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A qualitative study of clergy career satisfaction, functioning, and clergy-congregant relations

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF

CLERGY CAREER SATISFACTION, FUNCTIONING, AND

CLERGY-CONGREGANT RELATIONS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William & Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Brian R. Mc Donald

May, 2004

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
CLERGY CAREER SATISFACTION, FUNCTIONING, AND
CLERGY-CONGREGANT RELATIONS

By

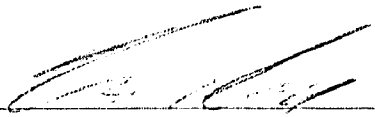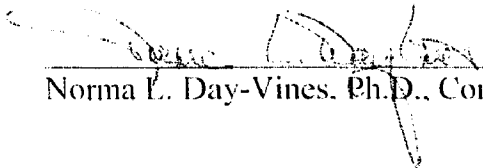Brian R. Mc Donald

Ph.D. Dissertation
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

May, 2004

Approved by:

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Charles F. Gressard, Ph.D., Committee Chair

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David W. Leslie, Ed.D., Committee Member

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Norma L. Day-Vines, Ph.D., Committee Member

Gustave Doré (French, 1832-1883)

The Neophyte (First Experience of the Monastery), ca. 1866-1868

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA

A Qualitative Study

of Clergy Career Satisfaction, Functioning, and

Clergy-Congregant Relations

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand more fully the experience of clergy who are at the more advanced stages of faith development according to James Fowler's Faith Development Theory. Six subjects were selected using Fowler's Faith Development Interview. Each of the individuals selected had been rated at least 4.5, "Individuative-Reflective Faith" (transitional). The study sought to understand the experience of these members of the clergy (who were pastors of churches), especially as it applies to career functioning, satisfaction, and clergy-congregant relations. The phenomenological study used a qualitative approach in analyzing two 1.5 hr interviews with each of the six participants. Themes were identified for each of the cases and a cross-case thematic analysis was undertaken. The analysis of the interviews with these pastors yielded the following themes: Questioning as acceptable, the strategy of creating an environment of openness, a quest for integrity, the value of a personal confidant, the benefit of work/activity beyond pastoral duties, and the inevitability of the need to exercise caution in expressing beliefs. Implications were drawn for clergy training, clergy career practice, and the counseling of clergy.

Acknowledgements

As I reflect upon the completion of this dissertation, I feel tremendous gratitude to so many individuals who have assisted me, not only in the completion of this project, but also in the completion of all the work for my Ph.D. degree.

First, I would like to thank the twelve pastors who participated in this study. They took time out of very busy schedules and graciously opened their lives and experience in order to further this study. Hearing their stories was an incredible experience.

I would like to thank my committee chair and long time advisor, Dr. Charles F. "Rick" Gressard. He was the first teacher that I had at the College of William & Mary in 1993 and I am so grateful for his continued help and encouragement throughout my studies. Thanks also to Dr. Norma Day-Vines and Dr. David Leslie for serving on my committee and offering excellent advice. I appreciate the enthusiasm of these individuals for my dissertation topic.

In addition, I would like to thank several individuals who assisted me with the research. Dr. Donna Kaiser served as the second rater for the phase one interviews and Stuart Nixon and Dr. Mark Blagen read the stage two interviews and gave feedback on my analysis. Wreatha Anderson typed many of the interviews and Barbara Moore helped with proof-reading. These individuals were a tremendous help.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank my own personal therapist of many years, Mary Ann Kearly. When I was contemplating embarking upon the long journey of seeking a Ph.D., she was of invaluable assistance to me. I am thankful to the many colleagues and professional associates with whom I have served as a minister over the years, too many to enumerate. In addition, I owe a debt of gratitude to all the professors and fellow students at the College of William and Mary for their guidance and friendship over these years.

I certainly would never have believed I was capable of earning a doctorate without the loving support of my parents. My father did not live to see the fulfillment of this dream, but my mother, at 87, was able to read some of the final manuscript for grammar and spelling.

Lastly, I want to thank my wife and children. Over the last few years, they have had to accept that I was often preoccupied with the pursuit of this degree. Their calls, notes, and words of support kept me going. I am certain that I would never have completed this project without the support of my wife, Kathy. She is the most "can do" person I have ever known. When I felt overwhelmed, she always assured me that I could do it. When my computer skills fell short, she came to the rescue. During the last weeks before this project was completed, she worked many long hours typing and assisting with the layout. We did it! Thank you.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

Nineteenth century French artist Gustave Doré did a number of paintings depicting the life of those who had embarked upon the monastic life. One such painting entitled The Neophyte: First Experience of the Monastery (ca. 1866-1868), depicts a group of eight or nine Carthusian monks sitting in a row. All but one appear aged and decrepit with long beards and drooping shoulders. In stark contrast to these is one young monk, appearing to be in his teens. Rather than having his head bowed in prayer (or perhaps sleep as some of the others appear), his adolescent face is raised and bears on it a look that indicates something between bewilderment and shock. The viewer can't help but receive the message that the young novice is having second thoughts about the vow that he has recently taken.

Perhaps, some members of the clergy today find themselves in a situation somewhat different from what they imagined when they first embarked upon a career that functions in the arena of faith expression. Though differences between themselves and those with whom they interact may not become apparent as quickly or be as striking as in the case of the novice monk and his senior counterparts, some clergy nonetheless find themselves, at some point, to have lost the ability to identify with the institutionalized expression of faith to which they have committed themselves (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970, Lee, 1976).

Statement of the Problem

This study was concerned with professional clergy, the manner in which their faith outlook may grow and evolve, and how this journey interacts with career functioning and satisfaction. Perhaps clergy find that their conceptualization of faith has become so different from many of those they are called upon to lead, that serving in such a role has become problematic. On the other hand, it is possible that their evolving faith has enhanced and energized their vocation. It was the desire of the researcher to gain greater insight into the faith development of faith's leaders so as to provide greater guidance and understanding to those who are viewed as 'faith guides' themselves.

Chapter Overview

This first chapter will present an overview of the issue of faith/religious sentiment as a significant life issue and a brief introduction to theory and thought as it applies to this issue. The chapter will move forward to discuss clergy career, choice of this career, career functioning and satisfaction, and clergy-congregant relations. Theories of career satisfaction, especially as they apply to clergy, will be highlighted. A model of faith development will be introduced and its implications for understanding clergy functioning and career satisfaction will be noted. Research questions will be set forth and operational definitions and data gathering procedures will be outlined. Limitations of the study and a statement of researcher bias will be included.

Faith as a Significant Life Issue

Faith and/or religious sentiment is an issue which cannot be ignored by those providing services in the mental health field (Genia, 1992, Worthington, 1989). Faith

issues can be both a resource for clients as well as a problem to be addressed (Herzbrun, 1999, Genia, 1992).

Well known theorists in the field of psychology who have addressed the issue of faith include William James (1902) who devoted a well known volume to the issue of religious experience and Gordon Allport (1962) who cited religion as one of humanity's primary concerns.

Faith expression in the form of organized religion continues to be popular, though forms have evolved (Glenmary Research Center, 2000). As recent as 2001, a Gallop poll indicated that 59% of Americans consider religion to be important to their lives (Gallop, 2001). Counseling educators and theorists have emphasized the need for counselors to be alert to religious/faith issues in the counseling process (Worthington, 1989).

Models of Understanding Faith

Gordon Allport (1962) was one of the first to address faith or religious sentiment as a developmental issue. He cited characteristics of the religious sentiment at various stages of life. Those seeking to understand the source of religious sentiment in childhood have looked to the work of Elkind (1965) to understand the emerging concept of God in children. Erikson's (1968) model of Psycho-Social development has been drawn upon often to understand faith ideation across the lifespan. Elkind's work has also been cited in the examination of adult religious sentiment (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1979). Psychodynamic theorists such as Rizzuto (1991) have attempted to address the concept of God in individuals by pointing to early relationships as the key to understanding faith ideation.

Fowler, (1981, 1986, 1987, 1996, 2001) has developed a comprehensive model which addresses faith and its development. Fowler, in his *Faith Development Theory*, outlines a developmental approach to understanding a person's growth and change as meaning is sought throughout the life experience (1981). As in most cognitive developmental theories, Fowler's model addresses the thought processes of individuals and how these processes impact actions and behavior. Faith Development Theory proposes a series of stages through which a person of faith orientation will pass. This model regards faith as a construct common to all human beings, whether expressed in religious terms or otherwise (Fowler, 1981). Fowler defines faith as "a dynamic existential stance, a way of leaning into and finding or giving meaning to the conditions of our lives" (1981, p. 92). In addressing the construct of faith Fowler emphasizes its relational aspect and conceptualizes faith as a "covenantal triad" (1981, p. 17). At the three corners of this triad are self, other, and a 'shared center of value and power' (SCVP) or something he sometimes calls the 'holy.' A person's concept of faith, then, involves her/his relationship to not only some faith perspective (the 'holy'), but also to other significant individual(s), often primary caregivers, who share this relationship with the SCVP or the 'holy.' This 'covenantal triad' has an important bearing upon how a person sets goals, makes and maintains relationships, or reacts to unexpected events.

