Cultivating Key Practices for Resilience in Pastoral Ministry Among United States Foursquare Pastors

Loren Houltberg

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin

Part of the Leadership Studies Commons, and the Practical Theology Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin/408

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Theology at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.
Doctoral Project Approval Sheet

This doctoral project entitled

CULTIVATING KEY PRACTICES FOR RESILIENCE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY AMONG UNITED STATES FOUR SQUARE PASTORS

Written by

LOREN HOULTBERG

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

Jan Spencer

Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: April 16, 2020
CULTIVATING KEY PRACTICES FOR RESILIENCE IN PASTORAL MINISTRY AMONG UNITED STATES FOURSQUARE PASTORS

TRAINING MANUAL
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
LOREN HOULTBERG
April 2020
ABSTRACT

Cultivating Key Practices for Resilience in Pastoral Ministry among United States Foursquare Pastors
Loren Houltberg
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2020

Pastoral ministry is challenging and at times difficult. Paul describes the stress of ministry in 2 Corinthians 7:5: “Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.” The purpose of this project is to provide a training manual that can be used in a pastors’ summit that encourages Foursquare pastors in the United States to cultivate key practices for ministry resilience for a lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry. The introduction identifies cultural pressures and unrealistic expectations that make ministry difficult. Chapter 1 introduces the target audience. It also provides a brief history of the Foursquare Church and identifies Foursquare’s doctrine, domains of expertise, and polity. This constitutes Part One.

Chapter 2 reviews key books that deal with pastoral resilience, the Holy Spirit’s relationship to the pastoral vocation, and pastoral theology that relates to ministry context. Chapter 3 completes Part Two and articulates a practical pneumatology that accesses the help of the Holy Spirit in pastoral ministry.

Part Three consists of two short chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 4 lists theological conclusions and ministry challenges of the project and the pastoral summit format. Chapter 5 concerns the implementation and evaluation of the training manual and summit, followed by a conclusion.

The heart of the project is a training manual entitled “Pastoral Grit: Key Practices for Resiliency in Ministry.” The manual articulates twelve key practices that apply to the whole of the pastor’s life and ministry. The manual is less about strategy, methods, and church growth and more about the transformation of the inner life of the pastor for his or her emotional, spiritual, and mental health in ministry. The approach to these practices is fourfold: a story from my pastoral experience, biblical texts that apply to the practice, a teaching on the practice, and pneumatology accessing the help of the Holy Spirit.

Content Reader: Jan Spencer, PhD

Words: 299
DEDICATION

To the congregation of Emmanuel Foursquare Church, who grew with me these last forty years and granted me the privilege of being your pastor.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Erie, my beautiful wife of forty-seven years, who has been my companion and co-laborer in ministry, and my four children who endured and, I hope, enjoyed being pastor’s kids. I give a special thanks to Brenda Lamer, who tirelessly typed this project. I would also like to thank James Hansen, my editor, and Dr. Jan Spencer, my content reader.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**  iv

**PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT**

**INTRODUCTION**  2

**CHAPTER 1: THE FOURSQUARE PASTOR—THE AUDIENCE**  15

**PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**  33

**CHAPTER 3: A PASTORAL ORTHOPRAXY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**  68

**PART THREE: FORMULATING THE NEW MINISTRY INITIATIVE**

**CHAPTER 4: MINISTRY OUTCOMES**  91

**CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT**  98

**CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**  103

**APPENDICES**  111

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**  168
PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

While thinking how to introduce this project focusing on pastoral ministry, I remembered an email I had received. Opening the message attachment revealed a photo of Captain Jack Sparrow, Johnny Depp’s eccentric character from the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, fleeing for his life from a horde of zombie pirates.\(^1\) The caption read, “Be a pastor, it will be fun.”

Pastoral ministry is a rewarding vocation, but it can be difficult due to both external and internal stressors. The Apostle Paul packs the pressures of ministry into two brief sentences. “We were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears” (1 Cor 7:5).\(^2\) Paul clearly understood the challenges of ministry, and his astute observation serves as a springboard for this project. My overall objective is to help pastors cultivate key practices that foster ministry resilience resulting in a lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry. The working definition of ministry resilience in this document is: receiving the grace of God through the help of the Holy Spirit to develop the inward character and outward courage to bounce back from the difficulties and disappointments of ministry, adjust to the changing culture, and stay encouraged and joyful for the long run of the pastoral calling. Staying power and pastoral grit are synonyms for resiliency in this manual. The authors Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie offer a more succinct definition of resiliency, saying resilient pastors are

---

\(^{1}\) *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, directed by Gore Verbinski (Walt Disney Pictures, 2003).

\(^{2}\) All Scripture in this paper is quoted from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.
those that “not only survive but thrive in fruitful ministry over the long haul.” Helping pastors to develop staying power is another way of stating this. The vehicle for accomplishing this objective is a training manual designed specifically for pastors in the Foursquare denomination who serve in the United States.

To support the need and relevance of this training manual, I have drawn from statistics in *The State of Pastors*, a Barna report produced in partnership with Pepperdine University. *The State of Pastors* represents the sampling of approximately 320,000 Protestant pastors across the United States. Barna gives a plethora of statistics about pastors but a summary statement by David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, caught my attention. Kinnaman says “the Christian community in North America does not need stronger leaders; we need more resilient leaders.” Fostering resiliency is a key goal of this training manual.

Kinnaman’s observation and the Barna statistics support the need for resilient pastors. “More than one-third of pastors are at high (11%) or medium (26%) risk of burnout.” The Barna report also describes the inner struggle of pastors: “Nearly half of pastors report struggling with depression at some point during their tenure in ministry.

---


5 David Kinnaman, introduction to *The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity*, by Barna Group and Pepperdine University (Authors, 2017), 9.

(46%). A smaller but still significant proportion . . . says they have struggled with an addiction (19%).”

These statistics pinpoint burnout and depression as causes for pastors leaving ministry. Other authors, including Wayne Cordeiro and Ken Roberts from the Foursquare denomination, sound an equally distressing alarm about pastors. Cordeiro states emphatically, “The church leadership graveyard is ominously overcrowded. . . . I was surprised to find in a recent poll that fifteen hundred ministers leave pastoral ministry every month for various reasons.”

Roberts lists these shocking statistics: “Only 1 out of 10 ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form, 50 percent of those who start out in ministry will not last 5 years, 52 percent of pastors say they and their spouses believe that being in pastoral ministry is hazardous to their family’s well-being and health.”

Many factors contribute to the lack of resiliency and health of today’s pastors, but I will focus on four in this introduction.

**Vision Conflict**

A wrong perception of what pastoral ministry is comprised of can be an inward stressor and deplete resiliency for pastors. J. Louis Spencer, Bruce E. Winston, and Mihai C. Bocarnea define vision conflict as “the disparity between clergy’s positive anticipation

---

7 Ibid., 47.


of what ministry will comprise and the actual experience of serving in the ministry.”

They view the causes of vision conflict as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. A pastor not knowing what he or she should be doing and should not be doing is role ambiguity. In 1 Corinthians 9:26, Paul says, “I run thus, not with uncertainty. Thus I fight not as one beats the air.” Paul seemed to have clear direction what to do and what not to do. Ambiguity and lack of definition of pastoral ministry can cause inward stress. Role conflict, a conflict between what a pastor thinks he or she should be doing and what the congregation thinks the pastor should be doing can cause conflict. Conflict with parishioners in itself is the cause of many pastors leaving the ministry. Role overload can be caused by the immensity of the pastoral task of meeting all the people’s needs, running the business of the church, growing the size of the congregation, and a multitude of other things. Many of these things only God can do and when the pastor tries to do God’s part, burnout can occur. These are just a few of the inward stressors of pastoral ministry. There are also many outward stressors. In addition to the outward stressors listed here, the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has placed intensified stress on pastors. Pastors need God’s grace and wisdom to lead their congregations in times like this crisis.

---


11 Ibid.
Status of Pastors in Society

The respected status and central role of pastors in American culture has fallen. Pastors do not have the trusted and esteemed role they once had in communities. This diminished role could be attributed in part to the moral and financial scandals of high-profile pastors, while the decline in attendance in American churches, indicates the church is losing her position at the center of American culture. Pastors were once called “parsons” from medieval Latin *persona* and were considered a main person in local community for influence and education. The Barna report concludes, “The problem is not that the average American has an overwhelmingly negative perception of Christian ministers; it’s that the average American doesn’t think about them at all.”12 This general apathy can have a detrimental effect, making it more important than ever for pastors to be secure in their calling from God into pastoral ministry. This issue is covered in chapter two. Reggie McNeal stresses the importance of calling when he says, “A leader with a clear sense of call is a formidable force. Leaders convinced of their call do not easily succumb to disappointments or discouragement.”13 In the New Testament epistles both Paul and Peter open their letters to the churches by identifying their call. Paul writes, for example, that he is “an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” (Eph 1:1). Peter also introduces himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 1:1). Both apostles deemed it important for themselves and their readers to identify their calling. Resiliency in pastoral


ministry is enhanced when a pastor reminds himself or herself that it is God who called them to this task. Rehearsing one’s call is a healthy practice for a pastor.

**Effect of Current American Culture**

American consumer mentality has infiltrated the church world and steals pastors’ attention away from being spiritual leaders to managing the business of the church.

Eugene Peterson captures this when he says, “Our vocations are bounded on one side by consumer appetites, on the other by marketing mind-set.”

In the Barna report, preaching and teaching were by far the most enjoyable activities of pastors (66 percent) and organizing church events was the least enjoyable (2 percent), yet pastors often find a majority of their time today given to managing the business of the church and directing programs and events. Every occupation requires doing tasks that are not enjoyable but if the majority of one’s time is given to these tasks, exhaustion can result. If trying to compete with other churches for business, or trying to produce the best worship product takes the majority of a pastor’s time, the enjoyable tasks of teaching the Word of God and loving people can be diminished to a minor role. The result is discouraged and exhausted pastors.

---


Size of Congregation

Comparing the size of the congregation and the impetus to make the congregation grow in size is the third pressure that produces lack of health and resiliency among pastors. Pastors are asked often how many people attend their churches and whether their churches are growing. The Barna report supports pastoral satisfaction in connection to the numerical size and growth of the church the pastor serves. The size of a congregation does not always correspond to the health of a church; understanding this brings release of pressure for a pastor. A small church can be a healthy church. According to the Barna “State of the Church” report for 2016, 31 percent of Americans are practicing Christians; a practicing Christian is defined as one who attends services once a month and whose faith is important to them.16 A far lower percent of Americans are in church on a given weekend if practicing Christians attend only once a month. The Barna report summarizes its findings: “The Christian church has been a cornerstone of American life for centuries, but much has changed in the last 30 years. Americans are attending church less, and more people are experiencing and practicing their faith outside of its four walls. Millennials in particular are coming of age at a time of great skepticism and cynicism toward institutions—particularly the church.”17 The Barna researchers have coined the phrase “digital Babylon” to describe the culture the church finds itself in today. “Phenomenal access, profound alienation and a crisis of authority” is how these researchers have


17 Ibid.
defined digital Babylon.\textsuperscript{18} Wi-fi with its instant access cause many to find their reality from looking at a screen instead of interacting with others in a church setting. This causes alienation from institutions like the church and this is enhanced by a suspension of authority. This is the culture the American pastor faces today, and pastors must remain steadfast and resilient to serve their generation like David (Acts 13:36) and other leaders throughout church history.

The Foursquare Church is not immune to this decline in church attendance. According to the December 2018 Foursquare District Report, a monthly denominational report distributed only to Foursquare regional pastors and other Foursquare leaders, seven of the eleven Foursquare districts in the United States reported a twelve-month decline in attendance compared to the previous year. Attendance at thirty-one churches in the Gateway district, in which this training manual will be implemented, declined by more than 10 percent while only nineteen grew by more than 10 percent; the remaining 130 churches experienced no change in attendance. If church growth is the only standard for pastoral satisfaction and health, then America is strewn with discouraged pastors. One solution addressed in the training manual that redefines this standard for pastors is understanding the difference between successfulness and fruitfulness. In John 15, Jesus points out the goal of a disciple is to be “fruitful” and a disciple does this by “abiding,” which is another way of saying be resilient.

Aging of Pastors—Need for Resilient Pastors

Resilient pastors are needed to help find, restock themselves, and find the replacement for themselves in the next generation. Depending on the form of church government, many congregations themselves will be responsible to find new pastors. The aging of American pastors is evident. In 1968, 55 percent of all Protestant clergy were in their twenties, thirties, and early forties; in 1992 only 33 percent were under the age of forty; and by 2017 this number had fallen to just 15 percent. The Barna report concludes “the prospect of a massive leadership shortage in the coming decades” is in store for the church. This points out the need for resilient young and older pastors who have found the keys to fruitful and fulfilling ministry to help discover, model, mentor, and release leaders into pastoral ministry. Resiliency is not determined by age but rather by allowing the Lord to work the fruit of faithfulness in a pastor’s life. Young or old pastors can be resilient.

Value of Resiliency

The Barna report also connects resiliency in ministry to pastoral health: “The longer a pastor has been in ministry, the higher they rate their mental health. Conversely, leaders in ministry less than 15 years are twice as likely as the norm to say their mental health is merely average.” These statistics support that resiliency is a key factor for a

---


20 Ibid., 15.

21 Ibid., 23.
lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry. Peterson takes a cue from Saint Benedict and urges pastors to take a “vow of stability” and stay where they are. The flip side is that some churches die or close as a result of pastors who stay beyond their season of fruitfulness and fulfillment. Resilient pastors are those who have developed what Peterson calls “vocational holiness.” Vocational holiness for a pastor is accepting the current congregation God has given them and allowing the Lord to work in and through them all his good pleasure (Phil 2:13).

**Reason for Training Manual**

My interest in this training manual is twofold: (1) my sincere thankfulness that the Lord Jesus saved me, enabled me, and counted me faithful to be called a pastor (1 Tm 1:12); and (2) my genuine concern and love for the welfare of fellow pastors that I am privileged to oversee (1 Pt 5:3-4). My wife and I planted Emmanuel Foursquare Church in our hometown of Salina, Kansas, on the first Sunday of January 1980. In January of 2020, I will transition out of the role of senior pastor of Emmanuel after forty years. Not every season of ministry has been enjoyable and I have had my trials and tribulations; however, the title of Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson’s book, *That Their Work Will Be a Joy*, still resonates with me. Pastoring has given me joy and purpose. The Barna report agrees when it says of pastors, “For the most part, pastors present a positive

---

22 Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, 19.

23 Ibid., 21.

picture. The most common self-descriptions include having a good overall quality of life (91%), ranking spiritual well-being as excellent or good (88%) and being in good emotional and mental health (85%). About three-quarters of pastors frequently feel motivated to be a better leader (73%).”^25 Pastors rank far higher on these measures than the general public.

Our church, Emmanuel Foursquare, grew to an average weekend attendance of around six hundred people at our highest point about seven years ago and then plateaued in size for a number of years. Although we have had the privilege of starting three other congregations, the size of our congregation actually has been in decline over the past few years. I oversee twenty-nine churches in Kansas and Nebraska as a regional pastor for Foursquare. Many of these churches have also experienced a plateau or decline in the last few years. This training manual will address the twofold issue of not equating growth with health but also not ignoring growth. Helping pastors focus on fruitfulness and faithfulness and leaving growth to the Lord can promote pastoral health. This training manual is the convergence of the lessons I have learned in forty years of ministry at the same church and the lessons I have gleaned from my studies in the Fuller doctor of ministry program on pastoral theology and the Holy Spirit. My hope and prayer is that this convergence in my life will encourage pastors to cultivate key practices for ministry resilience with the continual help of the Holy Spirit.

The training manual deals with both the inner life and outer life of the pastor. Psalm 78:72 says of David, “So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his

---

heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” Pastoral ministry is the overflow of the pastor’s inner life. Barna summarizes the inner life of a pastor by stating, “The consistency of a pastor’s spiritual practice correlates to overall satisfaction and low risk metrics.” Pastors must develop a rich inner life with the Lord.

Part One of this doctoral project consists of this Introduction and Chapter 1 on the ministry context. Chapter 1 introduces the Foursquare Church and a brief history and identification of the doctrine, global distinctives, domains of expertise, and the polity of the Foursquare Church. The chapter also describes the American Foursquare Church, particularly the pastors in the Gateway district in which the training manual will be implemented. Part Two consists of two chapters, a literature review of seven books critical to the theme of resilience in pastoral ministry and a practical pneumatology applied to the pastoral vocation. Finally, Part Three is made up of two short chapters. Chapter 4 is on ministry outcomes, describing the design of the training manual and the planning of the pastoral training seminar for Foursquare pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska region. Chapter 5 concerns implementation and evaluation of the training manual and seminar.

The training manual, which is in the Appendix, consists of twelve chapters identifying key practices for pastoral resiliency. The twelve practices encouraged in the training manual were distilled from two sources: my personal experience of pastoring Emmanuel Foursquare Church for forty years and from the research and reading of books both past and present on pastoral ministry. The practices are not meant to be

---

26 Ibid., 29.
comprehensive in number but to be practices that are crucial for resilient pastoral ministry. The entirety of the training manual is not included in this project. Since the training manual is the heart of this project, I intend to give the reader a brief summary of the chapters here. Four items included in the summary are: 1) the title of the chapter with a phrase describing it, 2) a sentence explaining the practice, 3) a supporting biblical reference, and 4) the reason the practice is crucial for resiliency.

(1) *Comforter: Living with the Help of the Holy Spirit.* Pastoral ministry is to be attended by the personal and constant help of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7). It is the Holy Spirit who brings the life of the Father and the Son into the pastor’s ministry; without the Spirit’s help, the pastor is a candidate for burnout and exhaustion.

(2) *Calling: The Sustainer.* A pastor secure in his or her calling to ministry can better navigate the ups and downs of ministry (Acts 26:19). A clear sense of God’s calling gives identity, purpose, and resiliency to a pastor.

(3) *Communion: The Secret Place.* Ministry is the overflow of the pastor’s inner life with the Lord (Mt 6:6). The secret place is where the Lord and pastor meet together; without a life-giving secret place, the pastor soon has no fresh bread from God to give to the congregation.

(4) *Congregation: You Don’t Get to Choose.* God sets members in the church, and the congregation is the place where the pastor becomes what he or she teaches (1 Cor 12:18). A wrong understanding of a congregation and the place of the congregation in the pastor’s life can lead to lack of spiritual growth in the pastor’s life personally and staying power in ministry.
(5) Compassion: Gripped by Love. Ultimately, pastoral ministry is a labor of love (1 Thes 1:3). Maintaining a “first love” for the Lord, keeping a strong “seek,” and loving the congregation are crucial to resiliency and joy in pastoral ministry.

(6) Courage: Bias for Action. Pastors must choose to stay encouraged and not go into a maintenance mode (Jo 1:18). Discouragement is a major enemy of pastoral ministry; courage and grit are needed to combat discouragement.

(7) Consistency: Pace and Grace. Pastoral ministry is a marathon and pastors must find the right pace and God’s grace to be resilient (Heb 12:1-2). Keeping priorities right, setting boundaries, and speaking grace over yourself, your family, and others brings pace and grace for the long haul.

(8) Comparison and Conflict: Two Great Discouragers. Authenticity is a guard against comparison and humility is a necessity in conflict (2 Cor. 10:12; 1 Pt 5:5). A pastor who is secure in who they are and who they are not will be more able to resist the temptation to compare and compete with other ministers. A pastor who is a peacemaker can better endure the conflicts that are inevitable in pastoral ministry.

(9) Competency: Leadership – A Few Humble Ideas. Leadership is influence, and leaders have followers (2 Thes 3:7). Leadership is learned in the crucible of ministry.

(10) Christology: Crucified and Risen with Christ. Only Christ’s ministry is redemptive (1 Cor 2:2). The sustaining message that produces resiliency in the pastor and the congregation is Jesus Christ—who he is, what he has done, and who we are in him.
(11) Culture: Sons and Daughters of Issachar. Pastors are called to serve their generation (Acts 13:36). Making the goal authenticity and not relevance is a key for fruitfulness and longevity in pastoral ministry in any culture.

(12) Convergence: Finishing Well. God’s intention is for pastors to finish their course with joy (Acts 20:24). The fruit of resiliency in a pastor’s life is a finishing season of convergence where all the Lord has done in and through the pastor makes it his or her time of greatest influence.

An added emphasis in each chapter is accessing the help of the Holy Spirit. The goal of this emphasis is taking a theology of the Holy Spirit and making it a praxis in the daily inner and outer life of the pastor. The Foursquare Church is a Pentecostal denomination and in the DNA of our church is a dependence on the Holy Spirit. The founder of our denomination, Aimee Semple McPherson, said:

Any success which has followed my ministry is attributed to the motivating power of the Holy Spirit in my own life. The tremendous power and ever-increasing momentum which enabled the Foursquare Gospel in seven short years following its inception, to encircle the earth, is naught but the impelling force of the Blessed Holy Spirit Baptism. This great international organization is bona fide proof in itself of the indomitable prestige, triumphant power and invincible strength of the work of the Holy Spirit.27

The training manual, with discussion questions at the end of each chapter, will be used as a pastoral training seminar for the twenty-eight Foursquare churches in the Kansas-Nebraska region. An added goal is for the training manual to be sent to the 130 churches of the Gateway district of the Foursquare Church. A famous quote widely

attributed to Charles Spurgeon states, “If God has called you to be a minister, don’t stoop to be a king.” This statement magnifies the honor of being called pastor. My prayer for this manual is that the readers should not lose the honor, joy, and privilege of being called pastor in the pressures of today’s culture and the state of the church.
CHAPTER 1

THE FOURSQUARE PASTOR—THE AUDIENCE

The target audience for this training manual is the Foursquare pastors in Kansas and Nebraska. My hope is that the manual could also be implemented in other areas of the United States among Foursquare pastors. The Foursquare Church is the only church I have known. Not having grown up in the church, I became a part of the Foursquare Church after I became a believer in 1972. I graduated from the Foursquare Bible college, my first ministry assignment was as the youth pastor at Angelus Temple (the first headquarters church of the Foursquare movement), and I have been a Foursquare pastor for forty-three years now. I recently served a five-year term on the board of directors for our denomination and received further insight into the character and workings of our denomination. I have served as the Kansas-Nebraska regional pastor since 2005.

This chapter contains a brief history of the Foursquare Church, the major doctrines of the church, the Global Distinctives, five Domains of Expertise of Foursquare, and the polity of our church government. Woven into each of these components are statements of how this training manual addresses these distinctives of the Foursquare Church.
Brief History of the Foursquare Church

The Foursquare Gospel Church is an evangelical Pentecostal denomination founded in 1923 by Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944)—a single, immigrant woman who could not even vote at the time—commonly known as “Sister Aimee.” From this humble beginning the Foursquare denomination has grown, according to the 2018 Foursquare Church Annual Report, to 80,604 churches in 144 countries of the world with nearly eight million attendees.¹ Angelus Temple, the first Foursquare church, opened her doors and became one of the nation’s first megachurches in January 1923, and today there are 1,827 Foursquare churches in the United States. Church historian H. Vinson Synan pays a high compliment to Sister Aimee when he says, “She holds a prominent rank among all religious leaders in the twentieth century regardless of their sex and may well be the most important ordained woman minister in the history of Christianity.”²

Sister Aimee was born in Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada in 1890. After marrying Robert Semple in 1908, the young couple went to China as missionaries in 1910. Robert died in China shortly before the birth of their daughter, Roberta. Aimee and her young daughter moved to New York where she met Harold McPherson and remarried in 1912. A son, Rolf McPherson, was born to this union. The McPhersons later divorced. After a miraculous healing, Sister Aimee traveled the nation in what she called her “gospel car” from 1915 to 1923 with her two small children, holding evangelistic campaigns in tents, holding evangelistic campaigns in tents,

¹ The Foursquare annual report is sent each year by the national Foursquare Church office to all Foursquare pastors in printed form or on a disc.

opera houses, and city auditoriums. According to Nathaniel Van Cleave, “All the revival meetings were marked by miracles of healing and great altar calls.”\(^3\) Sister Aimee, in her own words, ascribed the rapid early growth of the Foursquare Church to the Holy Spirit: “That power can be attributed to naught but the Holy Spirit who descended upon her heart that wintry morning when, as a girl of seventeen, she was baptized with ‘Fire from on High’ . . . the Spirit whose matchless floodgates of blessing are still flung wide to the humblest disciple.”\(^4\) One main emphasis of the manual is to encourage pastors to a strong personal daily dependence on the Great Helper the Holy Spirit. I remind my fellow Foursquare ministers the DNA of our denomination, modeled by our founder, is marked by a strong Pentecostal ethos which I will describe later in this chapter.

