LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE FIGHT FOR THE FAMILY: BIBLICAL APPLICATIONS FOR NAVIGATING LIFE’S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES IN MINISTRY

A Thesis Project Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By
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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

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ABSTRACT

THE FIGHT FOR THE FAMILY: BIBLICAL APPLICATIONS FOR NAVIGATING LIFE’S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES IN MINISTRY

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013
Mentor: Dr. Charlie Davidson

This thesis project is an assessment of the life of a minister’s family. The purpose of this project is to prepare new pastors, missionaries, and other Christian leaders so that they do not lose their own children while they are reaching the world. After careful research from contemporary ministries and research projects, the Christian leader will be aware of the challenges before him or her and have biblical applications that will help the families navigate through the difficult life of ministry. As a result of reading this thesis project, the reader will become aware of the battle that is taking place in the lives of the minister’s family, especially in the lives of the children, and what needs to be done to counter the advances of the adversary.

Abstract length: 128
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Judi, my friend, my partner, and my lover, who, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, is by far the best thing that has ever happened to me! We indeed have “climbed the hill together.” And to our four amazing “preacher kids”: Lee, you are a pillar of strength and wisdom, an amazing person who makes the right decisions. You indeed are firmly planted! Kim, you are the truest example of loyalty and possess the ability to act when others are paralyzed with fear. It is a glorious token of the person God has made you to be! Lisa, your smile, laugh, and attention to detail all add to your ability to capture the “special moments” in life in such a way that all can enjoy them continually. You are an amazing woman! Sarah, when some said you should not be born, God said otherwise! Your song is an inspiration to many. It echoes your confidence in the Lord loud and clear, whether there are tears in your eyes or there is laughter in your voice. You indeed are fearfully and wonderfully made!
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Winning the World but Losing our Kids

Most people have heard of preachers’ kids and missionaries’ kids, and when it comes to these ministry children, there is a cultural perception or stigma attached to these two groups of individuals. Many people have developed preconceived opinions of these individuals, which may be based on personal interaction, direct or indirect observations, casual or dynamic relationships, or a variety of other means that lead to stereotyping conclusions. Some ministry children grow into adulthood having no personal identity of their own, while others develop a strong personal identity and engaging personalities from a very young age. There are many who thrive throughout life as ministry children. Unfortunately, though, the reality is that there are many who do not. The following list provides a casual consideration of the following well-known historical figures and pop culture personalities, which further illustrates this point:¹

Table 1. Well-Known Children of Clergy

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<td>Karl Barth</td>
<td>Swiss Reformed theologian whom critics hold to be among the most important Christian thinkers of the 20th century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron Burr</td>
<td>Vice President of the United States who studied theology at</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Camp</td>
<td>Princeton University and whose father was Reverend Aaron Burr, Sr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grover Cleveland</td>
<td>President of the United States (1885-1889 and 1893-1897). His father was a Presbyterian minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat King Cole</td>
<td>Singer and jazz pianist and son of a Baptist minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Edwards (the younger)</td>
<td>Son of Jonathan Edwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Waldo Emerson</td>
<td>American essayist, lecturer, and poet, who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century, was the son of a Unitarian minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustav Fechner</td>
<td>Experimental psychologist who wrote on religion or metaphysics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aretha Franklin</td>
<td>&quot;The Queen of Soul&quot; and daughter of a Baptist minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin Graham and Anne Graham Lotz</td>
<td>Evangelists and authors and children of American evangelist, Billy Graham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsenio Hall</td>
<td>Son of Baptist minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camilla Hall</td>
<td>Early member of the Symbionese Liberation Army killed in a shootout with police.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Henry</td>
<td>Author of commentaries on the Old and New Testaments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Il-sung</td>
<td>Korean communist politician who led North Korea from its founding in 1948 until his death in 1994. His maternal grandfather was a Protestant minister, his father had gone to a missionary school and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, and both his parents were reportedly very active in the religious community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Jackson</td>
<td>Former NBA player and current NBA coach; both parents were Assemblies of God ministers. His older brother Chuck speculated years later that Phil threw himself passionately into sports because it was the only time that their very strict parents allowed Phil and his brothers to do what other children were doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonas Brothers</td>
<td>Pop-rock boy band members, sons of a former Assembly of God minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Kaunda</td>
<td>First President of Zambia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
<td>Civil Rights Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Lions</td>
<td>The Canadian indie rock band including brothers, John and Rob MacPhee, sons of Rev. Roger MacPhee, a Presbyterian minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Manuel</td>
<td>Current manager of the Philadelphia Phillies of Major League Baseball. Son of a Pentecostal preacher who committed suicide just before Charlie graduated from high school, which led him to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roots Manuva</td>
<td>British rapper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George McGovern</td>
<td>American historian and Democratic Party nominee in the 1972 presidential election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Merkel</td>
<td>Chancellor of Germany, chairwoman of the Christian Democratic Union (Germany), and a Lutheran pastor's daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedrich Nietzsche</td>
<td>Noted critic of Christianity who wrote <em>The Antichrist</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Osteen</td>
<td>American pastor, author, and televangelist who reaches 7 million viewers weekly. Also, son of televangelist, John Osteen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige Patterson</td>
<td>Conservative Southern Baptist reformer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katy Perry</td>
<td>American pop singer-songwriter, daughter of two pastors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Piper</td>
<td>American Reformed Baptist preacher and author of 54 books. He coined the term ‘Christian hedonism’ in his 1986 book <em>Desiring God</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chonda Pierce</td>
<td>American entertainer and founder of Preacher's Kids International.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pointer Sisters</td>
<td>Daughters of a Church of God minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asafa Powell</td>
<td>Track-and-field sprinter. Both of his parents are pastors and he plays for a church band.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Johnson Reagon</td>
<td>Founder of Sweet Honey in the Rock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condoleezza Rice</td>
<td>The United States' 66th Secretary of State, daughter of a Presbyterian minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gustav Adolf Scheel</td>
<td>Member of Nazi Germany's Schutzstaffel who studied theology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica and Ashlee Simpson</td>
<td>American singer and pop-stars, daughters of a Baptist minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Tindal</td>
<td>English deist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Charles Tupper</td>
<td>A Canadian father of Confederation, premier of Nova Scotia and prime minister of Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Warren</td>
<td>Evangelical pastor and best-selling author, son of a Baptist minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfred North</td>
<td>English mathematician and philosopher; his Philosophy of Organism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Whitehead gave rise to process theology in which God, as source of the universe, is viewed as growing and changing.

Woodrow Wilson The 28th President of the United States, son of a Presbyterian minister.

Wright brothers Sons of Milton Wright.

Malcolm X A convert to Islam whose father is described as "an outspoken Baptist minister."

Denzel Washington Actor and son of a Pentecostal preacher.

Many have written off ministry children as simply being hazards of the ministry, a price the clergy family has to pay. After all, God gave His Son for the world, should not the clergy family be willing to give its sons and daughters so the lost of the world can be reached for Christ? This is unacceptable and at every point in kingdom work and training, a better approach must be taken for the care, treatment, support, raising, and stereotyping of ministry children. As the above-mentioned short list of sons and daughters of ministers are considered, the reader will find someone in close to every capacity of life. In reality, though, ministers’ children come in all kinds of shapes and all kinds of sizes. Some are thrilled to have this distinguished title, while others consider it one of the most disgusting curses one could have. They are young and old, male and female, big and small, educated and uneducated, church attendees and non-church attendees. They have white skin, black skin, yellow, brown, and red. They speak almost as many languages as there are on the earth today. They stand behind the pulpits of many churches, they serve as missionaries around the world, and they may be found in the military, in the operating room, in political offices, on the athletic fields, and in the courtroom. One can also find them homeless on the streets, in the mental wards of hospitals, as drug users and sellers, in prisons, and on death row. They are in every part of society today! Wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed, ministry children can be located. Moreover, they are some of
the most misunderstood, mocked, and ignored people in the entire kingdom of God. What needs to be understood, though, is that they are children, or at least were at one time. There are many ministry children who are living full lives and those living lives of emptiness – some who are thriving and some who are forsaking Christ, even from the same family. Therefore, the problem is real, and the issue needs to be faced, for both the children of pastors and missionaries are forsaking Christ at an alarming rate.

The question of who and what they are needs to be addressed. Do ministry children have any identity of their own? In deciding who they really are, it is unwise to leave these often forgotten and neglected individuals to fend for themselves. Are they really a group of troublemakers who often bring reproach to their parents or to the name of Jesus? Lee and Balswick present the core of the issue at hand in the book, Life in A Glass House, when they say, “There are many articles focusing on the minister’s family, however, most are simply reminders to busy ministers that they need to find time in their schedules for their families.”

In past generations, ministry children have been pushed aside, considered as troubled individuals who are to be “managed,” while their parents do the Lord’s work. Sometimes this faulty perspective seems to be in line with what the apostle Paul would call the problems of having a family and not being able to devote fully to the work of the Lord. Within this erroneous mindset, these children are only considered hazards of the ministry. There is a great need to inform the misguided, to encourage hurting ministry children, and to begin a process of training and confronting the misguided kingdom culture that merely “puts up” with the children while

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2 Cameron Lee and Jack O. Balswick, Life in A Glass House (Pasadena: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 16.
their parents serve. For this reason, when trying to describe the identity of a ministry children and what it is like to be one, Timothy Sanford says it well. He states, “It is a lot like being a white lab rat; everybody observes you, pokes at you, tests you, measures you, surveys you, but nobody wants to climb inside the cage and be your friend.”

The Statement of the Problem

Why are the children of ministers and missionaries looked upon in such a negative way? Why are they often mocked? Why do so many forsake the church as adults? As Rebekah Montgomery questions, “Why do 80% of adults raised in clergy homes need professional counseling as adults?” Why, when referring to every other child in the church, people will say they are “just kids,” but ministry children are expected to be perfect? Is there really a problem in kingdom work that causes – or at least place – these precious individuals on a slippery slope to rebellion? Why is it that so many Christian leaders will say without reservation that ministry children need help, but so very little has been done in this area? Why is so little is truly done by denominations to prepare the churches and the pastors themselves to help their kids? Why is it that few, if any, Bible colleges or seminaries have not included, other than a few token words in the training of the clergy, some mandatory preparation for raising, leading, and guiding these “rebels” who live or will live in the homes of most students who enters the doors of their

3Timothy L. Sanford, I Have to be Perfect (Colorado Springs: Llama Press, 1998), 7.

institutions? Why the oversight? Why the closing of the eyes to what is really taking place in the homes of the clergy families all over the world?

The stories of preachers’ kids (PKs) are very personal and normally confined to the individual. When it comes to missionaries’ kids (MKs), though, the stories seem to be more corporate. When abuse has taken place there are often several kids involved. It would appear that many missionary sending agencies have dealt with the “problem” of missionary children. When trouble does begin to take place in the home or with the kids, the parents are often reassigned or even removed from the agencies all together; thus, at least removing the problem from the mission agency. The following statement presents a mindset that has done great harm to ministry children both at home and on the mission field:

The children were viewed as a hindrance to the work of God. Rather than only one missionary from a family working on a field, the Senegal team education strategy doubled the workforce by allowing the husband and wife to labor to carry out the Lord’s work in the village. To this end, children as young as 5 years old were separated from their parents and placed in the Fanda dorms. On the field, mothers and fathers were warned against the idolatry of putting their own children at the center of their worlds and thereby making them into little gods. Parents were often reminded that if God sacrificed His only Son, missionaries should be willing and prepared to do the same. This attitude was communicated in order to keep the parents exclusively focused upon the work of the mission.

In dealing with the horrendous situations that transpired over a period of several years in one major missions agency, the following observation was made, “The vision for saving the lost burned so bright in people’s hearts that once their own children were saved and bound for

5Throughout this Thesis Project, the term “PKs” refers to what many people call Preacher’s Kids. When the term “MKs” is used, it is a reference to Missionary Kids. There are times when term “ministry children” is used, which is a general term for PKs and/or MKs.

heaven they were prepared to move on to concentrate on other souls and lives.” While many times the stories of the ‘successful’ ministry children are highlighted, there are just as many that one would wish to not be known. Most often, the stories of those who are hurting are ignored or maybe even being swallowed up in resentment of the minds of those who are forsaking the Lord Jesus and anything that resembles anything about God. The following stories are intended to drive deep the need at hand:

- “Because of . . . , I absolutely DESPISE anybody who calls themselves Christian.”
- “The spiritual abuse came in the form of twisted theology. The theology seemed to say, ‘God is waiting for you to screw up and when you do, He will punish you.’ God was always angry . . . The philosophy was that kids had to listen to adults because God talks through adults.”
- “At the age 13, [I] . . . was so disillusioned with Christianity that [I] . . . preferred hell to that f---ing school. [I] . . . was committed to following Satan. [I] . . . saw the native people worshiping the devil (witchcraft), and they were getting what they needed from their religion.”

One of the goals for this project is to bring to light the desperate need in which ministry children have. The leaders at seminaries, denominations, missions agencies, the local churches, and even the pastors themselves need to quickly become aware of the plague that is devouring the homes of those who are sent to rescue the world. The major problem is probably the ignorance on this subject. It seems that young ministry-minded families are oblivious to the challenges before them, even though in their own minds they think they are experts on the

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8These statements were made by former missionary kids, but these types of stories are unfortunately consistent with many ministry children.
10Ibid.
11Ibid.
subject. Most ministry families who are in training are extremely idealistic about family life, and in their ignorance, really think that they are knowledgable parents who have a true handle on raising children in what is called the clergy home. In reality, however, because of the calling of the parents, the kids have had a huge bulls-eye placed on them. What would happen to the clergy families if while learning about Eschatology, Pneumatology, Anthropology, Ecclesiology, and Soteriology, they would start to learn about “PK-ology” and “MK-ology?” What would happen if clergy parents would learn how to see and meet the needs of their children at every stage of parenting?

Furthermore, what would happen if while in seminary training, future pastors and missionaries would learn the strategic planning theories of raising ministry children? What would result if churches, while going through intentional transitional periods, would deal with the real issues of the life of the clergy family? In reality, most congregations have distorted views of who ministry children are. What hurt and pain could be avoided if pastors/missionaries and their spouses would become the protectors of their homes and rise up on behalf of their children, refusing to allow their children to be pawns to be used to advance someone else’s agenda? So many clergy families set aside their parental authority by yielding to the unfortunate demands of unbiblical churches. In this regard, in the book PK - Helping Pastor’s Kids Through Their Identity Crisis, the author articulates this problem by stating, “Pastors having weak boundaries and confronting high congregational expectations feel pressure to abdicate parental authority and let church members dictate their children’s behavior.”12

12Cameron Lee, PK-Helping Pastors’ Kids through Their Identity Crisis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 40.
Many ministry children who speak out on this subject are those who have “made it.” They have turned out the way all kids should. Others have been able to manage and dumb-down what really took place when they were young and impressionable; after all, they do not want to “shed a negative light on the church.” In spite of this, the need to be honest and to begin the long and hard cultural shift within the church today needs to begin immediately. The change needs to begin on every front, acknowledging the needs, training, informing, renewing, and educating at every step. The shift could take years, but the need to begin is now. Author Timothy Sanford shares some eye opening insight on the subject. He starts with the simple word “and.” When ministry children talk about their lives growing up in the ministry home, they need to be able to share and address both sides of ‘and’: “There were good times . . . and . . . there were some hard times. Dad was a good dad . . . and . . . he made some bad mistakes too. I’m proud of our mission agency . . . and . . . they have made some bad choices along the way.”13 When this honest open dialogue begins, a paradigm shift will start to take place.

The Statement of Limitations

The limitations on the subject of ministry children are abundant, to say the least. It is clear that the struggles of these children are considered to be hazards of the occupation, and this is just one of the aspects of ministerial sacrifice that must be accepted. In light of this, the limitations of this research project are a real problem. There are personal limitations because of the lack of honest direction. At times, the author has the feeling that he could go in any direction.

13Sanford, Perfect, 17.
with this research and make a profound impact on many lives. Nevertheless, for the sake of real research the main limitations are as follows.

The first limitation is the mindset that many possess concerning the problem at hand, which is evidenced in the fact that when assistance was sought from some whom I thought would be helpful, the common response was “Let me put some thought into it, and I will get back to you.” It was surprising to see, by the number of responses similar to this statement, that never really put another thought into it. Another limitation is the ignorance of the subject. Those who were raised in a clergy home who “made it” and are now serving the Lord, tend to be a little judgmental and unforgiving of the ministry children who are bitter or who have forsaken the Lord, the church, and their families. A third limitation is the total lack of credible research on the subject. While there is no shortage of opinions on the subject, most look at the subject from an extremely narrow perspective that basically comes down to what they have learned by themselves or the one or two people they know who are children of pastors or missionaries. In her work on this subject, Karen Gibson asserts, “There is a remarkable lack of research that gives voice to the lived experiences of each member of the family.”

Gibson goes on in her dissertation to share that the father/pastor has many resources at his disposal, and the pastor’s wife has a lot of help, although not to the level of her husband/pastor. Yet, help for the pastor’s children is almost non-existent, except for those who say “we are for you and are praying for you.”


\[15\]Ibid.
As searches are made for information on the subject of ministry children, scholarly research is extremely hard to find. It would appear that in the last 25 years, very little new information has been published. By looking over the resources used for the book *Life In A Glass House* it can be observed by that most of the dates of these books and articles are from the 1960s and 1970s, even though the book was written in 2006. This is just one observation, but it seems to present a pattern that is a limitation of great concern. Therefore, because of the overwhelming limitations on this subject, if intentional and aggressive research would begin immediately, many directions of this project could possibly be altered.

**Statement of Methodology**

Several approaches in presenting the problems, challenges, and biblical solutions associated with the preservation of the clergy family will be used. Because of the need for years of continued research on this subject, several approaches will be used, all with the understanding that the solutions will be a work in progress for years to come. There are four lines of research that will be used in the pursuit of solutions. One will be the use of the books, as few as there are on the subject at hand. The second research method will be the online material that is available. The third method used will be a online survey that will be sent out to around 130 ministry children. The fourth approach will be personal conversations with pastors and missionaries as they reflect on the thrills and disappointments of being parents in ministry.

It must be stated again that the research material is limited because of what seems to be a general neglect on the subject. It is the intent of the author to stir up the desire of many on several fronts to make this a subject of aggressive research and training in the years ahead as the
culture of ministry changes in a way that reflects biblical teachings on the subject of raising, leading, protecting and guiding ministry children.

Chapter 2 will present the life of clergy families with the main focus being on the children. Many people misunderstand the children of clergy families, and it is normally because so little is actually known about them. As a result, many just laugh at them or have some smug comment to make concerning these children. In reality, these are a huge group of hurting people who have been left in the wake of accusation, misguided stereotypes, and unbiblical parenting. Consequently, these children are leaving, in huge numbers, the Lord, their families, and the church in general. The purpose of this chapter will be to open the eyes of people who need to know and understand what is really taking place. Yes, many clergy children have wonderful experiences, and are quick to say so, and for this kingdom-minded people need to rejoice. But just as many are also experiencing hurt and pain that often will last a lifetime. The purpose then is to bring the need to light so that extensive study, with the purpose of changing a ministry culture that many times is toxic and outright harmful to clergy families, especially the children, will begin.

There are many great approaches to raising children that have proven over the years to be great assets to raising kingdom-minded families. Most Christian publishing companies will have several readily available resources for the wise parents to consider. Each generation will have new ideas that will prove to be very helpful to parents who want their children to be raised with a clear understanding of the challenges their kids will face. The difficulty for the clergy family is different from the typical family seeking to raise their children. Clergy parents have much wisdom and training so this is not necessarily the issue at hand for these special families.
Rather, the challenge is raising families in the ministry context. The need for clergy members to understand what the adversary will use to hinder their families from walking with the Lord is of extreme importance. Often times the very things the parents want to accomplish in life and ministry are the very things that can possibly do great harm to their own children. The challenge for many clergy families, then, is becoming aware of these issues while their children are still in the infant stages of life. Many young families have it in their minds that they know how to be successful parents, and they often find out after many years have transpired that they overlooked many things early on. Thus, chapter 3 will help these young families to develop a biblical approach to raising their children in the ministry context. Several passages will be used as a template so that areas where their families will be attacked can be minimized. Key passages will be used in order to build a structure that will enable the parents to meet the needs of their children in the ministry setting. The wise clergy parent will take these ideas and incorporate them into meeting the needs of their own families.

In chapter 4, a biblical perspective will be considered for use when training people for the ministry. Understanding that almost every pastor and missionary will have children at some time, some clear biblical insights should be a part of their preparation. This will include building hedges around the clergy families so that family time is protected. The development of a theology of rest will also be considered so that the family can have more than the ‘left-overs’ of their parents. The importance of creating margins in life is so that spontaneous events can be shared with the ministry children. Helping the parents to understand that their children are their ministry above the church, before the church, and beyond the church will also be considered.
Moreover, this chapter will demonstrate the need to develop homes where renewal and forgiveness is the norm so that ministry children can find their way back home. Some insight will be addressed in order to develop ways and approaches to reclaim those who have gone away from the Lord, their families, and the church. There are many who could be a real blessing to kingdom work, if only they could be loved back into a relationship with Jesus Christ. There are ways in which non-church settings can be used as places of worship. Different types of “Church Styles” could help to lower the hurt zones that ministry children have because of memories that are deeply imbedded into their lives. Then, there is a need to train parents, grand-parents, and church members in general on how to love these people back into a healthy relationship with the Lord that goes beyond the typical guilt laden approached that is most often employed. The purpose is to love them back into a growing discipleship process so that the grace of God can be infused back into their being.

Chapter 4 will discuss the current culture of ministry children, based on the results of the survey questions that will be given to around 130 individuals. One of the goals and purposes of this research project will be to create an awareness of the situation and to begin a process that could take ten years before the full extent of the problems are known. As new and accurate information is gathered, the shift will begin to occur, and create a non-toxic environment for the clergy families. Included in this chapter will be studies on helping families locate those ministries that are more family friendly. Guidance will be given so that they can locate the “Ecology” that best fits their family dynamic.

In chapter 5, the case will be made for seminaries to begin aggressive research into the clergy family. Some specifics include addressing the need to develop biblical applications so
that in the future accurate data can be available to teach, train, and change the direction of the clergy family as well as the church so that healthy ministry children can be consistently developed. Some of these items, and many more, could be integrated into seminary training.

Chapter 5 will also introduce some important ways in which denominations can help local congregations address this issue of clergy family relations. There are many churches that will need the assistance of denominational leadership. Timely instruction during the interim periods could be very helpful to train the congregation on how to do their part so that the pastor and his family can serve with joy (Hebrews 13:17). Other opportunities to infuse training on the subject could be included at pastor’s conferences and other training times that take place during the denominational year so that the culture of clergy-congregation relations can be actually changed instead of constantly managing conflict. Making family training and retreats available for those receiving financial assistance is another consideration.

In addition to denominational changes, the stereotypes that are so toxic will be addressed. A realistic process of preparing the families, the churches, and even missions agencies for the helping and healing of the hurting needs to become a part of the training and evaluation process. Some ideas will be shared as to how the public in general can begin to have a realistic expectation of these children just like they would any other child with which they may come in contact.

Finally, chapter 6 will deal with the boundaries and hedges that need to surround every home, including issues such as what is acceptable in congregational behavior, and how to recognize when the boundaries have been crossed. The challenges for parents will be to be the watchmen and guardians of their home. A process will be developed to help the parents of these
kids to know when it is time to stand up as defenders of their children. This chapter will also help the parents understand what can be allowed in the home and what cannot. Some issues covered include topics concerning rest, personal time, family time, and making children a priority.

A Review of the Literature

The literature available for this research is woefully weak. For years, the subject of ministry children has practically been ignored and considered unimportant; just a hazard of the call to ministry and clergy family life. Even though this is unacceptable, those in kingdom leadership positions need to rethink neglected areas of family life. According to Lee and Balswick, “Although numerous recent works teach how to minister to families, little has been written regarding the minister’s own family. A few references deal briefly with the subject, but treat it as if it were of little importance or interest.”16 In other words, the few books and articles that deal with the real issues at hand are sparse. The overlying theme with those who have done some respectful work in the area is that the pastor has some help and resources to lean on, the spouse has some help available but is lacking, the children have been all but left out of the discussion and treated at least in action as being non-important.17 Therefore, the need for this study is one of the greatest needs in all of Christian ministry. The following is a general overview of some of the available literature.

16Lee and Balswick, Glass House, 15.
17Ibid.
Web-Based Sources

There are several types of websites that have the clergy family in view. Some focus in on the father and mother. There is some good devotional-based information available. Focus on the family’s website, www.parsonage.org, is one of the leading providers of this type of websites. There are also many sites and blogs where clergy couples can go to receive encouragement and guidance. For the most part, these articles are written by people who are young and still have small children in the home.

Some web-based sites feature the bitterness and those who have been severely hurt during the younger days of being a child of pastors or missionaries. One such example is a site titled “The Freethinker,” which can be accessed at http://freethinker.co.uk/features/the-atheism-of-a-preachers-kid/. This young lady is a self-proclaimed atheistic preacher’s kid. Unfortunately, sexual abuse took place in her past while her parents were serving the Lord. There is also a Facebook page that is available while it appears to be outdated, or it may have a different type of commercial agenda. Next, there are denominational types of ministry children-expressions of hurt and pain. The following site is for ex-penticostals, and seems that most of the emphasis on this site is from preachers’ kids who are tired with the unique challenges faced as a result of being in this position.

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18See also http://www.facebook.com/pages/preachers-kidstheuntoldstories.

19See also http://expenticostals.org/preacherskid.htm.
Dissertations and Reports

There are a few dissertations that have the main focus on ministry children, but the ones that are available are very helpful and are a great source for references on this subject. The reports that are available, as few as there are, usually deal with some pretty horrendous issues. In her dissertation entitled “Logging In: An Internet-Based Inquiry Into The Needs of Clergy Families,” Karen E. Gibson does a good job of setting a pattern for future studies. From Western Canada, she seeks to gather information that will help to get some answers and solutions on problems with clergy families. She makes this statement when she did her work on this subject, “While there is a significant amount of qualitative research surrounding the demands and stressors of clergy, there is a remarkable lack of research that gives voice to the lived experiences of each member of the clergy family.”

Her work also demonstrates the difficulties of research of this nature, for she acknowledges that very few responded to the survey that is the foundation of her project.

Additionally, in a very interesting research project done by the Florida State University for the Journal of Family Issues, some foundational matters can be observed. The purpose of this research project was to learn how having children in the clergy home added to the stress level of the parents. Several issues were researched, but one foundational finding was a diagnosis called “Compassion Fatigue.” The research deals with all kinds of clergy family issues, like loneliness, ambiguous family boundaries, and the “Congregational Watch Dogs” in the church. Compassion Fatigue is suffered by those who continually give to the well-being of

\[20\text{Gibson, “Logging In,” 2.}\]
others to the point of having nothing more to give. Often times this is what the parents bring home to the kids – nothing more to give.21

A report that deals with the real ugliness of carnality expressed towards missionary kids is the “Final Report for the Investigatory Review of Child Abuse at New Tribes Fanda Missionary School.” While New Tribes Missions is respected and loved by the author of this research project, in the past NTM has been plagued with some horrendous activity at a few of their boarding schools. The current executive board appears to be very proactive in dealing with the crimes at the schools during the 1980s. In this report, some observations made by the Grace Committee are helpful in seeking some solutions to the plight of hurting ministry children. A few highlights from this report will be helpful for those who have children, whether they are missionaries or pastors. One insight can be found in the comment, “The vision of saving the lost burned so bright in people’s hearts that once their own children were saved and bound for heaven they were prepared to move on to concentrate on other souls and lives.”22 In addition to this thought that deeply invades many clergy families in general is the issue of using ministry children to make people happy or to pacify the congregants: “The authority of Fanda dorm parents over the children was allowed to trump that even of their children’s lives.”23 These will prove to be major concerns that need to be addressed throughout this research project.

21Darling, McWey, and Hill, “Paradox,” 439-41.


23Ibid.
Books

Again, the number of books on this subject of research is indeed meager, but the books that are written can basically be divided into three categories. The first such category available for this research project is more academic in nature and is for overview purposes. The leading book on the subject from this perspective is Lee and Balswick’s *Life In A Glass House*. This is one of the few books that would be helpful in training new clergy families for ministry, and the authors present how understanding the “ecology” of a family can be very beneficial. The authors explain how clergy families adjust differently to various circumstances and situations. For example, just as one would adjust to certain “sea levels,” where the oxygen is more available at certain levels and less at others, so too the clergy families must learn to understand their ecology, those levels that can be handled by their own family unit. Lee and Balswick go on to explain that different families and different members within the family can handle differing levels of ministry sea level.24 One of the authors, Cameron Lee, along with co-author Kirk Fredrickson, also has a newly released book dealing with stress in the clergy family.

Other books in this category that are helpful include: Cameron Lee’s *PK: Helping Pastors' Kids through their Identity Crisis*. The title tells the story of this helpful book, which deals effectively with the identity of PKs. In addition, Mels Carbonell’s book *How to Solve the People Puzzle* is a valuable book in its insight on the different types of personalities. This can be extremely helpful for parents who want to understand their own children. Moreover, Stetzler, Stanely, and Hayes have written a book titled *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches That Reach Them*, which will help parents enter into the world of a new generation. It

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can also be a great resource for learning to understand the people who have left the faith over the years. A few additional books that can be helpful in understanding and changing harmful behaviors in church life and family life are *The Simple Church: Returning to God’s Process for making Disciples* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Safe People* by Henry Cloud and John Sims Townsend, *Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our church Practices* by Frank Viola and George Barna, and *Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations under Attack* by Lloyd G. Rediger. These books can all reveal deep and valuable insight into harmful church environments and what needs to be done to change it.

The second type of book that pertains to the subject of this research is what the author calls the “Relationship Books,” or when an adult ministry child has a ministry of being one of those whom they are attempting to help. Timothy Sanford of *Focus on the Family* has captured this dynamic. He uses sarcasm, which is one of the trademarks of a pastor and/or missionary child, to connect with clergy children and teens. In his book *I Have to be Perfect* he goes to the very heart of the issue in a way that connects with many who have been hurt. In order to demonstrate how he gets to the real issue, one chapter in the book is title “Damned if I Do, Damned if I Don’t.”²⁵ He directs the reader to the very center of the problems that many ministry children struggle with when he states, “Either you are a goodie-two-shoes, or you are the town rebel. Either you agree with everything dad says and does, or you are perceived to be against all that he stands for. Either you are a servant, or they call you selfish.”²⁶ Other books


²⁶Ibid.
that are helpful in dealing with relationships include Cloud and Townsend’s *Safe People*. Next, Stephan Arterburn and Frank Minirth have written a book entitled *Safe Places: Finding Security in the Passages of your Life*, which is helpful for people and churches that want to be “a safe place” for hurting people, or those who are seeking to come back to the Lord. Neil Coles’ book *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* is very challenging and has some fresh ideas for changing the culture of many churches that have hurt so many people. Finally, H. B. London’s *Pastors at Risk: Hope for the Church*, is a valuable resource that teaches on relationships within the church.

The third type of books on this subject are those that have been written by someone who has suffered tremendously and may have experienced a long pathway to healing. This category of books can be classified as “Testimony Books.” Some of these types of books have a point of getting even with someone who was at the forefront of the pain: “A Preacher Man can be like a teutonic god that can destroy the spirit of a child because of the harsh, loud, and provocative speech of the father.”

27 Others really do desire to help those who have experienced the same type of hurt and do want to be a blessing by telling stories of renewal and forgiveness. In addition to this book, there are several other books that provide encouragement for those whose adult children are away from the Lord. For example, *Prodigals and Those who Love Them: Words of Encouragement for those who Wait* by Ruth Bell Graham is a good read for anyone who is broken for their children. In addition, *Praying for Your Children* by Towns and Early is a book that offers help to those who want to pray for their children while they are small as well as

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some clear and practical insight for those who have seen their kids leave the faith. Finally, *Praying Prodigals Home*, written by Quin Sherrer and Ruthanne Garland, offers several helpful ideas for the parent whose children have left their walk with the Lord behind.

**Scripture**

When seeking to present solutions to the problem of the clergy families, Scripture must be quickly and ultimately consulted. The place of the family is prominent all throughout the Word of God. Therefore, the following passages of Scripture will prove to be extremely helpful to the families in ministry. These passages of Scripture will be the foundation for the healing and renewal of the individual, and will also re-image the church culture in order to create a safe clergy family environment.

- Malachi 4:5-6 "Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."\(^{28}\)
  - It is obvious that this passage of Scripture has Eschatological significance, yet the heart of God concerning the family is in view as the heart of the fathers and children are being turned to each other. This thought will be dealt with because one of the basic needs of PKs and MKs is to be loved and cared for by their fathers while they become companions together in life.

\(^{28}\)NLT.
• Mark 3:13-14 “... and He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach...”

  † The Lord Jesus Christ was sent to the world for a very clear and determined purpose. As He began His earthly ministry, He called to Himself the twelve disciples in order that they would “be with Him.” This discipleship process included much more than just passing on a few tidbits of information. He was sent to show them how to live a righteous life. They laughed together, they cried together, and they saw Him at the grass-roots levels of life. They heard Him teach, saw Him pray, saw Him show compassion, endure ridicule, criticism, and even torture. They saw Him live on a very personal level, and he revealed the truth of the heavenly Father to them. Parents need to do much more than to share a few biblical facts with their children. They need to live the biblical truths with their children; their children need to be with them.30

• Deuteronomy 6:20-25 "In the future your children will ask you, 'What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the Lord our God has commanded us to obey?' Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. The Lord did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. He brought

29NKJV.

us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.”

- Deuteronomy 6 is one of the clearest passages in the Bible when it comes to the family. The main focus is the proper transferance of biblical information to the next generation. The parents, specifically the father, were to live the truth of God’s Word authentically. When his children asked him why some events had taken place he was to tell them. This means that the fathers and mothers need to know the truth experientially. Parents, specifically clergy parents, need to be involved with biblical education. What happens so often is that this responsibility is passed off to a Sunday School teacher, youth worker(s), or some other believer. This needs to change, for the children need to both know the Word and to see the Word lived out everyday.

- Habakkuk 3:17-19 “Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.”

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31NLT.

32NLT.
In this classic Old Testament declaration of faith, the very heartbeat of living by believing God can be seen entirely. The challenge for the clergy family is to convey this living by faith passage during the real life issues that the family faces. There is a time when the children need to see mom and dad dealing with the struggles of life and ministry and how they labour together, while trusting the Lord for His gracious care. The main emphasis will be that the love and relationship with the Lord is not based on the material aspect of life and the apparent success of ministry. The real success comes with a dynamic walk with the Lord.

- Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.”

- This passage in Ephesians is well known to most who have had any training in family nurturing. Yet most fathers, including the pastors and missionaries, do not understand those areas of life and ministry that could be provoking children to anger. The key is to bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. The main point needs to be clear, that which comes from the Lord and not from the passion and vocational interest of the parent.

- Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.”

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33 NLT.
The number of clergy who are dissatisfied with their position and calling in life is alarming. Many would spiritualize this and put a misleading slant on what they are feeling. But when the full truth is known there is a real lack of joy with many clergy. Giving reasons for the clergy to serve on the field and in the local congregation with joy will be the focus of the application of this passage. Some of the things to consider could be learning to recognize the joy robbers and learning to see the unrealistic expectations the pastor or missionary could have that fosters joylessness.

- Job 1:10 “You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is!”
  - Job was accused by Satan of having a hedge or wall of protection around him. This is really an accusation toward God, but Job endured the accusers of the brethren. In an article by Phil and Bev Haas, they contend that the clergy parents can use their jobs to put and keep in place hedges that protect the time, expectations, and stress levels so that energy and ability is very available for the entire family. They summarize this point in the statement, “Early in our marriage . . . we asked God to raise a ‘hedge’ around our family to protect it from eroding under the pressure of a hectic life. During the past 20 years we’ve learned how to keep the hedge in place.”

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34NLT.

35NLT.
• Ezekiel 3:17-18 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me . . . "37
  - The watchman was to warn the people in the city of danger that was about to threaten the city. A watchman was also to announce the arrival of someone bringing good news as well. The father and mother need to be so in tune with what is going on around them and in the life of their children so that they can recognize when danger is threatening. The sources of these threats can come from a multitude of places and people. The parents should also be quick to share good news to their families as well. All of this requires that the parents are very much aware of everything that is taking place in the life of their families, and then they must be ready to respond appropriately.

• Luke 10:5-7 “. . . But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.” 38
  - The clergy parents have the responsibility to place their children in environments that are not toxic to their spiritual development. Often there are those in the congregation that are blessings from the Lord and enhance the spiritual

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37NKJV.
38NKJV.
development of their children. These people are called “a person of peace.” Often times they are not recognized until the children are grown. The need exists to learn how to see them and consider them to be from the Lord. The clergy parent can not allow their children to be exposed to those who are toxic to the faith development of their children.

- Luke 15:20-24 "... So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.”

  o There are thousands of ministry children who need to be reclaimed for the glory of the Lord. They cannot just be written off and forgotten. The above passage mentioned is a wonderful story of a son who rebelled and a father who would not lose hope. In his article titled Loving Your Rebel, Tim Kimmel gets to the real heart of the attitude that parents and close relatives should have. Of the ten points in the plan to reclaim these fallen ones, a key point is stated this way, “Don’t add bitterness to his rebellion.” There are many things that can be done, most of

39NLT.
which have to do with the parent making his or her life more attractive to the fallen child. This can be a time of extreme pain and pressure. There are very few stressors in the life of the clergy parent that surpasses this difficult circumstance. Therefore the parent must learn to “escape from the pressure cooker,” in order to authentically bring the grace of God into their own life and to the life of their children.  

- Genesis 41:50-52
  
  o This passage in Genesis focuses on the two sons of Joseph. After years of trials and difficulties, Joseph’s life was turned around in a matter of minutes. The names of the two sons offer real help for those who have been hurt to the very core of their existence.

- Job 42:9-17
  
  o After all of the loss that Job experienced, he was declared to be more blessed than he was before his trials. It did not come easy, though, and Job had real soul searching to do himself. In the last chapter of Job, the names of his three daughters are mentioned. These names are very helpful in describing the blessings that can result when the child of God experiences the healing of the Almighty deep within the depths of his or her hurting soul.

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1 Peter 5:3-4

- Peter challenges the pastors and Elders to be careful as they shepherd the people over whom God had made them overseers. As Clergy parents make their families their priorities, they will be demonstrating without words what kind of parents the people in the churches should strive to be.

Revelation 22:17-18

- “The Spirit and the bride say, Come!” Come freely. Many PKs and MKs want to come back to the Lord and into a special relationship with their parents. The yearning is there! The desire cannot be denied in most cases. Churches and parents need to rid themselves of the unbiblical practices that have been harming the children for years.

1 Corinthians 10:31

- Whatever you do, eat, or drink, do it all for the glory of God. Having families that are pleasing to the Lord is not for the glory of the parents, although so much happiness can be experienced when one’s children do live for the Lord. Nor is the glory for the church, the school, or the seminary. The glory is to the Lord! SOLI DEO GLORIA!

Ministry Children Survey

The survey was sent to 130 PKs and MKs with 90 actually participating. The results were profound! These adults responded from the depths of their hearts, and as a result, some foundational thoughts and ideas will prove to be extremely useful all throughout this dissertation. It was the backdrop for almost everything that was presented in the writing project. What “the
kids” had to say and how they responded to the questions was given priority in every facet of the project. The reason for this was intentional. When dealing with the clergy family most will approach it from the perspective of the pastor or missionary. Some would approach the clergy family from the perspective of the spouse, normally the mother. Some even approach the clergy family and the needs of the kids from the perspective of the church or missions agency. It was therefore the intention of this project to give “the kids” (who were all adults, ages 18 to 80) the opportunity to have a say. Any clergy family, denomination, church, or seminary will find a lifetime worth of subjects that will help them to raise healthy and Godly children.
CHAPTER 2
DEFINING THE REAL LIFE OF CLERGY FAMILIES

Introduction

This chapter will present in some ways the ugly side of being a ministry child. Because these are issues that have been kept quiet for years, many will question the reality of the painful experiences, but this will be the place where preacher and missionary kids can come out of the closet and really tell it all. The attempt will be made to understand even those who would rather turn away from this discussion because they left the Lord and the church years ago. The damaging patterns that most hold to when it comes to the clergy and his or her family will be examined as well. Many hurts, pains, and harmful behaviors will be examined so that all those in kingdom work can begin to change a plague that the kingdom of God has been ignoring for years.

Who are preacher and missionary kids? The simple answer is that they are children of pastors and missionaries. Is there ever a time when they will no longer hold these titles? What is the behavior they should convey to those in churches and in public? There are many ministry children who have had wonderful experiences, and they are thriving in their lives today. These are the success stories that many would like to see as the norm. But, there is a need to present the total picture of what it is like to be a ministry child so that the needed corrections can be made with the end goal being that more ministry children can be successfully reared and can thrive with the lives they have been given.
Therefore, the need to educate people both within the church and outside of the church must begin. For years, Christians have been able to brush the negative and painful issues involved with clergy families under the rug. Today, this can no longer be avoided or tolerated. With the rise of the internet, media, Facebook, YouTube, and other forms of worldwide communication, the painful, hurtful, and embarrassing things that unfortunately take place can no longer can be hidden. Consequently, they must be confronted head-on; the cancer must be located, and the infection must be removed. The purpose of this chapter is to dig deep with the purpose of opening wide the wound so that the infection can be removed, at least so that a better understanding can be realized and ministry children can thrive instead of being managed and hurt.

The information presented in this section originated with from a survey sent to 130 ministry children. Ninety of these individuals took part and revealed in both heart-wrenching and encouraging results.

“Please don't make MK's feel like a charity case. We don't enjoy being made to feel embarrassed about our family's lack of money so you can run your fund drive. As an adult I understand your good intentions. As a child I was humiliated.”

“You're lucky God has more mercy and forgiveness than I do, because the evil in your hearts and the poison in your tongues is more destructive than I have been able to bring myself to understand why you even call yourselves Christians or care if you burn in hell.”

There has been very little in-depth research into the subject of ministry children. While seeking additional resources, the process is long and slow. A few books, dissertations, and some websites and articles help with really getting to know the children. The challenge, then, is

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1Unless stated otherwise, the italicized quotes throughout the remaining of the project are all responses to the online survey that was distributed to the adult-children of Pastors and Missionaries, the full results of which can be found in Appendix A. In some instances, some of the included survey comments are paraphrased.
to piece together the information. With the results of the survey, some clear tendencies surfaced, and it is these tendencies that will guide the direction of this research into the life experiences of ministry children.

The relationship between the congregation and the clergy family is the main point of this research. Although much has been written that centers on the effects that the pastor has over the congregation, and some have written about the effect that the congregation has on the pastors, little has been written that deals with the spouse and next to nothing has been written about the effects on the children. In a newly released book entitled *That Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, Lee and Fredrickson state, “The spouse and children of ministers routinely complain of living in a fishbowl, the sense of being under the congregation’s ever-present watchful gaze.”2 In this statement, what seems to be an accepted by-product of ministry is demonstrated, and one is introduced to the public life in which the families of pastors and missionaries are forced to deal with. When the congregation has members from every perspective along the “personal conviction/preference scale,” with everyone thinking they have the right to express that to the spouse and children, with the unrealistic expectation that they are obligated to conform to whatever the latest issues are, a common result is kids who are torn, hurt, betrayed, and left as defenseless orphans. The only way to combat against these consequences are wise and protective parents who are courageous enough to stand up to the person, group of people, and, when necessary, the entire congregation.

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Unless someone thinks that the experience is always a negative one, there are many who have had a wonderful experience being a ministry child. However, the point to be made here is that many do not have pleasant experiences. Many are hurt for life. Many will leave the church and a relationship with the Lord because of what hurtful people have done; some intentionally, and some unintentionally through ignorance. Several areas need to be dealt with here so that a real understanding can begin to invade the church and other areas of kingdom work.

In order to understand what it is like to be a ministry child, some valuable insights can be found by considering a few who have dealt with the problems and challenges of clergy children. For example, in describing the life of being the child of a missionary or pastor Timothy Sanford states, “Being a [ministry children] was/is like being a white lab rat; everybody observes you, pokes at you, tests you, measures you, surveys you, but nobody wants to climb inside the cage and be your friend.”3 This statement conveys what is normally a non-verbal expression of the value of ministry children – that they are a hazard of their parent’s occupation, and they just have to be managed so that they do not get in the way of their parent’s mission of reaching the world. Ministry children have been set aside and ignored, but the need to listen to them is now. What these special people are saying can help in so many ways with the expansion of the kingdom of God, for in their hurt and pain the toxic behavior that has plagued the church for years can be used to cleanse the church from behavior that causes many to flee. If the ministry children could speak, both their parents and the church as a whole would learn many things that would advance the kingdom light-years down the road. Sanford calls these ‘family

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3Timothy L. Sanford, I Have to be Perfect (Colorado Springs: Llama Press, 1998), 7.
secrets.’ Sometimes they reveal issues within the family most often they reveal the truth in many churches. This statement mentions something that is rare, but when the secrets that are harbored can be shared, wrong can be confronted and dealt with. One pastor’s child states, “I have a hard time believing when the fists are saying something different.”

Often ministry children feel as though they had to be perfect, or ‘perfect’ as defined by each person in the congregation. If one church member had issues with the length of a boy’s hair and the hair crossed the line of acceptable length, the child would be told he needed a haircut, even if the child’s parents approved of the hair length. If a girl would wear slacks and someone in the congregation did not think that was acceptable, they would often confront the girl to correct her even if the parents told her it was okay. The kids would be confronted by those who had Amish-type styles and expected them to conform, and then they would be confronted by the latest-style type people and wonder why the kids were so out of style. Music, school choice, movies, sport, hairstyles, how they would sit in church, how they would wear their hats, and many, many other things were all areas in which people in the congregation and community thought they had the right to instruct ministry children, usually behind the backs of their parents.

Why do congregations, communities, and sometimes even family members put unbearable pressure on kids to be perfect? There are several reasons why this is the case, and these reasons need to be explored. Parents may do so because they want their credibility as leaders in the church to never be questioned. It is so easy for parents to lose sight that their children have the same needs as others. Adult ministry children are very clear on this point – repeatedly they are saying that kids need to be permitted to be kids. Parents of these children

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should take a huge step back and take a close look at their expectations for their own children. Clergy parents are often driven to succeed; after all, the monthly and quarterly reports need to be turned in and the leaders of the church and missions agencies need to see the glowing reports so that praises can be given to God. However, one must question whether the desired praise is for God or really for the parents. When God’s Word says in Matthew 6:33 “to seek first the kingdom of God . . .,” does this mean that the kids can be sidestepped and considered not to be part of kingdom work?

Consider the kids, are they expected to be perfect because of the image so many yearn to see? Consideration needs to be given to what real kingdom success looks like! Those in kingdom work need to step back and look at the full picture of ministry and put the kids, who are part of the clergy families, back in their rightful place. As one survey respondent states, “They didn't ask to be here. Your most important "God-given" responsibility [is] your children. The greatest God given resources for your happiness are your children. Treasure them so.” Most everyone will say that the proper priority order is God, family, and then ministry. Nevertheless, what is really taking place in reality? Many kids just give up and say “What is the use; I only fall short of everyone’s expectations! Maybe they are correct in thinking I am a rebel!” What happens so often when people say these things repeatedly about ministry children is that they may prove to be giving a prophetic word, for this is what these kids continually hear. Sanford addresses this thought this way, “‘If I don’t try,’ you say to ‘yourself, I can’t fail.’ You create an alibi that allows you to save face. Better to not try and fail, than to try your hardest and still come
up short, right?" Many of these kids as adults deal with depression, and some have estimated up to 80% at some point in time have needed to get help.