Fowler emphasizes that this covenantal triad is 'dynamic,' in that it is ever changing and adapting as relationships between self, other, and the 'holy' evolve. Thus, Fowler posits that a person will pass through a series of 'stages' in terms of this faith. The stages he sets forth are: Pre-Stage: Infancy and undifferentiated faith, Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith, Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith, Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional

faith, Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith, Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith, and Stage 6: Universalizing Faith (Fowler, 1981). A thorough discussion of these stages will be presented in chapter two.

According to Fowler's original work and subsequent model, faith stage can be assessed using a "matrix of structural aspects" which are used to identify and track patterns of faith development (Fowler, 2001, p. 161). Fowler outlines these 'aspects' as follows: 1) Form of logic, 2) Perspective taking, 3) Form of moral judgement, 4) Bounds of social awareness, 5) Locus of authority, 6) Form of world coherence, and 7) Symbolic function.

A thorough discussion of these 'aspects' will be presented in chapter two. It should be mentioned that Fowler (2001), in tracing the evolution of Faith Development Theory, cites the influence of a number of theorists. Prominent among these are Erikson (stages of the life cycle), Neibuhr (dynamic conception of faith), Piaget (form of logic), Kohlberg (form of moral judgement), and Selman (perspective taking). The influence of these and other theorists will be discussed in detail in chapter two as well.

<u>Clergy: Faith as a Career Choice</u>

The present study explored the experience of individuals who have chosen faith/religion as a career; that is, individuals who are professional clergy. Churches and other religious entities are organizational and institutional groupings that reflect individuals' conceptualization of issues related to the nature of ultimate reality, or God (Rizzuto, 1991). Clergy members, in most cases, preside over or serve as leaders/teachers of such entities.

Members of the clergy often describe or refer to the decision to enter the ministry as a 'calling' which has been observed to be different in certain respects from the decision to enter other professions (Rulla, 1971, Christopherson, 1994). The decision to enter the ministry has been linked to issues such as dynamics of family of origin and personal identity development (O'Neill and Grandy, 1994).

Clergy and Career Satisfaction

Given that faith is a significant life issue for many individuals, one that is quite complex and influenced by numerous variables, and also understanding that the decision to enter the ministry is a complex and consequential one, one must ask, "To what extent do clergy find satisfaction in pursuit of this career?" The average tenure for clergy is getting shorter (Zelizer, 2002) and clergy are dropping out of the ministry at a noticeably higher rate both voluntarily and involuntarily (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970, Wallace, 2002). Issues of clergy being able to pursue a 'calling' while satisfactorily maintaining gainful employment at once come to mind.

Numerous theories and models of career and career development have been tapped in an attempt to understand clergy career, satisfaction, and tenure. Holland's (1985) model of personality types has been applied in seeking to understand individuals' fit for ministry positions (Osipow 1970, Lee, 1976). Others have looked at issues of psychological conflict arising out of the search for meaning as possibly contributing to career difficulty among clergy (Rulla, 1971).

In looking at role expectations of clergy, theory related to career motivation (Schneider & Hall, 1970) has examined the often unclear expectations thrust upon clergy and the possible consequences for career satisfaction (Lee, 1976). Age at which one

embarks upon a ministry career has also been looked at as a predictor of satisfaction

(Umeda and Frey, 1974). Changing attitudes toward clergy among laity have been cited

as possible factors contributing to growing clergy dissatisfaction (O'Neill and Grandy,

1994).

Faith Development Theory: Implications for Clergy Career

Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981, 1986, 1987, 1996, 2001) has potential

to give insight into issues of clergy career satisfaction. As set forth earlier, Fowler's

theory looks at the development of faith in a sequential manner across the life span. The

application of this model, as it relates to clergy, has been primarily in the area of its use in

pastoral care. Fowler speaks of clergy as needing to understand the faith stage of a

particular individual or individuals when designing and implementing the various aspects

of clergy functioning such as preaching, counseling, giving direction, teaching, and

organizing (1987). In designing a worship experience, for example, clergy will need to

understand and take into account what he calls "varieties of congregational presence" that

result in different individuals interpreting and processing the content in various ways

(1987, p. 82).

Because clergy and religious educators have welcomed Faith Development

Theory as a potentially useful framework for religious education as well as diagnosis for

pastoral care (Schneider, 1986), the emphasis, as far as application of the stages to

individual faith expression, has been primarily upon parishioners rather than upon clergy

themselves. However, a central tenet of Fowler's theory is that of faith as a 'covenental

triad' (Fowler,1981). A person relates to an ultimate environment (the holy) in a manner

which impacts and is impacted by one's relationship to others who share this view of

value and power. Fowler refers to this developmental process as a 'dance' (2001).

Kegan (1982) has characterized a person's quest for meaning making as a 'dance'

involving 'self in motion.' Fowler has said that this dance involves the "self-other-

ultimate environment trialectic." (2001, p. 164) The most basic application of this has

been to a person's relationship with significant individuals, particularly in the early years

(Fowler, 1981, 1986). However, Fowler emphasizes that this triad is 'dynamic' and

'evolving' (2001). The question arises as to how a clergy person's own faith may evolve

through the aging and growth process and how this then impacts and is impacted by

relationships within the faith community (i.e. church) by which she/he is employed.

In corresponding with James Fowler regarding the impact of a clergy person's

own faith development upon both professional functioning and clergy-parishioner

relations, Fowler responded as follows:

> Many pastors . . . have reasonably well developed sensibilities that enable them to
>
> establish effective communication and relationships with persons and
>
> congregations, through meeting them at their varied points of readiness. This can
>
> be mildly manipulative or deceptive; it can also be authentic and faithful. When
>
> pastors' struggles with and in faith, and with the processes of aging and
>
> developing a rich range of experiences lead them to stage change, it can create
>
> crises of communication and of authenticity. (Personal communication, e-mail,
>
> Feb. 4, 2003)

The question then arises, what is the nature of faith stage growth among

professional clergy? If indeed, as Fowler's above statement suggests, most clergy have

reasonably developed 'sensibilities,' what is the meaning of this in terms of their own

faith development? How does this relate to age, experience, and other developmental variables that are unique to clergy, such as their particular career focus on issues related to ultimate meaning? Transition to higher stage levels (e.g. stage 5 *Conjunctive Faith*) often involves disengagement, disequilibrium, and personal disillusionment (Hamrick, 1988). The fact that such disillusionment may take place raises questions as to how a clergy person will continue to preside over a faith community during such a time of personal struggle. More specifically, the question then arises, how does such faith stage growth, if indeed it takes place, impact clergy functioning, and ultimately, such issues as career success, persistence, and satisfaction?

Research in Faith Development

Faith Development Theory has been employed in an attempt to understand the development of religious and/or faith concepts in relation to age and other developmental variables. Following is a brief overview of some of the findings of studies related to Faith Development. A more thorough and in depth review of studies related to faith development will be presented in chapter two.

The literature revealed that age and faith stage are related, particularly during the period of adolescence, where Stage 3, *Synthetic-Conventional Faith*, is generally the norm (White, 1986). Further, advancement in faith stage is related to advancement in cognitive/affective maturity (Nieratka, 1984). Concerning faith stage and adult development, it was seen that high stress of a negative nature may facilitate growth to higher levels of faith development, at least in males (James and Samuels, 1999). Growth to higher levels of faith stage (stage 4 and above) was found to be associated with intelligence and more self awareness of mid-life crisis issues (Basset, 1985).

As far as faith stage and its application to religious life, the research revealed that advanced faith stage may not correspond with traditional concepts of religious maturity (Jones, 2003). Some who manifest higher faith stage characteristics may rate self as less mature according to the standards of their particular religious tradition (Jones, 2003). Churches and religious entities that are characterized as 'evangelical' in belief and practice may be largely made up of a individuals who demonstrate stage 4 (*Individuative-Reflective*) stage characteristics (Jones, 2003). Though not conclusive, there is a possibility that religious study, of a cognitive nature, may contribute to advancement in faith stage (Tulloch, 1985). Finally, it was seen that transition between stages among adults involves, among other characteristics, personal disengagement and disequilibrium which is are characterized by both personal and systemic disillusionment (Hamrick, 1985).

Contribution to Theory and Practice

There is a striking lack of research related to the development of faith among faith's leaders, i.e. clergy. Clergy who better understand their own development in faith will be better able to apply this model in providing guidance and leadership to those under their care. Fowler's (1981) model sets forth a "faith triad" in which an individual is impacted by and impacts others with whom a "center of value and power" is shared. This faith triad needs to be explored in terms of the unique life setting of clergy whose identity is that of the leader of a faith community. Greater understanding of faith development among those who have devoted significant energy toward faith expression and understanding (i.e. clergy) can provide greater insight into the subtleties of faith change and development as it is applied broadly.

Clergy are often isolated at the top of the faith community. Though Faith Development Theory sees growth and change as normal and even healthy, a clergy person's disclosure of her/his own changes in faith perceptions may be alarming to congregants and could even threaten job security. Counselors who understand faith development and can provide a guiding hand to clergy who are navigating the faith journey are much needed.