By 1927 the Foursquare Church had grown to 105 congregations, and ten years after Angelus Temple was founded there were 253 Foursquare churches in twenty-nine states.\(^5\) The training manual I have written is addressed to Foursquare pastors in the United States. I have observed that the Foursquare Church grew most rapidly when there was a strong dependence on the Holy Spirit. During the ten years of growth from 1923 to 1933, revival services were continuous at Angelus Temple. Van Cleave comments on this period: “The Angelus Temple revival went on for more than a decade unabated. Souls continued to be saved, sick bodies healed, believers filled with the Spirit; hundreds of


trained, Spirit-filled workers kept carrying the message of the Gospel to the nation and to the world.\textsuperscript{6} Another great spurt of growth came in the 1970s and 1980s, when Foursquare churches in the United States increased from 775 in 1970 to more than 1,400 in 1989. This was the time of the “Jesus people” movement and later the charismatic renewal with strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{7} The Foursquare National Church report of 2011 relates these statistics: “Conversions to Christianity were 44 per church in the 1970s, as of 2010, conversions were 18 per church (a 60\% decrease). Compared to 1970s, water baptisms decreased from 9 to 4 per church (-56\%), and Holy Spirit baptisms declined from 11 to 4 per church (-64\%).”\textsuperscript{8} These statistics support a need for a renewed emphasis on the Holy Spirit who brings conversions and baptisms to a church.

**Foursquare Defined**

“Foursquare,” an unfamiliar term in today’s vernacular, means equal in length, breadth, and height; solid. It is also defined as “firm, steady and unswerving.”\textsuperscript{9}

Foursquare is a term used often in the King James version of the Bible. The altar of burnt offering and incense altar in the tabernacle were built foursquare (Ex 38:1; 33:25) and the heavenly Jerusalem is a city foursquare (Rv 21:16). The Foursquare Gospel Church received her name from Sister Aimee in an evangelistic meeting in Oakland, California,  

\textsuperscript{6} Van Cleave, *The Vine and the Branches*, 15.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 204.


in July 1922. She was preaching a sermon on the four faces of the cherubim in Ezekiel 1. She saw in the face of the man, Jesus Christ the Savior; in the face of the lion, Jesus Christ the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit; in the face of the ox, Jesus Christ the Healer; and in the face of the eagle, Jesus Christ the Soon Coming King. In her sermon Sister Aimee said, “A perfect gospel. A complete gospel for body, for soul, for spirit, and for eternity. A gospel that faces squarely in every direction. . . . Why—why it’s the F-o-u-r-s-q-u-a-r-e G-o-s-p-e-l.”\(^\text{10}\) The symbols used to represent the Foursquare gospel today are the cross, Jesus Christ the Savior; the dove, Jesus Christ the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit; the cup, Jesus Christ the Healer; and the crown, Jesus Christ the Soon Coming King. Hebrews 13:8, which reads “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever,” is expected to be prominently displayed in Foursquare Church sanctuaries.

**Domains of Expertise of the Foursquare Church**

On the Foursquare Church website the question is asked, what makes Foursquare different?

Being a global church that spans hundreds of cultures requires flexibility in style and approach. But every Foursquare Church around the world agrees on six foundational principles: kingdom partnerships, sound doctrine, empowering leadership, family relationships, Spirit empowerment and shared mission. These are called our Global Distinctives. It’s what makes us, us.\(^\text{11}\)


Sam Rockwell, who serves as the Gateway district supervisor for the Foursquare Church (the district I serve in), developed five “domains of expertise.” These domains of expertise integrate the cardinal doctrines of Foursquare, the “global distinctives,” and a congruence study in which Rockwell surveyed 468 licensed Foursquare ministers in the United States. Rockwell states, “It is important to note these Domains of Expertise, as an ensemble of qualities, combine together to differentiate Foursquare as distinctive among its peer institutions. . . . These Domains emerge from the history and practices of Foursquare Church and build upon existing work of our identity.”

These domains are a part of the DNA of the Foursquare Church. Understanding and practicing the domains of expertise does two important things for Foursquare pastors. It helps us understand our identity—who we are and who we are not—and emphasizing and practicing the domains are helpful keys to fruitfulness and fulfillment in pastoring a Foursquare church. My time on the board of directors of Foursquare has given me further insight into these domains. I will list Rockwell’s five domains of expertise and add my interpretation of them as a Foursquare pastor for over forty years.

Integrated Mission

Integrated mission includes church planting, emphasis on evangelism, global missions, and social justice. The cornerstone on Angelus Temple reads, “Dedicated unto the cause of inter-denominational and worldwide evangelism.” I define evangelism as comprising each of the components listed in integrated mission. Reaching out beyond the four walls

---

of the church and not going into a maintenance mode is a key practice for the health of a Foursquare pastor and a Foursquare church. Much of the growth of the Foursquare Church in the United States and in the world has been due to apostolic leaders who consistently press the church to expand. Tammy Dunahoo, vice president of U.S. operations and general supervisor for the Foursquare Church, uses the term “catalytic” to describe the kind of leaders needed within the Foursquare denomination. This translates to pastors who can inspire their congregations and move them toward accomplishing God’s mission for their church. Wayne Cordeiro, one of Foursquare’s catalytic pastors, has been responsible for starting a hundred churches in the Pacific Rim. He states in his book *Sifted* that as pastors we need to develop and not lose a “bias for action” and “forward lean” in ministry, and we need to “connect everything we do to a soul.”

Chapter 11 of the training manual addresses bias for action.

Reaching out to the poor, hurting, and marginalized of our society is included in social justice, and I see this as a component of evangelism. James chastises churches that ignore urgent needs by saying, “If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?” (Jas 2:15-16).

During the 1920s the Angelus Temple Commissary helped thousands of people. Daniel Epstein claims, “Angelus Temple was the only place anyone could get a meal, clothing, and blankets, no questions asked. Aimee’s policy was ‘give first and investigate

---

afterward.” Integrating sharing the gospel and social justice falls under the term “servant evangelism.” I have seen a marked increase in the Foursquare movement, especially among millennial pastors, to integrate these two components. I have discovered servant evangelism as an effective way to reach out in our community and believe it is an effective form of evangelism the Holy Spirit is emphasizing in today’s American culture.

Foursquare President Glenn Burris has coined the phrase “Reimagine” as an initiative for our churches. Every Foursquare church tithes to the denomination. Part of the reimagine initiative is returning to each local church a portion of their tithe, and then allowing the church to use it in creative ways to reach out beyond their walls. “Courage” and “Compassion” are titles of chapters in the training manual that address integrated mission for Foursquare pastors.

Women in Leadership

The position of the Foursquare denomination concerning women in ministry is stated in a book written by the Doctrine Committee of the Foursquare Church. “Anyone called by God and verified through character, spiritual experience and preparation for service or leadership, is qualified for Foursquare Church ministry in any role or office, regardless of gender, age, or ethnicity.”

---


unique characteristics of the Foursquare Church. Many of the Foursquare churches in the region I supervise were planted by women.

Foursquare began keeping statistics on senior pastors in 1933. At that time, 21 percent of the 266 senior pastors were women. The highest percentage of female senior pastors was in 1935 when 40 percent were women. The percentage of female senior pastors in the Foursquare Church in the United States was 7 percent in 2016.16 Only 13 of the 130 senior pastors in the Gateway district are women. Women in senior leadership has waned in the Foursquare Church, and empowering women into all phases of church leadership is part of our DNA that needs to be renewed. The last two pastors I was able to appoint as senior pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska region have been women thirty-five and thirty-two years old.

Pentecostal Ethos

A Pentecostal ethos includes teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second experience to salvation, practicing the gifts of the Spirit in services, expressive and heartfelt worship and prayer, speaking in tongues as a physical sign of the baptism of the Spirit and also the prayer language to be used in private devotional times. Included in a Pentecostal ethos is a belief in divine healing and praying for the sick. Sister Aimee called healing the “handmaiden of the gospel.”17 A Pentecostal ethos is one that welcomes all the help the Holy Spirit offers. In John 16:7, Jesus said, “Nevertheless I tell

---

16 Lisa Penberthy, e-mail message to author, October 29, 2019.
you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” A danger for a Foursquare church is to have Pentecostal form without the Pentecostal power and presence of the Holy Spirit in our ministries.

A major goal for resiliency in pastoral ministry is to encourage pastors to have a pneumatology that produces a praxis of the daily help and presence of the Holy Spirit in the pastor’s life and ministry. Steven Land lists the three affections of a Pentecostal ethos as gratitude, which includes praise and thanksgiving; compassion, which includes love and longing; and courage, which includes confidence and hope. Spirit-filled living is being so full of gratitude for what Jesus has done for us that we reach out with compassion to share this love with others, overcoming any fears or timidity of doing so by the courage this love has produced in our hearts. Embracing a Pentecostal ethos is a major part of the DNA of the Foursquare Church, and this, coupled with a middle-of-the-road theology, is part of the distinctive identity of Foursquare.

Three things have contributed to the waning of a Pentecostal ethos among Foursquare pastors. The first is the influx of new ministers from outside of Foursquare Bible colleges. This is addressed more fully under the domain of indigenous empowerment. The second is a current lack of role models for how a Pentecostal ethos looks in worship services, especially since Jack Hayford’s retirement. During his many years as a pastor, Hayford served as a wonderful example of what it looks like to

---

welcome the Holy Spirit into congregational worship services. He has been a stable spokesman for Pentecost to the body of Christ. Sister Aimee said the Pentecostal church has often stayed trapped in the Upper Room or behind basement walls and has not related to the culture around it: “The richest mountain top experience is only desirable insofar as it fits the recipient for more practical, level-headed, sober, and Spirit-filled soul winning in the valley lands of life!”

One of the goals of the training manual is to help Foursquare pastors model a form of Pentecostal ethos that engages today’s American culture. A third reason some churches have moved away from a Pentecostal ethos is a desire to establish a more mainstream, seeker-friendly atmosphere; the result is a diminished emphasis on the move of the Spirit in worship services.

It is important to state here that the training manual is not an argument for or a defense of a Pentecostal doctrine. It is a plea for pastors to have a personal, practical relationship with the Holy Spirit that translates into their own personal lives and the lives of their congregations. The Holy Spirit always points outside of himself to the Father and the Son. The church was born on Pentecost and in a very real sense all churches are Pentecostal and not just a doctrinal segment of the body of Christ.

Indigenous Empowerment

Indigenous empowerment is the fourth domain of expertise of Foursquare. Another way of saying this is that it is a goal in Foursquare to have an empowering leadership culture. Rockwell says, “According to God’s gifting and calling, we will

---

intentionally prepare and release men and women across generations and cultures into all positions of leadership and areas of ministry.” 20 Rockwell quotes Matt Temple—an urban missionary with Foursquare in Chicago and director of Mission City, an urban church planting network—as saying that “God turns powerless spectators into sovereign participants.” 21 “The Holy Spirit produces a ‘go sound’ in individual believers’ hearts and they are empowered to be Christ’s witnesses wherever they go” (Acts 1:8; 2:2) 22. Mark Branson and Juan Martinez capture the essence of indigenous empowerment when they say, “A core belief of missional churches is that God’s missional imagination is among the people of God.” 23 A key to resilience in pastoral ministry is equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12) and encouraging pastors not to do it all themselves. Doing all the work of the ministry in a church is a recipe for burnout.

The need for current Foursquare pastors to cultivate an empowering leadership culture within their congregations to raise up new leaders became greater in the 1970s. Until that time, pastoral candidates were required to receive training at LIFE Bible College (now Life Pacific University), established in 1923 by Sister Aimee, in order to be licensed. This requisite was removed in 1973 when the church began allowing individuals to be identified at the local church, discipled, and trained without attending

20 Rockwell, Identity Keystones, 21.

21 Ibid., 106.


23 Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martinez, Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities (Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity Press, 2011), 17.
LIFE.\textsuperscript{24} Since the pipeline for many men and women in Foursquare pastoral ministry has shifted to local training institutes and other theological training centers, it is crucial for those pastors to develop an understanding of our Foursquare identity.

A reality that makes instilling Foursquare DNA into emerging leaders so important at this time is that many pastors who were trained at LIFE Bible College are looking toward retirement from the pastorate. Barna’s report bears out the need for an increased focus on developing younger pastors among all denominations when it warns that the graying of America’s clergy presents “the prospect of a massive leadership shortage in the coming decades.”\textsuperscript{25} The average age of the senior pastors in the Gateway district is fifty-four\textsuperscript{26}—the same as the median age, according to Barna, across all Protestant clergy in America.\textsuperscript{27} As new leaders are cultivated, discipled, and mentored to enter the ministry, it will be critical to share with them the importance of being resilient when faced with the challenges of shepherding a congregation. Training today’s pastors to use the keys for developing resiliency in ministry will help ensure a rich, spiritual heritage for the next generation of Foursquare leaders.

Foursquare polity and governance also reflect indigenous empowerment. The denomination employs a modified episcopal form of government where the pastors are

\textsuperscript{24} Lisa Penberthy, e-mail message to author, July 31, 2019.

\textsuperscript{25} Barna Group and Pepperdine University, \textit{The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity} (Authors, 2017), 15.

\textsuperscript{26} Diana Vonfeldt, e-mail message to author, March 11, 2019.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 11.
appointed by a district supervisor. Financial oversight of each local Foursquare church is provided by a church council, of which the pastor is the chairman, and not a board. Council members are elected from within the congregation to a two-year term with a two-term maximum. This form of governance empowers the pastor to lead the church with more autonomy. In addition, “the pastor hires and manages the staff and sets the direction for the church.” Foursquare pastors can stay in a local church as long as they feel called unless there is a serious offense such as a moral failure or financial dishonesty, at which point they would be removed by the district supervisor. This promotes resiliency and the opportunity for long-term pastorates. The average length of stay at the same church for senior pastors in the Gateway Foursquare district is 10.28 years (Diana Vonfeldt, March 11, 2019, e-mail message to author). The downside to this policy is that it can lead to a pastor overstaying his or her fruitfulness at a church.

Moderation

Rockwell’s fifth and final domain of expertise is moderation, or a middle-of-the-road policy. Sister Aimee declared, “formalism to the left of us, fanaticism to the right of us, the Foursquare Gospel is called to march straight down the middle of the King’s highway.” Van Cleave describes this middle-of-the-road attitude: “The founder frequently emphasized the fact that the Foursquare ‘way’ in worship was a path that ran


29 Ibid., 48.

30 Rockwell, Identity Keystones, 36.

between the wildfire of fanaticism and the iceberg of formality.”

Finding the middle-of-the-road mentality is a key to resiliency in pastoral ministry. Jack Hayford, former Foursquare Church president and long-time Church on the Way pastor, warns against fanaticism when he recalls that “some charismatics often exhibited a distressing spiritual gullibility and love of sensationalism.” Leslie Keegel, president of the Foursquare Global Council, warns Foursquare pastors not to be drawn too far to the other side of the road where overbearing formalism can have the opposite effect and “any attempt to be led by the Spirit and move in the anointing is viewed as suspect and full of the possibility of deception.” The balance or the middle of the road is a safe but challenging place for a church and pastor. The inference reached in this project is that if a Foursquare pastor understands and embraces the DNA of these domains of expertise and lives out the twelve practices outlined in this training manual, resiliency will be a fruit.

**Implementation of the Training Manual**

This training manual will be implemented in a pastors’ seminar for the twenty-eight Foursquare senior pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska region and distributed to the 107 senior pastors in the Gateway district. The ethnic makeup of the 107 senior pastors reporting in the Gateway Foursquare district is twenty-six Hispanic, seven African-

---


American or Black, six Asian or Pacific Islander, one First Nations, and sixty-eight white.\textsuperscript{35}

The Foursquare Church allows liberty by its structure and ministry distinctives for the local pastor to fulfill his or her own unique calling or gifting. There is variety in the leadership style and culture of each Foursquare church. However, understanding who we are as Foursquare pastors as discussed in this chapter will only help us in our identity as leaders. A unique feature of the Foursquare church in the Kansas-Nebraska region is only three of the twenty-eight churches are over one hundred people in attendance, and many of the pastors are bi-vocational. This in itself produces unique challenges besides all the challenges Barna discusses. Karl Vaters provides many good insights to help pastors of small churches. One quote from Vaters will get the attention of small church pastors: “God has entrusted into our care the most powerful force on earth—the Small Church.”\textsuperscript{36} A discouraged pastor cannot be a resilient pastor, and Vaters’s book provides great encouragement for small church pastors.

\textbf{Summary}

This chapter has introduced the Foursquare Church and the elements that make up some of our DNA. Understanding these dynamics will help Foursquare pastors know who they are and promote resiliency. Taking the current cultural conditions described in the Introduction and the statistics from the Barna survey and combining them with the

\textsuperscript{35} Diana Vonfeldt, e-mail message to author, March 11, 2019.

\textsuperscript{36} Karl Vaters, \textit{The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us} (N.p.: New Small Church, 2013), 113.
specific cultural setting, size of churches, and denominational distinctives of the Gateway Foursquare churches, the training manual is an attempt to encourage key practices for resiliency in pastoral ministry that will apply to today’s culture and promote a fulfilling and fruitful lifetime of ministry.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of reviews of seven books critical to the theme of resilience in pastoral ministry. This literature review has two goals. The first is to establish some of the key practices for developing and maintaining pastoral resiliency. The second is to demonstrate that the literature is lacking a robust theology of the Holy Spirit for pastoral resiliency. After demonstrating this gap in the literature, I will attempt to develop such a theology of the Holy Spirit in the next chapter.

Eugene Peterson’s book *Under the Unpredictable Plant* and David Rohrer’s book *The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry* define the call to pastoral ministry and in the process correct misunderstandings about this call. Peterson, a longtime Presbyterian pastor and author of several books on pastoral ministry, also authored the best-selling contemporary Bible paraphrase, *The Message*. Peterson defines the pastoral call as an opportunity to develop vocational holiness, and he uses the life of Jonah to debunk a romantic view of this call. Rohrer, also a Presbyterian pastor, uses the life of John the Baptist to assert that pastors need to find a pastoral theology that is applicable in any culture. The Apostle Paul speaks of common temptations (1 Cor 10:13). Pastors of different streams of the church face common temptations that would disrupt resiliency in
ministry. The insights of Peterson and Rohrer would apply to the pastor of any church persuasion including Foursquare pastors.

Ruth Haley Barton’s book, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, places emphasis on the inner life of a pastor. Gary A. Haugen, in the foreword to Barton’s book, says, “Ruth Haley Barton has dedicated her life to distilling the wisdom to be found within these spiritual disciplines that position us to be strengthened and renewed at the level of our souls.”\(^1\) Barton warns pastors can lose their own souls in the midst of pastoral ministry if they neglect the inner life. I chose *The Grasshopper Myth* by Karl Vaters specifically because of the target audience of the training manual. In this book, Vaters corrects the myth that small church pastors are failures. The majority of the Foursquare pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska region are small church pastors with congregations under one hundred people.

Books by two Foursquare authors are included in this review. In *Staying Power*, Ken Roberts addresses five core ideas for resiliency in a local congregation. Jack Hayford commends Roberts’s book as being written “with discernment, humility and unpretentious self-disclosure.”\(^2\) Wayne Cordeiro pastors New Hope Foursquare Church and has planted over one hundred churches in the Pacific Rim. Cordeiro authored two books applicable to this training manual—*Leading on Empty* and *Sifted*. I chose to review

\(^{1}\) Gary A. Haugen, foreword to *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry* by Ruth Haley Barton, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 11.

Sifted, Cordeiro’s more recent work, in which he proposes that enduring sifting is what produces influence in a pastor’s life.

The final book in this review is Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving by Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie. This book is applicable to this project not only because of the wisdom of the authors but because their five themes for pastoral resilience in fruitful ministry are derived from the experience of pastors who attended peer cohort retreats called pastors’ summits. The struggles described by these cohort pastors are typical for pastors from all streams of the church. I found myself as a pastor allied to many of the accounts related in this book. The experiences and stories told by the summit participants helped verify for me that the key practices for resiliency proposed in the training manual are relevant to the everyday lives of current pastors.

Under the Unpredictable Plant by Eugene H. Peterson

A faulty understanding of the pastoral calling can make the pastorate a difficult vocation. Eugene Peterson, using the book of Jonah as a template, suggests all pastors start out with a vision of serving a perfect congregation in Tarshish when in reality they all minister to a flawed congregation in Nineveh. Tarshish, Peterson asserts, represents “a glamorous career in religion.” Pastors often carry an unrealistic romanticism about the pastoral vocation. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh, which represented difficult

---

3 Eugene H. Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 73.
people in difficult situations; however, neither Jonah nor pastors today get to choose the congregations they serve.

Nineveh, Not Tarshish

Theoretically, all pastoral ministry takes place in Nineveh because all congregations are filled with imperfect people in need of God’s grace. Once Peterson establishes this, he presents the key point for developing resiliency in pastoral ministry: “The congregation is the pastor’s place for developing vocational holiness.”4 The congregation contributes as much to the pastor’s growth in grace and holiness as the pastor contributes to the congregation. Peterson poignantly states that the congregation is the place that pastors “become what we preach.”5 Having pastored at the same church for forty years, I definitely understand that the congregation has helped me grow in the fruit of the Spirit as much as I have helped them. Peterson’s insights contribute valuable material for Chapter 4: Congregation in the training manual.

Vocational Holiness

The author’s thesis, that the congregation is the place where pastors develop vocational holiness, demonstrates the “norm for pastoral work is stability.”6 The Apostle Paul uses the synonym “faithful” in place of “stability” when he says of ministers, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2). Saint

---

4 Ibid., 21.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 29; emphasis original.
Benedict instituted a vow of stability to keep priests from moving to a more desirable monastery instead of staying put. Peterson insinuates today’s pastors need to take a vow of stability. In most cases, such a vow undoubtedly would enhance pastoral resiliency. In some cases in the Foursquare church, however, a requisite vow of stability could detract from the health of a church if the pastor stayed beyond his or her season of fruitfulness. Foursquare pastors are allowed to stay in a church indefinitely barring moral failure or a major difficulty, and while longevity is to be commended, it must be tempered by sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This scenario does not play out often among Foursquare pastors; however, Foursquare opened seventy-two churches in 2017 and closed eighty-five, and some of the closures were due to long-term pastors who stayed until there was no congregation left to pastor.\(^7\)

Peterson points out the administrative side of running a church can be a full-time job that leaves little time for pastoral ministry. A consumer mentality dominates much of North American Christianity; by accepting this, pastors find themselves program directors competing for the business of church attendees. Pastors need to be spiritual directors and not program directors. Peterson asserts that maintaining a “prayer-defined life,” seeing prayer as the core activity of pastoral ministry, and diving “to the ocean depths of prayer” will help pastors keep a spiritual director’s priority.\(^8\) Chapter 3: Communion in the training manual stresses there is no substitute for a healthy inner life for a pastor.