The question of why it is acceptable to put this amount of pressure on a ministry child needs to be addressed. Is it really the way God intends for the people to look at clergy families and their kids? Is this something that needs to be confronted so that a new culture can be infused into kingdom culture, and the needs of these kids can honestly be met? It is so ingrained into the fabric of the church that it almost sounds like heresy to think otherwise.

In addition, should the clergy families be exalted to in the eyes of the church or kingdom of God as they are? Is this really what God intends? Should missionary children be placed before congregations as their parents are seeking support? Yes, many have had wonderful experiences and many of these children are quick to point out the blessings of their upbringing. However, it is clear that many struggle with it. Regarding this issue, one survey participant states, “They are just kids who shouldn't have huge magnifying glasses on them; especially no more than other children.” As one can see, many are so hurt and bothered by it that they would rather rebel so they can separate that part of their life from their current life as adults. In the same way, Lee and Balswick call this “The Price of Exampleship,” and they compare it to the “Royal Family Complex.” They write,

The minister still tends to be regarded as the father of the extended family, of which his wife if the mother. Furthermore, like the British royal family, which symbolizes the Empire and Commonwealth to the world community, the minister and his family symbolize the congregation to the community. In their representative function, “the royal family” is given

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love and respect, without earning or necessarily deserving this response. But the price of respect and love is exampleship.6

In many environments, the clergy family must always be in the proper state of exampleship. They must dress, talk, walk, and act the part or the congregation has every right to voice their disapproval to whomever and for whatever reason they wish. While this is not always verbally communicated, this way of thought is often explicitly demonstrated through actions. Children are expected to be perfect role models for everyone, both inside and outside the church. They are to know all the answers, all the songs, always dress appropriately, be tender and meek, and be completely respectful to their parents in every situation, while being able to communicate with every kid in the church: “In some churches . . . the children must be upright and moral, often with the implicit expectation that they are to be groomed for positions of church or civic leadership.”7

Table 2. Demographic Information of Ministry Children Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>36-45</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>46-55</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-90</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 16 people opted out of this question.

According to one survey respondent, “Leading the church is the calling on [a pastor’s] life, [a pastor’s kid] by default. It's [pastor’s] job to lead it, not [the kids]. Never threaten them sing implications of ministry as advantage. Make sure your kids have the resources to be lead and disciple[d] themselves.” Many do not understand why this is such a big issue! Often the

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7Ibid.
parents of ministry children are much unprepared for parenting in the ministry setting. They have
general ideas about parent that they possibly learned by having good parents or by having some
good mentors that modeled parenting before them, but the challenges of parenting in the ministry
setting are extremely different! The survey that was conducted reveals some things that current
and future parents of ministry children need to consider. These parents would be wise to learn
from the mistakes of previous generations.

When asked if their parents acted one way at church and another at home, 18%
indicated that their parents were different at church than they were at home. The following
quotes are some of the comments provided:

“Dad was always a happy, congenial man at church . . . talking and laughing with church
members while at home he hardly talked to us kids . . . he was a great provider and I love
him, but the church people always came first . . . He would be fussing with us about
something, the phone would ring and it would be a church member, and his demeanor
would change in a second . . .”

“Absolutely never. Both my mom and my dad were consistent in every situation. But I have
definitely heard many complaints about this from other PK’s and this seems to clearly
relate to that PK’s relationship with the Lord. I am so thankful that my parents were/are so
good at this area- to this day, me and my siblings are all still involved with local churches,
teach/attend Sunday school and volunteer for ministry.”

There are so many things that the caring parent can learn from this brief display of
honesty from these adult ministry children. Many of them felt as though they were given what
was leftover after their parents served others in the congregation. Indeed, there are many
wonderful parents who have been wise and careful, but there are far too many who have missed
the mark completely. Therefore, the biblical applications need to be put in place to better equip
parents for rearing their children in the ministry setting. Parents need to be secure enough to
admit mistakes and to seek reconciliation. Many times parents, because of what they were taught
at seminary or Bible school, were misinformed. They were told in so many words that if they would take care of the church or go to the remote tribe of people that God would take care of their kids. This needs to be corrected.

Another issue that influences parents of ministry children is the unreal expectations that are placed on clergy couples. Many times people have the “Messiah Trap.” Cameron address this with this statement, “This condition, common to many Christians . . . is based on the double edged lie that if ‘I don’t do it, it won’t get done’ and ‘everybody else’s needs take priority over mine.’ A pastor caught in this trap fails to see that he himself is the reason that everyone expects him to do all the work.”8 They must be the one to pray, they must be the one to visit, they must be the one that people call, and they are the only ones who can really minister to people.

**Time**

As a result, the time element in the clergy families is a real battleground. Not that there is constant tension within the family itself, it is rather that there are so many aspects of life and ministry that can pull the family in so many directions, usually apart. What many clergy families, especially younger ministry families need to be aware of is that whenever they say ‘yes’ they are also saying ‘no.’ The times in which the phone rings, when there are meetings, or when someone stops by the house unannounced, are the times that could have been spent with the family and ends up being spent on someone with a need that only their parents can deal with. Often the clergy couples are willing to drop anything and everything before duty demands it. However, many of the calls, meetings, and drop-ins can wait or be handled by someone else. But

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many times the pastor really wants to be needed in this way, or maybe he is afraid that if
someone else meets the need the congregation will not need him anymore. The insecurities of
clergy couple must be dealt with, and the dependence that congregations have for clergy couples
needs to be confronted.

When most families are spending special time together, for clergy families, this
quality time is often spent on ministry responsibilities. For example, holidays are special times
when many families develop family traditions, but the clergy family is tied to the Christmas
specials or all the Christmas parties for every class in the church – God forbid that the pastor and
his wife not attend one of these parties. Then, there is also the New Year’s party, the Fourth of
July service, Easter and Palm Sunday, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day. There is the church
anniversary, all the other denominational stuff, and before you know all the kids really hear by
way of actions is that my parents do not have time for me. Alternatively, maybe they are hearing
that I am not as important as those people in that church are. One pastor’s kid says it this way:
“You hate them because they take the first, the best, and deepest of your ministry parent.”

Furthermore, the kids hear the complaints of the one or two who disagree with this or
that, or the person who is vocal about how their parents do not have their priorities right because
they did not go to “sister blue hair’s” tea party. Then, they hear the reports of Mr. Time
management who wants to help the clergy family with their time management so they can have
more time to devote to the church. Moreover, the kids must endure Mrs. “I don’t think we should
spend so much time with our kids. In fact, I think the pastor worships his kids because he goes to

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most of their ball games and spends two nights a week with them at home in the evening. He must not want our church to grow!” In other words, as Lee and Fredrickson point out, “PKs struggle to make sense of how their parents could devote their lives to serving God and yet get slapped down by the very people for whom they sacrificed, day in and day out.”

The following quotes are statements made regarding what some of the ministry children had to say about “sharing” their parents with the church. In response to the question, “If you could say anything to your parents knowing that they would not find out, what would it be?” some of the responses include:

“That it wasn’t fair that I had to share my parents with people at the church who would complain, not tithe, and make them miserable. It wasn’t fair that I was held to a higher standard than other kids growing up and sometimes it made me feel like nothing I did was good enough.”

“...I've been saying this for years that I just want a Daddy to invest in me, and now my children. Don't leave me with this sorrow of not sharing yourself with us...there is so much I want to know from you, so much I have learned already by listening to you preach, but I know there are deep wells of wisdom and understand and knowledge that I long to hear you speak of and share. All those church people you've spent hours trying to teach and share God's truth with...so many rejected what you had to say...so tell me! I am all ears, Dad! Because I trust your word and your wisdom more than anyone else in the entire world. Please.”

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A Church and Community Full of Parents

Table 3. Ministry Children Survey Question 40 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
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</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

Table 4. Ministry Children Survey Question 44 Results

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<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

The issue of parental authority is the primary concern here. According to the survey results, the ministry kids are clearly tired of people feeling it is their right to tell them what to do. Sixty-five percent indicated that this was a real issue, and 27% indicated that it was a huge issue. This could very well be more of a parental issue though. Parents are to be the protectors of the family, but it appears that many parents are allowing the transfer of their parental authority to be given over to the whims of the church. Clergy parents need to be made aware of this and be presented with a plan of action. Sometimes people in the church and
community have sincere purposes, but when ministry children feel as though wherever they go there are people instructing, bossing, and even at times belittleing, the kids become embittered and at some point in time many of them will just become a rebel. They think “I cannot please anyone anyhow, so I might as well make life miserable as a way to get back at them!” The kids get to the place where they get numb to it all; everywhere they go, inside the church, outside the church, people feel they can boss the kids around. Any mis-step of any kind and there will be those self-appointed authoritarians who believe it is their calling to straighten these kids out. If the truth were told, most of these people have failed in their own homes so they try to show their ability to handle kids by dominating these ministry children. Is this an overstatment? To some who were blessed with people who were wise and informed, maybe. To many, however, this is so very true. Even as adults, sometimes people feel as though they can dominate ministry children. Perhaps this explains some of the behavior of some adults who have long ago decided that “by God, they treated me like that when I was a kid, they will not treat me that way as an adult.” Listen to the voice of the kids:

“I think everybody older than myself in my dad’s congregation felt it was their responsibility to act as my parents whenever my parents weren’t around. They were constantly telling me how I should act. Even if their own children behaved outrageously, they would tell me how they felt a preacher’s son should conduct himself.”

“You are not their authority. Treat them as you would other kids. Understand that kids misbehave as a part of the growing process.”

Lack of Identity among Ministry Children

When kids are young, most everyone knows that their parents are the heroes. They look up to the parents, they admire the parents, they even at time mimic the parents. This is fine and at times very enjoyable. Kids are compared to their aunts and uncles, grandparents and siblings,
and even relatives five times removed. What parents do not enjoy hearing is that their kids are a “chip off the old block.” This is all good, but the time comes when the kids want their own identity. Often, as kids go through the different stages of childhood, they will go in a different direction than their parents just so they can be their own person.

Table 5. Ministry Children Survey Question 31 Results

<table>
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<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Occasionally</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 answered question 70 skipped question 15

Is this identity really a healthy one for the kids? Many non-clergy family kids will grow out of the shadow of their parents, or at least if they desire something different they are encouraged to do so. This is good, for each child is uniquely made in the glorious image of God. Some have said that the identity of being a ministry child hinders the kids if there is a constant bombardment of comments over an extended period of time that pushes these kids into a man made mold that has been created in the minds of controlling or uninformed people. One person presents this problem by stating, “If you are a PK . . . try as you might at times, you never forget it . . . I have found absolutely no one who grew up as a child of a minister who would say anything like ‘Oh, it really isn’t a big deal. I don’t think it had much of an impact on me.’ My own father has been dead for twenty-five years and I have been an ordained minister myself
longer than that, and yet, to this day, I still think of myself as a PK.”11 In the same way, in regard to the need for a ministry child to form his or her own identity, some of the survey participants made statements such as:

“You don’t have to go the way of your parents...find out what God’s purpose is for your life. Even though there are callings on families and it will or may include you in the plan from God. He is generational.

“They're individuals, not clones.”

“This is your calling/vocational choice, not your child’s! You went into this career knowing what you would be up against, we got forced into it. Be compassionate!”

The Issue of Church Leaders

In the ministry children survey, the question was asked, “Do you struggle with certain leaders within your church because of memories you have with any of the following church leaders?” The four choices were pastors, youth pastors, deacons, or peers. It is suspected that if the children of pastors and missionaries were surveyed separately, the results may have been different. For, in some of the verbal responses throughout the survey missionary children may have had some issues with pastors because of support for their parents being dropped or because they felt like they were being used as a method for the church reaching a goal. Pastor’s children would not have these types of issues with pastors, and their concerns would be more centered on youth pastors or deacons. The results of this question were very clear though, and the intensity of the verbal responses should cause many to re-evaluate the toxic behavior of many church leaders today. Thirty-two percent struggle with pastors, 36% struggle with youth pastors, 59% struggle with deacons, and 32% struggle with their own peers who they considered leaders.

11Lee and Fredrickson, Understanding and Coping, 190.
This is one of the major issues that became known during the survey and must be addressed aggressively by clergy families, churches, seminaries, and mission’s agencies.

Concerning the struggle with church leaders, some of the survey respondents vocalized their thoughts with statements such as:

“During my time growing up in the church I would often hear the deacons talking about my dad the preacher and that would really bother me. The way they acted when he was around and the way that they acted when he wasn't was very different. It was very hypocritical.”

“We went through a church split that was primarily started by the deacons and youth pastor against my father. They made the church very uncomfortable for me and my family. It took me several years to learn to trust the members of our new church.”

“Sadly, I am often skeptical of many youth pastors because I have heard stories of inappropriate relationships within their ministry. I understand that the teenagers/adolescents are extremely influential and eager to be accepted and pray that men/women chosen to work with youth are surrounded by a hedge of protection.”

Therefore, the intensity level of these responses is clear, and the focus of the struggle is obvious. The challenge for kingdom leaders is to see the toxic behavior, make the hard decisions, and then make the corrections necessary. The adult ministry children are rarely considered, and what they have to say could very well be what is holding back so many churches and mission endeavors from full fruitfulness. Many will deny the validity of what has just been
shared, but it is real and change must take place for the sake of the kids and for the sake of future ministry.

“I Have to be Perfect”

Ministry children are placed under the watchful eye of many who believe it to be their right and responsibility to look for the flaws in the kids. What is it that causes people in congregations and even the community to look at these kids with such anticipation of finding faults? This is something that has caught the attention of not only those in the religious circles, but also in the secular circle as well. In an article in the Journal of Family Issues, a study was conducted entitled “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” which sheds a very interesting light on this subject. Conducted by Carol Anderson Darling of Florida State University and Lenore M. McWey and E. Wayne Hill of East Carolina University, of the many helpful research topics contained in this study, one dealt with the clergy families being in the focus of many people in the congregation. It is stated that “a number of studies have reported that personal satisfaction for clergy families are hindered by ‘congregational watch-dogs.’”¹² These people consider it their responsibility to scrutinize the every move of the clergy family, especially the children, and this is a constant source of stress for the entire family. It is interesting that research in family issues from non-Christian universities have seen the need to deal with this issue of clergy families being in the watchful, critical eye of several people.

Table 6. Ministry Children Survey Question 42 Results

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69  
skipped question 16

The kids live in a world where they have to be perfect. Everyone knows they are not, but because of the watchful eye of so many people, they must be. Some people will see or hear the child say or act in a certain way, and it is not a problem, while there are other adults who will see the very same thing, but to them this is a huge issue that needs to be dealt with. Often, these kids just cannot get away from the judgmental eye of someone. According to Sanford, the kids deal with thoughts like this:

- “Everybody expects me to be the shining example of whatever dad preaches.”
- “If I’m not, it’s because I’m being irresponsible.”
- “Image is everything, that’s what Mom always says.”
- The congregation will like dad better if I am.”

Similarly, the survey participants responded with comments such as:

“I was constantly reminded that my dad's ministry depended on my behavior, and was threatened that he would have to resign if I did not act as I had been taught. It was too much pressure for a child.”

Sanford, Perfect, 35.
“We had to be at every function, we were the choir, singing specialist, basically the dog and pony show. All of bible schools, Sunday schools, Easter sunrise services, Wednesday night Sunday a.m. Sunday p.m. services, revivals, everything, it felt like nothing else existed for us.”

“As an MK, it got really tiring while we were on furlough, visiting church after church after church. I was in a new Sunday School class almost every weekend and felt like an animal at the zoo. I was strangely fascinating to all my peers, but no one actually wanted to be my friend. Sometimes I had to sing with my parents in front of the whole church. When I was little I didn't care, but as I got older, it was really embarrassing for me.”

“I Can Ruin My Dad’s Ministry”

Having been raised in a clergy family himself, Sanford provides a discussion of what he refers to as “the myth of being perfect.” With both passion and compassion, he shares that ministry children are not responsible for their fathers’ ministry. In his sarcastic way, Sanford addresses this common thought of many ministry children concerning them supposedly destroying their fathers’ ministry: “Wow! What awesome power! A PK can totally dismantle the ministry of a forty-year-old, seminary-trained, six-foot-two man!” Sanford continues along this line of thinking with the purpose of showing PKs and MKs that this is nothing but a myth. He says, “Losing the pulpit or being de-credentialed by the denomination is between your dad, the congregation and the board or denominational leaders. But frequently one of these pulls you in, providing a ‘reason’ for the actions being taken. This is the very fuel that keeps the ‘I can ruin my dad’s ministry’ heresy alive and well.”

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15 Ibid.
In the same way, the survey respondents had much to say about the stress they felt as children to be perfect, and the thought that they would ruin their fathers’ ministry if they failed to do so. They write:

“We are not perfect. Our parents have a special, vocational ministry. We did not choose this life. We feel a heavy burden to live a sinless life. There are higher standards for PKs/MKs, but shouldn't those standards be held for ALL of God's people?”

“We're kids too. Just like your kids. Also just because our parents are Godly, doesn't mean we are at that level of understanding yet. Don't have unfair expectations of us or unfair standards of us because of them. We aren't automatically born Christians. We have to come to faith just like you. And with your help that can happen.”

“Be careful...your child is watching you. Don't preach one thing and do or say another. Try to spend time with your family...quality time AWAY from church members. Explain to the church that you need to spend time with your family. Your child is vulnerable. They feel like everyone is watching them, just waiting for them to "mess up." It's like living in a fish bowl...Talk with them, listen to them!”

As one can see, then, many PKs and MKs get to the place where they just stop trying. Often times the kids get to the place where they just give up. They feel as though they are here on this earth for everyone else. They must be the perfect example to all the kids at church and at school. They must always know the answers to the questions that are asked, and yet they cannot always give the answer because some of the other kids might feel bad if they are not able to answer the questions themselves. There have been reports of Sunday School teachers, workers, and youth directors actually telling the ministry children to avoid answering any questions. One teacher asked one PK not to answer a question, resulting in her own child answering the question and getting a special award for it. This troubled the PK for years, and he felt used. Fortunately, many years later the teacher went to the child in order to seek forgiveness. Sanford addresses this type of behavior and in his own way, he says the kids feel “Damned if I do, Damned if I don’t!”
• “Either you are a goodie-two-shoes, or you are the town rebel.”

• “Either you agree with everything dad says and does, or you are perceived to be against all that he stands for”

• “Either you are a servant, or they call you selfish.”

• Either you totally agree with everything the mission does, or you are anti-missions.”

The Public Eye of the Church and Community

The church and even the community as a whole enjoy bragging about the pastor and the entire clergy family. There are several possible reasons for this. It could be that they want other people to know of their connection to this special family, and it becomes a bragging point for some congregants. It could be that the people of the church want people to see and know that their church is a good place for other families because of the great family they have. It is interesting to find that the community as a whole has a close eye on the family, even the kids.

When a survey question was asked concerning bitterness, unforgiveness, and trust, the ministry children responded by saying the focus of these struggles was 20.8% with the parents, 62.5% with church leaders, and 47.9% was with someone in the community.

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16 Sanford, Perfect, 65-66.

Table 7. Ministry Children Survey Question 13 Results

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<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6

The way the PKs and MKs responded was a little unexpected. The pressure that these kids are facing not only comes from some of their parents and many of the church leaders, but almost half of the participants had deep issues with someone in the community. A teacher, someone from another church, a coach, a neighbor, a police officer, and many others were a part of those who negatively influence young clergy family children. Why is this true? Could it be that people all throughout the community people are looking for role models? Could it be that people from other churches have issues with their own pastor and family and they take it out on these kids? Maybe it is outside the church where ministry children work out their frustrations. There is still a lot of research that needs to go into this, but it is clear, the parents need to provide the same kind of protection outside the church as they do inside the church. The parents need to be involved in all areas of their kids’ lives.
CHAPTER 3
THE BIBLE AS THE GUIDE

A Biblical Template for the Clergy Family

“Things as the child of a missionary in India was a challenge in itself, but it was the ability of my father and mother to nurture me in a way that I never felt I was being used to advance the calling my parents had, I in fact had a personal choice of choosing the Lord as my Savior and no compulsions from anyone.”

The family is at the very heart of the local church. The family is likewise at the very heart of the pastor-missionary and their spouses. The problem is that the children are the ones who often suffer the most. In fact, they can be the ones in the entire kingdom of God who get the least amount of Bible training, teaching, and authentic attention even though they are the most impressionable.

Dealing With Provocations

Based upon the teaching and understanding of Ephesians 6:4, a clear analysis and biblical and practical solutions will be outlined in order to give the clergy families, specifically the parents, the tools to lead their children to desire the things of God, not despise them. For example, it has been stated that 80% of clergy come from dysfunctional homes themselves.¹ Learning to recognize the need to deal with generational and family tendencies is worthy of

much consideration during early training periods of the clergy parents in order to deal with pre-existing family, emotional, spiritual, and social issues.

**Proper Understanding of the Transfer of Biblical Information**

While the tendency to pass off biblical teaching to others is rarely the intention, in practice this is indeed what takes place in even the homes of the clergy. In pastors’ homes and with church people in general, the transferring of biblical information takes place by someone other than the parent; the Sunday school teacher, the youth worker, the children’s leader, and others are all some instructors to whom many have given the responsibility of biblically educating their children. For the missionary, this may be in the boarding school, or some other care unit that is in place while the parents are off serving the Lord. Although there is some real value in these areas of teaching the foundation, core, and heart of biblical education it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents. This is clearly presented in Deuteronomy 6:1-25, which continually tells parents, specifically the father, what is to be passed on to children. If the children are going to learn the truth of God’s Word, the mentoring of the children by the parents is nearly an absolute. Following the example of Jesus in Mark 3:14 in calling His disciples to be with Him so that they could be taught by His life, there is a major paradigm change for pastors and missionaries who want to instruct only. The difference between segregated education and integrated education will be considered.

**The Father – The Protector of the Home**

The symbol of the father as the watchman over the family is an excellent picture of protecting and sheltering the family from harm. In many cases, being the protector of a clergy family means that the father will need to shelter his family from the ministry and those who can
and will bring harm. The need of the father to be bold and courageous, even in the midst of the threat of losing his job, is pivotal for the kids’ understanding that they are on his priority list. Great insight and wisdom is needed to discern when and how a father’s protective hand needs to be exercised.

**The Authority of the Parents**

The training of a child is a huge responsibility. Based on Proverbs 22:6 this training has profound ramifications for the rest of a child’s life. Here again, so many look at themselves as being experts in this area when in reality they are not. The problem is that so much harm is often done to the children before some parents are willing to make the proper biblical adjustments. The clergy parents, both pastors and their spouses and missionaries and their spouses, approach their children in order to instruct them in ways that they would never approach others. Instead of teaching and mentoring in ways that really instill truth into the lives of their children, determination force, or maybe intimidation, is often used. Therefore, the focus of this project will be what real biblical authority looks like and what it does by way of biblical application as the parents train their children.

**Developing Real Relationships with Christ**

In Matthew 19:14 some of Jesus’ followers were trying to keep the children from coming to Him. In response Jesus says, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those are are like these children.” There is a real need for everyone, including children, to have a real, authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. Children of missionaries and pastors often struggle with a real relationship with Jesus Christ because there are so many externals to which they must aspire. People in churches can be brutal and harmful
to the spirituality of kids. They are expected to look the part of whatever anyone may have in
mind. In many ways, the expectations placed on clergy children lead them to accept as normal
what the Lord condemend. Congregations often do see this and it is never their intentions, but it
is exactly what is being imprinted on and in the very minds of the kids, being hypocrites. The
need of a real authentic relationship with Jesus from the heart and for the glory of the Lord alone
must be taught and sought. Ministry children have learned to play the game to please people,
now they need to learn to please only the Lord.

Scripture

When seeking to present solutions to the problem of the clergy families, Scripture
must be quickly and ultimately considered. The place of the family is prominent all throughou
the Word of God. Therefore, the following passages of Scripture will prove to be extremely
helpful to the families in ministry. These passages of Scripture will be the foundation for the
healing and renewal of the individual, and will also re-image the church culture in order to
create a safe clergy family enviroment.

Malachi 4:5-6

"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord
arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children
to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."\(^2\)

It is obvious that this passage of Scripture has Eschatological significance, yet the
heart of God concerning the family is in view as the heart of the fathers and children are being
turned to each other. The heart of the father needs to be reingaged with his children. His time,

\(^2\)NLT.
thoughts, prayer, strength, tenderness, affection, acceptance, and appreciation need to be expressed from the depths of his heart. If the father’s heart is truly for the kids experientially, then other areas of life and ministry will be affected. Family, churches, missions agencies, seminaries, and denominations must make this a priority. If indeed these groups believe that the family is second in priority only with the Lord being above, then teaching, training, challenges, and encouragement need to reflect this obvious truth. Mere words are not enough. From the depths of the hearts of the fathers, they need to “have a heart” for their kids; not just words, not just a few amens when something is said, but a real heart for their families. The kids know if their father’s heart is with them or with something that he preaches as being further down the priority list.

Mark 3:13-14

“... and He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach...”

The Lord Jesus Christ was sent to the world for a very clear and determined purpose. As He began His earthly ministry He called to Himself the twelve disciples in order that they would “be with Him.” This discipleship process included much more than just passing on a few tidbits of information. He was sent to show them how to live a righteous life. They laughed together, they cried together, they saw Him at the grass-roots levels of life. They heard Him teach, saw Him pray, saw Him show compassion, endure ridicule, criticism, and even torture. They saw Him live on a very personal level, and he revealed the truth of the heavenly Father to

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3NKJV.
them. Parents need to do much more than to share a few biblical facts with their children. They need to live the biblical truths with their children; their children need to be with them!⁴

This area of clergy family life is woefully lacking. So much time is spend away from the family and the kids begin to develop in ways that kids with absentee father develop. There is very little emotional connection in the kids so when he is with them, it becomes meaningless. When this happens, the kids suffer a loss that has been describe as being similar to a family that loses a family member but refuses to acknowledge the death.⁵ Consequently, when the father attempts to schedule time to be with the kids, they know that he would really rather be somewhere else, or maybe he is somewhere else emotinally. The kids suffer severely, and over time, they will consider the time with their father to be a joke. The fathers must, from the depths of his existance allow the kids to be with him because he wants and understands that being a father is transferring spiritual life to them.

**Deuteronomy 6:20-25**

"In the future your children will ask you, 'What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the Lord our God has commanded us to obey?' Then you must tell them, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. The Lord did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.'"⁶

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⁶NLT.
Deuteronomy 6 is one of the clearest passages in the Bible when it comes to the family. The main focus is the proper transferance of biblical information to the next generation. The parents, specifically the father, were to live the truth of God’s Word authentically. When his children asked him why some events had taken place he was to tell them. This means that the fathers and mothers need to know the truth experientially. Parents, specifically clergy parents, need to be involved with biblical education. What happens so often is that this responsibility is passed off to a Sunday School teacher, youth worker(s), or some other believer. This needs to change, for the children need to know the Word and to see the Word lived out everyday.

An approach to the tranference of biblical information that flows against the typical thinking in most institutional church is that of Integrated Bible studies. There are some fascinating aspects to this approach that could really help the clergy family when tranfering/teaching the Bible to their children. In his book Church 3.0, Neil Cole offers some help with this approach to teaching. When dealing with kids and the house church meetings, he says that house church needs to change “from a scholastic model to a spiritual family.”⁷ According to Cole, what is taking place is that the parental responsibility is being passed off to educators, and the same approach is taking place in the church. The responsibility for health, nutrition, birth control, education, and even day care has been passed off on the educators. The church in many ways does the same. The kids are segregated away from the adults so the adults can have a break from them, or so the Bible can be taught on a level the kids can understand. The problem is that the kids need to have the truth model before them if indeed the information

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of God’s Word is going to be transferred to them. Again Cole says it this way, “We produce what has been modeled for us, and we end up with a teaching institution instead of a spiritual family.”

The challenge for the clergy family is that the Word of God needs to be modeled in real life, in a spontaneous way that is normal and not moments of just intentions. The problem with ministry children is that the parents are gone so much, and when they do return home they are worn out and emotionally absent. In fact, one study presents the thought that for the clergy family, with each additional child being added to the family, the more time the parents need to be away from them so that they can supply the funds to raise them. Churches and clergy need to come to grips with this and slow down so that parents can be parents and so kids can be kids.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

“Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation! The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.”

In this classic Old Testament declaration of faith, the very heartbeat of living by believing God can be seen. The challenge for the clergy family is to convey this living by faith passage during the real life issues that the family faces. There is a time when the children need to see mom and dad dealing with the struggles of life and ministry and how they labour together,

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8Cole, Church 3.0, 211.


10NLT.
while trusting the Lord for His gracious care. The main emphasis will be that the love and relationship with the Lord is not based on the material aspect of life and the apparent successes of ministry. The real success comes with a dynamic walk with the Lord.

The clergy family is undoubtedly on the forefront of living by faith, most living payday to payday. The possibility of the church deciding to fire the pastor or the missions agency wanting the family to go to a different field of service is always something that can happen whether the clergy wants it to or not. The kids are rarely consulted at least in a authentic way. Many times, their input is not even considered or their needs may be considered less important. Even though these can be difficult times, it can be a time when living out the promises of God can be taught by example. The clergy family often does not convey the joy of serving the Lord, and as a result the kids see the parents whom they love and admire so much, struggling and even depressed. As the parents truly follow the teaching presented here in Habakkuk, even though they may not enjoy the times of struggling, the kids can learn some valuable lessons that will go with them all of their lives.

The problems that can arise during this time, though, can create an element of bitterness in the life of the entire clergy family. Many congregations have the mindset that they cannot pay the pastor a respectable salary because there may be someone within the congregation who does not make that much money. As a result, the family struggles. On the contrary, if the congregation does pay them the proper amount, then the family must deal with the guilt of knowing there is some poor soul who feels their pastor is materialistic. The guilt of this must not be conveyed to the kids. The congregations need to have a change of culture with the new understanding that the clergy family should be paid on a level that is well above the poverty level
of that community. The clergy family should not feel as though they must apologize because they have a few material blessings. The missionaries should not feel as though they must apologize and explain that they are not on vacation when traveling, but that they are visiting supporting churches. Families need to celebrate God’s provisions, and churches should not become covetous when the clergy family happens to experience some material blessings.

Ephesians 6:4

“For fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.”

This passage in Ephesians is well known to most who have had any training in family nurturing. Yet most fathers, including the pastors and missionaries, do not understand those areas of life and ministry that could be provoking children to anger. The key is to bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord. In order to accomplish this, the clergy parents needs to become students of their kids. They need to know— with precision— what is taking place. They need to constantly be on guard for those in the congregation who, whether intentionally or unintentionally, parade toxic behaviors, attitudes, and actions before their children. Clergy parents need to become aggressive and intentional protectors of their children.

Even though the clergy family must contend for the faith, run the race, and fight the good fight, their kids are to never be the recipients of the darts and evil intention of the ignorant or the spiteful.

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\(^{11}\text{NLT.}\)
Hebrews 13:17

“Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.”¹²

The number of clergy who are dissatisfied with their position and calling in life is alarming. Many would spiritualize this and put a misleading slant on what they are feeling. But when the full truth is known there is a real lack of joy with many clergy. Giving reasons for the clergy to serve on the field and in the local congregation with joy will be the focus of the application of this passage. Some of the things to consider could be learning to recognize the joy robbers and learning to see the unrealistic expectations the pastor or missionary could have that fosters joylessness. However, what many clergy need to begin to do with their families is to be honest. Parents need to discuss, at least to some degree, the joy robbers with the kids. Clergy parents must teach their kids to triumph through trials that may rob them of joy, not simply ignoring them or pretending that they do not exist. In his helpful article on family ambiguity, Lee states, “The first is the clarity of family communication. In some clergy families, the ethic of self-sacrifice is unproductively wedded to communicative rule that prohibits open discussion of problems in the ministry.”¹³ Lee goes on to say that “whether consciously or not, by a form of religious triumphantalism that rejects negative emotions and interpersonal problems as outdated relics of a worldly past.”¹⁴ One of the most vile joy robbers in the clergy family is that the clergy cannot confront the real issues in ministry. After all, they are to be all things to all people so that

¹²NLT.


¹⁴Ibid.
they can make everyone happy. The important point is that congregations need to deal with this, for it is their problem! The parents need to walk through these issues with their kids and demonstrate to them the biblical model of having authentic joy.

Job 1:10

“You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is!”

Job was accused by Satan of having a hedge or wall of protection around him. This is really an accusation toward God, but Job endured the accuser of the brethren. Phil and Bev Haas contend that clergy parents can use their jobs to put and keep in place hedges that protect the time, expectations, and stress levels so that energy and ability is very available for the entire family. They summarize this point in the statement, “Early in our marriage . . . we asked God to raise a ‘hedge’ around our family to protect it from eroding under the pressure of a hectic life. During the past 20 years we’ve learned how to keep the hedge in place.”

This couple wisely states that they are often the very tool God uses to put the hedge of protection around the children. Yes, the Lord is the hedgemaker around our families, but as with most everything else that the Lord does, He uses human hands. Clergy parents are the hands of God’s protection around their children.

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15NLT.

Ezekiel 3:17-18

"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me...” 17

The watchman was to warn the people in the city of danger that was about to threaten the inhabitants. A watchman was to announce the arrival of someone bringing good news as well. The father and mother need to be so in tune with what is going on around them and in the lives of their children so that they can recognize when danger is threatening. The sources of these threats can come from a multitude of places and people. The parents should also be quick to share good news to their families as well. All of this requires that the parents are very aware of everything that is taking place in the life of their families, and then they must be ready to respond appropriately. What this means is that the parents need to be students of their kids and the culture they have been placed in. Having the mindset that ‘I was raised a certain way or my parents disciplined me this way’ is not enough. Every child is fearfully and wonderfully made, with his or her own areas of strength and vulnerability. In addition, every child has a path they have been set on by the Lord Himself. It is the parents’ privilege to help the kids during the informative years to find this path.

But while this is taking place, the adversary will be seeking to destroy the ministry children. Thus, the parent much be wise and watchful, knowing when to speak and when to be quiet, knowing when to stretch the kids to greater accomplishments and when to back off and let the child seek the Lord’s direction. The parents needs to be constantly on guard for those who may intentionally or ignorantly pressure and harm the children. The parents should not be held to

17NKJV.
a higher standard, so that they personally do not lose sight of their own tendency to de-prioritize their own family.

Luke 10:5-7

“... But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house.”\(^{18}\)

The clergy parents have the responsibility to place their children in environments that are not toxic to their spiritual development. Frequently, there are those in the congregation that are blessings from the Lord and enhance the spiritual development of their children. Such individuals are called “a person of peace.” These people often go un-recognized until the children are grown. The need exists to learn how to see them and consider them to be from the Lord. The clergy parent can not allow their children to be exposed to those who are toxic to the faith development of their children.

Therefore, the parents needs to be trained to discern who these people are. Our families indeed need people. If the parent is overly protective the children will be lacking in many areas of life. If the kids are exposed to unsafe people, the effects could last a lifetime.

According to Henry Cloud and John Townsend, safe people accomplish three things:

1. Draw us closer to God.
2. Draw us closer to others.

\(^{18}\)NKJV.
3. Help us become the real people God created us to be.\textsuperscript{19}

These people need to be located by the parents and then opportunities need to be given for the entire family to connect with them. These indeed are special people whom God uses to minister at strategic times in the life of the family, specifically the spouse and children.


"... So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began."\textsuperscript{20}

There are thousands of ministry children who need to be reclaimed for the glory of the Lord. They cannot just be written off and forgotten. The passage mentioned above is a wonderful story of a son who rebelled, and a father who would not lose hope. Tim Kimmel gets to the heart of the attitude in which parents and close relatives should have. Of the ten points in the plan to reclaim these fallen ones, a key point is stated this way, “Don’t add bitterness to his rebellion.”\textsuperscript{21} There are many things that can be done, most of which has to do with the parent making his or her life more attractive to the fallen child. This can be a time of extreme pain and pressure. There are very few stressors in the life of the clergy parent that surpasses this difficult


\textsuperscript{20} NLT.

\textsuperscript{21} Tim Kimmel, comment on “Loving Your Rebel,” Thriving Pastor, \url{http://www.parsonage.org/articles/family/A000001463.cfm} (accessed August 2, 2011).
circumstance. Therefore, the parent must learn to “escape from the pressure cooker,” in order to authentically bring the grace of God into their own life and to the life of their children.\textsuperscript{22}

**Biblically Sound Clergy Families**

In this chapter, a biblical perspective will be considered for use when training people for the ministry. Understanding that almost every pastor and missionary will have children at some time, some clear biblical insights should be a part of their preparation. This will include building hedges around the clergy families so that family time is protected. The development of a theology of rest will also be considered so that the family can have more than the ‘left-overs’ of their parents. The importance of creating margins in life is so that spontaneous events can be shared with the ministry children. Helping the parents to understand that their children are their ministry above the church, before the church, and beyond the church will also be considered.

Moreover, this chapter will demonstrate the need to develop homes where renewal and forgiveness is the norm so that ministry children can find their way back home. Some insight will be addressed in order to develop ways and approaches to reclaim those who have gone away from the Lord, their families, and the church. There are many who could be a real blessing to kingdom work, if only they could be loved back into a relationship with Jesus Christ. There are ways in which non-church settings can be used as places of worship. Different types of “Church Styles” could help to lower the hurt zones that ministry children have because of memories that are deeply imbedded into their lives. Then, there is a need to train parents, grand-parents, and

church members in general on how to love these people back into a healthy relationship with the Lord that goes beyond the typical guilt laden approached that is most often employed. The purpose is to love them back into a growing discipleship process so that the grace of God can be infused back into their being.

“Daddy, Can I Come Home?”

“...Don't leave me with this sorrow of not sharing yourself with us...there is so much I want to know from you, so much I have learned already by listening to you preach, but I know there are deep wells of wisdom and understand and knowledge that I long to hear you speak of and share. All those church people you've spent hours trying to teach and share God's truth with...so many rejected what you had to say...so tell me! I am all ears, Dad! Because I trust your word and your wisdom more than anyone else in the entire world. Please.”

“They are just kids, who shouldn't have huge magnifying glasses on them; especially no more than other children.”

“I do not attend church.”

Many people live within the illusion that clergy families are perfect and that they are exempt from the struggles that most families face. Both church people and the parents of ministry children often believe, or at least they think, their kids will never falter. There have been some high profile Christian leaders who have shed light on this issue when their kids went in other directions than that of the parents. Most clergy parents are not prepared when their kids make mistakes. They often go into shock and disbelief. The pastor or missionary spends a lot of time helping other parents through their grief and pain during these times, but when it happens to their own kids, it is different. The tears and heartbreak are now their own. They know what they have said to others, even to other pastors, but it is very different when it hits home.

Both the parents of these ministry children and the congregation often try to live in some sort of utopia, imagining perfect kids who are a wonderful example to all and will never
rebel. When the congregation becomes aware of this rebellion, all kinds of reactions can be expected. There will be those who are caring and understanding, and there will be those who will immediately question the pastor’s ability to lead the church. The thinking may be “if he cannot lead his own family, how can he lead the church?” Pastors and spouses themselves are often in shock. After all, many of them believed that “if they did a good job as pastor, surely [they] could count on God to keep [their] children safe.”23 Many times pastors and their spouses will fall into an intense time of guilt and grief when their kids go in a questionable direction. The dreams and aspirations that they have for their children are shattered. They begin to wonder about their reputations and what the people of the church will think. They will wonder if they will be asked to leave the church. So many clergy families will try to go into hiding. Feelings such as this are exaggerated in the clergy family, but Christians in general often respond in like manner. This could explain why as many as 225,000 Christian girls have abortions every year.24 Maybe part of the problem is that of the expectations of the congregation. But, could it be that part of the problem is that clergy families also live in a world of religious fantasy? For this reason, the need for parents to be real with their families and real with the congregations is one of the greatest needs in clergy family health.

The understanding that ministry children are leaving their families and the church needs to be made clear. According to the survey that was conducted for this project, 9% of the participants indicated that they do not go to church, 2.9% indicated that they are a part of a non-


Christian church, and 5.8% indicated other. In other words, in just this survey alone as many as 17.7% have gone a different direction than their clergy parents. In all fairness, this survey was not a scientific survey. It was taken from a group of adult ministry children who mostly came as a recommendation from other PKs and MKs, from Christian universities, and active missionary families. If recruitment took place by finding web sites and groups that are intentionally against their parent’s upbringing or mission’s organizations, the numbers could have potentially doubled, if not more. In a book by Elmer Towns and Dave Early, they present some alarming data that is closely related to the findings of this survey. The authors mention that according to David Delk, president of *Man in the Mirror Ministry* that “85% of children in American churches drop out of church before graduation; of those, only 40% return.”\(^{25}\) This is an alarming statistic indeed. It is not known what percentage of the 85% are ministry children, but many of them are. The percentage in clergy families and non-clergy families is surely close.

With these alarming numbers of PKs and MKs who are leaving the church and their families, intentional training and preparation needs to be put in place. Along the same line of thinking, how many more are thinking about leaving the faith and at least have serious reservations about it all? Many parents are hurting. Clergy families are left wondering why this has taken place when, after all, “they taught them better.” They went to church, Sunday school, children’s ministry, VBS, youth camps, and so many more religious functions! The question of “What more could I have done?” seems to be the question many are asking.

In talking with some parents, some of the problem lies with them. One can understand why this has taken place with parents who are overbearing and who have dominant personalities. One can see why this has occurred when parents refuse to take any of the responsibility. It can also be seen in parents who become bitter toward their own children, spending precious time that could be spent infusing God’s grace into the situation instead of being defensive and placing blame on the church, the spouse, or even at least in their own hearts, God. When the rebellion takes place, often it is the first time that the parents have had to humble themselves and admit weakness. If they are interested in doing the right thing, they will be honest with their churches or missions agencies. Because so many pastors and missionaries place their identity in success, when a rebellious child comes along, they are ripped open and their heart is turned inside out. When these things happen, clergy families will experience pain, hurt, guilt, and loss that any other family would experience or even more, since the expectations were so much higher.²⁶ When the pastor steps into the pulpit, the heaviness of failure will rest on him. When they deal with other families that are facing rebellion, doubt will creep into their thought process. After all, they wonder, “How can I help others when I need help myself?” When in public, thoughts of wonder will flood the mind, “Are they talking about me?”

First, the clergy family, whether pastor or missionary, needs to empty themselves of ‘self!’ The parent needs to take on a humble attitude, that which should be a part of all of those who serve the Lord. They need to develop an attitude of grace and not an attitude of blame and self-defense. If the church or missions agencies will not allow the parents to deal with them in an acceptable fashion, or if they consider the clergy unqualified, let it be so. The church is probably

²⁶Schooler, “Daughter.”
a poor excuse for a church and the mission agency probably has pride and self-righteous issues; who would want to be a part of that anyway? After all, God is first, the family is second, and the ministry is third.

Parents to Whom the Kids can Return

In their book, Praying for Your Children Elmer Towns and David Earley have provided a great resource for how parents can and should pray for their children. In the fifth chapter of the book, the authors have written a chapter entitled, “Praying for Prodigals,” which has its foundation in Luke chapter 15:11-24:

To illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story: "A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.' So his father agreed to divide his wealth between his sons. A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living. About the time his money ran out, a great famine swept over the land, and he began to starve. He persuaded a local farmer to hire him, and the man sent him into his fields to feed the pigs. The young man became so hungry that even the pods he was feeding the pigs looked good to him. But no one gave him anything. When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, 'At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.' So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him. His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son.' But his father said to the servants, 'Quick! Bring the finest robe in the house and put it on him. Get a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet. And kill the calf we have been fattening. We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' So the party began.27"

What are clergy parents to do with so many of their children leaving the church, the Lord, and their Christian roots? Many go into a time of self-analysis. They wonder what they

\[ \text{27NLT.} \]
did wrong. They spend time blaming themselves, the churches, and the mission’s agency. They may blame another family member or perhaps their spouse. Some may even blame or feel betrayed by the Lord. Some parents will go into denial and simply blame the kids. They will tell themselves that they did everything they could and that the child made this choice for him or herself. Sometimes parents become bitter and lash out with hurtful words. Some will even use the Word of God as a tool to slam their own children. Every time they talk to the kids they are preaching at them, telling them how much hurt they have brought into the life of the family. They even at times will use the Jesus club and beat them over the head by saying that Jesus must be so hurt by your choices. Are you not aware of what He has done for you? How could you treat Him this way? What happens so often is that the parents, by using this tactic, drive the kids further away, and at times make it next to impossible for the kids to come home.

There is a better way! First, the parents need to understand that it is not about them and their own feelings. All parents need to be aware of mistakes that they have made, and they should quickly ask the kids for forgiveness. In the survey that was conducted for this study, 26% of the participants indicated that their parents have never asked for forgiveness for mistakes made as parents. The parents need be sure their own attitudes are in order. Many parents of adult ministry children continue to treat their adult children just as though they were still kids. They will often dominate them and refuse to listen. Parents of adult PKs and MKs need to be trained so that when their children make mistakes, they can be part of the restoration process and not agents of continued pain and hurt. Sometimes the adult kids will seek ungodly friends because they are the only ones who do not belittle and condemn them. One rebellious PK put it this way,
“They (the gang members) care more about me than you do.”

It is so important that the parents leave the pastor/ministry to the side and learn to become friends with whom their adult kids will want to spend time. In the majority of cases, the relationship will need to be restored before any renewal will take place.

The one story in the Bible that sheds light on this issue is that of the father and the prodigal. Most pastors and missionaries have read, taught, preached, and written about this story of renewal. The need is for the parents not to preach this passage but live it out. The adult PKs and MKs are probably aware of it as well. Towns and Earley also have some helpful thoughts from the story of the father and the prodigal. They title this section “Lessons From the Father.”

The following seven points have been taken from this book with some additional information added for help for parents.

1. The father gave his son the opportunity to make mistakes.

“Do not shelter your children from the world. They will be seen as outcasts and never fit in any place. Let them be kids.”

The first lesson is that the father gives his son the opportunity to make mistakes. The tendency in many Christian homes is to protect the kids from all appearance of evil. In the younger and teenage years, the parents need to walk graciously with their kids, giving instruction as they face certain issues. The kids want and need to hear from their parents in these years of how they learned to handle the issues of life. It is not enough for parents just to keep them from the evils of life. At some point in time the kids will have to deal with issues, and it is much better

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28Willowby, “Prodigal PKs.”

29Towns and Early, Praying, 79-81.
to guide them when they are young than for them to be overwhelmed by it all when they are on

their own.

One example can be taken from the survey. The question that was asked had to do

with addictions. This indeed was a very personal question, and it was skipped by an alarming

number of participants. When asked to respond to four options concerning past or present

addictions, those that responded did so in the following way:

Table 8. Ministry Children Survey Question 32 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you now, or have you ever been addicted to:</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kids have utmost respect for openness and realness. Pastors and Missionaries at times

are so concerned with their image and what people think that they try to present an image to their

kids that they know is false. When the kids hear the wisdom of experience from the mouths of

their parents they respect and will have a greater propensity to listen to what they say. One

survey vocalized how he wished his parents had taken more time to talk with him about personal

issues. The participant states, “I wish you had talked to me about dating and sexual issues. I

struggled with hurting girls emotionally and had masturbation and pornography issues. I

wouldn't have wanted my parents to know about this, but if they had loved me enough to ask, I

would have shared and they could have helped me.”
When the kids become adults, it is time to let them be adults and to give them freedom to thrive in life on their own by the grace of God. On the other hand, it is time to let them learn by the mistakes they make. By this time, the parents can really put into practice what they have taught the people in the congregation for years. Pray and pray without ceasing.

2. The father did not let his reputation keep him from doing what he thought was right.  
“I wish we wouldn't have been so worried about what everyone thought. I wish I could have spent more time as a family. I wish I could have felt more normal and been allowed to do more.”

“What will the people think?” “What will the deacons say?”