Current Study

These subjects were identified from a group of clergy who were selected due to their possible demonstration of stage 4.5 (those in the midst of transition to stage 5) and above characteristics. In-depth interviews were conducted with the stage 4.5 and above clergy and results were analyzed. A detailed description of data gathering procedures will be presented in chapter three. The following questions were utilized to guide the study:

1. What are the unique characteristics of faith development among those who have chosen a career in the arena of faith expression?

2. What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his own faith development?

3. How does growth to stage 4.5 and above impact career functioning and clergy-parishioner relations?

4. What is the impact of faith stage growth upon career satisfaction among clergy?

Study Limitations

The study is limited in that the clergy participating are all members of a particular denomination among the protestant faith. Varying denominations have varying organizational structures as well as varying role expectations of professional clergy. In addition, clergy have more or less autonomy in pursuing their work depending on the church/denomination served. Therefore, the generalizing of findings beyond the particular denomination represented by this study's participants should be done with some caution. Any application of findings to religious professionals of other non-Christian faith traditions is, at best, speculation.

The study is also limited due to the fact that the clergy participants and the churches served were from a large Metropolitan area (Washington, D.C. and surrounding suburbs). This area has certain characteristics related to the socio-economic status of congregants that may influence their expectations of clergy as well as clergy functioning. This may be quite different from those of churches/clergy in different settings.

The study is also limited in that the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of subjects. Since a qualitative approach was chosen in order to explore in depth the experiences of participants, researcher bias could possibly limit the results of the study.

Statement of Researcher Bias

I have been a member of the clergy for more than 23 years. This fact animates my interest in this line of inquiry. I have found Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981) to be helpful in understanding my own career path and my relationship with church/congregants I have served. In addition, my original theological training was in a

very conservative seminary and early on I served churches/groups that were conservative/traditional as well. My own faith perspective in subsequent years has reflected a steady movement away from the rigid approach which characterized my earlier experience. I have found in Faith Development Theory a rationale for this progression and this motivates my interest in the experience of other clergy.

Though I am a member of the clergy, I have pursued extensive graduate studies in the field of counseling, with particular emphasis on a cognitive development approach to understanding a person's reaction to life issues. Therefore, I am apt to look at the religious/faith experience of individuals more in terms of development across the life span rather than as a spiritual phenomenon.

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms that will be utilized throughout the study along with their particular definition.

Faith: For purposes of this study, 'faith' will be defined as a person's acknowledgment of and reliance upon a concept of God that gives strength, value, meaning, and guidance to life. Though Fowler defines faith in much broader terms, as being a universal construct, manifested even by individuals who claim adherence to no form of religious expression or belief (Fowler, 1981, 1986, 2001), this study will use faith in terms of an individual's embracing of some form of faith expression through organized religion (Rizzuto, 1991). Occasionally, the term 'religious sentiment' will be used in place of 'faith.'

Clergy: For purposes of this study, 'clergy' will be defined as those persons who at some point in life have made a conscious decision to pursue a career that is peculiarly religious

in nature. In addition, the term will be used to refer to those who are considered professional clergy and whose primary livelihood is provided through work as clergy. Occasionally, during the study, the word 'minister' may be used interchangeably with 'clergy.'

Pastor: This term will be used to identify those clergy who function in a position of leadership and guidance of a community of faith, i.e. a church.

Congregants: This term will be used to indicate those individuals over whom the clergy person has primary oversight and/or leadership, or with whom the clergy person primarily interacts in a contractual manner in pursuit of career. From time to time the terms 'parishioners' or 'members' may used in place of 'congregants.'

Faith Stage: This refers to the level at which a person is currently addressing issues of meaning according to Faith Development theory. Faith stage is assessed using the 'aspects' of faith mentioned earlier and discussed more fully in chapter two by means of a faith stage interview.

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an introduction to the issue of 'faith' as a significant life issue, an overview of theories related to faith and/or religious sentiment, and a brief overview of research related to clergy career issues and career development as it relates to clergy. The theoretical rationale for this study was presented through a brief introduction to Faith Development Theory. The chapter included a brief summary of important studies related to faith development.

The basic research problem was stated and questions that were used to guide the study were set forth. The chapter included limitations of the study, a statement of researcher bias, and operational definitions of terms.

Chapter Two will include a thorough discussion of Faith Development Theory, including its origin, evolution, and theories/theorists that contributed to its development. A thorough description of each stage will be presented, along with a review of the manner in which faith stage is assessed using the faith stage interview. Chapter Two will also include a more detailed overview of research related to clergy career and career development. Lastly, a selected in-depth review of literature relevant to Faith Development theory, particularly as it relates to the question being examined in the current study, will be presented.

Chapter Three will include a defining of the population of interest for the study, methods by which participants were identified, and a thorough explanation of procedures employed for the gathering and analysis of data. Ethical considerations will also be addressed in chapter three.

Chapter Four will present a within-case analysis of each of the six participant interviews and Chapter Five will set forth cross-case themes. Chapter Six will summarize and discuss further the results of the thematic analysis, review portions of the literature in light of these results and make recommendations for further research. Chapter Six will also discuss implications for clergy training and clergy practice. Implications for the counseling of clergy will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with this researcher's reflections on the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL RATIONALE AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter Overview

This chapter will present a more thorough discussion of faith as a significant life issue, models of understanding faith, and the importance of further understanding in this area. Following this will be thorough explanation of Faith Development Theory as conceived by James Fowler (1981, 1986, 1987, 1996, 2001). This will include a history of the theory's development, a discussion of the construct of 'faith,' an explanation of the stages of faith, as set forth by the theory, and an explanation of how faith stages is assessed according to this model. In addition, those theorists or theories that have contributed to the development of Faith Development Theory will be briefly reviewed.

The rational for the current study will be set forth in detail. The chapter will also include a selected review of literature and studies related to faith, clergy career issues, and Faith Development Theory. Particular emphasis will be given to those studies involving Faith Development Theory which have implications for clergy career. The need for further research will be set forth and research questions formally posed.

Faith as a Significant Life Issue

For many people the issue of faith and/or religion is a significant life issue. It is increasingly being recognized that this aspect of a person's identity and personality make up needs to be understood more fully by those providing service in the area of mental health (Genia, 1992, Worthington, 1989). An individual's religious/faith outlook is likely to impact the process and outcome of counseling/psychotherapy and the latter in turn can influence one's faith viewpoint (Genia, 1992). Even for individuals who do not adhere to

a particular religious/faith outlook, the choice not to embrace a particular faith expression may be significant (Herzbrun, 1999).

In his seminal work on the issue of religious faith, psychologist William James (1902) stated, "To the psychologist, the religious propensities of man [sic] must be at least as interesting as any other of the facts pertaining to his [sic] mental constitution." (p. 4) Some years later, at a time when scientific enquiry and psychological study was gaining prominence and sophistication, another prominent psychologist, Gordon Allport (1962), authored his important book, The Individual and His Religion. Allport cautioned that 'religion remains, as ever, one of the prominent concerns of mankind [sic]." (preface)

While some traditional religious organizations, such as mainstream churches, have experienced decline in terms of adherents in recent years, other religious groups with more experiential emphases have grown (Glenmary Research Center, 2000). Many individuals will embrace a religious outlook at some point in life and this will likely be a significant issue for them, in one way or another, throughout life. Worthington (1989) cited several reasons for the need to give attention to the issue of religious faith in the field of psychology and counseling. Among these reasons are: 1) the high percentage of the American population that considers itself religious to some degree. A Gallop poll reported that in the year 2000, 95% of Americans stated they believed in God, 68.2% indicated membership in church or synagogue, and 59% considered religion to be a very important component of their lives (Gallop, 2001). 2) the fact that many people, when in crisis, will consider religion in attempting to make sense of life issues, and 3) the fact that, in general, therapists tend to be not as religious as their clients, thus not as easily attuned to such issues.

Models of Understanding Faith

Numerous theoretical models have been proposed to understand an individual's

incorporation of faith/religion as a component of personality and identity. In his

groundbreaking work, The Varieties of Religious Experience, William James (1902)

asserted that the 'visible world' is a part of a 'spiritual world' and that an attempt to live

in harmony with this spiritual world is a basic goal of many individuals (p. 475). James,

the son of a theologian, was trained as a medical doctor and later became a pioneer in the

field of psychology. Although his work seems more philosophical than psychological in

nature, it nonetheless underscores the central place that faith and religious sentiment

occupies in the human experience.