\(^8\) Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant, 99, 112.
Askesis

Peterson describes Jonah’s time in the belly of the great fish and compares this to the place where pastors lose their concept of pastoring as a “glamorous career in religion” and begin to develop *askesis*. The author defines *askesis*, which is a Greek word, as the process of developing a spiritual discipline in life that “permeates every human activity.” The pastor’s prayer and devotional life certainly would be included in *askesis*, but Peterson sees *askesis* as a spirituality that covers all of life. “*Askesis* is to spirituality what a training regimen is to an athlete.” Pastoral ministry is an overflow of the pastor’s secret-place relationship with the Lord (Mt 6:6). David had to fight and overcome the lion and bear in secret before he could face Goliath in the public arena (1 Sam 17:34-36).

*Askesis* is the development of a spirituality that orders a pastor’s inner life, which then translates to resiliency and fruitfulness in the pastor’s public and congregational life. Chapter 3: Communion in this training manual addresses the devotional inner life of the pastor. Each author in this review and my personal experience of over forty years of pastoral ministry attest to the fact that ministry is an overflow of the inner life of a pastor. Pastors minister out of the overflow of their secret place with God, and nothing can

---

9 Ibid., 73.

10 Ibid., 75.

11 Ibid., 74.
substitute for this communion. Barna concludes the quality of a pastor’s devotional life corresponds to resiliency in ministry.12

Three major insights regarding the call to pastoral ministry stand out in Peterson’s writing: (1) Pastoral ministry occurs in Nineveh, not Tarshish; (2) the congregation is the place where pastors develop vocational holiness; and (3) in a consumer-based society pastors need to pastor and not just run the business of the church. Understanding these three insights is key to developing resiliency in pastoral ministry.

_The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry by David Rohrer_

Describing the cultural landscape pastors find themselves in today, David Rohrer says, “Rocked by the waves of a changing culture, the church in America seems to be dealing most with the question of its institutional survival.”13 Rohrer argues that if pastors spend their energy on building, changing, or growing the institution of the church, “it is all too easy to neglect the work that is at the root of our calling.”14 The author defines this basic work of a pastor as preaching the gospel. Pastors can find themselves at one of two extremes concerning today’s culture: either ignoring the nuances of the culture and doing business-as-usual or concentrating solely on trying to make the church culturally relevant. The solution to this dilemma, Rohrer suggests, is that “What we need

---

12 Barna Group and Pepperdine University, _The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity_ (Authors, 2017), 5.


14 “In short, we don’t simply have an institution to create, refine or maintain. We have a gospel to preach.” Rohrer, _The Sacred Wilderness of Pastoral Ministry_, 14.
is a pastoral theology adequate for the task before us. We need a philosophy of ministry that is both unaffected by the contemporary situation and absolutely applicable within it.”\textsuperscript{15} My hope is the training manual will accomplish this.

Theology that Transcends Culture

Using the ministry of John the Baptist as a guide, Rohrer seeks to identify principles of pastoral ministry that transcend culture. Pastors must remember we are about something much bigger than ourselves and our ministries, and that Jesus is the one responsible for building his church (Mt 16:18) and not us. John the Baptist’s ministry developed and took place in the wilderness, not in the center of institutional religion. Rohrer says, “For this reason, the voice of God is often easiest to hear in the wilderness of our lives.”\textsuperscript{16} A key to fulfilling and fruitful ministry is a quiet and hearing heart. This is addressed in the training manual in Chapter 3: Communion.

The author defines the wilderness as going back to the basics or beginning, to “the place where the accoutrements of religion are stripped away.”\textsuperscript{17} Our task as pastors is not to clean up the mess the church is in today but “to give ourselves more fully to the work of looking for the ways in which God is showing up in spite of the mess.”\textsuperscript{18} “WWJD” is a popular acronym representing the question, “What Would Jesus Do?” It would be more appropriate to ask, “What is Jesus doing in the midst of his church and this culture?”

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 15.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 29.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 41.
Identifying what Jesus is doing requires close attention to the Holy Spirit, the great Helper whom Jesus promised us (Jn 14:16). Pastors need a personal daily working theology, or praxis, of the Holy Spirit to develop resilience for a lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry. This is a major premise of this doctoral project on resiliency.

Dependence on the Holy Spirit

Rohrer says this about the Holy Spirit’s role in a pastor’s ministry: “Where the Spirit of God is active, we can expect a dynamism and levels of innovation and creativity that are beyond our wildest imagination.”19 Burnout and despair can be the result if the pastoral task depends completely on us without the help of the Holy Spirit. I found this book to be most helpful to my doctoral project in urging pastors not to give all their energy to being culturally relevant, which the author calls a “moving target.”20 In the wilderness of our lives we must see and hear what Jesus is doing in our churches and then concentrate on the main pastoral task of proclaiming the truth of the gospel. However, the book does not offer fundamental practices for developing a philosophy of pastoral ministry that sustains our primary pastoral tasks and yet engages the culture.

*Staying Power* by Ken Roberts

Peterson and Rohrer define in great detail the culture the American church finds herself in today. In *Staying Power*, Ken Roberts focuses on five core ideas for pastoral resiliency, making it very applicable to the training manual. Roberts begins the book with

---

19 Ibid., 141.

20 Ibid., 158.
disturbing statistics about pastors and ends with disturbing statistics about the church. For Roberts, the pastor’s “inner world” or “state of our soul” is the key to a healthy and fulfilling pastoral ministry.\textsuperscript{21} The training manual verifies this statement in Chapter 3: Communion.

Identity

Roberts maintains, “What’s on the inside defines who we really are and determines who we will eventually become.”\textsuperscript{22} Discussing why so many people in pastoral ministry experience physical illness, the author concludes that unreal expectations, constant criticism, and disappointment in people and in God has made them sick. The first of Roberts’s core ideas for resiliency is being secure in our identity in Christ. The author says, “Jesus’ ministry didn’t define his identity; his identity defined his ministry.”\textsuperscript{23} Jesus’ identity was found in his Father’s view of him (Mt 3:17, 17:5). Our identity must be secure in Christ for our health and wholeness and not in our ministerial performance. This first core idea corresponds to Chapter 10: Christology in the training manual. In 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul declares, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” Before a pastor can teach the congregation who they are in Christ, the pastor must be secure in his or her own identity in Christ.


\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 77.
Calling

Roberts’s second major focus is on “calling,” which is the title of Chapter 2 in the training manual. The clarity and certainty of a pastor’s calling will sustain him or her in ministry. I have found this to be true in my own life, as rehearsing my call to pastor has sustained me in difficult times. The author explains the primary responsibilities of a pastor’s call are setting the spiritual tone of the congregation, nurturing the spiritual life of the staff and key leaders, and providing care for the souls of those the pastor serves.24 These three tasks summarize and simplify the pastoral call, which involves a myriad of activities.

Solitude and Silence

Solitude and silence are the third focus Roberts submits for pastoral resiliency. Quieting all the voices around us and getting alone with God is our best chance to hear him. A. W. Tozer sums up the importance of pastors hearing God: “The tragedy is that our eternal welfare depends upon our hearing, and we have trained our ears not to hear.”25 This focus corresponds to Chapter 3: Communion in the training manual. A major priority for pastors is secret-place time where Jesus says the Father is (Mt 6:6).

Transformation

The fourth focus of the book proposes that we can choose whether we will be “twisted or transformed” by our experiences. This focus relates to the chapter on

24 Ibid., 90.

consistency in the training manual, which encourages pastors to find pace and grace in all areas of their lives. Roberts views all moments in life as opportunities to experience transformation and points out that transformation requires both the grace of God and our cooperation. Philippians 2:12-13 confirms spiritual growth and transformation requires God and the pastor working together: “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” Roberts observes the phrase “it came to pass” appears 2,761 times in Scripture while the word “suddenly” is used only forty-one times. His point is that transformation takes time.

Reassessment

The final focus of Staying Power is reassessment and response. Roberts explains that “the fifth core idea to sustainability in Christian leadership is to have some honest reassessment of today’s church and respond with a clear and courageous plan of action.” He gives examples of wrong responses, including becoming too program-oriented, becoming hyper-spiritual for revival, and even deconstructing the church or leaving the church altogether. Maintaining a rich devotional life, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit, gathering, and heeding the advice of wise leaders are safeguards against these extremes. Right responses include focusing on discipleship, cultivating an atmosphere of community (living the gospel and mission), and joining God’s work in the

---

26 Roberts, Staying Power, 127.

27 Ibid., 135.

28 Ibid., 136-137.
world. Roberts is a pastor in the Foursquare Gospel Church and, although I find his book to be practical, it does not include much material on the Holy Spirit’s involvement in the pastor’s life.

_Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership_ by Ruth Haley Barton

“And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?” (Mt 16:26, New Living Translation). This key verse serves as the basis of _Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership_. Ruth Haley Barton captures the main thrust of her book when she asks, “What would it look like for me to lead more consistently from my soul—the place of my own encounter with God—rather than leading primarily from my head, my unbridled activism, or my performance-oriented drivenness?”

Leading from the Soul

Using the life of Moses as an example, the author teaches how leaders lead best from the presence of God in their own souls. Barton defines the soul as “the part of you that longs for more of God than you have right now.” When our leadership and our souls are in different places our resiliency, fruitfulness, and enjoyment of ministry are in jeopardy. Barton says spiritual leaders need to “forge a connection between our souls

---


30 Ibid., 13.

31 Ibid., 15.
and our leadership rather than experiencing them as separate arenas of our lives.”\textsuperscript{32} This concept is closely related to the idea that ministry should flow from our identity in Christ. “Truly, the best thing any of us have to bring to leadership is our own transforming selves.”\textsuperscript{33} It was after Paul discovered Christ in him that he became a zealous and faithful witness for Christ (Gal 1:15-16).

Life-Giving Spiritual Disciplines

To ensure successful ministry, pastors must develop spiritual disciplines that are life-giving to themselves so they can be life-giving to others. Barton explains this with a descriptive metaphor when she says that by practicing these disciplines “we will have bread to offer that is warm from the oven of our intimacy with God.”\textsuperscript{34} Solitude is a spiritual discipline that leaders need not only to teach but practice themselves. Moses learned solitude in his forty years in the Midianite desert. The author gives an overview of the leadership style Moses learned in Midian when she says, “He did not seem to have any great strategies for leadership except to seek God in solitude and then carry out what God revealed to him there.”\textsuperscript{35} It is important to grow in leadership skill by reading and interacting with other pastors but nothing substitutes for hearing God.

In the training manual I contend that learning to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives is crucial to resiliency in ministry. Scripture provides an example

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 19.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 29.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 31.
\end{itemize}
of this in the Apostle Paul’s keen sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in Acts 16 and taking the gospel to Philippi. In verse 6, Paul was “forbidden by the Holy Spirit”; in verse 7, the Holy Spirit “did not permit them” to preach; and then in verse 9, Paul saw the vision that led him to Philippi. This is a vivid example of Paul’s sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in his ministry. He did not give up until he discerned exactly what God wanted him to do.

Barton reinforces the idea that solitude increases sensitivity to God’s leading when she says, “Our leadership cannot be a force for good if it is not being refined by the rigors of true solitude, that place where God is at work beyond what we are able to do for ourselves or would even know how to do for ourselves.”\(^{36}\) It is in solitude that leaders learn to see, turn aside, and take their shoes off to the burning bushes in their lives (Ex 3:34).\(^{37}\) Waiting on God is a major component of solitude. “Burning bushes” are discerned by those who wait on the Lord (Is 40:31). Barton invites leaders to ask themselves this question: “Have I learned enough about how to wait on God in my own life to be able to call others to wait when that is what’s truly needed?”\(^{38}\)

Signs of Pastoral Burnout

Barton identifies some of the warning signs that a leader may be approaching burnout. Some of these signals are irritability or hypersensitivity, restlessness,

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 43.

\(^{37}\) “We are blind to the bush that is burning in our own backyard and the wisdom that is contained within it.” Ibid., 63.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 98.
compulsive overworking, emotional numbness, escapist behaviors, disconnection from identity and calling, inability to attend to human needs, hoarding energy, and slippage of spiritual practices.\textsuperscript{39} A pastor needs to be self-aware to recognize these signs of burnout and also have trusted confidants who have the courage to bring them to his or her attention. When the burden of ministry gets heavy, it often indicates a pastor is trying to do what only God can. Jesus says, “My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Mt 11:30). Barton asserts that when Moses recognized this to be true, he was “unencumbered by the weight of undue responsibility, he was free to carry the people into God’s presence and intercede in their behalf.”\textsuperscript{40} Pace and grace is a mantra repeated in the training manual.

A Pastor’s Prayer Life

The training manual emphasizes personal prayer and intercessory prayer for the congregation as key practices for resiliency. Exodus 17:11-12 has always provided me with a clear picture that a pastor’s prayer for his or her congregation significantly impacts their spiritual, mental, and physical health. In Israel’s first battle following the exodus from Egypt, Moses stood apart from the battle holding the rod of God above his head. From a human perspective Moses’ action would appear to have little to no bearing on the success of the battle, but, in fact, it was the very key to victory. When Moses held the rod high, Israel dominated over the enemy; each time he lowered it his people began to lose. Nothing can substitute for a pastor’s personal intercession for the congregation under his or her care. Barton gives a moving description of the role of the Holy Spirit in

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 104-106.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 142.
intercessory prayer when she says, “[Intercession] is being present to God on another’s behalf, listening for the prayer of the Holy Spirit that is already being prayed for that person before the throne of grace, and being willing to join God in that prayer.”

Discernment is given by the Holy Spirit to leaders who are sensitive to listen. God-given discernment can replace hours of trying to solve problems with one’s own understanding.

**God’s Presence**

Barton summarizes what it means to lead from the soul when she says, “Strengthening the soul of our leadership is an invitation that begins, continues and ends with seeking God in the crucible of ministry. It is an invitation to stay connected with our own soul—that very private place where God’s Spirit and my spirit dwell together in union—and to lead from that place.”

This is the most inspirational of the books I reviewed, and I have found it particularly insightful in regard to including the Helper, the Holy Spirit, in pastoral ministry. Barton closes the book by saying, “for Moses the presence of God was the Promised Land.” Pastors may not accomplish all they envision to do in ministry, but experiencing the presence of God in ever-deepening ways is an incomparable reward for fruitful and fulfilling ministry.

---

41 Ibid., 146.

42 “Discernment is always a gift given by the Spirit to spiritual people.” Ibid., 196.

43 Ibid., 210.

44 Ibid., 214; emphasis original.
The Grasshopper Myth by Karl Vaters

Karl Vaters refutes the belief that if a church is small and is not growing, then the pastor is a failure. Vaters defines a small church as a church of 25 to 350 attendees and a church with under 25 as a house church. Only one church in Foursquare’s Nebraska-Kansas region regularly has over 350 worshippers. A copy of the training manual will be distributed to all pastors in the Gateway district, which is comprised of 130 churches. Of these churches, only six have a regular attendance over 350, making the material in The Grasshopper Myth particularly well-suited to my target audience. According to Vaters, “93% of American churches (under 350) are small, while 80% (under 200) are very small. If size equals success, then 93% of pastors are unsuccessful, bad at their jobs and inadequate at fulfilling their calling, while 80% are very bad at their jobs.” The author contends this cannot be true and defends his answer with solid logic and statistics.

Prominence of Small Churches

Vaters states there are between two and three billion professing Christians in the world who regularly attend church and, using the lower number of two billion, over half choose to participate in congregations of less than 350 people. He also points out that at most 100 million Christians attend megachurches, leading him to the conclusion that

---


46 Ibid., 41.

47 Ibid., 113-114.
“Small Churches minister to 10 times more people every week than megachurches do!” Based on these numbers, Vaters makes this bold statement to small church pastors: “God has entrusted into our care the most powerful force on earth—the Small Church.”

Pastors of small churches will be unable to fully comprehend this statement unless they also understand and accept the fact that their churches are just as much God’s idea and plan as large churches. Logistically, megachurch complexes can fit only in certain geographic areas, but small churches, on the other hand, can fit anywhere.

Growth and Health are Not Synonymous

Although lack of growth in a church can be a symptom of an underlying issue, Vaters observes it does not necessarily mean the church is unhealthy. In defense of this point Vaters states, “All healthy, living things reach their optimal size at maturity, then they grow in different ways from that point on.” He goes on to say, “Sometimes what we call a plateau is simply a church reaching its optimal size, then using that size to grow healthful fruit.” Applying this sentence to churches Vaters says, “If the church is one body with many parts, isn’t it possible, even likely, that the body of Christ needs churches of all sizes?”

---

48 Ibid., 116.
49 Ibid., 112.
50 Ibid., 6.
51 Ibid., 128.
52 Ibid., 6.
Fruitfulness is the goal of the church and not numerical growth. A church’s track record in discipling and equipping its members to serve in Jesus’ name is a much stronger indicator of success than the number of bodies filling the pews. In a society that places so much importance on measurable achievement and performance, Vaters’s goal for small church pastors is that they “will be released from the guilt, stress, and feelings of inferiority that come with trying to live up to an unbiblical ideal.” Vaters is not saying all small churches are healthy and fruitful, but he is saying their size does not limit their potential for health and fruitfulness. “The truth is there are great churches that are big and great churches that are small.”

Practical Advice for Small Church Pastors

This book offers a wealth of practical advice to small church pastors that can help to free them from the guilt and condemnation of the grasshopper myth. The grasshopper myth is the belief that unless a church is large and growing numerically, the pastor is a failure. Listed here are some of the points I will directly apply to my target audience in the training manual.

---

53 Ibid., 11.
54 Ibid., 45.
55 I gave The Grasshopper Myth to the pastors I oversee in the Kansas-Nebraska region and they reported it was a great source of encouragement to them.
Focus on Health and Fruitfulness

Be health-oriented and not growth-oriented. Be fruit-oriented and not success-oriented. Vaters states of himself, “As soon as I stopped worrying about growing, my church and I started getting healthy again.”\textsuperscript{56}

Be Vision-Oriented

Be a small church with a big vision.\textsuperscript{57} Discover what your church is good at, and then concentrate on that and not on what you are not doing. Vaters says to small church pastors, “Stop acting in fear and step out with boldness.”\textsuperscript{58} Ask God what you can do as a small church that no other church is doing and let that become the identity of your church.

Being Small Can be a Blessing

Celebrate the blessings that come with being a small church. Some of these things are intimacy and accountability. Pastors can know the members of their congregations personally and be involved in their lives. Vaters says this of the blessing of being a small church pastor: “I am a member of my church, not just its pastor.”\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{56} Karl Vaters, \textit{The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us} (N.p.: New Small Church, 2013), 61.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 88.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 96.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 71.
Success is Not a Number

Instead of counting success in numbers, count success “one person at a time. Individual growth.”

Self-Discovery

Vaters has some very specific advice for small church pastors who are struggling with pastoring a small church—determine who you are not, discover who you are, and start doing it. He says this can be accomplished only by being brutally honest with yourself, with God, and with trusted leaders about how you feel.

Each of these five points are extremely applicable, practical, and crucial to the pastors who make up the target audience for the training manual. Summarizing these points will be a source of encouragement toward resiliency for these pastors. Vaters has written a very valuable and needed book for all denominations.

Comparison and Competition

Comparison and competition are major sources of discouragement for pastors. Vaters has provided crucial material for the chapter in the training manual that addresses these topics. Exposing as a lie the grasshopper myth—that all small church pastors are failures—will be an invaluable source of encouragement for the pastors I oversee, the majority of whom pastor churches under two hundred people. Vaters is not contending that church growth is wrong and neither is he stating all small churches are healthy

60 Ibid., 134.

61 Ibid., 174-181.
churches. The book does not promote complacency among small church pastors but contentment, which is the best attitude to pastoral health—and healthy pastors lead fruitful churches.

**Sifted by Wayne Cordeiro**

“A sifted life is an influential life. Your greatest influence takes place after you have been sifted and have survived.” This defines the major theme of Wayne Cordeiro’s book, *Sifted*. Jesus told Peter at the Last Supper that he would be sifted “as wheat” (Lk 22:31-31). As Cordeiro explains, “The process of sifting, coming to the moment when our strength is spent, is how God builds our faith. It’s a process that forms new character, tearing away old perspectives and putting fresh truth in place. Former habits are discovered and wrong tendencies are abandoned.” If a pastor does not endure and learn from times of sifting, he or she will not be around long enough to develop resiliency in pastoral ministry.

Cordeiro points out that “the church leadership graveyard is ominously overcrowded.” He validates this observation by reporting that 1,500 ministers leave the pastorate every month and 3,500 churches close every year in North America. Key points Cordeiro gives for learning from the sifting process are accepting where you are

---


63 Ibid., 10.

64 Ibid., 24.

65 Ibid., 25.
now, refusing to compare yourself to others, and being secure in your calling. In the author’s words, “Most of the growth and refinement that comes from the sifting process begins when you accept that you are exactly where God wants you to be, at least for the time being.” Sifting is addressed in the training manual in Chapter 10: Christology, which stresses that only Christ’s ministry is redemptive.

Fruitfulness

Pastors often base how well they are doing by measuring their ministry against that of other churches; however, the true measure of success is fruitfulness, and that is determined by faithfulness to God’s calling. Cordeiro says, “The temptation to compare often lies dormant in our hearts, emerging anytime we ask ourselves ‘How am I stacking up against everybody else?’ . . . We compare ourselves with another leader and either feel competitive, like we can do better, or inadequate, like we’ll never measure up.” At the root of resiliency is being yourself—knowing who you are and who you are not. Trying to live up to others’ expectations and not being secure in God’s calling for one’s life are major causes of burnout, discouragement, and dropout in ministry. Fruitfulness and faithfulness are targeted in the training manual as the primary outcomes of pastoral resiliency.

---

66 Ibid., 33.
67 Ibid., 43.
Pastoral Call

Cordeiro emphasizes the importance of the pastor’s call to ministry. “When you are sure of your calling, you are less prone to compare yourself with others, because you know that they are called to do something uniquely different. You are called to be you. You are not called to be someone else.”

Pastors can identify their calling through “hindsight revelation” (seeing what God has done in their life in the past), discovering their gifts, and practicing humility “expressed with teachability.” In summary, Cordeiro says a pastor’s calling is “one of the keys to long-term ministerial success: know how God has gifted you, know where God has called you to be, and then function faithfully in that role.”

Being secure in the pastoral calling does not happen overnight; it is worked in a pastor’s heart as he or she abides in Christ and allows tribulation to work endurance and endurance to work character in their lives (Rom 5:3-5). Chapter 2: Calling in the training manual covers the call to pastoral ministry.

Reliance on the Holy Spirit

At the heart of achieving pastoral resiliency lies the need for pastors have a constant and continual reliance on the Holy Spirit. Cordeiro includes in his book a chapter titled “Cry Out to God,” in which he discusses what he calls the “truth of passive

---

68 Ibid., 49.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., 54.

71 Ibid., 53.
power.””72 This chapter references Jesus’ words in 2 Corinthians 12:9, when he tells the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Cordeiro relates a similar experience in which the Lord said to him, “The reason I cannot be strong for you is that you refuse to be weak.”73 Passive power is coming to a deep realization that we can do nothing without Jesus (Jn 15:5), crying out to him for help, and allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to flow through our weakness to others (Zec 4:6). Cordeiro shares that access to God’s strength and the corresponding help of the Holy Spirit comes through humbling ourselves (Jas 4:6), disciplining ourselves (1 Tm 4:7-8), and encouraging ourselves (1 Sm 30:6).74

Homework

In Part Two of Sifted, Cordeiro covers what he calls “homework”—the priority of marriage, family, and rest in the pastor’s life. This topic relates to Chapter 7: Consistency in the training manual that discusses the importance of finding a “pace and grace” in the rhythm of a pastor’s life. I agree wholeheartedly that after one’s relationship with the Lord, nothing is more important than one’s relationship with their spouse. For married pastors most of the joys and sorrows of life stem from this key relationship, and it must be nurtured and protected throughout the ebb and flow of ministry to a church body. Single pastors do not have this added responsibility of pleasing their spouse and can concentrate more fully on pleasing the Lord (1 Cor 7:32-33).