“Image, image, image!” “What will the people think?” “What will the deacons say?”

Pastors and missionaries are so concerned about their image at times that they live a lie. They are not living in their own skin. In most cases, this over-concern for the opinions of others results from deep seeded issues with insecurity. The need to be wanted, accepted, admired, and talked about is a serious problem that everyone, at least in some way, must learn to deal with. When one spends so much time teaching, mentoring, guiding, and even nursing people back to spiritual health, only to be betrayed in the end, it can bring extreme amounts of hurt and pain. With the success driven mindset that is based on the world’s measure of success, which is always “bigger and better,” when any slowdown in growth or advancement occurs, the critics and analyzers step forward in groves. Additionally, after considering the competition from the church down the road and the churches to which people have moved from across town, one can be left feeling paralyzed with the fear of failure and belittlement in the eyes of others. Therefore, as pressure begins to mount on the ministry kids and spouses, resulting in unrealistic expectations are placed on the shoulders of the whole family.

However, there is a way to combat this pressure, and in order to do so, the pastor needs to develop his theology of identification with Christ. Being in Christ needs to be the
source of the clergy family’s identity. Anything less than this will result in deep disappointment many times throughout ministry.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

This is what the Lord says:
"Don't let the wise boast in their wisdom,
or the powerful boast in their power,
or the rich boast in their riches.
But those who wish to boast
should boast in this alone:
that they truly know me and understand that I am the Lord
who demonstrates unfailing love
and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth,
and that I delight in these things.
I, the Lord, have spoken!\(^{30}\)

The parents of wayward adult children need to get a picture of the reality of their identity in Jesus Christ. When this is actualized, then the parents are prepared to “go to hell and back” in order for their kids to be safe in the loving arms of the renewing Father.

3. The father refused to bail his son out of the mess he made.

“Your kids love you, and are proud to be a part of your ministry. Find ways to include them in your ministry in ways that they are comfortable. Do not seclude them from the world, let them have non-church friends and let them minister to the world even when they are young. Let them get involved in the community in other ways than just church, i.e. sports, cub scouts, theater...”

The son left for a far country. How far might that be? Anytime someone is away from the Father, it is far even if it is across the street. It is interesting that the father did not go after the son. How many times did he want to? Probably daily! How many times did friends admonish him to go? However, he did not. Parents need to understand that the corrective discipline of God is contained within that very act of rebellion. According to Tim Kimmel, “Let consequences do

\(^{30}\)NLT
their work. To the best of your ability, let him face the results of his choices. Resist the urge to intervene; you don’t want to stop the process of repentance.\textsuperscript{31} The rebellious person will reap what they sow. One of the most difficult things a loving parent can do is to surrender their child, no matter his or her age, to the Lord. Of all the things that can mean, one meaning is clear – the child needs to be responsible for their actions and rebellion. The principle of reaping and sowing come into play.

\begin{quote}
Hosea 8:7

"They sow the wind, 
And reap the whirlwind."
\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

For the one whose child is lost, the decision must be made of how deeply he or she wants the child to return as well as the depth of his or her prayers to the Lord. Sherrer and Garlock deal with this in their book \textit{Praying Prodigals Home}. Quoting Joy Dawson they write, “Are we prepared to say to God, ‘use anyone, anywhere, under any circumstances, to bring that lost soul to you’? Or, have we prejudices (maybe hidden ones) about whom we would not want God to use?\textsuperscript{33}

4. The father did not give up hope.

"Love on your kids. Tell them you are proud of them. And please, have an open relationship. Allow them to "talk back." They need a way to communicate with you without feeling intimidated."


\textsuperscript{32}NKJV.

The father is the one who is left at home, waiting for his child to return. He is the one who was watching for his son to come to the Lord and turn from his evil ways of rebellion. This is not an idle time of doing nothing. Just as the Lord is moving to change the heart of the son who is gone, so the Lord is working in the heart of this father and ridding him of any toxic behavior that may have contributed to the son’s rebellion or that may be keeping the son from returning. According to Ruth Bell Graham in her helpful book *Prodigals and Those Who Love Them*, all prodigal have one thing in common. She writes, “They have left home . . . and they are missed.”³⁴ The emptiness with which these parents must deal is very deep. With as many as 85% of kids who are raised in the church leaving, the pain that those who are left at home experience must be massive. It is so important for these parents to use this time and to allow the Holy Spirit to do a special work within them. If not, the adversary will seek to create attitudes and behaviors that will almost insure the prodigal will not come home.

That this relates to reclaiming ministry children is clear. After all, they have heard the entire sermon, have been to all the Sunday School classes, VBS, youth camps, mission’s conferences, and almost everything else that their parents were a part of. Their rebellion is not because they have not ‘heard’ the truth. Therefore, this is a time for the parents to prepare themselves for the grand return.

Forgiveness is an important factor if the relationship between parents and their prodigals are going to be restored. As part of the research for this study, the adult ministry children were asked if they had ever heard their parents apologize for various issues and their behaviors as it relates to the ministry.

Table 9. Ministry Children Survey Question 15 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

According to the survey results, 26% of the participants indicated that their parents had never said that they were sorry for their shortcoming and mistakes. These figures are from those who mostly are not in rebellion, so the figures are surely different for those who are. The bottom line is that parents need to exercise complete forgiveness and to be open to areas they have been wrong and hurtful towards their children.

Clergy parents need to learn to stop the preaching, for the Holy Spirit is the only one who changes the hearts. Many parents exacerbate the problem by continuing with the confrontation and the pleas to repent. Comments and questions like “How could you do this after all we have done for you,” “We did not raise you this way,” “You are going to send your father to the grave with this kind of behavior,” and “Do you not know how much God has done for you by sending His Son to die for you” only cause the guilt and contention to build. Again, Tim Kimmel has some great thoughts to interject on this topic. He cautions, “Don’t add bitterness to his rebellion. Keep the lines of communication open. Enjoy interaction with him outside the times you are forced to deal with his rebellious attitude. Give him plenty of reason to believe you
not only still love him, but also enjoy his company and have confidence in his future.” In like manner, one of the survey participants expressed the same sentiment, admonishing parents to understand:

PKs/MKs still deal with the same amount of pressure and hurt that all children go through. Even though we have heard our parents (normally fathers) preach on certain topics and how to deal with them, we still want to be able to sit down and talk with our parents about what we are going through and how we feel about what is going on. Sometimes a kid (especially a PK/MK) doesn't need another sermon on how to deal with the situation but a friend to talk to.

Along this same line of thinking, during this time, the parents should also work on areas in their own life, personality, and expressions of faith that may be toxic to the relationship. The parent needs to find ways they can simply be a friend with their child. Find some areas of like interests, and spend time with the prodigal doing this, without mentioning spiritual things unless he brings it up. If there are no areas of like interest, create them so that there may be some common footing with the child. Ultimately, though, says Kimmel, “Do not be preoccupied with convincing him that Christians are right.”

Finally, the clergy parent must maintain other relationships; those with his or her spouse, other children and grandchildren, as well as friends outside of the family. It is crucial to make sure they do not feel as though all of the parent’s concern and care is wrapped up in the prodigal and that they are not cared for.

“I'm so thankful that I had such dedicated, faithful, loving, giving parents. It was a model of ministry and service and sacrifice that has impacted me deeply and set my life on a course of ministry and service. I know you both did your best and you are not perfect, and I'm so thankful that you both knew that too and showed the power of God's grace and love

___________________________

35Kimmel, “Loving Your Rebel.”

36Ibid.
in such tangible ways. So on the one hand, I have a deep gratitude for your example, on the other, I have a sorrow that our family was often neglected in terms of ministering to us. So much energy and time was spent (yes modeling and serving together) serving other people in the church, but when it came down to it, you had no energy left to invest spiritually in our lives, while at home. And when you tried it was so awkward and forced and not at all, I'm sure, what you really meant or wanted to do/say. I don't blame you or hate you for that, I just wish things had been a little different, like I would have loved to do fun, creative family devotions, pray together as a family, serve together in non-church ways, learn about the world and what God was doing outside of just our church and church's missionaries . . . family stuff that would have bonded us and given us deeper roots than the various churches we spent time at. And I wish so much that we would have talked more as a family to process the happenings (good and bad) of the church, especially when there was pain and hurt involved. I don't know what my siblings would say about processing, because that may just be more my personality's way of dealing with stuff, but I would have valued at the very least, more one on one spiritual and relational time with my Dad, initiated by you rather than by me. And yet it's not too late! I've been saying this for years that I just want a Daddy to invest in me, and now my children. Don't leave me with this sorrow of not sharing yourself with us...there is so much I want to know from you, so much I have learned already by listening to you preach, but I know there are deep wells of wisdom and understand and knowledge that I long to hear you speak of and share. All those church people you've spent hours trying to teach and share God's truth with...so many rejected what you had to say...so tell me! I am all ears, Dad! Because I trust your word and your wisdom more than anyone else in the entire world. Please.”

5. The father kept the light on and the welcome mat out for the son to come home.

“This is your calling/vocational choice, not your child’s! You went into this career knowing what you would be up against, we got forced into it. Be compassionate!”

At the end of the day, every ministry child, whether young or old, should be able to lay his head down, be it on a soft pillow or in the alley with the bums, knowing that his parents, who live their lives in the Word of God and who teach the Word of God, love him.

This process, however, is a process in the making. The parents must often deal with pride before they will “leave the light on” in order for their wayward child to see the way home. There are the personal issues of rejection the parent must deal with, as well as the feelings of being used by the child for all the years of providing and protection. There are the issues of feeling like a failure and the feeling of judgmentalism from friends and even other family
members. These are some of the things from which the parents must allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse them. If they do not allow the cleansing, when the wayward child comes home, all of the hurtful issues that contributed to the rebellion could resurface, wasting much valuable time. The Holy Spirit will dig deep into the innermost of the soul during these times, and when the cleansing is complete the welcome light can shine bright so at the child’s darkest hour they can see their way home.

One of the stories of a prodigal shared by Ruth Bell Graham deals with this very thought. In the story, after dealing with pride and being overbearing for years, the father “cleaned and trimmed a lamp that was kept for show and never used . . . This was the stand on which he set the lamp in the window, and every night its light shone down the steep path ascending to Flora’s home.”37 The story goes on to tell how this father waits night after night, pleading with the heavenly Father not to let his child suffer because of his sin. The daughter, Flora, after God had guided her step-by-step in many amazing ways, comes home. When she sees the light she knows what is it; her father was waiting for her to come home: “When she reached the door, her strength had departed, and she was not able to knock. But there was no need, for the dogs, who never forget nor cast off, were bidding her welcome with short joyous yelps of delight, and she could hear her father feeling the latch, which for once could not be found, and saying ‘Flora, Flora.’”38 Thus, ministry children need to truly believe that the parent is really saddened because of mistakes made during the younger years of parenting. If they sense that the parents’ words expressed for their shortcomings are fake, they will just move further down the path of rebellion.

37Graham, Prodigals, 37.
38Ibid, 40
6. The father extended full forgiveness.

In the story of the prodigal, the father expresses full forgiveness to his son. There are many things the father could have said upon the return of his son, but he did not. Statements such as “I told you so” or “You should have listened to me” were nowhere to be found. After certainly enduring harsh ridicule from family and friends, nothing is said upon the return of the son that would indicate otherwise. It is unfortunate that the first things parents—including clergy parents—will often say is something that has a tone of revenge or arrogance, making the parent feel as though he is getting all the anger off of his chest, giving a piece of his mind, or something along this line of thinking. As Tim Kimmel properly advises, “Don’t add bitterness to his rebellion . . . Give him plenty of reasons to believe you not only still love him, but also enjoy his company and have confidence in his future.”

First and foremost, this will show that the parents have not fully surrendered their son or daughter to the Lord. The parent still may want to bring and unleash some vengeance of their own. All clergy parents understand that the Bible is clear on this point, vengeance belongs to the Lord, and to Him only. It is certainly preached and taught, but it also must be practiced in the context of parent-clergy/child relationships in order for restoration to take place.

Romans 12:19

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.\(^{40}\)

\(^{39}\)Kimmel, “Loving Your Rebel.”

\(^{40}\)NKJV.
If the parent seeks any kind of vengeance or “I told you so” comments, they are in danger of driving the kids right back to the rebellion from which they have come. Often times, while seeking to bring the kids back to the Lord, the clergy parents will add additional burdens such as previous rebellion and deep-rooted bitterness. However, kids of all ages need to experience real, authentic biblical forgiveness so that bitterness and rebellion will become more embedded into their hearts and souls. In like manner, Sherrer and Garlock share this touching and helpful story:

She walks into the terminal not knowing what to expect. Not one of the thousand scenes that played out in her mind prepares her for what she sees. There, in the concrete-walls-and-plastic-chairs bus terminal in Traverse City, Michigan, stand a group of forty brothers and sisters and great aunts and uncles and cousins and a grandmother and great-grandmother to boot. They’re all wearing goofy party hats and blowing noise makers, and taped across the entire wall of the terminal is a computer-generated banner that reads “Welcome Home!” Out of the crowd of well-wishers breaks her dad. She stares out through the tears quivering in her eyes like hot mercury and begins the memorized speech, “Dad, I’m sorry. I know…” He interrupts her. “Hush, child. We’ve got no time for that. No time for apologies. You’ll be late for the party. A banquet’s waiting for you at home.”

7. The Father probably had been praying all the time.

Of all the things a parent may want to do when his or her child becomes a prodigal, the most obvious and important is that of prayer, especially when the child is an older teenager or adult. Kimmel likewise has several helpful ideas on this topic. First and foremost, he suggests that the parent “Employ the Power of Prayer.” Often, parents will keep this to themselves because of embarrassment, or maybe because they are a part of a congregation that will take these types of burdens and use them as a tool to speak ill of the family.

41Sherrer and Garlock, Prodigals, 196-97.

42Tim Kimmel, “Loving Your Rebel.”
Moreover, Ruth Bell Graham shares a story of the mother of St. Augustine in order to demonstrate this loving mother’s prayer life. Monica prayed for her son when he was a rebel and lived as a prodigal. Her prayers for her son were described as though she “stormed heaven’s gate in his behalf.”\(^{43}\) The parent needs to lead the cause of prayer for their wayward child. Enlist the prayers of many people. Some possible prayer partners could be:

- Family members
- Friends who are like-minded
- Church family – be open with Christians.
- Missionaries who are in other countries serving the Lord
- Other pastors and denominational leaders
- Co-workers who are followers of Jesus Christ
- Note: be careful sharing request on social media like Facebook. This could be insulting for your child of any age.

The constant and persistent prayers of the parents is an indication of their total surrender to the Lord in the matter. Again, Tim Kimmel says it well, “We can help prepare the young person’s heart, but it is God who is going to change it. Pray for your child every day, and don’t be ashamed to recruit others to pray for him.”\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\text{Graham, Prodigals, 15.}\)

\(^{44}\text{Tim Kimmel, “Loving Your Rebel.”}\)
Churches to Which the Kids can Return

There is a tremendous desire to see a revival take place in the hearts of ministry children and their return to the church. Parents yearn to see their adult kids back in a loving relationship with the Lord. What church and what parents would want this? Nevertheless, most ministry children will not come back if the church and their parents only continue in the same old mindset that contributed to the kid’s leaving in the first place. Many churches spend valuable time criticizing their kids in the way they think, the way they dress, and in the styles in which they want to worship. For example, older generations often like to criticize the music preferences of the younger generation. However, all songs, both old and new, are only vehicles to declare the spiritual truth of God’s Word in a way that a generation or certain culture can understand and relate.

Table 10. Ministry Children Survey Question 25 Results

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answered question 70
skipped question 15
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

If churches and parents really want these adult kids to come home, they will need to stop trying to get the speck of dust out of their kids’ eyes and focus on getting the planks out of their own. In many ways, the reclaiming of ministry children is closely related to the thought process of the “De-churched generation.” Churches that understand and learn from this group will be well on their way to reclaiming the 85% of people who were raised in churches and homes. The real question that churches and parents must ask, then, is are they really wanting the kids to come home and back to the church, or are they really saying they want them to come back to the style and culture they enjoy? Are they really saying that they want them back so that the local church does not die? Many churches are not ready to address this, and they are dying. Sometimes churches are not dead enough to make the changes necessary. Therefore, many churches are in a state of dying – holding on for dear life, year after year. But, the time will come when they will either die or be forced to acknowledge that many of the ways church is done needs to be changed so that it can become relative to the language their adult kids are now speaking.
Therefore, when this first issue is dealt with then the ministry of reclaiming and reaching a new generation can begin. In their timely book on this subject, *Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them*, Stetzer, Stanley, and Hayes address this subject with much thought, detail, and wisdom by discussing a paradigm shift that many are dealing with today.

Another force in leading to the change needed in order to reclaim this massive group of people has been addressed by Frank Viola in his book *Finding Organic Church: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting and Sustaining Authentic Christian Communities*. He deals with a very timely new understanding on discipleship based on Mark 3:15. He convincingly draws the attention to the idea that when Jesus called His disciples, He called them not so He could teach and instruct them, but so that they would be with Him. Thus a new, but yet old discipleship approached is what Jesus taught, and it is what the generation to be reclaimed are asking for.

Moreover, another leading force in reaching ministry children, in addition to many de-churched people, is Neil Cole, author of the book *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. In this book, he proposes the need for integrated ministries. He convincingly proposes, based upon years of innovative church planting approaches, the need for different ages to meet, worship, and study the Word of God together. Cole also states that the basic program-based ministry segregates the ages of the church, ensuring that the ages do not learn from the wide spectrum of believers in the kingdom of God.
Accordingly, regarding church structure in the United States, one survey respondent remarks:

*The setup of the church in the United States frustrates me. Growing up there [on the mission field] was much more involvement in church and more of a sense of community than there is today. Men from our field took turns leading the study. We didn't have a pastor or youth pastor and more people pitched in and played a part in our lives which provided an amazing place to grow up. I am frustrated by the lack of community in our churches today.*
CHAPTER 4

PROPER SEMINARY TRAINING OF THE CLERGY IN FAMILY LIFE

The Desperate Need for Intentional Seminary Training

Seminary training is an exciting time for the student. Many lessons and foundational beliefs will be established, and a growing hunger to learn and to seek the Lord are often the desired outcomes. When all the areas of study are considered, there seems to be a real lack of preparation of dealing with personal and family issues. It is so important to get a handle on this area of the family in ministry so that greater family health can be a reality. The challenges to the clergy family are unique because the Lord has a way of calling the humble and simple. What is not dealt with is that often there are issues deep within the clergy that have never been resolved. The extent of this area of need is spelled out clearly in Sanford’s book I Have To Be Perfect. He writes, “It is estimated that 80 percent of today’s ministers come from dysfunctional families . . . Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, even in the hallowed halls of the sanctuary.”¹

Pastors are constantly bombarded with educational materials that are intended to help in all areas of ministry; evangelism, discipleship, prayer, worship helps, promotion and mass mail outs, stewardship plans, and a myriad of other programs that promise grandiose outcomes. In addition to these, there are constant phone calls and emails from those who have the exact resource for what the churches need, and they are offered free for a certain amount of time.

Then, there are conferences that people want the clergy to attend so that they can have the strong marriage that every one desires. These of course are all good, but most of the time it is just one more thing to add to an already stress filled schedule. These types of things take place on almost any given day. At first it can be exciting to be making some real decisions, but after a while it becomes old and draining on the time that is already so very limited.

What is needed is some foundational training before the vocational ministry starts. This training needs to be a requirement, and the focus needs to have at its core the navigating of the family through ministry. Because so many clergy come from dysfunctional families, the baggage that often comes along with that family dynamic needs to be dealt with so that the chain of dysfunction is stopped. This will create a more stable clergy family that will lead to a great influence in the families to which they are called to minister.

The section that follows is taken from the Ministry Children Survey that was conducted as part of the research for this study. The participants who were all adults and who have years of experience of being ministry children were asked to make suggestions concerning possible seminary training subjects for future seminary students. The suggestions were very carefully crafted and their insight into this subject can be a blessing for many seminarains as they begin their preparation for a life of service.

**Training Suggestions From “The Kids”**

Church Polity

“The way in which many of today's churches are structured makes it too easy for pastors and their families to be trampled over. If any real change is going to be a possibility in the way clergy families are treated by their congregations, our entire church model needs re-organization”
These participants deal with a very foundational question. With 76% of the survey participants coming from Baptist churches, the question that needs to be asked is, does current church polity encourage the behavior of many congregations as they treat or mistreat the clergy and their families? Many of the participants in the survey mentioned that a major source of the conflict in churches and with pastors is that deacons who have an extremely misguided understanding of their role and purpose. The issue, then, is the deacon board or those who are not deacons and yet still use unbiblical worldly organizational structures to lead and navigate a spiritual organism.

In a personal email to Ron Susek, the author of Firestorm, the question was asked concerning deacon boards and their place in church conflict. Here is his response: “I know that many PKs suffer badly, even avoid the faith for lifetimes as a result of church boards not acting as genuine spiritual elder/mentors. In fact, I'm working with a speech therapist right now, a former PK, who has turned to Universalism because of the horrors of her experience. I think she is slowly returning to the faith, but doing so quite warily.”

Even missionary children are feeling the effects of the general inability of church leaders in the United States in making wise decisions. Are missionaries just a means to accomplish a certain goal or campaign slogan? As a result, it appears that, as adults, many PKs and MKs are going to non-Baptist churches that do not have deacon boards or congregational “business meetings.” What the adult kids are saying is that many of their painful experiences have their origins in the typical Baptist church structure, and they do not want to be a part of anything that has the appearance of traditional Baptist

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2Ron Susek, e-mail message to author, November 15, 2012.
churches. This could explain why so many Baptist churches are evolving into more of an elder led structure and why more churches are removing “Baptist” from their name.

The need to retool the culture of the church today is real, and those churches that are willing to address, acknowledge, and reinvent biblical practices are those churches that will rise from the depths of defeat and death. Many churches in which ministry children were a part of (PKs) or had a relationship with (MKs) have a culture of entitlement. Because they pay the pastor’s salary and help support missionaries, and since every person has a “vote,” the congregants often will believe they are entitled to say anything they want to any member of the clergy family. This is the source of much pain and harm to the entire clergy family.

Spiritual Warfare

“Trust God but know that the devil will try to attack you through your family keep them close and safe.”

“The reality is that ministry is hard. Yes, there are countless joys involved as well, but overall it is one of the most difficult callings one can have! This makes sense because of course Satan does not want the furthering of the Kingdom of God--what better way to destroy this than to attack His messengers? Having a wartime mindset will only help future ministers and missionaries when they do encounter hardships in ministry. And the more they are prepared, the better they will be able to fight and (by God's grace) win these battles!”

Nothing has changed! The adversary is seeking to destroy God’s people. Satan’s involvement with the struggles with which clergy families are dealing must be considered. Many times these struggles are considered poor management of people. However, the truth may be that the devil is actively at work, and pastors spend their time managing carnality with the skills made by man. The activity of the evil one is rarely considered other than acknowledging its existence, but the practice of acknowledging the reality of the warfare that is taking place must
be developed. One participant in the survey states it well when he/she says that we need to have a wartime mentality that deals directly with this reality.

Jesus speaks to Peter, emphatically warning him that Satan specifically has asked for him to sift him and to render him fruitless and purposeless.


"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift each of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon, that your faith should not fail. So when you have repented and turned to me again, strengthen your brothers."\(^3\)

The clergy family is under attack. The forces of carnality from within the church and the community as a whole are at work. Missionary kids are often placed in clear and obviously demonic dominated cultures, and these all need more study and research so that appropriate plans of action can be uniquely tailored to each and every situation. With the number of issues that are dealt with, and the struggles that ministry children have during the younger adolescent years, serious consideration is needed and deserved. These kids face such issues such as bulimia, pornography, cutting, anorexia, loneliness, compulsive disorders, and many others. How these issues are related to demonic activity need to be studied, but the presence is undeniable by those who really want to get to the real core of the issue. Clergy parents need intentional and in-depth training in spiritual warfare and how to combat it. Because of the adversary’s constant scheming, generational tactics need to be employed in the training. This means that while there are some great resources that have been written over the years, the application needs to be dealt with in order to deal with contemporary issues as they apply to the clergy family; issues in doctrine and

\(^{3}\text{NLT.}\)
culture are continually addressed, so must the issue of spiritual warfare when training of the seminarians takes place.

The clergy family must be made aware of the activity of the adversary in his own family. This needs to be primarily combatted by enlisting a team of prayer warriors, knowing that the adversary’s number one tactic in bringing defeat to the clergy family will be to get at the children. Many in kingdom work overlook those simple but gifted people who have been called to prayer. The ability to recognize these people and enlist them needs to be the foundation for the wartime mindset in which the family needs to have. These people could be within the church, family members, other seminarians, and those from home churches who the Holy Spirit has imprinted upon their hearts the families of individual clergy.

In addition, as part of the results of the ministry children survey, one area of concern that came to light among PKs and MKs is the area of addictions. According to Timothy Sanford, addictions are real areas of battle for ministry kids because of the life of isolation they are forced to live.4 This particular question is a foundational question of the survey. First of all, it was one of the most skipped questions, which should indicate that adult PKs and MKs are struggling with some of the mentioned issues, and that they have not yet come to terms with it. Those who did participate in the question, though, were extremely honest. The issues are real, and help needs to be offered – real help, not a sermon that casts shame, but real help that addresses the deep seeded issues of why addictions are so prominent. There are several questions that need to be added to this list as well such as issues of eating disorders, abuse, cutting, and other such problems. Yet, those who live in an isolated world often deal with many addictive behaviors and are in bondage

4Sanford, Perfect, 69.
– even as adults – and are too embarrassed to seek help. Out of the 85 individuals who took part in the survey, 62 skipped this question, and of those who responded, the breakdown is disconcerting. When asked whether they have or currently have any addictions, the responses were as follows:

- Alcohol - 17.4%
- Drugs – 13%
- Pornography – 60.9%
- Other – 21.7%

Although the survey was not a scientific survey, some clear trends can be seen. For this reason, warfare needs to be raged against what the adversary is seeking to do; to entrap the kids in these and several other areas. The parents themselves need to engage in this battle for the sake of their own well being as well as for the well being of their children.

Parents – Students of the Generations

“Keep things practical . . . they live and are exposed to a world outside the church that don't know anything about Him like we do...be gentle, but wise, and be who we are...light, salt, reconcilers, and allow their children to grow up . . . if you keep the Word before them and live what you put before them . . . God will keep them.”

All children need to be a part of their own generation. This means that parents likewise need to be students of the culture and its generational distinctives, not just so that they can build a church but so that they can reach their own children. Clergy parents in particular are sometimes very idealistic about their children and what they are learning. The problem, though, is that ministry children spend a great deal of time with friends; friends whom may not have
received the same instruction. Many times it is in these homes that kids are exposed to things that the parents would be appalled at if they knew.

The kids are often left being torn between parents who are “out of it” and their generation that is advancing at an astounding pace. For this reason, parents would be wise to have a general awareness of the technology and how it can be used for both good and for bad. Those who are forty years of age and under live in a network world. They are connected with people from all over the world and can communicate with them at a moment’s notice. It is not uncommon for this group of people to form close friendships with people they may never actually meet face to face. Parents would be wise to recognize that even kingdom relationships can be described as “The Network Kingdom.” Therefore, the training of clergy parents needs to include the network connectedness of the world today. They need to know the details of it and how it can be used to grow kids in the world in which they can both live and thrive. At this time, the key may be in understanding social networking. Dwight J. Friesen shares some thought provoking insight into the church that is connected by way of the network. In the very first chapter he establishes a key thought for the entire book, “Harnessing the Power of Social Networks.” In the book, he upholds the value and even some biblical thoughts concerning a fast growing network of which kids for years to come will be in the middle. The premise of the book is that there is a need within the heart of every person for connectedness with others. A wise

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5Dwight J. Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church can Learn from Facebook, the Internet, and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 33.

6Ibid.
parent would be willing to walk down this path alongside of their children, for they must not walk it alone.

Confront Intrusive Demands on the Family

“Your calling to your family is higher than your calling to your job. Yes, your job is in service to the Lord, but in reality, it is only a job.”

“Yes. Pressures and expectations and how to handle them.”

In the ministry children survey, many mentioned that the pressures of their parent’s ministry, as well as the expectations that are placed on them, can almost be unbearable at times. These pressures and demands are proving to be at the core of clergy family stress. The kids are under stress by the unreal expectations of their parents when they place upon their own kids harsh and unreasonable demands which children are not capable of dealing with. Many times, clergy parents wanting to succeed in “the work” they have been called to will push their own children to the point of breaking. This is something that is not just a problem with the American church, this is a problem even with the Korean church, and it is probably a part of the church as a whole. Han and Lee address this issue in an article that was published in the *Pastoral Psychology Journal*. They write, “Research is beginning to demonstrate that intrusive demands on ministers and their families, such as invasion of their private lives by members of their congregations, is potentially detrimental to the attitude and well-being of minister.”

They continue to share thoughts based on research on how the stress of the clergy family is caused by the intrusive nature of many congregations. The congregational intrusions into the lives of the clergy family have been narrowed to four areas.

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● Personal criticism of the minister.
● Presumptive expectations of the minister’s flexibility and availability.
● Boundary ambiguity.
● Criticism of the minister’s family.⁸

It is important to note that this stress and intrusiveness are not just isolated to the people of the congregation. One of the unexpected results of the ministry children survey was the stress and the intrusiveness of the public in general. The survey participants responded by acknowledging that the public created about the same levels of expectations and pressures as that of the congregations.⁹ This indeed is troubling, and parents need to be aware of this new insight.

Thus, because of the stress being imposed on clergy children, boundaries need to be established, determining what the congregation is allowed to do and say. Then, when these boundaries are crossed, parents need to stand up and confront those who are guilty. The same goes for the public in general. This may not be as much of an issue to confront because the community does not have the “congregational voice” the people in the church might have. These boundaries need to be clearly put in place before the pastor or even the missionary arrives on the field. These boundaries need to be revised based upon the needs of the family and the intrusiveness of the congregation.

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⁸Han and Cameron, “Ministry Demands,” 473.
The Kids Need Dad and Mom

“I have been a part of developing materials for training missionaries and pastors and I don't know of a program that can meet all the needs of all of the trainees. True one on one discipleship seems much more effective.”

Great insight can be found in the above statement made by one of the survey participants. There are no training formats that can fit all situations, at all times, for all places, and for all families. The future clergy need to be trained with the understanding that there are no templates for training their families. They must take the time, make the effort, and be aware of their own kids and the cultures in which they live. These training suggestions are given with the understanding that the parents must seek the Lord so that the raising of their own children can be adjusted to fit the contours of the needs of their children. This must be done one on one, and only the parent can effectively accomplish this task.

Developing the Child’s Identity

“I think it would be so helpful to have classes on finding your identity in Christ and not allowing your identity to be being a PK. Help them to know how to please and listen to God through all the voices that have their own ideas and thoughts on who you should be and how you should act. Talk about tough skin, taking thoughts captive and not allowing people to control you...living and dying on their acceptance of you.”

Every member of clergy families has an identity of their own. What happens so often, though, is that they are all squeezed into an identity someone else has created. These man made identities are almost always impossible to live up to. Then, the pressure from all kinds of outside forces begins to go to work on these families. The parents can often defend themselves, or at least have the ability to navigate life through the stereotypes. Some adults may even erroneously like the false facade placed upon them because it makes them feel good about themselves, and they may even think that God is impressed with them as well.
The ministry children are the most vulnerable. At times, intense pressure is placed on these kids, and they are not able to maneuver through it. In fact, it confuses them and robs them of who God intends them to be. Cameron Lee says it well, “Adults find ways to cope with intrusions of fans, but the children need help with this problem.”10 Some people in the church and the community will even accept the parents as religious leaders based on the child’s ability to live up to the expectations. Some children, then, are faced with feeling that, based on the image expected of them, there will be people who reject their parents and family. To this end, Cameron Lee addresses this very issue when he states, “Sometimes there is only minor pressure to conform, and the minister’s child may view parishioner’s expectations with a sense of amusement. In other cases, expectations can be so conspicuous that PKs may feel that how others relate to them is based more on image, stereotypes, distortions, or denials than on reality.”11

Life in the public eye is one that many people have to deal with. When the public is looking at the clergy family, the words, thoughts, and actions of the gazers can be a blessing to some while being a curse for others. Some ministry children love the spotlight; they love the attention and the wonderful words of praise. Other PKs and MKs, however, cannot stand it. But because of who their parents are, and not wanting to destroy the image they are expected to have, the kids play the game. What child wants to be the one who causes his or her parents to fail? But when any of these kids do wrong or something that is outside the stereotypes placed on

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11 Ibid., ix
them, “the enquiring minds” go to work, and most often they feel as though it is their spiritual responsibility to do so.

As a result, the kids live in a world of tension where they must often learn to be something that they are not. In order to protect the star of the show, as some would put it, they need to be fake. As they grow, the kids begin to ask or at least wonder, “Do I have to give up me to be loved by you?”12 After an extended period of time, some children may become bitter because they feel as though they are in competition for their parent’s time and attention. Again, Lee and Balswick shed a bright light on this subject when they state, “I’m not some member of the congregation; I am your son!”13 The cry of many kids is to have parents not a minister. They need the parents to turn off the pastoral voice. They need for their parents to leave the stuff of ministry at church – or at least outside the house – and to be a family of healthy biblical relationships.

Consequently, many ministry children learn to be two-faced and hypocritical. The need for parents to step up and be parents in the real world in which their children live is the cry of the day for clergy family life. Some additional thoughts along this line of thought should give some guidance that hopefully will lead to healthy clergy family development.

“They're individuals, not clones.”

“You don’t have to go the way of your parents... find out what God's purpose is for your life. Even though there are callings on families and it will or may include you in the plan from God. He is generational.”


13 Ibid., 164-65.
“With parents who are vocationally connected to the ministry of the church, never let the line between a personal relationship with the Lord become blurred with their duties in the church which are required by their job.”

Whether they are in rebellion or actively serving the Lord today, many PKs and MKs will often acknowledge the problems with personal identity and feelings of inferiority. The ministry children survey provided some helpful insight into the subject of identity and feelings of inferiority. When asked whether they have ever struggled with identity or inferiority issues, more than half responded positively:

*Table 12. Ministry Children Survey Question 30 Results*

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answered question 69
skipped question 16

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<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
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answered question 70
skipped question 15
There are so many people and things that are tugging on children, trying to get them to be something and someone they are not. Pressures from the congregation, the community, family, and even parents at times are all pulling in different directions, leaving the kids wondering about their own value and purpose in life. Most clergy families know how to raise up the kids in the way they should go. They teach on it periodically, have written articles on how to do it, and they have even gone to conferences to hear and see how others have raised their kids. What most do not realize and most parenting manuals do not address is how it is done in the ministry setting. With all the tools and methods available and with most clergy parents having their favorite approach to raising kids, why is it that so many PKs and MKs are dealing with issues of inferiority and identity problems?

The image of God is an important subject for those who teach the Word of God. Contained in this short phrase is the understanding that each person has been created with God-like attributes of will and personality. Each person, including ministry children, need to understand this truth, and their parents must strive to develop the truth of this experientially. Therefore, the need for a short and precise definition of this needs to be dealt with so that the parents can spend a lifetime of helping their own children in fulfilling the purpose for which God created them.

In his thought provoking book, *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue*, Andreas J. Köstenberger sheds an interesting understanding of the image of God. He writes, “Our creation in God’s image, therefore, primarily relates to the fact that God placed humanity on the earth to rule it as his representatives. How can we best fulfill this role? It stands to reason that as beings created in God’s image, creatures who are called to exercise
representative rule over his creation, we must so with excellence.” The challenge for clergy families is helping their kids to fulfill God’s purposes and mission that God has created them for. It is always the same SOLI DEO GLORIA - For the glory of God alone. The parents need to learn what this means and then pursue it. They need to learn how this can be accomplished personally in the lives of their kids in the ministry setting. This needs to be the driving force and not the approval of a congregation or the success of the parents’ ministry.

Psalm 139:14-15

“Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.
You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.”

This amazing passage that David penned under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is so clear and recognized by most, if not all, clergy families. The parents need to flesh out this reality of each person’s existence based upon the creative purposes of the great Creator! But how is this to be accomplished? The parents need to develop the skill necessary to understand the uniqueness of each one of their children. Then they need to seek ways to develop the unique attributes their children have been given and to do it in the ministry setting. This means that the church, congregation, and the family dynamic cannot be allowed to squeeze these kids into an image of their own liking. While there are many that can be used, here are two examples of tools that are helpful in determining an individual’s unique personality.


15NLT.
The DISC is a toll that has been around for centuries. It is a personality profile that enables people to understand themselves, but it can also be used by parents to understand the basic needs, strengths, and weaknesses of their own children. Just a casual understanding of the formula can be a tremendous help in guiding the children through the growth and development of their early lives. In his classic book *How to Solve the People Puzzle*, Mels Carbonell offers some clear insight in understanding the make-up of people. Many ideas can be used by the parents so that they really know their own children. Carbonell says it this way; “Understanding personality patterns is one of the keys to improving your relationships and solving the people puzzle.”

The DISC is short for the following personality types:

- **D**- Directing, driving, demanding . . . Active/Task-oriented
- **I**- Inspiring, influencing, inducing . . . Active/People-oriented
- **S**- Steady, stable, shy . . . Passive/People-oriented
- **C**- Cautious, competent, calculating . . . Passive/Task-oriented

Another example of a ministry tool that is available to help with family relationships is *The Five Love Languages*. Dr. Gary Chapman is the author of this study, and it can prove to be helpful not only for the clergy couple, but also for the parents of PKS and MKs. This approach

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17Ibid., 14.
will help the parents discover some of “The Languages” the parent can use to effectively understand and communicate with their kids.

The Five Love Languages Are:

- Love Language #1: Words of Affirmation.\(^{18}\)
- Love Language #2: Quality Time.\(^{19}\)
- Love Language #3: Receiving Gifts.\(^{20}\)
- Love Language #4: Acts of Service.\(^{21}\)
- Love Language #5: Physical Touch.\(^{22}\)

The “DISC” and the “The Five Love Languages” are just two of many great tools that can assist parents in understanding their own children. For example, if a child is shy and has a personality that dreads speaking or being in front of people, it could be tearing them down to constantly parade them in front of congregations. If the child has a personality where they enjoy and even thrive on attention and being in front of people, putting them in front of the congregation could help in the development of what God has made them to be. This is so important for the development of the kids so they can thrive in life as they seek to fulfill all the implications of being made in the image of God. Again, parents need to become students of their own children, and this takes time and effort.


\(^{19}\)Ibid., 55.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., 73.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 87.

\(^{22}\)Ibid., 104.
Time Together – Interests and Hobbies

“Specifically training pastors to lead their families apart from their ministry/job.”

“They need a Mommy and Daddy who invest at least as much time in the family as they do in the church/ministry. There has got to be space and some separation, some margin provided for family time apart from the church. Don’t neglect your children's needs in deference to serving the church's needs.”

“Please know that they want to feel that they are important to you even above your present ministry. Take time together to do things- hobbies etc. It is not a sin to enjoy life and where God has placed you. Oh, and speak positively about the country and people you minister to. If you have a bad attitude, why would they end up different?”

“. . . So much energy and time was spent (yes modeling and serving together) serving other people in the church, but when it came down to it, you had no energy left to invest spiritually in our lives, while at home. And when you tried it was so awkward and forced and not at all, I'm sure, what you really meant or wanted to do/say. I don’t blame you or hate you for that, I just wish things had been a little different, like I would have loved to do fun, creative family devotions, pray together as a family, serve together in non-church ways, learn about the world and what God was doing outside of just our church and church's missionaries . . . family stuff that would have bonded us and given us deeper roots than the various churches we spent time at . . .”

The need to develop some kind of life away from the church almost seems to be heresy to many pastors. So much of his thoughts, training, prayer, and dreams are centered on the ministry and working out of the vision that they have so gracefully and patiently laid out before their congregations. But, there is indeed life away from the church, and the family needs to experience and know of it on a continual basis. The parents need to lead the way in making this a reality, for if they do not, someone or something else will. Scanzero and Bird appropriately say that “often in churches, the most demanding, complaining members set the agenda. Like cancer
cells, they kill healthy ones by invading other people’s spaces. They seem unable to learn from experiences and are unwilling to change.”

Most churches and ministries will be perfectly fine letting the family serve and work until they are burned out and then just go on to the next family and the same thing happens all over again. Therefore, a theology of rest and play needs to be developed. Each family needs to understand the contours of their own families and then develop a life with and for them. This can and should include rest, play, hobbies, family outings, and times of fun and laughter. These things need to be done while the phone is off and the family is away from the people of stress and the stressors of the ministry. The clergy parent needs discipline to know how and when to shut the ministry stuff off. In his book Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives, Richard Swenson states, “Be with people and serve them. But be sure to get away occasionally. Escape. Relax. Sleep in. Take a nap. Unplug the phone and turn off the beeper. Try setting aside time regularly for some quiet and rest.”

The Spiritual Formation of Ministry Kids

Ministry children are some of the most biblically advanced kids in the kingdom of God. Think of it, how many sermons have they listened to? How many Sunday School classes have they been to? How about Vacation Bible Schools, children’s programs, and youth camps? And then there are family devotions, one on one instruction given in an informal setting by

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parents, or grandparents, or even church people who think is their responsibility to educate the kids in order to help the parents because they are out serving the Lord somewhere! These kids have been exposed to so much! Then, they move to a new church or a new mission field with their parents and they hear the sermons and Bible studies along the stories, illustrations, and jokes all over again. Sometimes the kids can almost preach the messages themselves because they have heard them, or at least some of them before.

Deeper Studies

The kids hear the basics of the Word of God repeatedly, but there comes a time when they need to go deeper. For many, going deeper is a negative thing. Ministry children need and are able to hear and learn deeper things often times because their young minds have been enlightened at an early age to the Word of God. They will begin to need more of the “meat of the word” than the “milk of the word” at an earlier age.

Music

According to the organization’s website, “The mission of Sovereign Grace Music is to provide Christ-exalting songs and training for local churches. We call it Sound+Doctrine. We've been doing it for over 25 years now, primarily to serve the family of churches known as Sovereign Grace Ministries. We're happy that our songs are reaching a broader audience, and want to join the many others who are encouraging biblically informed, heartfelt, Spirit-empowered singing in the church.”\textsuperscript{25} The music of Sovereign Grace music points children to the

truth of the Gospel, and instructs them on the reality of their identity and acceptance in Christ. These are two very foundational issues that kids are or will encounter as they enter the early teen years. There are many other songs that can easily be purchased, or at times, downloaded for free that will get the kids singing about the glorious awesome God the parents preach about week in and week out. In the same way, in an article dealing with spiritual formation of families, the author, Chris Abeyta gives some advice intended for the church as a whole but can be used by the clergy families with their children. A few of the ideas are as follows:

- Ask questions or sing songs during care rides
- Find CDs, magazines, books, and other resources to listen to with or to read to the kids
- As the kids get a little older, begin to introduce them to apologetics that deal with important issues their generation deals with or may be dealing with in a few years.\(^\text{26}\)

CHAPTER 5
DENOMINATIONAL PREPARATION FOR CREATING SAFE CLERGY FAMILY ENVIRONMENTS

Intentional Denominational Church Training

Another need is for a paradigm shift to take place on the denominational level. Most churches are relatively free from denominational mandates, but times of transition can be an ideal time to intentionally deal at length with the realities of the clergy families. It is during these times that the “congregational watch-dogs”\(^1\) can be identified and dealt with. These are the people who make it their calling to watch the clergy families, looking for the fault lines, and they most surely will find some sooner or later. There is so much that can be said from the Scriptures on how to be an encourager instead of a destroyer.

Recommendations for Denominational Training by the Kids

When it comes to changing the culture within a church or denomination, the challenges are many. Some of the challenges come from the strangest places. It has occasionally been noticed that some denominational leaders or mission’s agency leaders would rather not deal with this subject, other than to say that they need to be nice and take care of the clergy family, especially the kids. When real issues have come to light, some have even responded by stating

that the subject should remain quiet so not to bring anything embarrassing that would shed anything negative on the church. The problem, though, is that the church is the truth and bearer of light, and those things that are hurting and chasing away the kids must be addressed and dealt with. In reality, the toxic mindset of many – perhaps even most – institutional, traditional churches is causing young people in general to leave the church, and before the church can authentically be revitalized, drastic changes must be accepted and practiced.

All the following statements were taken directly from the PKs and MKs who participated in the survey. Questions were asked concerning what would be good for training clergy families, churches, and denominations, so that the clergy family can serve with joy and hurt and pain can be minimized.

“I think several classes concerning the clergy family should be included in the training and seminary studies of future missionaries and pastors. This would include courses on biblical parenting in general, Effective Clergy Parenting, Issues in the Clergy Family, The Church/Clergy Family Relationship, etc . . .”

There appears to be a real need for church leaders to recognize that the clergy family needs additional training and guidance in order to navigate through the contours of ministry. That the amount of training possibilities are many can be seen in the statement above. General parenting skills, especially parenting in the ministry setting, is the ability to deal with issues that are unique to the clergy family. Issues that deal with boundaries and margins are always constantly needed. All these and many more will be consider so that Hebrews 13:17 can become a reality in every clergy family: “Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work
is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.”

Preparing for Transitions

“Dad, you never spent enough time with me or the family. You were always worrying about the church members. We moved so many times and you never seemed to care that it tore my heart out each time we did . . . you never talked about it with me . . . I loved people from each church we were a part of and it hurt to leave them knowing I would probably never see them again . . . you didn't have any patience for us after you dealt with the church people. . . . Mom, couldn't you have done something to help ease the pain? Make the transition smoother?”

One of the most exciting times in the life of a pastor is when he begins a new ministry and can be seen on all fronts. People are all smiles, and they are so very hopeful for the new and skilled pastor. He has been in constant contact with people in the new ministry area so his new circle of friends has been developing for some time. However, this is not always the case with the family.

The wife often has left friendships that took a long time to develop. At times, she has left a job herself where she had developed friends, often times those who were not connected with the church so she could have some resemblance of a normal relationship with peers and equals. When the move takes place, these relationships are interrupted, and most of the time they slowly begin to evaporate. Most of the time the wife knows very few people in the new ministry area, and she feel as though she is ending what has been some special relationships. She may even feel as though she does not want to make new friends because it is hard, and she has to put a lot of time into people before she really knows how to trust these new people.

___________________________

2NLT.
The kids, on the other hand, have the most difficult challenges ahead of them. They must say good bye to many close friends with whom they have spent almost every day; both their friends from church and school. They must leave their sports teams, drama groups, music groups, and the fun and familiar places in which they find security. They then have to go to this new place that they may not have even been to before, all while pretending that they are excited about it. The children are often left to fend for themselves while people spread their spiritual advice by reminding them of their need to make sacrifices for the Lord; after all the Jesus left His throne in order to reach people, didn’t He? In like manner, Craig Brian Lawson asserts, “Transitions tax people in any occupation, but vocational ministry, with its fuzzy boundaries between duties to the church and family, can make a heavy burden even more unwieldy.”

It is quite normal during the first 6 weeks of a new pastorate for the pastor to visit all the leaders, classes, committees, and many people throughout the community. However, this needs to become the time when the pastor focuses on getting his own family settled in first. After all, everyone knows that the family is to come before the church! Then, when the family is settled in and the wife and kids have friends or at least some of the securities of school activities, then the pastor should begin the process of getting to know the people of the church. The congregation needs to understand this reversal of the normal process, and allow the pastor the time needed to be the father and husband his family needs during this time of transition.