Allport (1962) brought the study of religious experience to the attention of many

in the later half of the 20th century. He sought to address faith from a developmental

standpoint, describing the characteristics of faith ideation during the prominent stages of

a person's life. A child believes whatever is taught or modeled about God and faith and

is quite egocentric, with perceptions directly related to emerging selfhood. Religious

expressions are actually more social than religious in nature during childhood. During

adolescence, according to Allport, doubting and questioning are the predominant

sentiments as individuals reassess previously held beliefs. Adults who reach a more

mature level of religious sentiment are more comfortable with ambiguity and a

willingness to live with uncertainty. The extent to which a person, in the more advanced

stages, leans in the direction of faith or disbelief will determine whether the person is

characterized as having 'mature faith' (faith is greater than disbelief), being a 'non

believer' (disbelief is greater than faith), or being an 'agnostic' (disbelief and faith hold

equal weight in one's sentiment). Gordon Allport (1962) also asserted that a person's religious development is impacted by issues such as bodily needs, temperament and mental capacity, psychological interests and capacities, pursuit of rational explanation, and responses to surrounding culture. Allport spoke of the tendency of individuals to carry childhood religious concepts into adulthood. Jung (1938, 1958) has, at times, been cited as a contributor in this area. According to Jung, in a person's early years, religious ideology is related to the ego and to a child's concern with logic. In the middle years of life, one is attempting to find balance through religious experience.

Much of the study of personality and development as it relates to religious/faith issues has focused on childhood development. Elkind (1965) postulated that the concept of God in children is related to cognitive development. In describing the religious consciousness of children he spoke of 'spontaneous religion,' i.e. those beliefs that spring forth from children as they attempt to make sense of the mysteries of the world around them. Elkind spoke further of 'acquired religion,' that is, those beliefs that are received through the example of significant adults or through instruction. The work of Erikson (1968) in the area of psycho-social development, though not directly addressing the issue of faith/religious ideation, has nonetheless gained the attention of a number of theorists who have drawn upon this theory in an attempt to explain the dynamics of religious sentiment. Steele (1986) noted that a child who is successful in navigating Erikson's stage of 'trust vs. mistrust' will lay the foundation for a possible faith outlook. Adolescence, with its attendant task of finding identity, is of importance since many will find faith/religion as a part of that identity (Worthington, 1989). Erikson (1968), in addressing an individual's pursuit of identity (common during adolescence), suggested

the possibility of a person ceasing this pursuit of identity due to the giving of self to a 'cause.' Implications for individuals who, during adolescence, become committed to rigid religious systems such as cults are apparent (Worthington, 1989).

Theories that are psychodynamic in origin have sought to explain the concept people have of God in terms of their relationships with early, significant individuals. For example Rizzuto (1991) has related religion to an individual's "transforming of self and object into representations of God and religious characters" (p. 48). Whether a person regards God as loving, punitive, distant, tolerant, etc., is determined largely by the manner in which one related to primary caregivers during childhood. According to a psychodynamic model, a person's concept of God is likely to be already determined by the age of five. Others writers have linked religious development closely to moral development and its attendant thought processes, especially as it applies to the value that one assigns to life (Clouse, 1978). Genia (1992) combines psychodynamic theory with developmental theory as a way to understand a person's religious outlook. Genia's approach looks at the conflicts that are encountered by individuals facing changing ideals as they advance through life stages.

In attempting to explain adult development in the area of religion and faith, other writers have also turned to Erikson. During the early adult years when 'intimacy' is a primary issue, individuals seek to more clearly define religious views related to issues such as marriage and divorce. During the middle years, when 'generativity' is the operative task, individuals seek to re-evaluate previously held beliefs in order to be able to give guidance to community and successive generations (Whitehead & Whitehead, 1979).

Faith Development Theory

Introduction

Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981, 1986, 1987, 1996, 2001) will provide

the primary rationale for the current study. Faith Development Theory falls within a

tradition of theories often referred to as 'cognitive developmental theories.' Theories of

cognitive development address the thought processes of individuals and how these

processes impact actions and behavior (Sprinthall, 1978). Common to many such

theories is the concept that as individuals advance in stage, they move from less complex

to more complex ways of viewing life and their environment. Higher levels of

development afford more alternatives of thought (Rest, 1994). Cognitive developmental

theory uniformly sees a person as moving through stages in a certain sequence with

movement (when it occurs) being upward and not backward (Sprinthall, 1978).

Faith Development Theory (Fowler, 1981, 2001) sets forth a series of stages

through which one may progress as she/he attempts to make meaning of life's events.

Fowler has looked at faith as a "universal feature of human beings which may be

expressed in religious terms or otherwise." (Fowler, 2001) The concept of 'faith' as used

in Faith Development Theory will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

History of the Development of Faith Development Theory

James Fowler, whose academic background was in theology and ethics, became

interested in faith development while working with a group of individuals at a religious

center for the personal development of clergy and laity (Fowler, 2001). In an attempt to

make sense of the various journeys of group participants, he began to study extensively

the theory of psycho-social development as set forth by Erikson (1963). He eventually

returned to teach at Harvard Divinity School in the late 1960's, and drawing heavily upon

the teachings of Erikson and his previous experience with the participants at the religious

center, began to teach courses with titles like, "Theology as Symbolization of

Experience" (Fowler, 2001). As he dialogued with students from a vast array of religious

backgrounds, he began to focus more and more on the study of faith as it relates to a

person's making of meaning. During this time he was introduced to Lawrence Kohlberg

(1981) who invited him to participate in his own discussions on development. It was

through his acquaintance with Kohlberg that he was introduced to Piaget's (1962) theory

of cognitive development. The work of both Piaget and Kohlberg (especially Piaget)

would eventually influence Fowler's own theory, and he acknowledges heavy

indebtedness to both of these stage theorists in the development of Faith Development

Theory, published in 1981. However, he states that he became 'restive' with what he

terms as Kohlberg's "lack of attention to emotions and his turning away from study of the

broader development of the self." (2001, p. 160) He felt disappointed that Kohlberg

neglected to include religious and philosophical issues in his studies. Fowler felt that

Kohlberg opted for a more strictly 'cognitive' approach that lent itself more readily to

empirical research and which is more easily accepted in an increasingly pluralistic culture

that is often uncomfortable with discussions of religious issues in public forums (2001).

<u>The Construct of Faith</u>

Faith Development Theory, as stated earlier, regards faith as a construct common

to all human beings (Fowler, 1981, 1986, 2001). Fowler defines faith as "a dynamic

existential stance, a way of leaning into and finding or giving meaning to the conditions

of our lives." (1981, p. 92) Fowler sees 'faith' growing out of one's desire to participate

in what he refers to as an 'ultimate environment' (Fowler, 1996). This ultimate

environment and the symbols that are gathered to assist one in defining it become one's

concept of 'God,' or what Fowler sometimes refers to as 'spirit' (Fowler, 1996). Concept

of God is inextricably connected to one's relatedness to other persons. Thus Fowler's

model sets forth what is referred to as a 'faith triad,' also referred to as the 'triadic nature

of faith' (Fowler, 1981, 1996). Sometimes referring to this triadic aspect as a 'covenantal

pattern,' Fowler explains that one's faith in ultimate environment (or a 'center of value

and power') cannot be separated from relatedness to other persons and that one impacts

the other and both impact self (Fowler, 1996). Fowler describes this triad as follows:

> By triadic, I mean that faith involves a relationship in which we as selves are
>
> related to others in mutual ties of trust and loyalty, of reliance and care; but that
>
> dyad is grounded in our common relatedness to a third member, a center of value
>
> and power that bears the weight of ultimacy for us. Our relatedness to a
>
> spiritually engaging center affects all the other relations of our lives. Our ways of
>
> symbolizing the center or centers of transcending worth and power in our lives
>
> most often involve symbols, stories, rituals, and beliefs that we share with others
>
> and that make us members of communities of faith. (1996, p. 21)

Fowler is careful to distinguish 'faith' from 'belief' or 'religion.' Belief, he holds,

involves the giving of mental assent to certain propositions (Fowler, 1981). 'Faith' is not

a faith in these propositions, but rather the sense of loyalty to a concept of meaning out of

which a belief in certain propositions may develop (Fowler, 1981). Religion has to do

with traditions gathered around the ways that particular peoples have expressed their

faith. Faith, Fowler asserts, is more personal that religion. Fowler addresses the

imaginative nature of faith and states, "The opposite of faith, as we consider it here, is not doubt. Rather, the opposite of faith is nihilism, the inability to image any transcendent environment . . . ." (1981, p. 31)

Stages of Faith

As mentioned earlier, Fowler describes faith in terms of a covenantal triad and states that this triad is 'dynamic,' ever changing and evolving as self, self-other relatedness, and a shared center of value and power (SCVP) change and impact one another. This evolution leads to a series of 'stages' in terms of this faith. These stages are as follows:

Pre-Stage: **Infancy and Undifferentiated Faith**: Fowler describes this stage as a time when "the seeds of trust, courage, hope and love are fused in an undifferentiated way . . ." (p. 121). Much like Erikson's (1968) stage of 'trust vs. mistrust,' this stage is a period during which a child forms basic trust with primary care givers.

Stage 1: **Intuitive-Projective Faith**: Fowler describes this stage, which is typically ages 3 to 7, as the "fantasy filled, imitative phase, in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the visible faith of primaly related adults" (1981, p 133). As a child enters 'concrete operational' thinking, a transition will begin to take place out of this stage and into the next stage.

Stage 2: **Mythic-Literal Faith:** This stage generally characterizes a school age child. A person at this stage will begin to claim the stories, beliefs, or observances that symbolize and are associated with the community of which she/he is a part. At this stage, religious symbols are 'one-dimensional' and 'literal.' There is an inability to reflect or to form 'conceptual' meanings. Meaning cannot be separated from the stories that relay it.