72 Ibid., 73.
73 Ibid., 72.
74 Ibid., 80-81.
Priorities

In another chapter, “Hand to the Plow,” Cordeiro cautions pastors about the dangers of busy work and neglecting the chief work of the ministry—”taking strategic steps to present the gospel and guide people to spiritual maturity.” This piece of advice reminds me of the Scripture that says, “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air” (1 Cor 9:26). Pastors can fall easily into the trap of “beating the air” with busyness while neglecting the pastoral duty of “feeding the sheep” (Jn 21:17). The training manual is designed to help pastors identify the practices that should take priority in their lives.

Forward Lean

Cordeiro stresses to pastors the importance of imparting to the congregation “a bias for action . . . a forward lean” and the need for “connecting everything we do to a soul.” No ministry in the church is insignificant if it contributes to reaching a soul for Christ. Because we both serve as pastors in the Foursquare denomination and I have the privilege of knowing Cordeiro personally, I have observed firsthand the evidence of these core values in his life and in the life of the New Hope congregation. Pastors who have no bias for action risk sliding into a maintenance or survival mode rather than courageously leading the congregation forward in fresh vision. Connecting everything to a soul inspires teamwork and ownership in the fresh vision of a congregation. One final quote

---

75 Ibid., 146.

76 Ibid., 146, 204.
summarizes what Cordeiro says God is looking for in a pastor: “This is what heaven longs to applaud: authentic, servant-leaders whose ministries are ratified by the Spirit of God, whose faith remains steadfast after a season of sifting.”

Chapter 6: Courage in the training manual discusses this “forward lean” in ministry.

*Resilient Ministry* by Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie

*Resilient Ministry* is the most directly applicable book to this doctoral project. The authors, from their own experiences and the shared experiences of the pastors who attended the pastors’ summit conferences, identify five themes for resilient ministry: “spiritual formation, self-care, emotional and cultural intelligence, marriage and family, leadership and management.” In the first paragraph of the book, the authors define resiliency by saying it is what it takes for pastors “not only to survive but to thrive in fruitful ministry over the long haul.” Many of these themes are covered in other books included in this review, but *Resilient Ministry* provides insights not found in the others. I will give some highlights from each of the five themes in this book and focus more attention on those the other books did not cover.

**Spiritual Formation**

Many things can contribute to a pastor’s neglect of his or her own spiritual formation including workaholism to prove he or she works as hard as the members of the

---

77 Ibid., 202.


79 Ibid., 7.
congregation and assuming the success or failure of the church depends on the pastor alone.80 The authors deal with the topic of spiritual formation in a more practical way than the other books reviewed for this project. For example, the authors say, “Developing a prayer life is much like developing the habit of exercise.”81 Reflection with the habit of journaling is one suggestion made in the book. An immeasurable benefit of this simple practice is a more focused and rewarding prayer time that will enrich a pastor’s personal, family, and congregational life.

Self-Care

The book lists self-care as the second theme for resiliency. The authors define it as “the pursuit of physical, mental and emotional health.”82 Peter Scazzero says “emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.”83 Pursuing physical health was not a high priority among participants in the pastoral summit. In fact, for pastors, nutrition and physical exercise were a lower priority than for the general public.84 My contention is maintaining good physical health, including physical exercise and a healthy diet, should be an established habit for pastors and is an ingredient that contributes to emotional and spiritual health. The body’s health is connected to the soul’s health.

80 Ibid., 31, 34, 35.
81 Ibid., 52.
82 Ibid., 21.
83 Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 19.
84 Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 61.
A key term the book identifies for emotional health is *differentiation*. 

“Differentiation is the capacity to hear and empathize with parishioners’ frustrations while not necessarily agreeing with their analyses or taking the attacks personally. It is the ability to care for church members while not taking responsibility for them or their emotions.”85 Differentiation involves establishing boundaries between home and church and discovering what the authors call “limits and rhythms” in areas of life like friendships, exercise, rest, and contentment.86 87 Scazzero defines differentiation:

“Differentiation involves the ability to hold on to who you are and who you are not. The degree to which you are able to affirm your distinct values and goals apart from the pressures around you (separateness) while remaining close to people important to you (togetherness) helps to determine your level of differentiation.” I have found in my own life and from observing other pastors that not practicing differentiation and trying to carry the burdens of the congregation twenty-four hours a day can result in burnout.

One component of self-care for pastors is the development of personal friendships, and pastors need both “allies and confidants.”88 Allies are people who are for you, but with limits; confidants are people with whom you can share anything. Identifying and cultivating relationships with allies and confidants is a key for resiliency.

---

85 Ibid., 74.
86 Ibid., 99.
In the forty years I have pastored the same church, four elders in the church have been confidants that have sustained me. Trusted confidants are a gift to pastors.

EQ and CQ

Emotional intelligence, or “EQ,” is a quality Resilient Ministry identifies that the other resources in this review do not. EQ is defined as “the capacity for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.”\(^89\) Another way of saying this is the ability to manage your own emotions and respond in the right way to the emotions of others.\(^90\) Being a good listener and remaining calm, or being a peacemaker (Mt 5:9), is an important key to resiliency in pastoral ministry. Being a good peacemaker promotes a healthy emotional atmosphere for the whole congregation.

Although each book I reviewed speaks to the importance of understanding the culture, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie propose pastors must have cultural intelligence, or “CQ,” which requires humility and knowing the difference between “cultural preferences and biblical imperatives.”\(^91\) CQ, the authors say, enables you to “build trust across fences.”\(^92\) There is much to be gained by seeking fellowship with pastors from other denominations. This “cross-pollination” makes for a richer ministry. Seeking inter-denominational pastoral fellowship has many rewards. Getting to know and trust pastors of different denominations can give pastors a broader theological perspective, deepen

\(^89\) Ibid., 103.
\(^90\) Ibid.
\(^91\) Ibid., 147.
\(^92\) Ibid.
their appreciation of the whole body of Christ, help them realize they are not alone in pastoral trials and tribulations, and reduce competition and suspicion with other ministries. Cultivating relationships that foster a sense of unity and trust across denominational lines has a positive impact on pastoral resiliency.

Family Life

I wholeheartedly agree with a strong statement the authors make about marriage and family: “Therefore, the health of a pastor’s marriage and family is also a priority for the well-being of a congregation.” They also offer a word of caution, wisely advising pastors to protect their spouses from becoming “a nuclear dumping ground” for all the “criticisms, crises and conflicts” of the congregation. Scripture teaches that the husband and wife relationship is the closest comparison to the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:31-32); therefore, it is imperative that pastors place a similarly high priority on their marriage relationship.

Poetry and Plumbing

Leadership and management were the last theme discussed for resiliency. Peter Drucker calls leadership “poetry” and management “plumbing,” and effective leaders need to have a blend of both. The authors state it so: “Leadership requires both creative

---

93 Ibid., 170.
94 Ibid., 174.
95 Lan Liu, Conversations on Leadership Wisdom from Global Management Gurus (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010), 159.
art and methodical tasks." 96 We find this blend of qualities in a beautiful description of King David’s leadership in Psalm 78:72. “He shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.” During a class session of “Leading Turnaround Churches,” a course in the doctor of ministry program at Fuller, Bob Whitesel noted that more churches “fail from lack of management than from lack of leadership.” 97 In the area of leadership, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie urge pastors to grow “relationship capital.” 98 The stronger the relationships a pastor builds, the more likely they will sustain him or her when unpopular or divisive decisions must be made. Investing time in relationships and staying vulnerable are two ways to develop relationship capital. 99 I have found that correcting a congregant without relational capital usually results in the person leaving the church.

Modeling spiritual maturity by living in the grace of God, being a good listener, being an encourager by staying encouraged personally, and being a truth-teller even when it is difficult and brings discomfort are important qualities of pastoral leadership. 100 By modeling spiritual maturity in these areas the pastor sets an example for the congregation to develop an atmosphere of spiritual maturity in their own lives.

97 Bob Whitesel, “Leading Turnaround Churches” (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Summer 2012).
99 Ibid., 215, 216.
100 Ibid., 225-229.
Managing Conflict

Chapter 8 in the training manual deals with handling competition and conflict in ministry. *Resilient Ministry* gives excellent advice on the topic of conflict, encouraging pastors to embrace conflict management as an important part of their ministry. When confronted with conflict pastors should not try to sidestep it, should not approach it with a need-to-win attitude, should not attempt to control the outcome, and should not settle for a false solution.\(^{101}\) The authors view conflict for pastors as “a crucible for discipleship.”\(^ {102}\) Conflict management and exercising church discipline are enviable parts of ministry, and the way a pastor handles them has a significant impact on his or her staying power in ministry. Many of the insights in this book came from actual comments made by pastors who participated in the training summits, making it an excellent source of practical material for the training manual.

**Literature Review Conclusion**

Each of these books has been helpful in determining key practices for pastoral resiliency, which is crucial to experiencing a lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry. What they seem to be lacking is clear guidance on accessing the Holy Spirit in the daily responsibilities of ministry. One of my primary objectives in the training manual is guiding pastors into a transformative dependency on the Holy Spirit. The training manual currently is geared toward Foursquare denominational pastors in the Midwest; my goal is

\(^{101}\) Ibid., 234-235.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., 236.
to expand it into a book that will compel leaders in other denominations to cultivate ministry resilience through a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit as their Helper. With this goal in mind, I hope to develop in the next chapter a theology of the Holy Spirit that will become a praxis for pastors, enabling them to access the help of the Holy Spirit in the daily routines (or practices) of pastoral ministry.
CHAPTER 3

A PASTORAL ORTHOPRAXY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The goal of this chapter is to articulate a reflective theology that accesses the help of the Holy Spirit in the everyday life of the pastor. A time-honored definition of theology is *faith seeking understanding*. As explained by Anselm of Canterbury, “The believer does not seek to understand, that he may believe, but he believes that he may understand: for unless he believed he would not understand.”1 Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson remind, “Our theology must be continually constructive.”2 Grenz and Olson go on to say, “Therefore the true theologian explores how the great confessions of faith we recite on Sunday morning affect our Monday world.”3 This is the theological goal of this training manual for the local pastor. Orthodoxy is correct belief while orthopraxy is correct conduct. It is important that pastors have a sound orthodoxy of the Holy Spirit, but this training manual aims at key practices in the life of the pastor that promote resiliency, which would be orthopraxy.

---


3 Ibid., 126.
The Greek word \textit{praxis} is used six times in the New Testament and is translated by the English words “works” or “deeds.” Praxis is defined as doing or a mode of acting. The English word “practice” comes from this word. Practice is a repeated exercise, activity, or skill to acquire or maintain a proficiency at a task. A practice that is repeated becomes a habit. My desire for the Foursquare pastors to whom this manual is addressed is that they develop a habit of accessing the continual help of the Holy Spirit in their personal and ministerial lives. Praxis is more than practice as Ray Anderson points out: “Whereas practice implies the simple nonreflective performance of a task in a dispassionate value-free manner, praxis denotes a form of action that is value-directed and theory laden.”\footnote{Ray Anderson, \textit{The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 47.} My hope is that the practices for resiliency in this training manual with fit the Ray Anderson’s definition of praxes in the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical life of the pastor.

\textbf{A Living Theology of the Spirit}

Jesus said, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you but if I depart I will send Him to you” (Jn 16:7). Two points accentuate the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers in this verse. First, Jesus says it is to our advantage he goes away so he can send the Spirit, and second, the name Jesus gives the Holy Spirit is the Helper. The Greek word here for “Helper” is \textit{Paraclete} and is translated by other English words like comforter and advocate. Kittel concludes that “helper is perhaps the best, though the
basic concept and sustaining religious idea is that of an advocate.”⁵ A Foursquare pastor might teach a pneumatology about being born of the Spirit, being baptized in the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit, and being led by the Spirit, but does he or she have a living theology that brings righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17) in everyday life? Jakob Egeris Thorsen says we need a pneumatology that brings “the concrete experienceability of God’s existence and the empowerment by Him in the everyday lives of believers.”⁶ Ray Anderson in his unique way says, “For thousands of pastors and church leaders who are on the fireline of God’s mission in the world, we need a theology that stings even as it sings, exciting the mind and stirring the heart.”⁷ We need a theology that gives the hearers a burning heart (Lk 24:32). Pastors need a functional theology that brings the power and the presence of the Spirit into their ministries. In Ephesians 5:18, the apostle tells the church to “be filled with the Spirit.” The tense and voice of this verb is present imperfect passive and denotes continual, ongoing being filled with the Spirit. Frank Macchia describes this kind of life as “a lived experience of the Spirit that must be renewed time and time again.”⁸ This is to be a daily practice.

The emphasis on rationalism in America can diminish the need for the help of the Holy Spirit. Clifton Clarke warns, “A worldview where the spiritual is less important

---


⁷ Ray Anderson, The Shape of Practical Theology, 328.

than the rational is just as problematic as a worldview where the spiritual is more important than the rational.”

Speaking of the Pentecostal church in Africa, Clarke says, “African Pentecostalism which arises out of context, prizes a theology that is lived and functional over against a cerebral, rationality based theological approach.”

The theology espoused in this chapter is drawn from the context of the everyday life of the pastor and is aimed at being functional and lived.

In Philippians 1:19, Paul speaks of the “supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” The English word “choreographer” comes from the Greek word for supply. A choreographer designs and directs the movements of a production. The Holy Spirit is to be the choreographer of pastoral ministry. I see in Genesis 24 a beautiful picture of the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life. Abraham sent his trusted servant to get a bride for his son Isaac. The servant stayed on task, overcoming many obstacles, and came back and presented Rebekah to Isaac. The only thing required of Rebekah is that she had to be willing to go. I see in this beautiful story a picture of Father God sending the Holy Spirit to get individual members of the body of Christ and lead them through their lives to present them to the Lord Jesus as his bride. Rebekah had to be willing to follow the leading of Abraham’s faithful servant. The Holy Spirit, likewise, is involved in the call and lifetime of ministry of the pastor.

---

9 Clifton Clarke, Pentecostal Theology in Africa (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014), 86.

10 Ibid., 39.
Qualifying Statements

Three things must be said here before proceeding to describe this theology. First, only Jesus received the Spirit “without measure” (Jn 3:34, King James Version) and walked in the fullness of the Spirit every minute of his life. Pastors will not always walk in the Spirit but will walk in the flesh also (Gal 5:16). I contend that pastors will not be resilient if they are not consistently accessing the help of the Holy Spirit.

The second thing to establish is that the theology espoused in this chapter is trinitarian, upholding both the ontological Trinity and the economic Trinity. The coequal persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, share the same nature but are different persons and have different roles. The role of the Holy Spirit is emphasized in this manual, but where the Holy Spirit is, so are the Father and the Son. The economic Trinity “refers to the manifestation of the three persons of the Trinity in relationship to the world, particularly in regard to the outworking of God’s plan (economy) of salvation.”\(^\text{11}\) The theology in this manual isolates the work of the Holy Spirit in the world in bringing the life of the Father and Son to the ministry and life of the pastor. The Holy Spirit always points to the Father and the Son. Amos Yong states, “The Spirit who is always hidden and points to the Son also leads followers of Jesus to empty themselves in the service of the Son.”\(^\text{12}\) Lesslie Newbigin astutely says, “the Holy Spirit does not lead

---


\(^{12}\) Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 112.
past, or beyond, or away from Jesus.” Jürgen Moltmann drives this important point home: “the experience of the Spirit is never without the remembrance of Christ.” Jesus Christ’s is the “Good Shepherd” (Jn 10:14), the perfect pastor, and it is the Holy Spirit who forms Christ in the pastor (Gal 4:19) to make him or her a good under-shepherd of the Good Shepherd. A pneumatology that moves away from Christ is in danger of heresy.

The third thing to be said is that the theology espoused in this chapter is not only for pastors who would consider themselves Pentecostal. I agree with Steven Land who says, “I believe the whole church is Pentecostal.” Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen warns, “No church can claim a monopoly on the Spirit.” The Nicene Creed states, “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the giver of life.” If any church is experiencing the life of God, it is the Holy Spirit who is giving this life. Jesus says in John 10:10, “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.” Living the abundant life Christ has given us in him is the key to resiliency in pastoral ministry, and the Holy Spirit is the giver of that life.

---


One Essential

Before a pastor can access the help of the Holy Spirit, he or she must see the great need for help. This profound statement by Jesus in his teaching on fruitfulness sums up our need for help: “Without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5). The words of Aslan to Prince Caspian are applicable to pastoral ministry: “If you felt yourself sufficient for the task, it would prove you were not.”17 To receive the help of the Holy Spirit, the pastor must recognize his or her need for help and ask for it.

The influence of the Holy Spirit in a pastor’s life and ministry can lie anywhere between two ends of a spectrum. In some cases, the Holy Spirit is allowed only a negligible role; in others, He is given a prominent place. Paul asks the disciples he found in Ephesus if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, and their reply was, “We have not so much heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” In Luke 24:49, Jesus exhorted the disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of my Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” The Greek word for endued is *enduo*, and it means to be clothed with. Applying these texts to pastoral ministry, a pastor can either conduct his or her ministry as if there is no Holy Spirit, depending on their own natural talents or abilities, or they can be clothed with the Holy Spirit and depend on the Spirit in all they are and do. At times pastors will do both. Stanley Burgess quotes Msgr. Maurice Landrieux as calling the Holy Spirit the

---

17 *The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*, directed by Andrew Adamson (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2008).
“Forgotten Paraclete.” Resilient pastors must not forget the Paraclete. If we forget the Spirit, ministry is difficult. In the Declaration of Faith of the Foursquare Church, under the section of Spirit-filled living, this phrase is stated: “it is therefore, the will of God that we live and walk in the Spirit, moment by moment.”

The Help of the Holy Spirit

John 13-17 contains Jesus’s last teachings to the disciples before he went to the cross. The bookends of these chapters are Jesus washing the disciples’ feet along with his lesson on servanthood (Jn 13:1-20) and the high priestly prayer (Jn 17:1-26). In between are chapters 14-16 with much material on the role of the Holy Spirit in the disciples’ lives. Using these chapters as a guide, I have divided up this pastoral orthopraxy of the Holy Spirit in this way: the pastor’s inner life (Jn 14:26), the pastor’s family life (14:16-18), the pastor’s ministry life (16:7-10), the pastor’s congregational life (16:13-15), and the pastor’s missional life (Jn 15:26-27).

The Pastor’s Inner Life

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. (Jn 14:26)

---


Secret Place

In Mirabai Starr’s introduction to *The Interior Castle* about the life and writing of Teresa of Avila, she says, “There is a secret place, a radiant sanctuary . . . this magnificent refuge is inside of you.”20 The Holy Spirit is the guide into the secret place where we come to know God personally. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen concurs: “The Spirit makes the knowledge of revelation possible and represents the intimacy of love within the Trinity and between God and the believer.”21 The Holy Spirit brings the abundant, eternal life of God to the believer. Jesus says in Matthew 6:6, “Pray to your Father who is in the secret place.” The secret place is the place where the pastor and the Lord meet together. Ministry is an overflow of the pastor’s secret place. Teresa of Avila calls the secret place the “interior castle” and says, “It seems to me the entry door to this castle is prayer and meditation.”22 Bernard of Clairvany (1090-1153), “a theologian of the experience,” called the Holy Spirit the very kiss of the Father, and Kärkkäinen says of him, “Peculiar to Bernard’s characterization of the Spirit is the Spirit’s role as the kiss.”23 The use of the word kiss depicts the intimacy of this secret place relationship between the pastor and the Lord. I was teaching a men’s leadership class on devotion and prayer. I wanted to impress on the class how crucial this topic was to their spiritual growth. I felt

---


the Spirit say to me, “Take them to your secret place.” I took this group of ten men to the
prayer room where I prayed every day I was in the office. I was surprised what a moving
experience this was for me as I shared this intimate secret place of my life.

Nothing is more crucial to pastoral resiliency than the pastor’s prayer and
devotional life. A life-giving time in the word of God, an honest pouring out of your heart
in prayer, and a quiet soul listening to the voice of the Lord are all included in this secret
place. The Spirit is the one who guides us into this secret place. Ruth Haley Barton
concurs with this priority for a pastor’s life: “Truly the best thing any of us have to bring
to leadership is our own transforming selves.” She says of her own ministry, “What
would it look life for me to lead more consistently from my soul—the place of my own
encounter with God—rather than leading primarily from my head, my unbridled activism
or my performance-oriented drivenness?” The Apostle Paul said he served with his
spirit in the gospel (Rom 1:9). It is in the pastor’s secret place time with the Lord that the
Holy Spirit can teach us to do this. The ancient term “daily office” defines the secret
place. Scazzero describes the purpose of the daily office: “The root of the Daily Office is
not so much a turning to God to get something but to be with someone.” Each pastor
must find this place and time in their life to get alone with God—there is no substitute for
it.

24 Ruth Haley Barton, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of
Ministry, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 19.

25 Ibid., 25.

26 Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 143.
Prayer

Two types of prayer relate to the pastor’s secret place—the prayer of silence and praying in tongues. Contemplative theologians accentuate silence before the Lord in prayer. Martin Laird quotes R. S. Thomas’s writing on silence: “The silence holds with gloved hand the wild hawk of the mind.”

Pentecostal theologians espouse praying in tongues, which is a part of praying in the Spirit. This training manual is addressed to Foursquare pastors, which is a classical Pentecostal denomination. Paul says, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my understanding is unfruitful” (1 Cor 14:14). The mind can be a detriment to both types of prayer. The prayer of silence and praying in the Spirit should both be included in a pastor’s prayer life.

When praying in the Spirit or praying in tongues, the spirit is praying directly to God but the person’s understanding is unfruitful (1 Cor 14:2); that person is praying according to the will of God (Rom 8:27), building themselves up in the holy faith (1 Cor 14:4; Jude 20), speaking mysteries beyond understanding (1 Cor 14:2), and the Holy Spirit is helping pray for things that they do not know how to pray for (Rom 8:26). This praying in tongues or prayer language is an added, rich dimension to devotional life that should not be neglected by Foursquare pastors. Pastors should make praying in the Spirit a daily practice of their inner life as well as waiting silently before the Lord in prayer.

The Voice of the Lord

The pastor’s inner life or secret place is where we cultivate hearing the voice of the Lord. A. W. Tozer says, “The tragedy is that our eternal welfare depends on our hearing and we have trained our ears not to hear.”\textsuperscript{28} I agree with Augustine who said, “Your voice is my joy; your voice is better than a wealth of pleasures.”\textsuperscript{29} The secret place is the place where we position our hearts to hear the Holy Spirit reveal the things of the Father and the Son to us (Jn 16:14-19). A heart that hears is a quiet heart rather than a busy heart, a burning heart rather than a dull heart, a word-saturated rather than a world-saturated heart, and a courageous rather than a fearful heart.

The actual orthopraxy of the secret place will differ from pastor to pastor, but nothing is more important. Ancient and modern writers affirm this. Basil of Cappadocia (ca. 330-379) was known as the “Doctor of the Holy Spirit,” and he said, “To be a pneumatophor—an active receptacle, carrier, and distributor of the Holy Spirit and his gifts—it is necessary first to become detached from this life.”\textsuperscript{30} A pastor must come aside daily from this world to allow the Spirit to guide him or her into the secret place. A modern perspective is attested in the Barna research in the section on the pastor’s devotional life: “If pastors and those who support them should take anything from these findings, it’s that consistent spiritual practices matter. They matter to the quality of pastors’ lives and leadership. They correlate to vocational satisfaction and contentedness


with one’s own ministry. They impact spiritual and relational well being.”31 One key component to resiliency in pastoral ministry is a rich secret place relationship with the Lord led by the Holy Spirit.