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Table 14. Ministry Children Survey Question 37 Results

<table>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
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answered question 70
skipped question 15

The most difficult times of transition are those that are forced. Some have mentioned that 1 out every 3 pastors will be forced to leave a church or ministry at some point in time.\(^4\) The hurt, pain, and disappointment can be paralyzing, and help is needed for the entire family. Many pastors leave, or at least think about leaving the ministry during this time, and if the opportunity would come they would leave the ministry, with their families would be okay with this decision. The need for denominations to have resources available for these families is vast. What so often happens is that these families take the hurt into the next ministry. Retreat centers are available if only funding could be allocated for these times of needed healing.

There are several things the husband/father can do to help his family during this time of difficult adjustment. These come from a well written article entitled “You’ve Been Called Where?”\(^5\)

1. Be heavily involved with every member of the family. By being heavily involved with the family during this time . . . the pastor will build credibility within the congregation because he truly puts his family first.


\(^5\)Larson, “You’ve Been Called Where?”
2. The husband/father needs to be a good listener. The wife and kids do not need another sermon or biblical guilt trip. They need the ear of their husband/father. Listen even when there are no answers.

3. Walk with the entire family during the different levels of homesickness.

4. If something is important for any member of the family, it is important to the husband/father.

5. The husband/father needs to be at home in the evenings. Supper time and bedtimes are extremely important times for every member of the family.

6. The father needs to know the unique needs of every child during this time. All kids, especially teenagers, deal differently with this change. Some openly like the change, some resent the change and want to go back home to their friends. Some kids have been known to go into depression and must deal with extreme loneliness during the transition.

7. The church secretary needs to be made aware that any member of the family can have instantaneous access to their husband/father. They need to know that they are more important to the husband/father than anyone and everything in the church.

8. The husband/father needs to make it a priority to get to more school events and other things the family is involved in.

9. The family needs to know that their husband/father would be willing to quit the church for the sake of the wife/children, if need be. An overly demanding church cannot be allowed to rule and ruin the family life.
The Ministry to His Own Family

“Please realize that your second God given responsibility is to your family. Your ministry will flourish if your family flourishes, and you will be fulfilled. Think of your death bed - if your ministry has been successful but your kids do not know and love the Lord, was it worth it?”

“Don't lose your family trying to help other families.”

Everyone knows that the proper order of life’s priorities is, first God, second family, and third church. However, the truth is that when it comes to practicing this in the context of a clergy family, it is a very different story. Many pastors and missionaries find their identity in the success of their church or the new group of people which needs to be reached with the Gospel. Frequently, this is the driving force for many who are called to preach and teach the Gospel. The thinking is that every opportunity deserves a ‘yes.’ Every request or demand by someone in the church needs to be met with no hesitation. After all, this is what the pastor/missionary is called to. What the church and pastors need to understand is that every time the pastor says ‘yes’ to a request that requires him to be away from his family, he equally says a big ‘no’ to his family. At first it is acceptable, but after a period of time, maybe years, the family realizes that either the pastor cannot say no to the congregation or they will not say no. These families often have the same issues as a home with an absentee father.

For this reason, the church needs to understand the need the clergy families have to care for their own first and foremost. The constant demand away from the office, the calls at home, the constant watchful eye of the congregation and the community all need to be dealt with so that these families can have a normal family life. The program driven, high energy, pastor has to be present at everything his church is doing, and this is causing great harm to both the clergy family and the kingdom of God in general.
It has been said that the mechanic will often have many cars in his yard that do not run because he does not maintain them. Similarly, the plumber will have leaks in his own home because he does not repair them. Thus, in like manner, while maintaining the families in the congregation and the community, the pastor will often ignore his own; so much so that if this problem was a disease it would be considered an epidemic. A passage from which many pastors have preached concerning this problem is Song of Solomon 1:6 which says, “They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept.” The pastor must be the keeper of his own vineyard. Like so many other occupations, the care of others will be tended to, but the care of their own is resultantly neglected.

Realistic Expectations of Clergy Families

“Expectations that are put on PKs/MKs are much higher and when they fail the disappointment seems so much worse. Kids didn’t ask to be in this position and should be disciplined for their decisions not disciplined because of who their parents chose to be.”

“Mind your own business and stop picking on an easy target, the devil’s already got that covered. Put yourself in our shoes for one minute and imagine living in a fish bowl every day of the week . . . not just Sundays.”

“Worshipping God is not an excuse to take shots at other people in His name. Those in ministry positions are not defined by their position; the Pastor that you exalt or degrade is just a man with a wife and children who love him as much as yours love you. If you were to say the things about your employer that you say about your pastor, your employer would be right to fire you.”

One of the clearest violations of the priesthood of the believer is the mindset, or at least the practice, that the pastor’s prayers ‘count more’ than those of anyone else. A close second to the first violation is that the pastor is the only one who can really lead someone to the Lord. A third harmful expectation is that the ministry children are expected to be accurate in

\[6^\text{NKJV.}\]
their understanding of Scripture. They are to be the first to answer the questions, but if they are outshining some of the other children or youth they are to back off so not to make the other children and youth look or feel bad.

Table 15. Ministry Children Survey Question 1 Results

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<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Often</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 75
skipped question 0

Often in an attempt to be all things to all men, clergy families, especially the children, have no identity of their own. The “church” is filled with all kinds of people; those who are believers and those who are not and some who are mature in their faith and some who are not. Then, there are also some individuals who base their beliefs on Scripture, while others base their beliefs on preference or tradition. In an attempt to be kind and not offensive to a host of people in the congregation, clergy kids often have no identity of their own. When someone comes along and does not like the hair length of the pastor’s son, there are those who tell him to get it cut. When the pastor’s daughter wears pants, there are those who are compelled to tell her that girls should not wear clothes intended for boys. On and on these types of thing go, and often the parents do not even know it is taking place. Churches need to go through a lengthy time of changing this compulsion to mold the kids into the image of whoever speaks the loudest. Denominational leaders can lead this change by writing in their journals, by insisting in the interim period of a church, or even by challenging that these things are dealt with at
denominational conferences. If this is aggressively countered with over a period of years, the cultural thinking in congregations can move to a new and biblical perspective of caring for the entire clergy family.

Table 16. Ministry Children Survey Question 34 Results

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<td>Often</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69  skipped question 16

In dealing with the issue of expectations churches have of ministry children, Timothy L. Sanford offers some needed assistance for adults who were raised in places where unrealistic and damaging expectations were the norm. Sanford introduces “The Four Holy Heresies” with which PKs often encounter:

1. I have to be perfect
2. I should already know
3. I’m here for others
4. I’m different

Furthermore, if the current culture in established churches is going to be transformed into a healthy environment for the clergy family, denominational leadership is foundational.

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Similarly, church planting movements would also be wise to take a close look at some of the issues presented so that a healthy clergy environment can be in place from the very beginning of the new church.

Family Priorities - Time Management

“Time management and margins, especially focusing on family investment and keeping ministry work from negatively impacting family life.”

“I think that they need to have ingrained in their brains the fact that they need to put the appropriate amount of time into their children. If they do not have control of their household, then they do not have the right to be an example for Christ in the church or on the mission field.”

“Mom, why were you not there when we were growing up?”

The need for the family to be a priority is one of the most sensitive areas for adult ministry children. There are so many thoughts that they have as adults concerning this tender subject of keeping the family prioritized. In word, everyone understands this to be true, but few clergy really understand what it looks like when practiced. Some misleading teachings of the past have soiled many pastors and missionaries. At the root is the unbiblical idea that if a clergy member takes care of God’s church, God will take care of his family. This is a deceptive tool of the adversary, and it has left many PKs and MKs pushed off to the side in its wake. Family is not something that can just be penciled into someone’s schedule. Rather, the family must the life of the clergy parent. Often even when the clergy parents are with their children any phone call, knock on the door, or any other form of communication takes priority for the parent. This needs to be both aggressively dealt with and changed.

Yet, when the parents are at home, who are they to be and what are they to do? Some who are misguided have said that the clergy parent needs to be the pastor of the family. This,
however, is nonsense, for he needs to be a father. This speaks of relationships that are fun and interesting and, most of all, authentic. Whatever the interest, hobbies, and family traditions may be, there are some key ingredients for prioritized parenting in the clergy setting. In Josh McDowell and Dick Day’s book, *How to be a Hero to Your Kids*\(^8\), they address some key thoughts that are extremely helpful for clergy parents as they rear their own children. These thoughts are helpful for parents of adult children as well.

First and foremost is acceptance, or “the ideal to aim for unconditional acceptance—communicating your love in such a way that they know, no matter what they might do or say, no matter how badly they fail or how they foul things up, that Mom and Dad love them anyway.”\(^9\) The second key thought that parents need to focus in on when raising their children in the ministry setting is appreciation, which “adds a sense of significance . . . the idea that, ‘Hey I’m important’”\(^10\) Furthermore, McDowell states that the third key thought when raising kids in the ministry setting is affection, for “they need to hear and feel affection from you every day. Physically, you should touch them with plenty of hugs, kisses, shoulder pats, and backrubs. Verbally you should tell them.”\(^11\) The fourth key thought when raising kids in the ministry setting is availability, which says “‘You are important.’”\(^12\) The fifth key when raising kids is accountability of which McDowell remarks, “Accountability gives the child a sense of self-

\(^8\) Josh McDowell and Dick Day, *How to be a Hero to Your Kids* (Dallas: Word Publisher, 1991).

\(^9\) Ibid., 19.

\(^10\) Ibid., 21.

\(^11\) Ibid., 15.

\(^12\) Ibid., 23.
control. As we make our children accountable, they gain knowledge of what it means to be responsible.\textsuperscript{13} Finally, the sixth key when raising kids in the ministry setting is loving authority.\textsuperscript{14} The parent needs to have clear lines of authority that is based on relationships and connections, not just treating the kids like they are puppets or clones. McDowell writes, “The relationship (authoritative) parent says, ‘I want what’s best for you. Let’s look at the options . . . here is why I believe this is the best choice – the most responsible way to live’”\textsuperscript{15}

Thus, the call of the day for clergy families is clear, sounding much like the call of the last days when Elijah comes and God will call the father and the children back together, as stated in Malachi 4:5-6, “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”\textsuperscript{16}

Dealing Biblically and Intentionally With Trouble Makers

“Be consistent in/out of church, we are watching you all the time. GET RID of the constant pot stirrers in your church! They rarely change, they strive on drama and will continue to cause it and all that does is hurt others, hurt your family, hurt you and hurt the kingdom. You don't need their money, their politics- God's bigger than all of that! So "turn over some tables!!" (my dad did not do that, but years later...now that we are all grown, I've heard him say he wished he would have.)”

The challenges of dealing with conflict while in ministry are increasingly high. There are many helpful books, conferences and advisers that are readily available to the pastor and

\textsuperscript{13}McDowell and Day, \textit{Hero}, 23-24.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 25.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16}NLT.
church. Many of the approaches to dealing with conflict and trouble makers is just a certain skill-set that applies some principles of ‘managing carnality.’ This is an over statement to be certain, but many times in the work of the Lord it is the same people who constantly disrupt the ministry year after year, and if they leave one church they will more than likely begin to do the same work of evil at another. Although the pastor needs to be gracious and kind, always willing to allow a truly repentant individual the opportunity to change, they often do not. What the PK quoted above is getting at is that pastors and missionaries need to aggressively deal with these people instead of putting up with them. However, the question that must be asked is why does the pastor think he should not confront these people in the first place? Most by-laws will have a section that deals with the process and the need for discipline, but yet this is ignored in most traditional churches. People do not see this as something that would be consistent with Scripture, while others will say that the church cannot afford to deal with these people because of the fear of losing them and their tithe.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a new movement within several circles and denominations to deal with these people as a result of the harm they have done to the church and clergy family for years. It would appear that Satan’s strategic plan is to have these people in churches in order to create havoc. In his beneficial book on this subject, Ron Susek shares some extremely helpful insights. He states that many churches have a few certain type of people who are drawn to that congregation. He calls them Pyromaniac and describes them this way: “Pyromaniacs are individuals impassioned to set fires, with a tragic psychological need to witness the drama . . . social pyromaniacs who excel in people skills are the most destructive, since they build confidences, win positions, then undo it all. [One] can find them when they:
• Fight doctrinal issues that are not essential to the faith.
• Relate improperly to men and women
• Are intensely controlling, demanding that everything goes their way
• Make others feel obligated for their success or failure, even their emotional state
• Despise weakness, failure, or inability in others
• Drive others to achieve their self-aggrandizing goals,
• Stir controversy since they function in conflict.17

The challenge in changing this culture of abuse and attacks on the clergy family is at an alarming level. The sad part is churches, denominations, seminaries, and even some missions agencies do not want to see it. Consequently, there is a need to awaken kingdom leaders, trainers, and change agents to what is taking place and then to begin the process of confrontation, purging, purification, and renewal. Jeremiah 1:10 is a passage that speaks of this subject as it related to Israel, and in many ways is a template for what needs to take place today on several fronts if the plague is going to be changed.

“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To root out and to pull down,
To destroy and to throw down,
To build and to plant.”18

The challenge, therefore, is for the attacks to be acknowledged and then the need for kingdom leaders to aggressively do what the Word of God proclaims; namely, confronting evil

17Ron Susek, Firestorm: Preventing and Overcoming Church Conflicts (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 81-82.
18NKJV.
instead of simply managing it. G. Lloyd Rediger says it well in his book *Clergy Killers*: “There is a strong tendency toward denial of this reality in denominational offices among clergy who have not been forced out of their congregations or battered emotionally and spiritually while trying to be faithful pastors.”

Equipping the Kids for their Own Ministries

“[You] better equip your children for the work at hand - Things such as counseling, depression, time management, communication with people, etc.”

“Real life issues discussed, researched, portrayed and heard. Make it more real than a text book. Offer as part of the training something for the whole family that is not cookie cutter how to stuff.”

“They all possess different and special gifts - maximize those rather than fitting them into a box.”

The training of clergy is a very special time in the life of the family. The denominations and missions agencies have an important role of keeping old, new, and fresh ideas before the clergy for years to come. The need has been mentioned several times and in several ways by ministry children. An often overlooked part of congregational health is the health of the clergy family. Therefore, as the PKs and MKs have proposed, training needs to take place continually so the kids can be all that God wants them to be. In general, clergy members strongly believe that each person is a unique creation of the Almighty, made with his or her own DNA, personality, talents. For this reason, as believers, they are given specific gifts by the Holy Spirit so they can serve as the Lord so directs. The problem, though, is that although done intentionally, parents treat the kids as though they are clones; they must act and talk like the

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parents, serve the Lord as the parents do, always supporting the parents so they may be successful. Quite often, those who violate the priest-hood of believers are the parents of the ministry children. The call from the words of the adult ministry children is that parents need the skill and constant challenge set before them to “train up the child in the way he should go.” The emphasis is that each child has a way he should go, and the parent is to help the child find and thrive in this way. In other words, parents need to be students of their own children.

Proverbs 24:3-4

“Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled.”

In order for this to be a reality, however, the parents need time, skill, wisdom, and constant challenges from those in kingdom leadership. Cutting edge issues need to be placed before the parents, and a good place for this to take place is on the denominational and mission’s agencies administrative level. This would help the clergy families to be healthy and places where true healthy growth can be experienced.

Worldviews that Congregations Need to Understand

“Make sure [parents] have a basic understanding of worldviews, and that includes the worldviews of children and teens. Make sure they understand the importance not only of teaching their children biblical truths, but also that it is vital they be the example of living biblically before their children.”

Ministry children must live in the worldview of which parents and churches know so little about. Many times churches and parent do not want to become aware of any worldview other than that with which they are familiar and comfortable. But, information overload has invaded the world. The book of Daniel mentions that knowledge will increase and that people will race across and around the world seeking to learn. This is exactly what is taking place today.
Daniel 12:4

“But you, Daniel, keep this prophecy a secret; seal up the book until the time of the end, when many will rush here and there, and knowledge will increase.”

Both clergy and churches need the biblical applications in place in order to teach and to be informed about the worldviews of each generation. With the acceptance by some of all the world’s religions under the umbrella of “coexisting,” all kids, especially the ministry children, are dealing with a rush of information. If the church and clergy are not prepared, the kids of many generations will be lost. Adult PKs and MKs are very educated and very informed. Simple answers to the complex will not work anymore. Denominations need to lead the charge of educating churches and pastors. Resource and staff need to be aware of current trends so that the differing worldview can adequately be dealt with.

A Christ-Focused Identity

“I think it would be so helpful to have classes on finding your identity in Christ and not allowing your identity to be being a PK. Help them to know how to please and listen to God through all the voices that have their own ideas and thoughts on who you should be and how you should act. Talk about tough skin, taking thoughts captive and not allowing people to control you . . . living and dying on their acceptance of you.”

It would seem that many de-value this foundation aspect of the believer’s position with Christ. The pastor finds his identity in the church or mission field or people group they reach. The wife finds her identity in being admired by the congregation and by leading the ladies’ group, playing the piano, teaching the kids, or any number of things. The kids find their identity by having no identity, or whatever everyone wants them to be. As a result, there is huge identity crisis in clergy families. The parents of these kids need to grow in their own personal

20NLT.
awareness of their identity in Christ so they may pass this foundational truth on to their own children. In his book *Victory Over the Darkness: Realizing the Power of Your Identity in Christ*, Neil Anderson presents some very helpful thoughts on this subject. The following is a sample on which clergy parents can focus when instilling this into the hearts and minds of their children.

The question is asked, “Who I am in Christ?” and Anderson lists the following:

**I Am Accepted:**

- John 1:12 – I am God’s child.
- Romans 15:1 – I have been Justified.
- 1 Corinthians 6:17 – I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
- 1 Corinthians 6:20 – I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 – I am a member of Christ body.
- Ephesians 1:1 – I am a saint.
- Ephesians 1:5 – I have been adopted as God’s child.
- Ephesians 2:18 – I have direct access to God.
- Colossians 1:14 – I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
- Colossians 2:10 – I am complete in Christ.

**I Am Secure:**

- Romans 8:1, 2 – I am free from condemnation.
- Romans 8:28 – I am assured that all things will work together for good.
- Romans 8:31-34 – I am free from any condemning charges against me.
• Romans 8:35-39 – I cannot be separated from the love of God.
• 2 Corinthians 1:21, 22 – I have been anointed and sealed by God.
• Philippians 1:6 – I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
• Philippians 3:20 – I am a citizen of heaven.
• Colossians 3:3 – I am hidden with Christ in God.
• 2 Timothy 1:7 – I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.
• Hebrews 4:16 – I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
• 1 John 5:18 – I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I Am Significant:
• Matthew 5:13, 14 – I am the salt of the Earth.
• John 15:1, 5 – I am a branch of the truth vine, a channel of His life.
• John 15:16 – I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
• Acts 1:8 – I am a personal witness of Christ.
• 1 Corinthians 3:16 – I am God’s temple.
• 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 – I am a ministry of reconciliation for God.
• 2 Corinthians 6:1 – I am God’s co-workers (1 Corinthians 3:9).
• Ephesians 2:6 – I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
• Ephesians 2:10 – I am God’s workmanship.
• Ephesians 3:12 – I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
• Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.\textsuperscript{21}

Understanding the Development of the Complete Person

“\textit{Psychology, time management, emotional intelligence}.”

“\ldots Personal soapbox: Now, obviously, this person was an extreme example but I feel that many of the same personalities are who go into the youth ministry field. I work in a Christian university environment and it seems to me that the only way that youth ministry candidates feel that they can be effective is to be "different." However, in that difference, they are all the same. They all wear the same youth ministry uniform (i.e., untucked striped button shirt, ripped jeans, flip-flops, spiky hair, black-rim eyeglasses, takeout coffee cup in right hand, iPad with The Message Bible in left hand), they all feel the need to question every little thing no matter how tedious the topic or pedantic their objection to it, they all have a blog, and they all have "just discovered" something about God that you HAVE to let them share RIGHT NOW or else you are "quenching the Holy Spirit". Personally, I believe that youth ministry as a mission field is over-sold and under-served . . .”

Much of the training and preparing for ministry focuses on the ministry itself and rarely is any thought put into the minister. If indeed the church must follow its leaders, then the leader must be emotionally and psychologically healthy. For, God often calls those from simple and lowly backgrounds, they often bring into the training process baggage that is rarely intentionally dealt with. Timothy L. Sanford deals with this in his book written to PKs and MKs in which he states the depth of the problem clearly: “It is estimated that 80 percent of today’s ministers come from dysfunctional families.”\textsuperscript{22} If this 80% is anywhere near the reality of the health of the pastor or minister, then more time and training is needed so that the families, churches, and mission fields are staffed by healthy growing people. The denomination can help


\textsuperscript{22}Sanford, \textit{Perfect}, 24.
with this by making continued growth of the ministers a part of conferences and conventions. Some of the following recommendations can be included in this continual training that needs to take place.

First is the need for spontaneous spiritual growth. In reality, the growing Christian life is really what every minister wants. So often, though, they lack the know-how, the time, or even the opportunity to be challenged. This growth takes place in the context of everyday living. The minister needs to be aware of and challenged in the area of the spiritual disciplines. In his book *The Life You’ve Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*, John Ortberg deals with this and it can easily be applied. The key to this transformation is what he calls “Morph.”

Ortberg presents the idea accurately by saying that each person’s morphing is unique and made specifically for the individual by the Lord. The contours of life and ministry are directed by the Lord so that God’s purpose in transformation can be experienced. He writes, “Consider the difference between piloting a motorboat or a sailboat. We can move a motorboat all by ourselves . . . but a sailboat is a different story. We can hoist the sail and steer the rudder, but we are utterly dependent on the wind.” So it is with the minister, for there is only so much he can do. The Spirit of God directs as He desires, and the minister needs to be ready to learn and change.

The second key area of developing emotionally and psychologically mature ministers is “Connecting,” which happens “when two people connect, when their being intersect as closely as two bodies during intercourse [and] something is poured out of one into the other that has the

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24 Ibid.
power to heal the soul of its deepest wounds and restore it to health.”

Pastors and missionaries need connection at the deepest levels of their souls so the power of relationships can accomplish what is intended by the Lord. The point is that people are made for community, even the clergy. The denomination needs to encourage and find helpful ways for the clergy to experience healthy connections. Clergy and their spouses need to make “connecting” a part of their normal life.

The third area of needed continual denomination emphasis is emotionally healthy men and women in ministry. If indeed 80% of clergy comes from dysfunctional homes, there is baggage that needs to be dealt with. It is wrong to assume that because someone has become a believer that all the past becomes immediately sanctified. The emotional, psychological, and spiritual health of pastors needs continual attention. Anyone who has been in ministry or closely associated with ministry understands the on-slot of attacks from the adversary, the carnal nature, the perceptions of people, from family, and, yes, even from the clergy themselves can be overwhelming. The challenge for denominations and missions agencies is to acknowledge the truth of this and begin to incorporate helping the clergy at conferences and training opportunities. Becoming stable in all these areas must be a part of the ongoing teaching and preaching that takes place and the regular events on the schedules of the group. The culture of openly sharing the hurt and pain with a few competent peers needs to be encouraged, modeled, and taught on all fronts.

The fourth area of continual denominational training is in the area of personal and ministry margins. With the consuming passion for success, many clergy are working themselves

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and their families right into the grave. They are pressured to work this way because of the personal drive to succeed, by the need to be acknowledged by peers, denominational leaders, and by the unrealistic expectations of churches. It is never expressed this way, but if one does not have healthy clergy, motives and purpose can be extremely worldly, and those who suffer the most are the children. For this reason, denominations and missions agencies need to keep before the clergy the need for margins. Richard Swenson paints a word picture of what margin-less living looks like. He writes, “Margin-less is being thirty minutes late to a doctor’s office because you were twenty minutes late getting out of the bank because you were ten minutes late dropping the kids off at school because the car ran out of gas two blocks from the gas station- and you forgot your wallet.”\textsuperscript{26} The clergy needs help developing margins that are realistic, healthy for them, their families, and the ministries with which they have been entrusted. The drive for success needs to be realistic and not fantasy-like because of what the latest speaker who spoke at the latest conference presenting the latest approach to do God’s work. When wrongly applied, it is a clergy, family, and ministry killer.

The fifth area that is needed in denomination training is in the area of self. The clergy needs to learn and understand how God has wired them. They need to understand that they are fearfully and wonderfully made and that they need not try (although they would never admit this is the case) to be like the latest success story on the religious front. As the clergy are trained to understand their own make up and how God works in and through them, they will have a greater awareness of how God uses them to relate to family and congregations. They will understand the

negative aspect of who they are and the dangers of these flaws as it relates to their own families. According to Mels Carbonell, use of the DISC personality type analysis can be beneficial as an individual seeks to get to know himself. He states, “Understanding a personality pattern is one of the keys to improving your relationships and solving the people puzzle.”

Raising Kids on the Mission Field

“Discussion of these issues of raising a family on the foreign field would help. It will vary from poor, 3rd world places, to wealthy Asian cities etc., but there is always an effect. A young family should weigh this carefully, more so than an older couple with grown kids who have plenty of freedom.”

“I have been a part of developing materials for training missionaries and pastors, and I don't know of a program that can meet all the needs of all of the trainees. True one on one discipleship seems much more effective.”

The challenges and the lifelong effects of being raised on the mission field are relatively unknown to the American Christian, unless he or she is an MK. The kids are often put in boarding schools so the parents can go off to the field of service. There are many stories, both good and bad, on how this affects the kids. The boarding school leaders and the personal needs of the kids play an important part in the stability of the kids. The danger at times has been that the parents transfer their parental authority to the school leaders, mission’s agencies or some other entity, sometimes because they are told to do so. However, no parents of missionary children should ever be told what they are to do with their own kids. If this takes place, the parent should put the family above the ministry and find another ministry to serve in. The parents are ultimately responsible.

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27Mels Carbonell, How to Solve the People Puzzle, Understanding Personality Patterns (Blue Ridge: Uniquely You Resources, 2008), 7.
Missionary children will deal with many emotional, social, and physical issues that few others have to deal with. For years, they live in certain countries where they grow to love the culture, the people, the traditions, and even the national patriotism that country might have. Then, they come back to the USA, and they feel like a foreigner, and a stranger and family, friends, and other believers do not have a clue what they are dealing with. While they are home in their passport country, they want to go home to their visa country. This entire study could focus in on this one area of needed research. Many mission’s agencies understand this and have a plan in place to help the kids as they come back to their passport home. But, the church generally does not have a clue. This is a real area of needed study and education so the kids come home to people who really care and understand.28

Therefore, the purpose of this section is to introduce the readers to “Third Culture Kids.” The following definition may be helpful for those who really want to begin the process of understanding and being an instrument of God’s grace for these amazing people: “Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are people who have spent considerable time during their developmental years living in at least one culture other than their parents. They assimilate elements from two or more cultures; however, they do not feel like they fully fit into any of those cultures. They feel like they belong with other TCKs who have had the same experience of growing up between worlds.”

There are several groups reaching out to these TCKs, specifically on college campuses. One such group that can be considered one of the leaders in the effort to help these young people is Barnabas International. After seeking help from several missions’ agencies, Barnabas responded

with some helpful and insightful thoughts. In a personal email asking for guidance and ideas, the following suggestions and thoughts were shared:  

- The biggest issue that MKs face is in the area of Identity. Their whole life has been wrapped up in what their parents do. They have led very “public” lives with details published in newsletters or prayer letters, paraded up in front of churches in America on furlough and sometimes in places on the field.
- The MKs that I have talked with believe that churches do not care for them beyond their parents’ work.
- They come to North America, and while their passports say they are Americans, they do not feel like Americans.
- They are truly multi-cultural, while their parents are mono-cultural. The difference is where the formative years of life have been spent.
- They feel most at home with other TCKs.
- They feel more at home in their adoptive cultures and when they are away from it they can’t wait to get back home. Many times the prospect of staying in America is not a positive one.
- Topics to deal with are grief and loss—dealing with “losing” the culture and country that is beloved to them. In helping to love America, they are betraying the country they love.
- Mostly they need help with seeing their identity in Christ and to appreciate what God has done in their lives by placing them in a missionary family.
- Many have had wonderful experiences and are proud of their family heritage of being missionaries.
- Some, however, have had difficult experiences and harbor some anger and bitterness about the whole experience.
- Some would rather leave it (the experiences) in their past and just “blend in” to the American culture.
- They often will not tell anyone they are MKs so that people won’t think they are weird.

Those reading this description of MKs for the first time may be both shocked and heartbroken. This is a good thing, for the opportunity to be an instrument of healing is drastically

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29 Donna Messenger, e-mail message to author, October 29, 2012. Donna Messenger works mostly with college-age MKs returning to North America for college. She runs a Re-entry Transition Seminar at Cedarville University each summer for Barnabas International.
needed. Getting to know the MKs is an opportunity waiting for kingdom-minded people wherever they may live.

“I am a confusion of Cultures. Uniquely me. I think this is good because I can understand the traveler, sojourner, foreigner, the homesickness that comes. I think this is also bad because I cannot be understood by the person who is sown and grown in one place. They know not the real meaning of homesickness that hits me now and then. Sometimes I despair of understanding them. I am an island and a United Nations. Who can recognize either in me but God.”

Grace Parenting vs. Rule Parenting

“Practical Christian living, that teaches what it means to allow Christ to live through us, humbling ourselves before a Holy God and being channels through which He can show Himself to a lost a dying world.”

“Live by a standard of grace, not perfection. Don't live life afraid to make mistakes.”

“Extend grace to others that grace might be extended back to you. Be careful to jump to hasty conclusions—things may not as they seem. Forgive quickly when you are wronged—don't let bitterness gain a foothold in your heart. Daily run to the cross—we are all sinners in desperate need of a Savior! May our Hope be in Him alone!”

The authority parents have is real, and it is foundational for the biblical development of the child. It is in the home where the respect for authority is learned and appreciated. But, one of two things often happens in the clergy home. One is that the authority is handed over to the congregation, and all of a sudden the kids have an assembly thinking they are in charge of the clergy kids. Notice how the PKs and MKs responded to the following survey question.

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Table 17. Ministry Children Survey Question 44 Results

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answered question 70
skipped question 15

Clergy parents need to take back the authority of their homes. As indicated in the survey results, almost two thirds of the adult ministry children felt like people in the congregations had the authority to tell them what to do. Furthermore, 37% indicated that this happened often or continually. Parents, specifically the father, needs to take the mantle of authority back and never give it up again.

Even though there will be times when parents need to be strong and confrontational, in the home they need to set aside the authoritarian approach to leadership and develop a relational style. One of the major problems that kids in general have with their parents and specially clergy parents is the authorization approach. The classic example of this style is in the movie “Sound of Music” and the Von Trap family. The military, authoritarian style of parenting was crude, and it demonstrated a complete lack of parental connective-ness that is contrary to the Scriptural example. There is a better way and it can be summarized in two words, grace and relationships.

“PK/MKs still deal with the same amount of pressure and hurt that all children go through. Even though we have heard our parents (normally fathers) preach on certain topics and how to deal with them, we still want to be able to sit down and talk with our parents about what we are going through and how we feel about what is going on. Sometimes a kid (especially a PK/MK) doesn't need another sermon on how to deal with the situation but a friend to talk to.”
From the depths of their hearts, kids desire to have parents that love and care for them. The kids will respond to this grace/relationship style of parenting. Even the adult PKs and MKs want this type of parenting. One of the overall observations of the survey is that the adult kids want, and at times, even yearn for the approval of their parents. But, what often happens is that parents are so consumed with the behavior of their children and what people think that they unintentionally teach their kids to be little liars; living one way in public but in private so little is done to change the heart of the kids. Most clergy want heart change in their children, but they want it to transpire through the force of parental will imposed on the child or through the discipline of the child, without acknowledging if the behavior is accepted and does not embarrass the parents or the ministry. In the book *Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids With the Love of Jesus*, the authors say it well: “Jesus or no Jesus, we just want them to obey, be polite, not curse or look at pornography, get good jobs, marry a nice person, and not get caught in the really bad stuff.”

They also share a dreadful thought that in practice many parents want their kids to be Christian without Christ. By this they mean to behave or “do what Jesus would do” while not having a real relationship with Jesus.

What this boils down to is that because the parents are so focused on others, the ministry, and their own good name they are not spending the time and making the effort to instill within their children the opportunities for biblically based Spirit-led transformation. As a result, clergy are unknowingly raising little Pharisees who look good on the outside, but on the inside are no different from the pagan walking down the street. In addition, the Bible is used for the

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parent’s own purpose and not for the transformational purpose for which it has been given. “In
an effort to teach our children about the Bible, we frequently employ the stories in the Bible to
compel obedience.”32

Dazzling kids with grace is taking the Word of God and showing them in word and by
example as it reflects the transformed heart of the parent and hour by hour and day by day
showing them the Word of God in the lifestyle of the parent, in the good times and in the hard
times, when the sun is shining and when the rain is falling. Showing them through the smiles and
laughter that comes in life and showing them through the tears that life sometimes brings.
Dazzling the kids with grace is incarnating Jesus through a transformed life that is lived in
connection with the children that God may give.

The second key is that of relationships. Kids need relationship with their own parents.
This is first important because the parents themselves grow as they grow in the thrills,
challenges, and opportunities of being a parent. These relationships are so much more than the
parent imposing their will, preferences, convictions, and interests on the kids, although often the
kids will be similar in many of these areas. The thrill of being a biblical parent is that of seeing
Christ fleshed out from the deep resources of one’s own heart that happens spontaneously
because of the God-space that has been filled with biblical principles and parental examples.

32Fitzpatrick and Thompson, Grace, 28.
Ways the Devil Attacks the Clergy Family

“Trust God but know that the devil will try to attack you through your family, keep them close and safe.”

“The reality is that ministry is hard. Yes, there are countless joys involved as well, but overall it is one of the most difficult callings one can have! This makes sense because of course Satan does not want the furthering of the Kingdom of God—what better way to destroy this than to attack His messengers? Having a wartime mindset will only help future ministers and missionaries when they do encounter hardships in ministry. And the more they are prepared, the better they will be able to fight and (by God’s grace) win these battles!”

“The reality of spiritual warfare is ingrained into all of God’s choice servants!” This is no doubt a statement of wishful thinking. In reality, so little is really said in most churches and ministries regarding the spiritual realm. Most of the time, the issues discussed and advice that is given is that of managing the conflict or the troublesome areas of the ministry. Skills are taught on how to maneuver around and through the attacks that come from so many directions, even from the clergy himself. The survey participant may be on to something foundational when he or she says we need to teach future pastors and missionaries to have a wartime mindset. Many will continue to brush this thinking aside, but the reality is the same, the adversary is working hard and maybe more aggressively than ever. Ron Susek says it well when he states, “Satan is involved in your church conflict. That is a reality that doubting cannot change.”

How does this affect clergy families? How does this affect the kids? So little has been done but what is known is shocking. Sanford addresses some issues that have the look and feel of spiritual attacks as it relates to ministry children. When dealing with issues that the kids struggle with he focuses in on food. He writes, “You may turn to food to either punish or medicate

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33Ron Susek, *Firestorm*, 107.
Because of the pain the kids are often in, they respond in time by eating in order to numb the pain they are in because of being PKs and MKs. He interestingly describes it as follows:

1. “Overweight or obesity. You eat to ease anxiety.”
2. “Bulimia or binge and purge. You eat for the same reasons stated above, with the sad action of making it come up again. That way you have the comfort of the food, without the weight gain.”
3. “Anorexia. You keep from eating and gaining weight as the ultimate way to gain control over your out-of-control life.”

In the same line of thought, Susek declares the biblical actions that the Christian is commanded to take.

1. Stand firm – Ephesians 6:14
2. Put on the full armor – Ephesians 6:11
3. Run – 1 Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1
4. Fight – 2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Timothy 1:18
5. Endure – 2 Timothy 2:3
6. Press on – Philippians 3:12
7. Resist – 1 Peter 5:9

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The need to comprehend and implement a plan of action is really one of the basic and fundamental needs for every clergy family, church, and ministry. The issue needs to be studied from many perspectives, because most are addressing completely different issues that relate to standing against the attacks of the devil. Neil Anderson presents the idea that Satan usually takes what is good and deceives people into taking it away from the boundaries God has established.

This is a sample of what it looks like:37

- Physical rest becomes laziness
- Quietness becomes non-communication
- Ability to profit becomes avarice and greed
- Enjoyment becomes intemperance
- Physical pleasure becomes sensuality
- Interests in possessions of others becomes covetousness
- Enjoyment of food becomes gluttony
- Self-care becomes selfishness
- Self-respect becomes conceit
- Communication becomes gossip
- Cautiousness becomes unbelief
- Positiveness becomes insensitvity anger becomes rage and bad temper

The point is that whatever is good Satan will work persistently to turn it to evil. There are so many other areas of arming the clergy family that need to be infused into training and conferences such as: “Reclaiming Surrendered Ground”38

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36 Ron Susek, Firestorm, 107.

Many clergy do not know very much about this subject because they have chosen to ignore it. Sometimes clergy and churches in general are uninformed because they do not want to sound like another group who may emphasize one portion of the subject beyond their own liking. The point is, though, that Satan is attacking from all directions. For this reason, all directions of standing against him need to be considered. This is so important because the attacks from Satan are real and should never be taken lightly. Once one attack has been dealt with, another is on the way. Satan is relentless, persistent, calculated, and timely. Satan desires to have our families. If he can get to them, the advancement of the kingdom will be hindered.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

“Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

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40Robeson Jerry, *Strongman’s His Name…What’s His Game* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2000).


42NKJV.
Keeping the Family First

“How to keep your family's need first. How to strike the balance between living for the Lord and living for the pastorate - that might help in a lot of these areas because when living for the Lord all other things fall into place.”

“The importance of family and how it should be your first ministry. I think if parents in ministry remembered that and made their kids a priority there would be A LOT less rebellion.”

“Your calling to your family is higher than your calling to your job. Yes, your job is in service to the Lord, but in reality, it is only a job.”

Table 18. Ministry Children Survey Question 7 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>61</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

answered question 80
skipped question 2

By far, the number one cry of ministry children is to keep the family before the ministry. They feel shunned and used, and with the 6+ need to reach the world for the Lord, they are put aside as though they were unimportant. Sure, the parents aspire to be good parents and to raise their children to have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. However, in actuality, this often falls so short, and the kids are always the ones who suffer. Community parents know to keep their families first. Churches know to keep their families first. Seminary and denominational leaders know to keep their families first. However, if the question were asked, “What does it look like to keep the family first?” the answers would be all over, and little clarity would be found. Here are a few areas for every clergy family to consider as they seek to keep their families first.
• What it looks like in prayer

Three hedges:

1. The Job hedge

   Job 1:10

   Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.\textsuperscript{43}

   Many people are familiar with this hedge passage because of the story of Job. In this passage, Satan accused Job of being blessed because of the hedge or wall of protection that God had placed around him. Satan states that the only reason Job was loyal to God was because of the hedge of protection and if God would remove it, Job would curse God. The challenge for clergy families would be to pray God’s hedge of protection for their families on a daily basis. They can pray for physical protection, spiritual protection, and emotional protection. The parents need to enlist people to join with them in this important implement of battle.

2. The Jeremiah hedge

   Lamentations 3:7

   He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out; He has made my chain heavy.\textsuperscript{44}

   Another hedge mentioned in the Scriptures is the hedge of Jeremiah in which he mentions in what is really a sad story that transpired because of the rebellion of the nation of Israel. Jeremiah was in the middle of what God had promised would take place. He wanted out

\textsuperscript{43}NKJV.

\textsuperscript{44}NKJV.
but he could not get out. God’s ways were sure and they would indeed be fulfilled. The challenge here for parents is to pray that God would place the Jeremiah hedge around their children so that the ways and purposes of God would be fulfilled in their children and that God would not release them until their children unconditionally surrendered to the gracious will of the Almighty.

3. The Hosea hedge

Hosea 2:6

"Therefore, behold,
I will hedge up your way with thorns,
And wall her in,
So that she cannot find her paths."  

The Hosea hedge was put in place because Gomer, Hosea’s wife was pursuing the relationships of a prostitute. God put a hedge around her so that when she pursued her lovers she would not be able to find them or they would have no interest in her. Te clergy children will have any and all the desires and temptations as any other person. As the parents and prayer team pray for these children, they need to pray that when the child desires to pursue the satisfaction of their carnal nature that the Lord would hedge them in so they cannot find what they desire or what they desire will have no satisfaction in them and reject them outright.

- What it looks like in the calendar

Keeping the family first means that the schedule will need to reflect this. What happens so often is that the calendar fills up with church, community, and personal functions and then the family is left trying to fit in somewhere. After a while, the family will feel unimportant

45NKJV.
and give up while resentment creeps in. The answer is to put the family functions on the calendar first and then schedule those other functions. There are some things that cannot change, but for the most part, the pastor’s schedule can be fluid and flexible. Cameron and Fredrickson say it well concerning the pastor’s schedule: “The good news: their schedules often allow more flexibility than typical jobs. That means, for example, that many pastors can attend school events in support of their children.”\(^{46}\) The pastor can fill in the calendar with holiday celebrations, anniversaries, birthdays, sports schedules for the kids, music concerts, drama and dance, and everything else with which the kids are involved. Make these family activities the priority and then try to fit the church activities around these. The point is that the calendar needs to lean heavily toward the family and not the occupation.

- **What it looks like in family time**

  Many pastors are blind to what H. B. London calls “present but absent syndrome.”\(^{47}\) When the pastor leaves the office and steps foot into the home, he must immediately focus on the needs of the family. It takes hard work and discipline to do this, but it must take place. Conversations with the wife about the troubles of the day need to be removed from the family dynamic. If the spouse needs to know, wait until a later time so the kids do not hear the garbage or see the looks of trouble on the faces of the parent.

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The pastor needs to feel free of not answering the phone. There are those people who call the phone when they could have called the office. There are usually a few people making these kinds of calls, and the pastor and spouse learn who they are very fast. The congregation needs to know that the pastor’s family time is sacred and a priority. Most calls can be made to the office or to another lay leader in the church. In fact, others can pray for people in need instead of just the pastor. Train the people to accept this. A few conflicts may result, but the church in most cases will grow to accept this.

- **What the marriage looks like**

  Keeping the marriage relationship a priority can be a struggle as well. Some of the foundational marital elements are time together, conversation that is dialogue not monologue, public displays of appropriate affections, and verbal affirmation of the love for each other. Ministry can be a sex killer if it is allowed! Constantly on the go, always something to do, internalized criticism, little time together, low finances, and stress in general can kill the sexual relationship between the pastor and his spouse. Boundaries and hedges need to be in place and the congregation needs to understand the limits. Even the kids need to know that mommy and daddy need time together. When the bedroom doors are closed, stay out and if an emergency arises, it had better be just that! It will take extra effort to keep the marriage growing and thriving in the ministry setting. In their open and practical book on marriage, Mark and Grace
Driscoll offer some help for the clergy couples. The chapter is titled “Friend with Benefits,” and he quotes a passage from Song of Songs 5:16:

“This is my beloved,
And this is my friend.”

Clergy couples will need to be protective of this because ministry has a way of robbing the time needed in order to cultivate of relationship with the spouse. They need to grow to be not only lovers, but also best of friends.

- What it looks like to reboot or start over.

There are those times when the family messes up, tensions are high, words are said that should not have been, attitudes are allowed that are not what the Lord would desire, and the ministry does not allow it to be seen. These are times when the family needs to have a ‘family huddle,’ and everyone needs to stop what they are doing, regroup, and apologies need to be shared. The father/pastor needs to lead the way and be the first to admit his fault and apologize, humbly asking to start over and for another chance. This will teach the kids to get past the hurt quickly, and they will see it modeled before them in their dad. The Scripture has several passages that speak of the importance of dealing with things quickly and thoroughly.

Matthew 5:23-24

"So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”

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49 NKJV.
The Community and its Impact on Ministry Kids

“Keep things practical . . . they live and are exposed to a world outside the church that don't know anything about Him like we do . . . be gentle, but wise, and be who we are . . . light, salt, reconcilers, and allow their children to grow up . . . if you keep the Word before them and live what you put before them . . . God will keep them.”

The following question was asked during the survey for this research project. The main reason was to locate some leading sources of hurt and pain in the lives of the PKs and MKs. The parents and the church leaders were expected, but the impact of someone in the community was not.

Table 19. Ministry Children Survey Follow-up to Question 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Leaders</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone in the community</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer Options:  answered question 48
 skipped question 34

Who are these people in the community? Why is it that the participants in the survey responded so aggressively to them? This is unknown, and it needs some serious attention for nearly half of those who participated in the survey took issues with them. The possibilities are huge, so narrowing it down so the parents can protect their own children and provide them with the support they need it extremely important.

When in the church, the pastor usually is aware of the dynamic of his congregation. However, communities have an abundance of people from other churches, non-believers, and maybe even some who have left the church of which the parent is the pastor. Many times, they
leave during time of disagreement over something they thought was important. These people could be taking these things out on the PKs because they are upset with the pastor. Along with this same line of thinking, there could be people in the community who are running from the Lord. Moreover, these kids could be a constant reminder of their own rebellion, and as a result, they can be crude or have overbearing expectations of the kids. On the other hand, perhaps some of these people in the community are schoolteachers who put pressure on the kids to be perfect in their behavior so the rest of the kids have a role model before them.

Some of these people in the community could be those who are prowling about looking for the innocence of the ministry children. They assume that their parents are teaching them to have biblical morality, and behavior and these people could be fixed on their destruction. When the church brags about the children of their pastor, or if the pastor uses them as illustration, the eyes of these types of people become more focused on the kids. There certainly needs to be more study and consideration put into the impact of the community on the lives of the clergy families – especially the impact on the children. Parents need to be aware of the impact all people have on their families both within the church and outside the church.

**Changing Toxic Behavior**

“You’re doing more damage than good, Jesus doesn’t care about the color of the carpet, quit being a half-ass Christian. You do nothing to advance the cause of Christ, you only have your own benefit in mind.”

“They actions hurt. They negatively affected a true man and woman of God with stress and heartache because of lies, gossip and selfishness. They hindered the lives of others by planting sin in a great church and potentially made eternal mistakes for those that were looking for Right. I have forgiven them but I pray that they have asked forgiveness from the Lord.”
This is a very difficult section, but it is so needed. Few churches will be willing to accept the intensity of some of the things that the ministry children have vocalized. Nevertheless, something is not right. In fact, some of the thoughts and issues dealt with in this section are a major contributor to the decline in many churches today. The de-churched are stating some of the very same things about the church when they are asked why they left the church. Many pastors, church leaders, and denominational leaders will write the finding off as being over stated, but the fear is that these types of issues may be understated. The wise pastor, parent, missionary, church leader, seminary professor, and denominational leader would take heed to what is being said by these adult PKs and MKs. They have spoken, and the church rarely has listened to these people and the wealth of information they have. If the church could solve these issues, the kingdom advancement would experience life-giving renewal. The challenge is to listen with an open mind and a heart that really desires to administer healing.

**The Hurting Voice of Ministry Children**

Two questions were asked in the survey pertaining to this topic. The first question asked was, “If you could say anything you wanted to the church that hurt you so much knowing that they would never know it was you who said it, what would you say?” The second question had to do with leaders in the church and what they did that caused so much hurt and pain. All the responses in this section come from those two questions. Indeed, there were many positive responses as well, but the purpose here is to deal with the pain. The PKs and MKs have been pushed aside for many years. The challenge now is to listen to them without finding some spiritual cliché that will lead only to ignoring what they are saying. This section is for the wise and those who really want to learn. Contained within these statements are vital elements for
renewal. If the reader will listen carefully to what is really being said, new and fresh ideas will develop, and healing will begin to be ministered to clergy families. The adult kids poured their hearts out, and one can sense the intensity of what they are saying.