Movement out of this stage will take place as a child encounters contradiction in stories

and begins to reflect, something now possible due to emerging 'formal operations'

thinking. Literalism begins to lose its hold due to this reflection.

***Stage 3*: Synthetic-Conventional Faith:** According to Fowler, this stage typically

arises in adolescence, though many adults will not leave this stage. Due to the

broadening of experiences through encounters with school, peers, media influences, or

work environment, faith must begin to synthesize previously held values with the

information that is being received from varied sources. A person begins to formulate a

'personal myth' which incorporates both one's past and anticipated future. A person in

this stage tends to conform to the expectations of significant others. Beliefs are felt

strongly but are not examined. A person can experience movement out of this stage and

to the next as she/he encounters contradiction between valued authority sources and/or

has experiences that lead to questioning of personally held beliefs.

***Stage 4*: Individuative-Reflective Faith:** This stage is most associated with young

adulthood, though some never move into stage 4. As a person moves into stage 4, she/he

begins to be more serious about being responsible for personal beliefs, actions and

commitments. Fowler describes this stage as follows; "The self, previously sustained in

its identity and faith compositions by an interpersonal circle of significant others, now

claims an identity no longer defined by the composite of one's roles or meanings to

others" (Fowler, 1981, p. 182). During this stage, symbols are transformed into

conceptual meanings. Fowler calls this the 'de-mythologizing' stage. A person may

begin movement out of this stage when becoming restless with the self-image and

outlook maintained during stage 4. As a person becomes somewhat disillusioned with

the 'logical' approach to faith that characterizes stage 4, the person may seek an approach to faith that is more multi-leveled and thus begin a transition to the next stage.

Stage 5: **Conjunctive Faith**: Fowler states that in this stage, which is uncommon prior to mid-life, a person is "alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions . . . strives to unify opposites in mind and experience" (1981, p. 198). In stage 5 the person begins to experience a commitment to justice that transcends his/her own ideological community.

Stage 6: **Universalizing Faith:** This stage, which is exceedingly rare, involves an overcoming of the paradox which characterizes stage 5 and includes a willingness to sacrifice and be sacrificed in the pursuit of an ideal. This stage is characterized by an "inclusiveness of community, of radical commitment to justice and love, and selfless passion for a transformed world, a world made not in their image, but in accordance with an intentionality both divine and transcendent." (Fowler, 1981, p. 201) Although stage 6 is rare, Fowler has cited the following individuals as possible examples of people who have attained this level: Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Dag Hammarskjold, Deitrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel, and Thomas Merton (1981, p. 201).

Assessment of Faith Stage

Aspects of Faith

According to Fowler's original work and subsequent model, faith stage can be assessed using a "matrix of structural aspects" which are used to identify and track patterns of faith development (Fowler, 2001, p. 161). Fowler outlines these 'aspects' as,

1) Form of logic, 2) Role taking, 3) Form of moral judgment, 4) Bounds of social

awareness, 5) Locus of authority, 6) Form of world coherence, and 7) Symbolic

function. These aspects are manifested in each of the seven stages in an integrated

fashion (Fowler, 1986). Following is a discussion of each of these 'aspects,' followed by

an explanation of their use in assessing faith stage.

Form of Logic: This refers to the patterns of reasoning upon which a person draws at a

particular stage. Drawing heavily upon the cognitive theory of Piaget (1963) the

particular milestone of cognitive development indicated by Piaget's stage theory must be

attained in order for faith to develop to the corresponding stage (Fowler, 1986). Faith is

not an irrational construct, but rather related to an individual's ability to reason. Though

cognitive development is necessary for advancement in faith stage, it is not, in and of

itself, sufficient.

Role Taking: This refers to an individual's ability to formulate not only her/his own

world view, but to attempt also, with some degree of accuracy, to look at life or a

particular issue from the viewpoint of an individual or group whose ideology may be

quite different from one's own (Fowler, 1986). In identifying role taking as a key

aspect of faith, Fowler has drawn upon the teachings of Selman (1974) in the area of

perspective taking.

Form of Moral Judgment: Drawing upon the teachings of Lawrence Kohlberg (1981)

Fowler cites, as a key aspect of faith, the pattern of thought followed by a person as an

attempt is made to determine what is morally acceptable concerning a given issue

(Moseley, et al., 1993). As mentioned earlier, Kohlberg's moral development theory had

a heavy influence upon the evolution of Faith Development theory and parallels can be

observed between the two models.

Bounds of Social Awareness: This aspect refers to the manner in which a person defines the primary group with which she/he identifies (Moseley, et al., 1993). In addition, 'bounds of social awareness' addresses the process by which a person determines which other groups will be allowed into one's possible circle of influences. In some ways 'bounds of social awareness' has some parallels with 'role taking' (discussed above) but is more focused on groups or cultures rather than individuals (Fowler, 1986).

Locus of Authority: As a person attempts to determine her/his own deeply held views on various issues, this aspect addresses to whom will the person look for guidance and/or affirmation (Fowler, 1986). Basically, who are the authority figures/sources in this person's life? In the Manuel for Faith Development (Moseley, et al., 1993) 'locus of authority' is defined as involving three things, 1) how authorities are selected, 2) how authorities are held in relationship to the individual, and 3) whether the person responds primarily to internal or external authority (p. 24).

Form of World Coherance: This aspect basically addresses the question, "How do things make sense?" (Moseley, et al., 1996, p. 24) It includes the processes whereby a person comes to some unified explanation of all that takes place in the world. It includes, but is not limited to a view of ultimate reality and addresses issues of life's meaning and one's approach to death.

Symbolic Function: This aspect addresses the manner in which a person understands and utilizes symbols in seeking to refine and connect with a center of value and power. Symbols may refer to objects, rituals, and language. Understanding how an individual interprets these symbols is a key to understanding the evolving concept of God (Moseley,

et al., 1993). Fowler cites this aspect as one of the more difficult ones to study fully (1986).

The Faith Stage Interview

Faith stage, according to Faith Development Theory, is assessed through use of what is called the "Faith Development Interview" (Fowler, 1981, Moseley, et al., 1993). This interview is described in Fowler's original and comprehensive work, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (1981) and details of how to administer the interview are outlined in the Manual for Faith Development Research, originally published in 1986 in association with Fowler and revised in 1993 (Moseley, et al., 1993).

The interview attempts to assess all seven of the above outlined 'aspects' of faith, all of which are present at each stage of faith development in an integrated way. The interview is conducted in an open ended fashion with respondents being allowed to talk freely in response to a pre-determined list of questions. Each of the seven aspects is given equal importance in the interview and the questions are designed to be asked in a given order. The manual states that, though the interview questions are open ended in nature, the interview is nonetheless a 'research interview' as opposed to a 'clinical interview' in that there is a definite agenda and effort is made to make the process as standard and consistent from interview to interview as possible.

The interview is divided into four parts. These parts are, 1) Life review, 2) Life shaping experiences and relationships, 3) Present values and commitments, and 4) Religion. There are from four questions (life review) to fourteen questions (present values and commitments) in each of these sections. The questions are set forth in the

manual (Moseley, et al., 1993) and in Appendix A of this paper. The interviews are to be

tape recorded for later transcription and analysis. The interview, for adults, takes

approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. As an optional aid to conducting the interview, a *Life*

Tapestry Exercise (Moseley, et al., 1993) can be given to the interviewee prior to the

interview. This exercise will direct the interviewee to chart life history and major events

that will then be explored during the formal interview process.

Coding of Data

The Manual for Faith Development (Moseley, et al., 1993) gives criteria by which

respondents' responses are coded. Arranged according to stage, a general description of

each of the seven aspects for a particular stage is given, followed by criteria for placing

an individual at that particular stage level for that aspect. In his original book, Fowler

(1981) gives hypothetical or anecdotal examples of respondents' answers for respective

stages. For each of the twenty five questions in the interview, a particular word in the

question is indicated by bold print which in turn corresponds to a particular aspect (e.g.

the word "decisions" applies to the aspect of *logic).* A respondent is then given a score

for her/his response to each question. Respondents' stage ratings on each of the twenty

five questions, including analysis of respective probing questions, are then recorded on a

scoring analysis sheet. For example, a person may be determined to exhibit stage 4

characteristics for *logic* for a particular question that is designed to assess logic. This

person is then given a score of 4 for this question. If a person's response seems to fall in

between two stages for that particular aspect, then the person is given a *transitional* score

for that question (e.g. 4.5). The respondent would then receive an average score for

logic, an average score for *role taking,* etc. The average of all the scores for the seven aspects then becomes an individual's faith stage rating.

Detailed procedures for conducting interviews, transcribing, and coding of data are included in the handbook (Moseley, et.al., 1993). It is recommended that responses be analyzed and coded independently by two raters in order to insure reliability. More detailed explanation of interviewing, analysis, and coding procedures will be given in chapter three.