**The Pastor’s Family Life**

And I will pray to the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever. (Jn 14:16)

The Holy Spirit is our Helper in all our family relationships. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to “be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately following this passage is the apostle’s teaching on husband and wife relationships (5:21-33) and parent-child relationships (6:1-4) If a pastor is married, the first place a Spirit-filled life should show up is in the family. Jesus reminded us in John 15:15 that without him we can do nothing, and this includes loving our spouses and children, grandchildren, and friends. Wayne Cordeiro, a Foursquare pastor, learned this when the Lord told him, “The reason I cannot be strong for you is that you refuse to be weak.”32 Pastors need the Lord’s help to love their spouses and families.

What relationships in our families would not be strengthened when the presence of the Holy Spirit brings love, joy, peace, and the other fruit of the Spirit into their lives (Gal 5:22-23)? The pastor’s family directly affects the pastor’s ministry life. “Therefore, the health of a pastor’s marriage and family is also a priority for the well-being of a

---


congregation.”

Paul, listing the qualifications of a bishop in 1 Timothy 3:5, asks, if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? Ray Anderson in his unique way says, “We can hardly empower people for ministry when they are not empowered to live their daily lives to fight lions and bears . . . Church members come to church beaten by the lions and bears in the daily routine of life.”

Pastors can come to their pastoral vocation beaten by the lions and bears of their marriage and family life. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, including words of wisdom and words of knowledge, are not just for ministry to the church and to the world but are available in parenting and family decisions as well. The key is to continually see our need and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help. Moltmann says, “A new energy for living proceeds from the Spirit,” and this includes family life.

The help of the Holy Spirit should show up in the pastor’s family life first.

A Pastor’s Ministerial Life

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

(Jn 16:8-11)

How important is the Holy Spirit in the ministerial life of a pastor? Sister Aimee comments on doing ministry without the help of the Holy Spirit, saying it is like “making

---


brick without straw.”\(^{36}\) Roger Stronstad talks of the vocational gift of the Spirit and says, “For Luke the gift of the Spirit has a vocational purpose and equips the disciples for service.”\(^ {37}\) For pastoral ministry to be a calling and not just a difficult job, the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit must accompany the pastor. Luke, who spoke often of the Holy Spirit, records that Jesus, after the Devil’s temptation, “returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee” (Lk 4:14). Jesus conducted his earthly ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit, doing only what the Father told him to do (Jn 5:19). Anderson describes pastoral ministry: “Our ministry is the ministry of Christ continuing through us by the presence and the power of the Spirit of Christ.”\(^ {38}\) Anderson also reminds pastors: “The Holy Spirit unites the doing of ministry to the ministry already accomplished in Christ.”\(^ {39}\) Fruitful and fulfilling pastoral ministry is experienced by pastors who are “led by the Spirit of God” (Rom 8:14).

Two things are a sure movement toward pastoral burnout: thinking ministry is up to us alone and trying to meet all the human needs around us. The Holy Spirit’s help is the antidote to both these dangerous views of ministry. The first-person pronoun “I” is used over thirty times in Romans 7; the Holy Spirit replaces the “I” in Romans 8. Western individualism is extenuated by capitalization of the subject “I,” in the English

---


\(^{39}\) Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology*, 63.
language. Other common languages do not normally capitalize “I” as the English language does. American pastors, with the influence of individualism, must watch the “I” replacing the Holy Spirit in ministry. Which is a better way to minister? Sister Aimee addresses this need: “Would you do your Master’s work? You must have your Master’s power. Would you perform your Master’s miracles? Then you must don your Master’s mantle of miracle working power.” Anderson intimates that resiliency in ministry also comes by Holy Spirit empowerment. “The evidence of empowerment is not always in obvious result but in unswerving commitment and inexplicable devotion to a task.” Resiliency is an evidence of a pastor receiving the Holy Spirit’s help.

Trying to meet all the needs and expectations of those around us is a sure step toward burnout. Anderson reminds us, “the needs of the world did not set the agenda for the ministry of Jesus,” rather the Holy Spirit did under the guidance of the Father. Anderson warns that “human need is an insatiable and unforgiving slave master as many pastors have found.” Jesus says, “For My yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Mt 11:30). Thomas Currie says of pastors, “We have grown busy but not joyful.”

---


43 Ibid., 79.

44 Ibid., 81.

ministry can be a great burden when I try to do God’s part, but it is joyful when I serve
Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. As a reminder here, only Jesus walked in the Spirit
twenty-four hours a day. All of us stumble and fall along the way attempting to be led by
the Holy Spirit, but it is noble to try to walk in the Spirit every day. Keegel, president of
the Foursquare Global Council, describes Holy Spirit empowered ministry: “Every day
presents an opportunity to be an agent of change; if you ask, you’ll be pleased how the
Holy Spirit will give you ears to hear and eyes to see in the lives of people you encounter
every day.”46 The Holy Spirit is the pastor’s constant companion in ministry if pastors
invite the Spirit’s participation.

The Scripture listed at the start of this section on the pastor’s ministerial life
outlines the Holy Spirit’s part in ministry. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts of sin,
the Holy Spirit is the one who convinces that righteousness is found only in Christ, and
the Holy Spirit is the one who convinces that each person will have to stand before the
Lord and give an account of what they have done in this life. These things are God’s part,
and the pastor cannot do them.

A Pastor’s Congregational Life

He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the
Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.
(Jn 16:14-15)

46 Leslie Keegel, The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Us: Discovering the Anointing to Share the
Gospel, Set People Free, and Experience the Supernatural in Your Life (Los Angeles: Foursquare Missions
“The congregation is the pastor’s place for developing vocational holiness.”

Vocational holiness is allowing the Holy Spirit to work in a pastor’s life so they become what they preach and not become like the Pharisee that Jesus said, “they say and do not do” (Mt 23:3). Pastors are to work out what God is working in their hearts (Phil 2:13). A part of this vocational holiness is for the Holy Spirit to work in the pastor a heart of a shepherd for his or her congregation as opposed to the heart of a hireling. A shepherd lays down his or her life for the sheep (Jn 10:11) while the hireling flees when the wolf comes (10:13). The Holy Spirit works in the pastor’s heart a sincere love for his or her congregation. After the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, the first thing that happened was the Father assured Jesus of his love for him (Mt 3:16-17). In Romans 5:3-5, a cycle of growth is described with the culmination being the Holy Spirit pouring out the love of God in our hearts.

This training manual is addressed to Foursquare pastors who teach that the second experience after being born of the Spirit is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Macchia connects love and this baptism: “The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of holy love. What we have been hinting at all along is that Spirit baptism is a baptism in Holy Love.” The ultimate expression of Spirit-filled living is walking in love. Some pastors never join their own congregation and remain a hireling. Ron Mehl, a beloved pastor in Foursquare who is with the Lord, would tell his congregation, “I am going to love you so well eventually all you can do is receive it.” 1 Peter 4:8 states, “Love will cover a multitude of sins.”

---


Kärkkäinen quotes Augustine as stating, “The primary presence of the Holy Spirit is love, not knowledge.”49 I have often told pastors, “If you aren’t perfect, you’d better be good at loving your people because they will put up with your shortcomings if they know you love them.” Love for the congregation worked into the heart of the pastor by the Holy Spirit is a key for resiliency. Jesus, the Chief Pastor, is the perfect example of resilient love for his disciples: “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13:1). Without love we are just “clanging cymbals” (1 Cor 13:1). Pastoral ministry is primarily a “labor of love” (1 Thes 1:3).

The Holy Spirit is the pastor’s guide in the study, presentation, and the reception of the word of God. Anderson says, “Praxis includes the effect and the presentation of it.”50 For Anderson, the Holy Spirit anoints the teaching of the word and anoints the hearing of the word by the congregation. In Anderson’s words, “Speaking creates the hearing.”51 Anderson shows the Holy Spirit’s role in the pastor’s ministry of the word: “While the biblical text must be taken as an authoritative word of God, its meaning is related to its application in contemporary context with the Holy Spirit as a guide.”52 The final element of the word is to produce change and action in the hearers. Grenz and Olson say, “Good theology always moves from the head to the heart and finally to the hands.”53

49 Kärkkäinen, Pneumatology, 47.
50 Anderson, The Soul of Ministry, 28.
51 Ibid., 47.
52 Ibid., 16.
53 Grenz and Olson, Who Needs Theology, 46.
The Holy Spirit should be invited to anoint the pastor’s preparation, presentation, and application of the word of God.

The Holy Spirit is to be the master of ceremonies in our worship services. The Holy Spirit brings the presence of God into our services. Molly Marshall says, “It is the Spirit who calls the thirsty to the well of worship. It is the Spirit who creates the hunger for communion with God and others. It is the Spirit who makes us present to one another, receptive and welcoming.” The presence of the Holy Spirit is what causes people to report about worship services, “God is truly among you” (1 Cor 14:25). A needed grace of pastors as the leaders of worship is to wait upon, welcome, and encourage the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his or her congregation.

The Missional Life of the Pastor

But when the Helper comes whom I shall send to you from the Father the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness because you have been with Me from the beginning. (Jn 16:14-15)

Jesus instructs his church to ‘Go’ in the Great Commission (Mt.28:19) which encourages pastors to look outside the four walls of the church. According to Stronstad, “Every initiative in evangelism recorded in Acts is the initiative of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is in charge of the missio Dei, the mission of God, in the world. Kirsteen Kim states, “The missio Dei may thus be said to be the movement of the Spirit in the world.”

---


55 Stronstad, A Reader on the Holy Spirit, 98.

Kim further articulates, “The Spirit initiates, guides, and empowers the disciple’s mission.”

The Holy Spirit understands the culture the pastor finds himself or herself in. An important question for pastors to ask is, “What is the Holy Spirit up to in the culture and community?” Kärkkäinen reminds Christian workers, “It is clear that the Spirit is active long before the Christian message reaches non-Christian people, the Spirit is working mysteriously among the nations.” With the church losing its prominence in American culture, it is even more crucial that pastors and churches are more missional than attractional. Instead of expecting the unchurched to come to them, the church must go to them in creative ways. The Spirit directs this creativity. Kim quotes James Dunn’s astute observation: “The first act of mission is discernment, to discern the way in which the Spirit is moving in the world in order to join in.” A warning here needs to be sounded about imperialism and colonization. Imperialism is seeking to “impose one group’s social, religious, political, and economic understanding upon another country, society or group.” The Western church in her missional activity has often been imperialistic in the approach of evangelism. With American culture becoming more secular, pastors today in America must not insist the face of the church look the same. Today’s pastor must discern the difference between tradition and truth. Kärkkäinen quoting Heraclitus (540-

57 Ibid., 28.

58 Kärkkäinen, Pneumatology, 158.


60 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, The Holy Spirit, Chi, and the Other, 65.
475 BC) says, “You cannot step twice into the same river for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you.” Pastors must discern the fresh water work of the Holy Spirit in American culture. Paul exhorts young pastor Timothy to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tm 4:5). Cordeiro says it this way: a pastor must keep a “bias for action,” always reaching out beyond the four walls of the church.

I often think of William Booth’s vision for the founding of the Salvation Army. The Glorious Being, the Lord Jesus, was in the midst of the angry sea saving drowning people while most of the church was safe on shore, with only a few helping him. The Holy Spirit keeps God’s mission alive and burning in the heart of the pastor. The Holy Spirit also gives each individual pastor in their cultural situation wisdom about how to do this if they have ears to hear. Kärkkäinen says, “The Spirit relates to each person and people group in a very specific way.” The Holy Spirit is an expert of every culture.

**Conclusion**

The pastoral orthopraxy of the Holy Spirit outlined in this chapter does not negate the discipline, character, and skill of the pastor, but it does propose the Holy Spirit be invited into every arena of a pastor’s life and ministry. Ignatius of Latakia is quoted by Stanley Burgess as saying, “Without the Holy Spirit, Christ stays in the past and the gospel is simply an organization.” Pastors must have a living theology of the Holy Spirit.

---


62 Ibid., 147.

PART THREE

FORMULATING THE NEW MINISTRY INITIATIVE
CHAPTER 4
MINISTRY OUTCOMES

Two major theological conclusions become evident from this project. The first is that resiliency is a biblical virtue necessary for pastoral ministry. Being resilient is being able to bounce back from misfortune and adjust easily to change. The title of Eugene Peterson’s book provides a good definition of resiliency: *Long Obedience in the Same Direction*.\(^1\) The Apostle Paul stresses this need in ministers: “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2). Resiliency and faithfulness are companions. Outward stressors, including the diminished central role of pastors and churches in our society, the suspicion that Christians are irrelevant and extreme, and a culture that is constantly changing, necessitate the need for resilient pastors who can stay encouraged. The inward stressors of role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, along with the daily care of people, can cause burnout in pastors. David Kinnaman confirms this need of resiliency when he summarizes the findings of the *State of Pastors*: “In the past, a career in ministry might have appealed to any leader who sought recognition or respect. Today, however, Christian ministers are as likely to be ignored and insulted as

they are to be admired and revered. It is not a job for the thin-skinned or the weak in heart. It is a job for the resilient.”

The purpose of this training manual and the twelve practices it proposes is to fortify pastors for greater resilience in their lives both in private and in public.

The second major theological conclusion drawn from this project is the need for the help of the Holy Spirit and for pastors to have a living theology of accessing the Spirit’s help. According to Kinnaman, pastors find themselves today in a culture “under constant reconstruction” and in a “time of unparalleled complexity.” The Holy Spirit knows all things and understands the culture pastors find themselves in. The Spirit also brings the instruction of the Lord Jesus to us. Jesus said in John 15:5, “Without me you can do nothing,” so certainly pastors need the help of the all-knowing Holy Spirit to help them reach our culture. Acknowledging this great need, constantly asking for the Spirit’s help, and learning to discern his daily leading are all components of having a pneumatological orthopraxy as well as an orthodoxy. My hope is that the training manual stimulates this great need for help in the pastor’s heart as well as a settled confidence in the Holy Spirit’s desire to help.

---


3 Ibid., 155, 156.
Ministry Challenges

Two ministry challenges that match these theological conclusions are to help pastors develop a “vocational holiness” mindset and to encourage pastors to develop a philosophy of ministry that fits in any culture.

Eugene Peterson says, “The congregation is the pastor’s place for developing vocational holiness.” A prerequisite for developing vocational holiness is to correct what Jan Spencer describes as vision conflict. In a telephone conversation with Spencer on September 16, 2019, he explained vision conflict as “having a disparity between what you think you would be doing in ministry versus what you are actually doing.” The challenge of this training manual is help pastors accept love and lay their life down for the congregation they have and not the one they would like to have. In the process of doing this, the Holy Spirit works vocational holiness in the pastor’s life so that they become what they preach.

The second challenge is to help pastors develop a theology that promotes resiliency, accessing the help of the Holy Spirit and flourishing in the culture the pastor finds him- or herself in. David Rohrer suggests, “What we need is a pastoral theology adequate for the task before us. We need a philosophy of ministry that is both unaffected by the contemporary situation and absolutely applicable within it.” The practices in the training manual encourage a holistic theology that applies to the pastor’s inner life,

---


family life, congregational life, and missional life. When implemented, these practices promote a pace and grace of life that gives resiliency for a lifetime of fulfilling and fruitful ministry.

**Overall Goal**

The preferred future of this ministry initiative is to produce encouraged pastors who have not lost the joy of being a pastor in the midst of the business of running the church. Paul links two unlikely things in Colossians 1:11, longsuffering and joy. All pastors have times of longsuffering, but when the companion of longsuffering is joy, there is resilience or staying power. Living out the key practices in this manual will help pastoral ministry to be like the title of Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson’s book, *That Their Work Will Be a Joy*.6

**Target Population**

The initial target population to implement this training manual are the Foursquare senior or lead pastors and their spouses in Kansas and Nebraska that I serve as the regional pastor. There are twenty-eight churches of various sizes in the region. Only three of the churches have an average attendance of over a hundred people, and most of the pastor are bivocational. Three of the senior pastors are women. Seven of the pastors are in their first pastorate, while several others are long-term pastors in the same church; one has pastored the same church for over fifty years. A Summit for Developing Pastoral Grit

---

is planned for a weekend in early September 2020. The Friday night session will begin at 6:30 p.m. and end at 9:00 p.m. The Saturday session will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. A block of rooms will be set aside at a discounted rate at the new hotel in town. The Pastors’ Summit will be free, including lunch and snacks, and if a pastor cannot afford the hotel, it will be taken care of for them. The timeline is to have the training manual published as a book entitled *Pastoral Grit: Key Practices for Resiliency in Ministry*. I also plan to make video teaching on each practice and make it available on YouTube. The plan is to send the book to the pastors ahead of time and then have the sessions at the training seminar cover the chapters, with small group discussions after each session.

**Format of Training Manual and Pastors’ Summit**

Each chapter of the training manual starts with a personal story from my years of pastoral ministry. The second component is Scripture that illustrates the key practices. A teaching on the key practice is the largest component of the chapter. The chapters end with questions for pastors to answer about the key practices in their life.

The format of the pastors’ summit will follow a similar pattern. There will be a forty-minute teaching that includes personal stories from my pastoral experience, followed by the Scripture and teaching on the practices. Two resiliency practices will be covered in each session. The pastors will then break out in small groups to discuss the teaching. The area pastors will lead the small group discussion. A detailed account of the Pastors’ Summit is provided in a brochure in the appendix.
Difficulties of the Project

Gathering all the Foursquare pastors and their spouses in the Kansas-Nebraska region together is in itself a difficult task. Giving plenty of lead time, sending a copy of the book and a description of the Pastors’ Summit, and making the summit free of charge to the pastors will help with this. The added cost of the hotel could be a challenge for pastors. Sponsors will be sought for those who are unable to afford the hotel cost. The material in the book is too much for one day, and getting the pastors away from home for a night with their spouses will add to the benefit of the summit.

An additional challenge is to make the material of the training manual applicable to a variety of pastors who have varying years in ministry, sizes of congregation, and church settings, both rural and urban. The goal for the practices of resiliency is that they would fit in any culture and life season. A final difficulty is to make resiliency or grit something to be desired. One wrong view of resiliency in pastoral ministry would be to just hang on and go into a maintenance mode. The other extreme would be to influence already hard-working pastors to work harder because of the culture the church finds herself in today. The follow up to evaluate the fruitfulness of the summit is outlined in the next chapter. The preferred future of these practices of resiliency is that ministry would be joyful and attended with grace and the power of the Spirit.

Conclusion

My prayer for the outcome of this project is that the book could be used in pastoral summits for other regions of the Foursquare Church and also with groups of pastors outside of Foursquare. I hope to use it with fellow pastors here in Salina, Kansas.
I also envision the book to be used in a class on pastoral theology in Bible colleges or seminaries. My hope is that this project will open doors for me in my next season of ministry as I transition out of my senior pastor role.
CHAPTER 5
IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Field Tests

Parts of this training manual have been field tested in several scenarios. I scheduled a monthly phone call with seven first-time pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska region. The purpose of each call is to review and discuss one chapter of the training manual. All of the pastors are in their early thirties or younger. Four of them assumed the senior pastorate of their churches from one of their parents. Two of the pastors are women. We have had four calls so far. Chapter 1 – Calling: The Sustainer stimulated much discussion, including the unique challenges they found of pastoring their parents’ churches. Chapter 4 – Congregation: You Don’t Get to Choose brought to light that each of the pastors did not have the exact congregation they had envisioned.

I also took seven topics from the training manual to a Bible school in Belize with good results. I was happy that the practices for resiliency in the manual were relevant outside of the United States. I was surprised the topic of conflict and comparison was the one the students wanted to discuss the most. I used an abbreviated form of the training manual, covering seven practices, in seminars with Foursquare pastors in Maine and Nevada. The most recent testing of a component of the training manual was in a regional leadership training in Colorado Springs. I covered the material in Chapter 1 – Comforter:
Living with the Help of the Holy Spirit.” I have included in this chapter some of the evaluations of the attendees of that training time.

The first full implementation of the training manual will be at a Pastors’ Summit for Developing Pastoral Grit in early September 2020 at Emmanuel Foursquare Church for the twenty-eight senior pastors and their spouses in the Kansas-Nebraska region. A letter of invitation will be sent to each pastor along with a copy of the book entitled *Pastoral Grit: Key Practices for Resiliency in Ministry*. A copy of the book will be sent to each pastor free of charge with a request that they read before the training time.

The Pastors’ Summit will be held Friday night from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A complete schedule of the summit is included in a brochure in the appendix. We will reserve a block of rooms at a discounted rate at a new hotel in downtown Salina. We will get sponsors for pastors who cannot afford the hotel. Getting pastors away from their towns and ministries to be together with other pastor couples will only add to the benefit of the summit.

Two chapters will be covered in each session of the training time followed by discussion on the questions at the end of the chapters in small groups. The four area pastors in our Kansas-Nebraska region will be the discussion leaders. I will access MediaShout, a presentation software, for the teaching part of the presentation in our church sanctuary. We will have a short worship and prayer time at the beginning and end of the day. Evaluation forms will be handed to the pastors to determine the value of the time. A small group discussion will be held during lunch, which will be provided. Our church has been the location for twice yearly regional trainings, so our staff is accustomed to planning such an event. The main sessions of the summit will be held in
the church sanctuary and the discussion group in classrooms in the Emmanuel church building.

Four goals are proposed for this pastoral summit: 1) Identify and express hindrances to pastoral resiliency, 2) provide a safe environment for pastors to discuss their struggles with these hindrances, 3) learn and understand key practices for pastoral resilience and, 4) leave encouraged to live out these practices for a lifetime of fruitful and fulfilling ministry.

**Assessment**

Each participant in the Pastors’ Summit will be asked to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the summit. A sample of this evaluation form is attached at the end of this chapter. The evaluation forms filled out at the recent leadership training with components of this manual were very favorable. Some of the questions asked were: Was the content what I expected it to be? Was attending this training a good investment of my time? Was the content immediately applicable to my life and ministry? Would I recommend the training to others interested in the topic? The evaluators were able to check the following options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree. Of the twenty-two evaluations, seventeen checked the Strongly Agree box for those questions and five checked the Agree box. The participants were also asked what was their biggest takeaway from the training. The answers were encouraging in that the training manual was relevant to leaders’ lives. A list of additional books that relate to the topic of pastoral resiliency will be provided for the pastors. This list is included at the end of each chapter of the training manual.
Two additional follow-ups of the Pastors’ Summit will be carried out. The four area pastors will be asked to call the pastors in their area about the summit, focusing on three specific topics. First, the local pastors will be asked which three of the twelve practices are the most relevant to their lives and ministry presently and why he or she chose these practices. Each chapter of the book ends with a series of questions to help pastors apply the practice covered in the chapter. Area pastors will be asked identify the practice they believe to be most relevant to each local pastor and discuss with them the questions from that chapter. Finally, the area pastors will be asked to pray for the pastors they call, asking for greater joy and resiliency in ministry and life. I also plan to follow up by calling a sampling of the pastors to see how the summit could be improved or changed. The pastors called will be those with the most favorable evaluations and also those who have the most unfavorable evaluations.