The number of responses was overwhelming. Some of the responses were more confrontational and very pointed. This again indicated that there are some deep seated issues that PKs and MKs deal with as adults. While many would want to express thoughts concerning spiritual oversight on these adult missionary children, their observations are usually wrong. Several MKs responded and expressed struggles they had when coming back to the passport country. Their parent’s home church was familiar to their parents, but the kids had very little personal connections and loyalties to these churches. When the MKs would come back to the passport country as adults they would often struggle because the churches they were now a part of were so much different than those they attended while on the field. In other words, even though they were home they felt like they were in a foreign land. Holidays were especially difficult because they were alone, away from their parents and family. Some similar issues were shared as well such as that ministry children are not without fault, and they should not be expected to always be the shining example of perfection to the kids in the churches. The responsibility of training children belongs to parents, not to MKs and PKs who may be around them at church or in school.\textsuperscript{50}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{50}Summary of ministry children responses. The full responses can be found in Appendix A.}
A Change in Church Polity and Church Government

“It's not their responsibility to fix your kids problems.”

“The setup of the church in the United States frustrates me. Growing up there was much more involvement in church and more of a sense of community than there is today. Men from our field took turns leading the study. We didn't have a pastor or youth pastor and more people pitched in and played a part in our lives which provided an amazing place to grow up. I am frustrated by the lack of community in our churches today.”

“The way in which many of today's churches are structured makes it too easy for pastors and their families to be trampled over. If any real change is going to be a possibility in the way clergy families are treated by their congregations, our entire church model needs re-organization.”

Business Meetings

Business Meetings are a vital part of many churches. The question that must be asked, though, is “Should they be?” Are they biblical? Should any church members assume that they are entitled to be a part of the decision making process of a church? Should anyone, no matter their level of spiritual maturity, personal godliness, and commitment, assume that they are entitled to be heard on all accounts and for any reason that happens to pop into their minds?

Many adult PKs will share openly their horrendous experiences with meetings the church had in order “to do the Lord’s business.” Stories of all sorts can be shared about these meetings, but if the truth were told these meetings are often the breeding ground for pain, hurt, and division. This survey question and response shows that 50% of the PKs remember a bad business meeting.
Table 20. Ministry Children Survey Question 36 Results

<table>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>answered question</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>skipped question</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should not surprise anyone that many of the PKs refuse to go to business meetings as adults. In many cases, the adults will not even attend churches that have business meetings because they understand the harm that they have on the church and to good name of Jesus.

Forced Terminations

Over one third of the ministry children indicated that their parents were forced to leave a church or a field of service. Granted, there are times when it is the fault of the clergy himself, but most often, it is not. The level of termination is high and as indicated by the participants in the survey, 32% experienced this personally. In a helpful article on the subject of forced terminations, one author states, “one in four ministers will be fired at some time during ministry. One of every three ministers is serving a congregation that forced the previous minister to pack books, empty his desk and turn in the office keys.”51

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51Schilling, “You’re Fired!”
Table 21. Ministry Children Survey Question 37

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

A change in the way churches deal with decisions is a huge item in many circles. Many churches that were congregationally based in the past are going to an Elder rule or something that resembles it. This is something that many should seriously consider because there are many people who thrive on being a part of these meetings. They really think they are doing the Lord’s work when in reality they are bringing toxic behavior into the churches of which they are a part. As a result, most young adults and many PKs and MKs have very little interest in being a part of many of these churches.

The Grace of Relinquishment

“Dad, you never spent enough time with me or the family. You were always worrying about the church members. We moved so many times and you never seemed to care that it tore my heart out each time we did...you never talked about it with me...I loved people from each church we were a part of and it hurt to leave them knowing I would probably never see them again...you didn't have any patience for us after you dealt with the church people...Mom, couldn't you have done something to help ease the pain? Make the transition smoother?”

“That they should have respected my father more and to understand he gave everything he had behind the pulpit and they should have taken care of him and not make him have to do some of the things he had to do. All he ever wanted to do was preach!”

“If you are going to commit to supporting someone I think you should make sure you are willing to do it even when times are rough. Cutting Missionaries’ support because it won't be opposed and it is the easiest course to take is not an option.”
The hurt is deep and the pain is intense, often lasting for a lifetime. Some learn to manage it, some never do. The worst thing that can take place is for people to tell them to get over it or that they need to learn to cope so that the good name of the Lord is not marred. As one PK or MK wanted to say to the congregation that hurt him so much, “Back off.”

What needs to be understood by all is that clergy families consist of real people, many of whom are hurting. In order for these people to experience real healing, people of understanding need to come along side of them with a heart of compassion, not continued instruction and judgmentalism. The survey results and verbal comments indicate that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. The Bible has much to say about forgiveness and renewal, but few contain the detail like the stories of Joseph and Job. Joseph and his family consist of half of the book of Genesis. Many family issues can be extracted from the entire story. However, it is the names of his two sons that can give tremendous help for the entire clergy family, and specifically the adult kids. Moreover, there is Job. Many people are familiar with the early portions of his story. However, it is in the last chapter of Job where one finds three more children of a man and family who were severely hurt. It is in the names of all these adult children that help can be sought in order that clergy families can relinquish the hurt of many years in ministry.

1. Joseph

**Genesis 41:50-52**

“And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: ‘For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house.’ And the name of
the second he called Ephraim: ‘For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.’\(^{52}\)

- Manasseh – For God has made me forget all my toil and my father’s house.

The Scriptures reveal some real insight concerning the healing that Joseph experienced after years of suffering because of a family that was completely dysfunctional. It was God who made him forget the toil and his father’s house. He was finally able to move to a new and exciting level of living because of what God had done in him. God’s healing took somewhere between fifteen and twenty years to complete. The point is that God did it all. Joseph, in all the years of suffering, never gave up on His God! Ministry families must continually seek God and in time as only God can He will bring healing. Parents, friends, church people, and well-meaning individuals who act as if they are called to straighten everyone out, need to realize that only God can bring the healing that these hurting and abused people need.

- Ephraim - For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

The second of Joseph’s kids was named Ephraim; meaning, “God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” Again, the healing was caused by God. Despite the hurt, pain, and rejection, Joseph became fruitful in the very land where he experienced the pain and bondage he so dreaded. God caused it! God gave him a purpose and a profound mission right in the land of affliction. Those who have been hurt cannot deny that it has taken place. Pastors, leaders, and spiritual advisors cannot act and pretend that their words and opinions will get these people past the tremendous pain inflicted on them. Only God can cause this to take place.

\(^{52}\)NKJV.
It is possible for, because of the healing and providential care of the Almighty for PKs, MKs, and the entire clergy family, to become fruitful even with the affliction they have experienced. In fact, this passage indicates that the affliction would be used as the foundation for the fruitfulness.

2. Job

Job 42:9-17

“And the Lord restored Job’s losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch. In all the land were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

After this Job lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren for four generations. So Job died, old and full of days.”

Many people have found encouragement in the book of Job. He lost all his possessions, his children, his position of respect in his community, he was criticized by his wife, and his health was taken from him. And, to think that it was God who brought his name to the attention of Satan. All these things happened because God allowed it to be so. This is hard for many people to comprehend. Nonetheless, God is God, and He can allow what He wants.

[S53NKJV.]
Nevertheless, He also brought healing to Job in the end, for God restored to Job all his losses and then some.

- Jemimah – Dove, the beautifier of the day, "day by day"\textsuperscript{54}

  The name of Job’s first daughter means “day by day.” After his fortunes were restored to him, Job was better able to enjoy the depths of God’s blessings. He understood that every day is special and a gift from the Lord. He understood that that he needed to live every day to its full because the days filled with God’s mercy are a thrill to behold. This new spiritual mindset came about because of the depth of his pain and the height of God blessing.

  In the same way, it is possible for all members of the clergy family to experience the joys and blessings of every day because they have also experienced the depths of hurt and pain. As clergy families look to the Lord and seek to justify God and not self, and as they began to pray for those who hurt them, God will began to heal and show them a new day that will be full of joy and unspeakable blessings.

- Keziah – Fragrance, pleasant presence. A feminine name from the fragrance of the flower.\textsuperscript{55}

  Job’s second daughter was named because Job had learned to enjoy the fragrance of life. As Job named his daughter Keziah, he had in mind those blessings in life that are a fragrance from the Lord. After Job spent time in the ash pile, probably smelling the odors that came from his own infections, he now enjoys that fragrance of life that can be enjoyed all

\textsuperscript{54}The Online Bible Thayer's Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, 1993.

\textsuperscript{55}The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Electronic Database, Biblesoft, 2006.
throughout life - the fragrance of a loving family, the laughter of kids and grandkids. Then there is the joy of special friends and the glory of the heavens, not to mention the beauty of the sunset and the aroma of the trees and flowers. Job’s joy filled life was restored to him by the Lord; only the Almighty can cause this to happen.

The blessing and hope for clergy families is that even though they have experienced so much pain, hurt, and disappointment, by God’s grace they can receive a great level of joy by experiencing the fragrance of God at the point in which God restores them. The challenge is for them to seek the Lord even through all the pain.

- Karen-Happuch – Beautifier, horn of cosmetic.  

Job named his third daughter after a substance that was put around the eyes to make the eyes more attractive. Throughout the trials Job had been through, his main problem through the entire painful time was that he was looking at things from his own vantage point, through his own eyes.

Job 42:5-6

“I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance.”

The encouragement for clergy families is that while the pain was severe and uncalled for, in His amazing way God way can work beautifully if they will continue to seek Him.

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57NLT.
allowing the Lord to reveal Himself to them. Just as Job saw the Lord as He revealed Himself to Job, likewise will God allow those to rise at some time to new heights and enjoy life like they never thought possible. See Appendix D for additional thoughts on forgiveness.
CHAPTER 6
CREATING BOUNDARIES AND HEDGES FOR THE CLERGY

Spillover

Very few occupations require so much from the employee’s families like that of the pastor and missionary. In fact, many churches have as many expectations for the family member as they do for the pastor himself. The wife is expected to play the piano, teach the kids, lead in women's Bible studies, and to be hospitable to everyone and anyone who wants to stop by the house for any reason. The kids are to be Bible scholars so they can answer all the questions the teachers at church might ask, yet not answer them in a way that makes the other kids feel ignorant of the Word. They are to be the best examples of Christ-likeness, even though they may not be believers and maybe they have not had a chance to grow in the Lord. They are automatically expected to be spiritual giants.

Then, there is the pastor father who may return home beat up and bruised because of the few who want to make ministry impossible. He often will fear for the financial support his family needs. He may be consumed with the acceptance of the people in the church and live in a world of fantasy thinking that he can make everyone happy. When there are problems in the church the kids often hear about them and then even experience the harsh words from the people who really have issue with the leadership of their father. An article in *Family Process* says it like this: “As clergy will attest, congregations can be very intrusive. Church members often expect
much from their pastors, and these expectations spill over onto the family in ways that would be inappropriate or even unthinkable in other social contexts.\textsuperscript{1}

**Parental Consistency**

“Absolutely never. Both my mom and my dad were consistent in every situation. But I have definitely heard many complaints about this from other PK’s and this seems to clearly relate to that PK’s relationship with the Lord. I am so thankful that my parents were/are so good at this area- to this day, me and my siblings are all still involved with local churches, teach/attend Sunday school and volunteer for ministry.”

“This response is strictly directed to my father. Why were you such a fraud? When did it start? Are you really a Christian? How could you walk away like we meant nothing to you? Why are you so selfish and self-centered? How can you continue to manipulate and con good people? Do you even care about all the lives you have damaged? Why is there no admission of wrongdoing? How can you blame all of your wrong choices and actions on others?”

“This only applied to my father, he would be kind and caring to others but at home he was very harsh. My siblings and I appeared to be more of a bother than anything else. He would be very involved in church stuff and very rarely took any interest in what school activities we were involved in.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel like your parents acted one way at church or in the public, but at home they were very different?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answer Options</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 22. Ministry Children Survey Question 5 Results**

What is the solution? The parents especially need to deal with this intentionally. So often during the training years, the pastor or missionary attends seminary and other types of

training, and they do their studying at home when the family is around. They get so accustomed to having ministry and life intersecting at so many times and in so many places that it begins to feel as though it is the way it should be. The family becomes accustomed to it as well, thinking that someday when the training phase of ministry is over they will finally have their husband/father/wife back. Then, the early ministry comes that requires a bi-vocational leader and the works of the ministry is done at home. Again, the spillover continues to boil over, day after day.

Families need to become aware of these types of challenges and learn to wean themselves away from what they have been doing sometimes for years. It will take discipline and determination to keep the spillover from happening. If the family will deal with it early in ministry, later on when congregational spillover occurs, the foundation will already be in place and it will be a smoother transition. London and Wiseman give the following helpful advice with the statement, “This present focus also needs to become specific in family relationships. When the minister goes home in the afternoon, he should leave problems in the car, concerns at the church, and the future in God’s hands. Children need undivided attention. Today is tomorrow’s happy memory and it is the only time we have to build a stable family.”

Because of the heavy load that clergy carry, it becomes so easy for them to carry it all home, and the kids are given whatever the parents want and have the energy for. Often, the parent will live two different lives without knowing it. Because of the front and godly demeanor that is required of a public figure like a pastor or missionary, when they get home all the ministry

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stuff comes off as if they are living externals only. The need is for the parents to be real, which is that the inner person called the new creation needs to be lived out in everyday experiences, especially at home. In this way, the author Ann Voskamp remarks, “The parent must always self-parent first, self-preach before child-teach, because who can bring peace unless they’ve held their own peace? Christ incarnated in the parent is the only hope for incarnating Christ in the child . . .”


Understanding the Ecology of the Clergy Family

“If I’ve ever had bitterness, anger, addictions, unforgiveness or lack of trust, it's because of my own sinful nature. Not because of being an MK and living on a primitive island. Again- you are implying that what secret or feeling I have to share with my parents is going to hurt them . . .”

“It gets better. One day, you will no longer be dragged around by your clip-on tie from one church function to the next and will be free to make your own choices. One day, you will make friends who don’t think of you as ‘the preacher's kid.’ One day, you will realize that a ‘normal’ childhood might have been easier but not necessarily better. One day, you will struggle as an adult with the people in your church and will already know what that feels like. One day, you will realize that it wasn’t your parents' fault, it wasn't the church's fault and it wasn't God's fault; it was the fault of people and people are stupid, selfish, short-sighted and mean.”

The survey results and comments made by the adult ministry children reveal so many helpful insights. Many are thankful for the privilege of being raised in a minister’s home, and some could not wait until the day would come for them to leave it all so they could finally be out from under the watchful, judgmental eye of the intrusive congregation. Why the difference? Why is it that some PKs and MKs from even the same family can have completely different stories to tell? The difference is Ecology, the ability of individuals within the clergy family to react differently to the same set of challenges.
What does this look like? To help with the understanding of this the following illustration is helpful. Ryan Clark, Pittsburgh Steelers defensive back has Sickle Cell Disease. He is fine playing in his hometown of Pittsburgh, but he is unable to play in the high altitude of Denver. The last time he played there he almost died because his body could not adjust to the climate around him. Similarly, Dr. Cameron Lee of Fuller Theological Seminary contends that the clergy families are placed in many different social ecology systems. He explains, “More specifically, they point to the tendency of humans to ignore the environmental implications of their actions, unanticipated consequences that must be corrected at great price.” Kids in the same family dynamic can and will handle the life of being ministry kids completely different. The challenge is for parents to understand this and to become students of each one of their children. Great care needs to go into the development of PKs and MKs in every field of ministry. The parents need to put great thought into the implications of each change they make and how it will affect each one of their children individually. The parent must really know the emotional, spiritual, and social make up of his or her own children. In addition, when the parents are preparing for a field of ministry, the dynamic of the field, church, and community needs to be parsed in such a way that they have a major understanding of how the new place of service will influence each one of their children. Just as Ryan Clark cannot play his favorite game in Denver, so some ministry children may not be able to adjust to some ministry fields, while others may be able thrive in that field.

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5Ibid., 18.
**Exegeting the Culture**

Many people have a lot of fun describing the unique nature of each generation. The way people have dressed and how they currently dress will bring many smiles to the faces of families. The music that the different generations listen to is also the source of laughter. Even during a recent Republican Convention speech, Paul Ryan, in a respectful but humorous way compared his generational music preference to Mr. Romney’s. However, what happens so often is that when the churches compare the generational differences this often leads to generational arrogance. No place is this more pronounced than in the church. With the biblical admonition for children, no matter what their age to honor parents, the pressure is piled on the kids even when they are adults and this creates a toxic environment that is both insulting and degrading to the ministry children as they seek to establish themselves in life.

These types of generational issues are foundational to understanding the decline in institutional, traditional churches. Therefore, the need is for Christians, and specifically clergy parents, to understand and exegete the generations of their kids so they can be wise in their understanding of how to relate to their own adult children. To this end, Stetzer, Stanley, and Hayes seek to form a greater understanding of how to reach the “De-churched,” a group of people who were raised going to church but when they graduated from school, they left the church because of the negativity and hypocrisy. Their thoughts on reclaiming these de-churched people between the ages of 19-39 provides some helpful thoughts for reclaiming the PKs and MKs who have gone away from the church and more importantly from the Lord. The challenge is for parents, especially clergy parents, to listen. For years, the mindset has permeated several generations of parenting that “children are to be seen and not heard.” Many think that this is a
Scripture verse, and in recent generations it has often been applied to children. This is extremely insulting and offensive to the de-churched, and many have heard this proverb applied to them. If any parent has every said this to their children they need to seek forgiveness immediately and start to reestablish proper communication no matter their age. As Stetzer and others began to listen to the de-churched crowd, they have discovered some basic needs for this generation. Adult PKs and MKs are seeking these same needs.

1. Community

Community is a word that relevant congregations understand and are using to reach people. Some have even said that community is the arena in which evangelism takes place in 2012. This goes beyond the Sunday School class or youth group. It is stated well in the book Lost and Found: “We have ‘aspired’ to build community, but it has scarcely been realized. And that has not gone unnoticed by young adults, both inside and outside the church.”6 Community needs to be more than just a new catchword for doing ministry. Community is what many, if not most adult PKs and MKs yearn for. They seek real relationship with people of all ages that are deep, continual, authentic, down to each, and transparent. The need for community is close to being a generational absolute. Where their parents were interested in the institution of the church, the structure, buildings, by-laws, budgets, missions statements, etc., the adult children are interested in the organism of the church, that which breathes, walks, talks, thinks, hurts, feels, and seeks

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God. This is how Stetzer puts it, “... community is a central value for young adults, whether secular or sacred. Churched and unchurched alike are desperate for it.”

“The setup of the church in the United States frustrates me. Growing up there was much more involvement in church and more of a sense of community than there is today. Men from our field took turns leading the study. We didn’t have a pastor or youth pastor and more people pitched in and played a part in our lives which provided an amazing place to grow up. I am frustrated by the lack of community in our churches today.”

Parents of adult ministry children would be wise to get out of their own skin and learn what Christian community looks like, smells like, and acts like. They should seek opportunities to walk with their kids in seeking these kinds of relationship and churches. Anything that looks like the institutional, tradition church will be toxic to them and may even drive them farther from the Lord all together.

2. Depth

Most of the survey participants were 45 years of age and younger. This age group in general is a very educated segment of society. Most have some college education while large majorities of them have a college degree. Many even have Master’s degrees and have or are pursuing Doctorate level degrees. This is a strong indicator that this is a deep thinking group of people. The simple answers and simple thinking that are mainstays in many churches will never meet the spiritual and intellectual needs of most ministry children today. Again, Stetzer says, “They care about who they are and what they are becoming – ‘ankle deep’ doesn’t work for them.”

Likewise, the ministry children of this generation are smart. They have heard their

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8Ibid., 68.
father’s sermons and Bible studies their whole lives. They have been a part of every Bible study that was age appropriate, VBS, youth camp, mission’s conferences, and every other kind of conference. Anything that has the appearance of the church or ministry brings back a flood of memories, and unfortunately, many of them are bad. But, what captivates and satisfies the emotional and intellectual needs that they have are the churches that take the ministry of the Word deeper. When describing churches that read out to the de-churched Stetzer says, “They were spending more time and going deeper into the content of Scripture and theology than was common in more established churches. Content and depth were a passion.” Therefore, the parents need to understand that churches that present pat answers to difficult questions will not be a church that reaches these adults. Along the same line, real authentic leaders who are not afraid to share their flaws are loved and respected. The church leaders and parents who never have problems or have it all together are suspect and will not be able to reach this group of people.

3. Responsibility

“Don’t schedule bible study after bible study at church, but forget to study the bible with us at home. Pray with us every night. Let us help make decisions about our high school education (public vs. private). Give us a chance to "be the light". Don’t shelter us from everything; help us make educated decisions about right and wrong. It is easy to say "the Bible says so", but a deeper explanation of why and good/bad consequences, etc.”

“They are just as human as you, and in most cases have inherited your struggles and besetting sins. So don’t approach them from above but from beneath and invite them to grow and mature with you.”

In order to better understand how to reclaim adult ministry children, the parent and church will need to understand what responsibility looks like to the forty and under crowd; the

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responsibility that the forty and under de-churched are talking about is the responsibility of helping people practically. They do not see the institutional church with its building, by-laws, budgets, and program resembling the help that Jesus Himself offered. They see Jesus as helping the sick, the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in bondage. The PKs, and especially the MKs, fall into this definition of responsibility. As children, they have watched the attempt to build what many are now calling wood, hay, and stubble. They have seen churches come and go. They have seen attempts to reach certain people. They have seen some success, but they have also seen and heard the attempts to use guilt and/or even the Bible misused in order to reach a goal or to fulfill a certain mission statement. The de-churched simply yearn for hands-on kingdom activity that looks and smells nothing like that with which they were raised.

4. Cross-Generational Connection

“As a child, there were many things I would have or could have said but, as an adult, the only question really worth asking is, "Was it worth it?"

“I have been a part of developing materials for training missionaries and pastors and I don’t know of a program that can meet all the needs of all of the trainees. True one on one discipleship seems much more effective.”

Ministry children are people who have been a part of almost every age group a church has to offer. The yearly graduations from the Sunday School classes became all too familiar. They remember the days of looking forward to being in the youth groups so they could finally get away from being treated like a child. Recent studies in church growth and church planting have indicated that the forty and under crowd especially, the de-churched, are looking for relationships. They want to connect with people on a deep level. They want to be held accountable to others, and they yearn to be known to the very core of their existence. Maybe it is that they have heard so many Christians who have emphasized the external aspects of
spirituality, and now they want to go deeper. In fact, they admire those who are willing to be gut honest and able to admit their own frailties and shortcomings. Stetzer again has some real valuable insight on this subject when he state that they desire “Cross-Generational Connection.”10 This could account for the huge growth within the organic church movement, small cells of believers ranging from 10 to 20 people who meet at various locations other than the traditional church building. Because of the potential for growth in these cross-generational churches, many church planting movements have included house churches as one of their models for church planting. Included in these groups are the Liberty Baptist Fellowship and the North American Mission Board.

The organic church leaders have really made this a foundational construct for the movement. This could explain how these types of groups are quickly becoming a place of renewal and restoration for many PKs and MKs. Many Christians are even looking for traditional church where the entire family meets in a class for Bible study and fellowship.

The typical church is segregated according to age or life experience and this is called segregated ministries. The integration of the different age groups into one age group is called integrated ministries. The drawing point of these integrated groups is that of being mentored and/or learning from the experiences of others. Neil Cole presents a very interesting argument for integrated ministries. The kids from a very early age learn from godly adults some of the key and foundational practices of the biblical Christian. In speaking of children in these types of

churches, Cole says: “He has learned something about love, kindness, and hospitality that he never could learn with a flannel graph story of a Good Samaritan.”

PKs and MKs who resemble the de-churched in many ways are extremely interested in the ‘new,’ or truly, the ‘old’ church model. Instead of being lectured and a huge amount of information being given, PKs and MKs seem to yearn for experiential learning. Again Cole affirms this thought when he states, “We have forgotten that much of the Christian life is ‘caught by example’ rather than taught by fill in the blanks, pop-up, coloring books.”

**Boundaries**

The need for boundaries is at the very core of the needs of clergy families. It would seem just by a casual consideration that boundaries are all about keeping the ‘bad guys’ out. However, it is much more than that, for sometimes the 'bad guys' can be the father and/or the mother. The pressures of ministry can so dictate the entire existence of the clergy family to the extent that it renders the family unable to be a family. Most often, as long as the schedule has a spot for the family, or if the pastor or missionary is there to help get the kids in bed, enough margin has been afforded and the family is adequately taken care of.

Because of the need for boundaries being a major construct in the effectiveness of the family, unclear and inadequate boundaries can bring much harm to the family. Once the need for boundaries is established, then the specifics of some of the key boundaries can be addressed. Similarly, Lee Cameron deals with the deep issues of boundaries and the harm that unclear...

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12Ibid., 214.
boundaries can have on the family, especially the children. Very few truly understand what the family experiences when the pastor, normally the father, is so involved with ministry. There are times when the family suffers what many suffer when there is a death of the father. What is sad is when the family suffers in this way, the feelings toward the missing father is more difficult because the father does so by choice. When death occurs, at least the family understands that the absence is because of death. In addition to this type of absence, there is the struggle between physical presence/absence and psychological presence/absence.\textsuperscript{13} When the father is not physically present or is emotionally disengaged, the family will recognize the father but will become disengaged. The father can become so preoccupied with the ministry that the family stress level is at a peak, and then they begin to disengage with the father, as though he is not even there in the mind of the kids. Lee says it this way, “Presence, therefore, refers to the perception that the father is still a member of the father, whatever roles he filled are neither reassigned nor eliminated . . . the father is no longer perceived as a member of the system.”\textsuperscript{14} The family can even get to the place where the father is considered lost and will begin to create new ways of filling the void. Lee comments, “The father is no longer perceived as a member of the system.”\textsuperscript{15} When the father is present yet his thoughts are distant or even absent from the family, the stress that the family must endure is off the charts. When these emotional, physical, and psychological needs are not being met by the father, the void must be met somehow. The family ends up being like a heat-sensing missile, roaming around until there is something that appears to be the target.

\textsuperscript{13}Lee, “Stress and Clergy Families,” 76.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 76-77.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 77.
In addition, this begins to explain why some PKs and MKs look for support often in all the wrong places.

“Give me a minute to take care of this and then we can do this or that . . . the minutes turn to hours, and hours to days, and usually it never happened.”

The need is for every family member to be totally engaged with each other. This is extremely difficult for young and aspiring clergy families. They are seeking to expand and to establish themselves. There is a world to conquer and people need to be brought into the kingdom. Building great churches, reaching new fields with the Gospel, writing new books, and teaching the seminary classes are just of few of those things that all in training must accomplish before ‘yesterday.’ It is also true that many are seeking approval, and the hunger for accomplishment is a driving force. This is truer than most clergy, young and old, would like to admit. Therefore, the need for clergy families to acknowledge and create boundaries for the sake of their own families is the battle cry of the day. London and Wiseman rightly address this when they write, “When the minister goes home in the afternoon, he should leave the problems in the car, concerns at the church, and the future in God’s hands. Children need undivided attention.”

Along the same line of thinking, when addressing the need for total engagement with the family London writes yet again, “Be Present When You Are Present.”

Interpersonal Boundaries

Personal relationships are often a struggle for clergy families. Does the spouse have a close friend within the congregation or not? How do the parents decide whom their kids can

16London and Wiseman, Pastors at Risk, 110.

17Ibid., 106.
hang out with and whose house can they spend the night at? Many parents struggle with this because if they allow their kids to go to one home and not another, it can create quite a stir. Some of this can be dealt with by the denominations, especially during the interim period. Often times, the parents are not trained to deal with this and if they are, they are paralyzed with the fear that they may offend someone so much that they may not ever come back to the church. Some will even unknowingly use their children to keep peace or possibly to get the family to come to church. According the survey results, the question was asked if the ministry children ever felt obligated to be friends with certain people. Nearly 24% of the participants said ‘yes,’ which should put warning flag up for the parents.¹⁸ What were the PKs and MKs exposed to or why were their kids uncomfortable? Often times, these are the very people who will expose PKs and MKs to the temptation from which the parents are teaching their kids to stay away.

Henry Cloud and John Townsend share some very helpful insights that will give some guidance to parents as they seek to have their kids surrounded by safe people. They state, “The problem is, parents often pick the wrong people to trust.”¹⁹ They go on to mention that both clergy and children alike need people. When speaking of the needs of people in general they say, “They reach out when they are lonely or stressed out . . . They reach out when they want someone to share their joys and successes . . . They reach out when they need someone to understand their loses and problems . . . they reach out when they need wisdom and guidance.”²⁰

¹⁹Cloud and Townsend, Safe People, 124.

²⁰Ibid., 121-23.
It is very interesting to know that most often God has these safe people, or as some people call them people of peace, in most congregations or in the community. Learning how to find them is key, for it takes prayer and a discerning heart to see these people. Some examples are Eunice and Fred who can be like grandparents to the kids and understand the dynamic of PKs and MKs being just normal kids. Barry and Carolyn are placed in some congregations to support the teenagers and to encourage the spouse. They understand and are okay with not being the center of focus for the clergy family, but are always there at just the right time. Al and Michelle and the people who are mature in the faith, who are okay with coming along side of the clergy family and laughing and crying with the clergy while knowing just when each of these are needed. Judson, Edna, Laura, and Mary Anne know when a special word is needed and are always interested in the affairs of the family, even the dog. Joe is one who will stand for and on behalf of anyone in the family when ministry pressure is heavy. He will literally take the burden on himself.

Anyone who has been in ministry for any length of time has learned to recognize these people; sometimes, though, they have learned the hard way. They can be recognized by their sacrificial love for the Lord, by their continued support for the family year after year, and even with all the staff of the church who were there before the current pastor. Sometimes they are young, sometimes they are old, sometimes they are PKs and MKs themselves, and sometimes they have been given an authentic heart of concern just for the minister’s family. Learn to recognize them; the clergy family will be better for it. Many resources available deal with pastor relationships with the opposite sex, so for this writing this will not be dealt with. This is not to
say that these other personal boundaries are not important, just that this research is more for the sake of the pastor’s relationship to his family.

**Two-Person Career Boundaries**

Almost every pastor and missionary has been asked the following questions during the interview process:

“What can your spouse do? Does she sing, play the piano, and teach children and women's Bible studies? Would she also be the secretary, custodian, and kitchen committee chair, or lead in the missions training time? How about the kids, do they sing, can they mow the lawn, or how about being immediate leaders in the youth group, and yes, do they know all the deep theological issues that are important to my family?”

On and on the list goes. Many congregations really have a mindset that they can get two for one. Moreover, of course the salary package is only a little below the denominational average for someone of your age, experience, ability, and educational level. Cameron Lee expresses the problem in stating, “The wives of male clergy, for example, are often drawn into what has been called the ‘two-person career,’ whereby they are expected to fill several important roles in the congregation, but neither consulted regarding the assignment of roles, nor compensated for their contribution.”

“They need a Mommy and Daddy who invest at least as much time in the family as they do in the church/ministry. There has got to be space and some separation, some margin provided for family time apart from the church. Don’t neglect your children’s needs in deference to serving the church’s needs.”

This is extremely common in almost all churches today. The congregation needs to know at the beginning of the interviewing process that the expectations are unacceptable and that the spouse will choose on her own when and what she will do as it fits into the time that she has,

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the gifts and talents that she has, and only if the family needs are cared for first. Granted, there are times when the couple will have a more shared role, but this must be the choice of the clergy family.

Parsonage Boundaries

The thoughts of having a house are thrilling to say the least. As the clergy family grows in numbers and as the kids grow older and have a greater need of a house with enough room to live, a house is important. Many times early in ministry the thoughts of a house with a yard for the kids or maybe a pet can sound like a dream come true. For some, the parsonage is a real blessing. For some it has been a nightmare. Because of the complexity of clergy taxes, the house presents some interesting issues. When the congregation provides the house, there will be some who think they are giving the clergy family free housing. Then, because of the ownership being with the congregation, some will think they can and should have access to the family any time of the day; they have the right to stop in anytime in order to get counseling, advice, or to give the pastor and sometimes the family a piece of their mind. Some have even stated that people will stop in and tell the family to turn lights off in order to be good stewards of God’s money. Over a period of time, or even at certain ages of the children, this can become a real stressor for the clergy family. Kids feel violated and that their lives can be interrupted by anyone for most any reason. This kind of intrusive congregational behavior is often one of the greatest stressors on the clergy/spouse marital satisfaction as well.23

One question that was asked during the survey of PKs and MKs dealt with these issues. The question was, “Did you ever feel like your home was private property?” The responses were extremely insightful:

Table 23. Ministry Children Survey Question 38 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you ever feel like your home was public property?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant struggle</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

As one can see from the results, 48.6% indicated that this was an issue while they were growing up in the clergy home. For this reason, pastors need to establish clear and intentional boundaries with the leadership of the congregation and the congregation in general so that family time is not violated. The people of the congregation need to be trained to deal with issues of importance during office hours, or at least have the courtesy to make an appointment during office hours so that the pastor can adjust his schedule. Often times, a call to the office will resolve the issue before it even reaches the pastor. The church also needs to have a clear congregational care ministry team, normally the deacons, who can care for the needs of the people in their own care ministry group. If the issue continues even after attempts to make adjustments, the pastor needs to take biblical corrective measures to correct the problem. The

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worst-case scenario is that the person will need to be confronted by some of the leadership in the congregation in order to protect the need for the clergy family to have uninterrupted time together.

**Holiday Boundaries**

The family and holidays are made for each other. The anticipation builds as families prepare to spend time together in order to celebrate special seasonal days. However, what happens so often in the clergy family is that the holidays can be one of the most dreaded times of the year. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the ministry is buzzing with activities; preparing meals for the needy, Christmas presents for the kids, children’s Christmas musicals both at church and at school, Christmas parties for each group/class in the church (of which the pastor and his spouse are invited to and often expected to attend), and endless other activities that can all lead the clergy family to the point of exhaustion. Additionally, there are those who just decide to take off all over the nation in order to spend quality time with the grandkids. The Thanksgiving Eve service, the Christmas Eve Service, and the staff Christmas party all lead to what some call the dread of the season. Then, the pastor needs to spend time with those who are going through the first holiday season without a loved one and they need some special pastoral attention.

The clergy family is often left exhausted, left out, forgotten, used, alone, and at times broke, not able to buy the kids the gifts that they would like. What are they to do? How can the congregation help with the struggles of the clergy family and the holiday season? They can start by taking a long look at all that is taking place. It is really needed? Is it really advancing the cause of Christ? Is it really making disciples? Does the church do what it does just because it is
what they do, or maybe to have programs in order to keep up with the churches down the street? Again, why does the church do what it does?

Thus, it is important to ask, “What is the solution?” Slow down! ‘More and more’ is not what the Lord desires for His churches. If the congregation believes that these things are needed, then a plan needs to be put in place in order to take the pressure and stressors off the clergy family. In addition to this, the clergy family needs to establish the boundaries of what they will and what they cannot do. This should be spelled out during the seeking and searching stage of ministry, when the interviews and the question are being asked. The pastor needs to put these things before the congregation clearly and even in writing.

The clergy family needs to establish their own traditions just like any other family would or at least should do. If not, the kids will become adults and the stuff of ministry will define their upbringing, resulting in a void that will follow them for years yearning for the closeness that the family is intended to fill. In an article that deals with creating traditions for the pastor’s family, John M. De Marco presents this thought; “At times life as a pastoral family seems packaged in a large re-sealable freezer bag-overrun with leftovers.”

The importance of building family traditions is so important. Theses traditions are the family cultures that provide some stability and natural rhythms that help in the creation of security and familiarity. When the clergy family times are so often interrupted some family traditions that bring consistency and uniqueness to the family (which may not fit the mold of what the congregation has pushed into) are not carried through. De Marco says it this way,

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“Even when the rest of the family throws itself into the congregational whirlwind, there comes a gradual aching for quality time together away from the crucible of spiritual celebration and multifamily confluence.”

Evening Boundaries

“That it wasn’t fair that I had to share my parents with people at the church who would complain, not tithe, and make them miserable. It wasn’t fair that I was held to a higher standard than other kids growing up and sometimes it made me feel like nothing I did was good enough.”

The time at home with the kids is of utmost importance; a generation of PKs and MKs who at times felt like they were pulled in all kinds of directions are now living their lives as adults with the determination to stay home with the family. This in fact is a generational distinction of the forty and under age groups. They want to be home and will shun and reject people and programs that pressure them and guilt them into attendance.

The clergy family needs to establish clear evening boundaries so that time can be spent enjoying the thrills of family life. Churches need to change the focus of meetings and other programs so that the entire family unit within the church itself can become family friendly. Programs and evening activities cannot and will not take the place of focused, intentional, disciplined family time together. The church will just have to learn to adjust to this new dynamic of family life, especially if they intend on reaching those 40 and under. If they feel pressured into busy-ness, they will just go somewhere else. Pastors need to lead the change concerning evening boundaries. Whenever they say ‘yes’ to the request for frequent meetings, visits, and other obstacles to family time they are at the same time saying ‘no’ to their own family!

25De Marco, “Family Fridays.”
“Yesterday is a canceled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, and today is cash in the hand. Spend it wisely.”

Social Boundaries

“Children need your love and care. This is demonstrated through words of affirmation and a hug, but also through boundaries and discipline!”

“While I think my parents were better than others it was in the culture by members to use the pastor’s kids as voluntary physical labor around the church. We were required to perform music or other duties at services. We were required to go on evangelistic outreach even if no other kids were ever there. And we were always being used as a sermon illustration. The worst humiliation was being used as the example for the other kids like when I was called out publicly in a service by the song leader, deacon or pastor for talking during the service or sitting in the back or something similar.”

The influence of people on the clergy family can be profound, sometimes for the good and sometimes for the bad. The parents need to be careful for reasons that most clergy know. Friends are important and congregations need to get over the notion that pastors and spouses should not have special friends. They should and need to have special friends even within the congregation. The real question is whom should clergy couple have as friends? Whom should the PKs and MKs have as friends? Should the kids be allowed to be friends with anyone and everyone? Often, the kids are used, most often unintentionally, in order to bring more kids into the church or maybe to make some parents happy because their own kids are having struggles. What happens, though, is that ministry children are thrown right in the middle of some deep problems, and they are unprepared to deal with the complexity of the issues before them.

If parents are not careful, the social life and connections the kids have can be used to help the parents accomplish certain aspirations of ministry. Reaching people and free hands for

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the use of ministry can become a part of family life that the kids will dread and become hardened to later in life. Cameron Lee states, “When parents do involve their children in the ministry, it may in ways make the PKs feel used instead of important . . .”27 According to the results of the survey, close to 30% of the PKs and MKs indicated this to be true.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 24. Ministry Children Survey Question 41 Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Did you ever feel like you were being used to reach people your age because their parents were failing to reach them?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
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<td>Often</td>
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<td>Continually</td>
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answered question 67
skipped question 18

“They are not tools for you to use for your own advancement. You are a tool to use for their advancement.”

Parents need to develop the ability to discern whom they should have as friends and whom they should lead their own children to be friends with; but how? Henry Cloud and John Townsend provide valuable direction by proposing that safe people are important for the proper spiritual growth and overall success in the Christian life. They write, “. . . the ability to determine good character in people is one of God’s most vital ingredients for our personal and spiritual growth. What is character discernment? It is simply being able to tell ‘sheep from the goats’ in

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your life, evaluating who is good for you, and who is not. And those who are good are called ‘safe people,’ those individuals who truly make us better by their presence in our lives.”

1. Look nice and stay quiet, particularly when we were in a new environment. I can specifically remember being told to ‘be seen and not heard.’

2. Free labor. It wasn't the worst thing in the world but most kids aren't required to do fundraisers or clean the bathrooms at their parents' job.”

“We were required to attend every function whether we wanted to or not even as older teens. We were often told what to do or not to do to protect our family's reputation. I was often told that my decisions and actions could affect my dad's job security. For instance, when an unwed girl in the church became pregnant, I was told that if I did that, dad would lose his job. I felt responsible for our family's livelihood.”

Telephone Boundaries

“Learn to let the phone go to voicemail. When you are spending time with your family, keep it family time. If your child is getting into trouble, they might just want to spend time with you.”

The telephone is something that comes up in many conversations with ministry children. The phone could ring during supper, during a family game, while a story is being read, during a Thanksgiving meal, and even while the family is exchanging the Christmas gifts, and many pastors feel obligated to answer because someone might need them. If the truth were fully told, close to 100% of the calls could be handled during office hours or by someone other than the pastor. Add to this text messaging, Facebook, email, etc. and the family feels as though they can be put on hold at any time for any reason, by any person. The family is left thinking that everyone else’s needs are more important than their own and that it is selfish of them to want some uninterrupted time with their dad or even their mother.

28 Cloud and Townsend, Safe People, 11-12.
Emergencies are rarely just that. Rather, they are usually something that the person just needs a sense of approval or maybe they are just addicted to ministerial care. What can be done in order to create boundaries that protect the time of the family? Caller ID! Any pastor can soon discern after being at a church or ministry for a short period of time who those people are who have a tendency to call the home. They usually ask if you are busy or they may ask, “Do you have a minute?” The call usually turns into thirty or forty minutes, and there the family sits, or maybe they have gone on to something else altogether.

Clear boundaries need to be established and shared with the congregation at the beginning of a ministry so that all understand that calls to the home should only take place when the situation is near a life or death type of issue. If these boundaries are not respected, the phone should be shut off or even the landline disconnected, if for no other reason to teach the people to call the office. The pastor may want to intentionally leave calls unanswered when some people call so that they can learn that the pastor, spouse, and the family are not always at everyone’s beckoning.

Time Boundaries

“He was not there to gain his attention. Too busy saving souls and doing the Church's work to spend time at home.”

Time is a very special commodity. The older people get the more they realize this. Time cannot be recaptured; when the kids are grown and gone, the kids are grown and gone. The seasons of ministry also need to be understood. When the kids are young and at home, they need the undivided time of their parents and they need a lot of it. Claiming to give only quality time will not meet the needs of the family. The family needs and deserves quality and quantity.
clergy parents need to say ‘no’ when the expectations of the congregation interfere with the time of the family. Congregations need to understand this, and the parents need to hold firm.

The pastor, missionary, and their spouses need to learn to understand that some ministries require more time than they have, and this needs to be investigated before the ministry is accepted. No congregation, missions’ agency, or ministry should attempt to dictate to the parents the amount of time that is acceptable for families to spend with family. No more should be expected than any other position or job some may have over the expanse of the entire week.

In addition, churches and pastors must consider the necessity of all the programs that are taking place throughout the week. Are they really needed? Are they really accomplishing the purpose? Is the church having the program in order to keep up with other churches or ministries? Stetzer, Stanley, and Hayes have some interesting insight into this subject as it pertains to the forty and under ages. While speaking about community within God’s people and how those forty and under crave it, they make mention that one of the challenges to community is “Velocity,” which deals with the rapid pace of life, everything and everyone who pulls in all directions in order to claim their time. Phone calls, mail, emails, text messages, groups in the community, extended family, church, youth group, children’s ministry, Christmas, Easter, patriotic programs, and many others all pull them when all they want is time to spend with their family. While most of their parents thrived with the busy life and dragging their kids around, the forty and younger crowd want time at home with their families. Churches that condense and consolidate ministries and programs will be the ones that attract today’s young families.

29Stetzer, Stanley and Hayes, Lost, 80.
Compassion Fatigue

The pastor and spouse are often called upon to minister to individuals and families who are dealing with hurt and pain. Rarely are these times planned and scheduled. They are usually emergencies to those who are hurting. It is during these times that the pastor and even the spouse are expected to drop everything and focus in on the need of the moment. These times can take place during the normal flow of the day, during the evening hour, the day the pastor takes off, and even while the clergy family is away on vacation. The people who are hurting rarely understand what this can do to the entire clergy family. This is usually no big issue at first, but after some time, and it is different for everyone, the person giving help during these times grows tired of offering healing and help. How many times a week can everything be dropped to attend to these needs? How many mornings and evenings away from the family can be afforded before it begins to affect the family? How many times can the pastor miss the children’s concerts and sports events before the kids and spouse begin to feel neglected? How many vacations can be interrupted before every member in the family tires of it? Darling, McWey, and Hill deal with these very problems as they relate to the clergy family, and in doing so, offer some very helpful thoughts along this subject. They assert, “Those who work with or around trauma, such as clergy or health care workers, often encounter compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, which involves the difficulty of being in harm’s way while needing to act with compassion.”30 The constant challenge of trauma and emergency care of marriage relationships, rebellious kids, job loss, home foreclosure, financial reverses, sexual infidelity, and relationship breakup can have a very draining effect on the clergy family: “Compassion fatigue can affect not

30 Darling, McWey, and Hill, “Paradox,” 440.
only the caregivers but also their entire family members and closest friends who provide a system of support.”

“When my dad would get called away from home, or one of our events, or even vacation, if we complained we were told it was just what he had to do. He didn’t have a choice. Even recently when we had travelled from out of town to spend a weekend with my parents, there was an incident which called him away. It took my brother getting irate to keep him from going away during the two days we had to spend as a family.”

Becoming aware of compassion fatigue is extremely important to learning to deal with it. Time needs to be spent considering the entire family and the fatigue level for each of them. Some individuals certainly find fulfillment in helping people during times of trauma. Those who have certain personality types and giftedness may be energized by having people who need his help during times of trauma. This is called “compassion satisfaction,” of which some Darling, McWey, and Hill have remarked, “Compassion Satisfaction tends to counteract compassion fatigue by providing meaning and hope based on successfully helping other.” Thus, he greatest need is boundaries and margins in life and in ministry.

**Intrusive Congregations**

Anyone who has been a part of typical traditional congregations has had to deal with intrusive people, at least to some degree. These types of people most often are a part of the congregation where the family is serving, but at times, the intrusion comes from those outside the congregation. Those who do not understand the need of the family to have family time often expect the pastor, and at times the entire family, to be available whenever the ‘intruder’ needs

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31 Darling, McWey, and Hill, “Paradox,” 440

32 Ibid.
them. At first, it is just an interruption in the family life, but after a while, the family will feel violated and used. The phone calls, the doorbells, the emergency conversations at the ball game, and the extra time speaking to these people after the church service all drain the family and become a real nuisance. Most of the time, only the clergy family recognizes this source of personal and family stress and most in the congregation are oblivious to it. They only see the pastor caring for them, but when it happens several times a week and on a consistent basis over an extended period, the stress level of the family begins to build. If it is not dealt with, dread and bitterness can set in. Cameron Lee addresses this subject in an article he has written. He writes, “The empirical and anecdotal literature on clergy suggests that intrusive demands on ministers and their families are a significant source of stress."33 Lee goes on in detail to describe the intrusive nature of some congregations and the profound impact it can have on the entire family. Because of the spiritual nature of ministry, the family is often guilt ridden because they feel like they are not willing to sacrifice for the Lord. As a result, the clergy families are plagued with guilt, bitterness, and even depression. Again, Lee points out four main areas of congregational intrusions: Personal criticism of the minister, presumptive expectations of the minister’s flexibility and availability on part of the congregation, boundary ambiguity, and criticism of the minister’s family.34 While most congregants do and will not see this as a problem, the family does, and the parents need to have the biblical applications in place to effectively handle the problem.


34Ibid., 481.
“Mind your own business and stop picking on an easy target, the devil's already got that covered. Put yourself in our shoes for one minute and imagine living in a fish bowl every day of the week . . . not just Sundays.”

“Leave them alone!! haha! They are just normal kids, nothing special, and yet, perhaps they need more special, gentle attention and investment since their parents are often giving extra attention to the church's needs.”

According to the participants of the survey, there were several areas of concern when it came to intrusive people. One of the concerns that many expressed leading up to this study was the level of congregational meanness toward PKs and sometimes MKs. They were asked if they had “ever felt like people in the congregation ever took out their frustrations on them.” They responded in the following manor: 52% - never, 31.9% - occasionally, 14.5% - often, 1.4% - continually. Moreover, in response to the question “Did you ever feel like your home was public property?” they responded in the following manor: 51.4% - never, 25.7% - occasionally, 14.3% - often, and 8.6% - constantly. Finally, when responding to the question “Did you ever feel like people in the church could tell you what to do?” they responded in the following manor: 34.6% - never, 28.6% - occasionally, 24.3% - often, and 12.9% - continually.