Original Research Into Faith Development

Faith Development Theory is based, empirically, upon 359 interviews that Fowler and his associates conducted during the period of 1972 to 1981. These interviews became the basis of his model of structural developmental stages in the area of faith (Fowler, 1981). In his comprehensive book setting forth his model of faith development Fowler (1981) describes in detail the empirical basis of the model. The original sample included individuals from Boston (134), Toronto (30), University of Chicago (40), and graduate students at Harvard Divinity School, Boston College, and Emory University (155). Interviewees ranged from age 3.5 to 84 years, with the majority falling between the ages of 13 and 40 years (54.1%). Males and females were roughly equally represented. However, the sample was over 97% white. As far as religious orientation, 45% of subjects were Protestant, 36% were Catholic, 11% were Jewish, with the remaining respondents representing other or non-faith traditions. Fowler does not attempt to claim that the sample was randomly selected.

The Manual was constructed through intensive study of approximately 60 of the interviews, from which a set of "paradigmatic' responses were formulated for use in

coding subsequent interviews (Moseley, et al., 1993, p. 7). In scoring interviews using

the procedures outlined by Faith Development Theory, trained raters have demonstrated

inter-rater reliability in the range of .85 to .90 (Fowler, 1981, p. 314).

Contributing Theories and Theorists

Theories that influenced the development of Fowler's model can be divided into

those that are theological in nature and those that come from a social science perspective.

Following is a brief introduction to each of these theories/theorists along with a brief

analysis of their influence upon the evolution of Fowler's theory.

Paul Tillich

From the theologian Paul Tillich (1957) Fowler draws his assertion that faith is

not limited to religion or belief. Tillich taught that the values that have power in people's

lives, these 'God values,' constitute individuals' "ultimate concern.' This ultimate

concern is more of a factor in defining behavior than religion or belief in a set of

doctrines. These 'concerns' may have to do with career, family, nation, or church. From

this broader understanding of faith, Fowler asserts that faith impacts "the ways we invest

our deepest loves and our most costly loyalties." (Fowler, 1981, p. 5)

H. Richard Neibuhr

H. Richard Neibuhr has been described as Fowler's mentor (Mc Lean, 1986).

Indeed, Fowlers' early work and writing was on the theology of Neibuhr (Fowler, 1974).

Neibuhr's work and teaching on what he calls "radical monotheism" (Neibuhr, 1960)

influenced Fowlers assertion that faith is a construct that is universal in nature. McLean,

in analyzing the influence of Neibuhr upon Faith Development Theory, describes several

themes in Fowler's work that evidence the influence of Neibuhr's writings (McLean, 1986, p. 157). They are as Follows:

1) <u>The dialectical relationship between theology and the social sciences</u>. Fowler, like Neibuhr, has worked as both theologian and social scientist. He attempts to bring both sciences to bear upon his subject. He is adept at using the language of one or the other of these audiences when he addresses the issue of faith and its development.

2) <u>The relationship of faith to its object</u>. Fowler, following Neibuhr's teaching, sees faith as always having an object, a 'center of value and power.' This is true for every person and one's relationship to this object impacts behavior.

3. <u>The understanding of the human self as fundamentally relational and communal</u>. Neibuhr referred to human beings' relational nature as 'man the answerer.' A person's response to the actions of others plays a large part in personal identity. This is employed by Fowler in his faith triad which puts 'other' at one point in the triad.

4) <u>The nature of transformation/conversion</u>. As a developmental model, Fowler's theory allows for the transformations that takes place as individuals redefine their 'center of value and power.' Neibuhr spoke of transformation in the more classic Christian sense as involving conversion and as being related to constructs such as forgiveness. Fowler sees transformation as being possible at any of the stages and during the transition between stages.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith

In the early days of Fowler's effort to understand faith, he drew heavily upon the teachings of comparative religionist Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1963). From Smith, who was both his teacher and later his colleague at Harvard, Fowler began to clarify the difference between 'faith' and 'religion and the difference between 'faith' and 'belief' (Fowler, 1981). As discussed earlier, Fowler came to see, in part through Smith's teaching, that faith was "deeper and more personal than religion." (Fowler, 1981, p. 9) The two are "reciprocal,' faith finding expression through the traditions that constitute religion and religion in turn being impacted by faith (Fowler, 1981).

From Smith's teachings, Fowler came to understand also the distinction between 'faith' and 'belief.' It was through the understanding of this concept that Fowler came to see 'faith' as a construct that may be observed with universal characteristics among individuals with varying 'beliefs' (Fowler, 1981). In relaying his understanding of Smith's teaching on this subject, Fowler states, "... we recognize that the variety of religious *belief* and practice is far greater than we might have imagined. But in like manner, we find that the similarities in religious *faith* also turn out to be greater than we might have expected." (Fowler, 1981, p. 10) This concept allows Faith Development Theory to be applied across a possibly limitless spectrum of religious ideation and also to individuals whose 'ultimate concern' does not fall within the parameters of what is normally thought of as religious sentiment.

Erik Erikson

While Fowler was completing his doctoral dissertation, he worked as associate director of a center where clergy and laity explored personal growth as relates to

vocation. This involved individuals sharing their personal narratives while receiving feedback and insight through the group experience (Fowler, 2001). During this time Fowler became interested in the eight stages of 'Psycho Social Theory' as set forth by Erikson (1963, 1968) and utilized Psycho Social Theory extensively in lecturing to the participants at the center. It was through his study of Erikson's psychosocial stages that Fowler, whose formal study up to that point had been more in the realm of theology, came to appreciate stage based psychology and its contribution to understanding human experience. In stating the influence of Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson, Fowler has stated, "...Erikson's influence on me has been both more persuasive and more subtle . . . . has become part of the interpretative mindset that I bring to research on faith development." (1981, p. 110) Fowler cites Erikson's 'eras and crises' as the impetus for the formation of 'faith' as one attempts to cope (1981). He notes that Erikson's stage of 'trust vs. mistrust' marks the beginnings of faith ideation.

Lawrence Kohlberg

After returning to Harvard University to teach during the late 1960's and early 1970's, Fowler began to teach theology with an emphasis on human experience and encouraged students to share their own experiences as a part of the exploration of theological symbol (Fowler, 2001). During this period, Fowler was introduced to the work of Kohlberg (1981) and his model of moral development. Fowler became closely associated with Kohlberg and discussions about his work. One of the 'aspects' noted earlier as part of an assessment of faith development is 'form of moral judgment.' The process by which an individual makes decisions as to the rightness or wrongness of an issue is one of the areas or 'aspects' used to assess faith stage. This reflects the influence

of Kohlberg. Later Fowler would feel that Kohlberg neglected 'emotions' in his model and chose rather to utilize a more strictly cognitive approach to moral reasoning (Fowler, 2001).

Jean Piaget

It was through studying Kohlberg's model of moral development that Fowler became acquainted with Piaget's (1962) model of cognitive stages. Fowler states that faith is a "way of being, arising out of a way of seeing and knowing." (1986, p.19) Piaget offers a model whereby individuals develop through "increasingly more adequate mental systems of knowing (stages)." (Fowler, 1986, p. 20) This 'hierarchical' aspect of knowing became an important feature of Fowler's model. Fowler cites Piaget's model of cognitive development as being the basis of 'form of logic,' one of the seven 'aspects' used to assess faith stage (Fowler, 2001).

Fowler refers to the theories of Kohlberg and Piaget as 'structural developmental theories' and cites their major influence upon the development of Faith Development Theory as being five-fold (1981, pp. 98-101). First is their 'epistemological focus,' i.e. the study of 'how we know.' Fowler states, "...we shape our actions and responses in life in accordance with our interpretations of the larger patterns of actions that impinge upon us." (1981, p. 98) Faith is then the way that individuals know and give meaning to life's experience.

The second significant influence of structural developmental theories (i.e. Kohlberg and Piaget) are their differentiation between the 'structure of knowing' and the particular content of knowledge. While faith expressions may vary widely in terms of content, there may be universal features of the structure of one's making of meaning

(Fowler, 1981). This is an important feature of Faith Development Theory which is less concerned with the content of one's interpretation of experience (religious belief or other ideology) and more with the process through which an individual arrives at this outlook.

Thirdly, from the structural development theories, FDT takes the concept of structural stages. Fowler believes that the stages of FDT, though dealing with a different domain than that of moral or cognitive development, nonetheless meet the criteria of being 'stages' according to structural developmental theory. They are sequential and invariant, with successive stages building upon previous stages (Fowler, 1981).

Another influence of the structural developmental theories upon FDT, cited by Fowler, is the concept that development is an interactional process. In contrast to models that view the individual as a passive product of the environment, structural developmental theories "view development as resulting from the interchange between an active, innovative subject and a dynamic, changing environment." (1981, p. 100) On the one hand, individuals have certain innate capacities for coping with environmental events (cognitive or moral), but each individual employs these in unique ways in interaction with the environment.

The fifth influence of the structural developmental theories noted by Fowler is that they imply that the more developed stages offer a more 'adequate' means of functioning than the less developed ones. Fowler states this as follows, "... the more developed stages make possible a knowing that is some senses is 'more true' than that of less developed stages." (1981, p. 101) Fowler admits that this claim needs to be made with caution, especially in the domain of faith, but asserts that this feature of a stage approach cannot be denied.