**Success of Project**

Initial success for this project would be encouraged pastors in the Kansas-Nebraska Foursquare region who are more able to be resilient pastors in the culture they find themselves in today. One of the ways I can evaluate this is by looking at the monthly reports on the Foursquare Hub. As the regional pastor, I have access to the monthly reports of all the churches in my region. Average attendance at all services, financial and stewardship reports, and spiritual reports, including new commitments to Christ, are some of the things covered in these detailed monthly reports. One section that gives insight into the health of the church is the narrative report. In this report the pastor writes about special services or outreach events of the church. The pastor has the freedom in this
report to write about anything encouraging in his or her life and the life of the church. Reading these narratives gives insight to the health of that church. I will be monitoring these reports more closely in the six months following the Pastor’s Summit. Further success for me personally from this project would be more open doors (Col 4:3) to present these key practices for pastoral grit in other settings within Foursquare and outside of the Foursquare Church. A future hope is that the book Pastoral Grit could be used in a course in pastoral theology in a Bible college or seminary. I was recently asked and accepted the opportunity to teach as an adjunct professor a class on Pastoral Ministry and Perspective at SoCAL School of Ministry. This was a realized open door to use the material in this training manual.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In beginning this doctoral project, Kurt Fredrickson suggested the term resiliency to me. Resiliency means the ability to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions and also adjust quickly to change. The working definition I came up with for this manual on pastoral resiliency is receiving the grace of God through the help of the Holy Spirit to develop the inward character and outward courage to bounce back from difficulties and disappointments, adjust to a changing culture, and stay encouraged and joyful in the long run of the pastoral calling. A major insight I have been convinced of through my research for this doctoral project is that resiliency is a crucial need for pastoral ministry. David Kinnaman supports this: “The Christian community in North America does not need stronger leaders, we need more resilient leaders.”¹

The changes in American culture toward the church have made pastoral ministry more complex and difficult today; however, pastoral ministry has always required resiliency in whatever culture the pastor finds him- or herself in. A biblical word that parallels resiliency is faithfulness. Paul says, “Moreover what is required in stewards is faithfulness” (1 Cor 4:2). Every culture brings unique stressors to ministry: “Besides

¹ Barna Group and Pepperdine University, The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity (Authors, 2017), 9.
these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of the churches” (2 Cor 11:28, KJV). The care of the souls of God’s people will always require resiliency in the Lord’s shepherds. Resiliency is not just not quitting or going into a maintenance mode, but it is keeping what Wayne Cordeiro describes as a “forward lean” of seeking, contending, staying encouraged, and reaching out to a world that needs the gospel of Jesus Christ.2

My firm conviction is the twelve key practices outlined in this training manual will foster resiliency in pastoral ministry. A pastor secure in his or her calling is more likely to survive and even grow stronger in the ups and downs of ministry and life. The pastor’s outward ministry life is the overflow of his or her communion, inner life, with the Lord. Spending time with the Lord is where the pastor finds the grace to serve Him as a shepherd. Allowing the Lord to work in a pastor the heart of a shepherd instead of a hireling fosters resiliency. The hireling flees when the wolf comes; the shepherd stays and defends the sheep (Jn 10:12). Congregations need shepherds, not hirelings.

Loving people is the right fuel for longevity in ministry. Love “bears all things, believes all things, endures all things; love never fails” (1 Cor 13:7-8). Ultimately pastoral ministry is a labor of love. Discouraged pastors will not stay in ministry, so pastors must stay in courage. When Joshua was assuming the leadership of Israel, three times the Lord told him to be “strong and of good courage,” and then the people told Joshua they would follow him if he would “be strong and of good courage” (Jo 1:1-18).

2 Wayne Cordeiro, Sifted: Pursuing Growth Through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 146.
Two sources of discouragement in pastoral ministry are comparison and conflict. Comparison is addressed in 2 Corinthians 12:12: “Comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.” Comparison or competition produces pride or condemnation; neither are virtues for pastoral ministry. Not handling conflict with humility and grace is what wakes a pastor up at 3:00 a.m. and wears him or her out in ministry. Understanding pastoral ministry is a marathon and not a sprint, and finding a pace and grace that builds endurance in a pastor’s family and ministry life is crucial for resiliency. Hebrews 12:1-2 exhorts the reader “to run with endurance the race set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” To run the race of pastoral life, we must find the right pace and grace that comes from Jesus. Pastors can grow in leadership competency as they learn from others and from pastoral life experiences. Teaching with a high Christology and remembering that only Christ’s ministry is redemptive are paramount for long-term effectiveness in ministry.

Cultural intelligence is made up of understanding the culture the pastor finds himself or herself in and hearing from the Lord how to share the gospel there. Pastors need to be like the sons of Issachar “who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chr 12:32).

Convergence, finishing well, and making your great contribution to the body of Christ are worthy goals of pastoral ministry. The great apostle said of the finishing season of his ministry, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tm 4:7). All of these key practices for pastoral resiliency summarized here are not possible without the pastor walking in the comfort and help of the Holy Spirit. This training manual contends throughout that pastors need a living theology or orthopraxy of
the Holy Spirit for fruitful and fulfilling long-haul pastoral ministry. Resilient pastoral ministry is a holistic lifestyle of finding the grace of God.

I will describe the implications of this project for my ministry with a look back and a look forward. This doctoral project is a look back for me and a culmination of the principles I have learned by planting and pastoring the same church for forty years in my hometown of Salina, Kansas. In chapter twelve of the training manual, I define convergence as a time in life that God brings together all we are and all we have learned to make our greatest contribution to the body of Christ. I feel this manual, which I hope to publish as a book, is a bucket-list accomplishment for me.

As of January 2020, I will transition out of the senior pastor position of Emmanuel Foursquare Church. In the introduction to the training manual book, I say about this time in my life that “I am somewhere between a survivor and a ‘more than conqueror’ (Rom 8:37).” I have loved being a senior pastor (most of the time); it has brought me purpose and great joy. I feel I am loving the Lord, loving people, and loving my wife and family more now than when I started. I humbly submit that this book is a compilation of what I have learned about being resilient in pastoral ministry and life. My prayer is that it will encourage the pastors who read it or attend the Pastors’ Summit to keep their hand on the plow of pastoral ministry and not look back (Lk 9:62).

Looking ahead, my expectation is that this project will provide a springboard for me into the future ministry the Lord has for me. I love pastors and have empathy for this high, holy, and difficult calling they have. I would like to spend the remaining years of my ministry encouraging pastors. I hope after conducting this first Pastors’ Summit that it will open the door to do others within my denomination and outside of it if the Lord
pleases. I would welcome teaching the key practices for pastoral resiliency in a class on pastoral theology in a Bible college or seminary.

My path to this point in my life has been unconventional. I was in pastoral ministry first, and then in the last seven years finished my education in a master’s program at Friends University and the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller. My prayer is that the combination of my pastoral experience and current theological education can be a blessing to the body of Christ. I finish this season of pastoral ministry and this time in the Fuller Doctor of Ministry program with a blend of sadness and excitement but trusting the faithfulness of God for my next season of ministry, for “He who calls [me] is faithful, who also will do it” (1 Thes 5:24).
APPENDIX A

TABLE OF CONTENTS AND SELECT CHAPTERS FROM TRAINING MANUAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1 COMFORTER: LIVING WITH THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CHAPTER 2 CALLING: THE SUSTAINER

CHAPTER 3 COMMUNION: THE SECRET PLACE

CHAPTER 4 CONGREGATION: YOU DON’T GET TO CHOOSE

CHAPTER 5 COMPASSION: GRIPPED BY LOVE

CHAPTER 6 COURAGE: BIAS FOR ACTION

CHAPTER 7 CONSISTENCY: PACE AND GRACE

CHAPTER 8 COMPARISON AND CONFLICT: TWO GREAT DISCOURAGERS

CHAPTER 9 COMPETENCY: LEADERSHIP – A FEW HUMBLE IDEAS

CHAPTER 10 CHRISTOLOGY: CRUCIFIED AND Risen WITH CHRIST

CHAPTER 11 CULTURE: SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF ISSACHAR

CHAPTER 12 CONVERGENCE: FINISHING WELL

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER 2
CALLING: THE SUSTAINER

It was 1980 and our brand-new church in my hometown was growing. We had formed a church council that consisted of three older men who were like spiritual fathers to me and three younger men who, like me, were in their late twenties. All of them had strong opinions of where they wanted our new church to be. We were meeting at my house, and they asked if I would mind going outside to let them discuss a few things without me. It was February in Kansas and well below freezing outside. I sat in my 1968 Toyota Corolla under our carport for at least an hour; I was freezing, and it seemed much longer. I could sense this group of men challenging my leadership. One issue they were pushing for was an independent church rather than affiliating with the Foursquare Church in which I had my credentials. I decided in that car that either I was going to lead our church or other strong leaders would take it in a different direction. I wasn’t sure of many things back then, but I was certain of one thing—I was called to start and pastor a church in Salina. I went back into the meeting and announced the church was going to be a Foursquare Church and, as the chairman of the council according to the Foursquare bylaws, I would no longer step out of meetings while they made decisions without me. Eventually, most of these men left our church plant. I believe the certainty of my call
from God gave me the courage that night to lead, and this call has sustained me the last forty years. God calls his leaders and sets them apart for his purpose.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah (Samuel’s call) (1 Sam 16:13).

Now the Lord said to Abram Get out of your country from your family and from your father’s house to a land I will show you. I will make you a great nation and you will be a blessing (Abraham’s call) (Gn 12:1).

Come now therefore and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel out of Egypt (Moses’s call) (Ex 3:10).

But the Lord said to him, “Go for he is a chosen vessel of mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (Paul’s call) (Acts 9:15).

And He said to them, Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men (Peter and Andrew’s call) (Mt 4:19).

The Strength of Your Call

Reggie McNeal says, “A leader with a clear sense of call is a formidable force. Leaders convinced of their call do not easily succumb to disappointments or discouragement.”1 McNeal sounds a positive note that understanding one’s calling gives “a sense of destiny that emboldens, energizes and empowers leaders as well as followers.”2 I would propose in this chapter a clear call is a necessity for resiliency in ministry.

A key verse for understanding the call of God is Revelation 14:17 when the Scripture says those who were with Jesus, the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, are

---


2 Ibid.
“called, chosen and faithful.” The call is to discover God’s purpose for your life, the choice is choosing to surrender to his call and discerning who you are by his presence in your life, and the faithfulness is walking out this call for a lifetime. The call is more than what you do; it encompasses all that you are. David Benner says, “Our calling is therefore the way of being that is both best for us and best for the world.”  

Frederick Buechner poignantly states, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” 4 Wayne Cordeiro, a Foursquare leader, succinctly summarizes, “The two greatest days of your life are the day you were born and the day you discover what you were born for.” 5 Finding your purpose in life through the grace of God is another way of saying this.

Every believer can discover God’s calling for his or her life and God’s calling is to all avenues of life on this planet, not just pastoral ministry. I contend that a pastor, however, needs a distinct call to pastoral ministry for a sustaining resiliency. Acts 13:2 says, “separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have called them.” This was an example of God’s call to ministry for Paul and Barnabas. Ken Roberts, a Foursquare pastor, concurs: “I believe every Christian leader needs to be able to point to a time and a place where God put his finger on their soul and marked them for ministry.

---


The clarity of our call is imperative, because in the end, nothing else will sustain us.”⁶ W. A. Criswell (1909-2002) wrote, “The first and foremost of all the inward strengths of the pastor is the conviction, deep as life itself, that God has called him into the ministry. If this persuasion is unshakable, all other elements of the pastor’s life will fall into beautiful order and place.”⁷ Paul’s Damascus Road experience and Ananias’s announcement of God’s call on his life were great sustainers for Paul’s ministry. In Paul’s defense before King Agrippa, Paul summed up his call in life: “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:19).

On August 12, 1972, outside a nightclub in my hometown of Salina, Kansas, after returning from Vietnam in a deep depression, I had a vision that I would describe as God’s call and intersection in my life. I had hitchhiked around the country, lost without purpose, promising God I would change my life when I got into difficult situations but never doing it. Deeply dependent on drugs and alcohol, I asked the question, “Isn’t there anything more to life than this?” I looked in the sky and saw a strong, kind, beautiful face and an arrow pointing straight down; the face, I later discerned, was the face of Jesus. The next day I surrendered my life to Jesus and from that vision discerned not only it was time to get my life right with God, but also that God had called me to start a church in my hometown, which I did seven years later after attending Bible college. Through the ups and downs of ministry in the last forty years of Emmanuel Foursquare Church, this certainty of my calling has given me grit and courage. I do not believe all callings to

---


pastoral ministry have to be dramatic; maybe because of my damaged soul I needed a 
dramatic call. Matthew’s call to ministry came quite simply in Matthew 9:9: “Follow 
me.” Each pastor needs their own holy ground experience of God’s call on their lives. 
Moses’s holy ground experience came at the burning bush in Exodus 3:5 at Horeb, the 
place Moses would later lead Israel and strike the rock to cause water to flow out. His 
holy ground call came in the context of where he would carry it out in the desert. 
Joshua’s holy ground call came in Joshua 5:15 when he met the Commander of the Lord 
of Hosts, which I believe was a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God. Joshua’s holy 
ground came in the promised land that he would lead the children of Israel to conquer. 
Each pastor’s call from God is unique according to the context God has called them to 
serve him in.

The Purpose Your Call Gives

I remember as a young minister attending a ministerial alliance meeting where 
pastors from an assortment of denominations were describing their call. One minister said 
he entered the pastorate on a dare from his brother-in-law that he couldn’t do it. I am not 
sure this would sustain pastoral resiliency. Os Guinness says “calling gave to everyday 
work a dignity and spiritual significance under God that dethroned the privacy of leisure 
and contemplation.”

Call gives purpose. A pastor needs the assurance he or she is living 
and fulfilling God’s purpose for life. Pastoral ministry is a difficult job but a wonderful 
calling. Ruth Haley Barton describes the deep work of the call of God on Moses when

---

she says of him, “The people will follow you because you have met me. Because you know my name deep in your being. That is what qualifies you to be a spiritual leader, and that is why people will be willing to follow you right out of the place they have known for so long to a place that is brand new.” People will follow a leader who knows his or her God-given calling.

Guinness describes our calling as our “ultimate compass in life.” The call of God in a pastor’s life develops and unfolds over a lifetime and supersedes even the season of pastoral assignment in our lives. Our call includes our life message. Ephesians 2:10 states, “For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” We get our English word “poem” from the Greek word for workmanship. God is writing a poem, a “life message,” through our lives. I believe pastors need key verses that define their call. Foursquare churches are asked to display Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever,” in their sanctuaries. We also have displayed in our sanctuary John 10:10, “I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.” This is my ministry life message: to help people discover who they are in Jesus Christ and live the abundant life he has given us. My personal life verse is 1 Corinthians 15:10: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” What is your life verse?

---


Uniqueness of Your Call

Understanding our unique, God-given calling allows us to realize the title of David Benner’s book, *The Gift of Being Yourself*. Benner states that when we discover this, “it is like putting on a perfectly custom-tailored dress or suit after wearing clothes made for other people.”

Guinness says, “God has called us to, ‘Do what you are.’”

Galatians 1:16 says, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the Gentiles” (Gal 1:15-16). Paul uses the phrase “called me through His grace.” Part of the call of God is discovering how uniquely the life of Christ is lived in me and through me to the congregation and the world.

I visited a congregation on a Sunday morning where the pastor tried to do everything in one service including long worship, testimonies, praying for the sick, long teaching, detailed announcements, prayer time for people. All these things are good, but doing them all in one service was exhausting. Equally important in your calling is to know who you are not. David could not fight in Saul’s armor; he had to be himself. Sometimes pastors try to be someone they are not or try to do everything and end up not doing anything well. A pastor who is secure in his or her own calling helps the congregation better understand their identity and calling. An example in our church is the concept of servanthood. I feel my call is to model servanthood and find ways to serve our community in love, which is our mission. A pastor who joined our staff said one thing he

---


12 Guinness, *The Call*, 43.
noticed about our church was that almost everyone was serving somewhere. Your identity and calling as a pastor influence the identity and calling of your congregation.

I remind you, pastor, as I close this chapter, you are called, chosen, and faithful by our wonderful Lord and Savior. Remember this quote commonly attributed to Charles Spurgeon: “If you are called to be a pastor, don’t stoop to be a king.” What a great honor and privilege for the Lord Jesus to trust us with his church for which he died.

Questions to Ponder

(1) Can you rehearse your call to pastoral ministry?

(2) When do you come alive most in the Spirit in ministry?

(3) What would you say is your life message?

(4) What is your life verse?

(5) Does your call reflect the call of your congregation? Can you give an example?

Going Deeper

A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders, by Reggie McNeal
The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose for Your Life, by Os Guiness
The Gift of Being Yourself, by David Benner
CHAPTER 4

CONGREGATION: YOU DON’T GET TO CHOOSE

I already admired and respected Dr. Paul Risser (1937-2017), the former president of the Foursquare denomination, but these sentiments grew by leaps and bounds after he visited and spoke at our church. It was late after our Saturday night service and three people needed a ride home—a blind man, a recovering drug addict still pretty damaged by his abuse, and a rather large special needs lady. Dr. Risser said, “I will take them home.” I argued with Dr. Risser: “You don’t know the town.” He said, “They can tell me where they live.” Off they went in his Crown Victoria, laughing together as if they were best friends. Now that’s a leader, a pastor—not a hireling—I can follow.

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased (1 Cor 12:18).

And these members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor, and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty (1 Cor 12:33).

Praising God and having favor with the people, and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).

Here are four important lessons I have learned about congregations that promote pastoral resiliency: you don’t get to choose your congregation, your congregation is as
much for your spiritual growth as you are for theirs, you need to join your own congregation, and you need the heart of a shepherd and not a hireling.

**Nineveh, Not Tarshish**

My wife and I both grew up in Salina, the town of 40,000 where I have pastored for the last forty years. I had a good idea when we started the church of what I wanted our congregation to look like. There would be people we grew up with, healthy young families, and older couples who could support the church, etc. We did get some of these, but some, even friends I knew growing up, left the church in the first year. The reason they left was the place we were meeting for Sunday morning services. The place we were meeting was a night club. The father of one of our members let us use the facility free of charge if we cleaned it from the previous night’s activities. It was hurtful that these friends left, but meeting in this location was one of the times of greatest growth in our attendance. Pastors, we don’t get to choose our congregations. Eugene Peterson wrote a must-read book for pastors, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, where he compares the life of Jonah to the life of pastoral ministry. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, but he sailed for Tarshish. Peterson says Tarshish represents “a glorious career in religion.”¹ Peterson says, “There is an enormous quantity of pretentious romanticism in the pastoral vocation.”² There is no perfect congregation because there are no perfect people; all of us pastor in Nineveh with difficult people in difficult situations. Peterson points out, “There

---


² Ibid., 10.
is much that is glorious in pastoral work but the congregation as such, is not glorious.”

The two Scriptures at the start of this chapter indicate God sets members in congregations as he chooses, and the less honorable members of a congregation receive our careful attention. Two applications I see in these Scriptures for pastoral ministry are to accept the congregation God has given you and be careful to take care of the less honorable members of your congregation. Shortly before our first Sunday morning starting our church, I saw a picture in my mind of a black and white spotted cow. I felt the Lord told me in this picture we would pastor a congregation with a great variety and it would take grace for them to get along with each other. This picture has helped me through the years to accept the congregation he has given us. I also often think when I am getting impatient with a less than honorable member of the congregation that the Lord is watching how I pastor this member. This might be one of our most important pastoral tasks, caring for less honorable members. I know our ministry as pastors is to promote spiritual growth and draw out the very best in our church congregants, but an illustration I heard during a class lecture by Dr. Charles Walkem in my last year at LIFE Bible College has helped me remain resilient in pastoral ministry. Walkem, a theologian and musician who ministered with Foursquare founder Aimee Semple McPherson, told the class, “Just remember you are pastoring sheep and you have never seen a sheep in a circus, have you? Don’t expect too much.” This has helped me when attitudes and actions of our congregation have been disappointing or less than loving. I have heard many pastor and church jokes through the years, but let me tell you the one I find myself telling the most. A man was discovered on a small deserted island where he had been stranded. He was the only person on the island.

---

3 Ibid., 16
When he was finally rescued, his rescuer asked about three huts on a hill of the island. The man said, “The first one was my house, the second one was my church.” The rescuer asked, “What was the third one?” The man replied, “That’s the church I used to go to.” Pastors all understand this joke because all pastors have had people leave their congregations for the slightest of offenses.

Another key point that will be addressed later is for pastors not to fall prey to the “grasshopper myth,” which is the title of a book written to pastors of small churches by Karl Vaters. The myth is that size equals health and only large churches are healthy. Vaters states in his book, “All healthy living things reach their optimal size at maturity, then they grow in different ways from that point on.”4 Applying this sentence to churches, Vaters says, “If the church is one body with many parts, isn’t it possible, even likely, that the body of Christ needs churches of all sizes?”5 Vaters’s main thesis is not to negate growth but to release pastors from the guilt and condemnation of accepting growth as the only indication of a healthy church and healthy pastor. Vaters’s personal testimony is that when he accepted this, he became healthy again.

**Vocational Holiness**

The congregation is as much a place for your spiritual growth as you are for theirs. Peterson says it like this: “The congregation is the pastor’s place for developing vocational holiness.”6 The Lord is as interested in your spiritual growth as a pastor as he

---


5 Ibid.

is in the growth of the congregation. Paul exhorts us, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:12-13). Ruth Haley Barton reminds pastors, “Truly the best thing any of us have to bring to leadership is our own transforming selves.” Your church is the place where you become what you preach. I know I am not the same pastor I was forty years ago when we started our church. I have grown right along with our church in “grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pt 3:18). I am thankful that our congregation has been patient with me as I matured as a pastor.

**Oz or Dorothy Pastor**

Have you joined your own congregation? Erwin McManus, a pastor, often asks other pastors whether they are Oz pastors or Dorothy pastors. This is an appropriate question for me as a pastor in Kansas. The great Oz projected an inflated image while hiding behind a curtain. Dorothy joined Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion on the yellow brick road, sharing her fears and hopes with them along the way. Charles Spurgeon plainly states, “Tear off your masks. The church was not meant to be a masquerade.” “Oz” pastors who can’t be honest about their own shortcomings and struggles are setting themselves up for a fall. In the book *Resilient Ministry*, the authors suggest pastors need “allies and confidants” within their congregations. Allies are people who are for you with limits, and confidants are people with whom you can share anything.

---


8 Peterson, *Under the Unpredictable Plant*, 21.


In Bible college we were told, “Don’t get too close to your congregation.” After years of ministry I feel this is dangerous advice. The Holy Spirit must give us wisdom who these confidants are, but we all need them. I have been blessed with four elders in our congregation who accept me (Rom 15:7) and whom I can trust with my life.

I also believe as pastors we minister far more effectively out of our weaknesses where we have found Christ’s grace than our strengths. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 the Lord told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Wayne Cordeiro reports that the Lord said to him concerning this verse, “The reason I cannot be strong for you is that you refuse to be weak.” Wayne Cordeiro calls this weakness “passive power” realizing we can’t do anything without Jesus and his grace (Jn 15:5). When we share with our congregations our own struggles and our finding God’s grace, it makes us relatable to their own lives. However, a pastor can go overboard with sharing personal experiences. The Holy Spirit will give you peace about what to share and what not to share (Col 3:15). God’s peace should be the ruling factor on whether you should share something or not. Whenever I have violated that peace because I wanted to be relevant or funny to our congregation, I have regretted it. A pastor’s spouse is also a great sounding board before sharing a story or illustration.

---

11 Wayne Cordeiro, Sifted: Pursuing Growth Through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 72.

12 Ibid., 73.
Hireling or Shepherd

The final question to address in this chapter is, “Are you a hireling or a shepherd to your congregation?” Jesus said in John 10:11-12, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.” In Moses we see the Lord transform a hireling into a shepherd. Early in his ministry in Exodus 17:4, Moses said, “What shall I do with this people.” Down through the years I have listened to pastors and know they are in trouble by the way they talk about their congregation. I see trouble on the horizon when they say things like, “I can’t get these people to do anything.” Lillian Daniels says, “Until ‘they’ become ‘we’ there is no body of Christ. Just a would be expert and a bunch of people who don’t know they need to be fixed.” Later in ministry in Exodus 32:32, after Israel sinned at Sinai, Moses said, “Yet now if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray blot me out of your book which You have written.” Moses had become a shepherd willing to lay down his life for the sheep. There is no substitute for God-given love for your congregation to produce grit in a pastor’s ministry. This is further emphasized in the chapter on compassion. Maybe you have heard the story about the person who didn’t want to go to church one Sunday morning because they didn’t like the congregation. Their spouse told them they had to go because they were the pastor.