These responses indeed reveal some very troubling survey results! These ministry children had experienced many things because of intrusive behavior. There have been reports of people coming into homes when the family was gone or out of town and going through the dressers to see what kind of clothing the kids were wearing. There have been reports of people watching the homes from a distance; at times using binoculars in order to see who was coming in and out, whom the kids were dating, what time the lights would be turn off, and what lights were left on. One of the biggest problems that seem to be a breeding ground is the parsonage, owned
by the church, often close to the church. There was a feeling of entitlement. The people felt like they had a right to go into these homes and watch these homes because they gave their tithe to the church and were voting members. What is the clergy family to do? Boundaries!

**Congregational Watchdogs**

Most pastors can name those in the congregation who fit the description of being “congregational watch-dogs,” “or those who are looking for something wrong or questionable and who will take this information to whomever will listen. Sometime the accusation will be masked in a prayer request. Sometimes these people will sense the need to confront the pastor, but mostly they will confront the family. The kids have to deal with these things often, and for the most part, they are helpless and cannot do anything. The parents are often unsuspecting and are oblivious to what is being said to their kids.

“*Take a look at your own life and your own family. Focus the attention and conviction that you have for me on yourself and your family. Back off!*”

“... *Their words and actions had a lasting impact on my life and the life of my family... while I have forgiven them, I still am overcoming the effects of that situation. I would want them to strive to honor the Lord in their future actions and relationships with His people.*”

The parents of these kids need to be aware that in many congregations there are people who, for some reason, have taken upon themselves to be the “congregational watch-dogs.” This indeed is a huge struggle for some clergy families, and the parents need to be proactive in dealing with these people. The parents need to cultivate an environment with their children so that they have the freedom to talk to mom and dad. Then, the parents need to watch and listen with their eyes and ears wide open, looking for signs of what could be taking place. Then, the parents need to be parents and protect their children. If the parents do not protect them, who
will? Again, boundaries need to be set up even before a call to a mission field or a church is accepted so that everyone understands what is acceptable and what is not.

**Social Desirability Factor**

According to Darling, McWey, and Hill, because “clergy are at the forefront in times of personal, familial, and community stress . . . [and] are often seen as healers and not individuals with concerns of their own . . . their own stresses are often overlooked by those around them.” They continue by asserting, “This can be confounded by ‘the social desirability factor,’ or the assertion that clergy persons are more reluctant to admit when they are feeling overloaded.” In other words, the pastor, and even sometimes the spouse, can be living a lie. Because of the demands of the congregation and the need to succeed, the pastor and spouse become so drained and overloaded they cannot, at least in their own mind, acknowledge that they are overloaded. Over an extended period, this can have a severe effect on the health of the pastor and spouse. It sometimes takes a dramatic sickness or an emergency before they are willing to admit their limitations.

“I don’t remember. I just remember most the feeling of wanting a Daddy who invested in me as much or more as investing in Kingdom work or church people (who were stubborn and ungrateful). I do remember begging God to heal my Dad of his various illnesses so that he would have more energy to give to his family, but then also seeing him when he was well and hearing his dreams and desires to do ministry . . . and my response (internally) screaming: ‘What about simply ministry to your family?!’”

What happens is that if the pastor and spouse remain in this mindset and refuse to admit limitations, they at some point will come to a sudden halt. One of them will break down, tired of it all, and just want to get out. Those starting in ministry need to understand this and stop

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36 Darling, McWey, and Hill, “Paradox,” 439-40.
trying to be super-pastor. In an article by Alan Heller, he shares several ministry ideas that have the very purpose of helping and nursing these families back to health. The name of the article really says it all, “Come Away or Fall Apart.”37 In this article, he introduces the ministries that are available to help these troubled families who have been serving their churches until there is nothing more to give. Therefore, for this reason and many more, the importance of boundaries in the life of a missionary or pastor and in the life of the clergy family cannot be overstated.

Conclusion

Clergy children are indeed scattered all throughout the landscape of society. Some have accomplished some very respectable things such as presidents, educators, lawyers, professional athletes, popular musicians, and some have even followed their parents by being pastors and missionaries themselves. In fact, it seems that most people know either a missionary’s kid or pastor’s kid, and everyone seems to possess an informed opinion of who they are, what they should be, what their role is in kingdom work, and why some of them turn away from the Lord. Many wonderful people carry these titles and are serving the Lord in many places around the world. However, many do not have the joy that some have experienced, and for years, these people known as PKs and MKs have been discarded, ignored, shunned, laughed at, and judged. One of the main purposes of this thesis project was to give these people a voice. Some expressed gratitude, some shared their pain and hurt. Most participants, though, truly want to help other parents who are raising their kids in a ministry setting so that the next generation can serve with the joy God intends. The help these “kids” have given has been amazing. Years

of research and study needs be put into the care and life of the entire clergy family. It could take an entire generation to change the toxic behavior that has done so much harm in previous generations.

As the research stage progressed, some glaring weaknesses began to surface. For example, during the survey stage of the research there were not very many opportunities for the participants to thank and acknowledge parents who had done a wonderful job. A second weakness was with the missionary children. There needs to be research that focuses in on them and their specific hurts and needs. Some groups have stepped up and are making a positive impact on MKs, especially when they begin to re-enter their passport country. Although PKs and MKs are all ministry kids, they each have unique challenges, blessings, hurts, pains, and disappointments.

Kingdom workers, churches, mission’s agencies, denominations, and seminaries all need to be more intentional in acknowledging the challenges, problems, and mistakes of the past when it comes to the clergy family. It almost seems as though some of these groups want to brush the harm that has been done to both the clergy family and specifically ministry children under the carpet. The thinking seems to be that harm will be done to the good name of Jesus if anything gets out; perhaps people may stop supporting them or switch to another group that appears to be flawless. Some emails, phone calls, and even face-to-face responses have proven this to be all to true. A cover up or pleading ignorance will never be a positive thing for the cause and the awesome name of Jesus. The issues need to be dealt with aggressively. Only this will bring glory to the good name of Jesus!
The hurt and the pain that many adults carry because of hurtful ministry experiences are deep and real. All who are a part of the Kingdom of God must become aware of what is taking place and be willing to change the behavior and attitude towards ministry kids so that the trajectory of their lives can be changed. The expectations, stereotypes, “royal family” expectations, spillover, congregational watchdogs, etc. need to end. How did the Kingdom of God get it so wrong when it comes to the expectations of and care for the clergy family, especially the kids? These are people, and they are all around. In fact, a reader of this project may perhaps be a ministry child. The separation of the clergy and the laity can be seen clearly with what the church expects and demands of these kids.

It is time for change; if such repulsive behaviors were taking place in any other part of kingdom work, immediate action would begin. Committees would be formed, discussion groups would begin, and strategic planning would start. How many more kids will be harmed? How many more churches, denominations, mission’s agencies, and seminaries will ignore this plague that has done so much harm? Clergy parents need to rise to the occasion for the sake of their own children. The ministry children, both PKs and MKs, need their parents! In a personal correspondence with one writer he remarked, “I think the most frequent detrimental thing you will hear is they feel as if they missed having a real father. One PK shared that at one point as a little girl she was so frustrated she called the church office and asked for an appointment to see her dad.”

The entire family – wife, sons, daughters, sons/daughters-in-law, and grandkids need the husband and the wife, the father and the mother. There simply are no substitutes. Dad

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and Mom, you need to be there, and when you are there with your families, you must be all there! Pastors and spouses need to understand that by them making the family their priority they will be following the Scriptural admonition to be examples unto their congregations.

1 Peter 5:3-4

*Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.*

Many parents within the church do not make their families the priority because they are not seeing it being modeled in the lives of the clergy. Yes, there are a lot of messages and a great amount of talk, but the calendar is still filled with stuff that distracts from family life. This needs to change. The church should take a close look at its ministry activities so they can trim down that which is eating away at the very fabric of family life.

Just as the Prophet Ezekiel was told by God, “I have made you a watchman.” Parents, especially the fathers need to rise up and become the watchmen of their own families. When the ministry demands are hurled at the family as an intruder to the home, fathers need to stand their ground for the sake of their own kids. Many churches would be heartbroken if they knew what was really taking place in the lives and homes of the clergy. Therefore, they need to be told. Denominations need to be proactive in support of this paradigm shift. They need to be intentional in educating the congregation on the subject of the clergy family. Churches need to learn to locate those who would hurt and cause pain to the clergy and their families and deal with them biblically. If repentance is not sought, church discipline needs to be practice so that the

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39 NLT.

40 Ezekiel 3:17.
needed change can take place in the heart of these dangerous people. If churches will not deal with these people maybe the church should be marked as a problem church so that clergy families are not placed in the middle of these extremely toxic environments. Missionaries need to rethink their approach to “handling” their kids while they are on the mission field. Yes, many MKs have had amazing experiences, and for this all are thankful. However, the truth concerning what has proven to be harmful to the kids needs to be addressed. The mindset of one participant in response to the survey reveals a sad and sickening attitude. He or she wrote, “The result of the survey won’t be getting out to anyone will it?” The fear was that the mission’s agency may get a bad name.

Furthermore, parents need to stop turning their parental authority over to any group, board, director, or anyone in the church who may think he or she has the right to lord over the clergy family and their kids. If parents are being told what to do with their kids, perhaps it is time to find another mission’s agency or church. Kids need their parents and not a substitute.

Moreover, the parents need to lead the way in learning and applying the truth concerning their identity in Christ. The surrender of this reality can quickly turn into idolatry; over-concern with the success of a ministry, the growth of a church, the increase in the budget, the conferences at which they speak, and anything else in which one might place one’s worth is idolatry. Simply stated, this idolatry is tearing the clergy family apart. The identity of every child of God needs to be grounded and re-grounded in who we are in Jesus Christ; not in some position, apparent success, what others may think, or anything else. All believers in Jesus Christ are accepted by Him, secure in Him, and significant in Him alone! Being the child of the King

41Anonymous.
far exceeds being a child of the preacher. Maybe instead of being PKs or MKs they should be referred to as KKs, or, King’s kids!

The clergy family also needs to be intentional in reclaiming their kids for the Lord. This goes far beyond getting them back in church. The emphasis needs to be on bringing them back to Christ. The first needed step is often the parents of adult PKs and MKs experiencing transformation themselves. The words and actions that for years have been used to clobber the kids need to end. These parents need to stop preaching to their kids and instead focus on living the Word of God and letting the Spirit of God do the drawing. It is of extreme importance that the parents stop being so defensive and acknowledge that they, as all other parents, have contributed to both the good qualities the kids have as well as the qualities that are rebellious. Many parents do not and will not see this until it may be too late. That is why all parents, especially clergy parents, need to listen to those who understand family life in the ministry setting.

The last few verses of the Old Testament depict what needs to transpire in the clergy home in order for the kids to become all that God desires them to be.

Malachi 4:5-6

"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."42

Interestingly, most often parents only see the hearts of the kids needing to be turned back toward the Lord and to them as parents. The prophet Malachi, however, indicates that both the parents (father) and the kids have some turning to do. For this reason, clergy parents need

42NLT.
specialized training on this very subject, so that they can be prepared for parenting in the ministry setting. The key is authenticity. Clergy need to learn to be authentic in order to present the proper reality to the congregation. If clergy members are not careful, they could be training their children to be little hypocrites. Instead of being disciples of Jesus Christ, they could be becoming disciples of the Pharisees right before their own eyes. This is the loud cry of many adult PKs and MKs; reality! In order for this to become a reality, it will take time, time together living out life together. This biblical application is clear in the Scripture.

Mark 3:13-14

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.\(^{43}\)

Jesus, the master teacher, called these men to be with Him. In the same way, parents need to be with their children, for this was the plan of Jesus in making disciples. It was not that He was going to preach another sermon to them. They were able to watch Jesus in all parts of life. He showed them through moment by moment life experience. Kids need the parents, not another sermon or another word of instruction. They need to see their parents authentically living out the Word of God in their actions, words, attitudes, and everyday life experiences.

The subject of ministry children is a highly emotional subject. Everyone has an opinion on this matter, and it is usually based on someone they know who is a PK or an MK. Some might even think that they understand all the different aspects of clergy family life because that is what they are. However, in the introduction to this study, PKs and MKs are on every level of the cultural and societal spectrum. Some are still walking with the Lord, while some are the

\(^{43}\text{NKJV}.\)
most adamant opponents to the Christian faith. Bringing these things to light has caused all sorts of dialogue. Some have taken offence to this study as though it will shed a very negative light on the Lord. Others have expressed their ignorance by claiming to be knowledgeable, when in reality they know very little. If nothing else, perhaps this study will cause new and scientific studies to develop in the area of clergy family life, specifically with the children. Maybe someday studies will take place that include not only those who have “made it,” but those who are homeless and living on the street. Perhaps someday, studies can take place that not only include those who are engaged in a profound ministry of some kind, but will also include those who are trying to shut down certain mission’s agencies and/or denominations. Maybe someday a denomination will stand tall and finally begin the process of cleansing its churches of the toxic behavior and attitudes that have hurt so many people and has all but brought kingdom work to a standstill. Maybe someday seminaries will instruct future pastors, missionaries, and other kingdom leaders how to navigate their families through the rough and difficult waters that are called “the ministry.”

Nevertheless, the call for the day is for clergy parents, specifically the fathers, to stand up and stop the invasion of their homes. Fathers need to be advocates for the authentic, spiritual development of their children. Fathers, at times in ministry, need to say, “Enough is enough. My family needs me, and I need my family.” Fathers need to stand up and proclaim that certain behaviors and expectations are unacceptable, and he will not allow it as it relates to his family. This may mean that the ministry in which they are involved will change and understand the error of its ways. This may mean that the father will face conflict because of this stand. It may mean that the family will need to find another line of work, at least for a while until a new ministry is
started or a new ministry door opens that will not be hazardous to the spiritual development of the family.

As a result of this research project, the clergy family must be made aware of the biblical responsibilities with which they have been entrusted. The family is at the very heart of the local church. The family is likewise at the very heart of the pastor/missionary and their spouses. The problem is that the children are the ones who suffer the most. In fact, they can be the ones in the entire kingdom of God who get the least amount of Bible training and teaching and authentic attention, even though they are the most impressionable.

Next, as a result of this research project, it should be understood that the clergy family must deal with all areas of clergy life and confront provocations. Based upon the teaching and understanding of Ephesians 6:4, biblical training and practical solutions must be outlined in order to give the clergy families, specifically the parents, the biblical applications to lead their children to desire the things of God, not despise them. For example, it has been stated that 80% of clergy come from dysfunctional homes themselves. Learning to recognize the need to deal with generational and family tendencies is worthy of much consideration during early training periods in order to deal with pre-existing familial, emotional, spiritual, and social issues.

In addition, a proper understanding of the transfer of biblical information must become the new norm. While the tendency to pass off biblical teaching to others is rarely the intention, in practice this is indeed what takes place in even the homes of the clergy. In pastors’ homes and with church people in general, the transferring of biblical information takes place by someone other than the parent; the Sunday school teacher, the youth worker, the children’s leader, and

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44Sanford, Perfect, 24.
others are all some instructors to whom many have given the responsibility of biblically educating their children. For the missionary, this may be in the boarding school or some other care unit that is in place while the parents are off serving the Lord. Although there is some real value in these areas of teaching, the foundation, core, and heart of biblical education it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents. This is clearly presented in Deuteronomy 6:1-25, which continually tells parents, specifically the father, what is to be passed on to children. If the children are going to learn the truth of God’s Word, the mentoring of the children by the parents is nearly an absolute. Following the example of Jesus in Mark 3:14 in calling His disciples to be with Him so that they could be taught by His life, there must be a major paradigm change for pastors and missionaries who want to only instruct. The difference between age-segregated education and integrated education is an area of effective application.

Moreover, as a result of this research reject, we need to go beyond words and make it a reality that the father is the protector of the home. The symbol of the father as the watchman over the family is an excellent picture of protecting and sheltering the family from harm. In many cases, being the protector of a clergy family means that the father will need to shelter his family from the ministry and those who can and will bring harm. The need of the father to be bold and courageous, even in the midst of the threat of losing his job, is pivotal for the kids’ understanding that they are on his priority list. Great insight and wisdom is needed to discern when and how a father’s protective hand needs to be exercised.
As a result of this research project, we also need to clearly establish the authority of the parents. The training of a child is a huge responsibility. Proverbs 22:6 describes how this training has profound ramifications for the rest of a child’s life.

“Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.”

Here again, so many look at themselves as being experts in this area when in reality they are not. The problem is that so much harm is often done to the children before some parents are willing to make the proper biblical adjustments. The clergy parents, both pastors and their spouses and missionaries and their spouses, approach their children in order to instruct them in ways that they would never approach others. Instead of teaching and mentoring in ways that really instill truth into the lives of their children, determined force, or maybe intimidation, is often used. Therefore, the focus of this project has been what real biblical authority looks like and how it should be biblically applied as the parents train their children.

Furthermore, as a result of this research project, we need to be developing real relationships with Christ. In Matthew 19:14 some were trying to keep the children from coming to Christ. In response Jesus says, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those are are like these children.” There is a real need for everyone, including children, to have a real, authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. Children of missionaries and pastors often struggle with a real relationship with Jesus Christ because there are so many externals to which they must aspire. People in churches can be brutal and harmful to the spirituality of kids. They are expected to look the part of whatever anyone may have in

\[45\text{NLT.}\]
mind. The need of a real authentic relationship with Jesus from the heart and for the glory of the Lord alone must be taught and sought. Ministry children have learned to play the game to please people; now they need to learn to please the Lord alone.

As a result of this research project, as ministers we must never use our kids to build our personal ministries. With the passion to build a church, ministry, or to reach a people group for Jesus Christ, there are times that children are so involved with the work of their parents that they can quickly become resentful, thus leading to bitterness. Ministry children are the foundation for so many ministries, and people develop the mindset that because the children are an extension of their parents’ ministry, they too can be used. Parents are guilty of this as well and should take a look at the big picture, teaching the kids how to use their gifts and talents for the Lord.

As a result of this research project, several areas in need of transformation have been identified. The church culture needs to change its view concerning ministry children. There is such a high view placed on them that it is impossible for them to meet this expectations. This is the reality of what most want to have for their pastors and missionaries; perfect examples with no place for flaws, and every member of the family must be ready to take any and all leadership positions both within the local ministry as well as in the public sector. Lee and Balswick refer to this as the “Royal Family Complex.” They write,

“The minister still tends to be regarded as the father of the extended family, of which his wife is the mother. Furthermore, like the British royal family, which symbolizes the Empire and Commonwealth to the world community, the minister and his family symbolize the congregation to the community. In their representative function the “royal family” is given
love and respect, without earning or necessarily deserving the response. But the price of respect and love is example-ship.”46

Today’s church culture needs to step towards a transformation into reality; clergy families are normal.

As a result of this research project, we also need to be proactive with intentional seminary training. Seminary training is an exciting time for the student. Many lessons and foundational beliefs are established, and a growing hunger to learn and to seek the Lord are some of the desired outcomes. When all the areas of study are considered, there seems to be a real lack of preparation in dealing with personal and familial issues. It is so important to get a handle on this area of the family in ministry so that greater family health can be realized. The challenges to the clergy family are unique because the Lord has a way of calling the humble and simple. What is not dealt with is that often there are issues deep within the clergy that have never been resolved.

Finally, as a result of this research project, we need to develop intentional and transformational denominational church training. The need of the day is for a major paradigm shift to take place on the denominational level. Most churches are relatively free from denominational mandates, but times of transition can be an ideal time to intentionally deal at length with the realities of the clergy families. It is during these times that the “congregational watch-dogs”47 can be identified and dealt with. These are the people who make it their calling to

46Lee and Balswick, Glass House, 60.

watch the clergy families, looking for the fault lines that they most surely will find sooner or later. There is so much that can be said from the Scriptures on how to be an encourager instead of a destroyer.

Revelation 22:17-18

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.\(^{48}\)

To any and all ministry children who have been hurt and who are living in pain: Come back to the Lord. Do not let the carnality of some people keep you away from a loving and caring Lord any longer. There is help for you. There are those who do care. There are those who understand. Come back home. The problem is with the bride (the church); the problem has never been with the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ). Come back, and allow Him to restore you and become a change agent in Kingdom work so that current clergy families, specifically PKs and MKs, can experience the joy and thrill of serving the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords!

As a father of four amazing PKs, I thank the Lord daily for them and the thrill of being their father. I am thankful for the kindness they have shown to me by forgiving me for all of the mistakes that I have made. It is because they mean more to me than life itself that I have been driven to be so passionate for the plight of ministry children. It is by their prompting that I have conducted these studies and submit these findings for the betterment of clergy families for years to come, specifically for the PKs and MKs.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

\(^{48}\)NKJV.
APPENDIX A

Survey Responses and Results

Question 1:

Table 25. Ministry Children Survey Question 1 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 75

skipped question 0

Analysis:

With both church people and community members holding ministry children to a higher standard, these adults remember clearly what others got away with and what they could not. Christians need to be aware of what is taking place and learn to be consistent with all kids. Parents need to rise to the need of their children and take a stand in favor of their kids. This needs to take place both within the church and in the public arena as well. With only 20% saying that this was not an issue, 80% are saying yes, it was a part of their struggle. Almost 23% said that this was a major issue. Parents need to be aware of this and seek to be consistent. Christians should look at PKs and MKs through the same glasses they would any other young person.
Question 2:

Analysis:

With most of those taking the survey being PKs, the focus of bad memories within the church is deacons. Some of the issues they struggle with will be dealt with later. It would seem that with MKs the issues with the pastors of churches rise. First, PKs are more hesitant to speak ill about a pastor because he is probably their parent. This is not normally the case with MKs. Youth pastors and youth workers received much more criticism than anticipated, perhaps because they were the ones who spearheaded the reminders of who they were and whom their parents were.

Note: In response to the above question, this follow up question was presented: “What took place in your younger days that caused you to react this way?” Fifty-one participants responded with the following statements:

- “Deacons that seek that position and then use it to push their own agenda within the church even if it hurt my Dad.”
- “The main focus was witnessing. It made it seem that if you didn't witness every day you were a bad Christian.”
- “The deacons ran the church and forced the pastor at a church my dad worked at to resign. They forced him to resign because they didn't like him using money for mission
I have a problem with deacon boards/bodies now not only because of that, but also because they're biblically not supposed to be the governing bodies of the church; they're the servants.”

- “During my time growing up in the church I would often hear the deacons talking about my dad the preacher and that would really bother me. The way they acted when he was around and the way that they acted when he wasn't was very different. It was very hypocritical.”

- “The way that they treated my father it took a longtime and a lot of prayer for me to become involved in just being in church.”

- “I do not attend church.”

- “For years I watched the church's adults openly hostile with one another and the pastor. I saw dishonesty, treachery, immorality as bad as anything anywhere else. There was a general hateful spirit toward other churches and Christians which I think was the result of some twisted pride masquerading as righteousness which infected you after a few years.”

- “Case of abuse that was covered up. I knew the truth about this person and though he was asked to leave our particular mission he is still in ministry today and still has contact with children.”

- “I got into some trouble for which I was totally at fault, and this leader came down on me pretty hard. Only to find out later that he was struggling with pornography. Seemed very hypocritical.”

- “This is an MK here so the church model really doesn't apply. I did struggle to some degree with the way mission leadership treated my father.”

- “This survey should have another option for #3- None of the above. Have no problem with any members of my church's congregation, including leaders. And if I did, this survey is assuming it’s because of some horrible thing in my past life as an MK. I lived on the mission field for 18 years and am so grateful for the strong Christian men and women that disciple me and shared the love of God to me daily.”

- “Youth Pastors-My first youth leaders would ask a question during youth group and immediately say that I wasn't allowed to answer. At other times they would do "sword drills" where we were to look up the bible reference given as quickly as possible. They would tell my brother and me that we were not allowed to participate so that "others could have a chance." I felt singled out and in some ways punished for being the pastor's kid who knew their Bible. Little did the youth leaders know that I would often delay answering in an attempt to make others participate but when others would not speak up, I felt obligated because I was the PK. During sword drills, I often sat with my Bible open to the passage and never announced that I had found the passage. The second set of youth leaders acted like my brother and I were not even part of the youth group. The leaders often went to lunch with or attended athletic events of other youth, but rarely attended games for my brother or me and never went to lunch. Also in my senior year of high school, I was one of only four girls in the youth group. There was an event that the youth was sponsoring and the boys from the youth group were meeting with the male leaders at my house. When the leader arrived, he asked if I was going to his house to spend the night with his wife and the girls from the youth group. I told him I didn't know about it. He said his wife had called all the girls. I never received a call. It was hard to imagine
how, being one of four girls, and the pastor's daughter no less, her excuse was she forgot. I didn't go because I was too hurt and this was like the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. I actually confronted them about their actions toward my brother and me. I was relieved to be leaving youth group when I graduated but my brother still had 2 years left and he was miserable. Deacons- When my dad first arrived at the current church, I was in middle school. It was a very difficult transition. There were people in the church who wanted to kick him out. Our house was egged and there were threatening phone calls. The stress was very apparent in my dad. At one point he was having chest pain because of it. He wouldn't tell the deacons how it was affecting his health. I would sit through each service and watch my dad for any signs that he was having chest pain or a heart attack. I would scan the congregation for doctors and nurses who could help him should he become ill. I blamed the deacons for not standing up for him and not recognizing the stress that was on him. Peers- I blamed the church members for having too many and too high expectations on my dad. They demanded so much from him at all hours and all days. I felt that they got the best and most of my dad. He would be exhausted and emotionally drained when he was home. We were often told we couldn't do things or say things because we had our "reputation" to protect. I knew it was because church members held us to a different standard and I began to resent them for the pressures my dad put on us to stay in their good graces. I began to see them as back-biting, demanding, selfish, nominal Christians.”

- “No real struggles or early bad memories, other than today I never felt the urge to develop a friendship with a pastor. I.E. not impressed with the "position" enough to seek a friendship...great if we connected, but Ok, if we didn't.”
- “The setup of the church in the United States frustrates me. Growing up there was much more involvement in church and more of a sense of community than there is today. Men from our field took turns leading the study. We didn't have a pastor or youth pastor and more people pitched in and played a part in our lives which provided an amazing place to grow up. I am frustrated by the lack of community in our churches today.”
- “I always respected the deacons in our church, but there was a situation in my church where my dad really needed some support and he didn't receive that from the deacons that were in our church. This hasn't made me think that every deacon is that way. But I suppose I have been skeptical of their role and if any ever take it seriously. I also think that in today's church, deacons don't function as deacons SHOULD function. They don't serve as we see in Scripture. They are more of a "board of directors" and often times I think that instead of servant hood, they are just there to make decisions and try to veto any vision the pastor have.”
- “Other Christian kids my age often did not act in the way that they should. Also, there was a church split at my home church and the senior pastor was dishonest throughout the entire process.”
- “Church leadership continually expected my behavior to be more mature than would be appropriate for my age. I was always expected to be a leader. As a result, I feel I am not comfortable in intimate relationships with church leaders. I feel I have something to hide, although I don't.”
“I wonder about decisions being made and assume selfish motives because a lot of decisions were made that negatively affected my family. Those decisions were made out of selfish motives.”

“Poor leadership, lies and adultery by our youth leader.”

“We went through a church split that was primarily started by the deacons and youth pastor against my father. They made the church very uncomfortable for me and my family. It took me several years to learn to trust the members of our new church.”

“Not a big struggle but Deacons attacked (not physically) my dad growing up.”

“I don't have a struggle with any of the church leaders that I've known.”

“Deacons appeared to use their power for a personal agenda instead of for the good of the church.”

“No, I have long since resolved any issues of this sort if I ever had them.”

“There were problems but that does not affect me today.”

“Sadly, I am often skeptical of many youth pastors because I have heard stories of inappropriate relationships within their ministry. I understand that the teenagers/adolescents are extremely influential and eager to be accepted and pray that men/women chosen to work with youth are surrounded by a hedge of protection.”

“Peers looked at me differently. Deacons bickered and fought with my dad, the pastor”

“Fights between deacons and pastor in business meetings.”

“Pastors were much more well-rounded, involved in managing staff, visiting, teaching, and other aspects of ministry, instead of focusing on just one area, like preaching as so many seem to do today.”

“I have never seen a set of deacons really back their pastor and seek to work together to further the vision of the church.”

“The effects of church politics are not limited to the politics of the church. Part I: Pastors -- I was raised in a string of fundamentalist Baptist churches. When I was young, my father gave up being a head pastor in order to concentrate on the lack of quality Christian education in our state. We moved to another city where he took a position as assistant pastor in a church that also came with becoming the head of that church's school. Within two years, the head pastor of that church resigned and my father became the interim pastor. A new pastor was quickly voted in but one of his first acts was to fire my father as part of a "clean slate" strategy. This did not go over well with the congregation and my father was re-instated only for that pastor to resign seven months later and then be fired for the same reasons by the pastor after that. Fortunately, we were able to relocate to another church-school within the same city with my father taking on virtually the same position. However, again, within two years the pastor of THAT church resigned and his successor promptly fired my father. (It has been explained to me that the "clean slate" concept is an actual church management strategy taught in the Hyles-Anderson seminary that produced all three of the "replacement" pastors. If so, that's an incredibly irresponsible idea.) Following that, my father formed a new church himself strictly for the purposes of it hosting a Christian school with the idea that he would never work in a school under the authority of anyone else's church ever again. The school did all right for several years but the church struggled and, eventually, my father was forced to disband it.
An old seminary friend of his was a pastor in the area and, after several years, convinced my father to bring the school onto the campus of but not necessarily under the authority of the pastor's church. My father finally agreed and brought the school in, again taking a position of assistant pastor within the church. Within four months, my father's friend resigned as pastor and left my father as the interim pastor of a church that was split into two entrenched factions, neither of whom wanted a school on the church's property. Fortunately, the two factions could also not agree on a replacement pastor. Since my father was the interim pastor, this basically bought the school more than a year's time as pastoral candidate after pastoral candidate were rejected by one faction or the other for one petty reason or another. Finally, one faction finally quit and left the church entirely and the very next candidate that came in was approved. He promptly fired my father and kicked out the school. By this time, I had entered my freshman year in college and had decided that I would never have anything to do with any Baptist church ever again. This has held true until very recently. Part II: Youth Pastors -- I did not have the benefit of having children's/youth minister until midway through my teenage years. When we finally landed in a church (the last Baptist church noted above) with someone who took an active role in ministering to youth. Unfortunately, beyond the basics of what I had heard in Sunday School all my life, he really didn't have that much to communicate. Further, it seemed that what he was really interested in was convincing we youth how cool he was and, in retrospect, perhaps re-living some of his own youth vicariously through us. I can remember one instance in which he attended a football game I was playing in (which I appreciated) but, following the game, I had to separate him from a fistfight involving him and a staff member from the other team (which I did not appreciate). Additionally, during the time when my father was serving as interim pastor of the factional church, the youth pastor's behavior came into direct conflict with my father. I would find out later that my father bailed the youth pastor out a couple times after he had been arrested on bad check charges but finally asked the youth pastor for his resignation after allegations of inappropriate comments were made against him by an underage female. Within two weeks, he had packed up his family, abandoned their apartment and left town. Personal soapbox: Now, obviously, this person was an extreme example but I feel that many of the same personalities are who go into the youth ministry field. I work in a Christian university environment and it seems to me that the only way that youth ministry candidates feel that they can be effective is to be "different". However, in that difference, they are all the same. They all wear the same youth ministry uniform (ie., untucked striped button shirt, ripped jeans, flip-flops, spiky hair, black-rim eyeglasses, takeout coffee cup in right hand, iPad with The Message Bible in left hand), they all feel the need to question every little thing no matter how tedious the topic or pedantic their objection to it, they all have a blog, and they all have "just discovered" something about God that you HAVE to let them share RIGHT NOW or else you are "quenching the Holy Spirit". Personally, I believe that youth ministry as a mission field is over-sold and under-served.”

- “Favoritism, Questionable Relationships with girls in the youth group. Frustrated deacons/sunday school teachers insisting that I should be better because of who I was.”
• “In two different churches, the deacons decided to remove my Dad as Pastor. The first church I was much too young to really know what happened, but the second church I was senior in high school/freshman in college and very aware of their hatred for my Dad. I came home from college in order to vote in the business meeting, because my vote was important in keeping my Dad there. The Deacon board had done their own survey or evaluation of the Pastor and 8 out of 10, when reading the responses, ripped him to shreds and tore apart his character, abilities, value and leadership, all in front of the entire congregation in the meeting. I was deeply impacted by that meeting and carry the pain from that awful experience. My Dad ended up staying on longer at that church (though not much longer, they effectively beat him out), but his health and well-being have never recovered, even 12 years later, and he has never been a pastor in a church since.”

• “My youth pastor was very judgmental and expected me to be different than everyone else.”

• “Power-hungry deacons who would stomp over anyone and everyone in order to have their own way have caused me to react this way. However, I think these types of people do not have to be in the position of ‘deacon’ in order to do this. The position of ‘deacon’ in our church today simply makes it too easy for these types of individuals to have positions of leadership in the church, despite the fact that they may not be truly spiritually qualified.”

• “Well, there was the time the deacons gave my daddy what they called, a "vote of confidence" where they belittled him and his pastoring in front of the entire congregation....as my mom was very upset and crying, she and I left the auditorium and was to have said was "bellowing like a bull." (You're right; this does bring back painful memories.) Oh and there were times when the deacons did not see the need to give my dad a raise, even though he was the sole provider for 5 people. There was one deacon in another church who said that if he wanted to leave, "preachers are a dime a dozen." I've seen deacons drink alcohol, curse like sailors, have affairs...and then condemn a preacher for not "visiting enough."

• “I was never led and always expected to lead.”

Analysis:

It is clear that there are some strong feelings with which the survey participants are dealing. Most of the issues focus in on deacons and youth pastors/workers. The stories seem to be endless, but the common trends that these ministry children deal with are clear. It is probably true that most of these stories come from PKs and not MKs, but that cannot be always assumed.
It should be remembered though that the pastors are given a little extra leeway because of the kid’s loyalty to the parents.

**Question 3:**

*Table 26. Ministry Children Survey Question 3 Results*

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*Note: In response to the above question, a follow-up question was presented, of which 16 participants answered:*

*Table 27. Ministry Children Survey Follow-up to Question 3*

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<th>Answer Options</th>
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<tr>
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<td>93.8%</td>
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*Analysis:*

For the three who were molested, it was a horrendous thing indeed. The question must be asked, though, if the participants really had the freedom to express themselves. This question was early in the survey and it seems that the further along in the survey, the more freedom the
participants had in expressing themselves in such private and extremely painful matters. The fact that one church would let something like this slide is very concerning, and if it were to happen today, because of the recent scandals of this nature, more than likely it would have been addressed openly.

**Question 4:**

Table 28. Ministry Children Survey Question 4 Results

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<th>Answer Options</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question* 74

*skipped question* 3

Analysis:

Twenty-three percent is a strong indication of what many of the ministry children are feeling. There were only three people who skipped this question, so there are many who acknowledge this as a problem. With the pressure that so many clergy families are under in order to build the church, it is extremely convenient for parents to expect things from their own children because there was no one else who would volunteer. Sometimes MKs are paraded in front of congregations and some of them feel as though they are a sideshow. The spiritual guilt trips can begin and the kids are forced into submission only to see issues building that may be harmful to them spiritually.
Note: In response to the above question, this follow up question was presented: “Did you ever feel as though you were being used to advance your parent’s calling?” The participants answered with the following statements:

- “Accompany them to church and missions meeting.”
- “If someone needed help or the church needed volunteers, my parents normally would volunteer my siblings and I but didn't require us to help if we already had something going on or didn't want to.”
- “We were participants with our parents in ministry, through this we learned to see needs, work hard and feel a part of what God was doing in the world!”
- “The churches my father was involved in were sometimes small and us kids were expected to be the praise team for the music period.”
- “Attend all church functions and services. One Sunday afternoon I stepped on a rusty nail that went into my foot. I went to church that night, hobbling on one leg.”
- “While I think my parents were better than others it was in the culture by members to use the pastor’s kids as voluntary physical labor around the church. We were required to perform music or other duties at services. We were required to go on evangelistic outreach even if no other kids were ever there. And we were always being used as a sermon illustration. The worst humiliation was being used as the example for the other kids like when I was called out publicly in a service by the song leader, deacon or pastor for talking during the service or sitting in the back or something similar.”
- “On furlough (home assignment) we kids were expected to behave like little angles in church. Does this this apply?”
- “We had to be at every function, we were the choir, singing specialist, basically the dog and pony show. All of bible schools, Sunday schools, Easter sunrise services, Wednesday night Sunday a.m. Sunday p.m. services, revivals, everything, it felt like nothing else existed for us.”
- “I was never required to do anything to 'advance my parents calling.”
- “We were required to attend every function whether we wanted to or not even as older teens. We were often told what to do or not to do to protect our family's reputation. I was often told that my decisions and actions could affect my dad's job security. For instance, when a unwed girl in the church became pregnant, I was told that if I did that, dad would lose his job. I felt responsible for our family's livelihood.”
- “No requirements, other than when on furlough go to visit the churches and families that supported our family. And of course, be expected to behave.”
- “Nothing- my parents were pretty good at reinforcing the idea that they wanted me to pursue whatever God called me to- no matter what vocation that would be.”
- “Perform in front of the audience. Follow extremely strict rules.”
- “I lived with them! I went to the mission field with them, but I never felt they were using me. We (my sisters and I) were excited about what our parents felt God wanted them to do.”
- “My siblings at times were the choir, worked VBS, went to every church service am and pm and prayer meetings.”
“I was required to be able to handle moving back and forth between the United States and Haiti. That was the only real hardship.”

“Sing/play the piano in front of churches, visit homes/churches to seek support with parents always had to be on best behavior - the fishbowl effect.”

“I was constantly reminded that my dad's ministry depended on my behavior, and was threatened that he would have to resign if I did not act as I had been taught. It was too much pressure for a child.”

“It was not a "requirement" but it was understood that we would volunteer in the church like set up special events, do childcare, and so forth. But honestly I never felt like I was doing any of it out of obligation. It was a family ministry.”

“I helped out in Children's Church often.”

“I worked the nursery and led junior church. I went early to set up church dinners and special events. I participated in all events/ministries for students my age.”

“Attend every service, regardless if it was age appropriate. Was forced to sing/worship whether it was genuine or forced.”

“We were involved in helping, but we felt like it was a family ministry. It was our desire also to serve God.”

“I honestly don't have one complaint in this area. I do not feel in the least that I was ever used to advance my parents' calling. I never even sang music special! : )”

“Nothing”

“As an MK, it got really tiring while we were on furlough, visiting church after church after church. I was in a new Sunday School class almost every weekend and felt like an animal at the zoo. I was strangely fascinating to all my peers, but no one actually wanted to be my friend. Sometimes I had to sing with my parents in front of the whole church. When I was little I didn't care, but as I got older, it was really embarrassing for me.”

“Refrain from talking to certain people and their children. Behave in a manner that would not bring reproach to my dad or mom---be perfect is the way I felt.”

“Move towns, schools, churches, etc.”

“Things as the child of a missionary in India was a challenge in itself, but it was the ability of my father and mother to nurture me in a way that I never felt I was being used to advance the calling my parents had, I in fact had a personal choice of choosing the Lord as my savior and no compulsions from anyone.”

“Be at church every time the doors were open and behave myself.”

“My dad, who is a Senior Pastor, has never attempted to make me do anything special simply because I am a pastor's kid. His expectations of me were the same as they were for every other church member. He sought to pour into me and develop me into a disciple of Christ.”

“1. Look nice and stay quiet, particularly when we were in a new environment. I can specifically remember being told to "be seen and not heard". 2. Free labor. It wasn't the worst thing in the world but most kids aren't required to do fundraisers or clean the bathrooms at their parents' job.”

“I was never required to do anything for my parents.”
Analysis:

There are several areas for parents to look at here if they really want to help their children. However, the overall intensity of the response is worth noting. Some sarcasm can be seen in some of the responses, which is very typical with adult ministry children. Many of the PKs and MKs had wonderful experiences while being with their parents in ministry. It would appear, though, that several of the PKs and MKs became hardened during the time their parents thought they were modeling ministry before their kids. With the responses to this question, a new understanding can be seen, at least the beginning of one: the need to understand the “ecology” of the children in the homes of PKs and MKs. Two kids in the same home can have completely different responses to the same situation. The parents then need to become students of their children.

Question 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 29. Ministry Children Survey Question 5 Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you feel like your parents acted one way at church or in the public, but at home they were very different?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 78
skipped question 4

Analysis:

Ordinarily, 82% would seem to be a strong number, but this question concerns people. Close to 18% indicated that their parents were inconsistent in their home and in public life. These are not children taking this survey, but adults who have had time to wade through many
issues in life. These are also children of pastors and missionaries dealing with issues pertaining to their parents. The tendency is that of loyalty to their parents, so there is the real possibility that the numbers could be a little swayed.

**Note:** In response to the above question, this follow up question was presented: “If so, what were some things your parents would do in public and at home that cause you to think this way?” Thirty participants answered with the following statements:

- “My mom was often very angry and stressed at home, but very warm and kind outside of the home.”
- “Dad was always a happy, congenial man at church...talking and laughing with church members while at home he hardly talked to us kids...he was a great provider and I love him, but the church people always came first...He would be fussing with us about something, the phone would ring and it would be a church member, and his demeanor would change in a second...”
- “Mostly there was a lot of arguing all the way from the driveway to the parking lot at church. Then you put up a front and smile even though you want to cry.”
- “The thing that always bothered me was the fact that my father would preach God's love in the pulpit, but at home and at intimate gatherings he would make very racist comments towards other ethnic groups as well as gays and lesbians. I understand that God does not like the act that gays and lesbians are performing, but I believe that we are to hate the sin but love the sinner.”
- “Sometimes fight about things that went on at church or something that were going on at home.”
- “They actually hid the fact at times of how much we were struggling financially. They tried to raise support but not beg if that makes sense.”
- “These questions are so general it's difficult to answer. I would answer #10 as probably yes but no different than any other family.”
- “It was always praise God, praise God, we love everyone at church and so much anger at home.”
- “How appalling! Is Liberty's belief that all MK's and PK's come from such destructive homes? My parents and all my friends’ parents were always the same - in churches, at retreats, seminars, etc.”
- “At times, my dad would be very happy and outgoing and seemingly fun loving in public, but very moody and sullen at home. There were also times when I felt he changed himself to be a peer with whomever he was interacting. For instance with the doctors and lawyers, he would become very intellectual. But with the country farmer, he would become the simple man who liked to raise a garden. He would even change his accent depending on the interaction. For instance, speaking with a southern drawl with the farmer, but no notable accent with the lawyer. There were also times when a church member may compliment my dad on what good kids he had and he would smile and
agree and thank them and then at home and even now, he talks about how difficult my brother was.”

- “My parents were authentic - in public and at home. Thank God!”
- “Nothing much- they were pretty consistent at home and church.”
- “This only applied to my father, he would be kind and caring to others but at home he was very harsh. My siblings and I appeared to be more of a bother than anything else. He would be very involved in church stuff and very rarely took any interest in what school activities we were involved in.”
- “I was hard on my dad I thought he was supposed to be perfect. I felt okay you preach trust God and my mom doesn’t even trust you. And you think I am always gonna do bad stuff.”
- “Never felt that way.”
- “I was blessed with parents who were honestly consistent. They did not put on an act in any way. Who they are is who they are, at home and at church.”
- “My dad would curse at the TV during sports. My mom was difficult to talk to about anything.”
- “My dad was outgoing in public and very withdrawn at home. He'd carry on long, gregarious conversations with others, but was very serious and somber with his family. I felt like he gave his best to the church and we got the left-overs. I now understand that he is not truly an extrovert and so those energetic interactions I witnessed we're very draining, but I did not understand as a child. And, it should be said that it still angers me when I see him interact with congregants and then witness him shrivel at home.”
- “N/A my parents are both very real people.”
- “Parents acted the same in church and at home.”
- “My Dad was human, and he did some things which were not right, He had his ups and downs. But I don't think he was trying to deceive anybody or pretend to be somebody different in public.”
- “Absolutely never. Both my mom and my dad were consistent in every situation. But I have definitely heard many complaints about this from other PK's and this seems to clearly relate to that PK’s relationship with the Lord. I am so thankful that my parents were/are so good at this area- to this day, me and my siblings are all still involved with local churches, teach/attend Sunday school and volunteer for ministry.”
- “My dad seemed to walk on water and was the epitome of righteousness at church/community, but at home my parents fought and my dad was physical abusive to my mom, me and my siblings.”
- “I was able to see them struggle through things at home that people could not see in public. Just as in every home people struggle with each other and people outside the home, I was just able to see some of the struggles my parents had. I believe this strengthened my respect and relationships with each of my parents.”
- Though I valued my Dad as a pastor and what I learned from his preaching, I carried (carry??) a resentment that I didn't really get to have him as a Dad, because he gave all his energy to ministry (obsessively at times) and was much too tired when he got home to give us much. There are some good memories of time spent with him, but it really is
mostly when I was younger. His health and stamina really were affected by the stress and time-commitment of church ministry. When I got married, I refused to have him officiate the wedding, because I wanted him to be my Dad not my Pastor. I never have asked him if it made him sad to not do my wedding. My mom as Pastor's wife was always worried about what other people thought and how that impacted my Dad's ministry, and so she was always giving her time to do the bulletin, clean the church, do Sunday school, Children's church, etc. Yet she did give her 4 kids lots of time and opportunity for fun and experiences. We probably got away with a lot because our parents were focused on the needs of the church, but I don't think I ever felt not cared for or taken care of by my parents.”

Analysis:

There are some awesome stories of adult ministry children who had the wonderful experience of having parents who loved, cared, took time, and lived Jesus before their kids; these indeed are blessed people today. Unfortunately, there are far too many examples and stories of adult PKs and MKs who still remember mom and dad as being far less than what they should have been. In the responses to this question, some had parents who really needed help! In addition, the response to this question would indicate real “compassion fatigue” and the need to establish boundaries and margins that protect family life.

Question 6:

Table 30. Ministry Children Survey Question 6 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever felt like you were second rate because your parents were out doing the Lord’s work?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 79
skipped question 3
Analysis:

Nearly 23% expressed that this was an issue for them. It would be interesting to know what the percentage would be for non-clergy families. This is about clergy families of which one would normally think would rate their families as second in priority to the Lord. When verbal responses are made concerning this type of question, the responses seem to be more aggressive and pointed toward major priority issues within the home. Perhaps if the question was worded differently more thought would have gone into the responses, thus giving a greater indication one way or the other as to the real extent of the issue at hand.

Note: In response to the above question, this follow-up question was presented: “What was said when you tried to gain your parents attention during these times?” The verbal responses were as follows:

- “This happened primarily when trouble would arise among the siblings, and as a result, punishment would be handed down too quickly without hearing all the facts, in order to get back to the important ministry.”
- “If my parents were dealing with a difficult/complicated problem at the church or with a church member, it made it hard for me to talk to them about a problem with my day or a person at school. I either felt it wasn't important enough or they would ask if we could discuss it later but a lot of times, later never came.”
- “You are making assumptions rather than asking questions.”
- “I felt my parents always had time for me. We worked hard but were together and could talk too. When we came home from boarding school we had good times as a family apart from working!”
- “I wanted to be out of the spotlight and just be myself.”
- “I don't recall the words but it was probably like most kids are told when parents are too busy for you.”
- “I don't believe I ever tried to get their attention because we were told not to bother them because if we did the "lost souls they were trying to reach would go to hell and it would be our fault." This was told to me by teachers at the boarding school I attended. I never wanted to trouble my parents with my problems because I felt it would interrupt Their work.”
- “They were always more focused on the appearances and their other jobs than with what was going on with us.”
- “Second rate? I have never felt unloved by my parents or that I had to work hard for their attention. My dad was very busy in field leadership on the mission field but you better
believe that he went to every tournament and volleyball game, helped me with homework at night, family movies or game night etc. my parents took us on vacations at least twice a year so we could get away and just be the 4 of us. That being said, I know that the Lord is to come first in each of our lives if we are His children. And my parents have always lived putting the Lord first.”