Robert Selman

Fowler cites the theory developed by Selman (1974, 1976) as contributing to his rationale for the second 'aspect' used to assess faith stage, i.e. 'role taking.' Selman's (1974, 1976) theory, known as "Social Perspective Taking," posits that an individual passes through successive stages in terms of ability to view an issue from another person's point of view. Selman's theory, which will not be developed fully here, grows out of Piaget's (1962) model of cognitive development and has made contributions to the understanding of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981). Selman asserts that perspective taking or 'role taking' is a necessary requirement for a person to advance in the moral reasoning domain (1976). Selman's model sets forth five levels of perspective taking, ranging from 'egocentric' perspective taking when a child cannot really differentiate others' perspective from her/his own, to 'Symbolic Interaction' perspective taking where enhanced understanding between individuals occurs due to ability to reason in a manner similar to each other (Selman, 1976). As applied to Faith Develoment Theory, in order for a person to move beyond Stage 3 (Synthetic-Conventional Faith) to Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective Faith) and beyond (Conjunctive Faith and Universalizing Faith), the individual must advance in her/his ability to understand her/his own personal or group perspective and also the perspective of other persons or groups (Fowler & Keen, 1978).

Clergy: Faith as a Career Choice

Certain individuals will decide at some point in life to find expression of their faith through the choosing of a career as a clergy person. These individuals, also referred to as 'ministers,' or, in many cases, 'pastors' often describe such a decision as

one of having responded to a 'call.' Various religious frameworks and traditions will no doubt define this 'calling' in different ways. But, generally, it is considered to be different in certain aspects from a decision to enter into a non-religious profession as a career. In this regard, Rulla (1971) has looked at the psychology of career choice for those entering into religious vocations and has concluded that they are unique in several ways. One such aspect is that a religious vocation "lays claim to the total existence of the one called." (p. 25) This idea is further explained as meaning that such a person will not be able to pursue this profession (calling) in any manner separate from her/his private life. One might conclude from this that in the area of faith, a clergy person's personal views and ideals will not be able to be held separate from professional functioning. The two are interrelated in a manner perhaps different than in other professions (Christopherson, 1994).

In a study which analyzed various survey material related to the attitudes and perceptions of young adults toward religion and religious professions, O'Neill and Grandy (1994) made a number of observations regarding factors that may motivate individuals to enter professions as religious professionals, particularly clergy. As one might expect, those aspiring to careers as clergy were more involved religiously in high school and college. However, such individuals were also found to have experienced close relationships with family and, particularly in the case of those planning to enter Protestant ministry, sought clergy professions as an opportunity to follow the ideal of 'being the right kind of person' (O'Neill and Grandy, 1994). Such findings speak to the personal nature of this calling and its connectedness with individual identity.

Clergy and Career Satisfaction

Clergy must negotiate a life that is seeking to follow a personal 'calling' and at the same time function in gainful employment as a professional clergy person (Christopherson, 1994). Some data indicate that this may not be as easy as one might expect. For example, studies have shown that the average tenure of clergy has dropped to 5 years in 2002 compared to 7 years just 20 years earlier (Zelizer, 2002). These findings suggest that the ability of clergy to persist in a particular job assignment is lessening. Other reports estimate that clergy are involuntarily terminated at an alarmingly high rate, higher than that of other professions (Wallace, 2002).

In a study of former or ex-pastors of the United Church of Christ (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970), it was found that these ex-pastors, who had left parish ministry, did so for a variety of reasons. The most common reason given, though only by just over 17% of the 241 respondents, was that they felt "a sense of personal and professional inadequacy." (p. 50) Another 7.8% of the respondents cited "dissatisfaction with parish work" and another 7.8% "lack of church's spiritual growth and relevance was stultifying" as dominant reasons for leaving parish ministry. When asked to rate the importance of each of 24 statements as related to the decision to leave parish ministry, 43.5 % rated as of 'high importance' the statement "disillusioned with the church's relevance to problems of modern world." (p. 51) The above data seems to raise questions as to the clergy person's own ideals, faith perspective, or self-concept and her/his professional functioning.

Review of the Literature

<u>Clergy and Career</u>

Osipow (1970) has attempted to apply Holland's theory of personality types and work environments to the work of clergy. Holland (1985) proposed the following work environments: realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic. Osipow's attempt to apply this to clergy found that there is either no relationship between personality type/interest and work environment or that there is a high level of frustration in the lives of clergy. Lee (1976), in response to application of this type of theory to clergy career, cautions that personality and interest factors may not remain constant over time and that interests related to religious life may change as one ages. Another approach has been to look at the concept of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and its relationship to clergy persistence/satisfaction (Rulla, 1971). The theory of cognitive dissonance hypothesizes that the perception that one's beliefs are contradicted by other beliefs produces an uncomfortable state of psychological conflict which in turn motivates behavior or belief change in order to reduce dissonance. In this regard some evidence indicates that people who experience high dissonance during seminary training are more likely to drop out of formal study (Rulla, 1971). This reasoning raises the question as to whether clergy who attempt to continually expand their thinking as regards issues of meaning and faith are more at risk to find themselves incompatible with their work. Religion is fundamentally about the search for meaning, but the question arises as to whether the process of searching for meaning can lead to dissonance that may result in potential leaders dropping out of the picture (Lee, 1976).

Motivational theories have been called upon to predict success and persistence among clergy (Lee, 1976). Schneider & Hall (1970) have proposed a model suggesting that one experiences psychological success when one's work meets the following criteria:

1. a person chooses an active goal for him or herself

2. the person works autonomously to seek the goal

3. the goal is central to one's self concept

4. the person achieves the goal

In one study, the application of the above model to a group of priests revealed that those priests who were in an administrative setting or on special assignment achieved satisfaction more often than those who were in traditional parish roles (Lee, 1976). This finding suggests that the often unclear role expectations of a person in parish ministry make the achievement of satisfaction difficult. In a study of attitudes toward religion among students entering theological seminary and high school/college students, O'Neill & Grandy (1994) found that that there was cognitive dissonance between young adults' image of ministry (clergy profession) and the actual roles that will be thrust upon a person who enters such a profession. Another study of clergy indicated that those who selected a career as clergy earlier in life were not as successful as those who entered the ministry later (Umeda and Frey, 1974). This, taken with the above study indicating dissonance between young adults' image of ministry and actual roles, suggests that the more a person understands what tasks life as a religious professional entails, the greater the chance of achieving satisfaction.

O'Neill & Grandy further note a trend, in recent years, away from clergy as authority figures and toward erasing distance between clergy and laity. This change, they

posit, may lead to role confusion. ONiell & Grandy cite surveys among laity indicating

ambivalence as to whether or not clergy are even needed for more than just ceremonial

and ritualistic functions. Clergy professions have traditionally been the result of a sense

of 'calling' which often goes back to adolescence or young adulthood (Christopherson,

1994). Several of the above studies suggest a lack of congruence between a young

person's goals, interests, and expectations and the actual duties encountered in pursuit of

the profession.

Literature: Faith Development and Clergy

As noted earlier Faith Development Theory was developed and has been utilized

in an effort to understand the development of faith concepts in relation to age and other

developmental variables. Following is a selective review of literature involving studies

related to faith development in three basic areas that are pertinent to understanding clergy

and clergy functioning. These areas are, 1) Faith Development in relation to adolescence,

2) Faith Development in relation to mid-life issues, and 3) Faith Development in relation

to religious life.

Faith Development and Adolescence

Nieratka (1984) utilized Faith Development Theory in formulating a study that

assessed 'religious complexity' in relation to both age and ego development. Religious

complexity was assessed using an inventory developed by Nieratka called 'The Religious

Complexity Interview.' This was designed using questions found in Fowler's faith

development interview (Fowler,1981). Religious complexity basically refers to the

degree to which an individual can tolerate ambiguity and can combine real world

knowledge with logic in conceptualizing faith issues. Adolescents in the group were

found to be lower in religious complexity than three adult groups assessed in the study.

The most significant finding of the study was in the comparison of religious complexity

to ego development. The study involved 4 groups of 16 individuals each in four age

groups; adolescent, young adults, middle aged adults, and older adults. Ego

development, assessed using the approach developed by Loevinger (1976), was found to

be significantly related to religious complexity. The study offers strong evidence that as

people advance in cognitive /affective maturity, their concepts of God and religion will

advance accordingly.

White (1986) found that in a longitudinal study of college students in a Catholic

university, the 13 college seniors had nearly all advanced slightly in faith stage between

their sophomore and senior years. All were at stage three (ranging from 3.0 to 3.8) in

during the sophomore year and all but one had advanced slightly by the senior year.

Only two had advanced to stage four. These findings are consistent with Fowler's

original findings that adolescence is often characterized by stage 3 (*Synthetic-

Conventional*) approach to faith (Fowler, 1981, 1986).