To summarize, pastoral resiliency is encouraged when pastors realize they don’t get to choose their own congregation, the congregation is a place pastors develop

---

vocational holiness, a pastor must join their own congregation, and a pastor must develop a heart of a shepherd and not that of a hireling. To accomplish these four things, Peterson says, “The norm for pastoral work is stability.” To emphasize this, Peterson writes about monasteries during the time of Saint Benedict. It seems monks were moving from monastery to monastery, always looking for a better and holier one than the one they were in last. To counteract this restlessness, Benedict instituted “the vow of stability; stay where you are.” Wayne Cordeiro says, “A sifted life is an influential life. Your greatest influence takes place after you have been sifted and have survived.” Cordeiro goes on: “Most of the growth and refinement that comes from the sifting process begins when you accept that you are exactly where God wants you to be, at least for the time being.”

Other words for stability are resiliency, grit, staying power, and faithfulness. Barna’s research, which represents a sampling of 320,000 Protestant pastors across the United States, supports the need for resilient pastors. David Kinnaman, the president of Barna Group, summarizes the statistics in The State of Pastors by concluding, “The Christian community does not need stronger leaders, we need more resilient leaders.” The Barna report connects resiliency in ministry to pastoral health: “The longer a pastor has been in ministry the higher they rate their mental health. Conversely leaders in

---

14 Peterson, Under the Unpredictable Plant, 29.

15 Ibid., 19.

16 Cordeiro, Sifted, 141.

17 Ibid., 33.


19 Ibid.
ministry less than 15 years are twice as likely as the norm to say their mental health is merely average.”\(^{20}\) Resiliency is the ability to bounce back after being twisted out of shape. My prayer is that this chapter about congregations will help you be a more resilient pastor.

**Questions to Ponder**

1. Have you accepted the congregation God has given you?
2. Can you share a story of fulfilling 1 Corinthians 12:33 and giving more abundant honor to one of the least of your congregation?
3. Can you give an example of how you as a pastor have developed vocational holiness?
4. Would you say you are more an Oz pastor or a Dorothy pastor? Have you joined your congregation? Explain.
5. Have you fallen prey to the grasshopper myth?
6. List four differences between a hireling and a shepherd.

**Going Deeper**

*Under the Unpredictable Plant: An Exploration in Vocational Holiness*, by Eugene H. Peterson

*The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us*, by Karl Vaters

*That Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, by Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 23.
I was running my first marathon. I was 52 years old and I had prepared well for it. It was the granddaddy of all marathons—the Chicago Marathon. I was doing great, having fun, and then it happened; I hit the wall just after mile nineteen. Everything shut down and I could barely walk to keep moving. I finished but was well over my time goal. The problem was I didn’t run the right pace; I ran too fast at first. I have run quite a few marathons since the first one and on about half of them, I didn’t pace myself right. We have a sign in our bedroom that reads “Pace & Grace.” It is a phrase my wife coined for our lives and a phrase she repeats continually to our church staff. To be a resilient pastor, we have to find the right pace for our families and our lives and find the grace of God to run this pace. My mom thought I might win the Chicago Marathon. I finished 28,000-something, but it’s great to have someone believe in you like my mom believed in me.

*Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you, you are not able to perform it by yourselves (Ex 18:18).*

*... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb 12:1-2).*


But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me (1 Cor 15:10).

For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? (1 Tm 3:5)

Long Obedience

The title of Eugene Peterson’s book, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, defines consistency.¹ I once had a friend give a word for my life with a picture. The friend said, “I saw your life as a long, straight line.” At first I thought, what a boring word, but the longer I live I see this in the light of the title of this chapter: consistency. The fruit of the Spirit that corresponds to consistency is temperance or self-control. The Greek word means to be strong in a thing, power over oneself with a constant restraint over one’s passions, appetites, and desires. I would define temperance as allowing the Holy Spirit to produce in us a discipline over our lives that helps us sustain physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health so we can remain free from sin and live a life of moderation and balance. Peter says the second thing after virtue—a courageous positiveness about life—that we should add to the soil of our heart so our faith can grow is temperance or self-control (2 Pt 1:5-7). Lack of self-control has shipwrecked many pastors’ lives.

When I asked my wife what she means by her pace and grace phrase, she said, “Keeping your priorities right, setting boundaries in your life, and speaking grace over

---

yourself, your family, and others.” I would like to divide this chapter into these three aspects of pace and grace.

Priorities

I wrestled with how to list priorities and decided to do it like this: love the Lord, love your spouse, love your family, and love the people in your ministry and community. By keeping these loves in proper order, you are loving yourself. Paul sums up the power of love: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor 13:7-8). This kind of love is only possible by the life of the Lord Jesus in you produced by the working of the Holy Spirit. For me, the only way to fulfill these priorities is to constantly ask for the help of the Lord through the Great Helper, the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 15:5, “Without me you can do nothing.” This help includes loving our spouse, our family, our church, and our community. This, to me, is accessing the grace to keep a proper pace in life.

Ephesians 5 is a very revealing chapter about the priority of husband and wife relationships. Verse 18 exhorts the church to be filled with the Spirit. The first place this Spirit-filled life should be expressed, after it is expressed in love for the Lord, is the marriage relationship and then, in Ephesians 6, to the children.

Throughout Ephesians 5, the Scripture compares the husband and wife relationship to the relationship of Christ and the church, validating the marriage relationship to have the highest priority. As a male pastor, by loving my wife and giving myself for her, the Lord is teaching me how to love the church and give myself to them in a similar manner. This is true also for female pastors in loving their husbands. Bob Burns,
Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie conclude: “Therefore the health of a pastor’s marriage and family is also a priority for the well-being of a congregation.”

The normal pressures of marriage and family life can be stretched by pastoral ministry. Ken Roberts lists some disturbing statistics: “45 percent of pastors’ wives say the greatest danger to them and their family is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual burnout. 52 percent of pastors say they and their spouses believe that being in pastoral ministry is hazardous to their family’s well-being and health.” Barna, based on their research with 320,000 Protestant pastors, states this about pastors and relational risks: “43 percent of pastors are at high or medium risk whether they are experiencing challenges in marriage, family, friendships, or other close relationships.”

By loving my wife, I am loving the Lord and loving myself. God’s will for marriage is expressed in Matthew 19:5: “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.” Pastors, our spouses are gifts from God that we have the privilege of unwrapping for a lifetime of intimacy—body, soul, and spirit. In the end, after the children leave and after pastoral ministry ends, all you have is each other. Cordeiro tells of his great admiration for a seasoned pastor he traveled with and observed. Wayne waited until just the right moment to ask him to tell what was the most important advice he could give about ministry. The

---


4 Barna Research Group and Pepperdine University, The State of Pastors: How Today’s Faith Leaders are Navigating Life and Leadership in an Age of Complexity (Authors, 2017), 11.
pastor responded simply, “Stick with your wife.” Cordeiro states, “A healthy relationship with my spouse is of utmost importance to my future joy,” and, I would add, to your present joy.

Ray S. Anderson says, “Church members come to church beaten by the lions and bears in the daily routine of life.” Pastors can come to their pastoral ministry beaten by the lions and bears of their married and family life and this can greatly affect the church they pastor. First Timothy 3:5 says, “If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” I will give you the simplest yet most profound advice I have about loving your spouse. Ask the Lord continually how to love your spouse—body, soul, and spirit—and tell him you can’t do it without the help of the Holy Spirit. I can say I love my wife much more today going on forty-seven years later than I did when we got married, and I attribute this to the help of the Holy Spirit.

I would like to insert a comment here about loving yourself by taking care of your body. The chapter on communion discusses care for your soul. Our bodies don’t belong to ourselves but to two people if we are married—the Lord (1 Cor 6:19-20) and our spouse (1 Cor 7:4). Keeping your body in health by exercise and proper nutrition is loving the Lord, your spouse, and yourself. Gary Harbaugh states, “Nutrition, physical exercise, and other forms of self-care were at lower levels for pastors than for the general

---

5 Wayne Cordeiro, Sifted: Pursuing Growth Through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 118.

6 Ibid., 99.

population.”

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie share reports of pastors in the Western culture: “For example one study shows that 76 percent of clergy were either overweight or obese compared to 61 percent of the general population.”

Rev. Marshall Stanton, longtime Methodist pastor and former president of Kansas Wesleyan University, is still active and fit at age eighty-five. When he was younger someone asked him why he exercised so faithfully. He responded, “I am investing in my future retirement.” In a conversation with Dr. Stanton, he said that most people think of money when investing in retirement, but your physical health is even more crucial. Mario Murillo, an evangelist who came to our church in the early years, said something that has always stuck with me about physical exercise. He said, “I train like a prizefighter so I have energy to give the Lord my best.” For me, physical exercise is not an option, it is an appointment I have regularly each week. The other day I went out to my car and my phone said it was six minutes to the YMCA. How did my phone know I was going to the YMCA? I guess my phone knows my habits.

Our physical health is connected to our spiritual health, and loving ourselves is caring for the Lord’s and our spouse’s bodies. Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie compiled comments from thousands of pastors who attended pastors’ summits. Chapters 11 and 12 of this book lists a summation of practical advice given by the authors from comments in the pastors’ summits. Here are key ones that stood out to me.

---


(1) Don’t let your spouse be a nuclear dumping ground. “Take into account that people have different capacities to manage negative issues in a healthy manner. Later the problem may be solved and the pastor’s spouse is left holding the pain, unable to bring closure to the experience.”

(2) Recognize how important your spouse is as a ministry partner and honor, recognize, and thank them regularly.

(3) Pray with your spouse.

(4) Provide emotional and sexual security. “Couples are just giving up their sex lives because they are too tired and too busy and not connecting. We would ask you to fight for this part of your relationship. It is so important. It’s so central that is the one person in the world with whom you can enjoy this part of your life. So don’t let it go away. Don’t let it become a non-part of your life.”

“Pastors have to positively project behaviors that serve as a ‘no vacancy’ sign (i.e., don’t give off any signals that could be construed as openness to romantic or sexual interaction with a person other than your spouse). One way to show a ‘no vacancy’ sign is to constantly speak positively about your spouse.”

(5) Get marriage checkups.

(6) Practice active listening skills.

(7) Take days off and keep a regular date night. Pursue hobbies together. Turn off phones. Keep short accounts of wrongs.

---

10 Ibid., 174-175.
11 Ibid., 189.
12 Ibid., 190.
We have four children and seven grandchildren. My wife and I always thought our kids survived well growing up in a pastor’s home. When we get together for family gatherings, however, we hear stories about how people in the congregation affected them in a negative way. A startling statistic by Roberts shows the potential toxicity of being raised in a pastor’s home: “80 percent of adult children of pastors surveyed have to seek professional help for depression.”\textsuperscript{13} God help us!

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie conclude: “Ministry children need both assurance that they are not responsible for our stressful reactions and comfort that we are not without hope in serving God with our work.”\textsuperscript{14} The expectation for the pastor to have a perfect family can put undue pressure on pastors’ children. My wife overheard a respected elder in our congregation telling our kids they had to be a good example because they were pastor’s kids. She politely reproved this beloved elder by saying, “Don’t put that pressure on our kids; we want them to be good because of their relationship with the Lord and not because they’re pastors’ kids.”

We as pastors need to protect our children. Wayne Cordeiro, at a breakout session of a leadership conference, heard a pastor express this: “My greatest fear is that my kids will grow up hating God because of me.”\textsuperscript{15} Pastors keep busy calendars but usually have flexibility to make a priority to enter into our children’s world of activities and experiences. One way to keep them at the center of our radar is to pray daily for them. I asked the Lord to give me a Scripture for each of my children that would prophesy a

\textsuperscript{13} Roberts, \textit{Staying Power}, 10.

\textsuperscript{14} Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, \textit{Resilient Ministry}, 177.

\textsuperscript{15} Cordeiro, \textit{Sifted}, 91.
bright future for them. I try to bring them with these Scriptures often before the throne of God. Now that I have grandchildren, I include them in these prayers. A pastor who attended the pastors’ summits summed up well the priority of marriage and family in a pastor’s life:

The quality of my marriage and my parenting will probably never garner me public accolades and the esteem of my peers. I am tempted to let these things slip while I pursue public ministry opportunities, such as preaching and leadership. However, if I would do this, it won’t be long before my relationship with my spouse takes a back seat to sermon preparation and time spent with my kids becomes time spent in meetings. The best way I can help my church is to be healthy myself—spiritually, emotionally and physically—and to help my spouse and children be healthy as well.16

Boundaries

I find it hard to read books without margins—it’s wearisome. Living a life without margins or boundaries is a sure recipe for burnout. Ruth Haley Barton says, “Sometimes a leader has been going so fast for so long that they didn’t know how close to their limits they are.”17

Jethro observed that Moses was headed for burnout (Ex 18:18). As I was working on this book, my editor said, “Foursquare pastors tend to be workaholics.” This is the denomination I serve in. Trying to meet the needs and expectations of all those in your congregation can lead to burnout in a pastor’s life. Ray Anderson warns pastors, “Human need is an insatiable and unforgiving slave master as many pastors have found.”18

16 Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 197.
17 Ruth Haley Barton, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2018), 104.
18 Anderson, Soul of Ministry, 81.
The needs of the world didn’t direct Jesus’s earthly ministry. The Holy Spirit under the direction of the Father did. As pastors, we need to be Spirit-directed and not need-directed in our ministries. Sometimes a pastor works hard to prove to his or her congregation they work as hard as their congregations do. Every pastor has heard the comment, “I wish I had a job where I just worked a few hours on Sunday.” I know in my life I have a deep desire to please the Lord and make every moment count as I serve him. This sincere desire can be turned into guilty drivenness by the enemy of our soul. Finding the balance between drivenness and Sabbath rest and between busyness and fruitfulness is key to a resilient, temperate, and balanced pace in ministry and life. Peter Scazzero lists the elements of Sabbath to be Stop, Rest, Delight, and Contemplate. All pastors need to practice regular Sabbaths. Barton articulates this goal for Christian leaders: “Rather than leading from frenetic busyness, I am leading at a measured pace, taking time to notice the burning bushes in my life.” Only by listening, obeying, and being led by the Holy Spirit can a pastor maintain and adjust this balance between drivenness and Sabbath rest and between busyness and fruitfulness. We as pastors don’t want to miss the burning bushes of God’s presence in our lives.

Grace

The final point in my wife’s definition of pace and grace is speaking grace over yourself and others. Nothing is more crucial to pastoral ministry than understanding and being able to communicate the grace of God to others. Understanding who the Lord Jesus

---


20 Barton, *Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership*, 211.
is and what he has done for us as God’s gift of grace and then communicating this to others is the definition of Christian ministry.

Speaking grace and giving grace to others is an important key of healthy relationships. Marriage relationships function differently from couple to couple, but I believe the secret ingredient that makes for a healthy marriage is grace. First Peter 3:7 says husbands and wives are “heirs together of the grace of life.” Grace is seeing each other through the eyes of Jesus Christ. In John 1:42, Jesus looked at Peter and said, you are “Simon.” Simon means a reed easily blown this way and that in the wind, but Jesus said you will be “Peter”; you will be a rock, steady and steadfast. It’s easy for married couples to see the “Simon” in each other, but grace sees the “Peter”—God’s view of our spouse. Grace is not concentrating on the worst in your mate but seeing the best of what God intends them to be. When eyes of grace are missing in a marriage, all you see is the weakness of the flesh in each other. Pastors need eyes of grace for their spouse, family, and church. The only thing that has rescued and flourished Erie’s and my life together in marriage is the grace of God. Tell me if this doesn’t sound like a recipe for disaster. I had only been saved less than a year, had returned from Vietnam, and had been delivered from years of drug and alcohol abuse with many scars on my soul. Erie was raised in a Christian home but had five different mothers by the time she was a teenager. She was seventeen years old when we married and I was twenty-two. Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us a threefold cord is not easily broken. It is the grace of God and the third person of our Christian marriage, Jesus, that have blessed us with a wonderful life together. Pastors can lose their eyes of grace for their congregation. An indication of this is just seeing what
they are not instead of what they are and can be with the grace of God. One of the greatest gifts you can give your congregation is to believe the best in them.

The first place a pastor needs to extend grace is to themselves. Chuck DeGroat stresses that self-compassion is more important than self-esteem. DeGroat says, “Self-compassion allows us to give ourselves the gift of being adequate at many things instead of exceptional at everything. Self-compassion gives our Inner Critic the day off. Self-compassion frees us from the slavery of narcissistic self-promotion and self-perfection.”21 Self-compassion is giving yourself grace and is a needed component for many of us driven pastors who want to do our best for Jesus.

Finding the grace of God for a healthy pace in life is the final point I would like to discuss in this chapter. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul labored with great energy in the ministry, but he did it in the grace of God within him. DeGroat shares the story of poet David Whyte, whose work titled “Crossing the Unknown Sea” describes his meeting with David Steindi-Rast, a monk and spiritual director. Rast stated the solution to exhaustion isn’t necessarily rest, proposing instead that “the antidote to exhaustion is wholeheartedness.”22 Wholeheartedness is being as one, fully surrendered to God’s grace which is sufficient for whatever we face. The third verse from the old hymn “Blessed Assurance” comes to mind: “Perfect submission all is at rest / I in my Savior am happy and blest.”23 When I am wholehearted, God’s grace produces divine energy in me for ministry without exhaustion.

---

22 Ibid., 9.
Here is a final prescription for maintaining a healthy pace and grace in life. Take a weekly Sabbath day where you completely disconnect from the church. Do at least three things a week that fill your energy tank outside the church. Take a daily inventory of whether you lived in grace of God that day and were led by the Holy Spirit.

Questions to Ponder

(1) Have you attained a healthy pace and grace in life? Why or why not?

(2) List your priorities in life. How are you doing with each of these priorities?

(3) If you have children, how has growing up in a pastor’s home affected them?

(4) What are you doing to promote your physical health?

(5) What are some of the healthy boundaries you have set in your life?

(6) Do you exercise self-compassion and give yourself grace? Which is more important to you, self-compassion or self-esteem?

(7) Do you think people would call you a grace giver? Can you give an example of you giving grace?

Going Deeper

*Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*, by Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie

*Sifted: Pursuing Growth Through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments*, by Wayne Cordeiro

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero
CHAPTER 8
COMPARISON AND CONFLICT: TWO GREAT DISCOURAGERS

A new church comes to town and people leave your church to be part of what’s going on there. Has that happened to you? I have pastored in Salina, Kansas, long enough that I can hardly go anywhere in town without seeing someone who used to go to our church. You hear about the growth of another church and the wonderful things happening there. You want to be able to rejoice with those who are rejoicing but inside you feel like weeping (Rom 12:15). You go to a conference and hear a dynamic pastor talk about what’s happening in his or her church and how you can apply it to yours. I have come home from many of those conferences excited and then discouraged because the new endeavor didn’t quite work out. Comparison and the feeling it produces, competition, is the first enemy of encouragement discussed in this chapter.

The second is conflict. In my years of ministry, I have heard about and experienced the scars of conflict gone bad. Church people can be cruel. Satan is the “accuser of the brethren” (Rv 12:10) and he often does this accusing through the brethren. One of the meanest comments I heard was what a person said to one of my fellow pastors as this person was leaving the church. This person said, “Every time I hear your voice it makes me want to throw up.” Almost every pastor has heard this at some
time in their ministry: “Pastor, we just aren’t being fed at the church.” Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie say forthrightly, “Conflict is one of the primary reasons why ministers leave local church ministry.”

For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise (2 Cor 10:12).

Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus (Acts 15:39).

And after they had become silent, James answered saying, ‘Men and brethren listen to me’ (Acts 15:13).

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things (Acts 15:28).

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God (Mt 5:9).

. . . endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3).

Comparison and Competition

Competitiveness is not a fruit of the Spirit; it is a work of the flesh. I think all of us pastors know that. Cordeiro expresses this well: “We can tell ourselves what matters is faithfulness, doing what God has called us to do. But the temptation to compare often lies dormant in our hearts, emerging anytime we ask ourselves, How am I stacking up against everyone else?”

Cordeiro continues, “We compare ourselves with another leader and either feel competitive like we can do better or inadequate, like we will never measure

---


2 Wayne Cordeiro, Sifted: Pursuing Growth Through Trials, Challenges, and Disappointments (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 43.
up.” Competitiveness and comparison are two things pastors have to recognize in themselves and keep at bay in their hearts. I offer three helps to this battle: 1) making fruitfulness and not success the goal of your ministry, 2) being secure in your own identity and, 3) being self-compassionate.

Fruitfulness or Success

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines success as the degree or measure of succeeding, the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence. Further definitions include: the attainment of popularity or profit and, a person or thing that achieves desired aims or attains prosperity. These are definitions of worldly success. If the truth be known, all of us want to be successful, but if we make this our goal we will always be comparing ourselves to others which breeds pride because we are doing better or condemnation because we are doing worse.

James 3:14-16 addresses how dangerous this drive for personal success can become when he says this wisdom is “earthly, sensual” even “demonic” and “where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” Ruth Haley Barton brings attention to this danger: “Narcissistic leaders are always looking at someone else’s field as somehow being more worthy or more indicative of success. They are always pushing the limits of their situation rather than lovingly working in the field they have been given.” The drive for success can be exhausting.

---

3 Ibid.

4 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “success.”

5 Ruth Haley Barton, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2018), 111.
Comparing the size and income of your church to others, seeing yourself as in competition with other pastors instead of on the same team, and fluctuating between pride and despair are all a part of this earthly wisdom that James says brings confusion and every evil work. The grasshopper myth is believing if you aren’t pastoring a large and growing church you are a failure. The ten spies in Numbers 13:33 said when comparing themselves to the inhabitants of Canaan, “We were like grasshoppers in our own sight and so we were in their sight.” Karl Vaters reports that it’s hard to find any statistics on the size of congregations before the twentieth century.⁶ The emphasis on the size of your church is a product of our American consumer culture today. Here are the statistics for today, according to Carl George: “At the 100 mark, your church has become larger than 60 percent of your peers; at 140, 75 percent, at 200, 80 percent, at 350, 93 percent and by 500, 95 percent.”⁷ Depending on where you find your church attendance in these statistics you can feel proud or discouraged. I remember a question I was asked many times at our pastoral conferences and am embarrassed to say I asked or at least thought: “How many are you running now?” Judging your success by your weekend attendance is not a biblical measure and doing it produces many discouraged pastors. How do I get to the heavenly wisdom which James 3:17 says is “pure, peaceable, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy”? I pray the following ideas will help.

---


Fruitfulness

When you read John 15:1-16 you will find the word “fruit” eight times and the word “abide” ten times. Jesus defines success by fruitfulness, and it is accomplished by abiding in him. If you Google success and fruitfulness, this paragraph from Henri Nouwen comes up frequently.

There is a great difference between success and fruitfulness. Success comes from strength, control, and respectability. A successful person has the energy to create something, to keep control over its development, and to make it available in large quantities. Success brings many rewards and often fame. Fruits, however, come from weakness and vulnerability. And fruits are unique. A child is the fruit conceived in vulnerability, community is the fruit born through shared brokenness, and intimacy is the fruit that grows through touching one another’s wounds. Let’s remind one another that what brings us true joy is not success but fruitfulness.