- “When my dad would get called away from home, or one of our events, or even vacation, if we complained we were told it was just what he had to do. He didn't have a choice. Even recently when we had travelled from out of town to spend a weekend with my parents, there was an incident which called him away. It took my brother getting irate to keep him from going away during the two days we had to spend as a family.”
- “It may be the opposite for my family. We were boarding school kids. When on break from school or parents were on break from their schedule...not that they didn't keep being missionaries, we just were a part of that too.”
- “I do remember a time in my mid-teens where I felt neglected by my dad a bit. Cannot remember what was said much though. Many talks...”
- “I didn't ever discuss it because it would have done no good!”
- “I didn't say anything. I just felt like my daddy didn't love me. That he loved the people in the church more.”
- “He was not there to gain his attention. Too busy saving souls and doing the Church's work to spend time at home.”
- “Never felt that way.”
- “My parents tried very hard to make sure that we were loved and knew we were loved. They did not put church above us. Although there were definite times that we were overwhelmed with being busy at church, I never felt like I couldn't get their attention if there was something I needed.”
- “Our family was always involved.”
- “The importance of "god's work" was touted and I was made to feel guilty for not understanding. They also reminded me of the other times they had spent with me.”
- “I always knew that if I needed either of my parents all I needed to do was ask.”
- “My parents listened and were there for me when I needed them. There were times that I could not do something, or my parents could not attend my events, and I was ok with that because I knew what my parents were doing had eternal significance, and I knew they loved me.”
- “That the church was a great priority and that our whole family needed to be a part of it.”
- “It was a selfish attitude because the Lords work is more important than your feelings.”
- “Although I selected "No", I realize it has been so long and my memory is faulty, there may have been occasions when this was my feeling.”
- “I always felt like our family was first.”
- “Give me a minute to take care of this and then we can do this or that... the minutes, turn to hours and hours to days and usually it never happened.”
- “My mother has always been a great homemaker; she has always been by my side and my brother since we are young till date. Her presence didn’t make us feel bad for the numerous times my dad had to go out for ministry work, He would be out for may be 20
days in a month, we would always wish he stayed home for our birthdays. I feel parents are very instrumental in the behavior or character formation of a child. Moreover, mothers play a pivotal role.”

- “When I was younger, and much more selfish, I always thought I should have the undivided attention of my parents all the time, but as I have grown up I understand that there are certain times when they need to focus on the church and its needs. Though they have never disregarded me and my own needs.”

- “I don't know that I tried to get their attention. Until very late in my teen years, I don't remember feeling or knowing that it should have been any different than it was. I have a younger brother who very much acted out growing up and a lot of the attention my parents had for us was in controlling him. I just remember trying not to get in trouble like he did.”

- “I don't remember. I just remember most the feeling of wanting a Daddy who invested in me as much or more as investing in Kingdom work or church people (who were stubborn and ungrateful). I do remember begging God to heal my Dad of his various illnesses so that he would have more energy to give to his family, but then also seeing him when he was well and hearing his dreams and desires to do ministry...and my response (internally) screaming: "What about simply ministry to your family??"

Note: An additional follow-up question was given to question 6. In response to the above question this follow-up question was presented: “If so, was it because the people were wealthy and the church needed their tithe, was it so your parents would find acceptance with the more influential people, was it so that they would start coming to church, thus building your parents kingdom or position?” The verbal responses were as follows:¹

- “I don't ever remember this being a thought I had. My folks really weren't concerned with money. One thing I was/am certain about, they genuinely loved all people. They made mistakes with us but that wasn't their issue unless you count that they were so busy with helping others that we kids had to help ourselves a lot. That hurt me a little in then but probably was good training for life.”

- “No, my dad loved the Lord he was always under paid he turned down opportunity to be rich, because he loved God. He didn't purposely neglect us...before my dad died he told me he was sorry for not being there for me like he should but he thought he was going what he was supposed to.”

- “Again, it seems as if we've moved way beyond "leading" questions and having gone straight to the conclusion, we're now seeking to prove it.”

¹This question was confusing and this is reflected in the answers and questions about the question. Many indicated “not applicable,” as well as making statements such as “do not know how to answer.”
“My Dad spent a lot of time getting new people to come to church. He also spent a ton of time counseling people with horrible pasts.”

“No, I did not get the impression that it was necessarily wealth, but there was a great emphasis on keeping the people that had been there a long time and were most influential happy.”

“I never personally experienced this situation or noticed it within our family so I cannot relate.”

“We as children were raised with the fact that we have very little and we should be grateful for that little cause there are many out there who don't have that little as well. My dad and mum were very careful while bringing us up, they did give us good education which was not cheap and was tough to afford, but they gave us lessons to live on with. All in all I would say if you have the trust and faith on our Lord nothing is impossible. He made us what we are today.”

“None of the above. I didn't feel ignored for other people. I felt ignored because my parents were doing what needed to be done to keep the ministry going. It was what it was.”

“I don't think I ever felt like money or position was the issue. I think it had more to do with just serving and caring for the needs of others, and perhaps some of keeping the peace and putting out fires of gossip and slander.”

**Analysis:**

This question is really of little value to this survey. It was not worded in a clear way, thus making it difficult for the participants to know how to respond.

**Question 7:**

*Table 31. Ministry Children Survey Question 7 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you ever feel as though you were obligated to be friends with certain people so that their parents would think well of your parents?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 80

skipped question 2
Analysis:

Almost everyone responded to this question. Nearly 24% felt that this was an issue during their own personal upbringing. Many would say that this is not that big of a concern, but one in four participants believed they had an issue of concern. Who are the kids with whom they feel as though they were obligated to be friends? Why did they not want to be friends? Was it because they were mostly kids who had personality quirks? Was it because they were kids who had additions to drugs, alcohol, pornography, or any number of other things? Was it because they felt threatened by them and that they were being exposed to things that would cause harm or an embarrassment to their parent’s ministry? These are all issues that the parents need to come to grips with.

Questions 8-12:

Table 32. Ministry Children Survey Question 8 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6
Table 33. Ministry Children Survey Question 9 Results

**Because of being a PK/MK – deep within your heart and soul, do you deal with Anger?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6

Table 34. Ministry Children Survey Question 10 Results

**Because of being a PK/MK – deep within your heart and soul, do you deal with Addictions?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6

Table 35. Ministry Children Survey Question 11 Results

**Because of being a PK/MK – deep within your heart and soul, do you deal with Unforgiveness?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6
Table 36. Ministry Children Survey Question 12 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>09.2%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 76
skipped question 6

Analysis:

The response that stands out with these questions is that of trust. Many ministry children have difficulty trusting leaders. It would seem as though this is the case within the church and in the community at large. This question should cause the clergy families to not only focus in on the people in the churches who may be doing harm to their children but also to those in the community. Why people in the community? Could it be Christians from other churches? Could it be Christians who do not have a say in churches so they take advantage of the PKs and MKs away from the church? Could it be that the stereotypes placed on ministry children are just as prevalent outside the church? Perhaps people everywhere are looking for role models to set before their kids in order to teach perfect behavior. Parents really need to be in tune with what is taking place in the lives of their kids, both inside and outside of the church.
Note: In order to locate the source of some of these issues the following question was asked:

Table 37. Ministry Children Survey Follow-up to Question 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Leaders</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone in the community</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 48  
skipped question 34

Analysis:

Why this question was skipped by so many participants is perplexing. Maybe some had no other chance than to skip the question since it did not apply to them. Nevertheless, with those who responded, the issue of trust really is a huge challenge for adult PKs and MKs because of what took place years ago. This could explain why adult ministry children have tendencies to be sarcastic and cynical. Parents need work diligently at exposing their children both within ministry and in the public sector to people of high moral integrity and character.

Question 13:

Table 38. Ministry Children Survey Question 13 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 55  
skipped question 27
Verbal Responses:

- “The only problem I’ve had is not with you, but with the fake church members. The cause of Jesus would be better off if we didn’t have Christians.”
- “No.”
- “Thank you for helping me see the good, the bad, and the ugly; and yet protect me all the while.”
- “Dad, you never spent enough time with me or the family. You were always worrying about the church members. We moved so many times and you never seemed to care that it tore my heart out each time we did...you never talked about it with me...I loved people from each church we were a part of and it hurt to leave them knowing I would probably never see them again...you didn't have any patience for us after you dealt with the church people... Mom, couldn't you have done something to help ease the pain? Make the transition smoother?”
- “I was blessed with very godly parents who, although not perfect, did not cause great lasting pain in my life. If I could say anything to them, it would be that I wished they were more open with me about their own personal struggles as they were growing up as teenagers and young adults. All children, PKs and MKs, need to know that their parents are still in the same battle against sin even as adults. Growing up, I often felt like I was "odd" and "rebellious" just because my desires were sinful. However, all Christians, teenagers and adults alike, have (and still are) battling against the flesh. As a pastor/missionary, one may feel the need to hide or disguise past mistakes, but your children need to know that they are not alone in their struggles. No amount of rules, threats, and punishments can change one's heart. While these are all necessary, parental love and encouragement are likewise. PKs and MKs need to know that their parents are not looking for perfection, as this is impossible. Further, no matter how much a PK or MK "tries," no true personal change can occur apart from the Gospel. In regards to overcoming sin, it would be helpful if a PK and or MK could hear their parents say "no matter how much you try, you cannot overcome this on your own apart from God's strength" and that "I faced this issue and here's how God helped me overcome."
- “I wish my dad would have come on the family vacations that he missed instead of staying home to be with a sick family member of a church member.”
- Thanks for being obedient to God and his call on your life even when it wasn't easy. Your example has been an inspiration and comfort to me.
- “I'm not trying to be all Pollyanna, but I honestly feel like my parents did an excellent job in helping us navigate the difficult life of being MKs. We sometimes felt "on display" and used our "company manners" but that is part of life for anyone. I never felt like they put undue pressure on us to perform or be good kids for the sake of the gospel. If we were going to do what was right it was for the honor of our heavenly Father and not to impress anyone. My parents made mistakes sometimes. They're human. But they would have made mistakes if we had stayed in Michigan and my parents had been dental hygienist or farmers. I guess I don't see the hurts in my life as a result of my parents being missionaries, but rather as a natural part of being among fallen human beings.”
- “I wish you had talked to me about dating and sexual issues. I struggled with hurting girls emotionally and had masturbation and pornography issues. I wouldn't have wanted my parents to know about this, but if they had loved me enough to ask, I would have shared and they could have helped me.”
- “Well, I would tell them that we aren't perfect. We are human and we make mistakes just like everyone else. I would tell my dad that if you no longer feel that being a preacher is your calling be up front and honest with first and foremost with God, and then with your family and then with your church. You are doing no good to anyone living a lie. And I would tell my mom that we don't have the perfect family and please stop faking it for the 'good of the church and the members!'”
- “I would tell them that I wish I had been able to talk about my problems at school or with people without feeling like there were other more important issues for them to be thinking about. I know that my parents always are/were willing to talk to me but when I was a kid, I didn't always understand that or know that they were willing to talk to me.”
- “I've shared those things with them!”
- “Please listen to us we aren't just kids we were your children that we have feelings too. I know you loved the ministry but we didn't know that we had to be such a big part of it.”
- “I know you loved me and thought you were doing right by me but I always thought I was second place to your job. No job is more important that your child. I know it was because you believe that it was the right way to be because you thought your job was special but it wasn't more special than me. Also I could not enter my "5 Words" on the previous question so I do it here: Forgive everyone for yourself and God's sake not theirs. Trust if when you are disappointed, it's the best way to live Patience with others but especially yourself. Laughter really is the best medicine! Loving-kindness to everyone is really Christian discipleship”
- “Nothing. They were feeling and dealing with pressures a child often doesn't understand.”
- “If I've ever had bitterness, anger, addictions, unforgiveness or lack of trust, it's because of my own sinful nature. Not because of being an MK and living on a primitive island. Again- you are implying that what secret or feeling I have to share with my parents is going to hurt them. I would not send a struggling friend to LU for counseling. Sounds like you already have your mind made up about issues and do a lot of brain washing....”
- “I have honestly shared my feelings with my parents when they ask me why I don't currently attend church. Our family has certainly been hurt in the past by church and community members when they disagreed with my father's decisions. It is sometimes difficult to trust church members. It is also difficult for me as an adult PK to find my place in a church where my father is not the pastor. I always relied on his "coat tails" to get involved and be a leader/member of a group. Being a SINGLE adult PK, I struggle with attending church alone, where as I have always had my family (and therefore, a group of friends) at church anytime the doors were opened.”
- “Please know that they want to feel that they are important to you even above your present ministry. Take time together to do things- hobbies etc. It is not a sin to enjoy life and where God has placed you. Oh, and speak positively about the country and people you minister to. If you have a bad attitude, why would they end up different?”
• “I wouldn't trade my upbringing as an MK for anything on this earth.”
• “This response is strictly directed to my father. Why were you such a fraud? When did it start? Are you really a Christian? How could you walk away like we meant nothing to you? Why are you so selfish and self-centered? How can you continue to manipulate and con good people? Do you even care about all the lives you have damaged? Why is there no admission of wrongdoing? How can you blame all of your wrong choices and actions on others?”
• “Your kids are given to you by God before he gave you a church to take care of. He gave you US first!”
• “I don't hold resentment towards my parents. There have been times I have resented ministry itself and what comes along with it. I would again, thank them for loving us and for not going through motions but for living out their calling to ministry in a Godly way and for being amazing examples of Christ followers”
• “That I love them. Thank the Lord for their example.”
• “Mom, why were you not there when we were growing up?”
• “I wish we wouldn't have been so worried about what everyone thought. I wish I could have spent more time as a family. I wish I could have felt more normal and been allowed to do more.”
• “Just to listen and understand what the siblings go through.”
• “My experience was not a bad experience. My parents did a great job in protecting me from many of the hurtful things that some people would say towards my dad. I did not learn of how awful some of the people had been towards my dad until I was in college. So, the only complaint I can think of was always having to set up for events. It was never a choice for us, it was a chore. I would ask that my dad consider calling upon the people from our church to get involved in setting up, and allowing us to choose to be involved as well. Personally I would have done it regardless.”
• “I would say thank you very much for being the greatest parents you could be. I will always cherish my time as an MK and am so thankful for the experience I was able to have.”
• “1. You were called to ministry...not me. Don't put pressures of ministry on me. 2. Give your best energy to your family. 3. Try to interact with me in things that I enjoy. Don't expect me to love the things you love. 4. Family time should be sacred and protected. It doesn't count as family time if someone from the church is present. 5. You should trust God enough to draw me to himself. Let being a Christian be my choice, and don't base YOUR love on my decision. 6. Love me like God loves his children. Unconditionally.”
• “I don't know of anything that I could say any more than I already can and do say. We have a great relationship. There is nothing to hide, nothing I cannot say to them.”
• “I'm thankful to have had the parents that I had! Their concern and care for the spiritual nurture of my soul was always evident, but not in an overbearing way. I knew that I was loved and valued--over and above their ministry obligations. Ministry is hard, but they made it an enjoyable part of growing up! I'm so thankful for that. And now having been on the other side of things--serving as a Pastor's Wife for nearly 7 years, I see what a
difficult task this can be. It is only by the grace of God that we cannot fail at this weighty calling--God grant us the grace to finish well!”

- “Please realize that your second God given responsibility is to your family. Your ministry will flourish if your family flourishes, and you will be fulfilled. Think of your death bed - if your ministry has been successful but your kids do not know and love the Lord, was it worth it?”
- “I am truly grateful to you for the godly example you have been to me, and training me in the ways of the Lord.”
- “I don't really have any reservations with speaking to my parents.”
- “Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the ministry. You have taught me how to work hard, and not to rely on what others say about me, but rather what I can make of myself. You always put others before yourself. Thank you for being selfless.”
- “Probably that I wish they wouldn't have worried so much about what other people thought about us, how we dressed and what we did. That we only really needed to be concerned about what God thought of us.”
- “That it wasn’t fair that I had to share my parents with people at the church who would complain, not tithe, and make them miserable. It wasn’t fair that I was held to a higher standard than other kids growing up and sometimes it made me feel like nothing I did was good enough.”
- “I would have tried a little harder to realize that even though they were my parents and my spiritual leaders that they were in spiritual warfare also. And not be too hard on them for things they did wrong.”
- “You were godly parents, who loved the Lord and desired to see tribal people reached with the Gospel! Yet, now, 20 years later, you (dad and mom) have lost your passion for tribal missions. You criticize mission organizations. You discourage others to be a part of a mission organization. (I know because my husband and I are in one, and you are continually discouraging us to continue to serve!) There is nothing "good" and edifying that you can say about world-wide missions. It hurts when I've seen you (my parents) love missions! Your heartbeat and passion was to serve and see tribal people reached. You have changed drastically and now you focus on living your life and the extent of missions is serving in your church. I'm praying for you, dad and mom! That your passion would be reignited and that my husband and I might be the example that God uses to bring you back to seeing the "light" of missions and what a joy to serve!”
- “Probably does not apply since Dad is with the Lord and Mom is 94!”
- “Thank you, for always being honest with me and not sheltering me from the world. Thank you for not giving me an "us" and "them" mentality. Thank you for teaching me to LOVE people--saved and not saved. And, thank you for being the same person at home as you are in church. I have a great dad :-)
- “I love you!! Thank you for doing your best to make us kids a priority!!”
- “Thank you. I loved my childhood and I love my adulthood because of that! My parents are the exception from the majority of the "Pastor stories" you hear. My dad was consistent, my mom was supportive and there was never a day that I felt they put the church or another member/family above us.”
• “There's nothing really I'd have to say except thank you.”
• “Thank you for being totally your real self at home and at church. Thank you for putting family in a high regard. Thank you for not sharing church business and people's issues with us. I am who I am in ministry today because of their example.”
• “Expectations that are put on PKs/MKs are much higher and when they fail the disappointment seems so much worse. Kids didn't ask to be in this position and should be disciplined for their decisions not disciplined b/c of who their parents chose to be.”
• “Would life have been different outside of ministry?”
• “You did the best you could. I wish the opinion of other people hadn't been quite as important as it seemed to be. Your need to be needed often times seemed more important than your family.”
• “Be intentional with the time and make your kids feel like they are more important than the church.”
• “Thanks for your love as parents. Thank you for your example. Thanks for your openness to listen to me in adulthood on areas where you made mistakes as parents.”
• “As a child, there were many things I would have or could have said but, as an adult, the only question really worth asking is, "Was it worth it?"
• “I love you, and praise the Lord for giving me the parents that he did. You have always supported me with love and trust. Thank you for the long hours spent on your knees before God praying for my soul. Thank you for letting me be a kid, and not holding me to higher standards then other kids. It is hard enough being a kid by itself.”
• “Thanks for living out what you believe in private and in public. I am SO thankful for both of you!”
• “I'm so thankful that I had such dedicated, faithful, loving, giving parents. It was a model of ministry and service and sacrifice that has impacted me deeply and set my life on a course of ministry and service. I know you both did your best and you are not perfect, and I'm so thankful that you both knew that too and showed the power of God's grace and love in such tangible ways. So on the one hand, I have a deep gratitude for your example, on the other, I have a sorrow that our family was often neglected in terms of ministering to us. So much energy and time was spent (yes modeling and serving together) serving other people in the church, but when it came down to it, you had no energy left to invest spiritually in our lives, while at home. And when you tried it was so awkward and forced and not at all, I'm sure, what you really meant or wanted to do/say. I don't blame you or hate you for that, I just wish things had been a little different, like I would have loved to do fun, creative family devotions, pray together as a family, serve together in non-church ways, learn about the world and what God was doing outside of just our church and church's missionaries...family stuff that would have bonded us and given us deeper roots than the various churches we spent time at. And I wish so much that we would have talked more as a family to process the happenings (good and bad) of the church, especially when there was pain and hurt involved. I don't know what my siblings would say about processing, because that may just be more my personality's way of dealing with stuff, but I would have valued at the very least, more one on one spiritual and relational time with my Dad, initiated by you rather than by me. And yet it's not too late! I've been saying this for years that I just want a Daddy to invest in me, and now my children. Don't
leave me with this sorrow of not sharing yourself with us...there is so much I want to know from you, so much I have learned already by listening to you preach, but I know there are deep wells of wisdom and understand and knowledge that I long to hear you speak of and share. All those church people you've spent hours trying to teach and share God's truth with...so many rejected what you had to say...so tell me! I am all ears, Dad! Because I trust your word and your wisdom more than anyone else in the entire world. Please.”

- “Great job!”

Analysis:

When considering how loyal PKs and MKs are to their parents in general, this must have been a very difficult question for many of the participants to respond. Additionally, bearing in mind the things that have been said about their parents being in the Lord’s work and that if they said anything or did anything that would hinder their parent’s work, they would be sending people to hell, the number of responses is very impressive. What a display of passion in the participant’s remarks! These ministry children truly shared the depths of their hearts with this question. Praise the Lord, for there are many who had wonderful parents and took the time with their children. However, in many of these responses the hurt of the ministry children can be felt. They want and need their parents even as adults. The intensity is clear. Being second place and in competition with ministry is unacceptable. These PKs and MKs are tired of the years of trying to earn the approval of people only to fail. They yearn to acknowledge that they are accepted by their parents.
Question 14:

Table 39. Ministry Children Survey Question 14 Results

If you could honestly say one thing to those people in the church who really hurt you and your family, what would you want them to know?

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Verbal Responses:

- “You're lucky God has more mercy and forgiveness than I do, because the evil in your hearts and the poison in your tongues is more destructive than I have been able to bring myself to understand why you even call yourselves Christians or care if you burn in hell.”
- “They are not gods and quit trying to rule the preacher and protect the children.”
- “I don't know. Some People are spiritual and some are carnal.”
- “You’re doing more damage than good, Jesus doesn't care about the color of the carpet, quit being a half-ass Christian. You do nothing to advance the cause of Christ, you only have your own benefit in mind.”
- “Take a look at your own life and your own family. Focus the attention and conviction that you have for me on yourself and your family. Back off!”
- “The harm they did was a mar on the testimony of Christ in that community for years to come.”
- “I forgive you...”
- “Your selfishness blinded you to growing God's kingdom and hurt the person God chose to lead the church.”
- “That failing is a part of being human. That God is a God of love, mercy, grace and forgiveness. That we can rest in Him and not feel the need to hide our weaknesses or deny our failures.”
- “I would want to challenge people in churches in the US not to put missionaries on a pedestal. They are normal people who are trying to honor God in obedience. They find that hard some days and don't do it very well on some occasions, just like everyone else. They are not godlier than you. They are not favored by God. What they really need is friendship, acceptance, prayer, and understanding, just like everyone. And when their kids come to your church, they need to be drawn in, not set apart.”
- “Grace abounds at the cross. It's not worth hurting people for your own gain.”
- “I would tell them that gossip and backbiting is a sin and not only that but is damaging to them as much as the victim of their venom.”
• “That they should have respected my father more and to understand he gave everything he had behind the pulpit and they should have taken care of him and not make him have to do some of the things he had to do. All he ever wanted to do was preach!”
• “Honestly? I don't ever want to see them again much less speak to them because it wouldn't serve any good purpose. It would just be venting for me and bringing up my old hurts that have finally healed.”
• “Honestly, most of them were fine.”
• “Again- assuming I've been wounded!”
• “Just because my dad is a pastor does not mean HE is perfect. It does not mean his family is perfect. My dad made decisions after long days and nights of prayer and Bible reading. My dad suffered many sleepless nights trying to make a decision that could please the people AND follow God's direction and leading. How can you call yourself a Christian, but yell obscenities at a man of God inside of God's house? I would want these people to look long and hard at their own spiritual lives, instead of their selfish, sinful hearts. There have been words spoken about my father that I will never forget. Did they forget he is also a husband and father? Words and actions towards one person can affect a lot more than just the person you were aiming for.”
• “Remember a couple things: first, missionaries are just people to- they have faults. Second, remember their love and sacrifice they made to come and minister to you and others there. Love them and be thankful.”
• “If you are going to commit to supporting someone I think you should make sure you are willing to do it even when times are rough. Cutting Missionaries support because it won't be opposed and it is the easiest course to take is not an option.”
• “I think that to average Pastor and their families are not equipped to handle the high level of psychological issue that they have.”
• “I would definitely want them to know the other side of things...how their actions affected our family. I would want them to see a bigger picture. (For example, Pastor's don't just work on Sundays, but they are busy through the week--often times dealing with other people's dysfunction.)”
• “I don't know of anyone who hurt me.”
• “You are an idiot and have no clue to the things of God.”
• “If you could have just loved and accepted us for who we are rather than trying to make us out to be perfect, then we could have had a greater impact. There is too much focus on us and not enough on God and your own failures. We are not perfect and neither are you...so why do you have higher expectations on us that you can't live up to yourself. It’s so unfair. Focus more on loving God and loving others...not on judging.”
• “For being God fearing leaders of the church how could they have treated us that way?”
• “Well, again, I didn't know about these things until later. By then I had matured and realized that they were not acting out of a spirit of love, but rather they were acting from selfish pride and a sinful heart. I prayed for them. I asked God to convict their hearts, and to save their souls if they did not know Him as their Savior. If I could talk with them one on one about how they hurt my dad, I would probably try to talk with them about their spiritual life.”
• “I would tell them that they need to get their act straight with what is truly important in this life. Do not let your greed or jealousy get in the way of your walk with God, especially since the world is looking at the church to see if we really are what we claim to be, followers of the one and only true God. Live lives above reproach and take responsibility for your actions. Repent and follow Christ.”
• “Please don't make MK’s feel like a charity case. We don't enjoy being made to feel embarrassed about our family's lack of money so you can run your fund drive. As an adult I understand your good intentions. As a child I was humiliated.”
• “People are cruel, and it seems Christians know how to be the cruelest. I'd tell them that PKs/MKs are children and that they should be treated as other children. Just as you don't expect a physician's son to heal other children on the playground; you shouldn't expect a PK/MK to act more spiritually or maturely. Let them make mistakes and grow up. Let them come to Christ when they are ready and trust Him to help the child mature. Forcing these decisions only encourages the child to become a good-looking fraud!”
• “My hope is in this--in the end, all things will be made right. God is our Righteous Judge--He alone sees all, and knows all--even the motives of our hearts. I can trust in Him for justice to prevail, even if it is never realized fully in this life...”
• “Pastors/leaders - The individual people in your church and on your staff are more important than the numbers and hype, don't step on them to push your own agenda. Congregation - The pastors/leaders are people to; they needed your prayer, support, and encouragement more than your complaints and criticisms.”
• “I know God forgives you, and I forgive you too!”
• “We are human. The Lord looks at our heart, and how we approach his throne. The Lord wants to help hurt people, not necessarily the ones who are easy to love. The church should be filled with the outcast of the world, and should not be merely a country club for the successful.”
• “That their words and actions had a lasting impact on my life and the life of my family. That while I have forgiven them, I still am overcoming the effects of that situation. I would want them to strive to honor the Lord in their future actions and relationships with His people.”
• “That I wish they would have put themselves in our shoes and thought about who they would have felt if their family was attacked and beat up (once again not physically). I wish they would realize how hurtful they were and how unnecessary the things they said and did were.”
• “That their selfish behavior affected my childhood by stealing time away from parents. Time they could have spent raising me and teaching me more life lessons.”
• “That their conduct and actions are not in line with God's Word. That spirituality isn't exterior but that they need to check their heart attitude with God without comparing themselves with others.”
• “Please know that when you come back into my life and try to stir things up, as if I think about you everyday, that I DONT. I really could care less what you think about me and I think that it is sad that you think my time is occupied thinking of ways to "get back" at you---when I really never even waste my time talking about you.”
• “It's in the past and you are forgiven and loved!”
• “Their actions hurt. They negatively affected a true man and woman of God with stress and heartache because of lies, gossip and selfishness. They hindered the lives of others by planting sin in a great church and potentially made eternal mistakes for those that were looking for Right. I have forgiven them but I pray that they have asked forgiveness from the Lord.”
• “None of my pain from within a church came because of being a PK (most don't even knew who my dad was). Generally, I've kept to myself and ignore those that would try to hurt me.”
• “That the way they acted was not at all like a true follower of Christ should act. They need to put their petty differences and preferences aside and focus on how to grow in Christ and reach those who are lost.”
• “If I had treated you the same, how would you have felt?”
• “No one is perfect. Deal with it.”
• “The issues that they get so frustrated and angry over are usually not really that important in the furtherance of the Gospel, so I wish people could put personal preferences aside and work together.”
• “Focus on what you are responsible for, yourself.”
• “God loves you and He commands that I love you. But I don't.”
• “God loves them”

Analysis:

These ministry children have spoken their minds. Again, there are those who had good experiences or who have been able to deal with the struggles that go along with being a PK or an MK. Many, though, have issues that can resurface at any time. This survey has proven this the case. In the future, some real healing that is appropriate for PKs and MKs needs to be established. Much thought will need to go into this process. Ministry children have had people trying to straighten them out for years! Anything that resembles this will be worthless in its impact. These adults are independent and unimpressed with people. Therefore, the sharing of the grace of God needs to be appropriate to ministry children.
Question 15:

Table 40. Ministry Children Survey Question 15 Results

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answered question 69
skipped question 16

Analysis:

Only a few of the participants skipped this question. While 73.9% is good, the question must be ask, why have 26.1% of parents not said “I’m sorry?” Is it that the parents are oblivious to what is taking place in the lives of their kids? Are parents just stubborn and uncaring and using their kids to satisfy their need to be parents? Have ministry children been ignoring the words of their parents? These are all questions that need to be asked. However, this is for sure, 26% of PKs and MKs need to hear from their parents in a humble and sincere way.

Follow-up Question:

Table 41. Ministry Children Survey Follow-up to Question 15

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answered question 54
skipped question 31
Analysis:

It is good to know that of those who have heard the words “I’m sorry” from their parents, most really believe that it was from the heart.

Question 16:

Table 42. Ministry Children Survey Question 16 Results

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Verbal Responses:

- “Just because someone (youth leader or other pk kids)says they are Christians trust with your eyes wide open talk to your parents no matter if you think it’s good or bad they will have to deal with it. Life in the Christian life is not always a bed of roses more times than not it’s a bed of thorns. But God will bless your trials in his honor.”
- “You don't have to go the way of your parents...find out what God's purpose is for your life. Even though there are callings on families and it will or may include you in the plan from God. He is generational.”
- “Live by a standard of grace, not perfection. Don't live life afraid to make mistakes.”
- “Thank you for being in a family that ministers. I know there are sacrifices made for being in ministry and God will bless you for being on the team with your parents. You should not feel you have to prove anything special just because of who your parents are. Ask God to keep your heart sensitive to what He leads you to do, and don't feel any great pressure for that to be full-time ministry.”
- “Talk to someone you trust, an old friend, a family member...when you are upset. Be careful what you say in front of a church member...they may use the information to hurt your family. Try to make at least one good friend in the church. Try to remember that your parent has been called by God to do His work...pray for the Lord's guidance.”
- “Forgiveness is key to continue working in ministry after leaving your parents’ home. Don't forget that you are a reflection of your parents whether you live at home or not, that will never change and you will always be held to a higher standard because your father is held to a higher standard. This is a wonderful way that you can help your father appear to the church and community as a person who lives in the world but is not of the world.”
• “Your parents are only a part of God's provision in your life. He has not only set you in a family but also within the Body of Christ. Be open to God working through others and don't think your parents have to be everything to you all the time. One day they will be gone, and if you haven't allowed others to be a part of your life you will be in for an extremely difficult time.”

• “I think both lay people and MKs and PKs are quick to blame their misfortunes on their upbringing. I've had people ask my parents, because my sister was very sick, "Do you think maybe this is God's way of showing you that he didn't want you to be missionaries?" I thought, "You mean to tell me that my sister wouldn't be sick if my parents were office workers in the US?" Would my teachers have not lost their tempers with me if we lived in New York? Would there be no bullying? No abuse? No misuse of authority? Don't get me wrong, I am not excusing sin in any way and when the sin comes from those with power (teachers, deacons, pastors, missionaries) and is exercised against those without power (children, students, parishioners) then the Christian community should always take action. I simply think that we are quick to make ourselves victims and quick to blame our problems on the wrongs of others. I think we need to find balance. We should neither turn a blind eye to wrong nor should we blame hurts on the fact that our parents chose a certain ministry or job. Neither one is a healthy response. But if God is sovereign then he knew that hurtful things would happen to PKs, MKs, and the children of pharmacists, teachers, sanitation workers, bank tellers and the like. He knows that this world is full of hurt, sin, injustice, and wrong and longs to gather us to himself like a mother hen gathers up her chicks and hides them under her wings. He loves us and wants to draw us to himself. He forgave us and wants us to be able to show that grace to those that wronged us.”

• “Don't let other people's expectations dictate your behavior; live to please God, not men. - It's ok to have issues- everyone does. It's not ok to stay that way though. - Rule keeping is damming; it only leads to pride and self-dependence. - If you're in Christ, God bought you through Jesus' blood almost 2,000 years ago. If he "foreknew" your sin and still sent Jesus, that means his love has not changed even when you mess up. He accepts you because of Jesus, not your good behavior.”

• “I would tell them that they cannot let the actions of others dictate their life and the decisions that they make. Tell them that they aren't perfect and neither are their parents and if anyone tells them that to politely tell them that they are mistaken. To be patient with their parents and ask for the same from their parents. Tell them that they are as much a part of the church ministry/mission field as their parents to embrace it and to work as a family to make the ministry/mission a success.”

• “I would let them know that they can always talk to their parents even at times when something else from the church seems more important. And to not let what you hear your parents saying about some people from the church really affect the way you view certain people.”

• “My MK experience was very good! I credit most of that to my parents and the other godly influences that I had in my life. They helped me see life through the truth of God's Word and the fact that He doesn't fail in spite of the fact that man does. He cares and desires us to find Him to be our delight and not our circumstances! We all have negative
experiences in our lives and I don't mean to minimize them, but where our focus is can make all the difference for the outcome. I like the saying "keep the Son in your eyes!" When the light is in your eyes, the shadows are behind you, not that they are gone, but they are not the focus!!”

• “The age I was when I experienced the things I did was to probably not resent my parents the way I did that they were in a tough situation and that we need to try and understand more.”

• “FACT: Bad things happen to everyone. It’s an inescapable part of life. It is why people must have faith in something to continue to live. There are some things that help us get past the bad experiences of life: Faith in God and the future, refusing to dwell on the past pain, because not only will it keep the pain fresh it will hold you back from finding happiness. I have observed some happy old people that share certain dominating personal characteristics. They are: faith, forgiveness, patience, resolve and a great sense of humor – Choosing to focus on these virtues gave them real happiness (and sanity in the middle of an insane world) Finally, I have been so disillusioned with church people that I mistakenly tried to walk away from my faith. I really tried living life without faith and it was the most miserable experience of my life. I have come to the conviction that I must have faith to live. I must believe God, what he says about me and my future to get up in the morning but in doing so I have found a way to forgive, forget and live on in real happiness.”

• “As much as I felt put upon at times, I am sure my parents felt put upon even more. Because I was a child I had a hard time seeing beyond my own discomfort. I wish I had been a little more understanding and supportive of them in the pressures they dealt with.”

• “I've experienced and incredibly joyful and wonderful life on the mission field! Seek the Lord and you will be so blessed!”

• “Sometimes they say MKs especially are a little weird. Well, life is weird sometimes and crazy. So, be a little crazy and weird yourself. It's okay. But serve the Lord in it all anyways. He's worth it! Get over the past and move on with Him.”

• “There are many things that you could choose to look at from a negative perspective but there is also always a positive way to look at it. God has taught me so much through my experiences and the way that he has chosen to show his love and care for me through other people.”

• “You have to be tough. Develop a thick skin as you are under constant scrutiny.”

• “Understand who you are, understand that your holiness is a Godly act same as your salvation. Love the Lord and Love yourself and all the rest will come out in the wash!”

• 1. Don't let your parent's position define who you are. It is not your identity. 2. Ministry is hard. Period. There is no way around that. It is hard because you work with people and their real life hardships. (And your own!) 3. Your actions will affect not JUST you, but your family as well. Remember that when you're tired of being held to a higher standard. (Whether right or wrong.)…”

• “My experience as a MK was a positive one. Maybe because my parents helped me to know GOD, and believe that He knew me. My struggles and sinful emotions were NOT because I was a MK.”
• “It is a good life and if you find the good in it and follow God through it, you will be better off in the long run.”

• “I spent too much of my life worried about what people would think. My parents did too. I am trying to learn that good people with good intentions can be very wrong! I have to train myself to listen to the voice of truth. To focus on pleasing God. To realize that it is impossible to please everyone and very disappointing to keep trying to please everyone. It will kill you. It will kill your spirit. Having a personal intimate relationship with Christ is your only salvation in ministry. And finding someone outside the church bubble to share your struggles with is healthy and vital. Someone who has a personal love for you and who will be truthful but always with a motive of deep love and care behind everything they do and say. Pray and hear God's voice! It's our only survival to drown out the other voices. Stay in God’s Word for truth so you don't get confused by politics. It's a tough call, but God chose you...he deems you as worthy and special.”

• “Keep your eye on the prize which is God.”

• “Being an MK is a very special opportunity. It will shape the entire way you approach the world. You will never be a "normal" individual in American society but that isn't a bad thing.”

• “Let God be God. Live, learn, laugh, love, accept, forgive as needed. We make mistakes as MK/PKs; accept who you are in Christ. Make allowances as others have made for you. We are not perfect; don't expect others to be either!”

• “Extend grace to others that grace might be extended back to you. Be careful to jump to hasty conclusions--things may not as they seem. Forgive quickly when you are wronged--don't let bitterness gain a foothold in your heart. Daily run to the cross--we are all sinners in desperate need of a Savior! May our Hope be in Him alone!”

• “The biggest blessing of my life was to see my parents ministry as my ministry too. It's not what God has called me too, but for the time being, as I work towards my calling, I can aid my parents in their ministry.”

• “My parents were parents first in our lives. My dad was a pastor and our church family was our large family. Yes, there were strange people in my church. We would laugh about different things in my church...certain instances, people, and such. My parents were the same at home as they were at church. They encouraged us to be friendly to everyone and introduced us to guests...not every guest, but many. We needed to be good examples, but were never told we should be good examples for the reason that my dad was the pastor. Our family would have been the same if my dad had not been the pastor. We as a family were involved in everything and enjoyed it. As I went off to college, my sister had some struggles with boys in our Christian school who didn't like some rules. My dad was one of the men over the school, so my sister had to hear the boys in class talking about my dad. My dad is a very respectable and godly man. It was hard for my sister. I never had to deal with situations like that, because my parents didn't tell us everything that went on at church. I think the biggest thing to do is to pray and trust God. I think memorizing Scripture to help keep your mind on positive things is great. Talking with your parents and to a respected leader is also very helpful. Keeping it to yourself is never the way to go. Our hearts can harden against people and then to God for putting your dad in this job.”
• “You are a vital part of your parents' ministry, so please take your role seriously. You are also responsible before God for your own walk with Him, your own attitudes, words, actions, etc. Make them count for eternity!”
• “Find God yourself, own your faith, and serve a purpose higher than yourself.”
• “They need to realize that people will disappoint you but God never disappoints. Even though they didn't choose to be in a pastor's home, it was God's plan. I feel it was an honor to be raised in the home I was in. My parents taught me to keep my eyes on Jesus and trust and follow Him. It is not a curse to be a PK.”
• “It’s not always fair, but keeping a positive attitude can keep you sane. Don’t get into trouble to get attention. Trouble can follow you for the rest of your life.”
• “Thankfully my experiences as a young MK were basically positive (and long ago), so I will leave this up to those who experienced painful times.”
• “That, yes, your parents have been called into ministry and you are set apart but you are NO DIFFERENT than your friends and peers. Don't let anyone tell you aren't good enough!! At the same time, try to learn from others mistakes instead of making your own. If you are struggling in certain areas tell someone that you look up to and trust that can help you when you are tempted to do wrong. Learn to forgive. Bitterness doesn't hurt anyone but you, Have fun and love and live for Jesus!!”
• “Forgive those that have hurt you or your family by things they've said/done. Never indulge in gossip- don't listen to it, don't spread it. Remember that people in the church are JUST people, not angels; every one of us has sin. Your parents need your love and encouragement more than they need anyone else's. Feel privileged! Your parents were called by GOD, you've been born into a home with the Lord's sweet blessings already built in.”
• “I may have had a better than normal experience as a PK, but I would definitely suggest not being scared to be alone or to do their own thing. I might have avoided a lot of headaches than most PK's who go to the same church as their parents, but I mostly surpassed or avoided people my own age and generally associated with adults when I was young. I was never pressured to follow my parents' steps, but I know most PK's are. and frankly I would tell them to stand up for themselves. No parent, pastor or person should tell someone what they have to be when they grow up.”
• “There will always be people that act as a thorn in your flesh but that is how God constantly molds us into something that can be used. Be a PK that is a blessing and glorifies God! Make that choice or other things will take over your heart.”
• “Do not shelter your children from the world. They will be seen as outcasts and never fit in any place. Let them be kids.”
• “Trust God to be all that you need. Others ARE going to let you down, even those closest to you. Learn to forgive.”
• “Look only to God. He will never fail---people will always fail!”
• “They are not responsible for their parents' lives, but do have a family responsibility to make their parents proud of them as far as they are capable of doing.”
• “With parents who are vocationally connected to the ministry of the church, never let the line between a personal relationship with the Lord become blurred with their duties in the church which are required by their job.”

• “It gets better. One day, you will no longer be dragged around by your clip-on tie from one church function to the next and will be free to make your own choices. One day, you will make friends who don't think of you as "the preacher's kid". One day, you will realize that a "normal" childhood might have been easier but not necessarily better. One day, you will struggle as an adult with the people in your church and will already know what that feels like. One day, you will realize that it wasn't your parents' fault, it wasn't the church's fault and it wasn't God's fault; it was the fault of people and people are stupid, selfish, short-sighted and mean.”

• “Trust your parents. They are doing the work of the Lord. Know that God is in control, and that He knows your needs. Praise the Lord constantly, and try to find your own ministry to serve Him. Be a kid! There is plenty of time to be a grown-up.”

• “My childhood was awesome! My relationship with my parents was and is awesome. I respect and trust my dad more than anyone I know.”

Analysis:

It is very exciting that 52 participants decided to respond to this question. Knowing that ministry children want to help others is thrilling to say the least. All would be wise to listen to these veteran PKs and MKs. This section was an amazing display of grace and tenderness. The wisdom displayed with these ministry children will be a source of help for PKs and MKs for years to come. With the number of responses, the words that can be shared with future PKs and MKs is limitless. Encouragement like “Being who God has made you to be,” “You do not have to be your parents,” “Much of PK and MK life is enjoyable,” and many other gems of wisdom can be used to teach future pastors and missionaries in years to come.
Question 17:

Table 43. Ministry Children Survey Question 17 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal Responses:

- “Trust what they say let them know there is predators of the devil in the church.”
- “Trust God to reveal to them their part if it is His plan.”
- “Leading the church is the calling on your life, theirs by default. It's your job to lead it, not theirs. Never threaten them using implications of ministry as leverage. Make sure your kids have the resources to be lead and disciple themselves.”
- “They all possess different and special gifts - maximize those rather than fitting them into a box.”
- “Be careful...your child is watching you. Don't preach one thing and do or say another. Try to spend time with your family...quality time AWAY from church members. Explain to the church that you need to spend time with your family. Your child is vulnerable. They feel like everyone is watching them, just waiting for them to "mess up." It's like living in a fish bowl...Talk with them, listen to them!”
- “That their children, just like any child, want THEM and want to make them proud.”
- “If people in your church are treating you poorly your child will take it personally and can have an overall poor attitude about church members overall.”
- “One thing I appreciate about my parents' approach to raising MKs was that they made us part of their ministry without putting undue pressure on us to "perform." They simply taught us that since God knew they would have kids and God asked them to do this ministry, then it was obviously God's will for us to be where we were at that time. And God knew what would be in store for us. He knew the good times and the bad times. Learning to accept God's will for my life has been a lesson I learned from my parents that has served me well into adulthood. It was also a blessing to learn to serve alongside my parents (they adopted the "we can't do this alone" approach) and to feel the joy of being vital part of a ministry that bears fruit.”
- “They are just as human as you, and in most cases have inherited your struggles and besetting sins. So don't approach them from above but from beneath and invite them to grow and mature with you.”
- “That their ministry is not more important than their kids. When they were blessed with the children that God gives them, those souls are just as important as their ministry. The
Apostle Paul said he wished everyone could be like him...single, to be able to devote oneself one-hundred percent to the ministry...”

- “They struggle just like everyone else; be there for them.”
- “That their kids make mistakes like any other kid. They need patience just like other kids. To involve their kids in the ministry as well. The whole family is part of the ministry.”
- “PK/MK still deal with the same amount of pressure and hurt that all children go through. Even though we have heard our parents (normally fathers) preach on certain topics and how to deal with them, we still want to be able to sit down and talk with our parents about what we are going through and how we feel about what is going on. Sometimes a kid (especially a PK/MK) doesn't need another sermon on how to deal with the situation but a friend to talk to.”
- “Children need your love and care. This is demonstrated through words of affirmation and a hug, but also through boundaries and discipline!”
- “To look closely at what is going on within the family.”
- “They didn't ask to be here. Your most important "God given" responsibility are your children. The greatest God given resources for your happiness are your children. Treasure them so.”
- “They're individuals, not clones.”
- “I am so thankful you took me to the mission field when I was 6 weeks old and that my baby brother was born there. So thankful I got to live there for 18 years!”
- “Don't schedule bible study after bible study at church, but forget to study the bible with us at home. Pray with us every night. Let us help make decisions about our high school education (public vs. private). Give us a chance to "be the light". Don't shelter us from everything; help us make educated decisions about right and wrong. It is easy to say "the Bible says so", but a deeper explanation of why and good/bad consequences, etc.”
- “They are normal kids with normal hang ups at times. Be more patient and never play the "Preachers kids can't act this way" card. It's just not helpful. Allow them to be normal sometimes.”
- “MK's: It is okay if we aren't as close to our cousins/aunts/uncles/grandparents as we are with our friends and their parents.”
- “This is your calling/vocational choice, not your child’s! You went into this career knowing what you would be up against, we got forced into it. Be compassionate!”
- “Do not include them in the talk of church dirt, church problems and politics. Only include them if there is a risk of their safety.”
- “Sometimes you feel as if you live in a glass house where everyone around you knows everything about your life. That is difficult. Also- It is important to know WHY we are at church. WHY pastoring is your job. Not just "we do this just because."
- “My parents loved us so much. Their loved truly covered a multitude of sins. My parents may not have done everything perfect but there was not a lack of love which is why I believe we survived and don't have too many scars. Your children need to know more than anything that you love them more then ministry. Not more than God but more than what people do or say.”
• “They did not ask for this life so if you put more effort into the ministry than them, you
will reap what you sow.”
• “Love them keep them involved, talk to them, and listen to them.”
• “Never let your ministry to your church be more important than your ministry to your
family.”
• “I would like them to know that they must spend the appropriate amount of time with
their children. They cannot assume that because they are a Christian household doing the
Lord's work that their kids are going to automatically live just like they do. Too many
PKs and MKs live exactly like their non-Christian peers and it is extremely sad and
disgraceful to see.”
• “For me, the pressure to care what others think and put off a certain reputation was very
high. It ended up in anxiety attacks as an adult when I couldn't control certain things
about that perception. I went through counseling to help me understand how to let go of
what people think and to not try to put on a show of being "perfect" all the time. It is still
something I struggle with and have to mentally remind myself to let go.”
• “1. Make them the priority 2. Protect them from people 3. Don't use them as a tool in
your ministry. It isn't appropriate. 4. Don't expect your children to perform unless you’re
willing for them to become nothing but a facade. 5. Encourage and allow your children to
be transparent and real.”
• “They are just like any other children the world over: likes, dislikes, hurts, struggles. We
aren't weird. We have needs, and we can meet other's needs. We have the privilege of
being in a special environment (MKs) which will shape how we think, how we view the
world. Our thinking patterns may be different from yours since you may not have been
raised quite like we were. Grow with us; help shape us with love and discernment.
Remember we love you and need to hear that you love us!”
• “There are unique pressures of being a PK or MK, however most of these things can be
minimized by how the children's status is portrayed by the parents. Focus on the
positives/ privileges of their position--your focus will become their focus.”
• “Let them be kids, and let them be themselves. Give them guidelines and a path for life
because you know that a love for the Lord and a life lived for Him is the best path. Not
because you're worried about your reputation.”
• “Your children need your unconditional love. They should be treated the same if you
were not a pastor's family. You as a family need to be a strong family at home first. You
need to be there for your kid’s meals, games, and special events. They need you. Your
children learn by your example: your heart for people, generosity, friendliness, desire to
know God, service to God, etc.”
• “As much as possible, try to involve your children in your ministry. They will greatly
enhance it. It will also provide many discipleship opportunities for your children and for
those to whom you are ministering.”
• “Your kids love you, and are proud to be a part of your ministry. Find ways to include
them in your ministry in ways that they are comfortable. Do not seclude them from the
world, let them have non-church friends and let them minister to the world even when
they are young. Let them get involved in the community in other ways than just church, i.e. sports, cub scouts, theater...

- “Treat their children like they are just like everyone else’s. Normal kids that will mess up and that will do right. Let them be kids but don’t let them get away with everything. Just like other parents should do.”
- “That the MKs need to know they are loved and that what they do is appreciated. Parents (and other adults) need to be willing to express approval when it is appropriate.”
- “Learn to let the phone go to voicemail. When you are spending time with your family, keep it family time. If your child is getting into trouble, they might just want to spend time with you.”
- “Love on your kids. Tell them you are proud of them. And please, have an open relationship. Allow them to "talk back." They need a way to communicate with you without feeling intimidated.”
- “That their family is their FIRST ministry.”
- “Don’t always believe what you hear. Your kids need your approval and need to know that you trust THEM above your congregation. People and sometimes parents, assume that we don’t know what is going on or being said, but most of the time, we do.”
- “I never experienced this, but to not pressure your kids in following your steps. Your steps were for you, not your kids. If they have a calling, they will hear it themselves. Give them space and encourage them in EVERYTHING they do and you will be rewarded 10x by having a much better relationship with your kid. I’m not saying let them get away with anything... but you have to let them grow up and learn for themselves. Encouraging them will help them communicate with you, instead of shun you.”
- “They are like any other children with struggles just like any kid.”
- “There is a lot of pressure to live up to being the "perfect" pastor's kid that should "never" make any mistakes.”
- “We desire and need your time too!”
- “They're human, too, and may not have the same way of thinking or goals that you do. Let them be themselves.”
- “Make sure they can enjoy the church you are ministering at.”
- “Your children need your love more than anything. You only have so much time before they realize that they'll have to compete with God's work for it.”
- “They are not tools for you to use for your own advancement. You are a tool to use for their advancement.”
- “Trust the Lord, and know that he is in control. Your own testimony and example are very important to your children. It will mean more to them to see the Lord through you, then to get hit over the head with a bible every minute.”
- “Same thing every Christian kid wants and needs from their parents - be consistent at home and in the community. Also, help us figure out what our natural gifts, talents, calling is. This may be harder for us as we're limited in what we see as our options, growing up overseas.”
- “They need a Mommy and Daddy who invest at least as much time in the family as they do in the church/ministry. There has got to be space and some separation, some margin
provided for family time apart from the church. Don't neglect your children's needs in deference to serving the church's needs.”

Analysis:

The participation in the question to the parents of PKs and MKs is very similar to the previous one that asks for words of insight for the ministry children themselves. There was still a large percentage that declined to participate in this question. Maybe they are feeling some survey fatigue seeing that this question comes later in the survey. Again, these adult PKs and MKs graciously present thoughts of wisdom and insight that can be of great value to future clergy families. Their words that speak of margins, boundaries, discipline, unconditional love, and un-interrupted time with family are key to the future stability of clergy families.

Question 18:

Table 44. Ministry Children Survey Question 18 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there anything you would want the churches to know as far as PKs and MKs are concerned?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
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Verbal Responses:

- “Love them just like the other kids that’s what they are KIDS.”
- “It's not their responsibility to fix your kids problems.”
- “They are just kids, who shouldn't have huge magnifying glasses on them; especially no more than other children.”
- “Please don't let the children hear you say disparaging things about their dad. They are kids; they can't do anything about it anyway. Love your preacher's kids...remember, they aren't kin to everyone in the community...they feel like "outsiders." Try to include them in everything. Talk to them about their life.”
• “The way in which many of today's churches are structured makes it too easy for pastors and their families to be trampled over. If any real change is going to be a possibility in the way clergy families are treated by their congregations, our entire church model needs re-organization.”

• “You should do all that you can to honor them for all that they do for the church. I promise they do more than you would ever know.”

• “I often felt very disconnected from my "home" church as a youngster. My parents had been part of it as adults, but I had moved overseas as an infant and my siblings were born overseas. When we were on furlough my parents were connecting with old friends and family and we were simply forced to hang out with strangers. It would be a lovely thing if churches' kids reached out to missionaries' kids and made them welcome. This would probably take on a different feel based on the interests, size, and make up of different churches, but is a good idea to keep in mind.”

• “MK's are not necessarily at home in your country. They may not feel comfortable with your style of service. Allow them to be different, and, within reason to act differently because they often have a different cultural background than you do.”

• “Don't put unrealistic expectations on them; people struggle enough as it is without them.”

• “I would tell the church the same thing that I would tell their parents - That their kids make mistakes like any other kid. They need patience just like other kids. To involve their kids in the ministry as well. The whole family is part of the ministry.”

• “People of the church sometimes look at Pastors/missionary families like they have it all together and know all the answers. They expect more out of the PK/MK in behavioral and knowledge of the Bible. I would like them to understand we are humans to and need to grow in the Lord and learn lessons (the easy or the hard way) on our own just like everyone else. We also are not perfect just because we are PKs/MKs.”

• “MK’s are people, they come from different backgrounds and upbringings, but have the same needs and struggles as others and they need to be pointed to Him the same as anyone else!!”

• “That they are just that they are the preacher’s kids and not your parent’s ministry.”

• “Treat them as Jesus would have you treat all children with love and respect.”

• “They're human.”

• “Churches need to continue to offer help to MK's when they return to the mission field. When I was at Lucy while my parents were on the field, I was sent care packages, money, gifts by supporting churches and was always invited to visit the churches- people offering to pick me up when I was carless.”

• “We are not perfect. Our parents have a special, vocational ministry. We did not choose this life. We feel a heavy burden to live a sinless life. There are higher standards for PKs/MKs, but shouldn't those standards be held for ALL of God's people?”

• “Show grace and love. Place yourselves in their shoes some. They are displaced individuals who never asked to be. They fit in more in a different county but not completely. They don't fit in at home in the US either. This can be a source of frustration. They need lots of love and grace.”
“MK: Holidays and summer vacation can be an extremely vulnerable time when MK's are in the US in college if they are not able to go home to see their family. An open invitation to Holidays is a huge blessing to feel like you belong somewhere.”

“We are normal kids that make the same mistakes that normal kids make. Don't hold us to a higher standard; it creates a lot of resentment.”

“The Solid and Spiritually strong members I would say thank you. The members that are like clouds changing shape and blowing in and out " open your ears and heart.”

“We're kids too. Just like your kids. Also just because our parents are Godly, doesn't mean we are at that level of understanding yet. Don't have unfair expectations of us or unfair standards of us because of them. We aren't automatically born Christians. We have to come to faith just like you. And with your help that can happen.”

“Treat them like normal kids because they are normal kids. They don't have supernatural powers. They need love but don't point them out or make a scene out of them. Don't expect them to know all the answers. Don't correct them in front of their peers or anyone. Give them a chance to talk to you privately before you put the pressure on their parents to make them behave. The pressure is great...give them a break sometimes.”

“We are not on the payroll and it is possible that any acting out is not a direct result in our parents’ lives but yours.”

“That they are normal people and they are only human. They make mistakes to.”

“They are no different than your kids! They are born sinners in need of God's grace in their lives. They are still prone to make bad choices, and act foolish from time to time. Rather than judging them, try to model a Christ like attitude in front of them.”

“I would want them to know that they need to hold these kids accountable. They need to constantly challenge them and make sure that these kids are being examples to their peers, not falling into the same sin.”

“We are human too. Just because we mess up does not mean our parents are not good Christians, are not raising us right, or shouldn't be in their positions. We are individuals with free wills.”

“We are not saints, special cases, oddities, or untouchables. We want to be accepted--even if we have some strange habits or ways of thinking. MKs are often 3rd culture kids with no real idea of what US culture is like--especially younger ones. Now with all the communications helps, there is not as much of that disconnects, but it can be there. Help us adjust.”

“Being a PK or MK can be a lonely position--take care to remember to minister to the Minister's family! They need to be cared for just as much as the rest of the flock!”

“Don't put standards on them that you wouldn't put on your own kids.”

“They need to be encouraged and loved. They should not be made to feel that more is expected of them than other children, because they are the pastor's kid. Bring them under your wing and train them. We as kids were always involved in activities and helped in setting up events, because we wanted to help...or because our dad asked us to. We wanted to be part of the church, but it wasn't because we were made to. We felt loved by many people. It was a positive place to go.”

“Try to be understanding and patient with them, since they have a unique background.”
• “There should be no higher standard for PKs/MKs everyone is held to the standard of Christ. We all fail and should seek Christ above all.”
• “That they are struggling humans as well and that they also should be shown some grace.”
• “PKs & MKs are not above doing wrong but don't treat them like they are the stereotypical "bad" preachers kid either. Remember they are kids, they will mess up just like anyone else's kids. Love them. Treat their parents with respect. Don't talk about them or their parents in front of your kids. It will get back to them and it will cause your children to disrespect God's man.”
• “That PKs and MKs are just like other kids and need to be treated as such, rather than looked upon as "super spiritual" or "different", etc.”
• “Be respectful of PK/MKs. Their parents devote tons of time, with very little pay, don’t ruin their childhood by over working your pastors and leaving them with no energy for their own family.”
• “We are people, we make mistakes. Just be our friend :))”
• “That even though God has called our parents to ministry, don't treat us any differently. We are still human beings just like anyone else, dealing with the same things in life.”
• “Mind your own business and stop picking on an easy target, the devil's already go that covered. Put yourself in our shoes for one minute and imagine living in a fish bowl every day of the week...not just Sundays.”
• “Don't always think of a PK/MK as just that -- they are an individual just as any other person in the church community (or world) and should not be held to any higher standard or looked down upon for any problems. Doing so will only encourage or push them to fall farther.”
• “Same thing, not all PKs are perfect, smart, and knowledgeable on all biblical topics. They just have parents who hopefully are putting a life of surrender to Christ as a testimony to their children.”
• “We are real people that make mistakes. Please grant patience and forgiveness and don't be condescending.”
• “Treat us like you treat your own children.”
• “Treat them like normal kids.”
• “Worshipping God is not an excuse to take shots at other people in His name. Those in ministry positions are not defined by their position; the Pastor that you exalt or degrade is just a man with a wife and children who love him as much as yours love you. If you were to say the things about your employer that you say about your pastor, your employer would be right to fire you.”
• “You are not their authority. Treat them as you would other kids. Understand that kids misbehave as a part of the growing process.”
• “They are just kids, not saints.”
• “Leave them alone!! haha! They are just normal kids, nothing special, and yet, perhaps they need more special, gentle attention and investment since their parents are often giving extra attention to the church's needs.”
Analysis:

Again, this question has about the same amount of participation as the last several questions. The reason is still probably survey fatigue. Still, some valuable information can be gathered that will help with future studies as well as giving current pastors and missionaries training and guidance in clergy family life. The responses themselves are resoundingly profound! With these responses, one can receive some insight into a few of the needs of MKs. One response mentions “Third Culture Kids,” or those who come back to their home countries and need to be eased into a life and culture that they know very little about. Loneliness and just feeling out of place are some issues with which they must face and receive help. Some other observations from these responses are well said, including “Back Off!” “Let the kids be normal kids,” “Parents need to stop putting pressure on these kids and minister to them first and not the leftovers after helping everyone else,” and many others.

Question 19:

Table 45. Ministry Children Survey Question 19 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is there anything you think should be included in the training of future</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missionaries and Pastors during their training and seminary studies?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answer Options</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response Percent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Response Count</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Verbal Comments:

- “Trust God but know that the devil will try to attack you through your family keep them close and safe.”
- “Keep things practical...they live and are exposed to a world outside the church that don't know anything about Him like we do...be gentle, but wise, and be who we are...light, salt,
reconcilers, and allow their children to grow up...if you keep the Word before them and live what you put before them...God will keep them.”

- “Your calling to your family is higher than your calling to your job. Yes, your job is in service to the Lord, but in reality, it is only a job.”
- “Yes. Pressures and expectations and how to handle them.”
- “I think several classes concerning the clergy family should be included in the training and seminary studies of future missionaries and pastors. This would include courses on biblical parenting in general, Effective Clergy Parenting, Issues in the Clergy Family, The Church/Clergy Family Relationship, etc...”
- “How to address the sacrifices their children will make and prepare them for that. But also how that sacrifice will help them grow the kingdom.”
- “I have been a part of developing materials for training missionaries and pastors and I don't know of a program that can meet all the needs of all of the trainees. True one on one discipleship seems much more effective.”
- “How to biblically handle your kids in dealing with various issues (biblical counseling, not Oprah or Joel Osteen feel good stuff).”
- “Practical Christian living, that teaches what it means to allow Christ to live through us, humbling ourselves before a Holy God and being channels through which He can show Himself to a lost a dying world.”
- “I know that they probably already have this but to look closely at the children as it pertains to their fathers ministry.”
- “Josh McDowell's book How to be a Hero to your Kids would be great to have them all read/teach/live. Also the book TrueFaced by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, John S Lynch.”
- “Yes, no brainwashing.”
- “Discussion of these issues of raising a family on the foreign field would help. It will vary from poor, 3rd world places, to wealthy Asian cities etc., but there is always an effect. A young family should weigh this carefully, more so than an older couple with grown kids who have plenty of freedom.”
- “Work/life balance. Your kids need you too! Don't be so involved in your church work that you push your children to the side.”
- “Psychology, time management, emotional intelligence.”
- “The understanding that working with people is going to be difficult. And your expectations of what ministry is may be very different once you begin to deal with people. But that is the point. That we bring Christ to the broken and messed up and lost. It is not always easy but it is important and so necessary.”
- “Their families and children are their first responsibility.”
- “Biblical teaching on gender roles in the home.”
- “I think it would be so helpful to have classes on finding your identity in Christ and not allowing your identity to be being a PK. Help them to know how to please and listen to God through all the voices that have their own ideas and thoughts on who you should be and how you should act. Talk about tough skin, taking thoughts captive and not allowing people to control you...living and dying on their acceptance of you.”
“Real life issues discussed, researched, portrayed and heard. Make it more real than a text book. Offer as part of the training something for the whole family that is not cookie cutter how to stuff.”

“Please keep the family involved.”

“It would be nice to have a mandatory course about balancing ministry and family life.”

“I think that they need to have ingrained in their brains the fact that they need to put the appropriate amount of time into their children. If they do not have control of their household, then they do not have the right to be an example for Christ in the church or on the mission field.”

“Pastors and missionaries should be trained to put their families first.”

“I only really know of my mission organization, and they truly try to hit all the areas I've mentioned.”

“The reality is that ministry is hard. Yes, there are countless joys involved as well, but overall it is one of the most difficult callings one can have! This makes sense because of course Satan does not want the furthering of the Kingdom of God--what better way to destroy this than to attack His messengers? Having a wartime mindset will only help future ministers and missionaries when they do encounter hardships in ministry. And the more they are prepared, the better they will be able to fight and (by God's grace) win these battles!”

“How to keep your family's need first. How to strike the balance between living for the Lord and living for the pastorate - that might help in a lot of these areas because when living for the Lord all other things fall into place.”

“Our family usually had our own family Bible time in the evenings before we went to bed. We also enjoyed our meals together...breakfast and dinner, during the school year. At these times, we shared our important happenings of the day. My mom made these two things happen in our house. Also, she never had us watch tv during a meal. This would cause us to not talk as a family. Another great thing in our family was that my parents came to all our sporting, music, and other events. They were always there cheering us on. In addition, my parents included us in the ministry by getting us involved. It was life to us. By no means were we a perfect family but a great one. We would have many guests to our house. We would help clean (as always) and help set the table, food, etc. We would entertain and also listen to the guests. We were expected to eat with the adults and stay at the table. We listened and many times enjoyed our guests.”

“Education options with pros and cons of each option. How to help them integrate into their home society. Preparing them for college or choosing a vocation. Identifying and dealing with child abuse situations.”

“The proper order of priorities is... 1, God 2, Family 3, Ministry.”

“Better equip your children for the work at hand. Things such as counseling, depression, time management, communication with people, etc.”

“Make sure they have a basic understanding of worldviews and that includes the worldviews of children and teens. Make sure they understand the importance not only of teaching their children biblical truths, but also that it is vital they be the example of living biblically before their children.”
• “Setting aside time each day that is specific for family. Much like a daily devotional, family time is a must.”
• “Don't lose your family trying to help other families.”
• “Just make sure you stress that ministry works is HARD on the family, tell them not to neglect their relationships at home.”
• “The importance of family and how it should be your first ministry. I think if parents in ministry remembered that and made their kids a priority there would be A LOT less rebellion.”
• “Be consistent in/out of church, we are watching you all the time. GET RID of the constant pot stirrers in your church! They rarely change, they strive on drama and will continue to cause it and all that does is hurt others, hurt your family, hurt you and hurt the kingdom. You don't need their money, their politics- God's bigger than all of that! So "turn over some tables!!" (my dad did not do that, but years later...now that we are all grown, I've heard him say he wished he would have.)”
• “Mentoring someone else's kid that's not a PK/MK. It will give the parent the insight of what they're like when not having the so-called "pressures" of being a PK/MK, and it'll help that the parent is not the parent of the kid, meaning none of the disciplinary past or other actions are between them.”
• “Hardship will come in ministry no matter how hard you try to keep that from happening. It is how we deal with it that counts.”
• “Interpersonal relations.”
• “A course on reality and acceptance of others might not be a bad thing.”
• “Specifically training pastors to lead their families apart from their ministry/job.”
• “Seminary training always has their internship requirements on the back end of the curriculum and this is a mistake. Prior experience doing unpaid, menial, thankless work should be a pre-requisite for ministry studies. This would serve as a weeding-out process and, while it would discourage people from entering formal training, it would strengthen and improve the character of those who legitimately have the call on their live to minister. The last thing the world needs is more ministers who are just going to hurt people in the name of ministry.”
• “Purposeful discipleship. Accountability without punishment for various issues. Authority that creates respect.”
• “Time management and margin, especially focusing on family investment and keeping ministry work from negatively impacting family life. Also, some type of class or focus on processing ministry experiences, transitioning from ministry to non-ministry (or for MK's culture shock and reentry shock for families).”

Analysis:

There are many thoughts here that provide real possibilities for future training for parents of PKs and MKs. It is extremely interesting to see the number of participants who sense
the need to teach parents the proper priorities in the home verses the ministry. These adult ministry children clearly remember that ministry was put before them when they were children. Others were able to handle this order because they were able to enjoy the friends and good times that came because of being in a clergy home. Some practical insight was also shared concerning the need to train parents in parenting children in clergy homes. It was acknowledged that being a parent of a PK or MK requires a different set of skills that have not generally been addressed in the training process for ministry. Some mentioned the need for in-depth training so that emotional and psychological issues can be addressed in clergy training.

Question 20:

**Demographic Information of Survey Participants:**
- The age breakdown of participants:
- 16 people opted out of this question.

*Table 46. Ministry Children Survey Question 20 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>18-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>36-45</th>
<th>46-55</th>
<th>56-65</th>
<th>66-90</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis:

The age breakdown seems to present a good cross section of the age spectrum. It would have been great to have more participation with older adult ministry children. However, they are the less likely to be internet users. Nevertheless, these figures present a good cross section of generational issues in ministry.
Question 21:

Table 47. Ministry Children Survey Question 21 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Participants</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

Analysis:

Again, this data shows that the survey participants includes good cross section of individuals. More than likely, as more ministry children take the the survey the numbers will probably be much closer. But with this level of participation, issues and comments for both genders should be represented well.

Question 22:

Table 48. Ministry Children Survey Question 22 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15
Analysis:

The results of this question will show one of the weaknesses in the survey. The results indicate that close to 96% of those participating were white. It probably would have been good to have more variation. For example, invitations were sent to India and some South American countries. Future surveys should be international in pursuing a wider range of ethnic groups. Through state and national conventions, enquiries could be made to non-English speaking churches so that a wider range of ethnicities can be included.

Question 23:

Table 49. Ministry Children Survey Question 23 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay/Lesbian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis:

The results of this question are encouraging. A few thoughts about the results should be considered. Why would 16 people skip this question? A question that could be asked in the future could seek information about those who have been divorced and are now remarried.
Question 24:

Table 50. Ministry Children Survey Question 24 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many brothers and sisters do you have?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis:

Most of those who responded indicated 1-3 siblings. A few had more, and a few did not have any. There is no way of knowing the size of each family and how it affected the family in ministry. There are some studies, though, that indicate the relation of the stress factor to the size and age of the family.

Question 25:

Table 51. Ministry Children Survey Question 25 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What religious denomination were your parents?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Denominational</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis:

The issues are clearly heavily dealing with Baptist ministry children issues. It was a little surprising that more Charismatics and Presbyterians were not involved. The issues that the PKs and MKs responded to are extremely familiar to Baptist PKs and MKs. In the future, non-Baptist PKs and MKs should be sought. It would be interesting to know if certain denominations have issues that are more common.

Question 26:

Table 52. Ministry Children Survey Question 26 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What religious denomination are you now?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-denominational</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

Analysis:

Ministry children are leaving their Baptist roots. It would appear that the non-denominational ministries are appealing to those raised in Baptist homes. This may be because of the issues with certain church leaders and/or certain approaches to decision making within non-denominational churches. This may be a indicator of an approach to reclaim PKs and MKs who
have left their Christian roots, for there seems to be an interest in non-denominational types of churches.

**Question 27:**

*Table 53. Ministry Children Survey Question 27 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question* 67  
*skipped question* 18

**Analysis:**

A concerning number of ministry children have stopped going to church altogether. It is interesting that they would even want to be a part of this research project. This would again indicate a good cross section of participants. Another observation worth considering is why would eighteen people skip this question? It would seem to be a non-threatening question, unless the individuals were not ready to acknowledge their departure from the institutional church.

**Question 28:**

*Table 54. Ministry Children Survey Question 28 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*answered question* 49  
*skipped question* 36
Analysis:

Assuming that those who skipped this question were MKs would explain the large number here. The responses vary greatly. Several mentioned only one or two. Some had numbers as large as fifteen. Most, though, were in the three to five range.

Question 29:

Table 55. Ministry Children Survey Question 29 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 26
skipped question 59

Analysis:

This is really one of the few questions dedicated to MKs. Fifty nine participants skipped this question. Many MKs were pleased with the stability of their home life as a child. They seemed to understand it all or at least they were willing to accept the nature of their life as MKs. Those who had struggles were the ones whose parents were not around for them, especially during the early days of living in a new area. Several despised the fact that their parents would drop them off while they served the Lord by reaching other people. They felt to be a lessor priority because their parents seemed not to focus on them as a major part of their life and ministry.
Question 30:

Table 56. Ministry Children Survey Question 30 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

Analysis:

It is interesting that only sixteen of the participants skipped this question. There seemed to be an openness in answering this question. Maybe because there is not as much negativity if someone struggles with this issues. More than likely, though, ministry children have learned to understand some of the personal issues that they have been dealing with over time. Sixty percent of PKs and MKs deal with identity problems. They are preacher’s kids or missionary kids who are often compared to their parents, often told how special their parents were, and what a wonderful job they are doing for the Kingdom of God. They also have heard all the negativity concerning their parents. Rarely were they acknowledged for being their own individual person.
Question 31:

Table 57. Ministry Children Survey Question 31 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever struggled with an inferiority problem?</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

Analysis:

The responses to this question reveal similar results to the previous question. All ministry children were willing to answer this question, and it was only skipped by 15 of the participants. Over 60% thought themselves as being inferior to others. Perhaps it is because they were put up on a pedestal for being model children, and they knew very well that they were just like the other kids with the same hurt, hopes, and fears. Or, possibly they felt guilt because of all of the pain they have experienced, and they thought they were worse than others because of it.
Question 32:

Table 58. Ministry Children Survey Question 32 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question 23

Skipped question 62

Analysis:

This question is both one of the most skipped questions and a very foundational question in the project. The fact that so many skipped this question should indicate that adult ministry children are struggling with some of the mentioned issues and that they have not come to terms with it yet. Those who did participate were extremely honest though. The issues are real, and help needs to be offered. The real deep seated issues of why addictions are prominent need to be seriously considered. There are several questions that need to be added to this list as well, such as issues with bolema, anorexia, abuse, cutting, and other such issues that many people are not even familiar with. Yet, those who live in an isolated world often deal with many addicted behaviors and are in bondage, even as adults, and they are embarrassed to seek help. Someone might find out who they really are, or at least that they have imperfections like everyone else.
**Question 33:**

*Table 59. Ministry Children Survey Question 33 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastors</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacons</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth workers</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 29
skipped question 56

*Figure 3. Ministry Children Survey Question 33 Results Chart*

**Analysis:**

Both visual and numerical results are shared so that the complexity of the response can be understood in a greater degree. Trust issues are a major concern amongst ministry children,
and further research needs to be conducted in this area. Then, a plan needs to be put into place in order to increase the trust that young ministry children have toward leaders. The number of skips for this question is very high, which could indicate that this is a huge issue. Parents of PKs and MKs need to be aware that they should expose their children to those in the church who can earn trust. Those who can not be trusted are toxic to the faith of their children. Future study that would shed light on different trust issues with certain leaders in the church could be valuable. For example, are PKs the ones who have trust issues with deacons? Are children of staff members the ones who have trust issues with pastors? Who has the trust issues with youth pastors? Are MKs the ones with trust issues focused in on with them? These are all research subjects that need to be pursued.

**Question 34:**

*Table 60. Ministry Children Survey Question 34 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Issue</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional Issue</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis:**

Very few people skipped this question. The participants responded and their results demonstrate that 74% feel as though they were treated differently than other kids because they
were ministry children. This is really not very surprising, for most understand this to be true. But, this does not mean that the issues do not need to be addressed. With this being an occassional struggle for 58%, it would seem to be easily managed, but when the verbal comments were given to questions similar to this one, the PKs and MKs were much more intense. This seems to indicate that the problem is much deeper than an occassional problem.

**Question 35:**

*Table 61. Ministry Children Survey Question 35 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant Struggle</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69  
skipped question 16

**Analysis:**

Most of the participants answered the question, and to most this was a non-issue. If this question was worded a little differently perhaps the responses would have been different. The issue is not that the parents seek money for personal and ministry need, the problem that many PKs have is that money and conflict go together. The issue with several MKs is that they felt as though they were being paraded in front of church and they felt like a side show to be used to help a church meet their missions goals and budgets.
Question 36:

Table 62. Ministry Children Survey Question 36 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 68
skipped question 17

Analysis:

This question received a huge response and was very revealing. This question deals mostly with PKs, and this issue stands out clearly in the minds of the participants. Again, over 75% of the participants were from Baptist churches which are known for business meetings. Fifty percent remember their parents having to deal with bad business meetings; meetings that were hurtful and painful and that they can remember even into their adult years. This could be a major contributor to PKs who were raised in Baptist churches leaving and going to non-Baptist churches. This could also be a reason why several indicated that they no longer go to church. Clergy families need to acknowledge this issue and seek ways to protect their families from the meetings, or maybe even consider ministries that have another approach to leadership and decision making.
**Question 37:**

*Table 63. Ministry Children Survey Question 37 Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70

skipped question 15

**Analysis:**

One third of all PKs and MKs have been forced to leave a church or mission field. This is an extremely strong response from the participants. These adult PKs and MKs have vivid memories of these types of events. Is there any wonder so many have left Baptist churches? Is it any wonder so many have stopped going to church altogether? The question that must be asked is how many were in churches where there were several people who wanted them to leave, but they did not have enough votes? What did the PKs experience because of the militant folks who were talking and passing along the latest tidbit of harmful information? What did these people say to the PKs? What did their friends say to them? This no doubt is a huge issue that parents need to deal with.
Question 38:

Table 64. Ministry Children Survey Question 38 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant struggle</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70
skipped question 15

Analysis:

Most of the participants responded to this question. This would seem to indicate that many PKs and MKs experienced intrusive people in their homes. Some reported instances of people going into the homes to investigate what kind of clothes the kids had in their dressers, people watching from a distance with binoculars in order to see who was going into the homes to see the clergy families, people stopping by the house at any time because they were lonely, needing council, money, or wanting to give someone in the family a piece of their mind. These are all issues that will require the fathers to stand up and to be defenders of their homes. People in the congregations who have these tendencies need to dealt with appropriately.
Question 39:

Table 65. Ministry Children Survey Question 39 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 68  
skipped question 17

Analysis:

Only a few participants skipped this question. As adults remembering back, 26% can remember being left out of certain activities because people had issues with their parents. It could be that this is a very normal number and that most every child will experience this. This could very well be true, but very few experience it because of their parent’s occupation. Ministry children do not have the ability to reason these things out as children. Church members need to stop taking their frustrations out on PKs and MKs in order to get back at or get even with the parents.
Question 40:

Table 66. Ministry Children Survey Question 40 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

Analysis:

Only sixteen participants skipped this question, and close to half said that this was an issue when they were children. The degree of intensity is revealing as well, with 15% saying that this was something that happened often or continually. If this happened in the public sector what would the response be? Parents need to rise to the occasion as defenders of their children. They should not be passive on this issue. It may require that they lose their positions, but for the sake of ministry children, it must be done!
Question 41:

Table 67. Ministry Children Survey Question 41 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 67
skipped question 18

Analysis:

Being used is the issue with this question; people in the church or mission field expecting or desiring the PKs and MKs to be the savior of their own children because they could not. The guilt of failure concerning this issue must be strong. Ministry children are constantly expected to lead and to pave the way for others because of who they are. Sometimes PKs and MKs need to be led as well. Youth workers and Bible study teachers need to be extremely careful. There is a lot of resentment because they guilted the PKs and MKs into submission because of their parent’s ministry. Yes, this received a strong response and needs further study and discussion.
Question 42

Table 68. Ministry Children Survey Question 42 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 16

Analysis:

Whenever one is dealing with life and death it is a huge issue. With close to 22% of the participants answering this question in the affirmative is extremely concerning. When the number of participants who actually answered this question are considered, this is close to epidemic proportions. A few questions should be asked: First, how many really answered honestly? Were they answering with the spiritual mask of denial? It should be noted that these are the children of God’s choice servants. Why are 22% having times of wanting to escape from life? What are the pains and hurts that are pushing them to this point? What would the response be if those who are adult ministry children who no longer want anything to do with their parents or the things of God were included? This is indeed a problem that any parent who put their families above the church needs to take a close look at.
Question 43:

Table 69. Ministry Children Survey Question 43 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 68  
skipped question 17

Analysis:

Considering the number of participants who have considered suicide, it is a positive that no one had indicated that they had attempted suicide. This is an encouraging outcome, for none have followed through with the intruding thoughts that have flashed through their minds.

Question 44:

Table 70. Ministry Children Survey Question 44 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 70  
skipped question 15
Analysis:

Only fifteen participants skipped this question. The issue of parental authority is the concern here. Ministry children are clearly tired of people feeling it is their right to tell them what to do. Sixty-five percent indicated that this was a real issue. Twenty-seven percent indicated that it was a huge issue. This could very well be more of a parental issue, though. Parents are the protectors of the family, but it appears that many are allowing the transfer of their parental authority to be given over to the whims of the church. Parents need to be made aware of this and presented with a plan of action.

Conclusions

The response to the ministry children survey was great, and the questions definitely reveal some areas that need to be addressed in the immediate future. There is a huge need for more years of study on this subject. There is a huge need to educate and inform on every level so that ministry children are adequately reared in an atmosphere that is free of the toxic behavior that has been tearing them up for years. First, parents need to be trained biblically on raising children. They need to be aware of the evils that are lurking about their families. Every father and mother needs to be aware that this is relevant to them personally and that it is their calling first to be godly, biblical parents. Any area in which over 20% of the PKs and MKs are struggling needs to be addressed aggressively by the parents.

Ministry children love their parents and want to be proud of them. Primarily, parents need to have their strategic plan in place concerning the challenges of being a clergy family. For the remainder of this research project, a plan will be presented, knowing that as more study and
research is gathered, there will be a continual need to update and to make adjustments.

Nonetheless, this is a start and that is the goal, to start!
APPENDIX B

Survey Observations

Pre-Survey Thoughts

It is clearly understood that so little has been done in this area of study. Ministry children have been left out of almost all research that deals with the clergy families. As a result, any attempts to conduct quality research are on the cutting edge. This has led to many observations even before the study was conducted. These are items gathered as the survey was in the planning stages. It is important to be aware of these items for future consideration in the field of study.

- Some of the parents of PKs and MKs are self-conscience about their kids taking this survey. They are wondering what their kids might say.
- It seems as though some parents do not want their kids to take the survey for fear it may reveal that they are not the perfect parents. It seems as though they are trying to manage their kids so that no one will ever question anything about their ability to parent.
- It seems as though some parents are still being extremely protective of their children even as adults which could be hindering them (PKs and MKs) from rising to new levels of spirituality.
• It seems as though most non-clergy families will recognize the need for this kind of study, but are clueless to the hurt and pain they or their church has inflicted on the clergy families, especially the kids.

• Many people consider themselves adequately informed on PKs and MKs because they know one. The think they have all the solutions because they know a ministry child. This is like saying, “I know how to preform open heart surgery because I met a doctor once.”

• It seems as though many parents of PKs and MKs are aware of the problems but have bought into the idea that it is just the way it is and has to be.

• If non-clergy families acknowledge the problem in clergy families, it is never personal. It is always someone else who has inflicted the pain and hurt, and it is always someone else’s church and never their own that has caused the pain.

• It would seem as though seminary leaders, denominational leaders, mission’s agencies, and other like institutions know that there is a need but are not sure how extensive it is, what to do about it, how to make the real needs known, and whether putting money in this area of need would help or hinder the advancement of their institution.

• There seems to be a real interest with PKs and MKs to be a part of this study. Some want to know if they will be able to see some of the concluding analysis. I sense that some want to continue to be part of ministry children studies in the future in order to help other, younger PKs and MKs.

• PKs and MKs were some of the best recruiters for this study.

• In many cases, ministry children were excited to hear that the study was taking place. I sense that they were thinking that for the first time they were going to have a voice in
what it is like to be PKs and MKs. It is almost as they had never been asked to do anything like this before; they only had been told what to think and how they should be spiritual in their response.

- PKs and MKs are extremely loyal to their parents as any child (adult and youth) should be.

- Of all the contacts that were made to take the survey, only one declined. In actuality, the parent declined for their adult child. However, several parents simply did not even ask their children to consider taking part in the study.

- The survey was definitely more applicable for PKs than MKs. Although there are similarities between the two with certain struggles, the overwhelming challenges each may face are different. For example, adult MKs need help dealing with being a “Third Culture Kid,” and not power people within the church like PKs have to deal with. Therefore, it would be wise in the future to separate the two groups.

- It would appear that those with denominational concerns or with mission’s agencies concerns may be a little more hesitant to be part of the study for fear that some negative information may get out and be an embarrassment to their group.

- It must also be known that there are a huge number of PKs and MKs who may be classified as de-churched who do not intend to be a part of this study, or, for that matter, any other practice that resembles church or religion. This means that many of the negative issues would be worse had they been a part of the study.
General Observations Concerning the Survey

- It is interesting to see which questions in the survey are being skipped over by the participants.
- Younger PKs and MKs are more likely to take the survey because of the mistrust older people have for the internet and specifically surveys in general. In addition, younger PKs and MKs are just more technologically inclined.
- Ministry children have many things to say that churches, parents, denominations, and mission’s agencies need to hear. Some of it will be encouraging and will bring tears to the eyes of some. Some will cut to the core of one’s existence and will cause many to rethink how they parent PKs and MKs. That is, unless the parents will continue to blame the kids and everyone else for their own failures.
- There are some interesting insights that the investigator has seen and learned because of the survey responses.
- There were not enough options to some of the questions. If PKs and MKs had only positive responses to the question they may have been left with no response that adequately reflected their thoughts.
APPENDIX C

Seven Things a Pastor’s Kid Needs from a Father¹

Pastors, your position is a demanding one, and those demands bring unique struggles on your family. A pastor's wife bears a great burden, but she usually enters into the ministry willingly. A pastor's children, though, are carried on the current of their parents' calling. It is often a life of singular struggle and uncommon needs. These struggles often stem from the failures of the father. This isn't to cast full blame on pastors for their children's problems. But it is to say that pastors need to work to be good dads.

My own father has worked hard at this. He had his blind spots and weaknesses, and they have been a source of tension between him and me. But to this day, in his 33rd and last year of pastoral ministry, he has never stopped trying to be a better father. As I wrote this I thought of his failures, yes, but I also thought of successes. Lots of them. I also thought of dozens of conversations with fellow PKs about such struggles and their own relationships with their fathers. So know that my writing does not stem from bitterness of heart or some jaded desire to expose a good man's faults. I love my dad. My desire is to see struggles avoided or defeated for other pastors and PKs.

So here are seven of the most significant ways a pastor can be a good father to his children. Pastors, your child needs . . .

1. A dad, not a pastor

Yes, you are called to pastor your family, but PKs want a dad---someone who plays with them, protects them, makes them laugh, loves their mom, gives hugs, pays attention, teaches them how to build a budget and change the oil and field a ground ball. We want committed love and warmth. We want a dad who's not a workaholic. It's hypocritical to call your congregation to a life of love, sacrifice, and passionate gospel living while neglecting your own family. If a mortgage broker or salesman works too much at 60 hours a week, so do you. Leave work and be present for your kids. Your children will spit on your pastoring if they miss out on your fathering.


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2) Conversation, not sermons

Sermons are an effective way to communicate biblical truth to a congregation, but not to your kids (or wife). Preaching at your children will stunt their view of Scripture, dull their interest, and squelch what passion you are trying to stir. Speak TO your children about the Bible in a way that's interesting, applicable, and conversational. Help them see the Bible as a normal part of life. Rather than teach lessons, imbue your conversation with biblical worldview to help your children shape their life lenses. That way they'll think they, too, can interact with this important book. Sermons at home separate them from the Word by implying that only the learned can understand it.

3) Your interest in their hobbies

Jonathan Edwards may be your homeboy or Seth Godin your muse, but your first-grade daughter doesn't give a flip. Her love language is playing Barbies and dancing to Taylor Swift. Your son wants to build a Lego fort, beat you soundly at Modern Warfare on Xbox, or learn how to run a 10-yard out pattern. Your hobbies are yours alone, but engaging your children's interests speaks love that matters deeply to them.

4) To be studied

It gets harder to share time with kids as they get older. So study them as hard as you study your Greek lexicon. They're more important, anyway. Would your high school son appreciate going out to pizza with you or chilling on the couch and watching college football on a Saturday afternoon? Does your teenage daughter want you to take her shopping or to coffee? Maybe they don't want recreation but just help---so talk through their friend challenges or algebra problems, whichever are the most pressing. LEARN these things, even if it seems like there are no right answers. Teenagers are hard; they treat parents like idiots all the time. But these acts, when done consistently, add up. Make them a pattern so that when your kids are done thinking you are a moron they have a path to walk with you.

5) Consistency from you

No one can call hypocrisy on you faster than your kids (and wife), and nothing will undermine you in the home faster. If you stand in the pulpit on Sunday and talk about grace after spending Friday and Saturday griping at your family, grace looks awfully cheap and unappealing to your son in the second row. If, however, you treat your son as if you need his grace and forgiveness for your crappy attitude, it may open a door to God's grace. (And use phrases like "crappy attitude"; it sounds more like you actually know what you're apologizing for.)

If you act like the great shepherd in the pulpit but the hired hand who runs away at home, your children will see church and all it entails as phony because you are phony. If you encourage a life of joy but are morose or exhort your people toward a life of sacrifice but are lazy and
spendthriftily, nobody will notice faster than those in your home. To your family, your
interactions with God and them are far more important than your Sunday sermons.

6) Grace to fail

Pastors speak much about grace. It is the basis of our salvation and the source of hope. But when
the rubber meets the road, do you offer enough of it to your children? PKs feel enormous
pressure to be "good" and to be confident in all things biblical. But we are often not good and
often lack confidence in biblical realities. We sin and doubt like everyone else, but when we do,
the road to restoration and peace often feels like an impossible one to travel. Are we allowed the
same grace to fail and to doubt (assuming you preach grace to your congregation)?

7) A single moral standard

One of the graces PKs need is a single moral standard. Too many PKs feel the pressure of their
fathers' priestly profession in our moral lives. The pastor and elder qualifications in 1 Timothy
and Titus feel like a threat: "If you screw up, your father not only looks bad, he will be out of a
job." But those standards are the same ones that every Christian should be held to (other than the
ability to teach). Nobody else's dad is at risk of being unemployed if his kid is rebellious, but
mine is. The additional pressure to be morally upstanding does not help my heart. It creates a
convoluted soul environment in which temptation to rebel and temptation to be a hypocrite battle
the desire to honor Jesus and my dad.

You have heard that it was said PKs should be holier than their peers, and their parents should
raise them better, but Jesus says to us all, "Be holy for I am holy." So it should be.
APPENDIX D

From “The Key to Your Child’s Heart”¹

Eighty-four ways we can offend our children

1. Lacking interest in things that are special to me
2. Breaking promises
3. Criticizing unjustly
4. Allowing my brother or sister to put me down
5. Misunderstanding my motives
6. Speaking carelessly
7. Punishing me for something for which I had already been punished
8. Telling me that my opinion doesn’t really matter
9. Giving me the feeling that they never make mistakes
10. Not being gentle when pointing out my weaknesses or blind spots
11. Lecturing me and not understanding when all I need is support
12. Never telling me “I love you.” Never showing me physical affection
13. Not spending alone time with me
14. Be insensitive, rough, and breaking promises
15. Being thoughtless
16. Never telling me “thank you”
17. Not spending time together
18. Being insensitive to my trials
19. Speaking harsh words
20. Being inconsistent
21. Being taken for granted
22. Being told how to do something that I was doing on my own
23. Nagging me
24. Bossing me

¹Gary Smalley, The Key To Your Child’s Heart: Proven Steps that will Help You Raise Motivated, Obedient, and Loving Children (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983).
25. Feeling unnoticed or unappreciated
26. Being ignored
27. Not being considered a thinking or feeling person
28. Being too busy to care for me and listen to me
29. Dismissing my needs as unimportant, especially when their work or hobby is more important
30. Bringing up old mistakes from the past to deal with present problems
31. Teasing excessively
32. Not noticing my accomplishments
33. Making tactful comments
34. Liking me only for my physical looks and abilities, instead of what’s inside me
35. Not being praised and appreciated
36. Being built up and then let down
37. Getting my hopes up to do something as a family and then not following through
38. Being corrected without being reminded that they love me
39. Being disciplined in harshness and anger
40. Not reasoning with me, and never giving me an explanation of why I’m being disciplined
41. Misusing brute force
42. Reacting to me in the opposite way I think a Christian should treat me
43. Raising their voices to each other
44. Not being interested in who I am
45. Cutting down something I am doing or someone I am with as being dumb or stupid
46. Using foul language when they are upset with me
47. Being impatient, which often comes across as rudeness
48. Saying “no” without giving a reason
49. Not praising me
50. Sensing a difference between what is said with the mouth and what is said through facial expressions
51. Making sarcastic remarks about me
52. Making fun of my hopes, dreams and accomplishments
53. Punishing me when I already feeling low or offended
54. Being distracted when I really have something to say
55. Insulting me in front of others
56. Speaking before thinking it through how it will affect me
57. Pressuring me when I already feel low or offended
58. Comparing me with other kids at school and telling me how wonderful they are and that they wish I could be better
59. Forcing me to argue with them when I’m really hurting inside
60. Being treated like a little child
61. Not approving of what I do or how I do it. I keep trying to get their approval but they just won’t give in
62. Seeing them do the very things they tell me not to do
63. Ignoring me when I ask for advice because they are too busy
64. Ignoring me and not introducing me to people who come to the house or we see in public
65. Showing favoritism toward my brother or sister
66. Acting as if something I want is of little importance
67. Not feeling like I am special to them. It’s so important to me to have my parents let me know, even in small ways, that I’m special to them
68. Seeing my father put my mother down, especially in front of company
69. Seldom touching or holding me
70. Hearing my mom and dad bickering at each other to the point where one of them is really hurt
71. Not trusting me
72. Making fun of something physically wrong about me
73. Seeing my mom and dad trying to get revenge against each other
74. Sensing that my dad never approves of what I do or how I do it
75. Not being able to control their anger
76. Getting mad at me because I can’t keep up with their schedule or abilities
77. Making me feel like they wish they never had me in the first place
78. Not having enough time for me
79. Needing my parents but they are glued to the television
80. Seeing my parents spending a lot of money on their pleasures, but when I want something, they don’t seem to have the money
81. Making me feel childish
82. Not spending the time to understand what I am trying to say
83. Yelling at me when I already know I’m wrong
84. Making feel like I hadn’t tried to improve at something when I really have.
APPENDIX E

“Twenty-One Beliefs of a Toxic Faith”

- Toxic Belief #1: God’s love and favor depend on my behavior.
- Toxic Belief #2: When tragedy strikes, true believers should have a real peace about it.
- Toxic Belief #3: If I have real faith, God will heal me or someone I am praying for.
- Toxic Belief #4: All ministers are men and women and can be trusted.
- Toxic Belief #5: Material blessings are a sign of spiritual strength.
- Toxic Belief #6: The more money I give to God, the more money he will give to me.
- Toxic Belief #7: I can work my way to heaven.
- Toxic Belief #8: Problems in my life result from some particular sin.
- Toxic Belief #9: I must not stop meeting other’s needs.
- Toxic Belief #10: I must always submit to authority.
- Toxic Belief #11: God uses only spiritual giants.
- Toxic Belief #12: Having true faith means waiting for God to help me and doing nothing until he does.
- Toxic Belief #13: If it’s not in the Bible, it isn’t relevant.
- Toxic Belief #14: God will find me a perfect mate.

- Toxic Belief #15: Everything that happens to me is good.
- Toxic Belief #16: Strong faith will protect me from problems and pain.
- Toxic Belief #17: God hates sinners, is angry with me, and wants to punish me.
- Toxic Belief #18: Christ was merely a great teacher.
- Toxic Belief #19: God is too big to care about me.
- Toxic Belief #20: More than anything else, God wants me to be happy.
- Toxic Belief #21: I can become God.
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Associational Sunday School Director, 2007
Associational Prayer Director, 2008

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Board of Directors, Salvation Army
Rotary Club International
May 10, 2012

Wendell Bishop

Dear Wendell,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
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