Success is fleeting and momentary, and once you succeed at something you have to set your goal to succeed at something else. It is a rewarding experience to succeed, but if that is your primary goal, it can fuel a driven, stressful, and potentially burnt out life. Fruit is more of what you are moment by moment as you abide in Christ. Brother Lawrence captured abiding in Christ in his little book The Practice of the Presence of God where the goal was always to be in Christ’s presence in your thoughts and actions no matter what you are doing. Success at the end of the day is how well you abide in Christ and lived that day doing this in your thoughts and actions. I have tried to end each day before I go to sleep with this evaluation of the day. The Scripture talks about the fruit of thoughts (Prv 12:14), fruit of your mouth (Jer 6:19), fruit of good works (Col 1:10), fruit

---


of repentance (Lk 6:8), and fruit of praise (Heb 13:15). Fruit is something you are all day long and not just what you accomplish. Fruit comes by abiding in Christ and is an indication of you receiving the help of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Am I pleasing Jesus? This is the important thing, not comparing myself with others which is not wise (2 Cor 10:12). When Peter asked about John in John 20:20-21, Jesus reminded Peter not to worry about him, for “you follow me” (Jn 20:22).

Secure in Your Identity and Calling

Paul says in Romans 12:3, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” How do we do this? How do we not think too highly or too lowly of ourselves? Two pastors give insight into this point of identity in calling. Cordeiro says, “When you are sure of your calling, you are less prone to compare yourself with others, because you know that they are called to do something uniquely different. You are called to be you. You are not called to be someone else.”

10 The best you can offer your congregation is an undiscouraged “you” because you know your identity and calling. The chapters of this book on Christology and calling have much to say about a pastor’s identity and calling. Another way of saying this is to be authentic, which makes you worthy of acceptance and belief. A pastor affects the identity of his or her congregation. I found that identifying my core values helped me articulate core values that were unique to our church. For example, servanthood is one of my core values and it is also a core value that reflects the ministries and ethos of our church. All

10 Cordeiro, Sifted, 49
churches have similar core values but also core values unique to God’s identity and
calling for that pastor and congregation.

Not everyone fits in your congregation. First Corinthians 12:18 declares, “But
now God has set the members, each one of them in the body just as He pleased.” Daniel
Brown, a prolific Foursquare pastor who now has a traveling teaching ministry, tells the
story of a young man who came to church and was standing at the back with his arms
folded looking everything over carefully. Daniel asked him what he was doing. He said
he was deciding if he wanted to come to this church. Daniel began to look him over. The
young man asked him what he was doing. Daniel said, “I am deciding whether I want to
be your pastor.”¹¹ We aren’t supposed to be everybody’s pastor.

Be Self-Compassionate

Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in
Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Here is
an excerpt from a commentary I wrote on the book of Romans.

Therefore (on the basis of all that Paul has taught us so far in Romans), there is
now **no condemnation.** Condemnation is a horrible thing to live under. Here are
three consequences of condemnation: 1) You have been pronounced guilty and
you can anticipate judgment coming; 2) You have been declared unfit for use; and
3) God disapproves of you as a person. How and where are we as Christians free
from condemnation? The answer is, **to those who are in Christ Jesus;** there is no
condemnation because we are in Christ Jesus. Lloyd-Jones calls the phrase “in
Christ Jesus” the “great theme of the New Testament and particularly the
apostle,” and goes on to say about 8:1, “The apostle is not talking about his
experience but about his position, his standing, his status; he is in a position which
being justified he can never again come under condemnation. That is the meaning
of this word ‘no,’ it means never.” We were in the first man Adam, and his sin led
to certain consequences including condemnation; we are now in the second
Adam, Christ Jesus, and our union with Him in His death and resurrection leads to
freedom from condemnation and to all the blessings Paul will expound in this

¹¹ Daniel Brown, conference presentation (Foursquare Connection, Seattle, WA, May 2017).
chapter. In regard to there being no condemnation in Christ, I agree with Lloyd-Jones when he says, “If you get ahold of this idea you will have discovered the most glorious truth you will ever know in your life.”

The next phrase in 8:1, **who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit**, is found in less than half the English translations of the Bible. For example, the New International Version (NIV) does not contain this phrase, while the King James and New King James do. Wuest leaves it out of his translation of 8:1. The Greek *Textus Receptus* contains this phrase, while the Nestle-Aland Greek text does not. Greek scholars Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say in their Bible commentary, “The evidence of manuscripts seems to show that this clause formed no part of the original text of this verse.” I agree with Stott when he says that whether this phrase is included or not, it does not change the meaning of the verse. There is no condemnation for those in Christ. This is a fact because of our position in Christ and then it becomes an experience for us as we walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh.¹²

Pastors have a tendency to be hard on themselves and can get under condemnation. One reason for this is that we compare ourselves to Jesus, who is perfect, and as his under-shepherds we want to rightly represent him in all we are, say, and do. Only as we walk in the Spirit can we do this and we will all fail at times. Pastors need to practice self-compassion. Chuck DeGroat, writing about how self-compassion is more crucial to our identity than self-esteem, expounds, “Self-compassion allows us to give ourselves the gift of being adequate at many things instead of exceptional at everything. Self-compassion gives our Inner Critic the day off. Self-compassion frees us from the slavery of narcissistic self-promotion and self-perfection.”¹³

Hebrews 12:2-3 is a fitting way to close this section on comparison: “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . . lest you become weary and discouraged in

---


your soul.” The Greek word for “looking” here means to consider attentively or look away from everything else and concentrate on him. If we can keep our eyes on Jesus, know who we are and who we are not, live to please him, and be compassionate toward ourselves, then we can pastor with divine energy and be undiscouraged.

Conflict

Numbers 12:3 says, “Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all the men who were on the face of the earth.” In the Scriptures, when Moses’s authority was challenged, you often found him doing what he did in Numbers 16:4: “he fell on his face.” From my forty years of pastoring the same church, let me give my most profound advice about handling conflict: “Humble yourself.” “By pride comes nothing but strife” (Prv 13:10). “God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble” (Jas 4:6). I haven’t always done this but have found it is the safest route to find grace to deal with conflict. Often this humbling comes at 3:00 a.m. when I wake up thinking about what I should have said to defend myself or put the person in place with whom I have had conflict. My pride was hurt. Part of humbling myself is to acknowledge this presence of pride. My prayer has often been, “Lord, how do you want me to handle this situation? How would you deal with it?”

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie discuss the need for pastors to have EQ, emotional intelligence. The authors follow the work of Daniel Coleman, one of the leading authors on emotional intelligence. Coleman followed the careers of eighty PhD students in the science field. The authors quote Coleman’s conclusion: “EQ, the capacity for self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—were about four times more important than IQ in determining professional success and prestige.
for these scientists.”

Pastors aren’t taught emotional intelligence in their theological training, but resiliency in ministry often depends on a pastor’s EQ to respond to conflict. One further quote attributed to Coleman about the scientists he followed can be applied to pastors: “Out of control emotions can make smart people stupid.” They can also shipwreck pastoral ministries. Peter Scazzero says “emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable. It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature.”

Jesus didn’t say “blessed are the peacekeepers;” he said “blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt 5:9), and peacemaking takes humility, someone to endeavor to heal the breach when peace between people has been broken. Someone, when conflict has broken relationship, has to be a peacemaker. I have observed in marital conflict if no one humbles themselves, conflict only escalates. Many times when counseling with couples in crisis I have watched them work each other up into anger because neither one would humble themselves by acknowledging their responsibility in the disagreement. Romans 13:18 is sound advice: “If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” Sometimes conflict leads to broken relationships, divorce, or people leaving our church. I have determined to always leave a bridge back for relationship to be restored. An extremely valuable book in forming my philosophy of ministry was written by Jerry Cook, a cherished pastor of my denomination, titled Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness. Based on Romans 15:7, Jerry emphasizes the best chance we have to restore

---

14 Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, Resilient Ministry, 103.

15 Ibid., 106.

16 Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 19.
and see people grow and change is to always offer them love, acceptance, and forgiveness.\textsuperscript{17} This has been a core value of our church. Scazzero talks about spiritual leaders needing a high level of differentiation. “Differentiation involves the ability to hold on to who you are and who you are not. The degree to which you are able to allow your distinct values and goals apart from the pressures around you (separateness) while remaining close to people important to you (togetherness) helps determine your level of differentiation.”\textsuperscript{18} Conflict is inevitable, but a healthy immune system in the church modeled by the EQ of the pastor can eliminate much conflict.

\textit{Resilient Ministry} is a book based on pastors’ summits and the insight of the authors. One pastor in a summit said, “Your church will take on your personality. It will reflect who you are, your background and your character.”\textsuperscript{19} The authors then add, “To use an analogy; just as children learn how to handle conflict (for good or for ill) by watching their parents work on difficulties, so congregations increase or decrease in emotional maturity by the ways their leadership manages disagreements and controversy.”\textsuperscript{20} One valuable lesson I have learned about conflict is to always ask for the Holy Spirit to show you the right time to deal with conflict with another person. Trying to deal with conflict too soon or waiting too long to deal with it are both mistakes. The Holy Spirit can set up the opportune time when both of your hearts are ready to deal with this issue. When you are going to confront a person in your congregation and bring pastoral

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17} Jerry Cook, \textit{Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness: Equipping the Church to be Truly Christian in a Non-Christian World} (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979), 19

\textsuperscript{18} Scazzero, \textit{Emotionally Healthy Spirituality}, 58.

\textsuperscript{19} Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, \textit{Resilient Ministry}, 208.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.}
correction, it is always important to ask the Lord for the right timing to do so. Bringing correction with love and humility is important pastoral grace. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” Often, however, even when I as a pastor have brought correction in the right way, people have still left the church. It takes maturity and humility to receive correction. We as pastors must be able to receive it, too.

I will finish this chapter with some practical advice about supervising conflict from Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie and drawn from the pastors’ summits they conducted.\textsuperscript{21}

1) “God uses conflict for our personal and corporate growth.”\textsuperscript{22} Embrace that conflict will always be a part of ministry.

2) Don’t avoid conflict at all costs.

3) Don’t try to win every disagreement by being concerned about your own ego or reputation.

4) Don’t try to control the outcome by defining the results ahead of time and then pushing everyone that way.

5) Don’t give up on the conflict because you can’t control the result.

6) Don’t come to a false resolution or have a “hireling” mentality.

7) Listen and don’t think how you will respond. Pray and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 234-238.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 234.
8) Don’t offer a one-answer-fits-all solution.

9) Maintain care and concern while not compromising the facts of sin in a matter.

10) Remember “conflict is a crucible for discipleship.”

Pastors with grit learn to curb comparison and competition in themselves and deal with conflict in a redemptive way.

Questions to Ponder

(1) When do you have the most trouble with comparison and competition in your ministry? How do you keep it under control?

(2) Describe your understanding of the difference between success and fruitfulness. Give some examples of fruitfulness from your ministry.

(3) What are the actions that make up abiding in Christ for you?

(4) Would you say you have grown in your identity in Christ and his calling in your life? Can you give an example of how you have grown?

(5) Would you say you have compassion toward yourself? Why or why not?

(6) What does it mean to you to humble yourself during conflict?

(7) What is the most valuable thing you have learned about handling conflict?

Going Deeper

Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving, by Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie

The Grasshopper Myth: Big Churches, Small Churches and the Small Thinking that Divides Us, by Karl Vaters

Wholeheartedness: Busyness, Exhaustion, and Healing the Divided Self; by Chuck DeGroat

---

23 Ibid., 236.
CHAPTER 12

CONVERGENCE: FINISHING WELL

All the other chapters of this book I wrote looking back, drawing from my years of pastoral ministry. I write this chapter looking forward by faith to what is ahead for me. After I came to know Jesus, was married, and went to Bible college, I have had only one assignment: start and pastor a church in my hometown of Salina, Kansas. As I write this chapter in January of 2020 this assignment will end. I had the honor and privilege to choose my successor, a man who also came to faith and grew up in our church. I believe he is a perfect choice and am confident it is God’s will, which is good, acceptable, and perfect (Rom 12:2). We have been working together for over a year now in this transition. I am excited and have periods of great hope about the future, but I also am anxious and maybe even a little terrified of what’s ahead. I am anxious about what I am going to do and wondering if I will have an identity crisis after being pastor of Emmanuel for forty years. Our call as pastors supersedes our assignment. Our assignment might change but the call is for a lifetime. Our call is more of who we are than what we do. Everywhere I go in town now someone will say, “I hear you are retiring.” Salina is small enough (40,000) that most people I know have heard this. I always say, “No, I am not retiring, just changing what I am going to do.” I heard a harsher comment from someone
who said, “I hear you are quitting.” The worst comment, which I heard recently was, “I hear you are giving up.” I am not retiring, quitting, or giving up; I want to finish well and fulfill God’s lifetime calling on my life. Terry Walling references Dr. J. Robert Clinton as reporting, “In his study of over 5,000 Christian leaders and Christ-followers throughout history, Dr. J. Robert Clinton discovered a startling truth, few leaders actually finish well. In fact, only about one in three do.”¹ I want to be one of the one in three, and my prayer is that you will also be one. Maybe you too are nearing the end of your pastoral assignment; if not, you will be someday. My prayer is that this chapter will help you in this process. I have divided up the chapter into three headings: the goal, the questions, and the journey, but first the Scriptures that apply.

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give to me on that day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing (2 Tm 4:7).*

*His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord (Mt 25:23).*

*He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he does shall prosper (Ps 1:3).*

*They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing (Ps 92:14).*

---

The Goal

Convergence is the goal. Convergence for a pastor is a time when God brings together all that you are and have learned and you make your greatest contribution to the body of Christ. Now that sounds better than quitting, doesn’t it? Terry Walling says this about convergence: “The challenge moves beyond success and accomplishment to passing on to others what one has learned. The finishing transition ushers in a time of legacy—that is living a life that others want to live and model (2 Tm 2:2).” This is the sage time of your pastoral life where you have become wise through reflection and experience and you can give sage advice characterized by wisdom, prudence, and good judgment to others.

I was asked to help lead a seminar for the Foursquare pastors in our Gateway five-state district who were nearing retirement age. We wrestled with a title for the seminar and finally arrived at the title “Encore.” An encore, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is an additional performance demanded by the audience or a second achievement expressly that surpasses the first. May we live our lives in such a way that after retirement age, younger ones ask, even demand, “how did you do it?” In helping them we achieve the most fruitful season of our lives in Christ.

Questions to Answer

Walling identifies three generic seasons of a leader’s life and a question for each: the awakening or call season, accompanied by the question of “what can I do”; the

\footnote{Ibid., 106-107.}

\footnote{Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “encore.”}
deciding or contribution season, accompanied by the question of “what should I do”; and the finishing or convergence season, accompanied by the question of “what must I do.”

During a phone conversation with Walling in April 2019, he asked me the following questions about the convergence season of my own life: What must you do? When does God show up most in your life? What do you communicate that people really get? These are questions to ask yourself that will help you determine how to have your greatest influence during the convergence season of your life. An exercise that I have done several times during my life has been helpful. Make a timeline on a poster board of your life. With sticky notes write out major events of your life that have impacted you. Use one color for positive things and one for negative things. These events can be people you have met, things you have done or things that have happened to you. Be sure to include God’s intersections with your life in these events. At the bottom of the poster board, distill from your life events the major lessons you have learned. These lessons should help answer the question, what must I do to leave my most important contribution to the body of Christ? This exercise helped me determine two must-do things for me. I was greatly impacted by the book of Romans and my Bible college professor Dr. Leslie Eno. I have said that the truths of who I am in Christ in the book of Romans saved my life spiritually. I wrote a commentary on the book of Romans entitled Reigning in Life and dedicated it to Dr. Eno. Pastoring in my hometown has been a joy. I love pastoring and I love other pastors. Writing this book, Pastoral Grit, is also an answer to the question, what must I do? What is it you must do in the convergence season of your life?

4 Walling, Stuck, 13.
Walling asks three questions on which I would like to expand. First, will I push to the end, bringing all myself to what I do? Or will I simply retire, sit back and let others do the work? In Luke 12, Jesus tells the parable of a man who speaks to his soul and says, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat drink and be merry” (Lk 12:19). The retirement years are time to slow down, but they are also a time to determine to make our greatest contribution and not just bow out. During the years of our church we have had several retired ministers come to the church. One wise pastor, Dixie Weese, said unless she stayed involved serving, it was easy for her to sit back and be critical of the ministries of the church. Dixie was a great blessing and made a major contribution to the life or our church because of this attitude. The opposite is the person the Lord talks about in Luke 12:45 who says, “My master is delaying his coming; and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk.” We as pastors can get negative and cynical in the convergence season of life if we don’t keep seeking and fulfilling God’s call on our lives.

Second, will I find my niche, keep learning and stay in the game? Or will I let the church culture push me aside in favor of the younger? Our Western culture doesn’t honor its elders like many other cultures do. The next generation of pastors needs the influence of leaders who stayed the course in the ups and downs of ministry. The Apostle John mentions twice that he writes to fathers (and mothers) “because you have known Him who is from the beginning” (1 Jn 2:13-14). We can bring this stability in Christ to the next generation. A worthy goal for retirement years is to live a life so the younger

---

5 Walling, Stuck, 109.

6 Ibid.
generation can follow our faith and the outcome of our conduct so they can know “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:7-8).

Third, will I intentionally leave my legacy deposited in the lives of others? Or will I doubt my contribution and simply hope that others have appreciated my life? Walling explains, “If older people are willing to enter into the world of younger people, they will be able to build relationships of influence. It’s about depositing life lessons into a few, not many. One of the greatest encouragements to younger leaders is seeing older Christ followers still passionate about Christ and His call on their lives.” Let the next generation see you are still bearing fruit and are fresh and flourishing in your call (Ps 94:14). A caution here is that the younger generation influenced by Western culture might not see the need for the input of older leaders. Barna again points out the greatest need in the American church today is for pastors to be resilient. Younger pastors need older pastors who have had grit in their pastoral ministry to come alongside them whether they know it or not. We have to be tenacious in this area and not get our feelings hurt by rejection. The next generation does need the input of seasoned leaders. We have seven first-time pastors in the area I serve in as a regional pastor. I have scheduled a regular call with these young leaders to do a short teaching and talk about pastoring. It has been rewarding for me and I hope for them. One of the indications you have graduated to this season of convergence in your life is that you get just as much joy in the accomplishment and fruitfulness of others as you would if you had done it yourself.

---

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 110.
The Journey to Convergence

I offer five actions for this season of pastoral call and remind you I am starting into this season myself. Number one, keep fighting the enemies that oppose you in the goal of convergence. Don’t give in to fear; as we abide in God’s perfect love for us fear is cast out (1 Jn 4:18). Don’t regret that you didn’t accomplish everything you desired to do in ministry. Nobody has. Be secure in your identity in Christ and not just in your title of pastor. Don’t give in to discouragement or depression that your years of fruitfulness are over but believe this can be your greatest season of influence and fruitfulness.

Number two, prepare and plan for this season of convergence. Ask the wonderful Helper, the Holy Spirit, to lead you into this season of your life. Proverbs 16:9 says, “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” Think about planning financially, spiritually, emotionally, and physically for this season of life. This verse tells us it’s okay to plan, but then the Lord directs our path. I don’t offer much advice here about these areas but suggest to contact people you have seen navigate well in these areas and ask for their counsel and prayer. I would only mention here the physical area. Being in poor health can curtail the influence of your life. I find exercise and watching my eating habits not to be extras but necessities for this time of life.

Trust and wait on the Lord. The most common advice I offer members of our congregation at the end of the conversation is, “We will just trust the Lord.” Trust is the relational word for faith; seventy-one times the psalmist tells us to trust the Lord. For example, Psalm 9:10 reads, “And those who know your name will put their trust in you.” The phrase in Proverbs 3:5-6, a familiar verse about trusting in the Lord with all your heart, says “lean not to your own understanding.” This verse gives us permission not to
have to understand everything that is ahead but to trust and put our future in his care. The song “Take Courage” by Bethel Music has brought me great comfort as I transition out of forty years of pastoring here at Emmanuel. “Take courage my friend, stay steadfast my soul, he’s in the waiting. Hold onto your hope as the triumph unfolds, he’s never failing. And you who hold the stars, who calls them each by name, will surely keep your promise to me, that I will rise in your victory.” Especially the phrase “he’s in the waiting” has ministered to me. I have to wait to see the future, but the way I wait, knowing the Lord is in the waiting, can be done with hope and expectation. I am working on this.

Number four, keep your master ambition to please him and continue to cultivate a rich inner life with Jesus. Oswald Chambers asks this question in his treasured devotion, “Is my master ambition to please Him and be acceptable to Him, or is it something less, no matter how noble?” Hebrews 11:27 talks of Moses and how he endured, “seeing Him who is invisible.” Can we trust even though we don’t always see the invisible hand and work of God, trust that he has a plan for these retirement age years of our life? Jesus will never leave us out or leave us behind because he is our Helper (Heb 13:5-6).

Number five, do something now to prepare for the future. Hebrews 13:16 exhorts us to come boldly before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and grace to help in the time of need. I have always interpreted this verse to ask God ahead of time for the grace I need to face my life ahead. I would encourage you to revisit the gift mix God has given you. Look back over or take one of the gift surveys like the Motivational Gifts, Strength Finders, or Enneagram surveys. Remind yourself of the place the grace of God shows up

---

9 Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1935), March 17.
brightest in your life. I remind you of a quote from Frederick Buechner, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”

This answers the question for the season of convergence, what must I do? On the Strength Finders test I score highest as an achiever, so I always do better and am happier with a few goals. As I am preparing for my transition from senior pastor, I asked the Lord how I can prepare. I always loved school and the Lord opened the door in the last seven years for me to finish my master’s degree and now my doctor of ministry degree. I also try to sign up for a half-marathon (it used to be a full one) to motivate me to stay in shape each year. May the Lord direct your path in preparing for the convergence years.

Thank you for reading this chapter. I pray it has been helpful. I know it has been good therapy for me to write it.

Questions to Ponder

(1) What season of ministry are you in now—the call season, the contributing season, or the finishing season? What are specific things the Lord is asking you to do during this season?

(2) Describe the legacy you want to leave behind.

(3) Read the definition of convergence. Describe what this would look like in your life.

(4) Are there persons of the younger generation you are investing in? Do you find this a rewarding or frustrating task? Why?

(5) What are you doing now to prepare for your transition from your current ministry assignment?

(6) Describe the things you feel you must do in the convergence season of your life.

(7) Describe your ideal ministry in your retirement years.

---

Going Deeper

*Stuck: Navigating the Transitions of Life & Leadership*, by Terry Walling
*Staying Power: Five Core Ideas in Sustainability in Christian Leadership*, by Ken Roberts
*Nearing Home, Life, Faith, and Finishing Well*, by Billy Graham
Pastors' Summit Brochure

Appendix B

Pastors' Summit Brochure

APPENDIX B
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Orientation and Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Opening Plenary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Keynote Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Welcome Reception and Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Friday, September 12th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Opening Plenary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Keynote Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Welcome Reception and Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Saturday, September 13th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Opening Plenary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Keynote Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Welcome Reception and Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sunday, September 14th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Opening Plenary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:15</td>
<td>Keynote Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Welcome Reception and Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

PASTORS’ SUMMIT EVALUATION FORM

PASTORAL GRIT
Key Practices for Resiliency in Ministry

Pastors’ Summit Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The summit content was what I expected it to be</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information in this summit was useful and valuable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was valuable to meet others interested in this topic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The summit was interactive and the facilitator engaged us in discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this summit to others interested in this topic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is your biggest takeaway from this summit?

What chapter of Pastoral Grit was most applicable to your current ministry and why?

Which key practice is the Lord working in your life currently? Can you give an example?

Has this summit encouraged you in having pastoral grit?

Do you have any suggestions for adding to or improving this summit?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


———. “God’s Pattern for Revival.” *Bridal Call*, February 1929.

———. “The Middle of the Road.” *Bridal Call*, November 1929.


Spencer, J. Louis, Bruce E. Winston, and Mihai C. Bocarnea. Predicting the Level of Pastors’ Risk of Termination/Exit from the Church. Published online, 13 December 2011: © Springer Science + Business Media, LLC, 2011.