Faith Development and Mid-Life

James and Samuels (1999) attempted to look at high stress life events and the

possible contribution of such events to a person's developing of a more universalistic

spiritual orientation. In this particular study, Faith Development Theory was used to

estimate what the authors called 'faith style.' This was done using an instrument called

The Fowler Scale (Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson, 1989). This particular application of faith

development theory does not use it so much as a theory of development across the life

span, but rather as a way to conceptualize 'styles' of faith. According to this approach

(Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson), *faith style 3* is characterized by loyalty to a leader, conformity to a group, and a literal understanding of scripture. *Faith style 4* is concerned with "logically coherent beliefs . . . and support for objectively valid norms rather than group standards." (p. 254). *Faith style 5* is characterized by concern for human welfare above all and a tolerance for differing values and beliefs. In the above study the presence of a high a stress event (of a negative nature) was investigated using an interview approach. Universal spiritual orientation was assessed using an instrument designed for that purpose. The authors found that the experience of a high stress event in one's history was associated with advanced faith stage, or at least 'faith style' associated with advanced stage. Interestingly, this was found to be true for males but not for females, though females actually reported a highly stressful life event more often than men. One possible explanation proposed by the authors was that, due to socialization, men only reported negative high stress events when such an event was so difficult that life view was impacted. In addition, it was suggested that it may be more socially acceptable for women to seek help and support when encountering such an event, thus facilitating a less traumatic experience. Another possible explanation is that, while high stress events urge men toward change in faith orientation, other factors are more associated with such change for women.

As far as the application of these findings to clergy, there is no apparent basis for asserting that clergy are more or less susceptible to high stress events than non-clergy. On the other hand, if indeed the experience of a high stress event will likely lead to a profound change in the manner in which faith is conceptualized, this certainly has implications for career functioning as a professional clergy person. For non-clergy, such

a change may necessitate change to another faith tradition or even the decision to no longer participate in organized religion (Herzbrun, 1999). In the case of clergy, for whom career and personal faith are inseparably connected, this transition could be more complicated. Conversely, the increased tolerance for and understanding of diverse viewpoints (associated with higher faith stage) could certainly enhance a clergy person's ability to care for a diverse group of parishioners.

In a study that looked at faith stage development among 42 health care professionals, Bassett (1985) sought to study the relationship between three issues: faith stage, mid-life and its attendant crises, and personality profile. The study sought to understand how mid-life crisis may impact faith stage development. The study also sought to set forth a personality profile for individuals at various faith-stage levels. This was done using the *Sixteen Personality Factor Inventory* (16PF). Faith stage was assessed using the interview method developed by Fowler and his associates (1981). Individuals were assessed based upon their response to mid-life issues through an interview process.

In addition to a personality profile for each faith-stage level, Bassett's study suggested that there are personality characteristics that are associated with upward faith-stage movement in general, i.e. warmth, outgoingness, concern for people, higher levels of intelligence, and being more adventuresome and able to endure stress. Intelligence paralleled more closely with faith development (higher intelligence predicted higher faith level) than did any other factor. Among the many findings among the 16 personality factors, two of particular interest were found. These were on factor A (cool vs. warm) and factor E (submissive vs. dominant). In the cool/warm factor, a 'U' shaped function

was observed, with individuals at lower levels (stage 2, 2.5) exhibiting more warmth, followed by less warmth in the mid-range levels (3.0, 3.5), and then more warmth in stages 4 and above. As far as the submissive/dominant factor was concerned, there seemed to be more submissiveness at the lower levels (stage 2) and upper levels (stage 4 and above), and more dominance in the mid range (stage 3). The study also found that more awareness of issues related to mid-life was associated with individuals found to be at the higher levels of faith stage (stages 3.5, 4.0, & 4.5).

The above study (Bassett, 1985) is thorough and well conceived. However, it reveals the complexity of assessing a construct such as faith. Of the 42 individuals studied, only two were found to be at the extremes of adult faith development (stage 2 and stage 4.5). None were found to be at stage 5 or above. This limits considerably the application of findings concerning movement from lower to higher levels. Bassett cites as a potential problem with Fowler's interview method of assessing faith stage the fact that, due to its reliance upon participants' verbal description of faith outlook, individuals who are less verbal may be inadvertently placed at lower levels. This is a thoughtful and important observation.

In terms of application to the subject of this paper, the personality characteristics ascribed to those who have potential for faith-stage advancement (warmth, outgoingness, concern for people, etc.) appear consistent with those desired in clergy who are generally thought to be committed to a life of service to others that transcends self-interest (Christopherson, 1994). Though not addressing clergy specifically, the study (Bassett, 1985) may suggest that those who function reasonably well as clergy are likely to present at higher stage-levels.

Faith Development and Religious Life

Faith development theory has been utilized by a number of individuals attempting to understand various aspects of religious life. For example, Jones (2003) sought to look at the relationship between faith stage, as posited by Fowler (1981, 1986), and an individual's self-assessed level of maturity in the Christian faith. Jones' study, which was done with 348 respondents, found no significant relationship between faith-stage and self assessed Christian maturity, though a non-significant negative relationship was noted. This negative relationship would mean that higher stage levels were associated with lower self-perceived maturity. Jones suggests that individuals at higher faith-stage levels tended to be more critical of self and that this result, though not significant, is more a result of self-assessment than of actual experience. This reviewer would ask whether this finding could possibly indicate that as individuals move to higher levels of faith, they may become disillusioned with traditional expressions of faith (Hamrick, 1988) and thus rate themselves lower as far as their performance of its requirements.

The Jones study found a large number of respondents (80%) to be at stage 4, *Individuative-Reflective Faith*. Jones cited possible reliability problems with assessment using the survey approach as a possible reason for the high placement of individuals in this stage. However, Jones suggested that the most plausible explanation may be the fact that the study was conducted among members of a denomination that was characterized as 'evangelical' in belief and practice. Jones describes 'evangelical' Christian belief as being characterized by emphasis on Jesus Christ as Savior and God, the authority of the Christian scriptures, the personal reception of salvation by faith, and the need for global evangelism (p. 9). Jones cites two characteristics of evangelical Christianity that may be

related to individuals' demonstrating stage 4 characteristics. These are; 1) emphasis on individualized adaptation of the Christian message and 2) tendency to separate the Christian message (viewed as unchanging) from the means of communication which are ever evolving. Jones further suggests that western culture, with its emphasis on individual initiative, may influence individuals to present at the *Individuative-Reflective* stage. This notion raises the question of how a clergy person employed by a church of evangelical persuasion, who through heightened reflection and investigation of faith issues, has moved beyond stage 4 faith, will function in a church setting with parishioners who are firmly established at a stage 4 approach to faith. Is this a healthy mis-matching that could result in ability to challenge parishioners in a meaningful way, or is this a formula for conflict, misunderstanding, and/or career dissatisfaction?

One study of Faith Stage Development by Tulloch (1985) tested the hypothesis that a cognitively oriented course of religious training could effect movement between stages or, at least, within a faith stage. A group of six individuals were selected from a larger group of sixteen individuals who voluntarily registered for the sixteen week cognitively-oriented religious study course at a church. The six participants were selected due to their age, which was representative of the age distribution in the entire group who registered. The six participants that were selected also represented a range of scores on a religious inventory which places individuals along a continuum of religious orientation; from 'conservative/orthodox,' to 'religious liberal,' to 'naturalistic.' Faith stage was assessed at the beginning of the course, as well as at the end and scores were compared. This repeated assessment was done using the interview method developed by

Fowler (1981). In addition, reflection groups were conducted half way through the course and at the end of the program.

Tulloch (1985) concluded that such a cognitive intervention may influence development within a stage or in the transition from one stage to another. Of the six participants, two demonstrated movement from stage 3 (*Synthetic-Conventional*) to stage 3-transitional, (3.5,moving toward stage 4). Another two individuals demonstrated change from stage 3-transitional (3.5) to stage 4 (*Individuative-Reflective*). No participant was found to have moved from one full stage to another. Tulloch acknowledged that other factors may have influenced such growth in the individuals involved, such as personal crises experienced by two of the participants during the study period.

Review of Tullock's study raises questions as to its validity. First, six participants is a very small sample. Although the author says that the project was a case study, it appears to be rather at least a mixed design, attempting to assess faith stage by means of Fowler's standardized interview approach. Any findings based on just six participants are at best only suggestive. Second, the possibility of generalizing findings is limited, given that the participants were picked from a group of volunteers for a particular study course at a church of a particular denomination. Third, nothing is mentioned as to how reliability of stage ratings (conducted by the author at the beginning of the course and by an assistant at the end of the course) was insured. And last, the suggestion that stage-level advancement could take place during such a short period of time (16 weeks), based on such a small group study, seems to lack credibility. Such a study, using a larger sample and spanning a longer period would be more convincing.

Nevertheless, the above study does alert one to the possibility that cognitively-oriented investigation of beliefs may lead to advancement of faith stage. This has implications for clergy, who through formal training and continued study of issues related to faith, may grow to higher levels than the average parishioner. Given that individuals at higher levels conceive of faith in a more inclusive, universal manner (Fowler, 1981, 1986), the question arises as to the compatibility of clergy views with the congregation or denomination served.

In a study that sought to determine factors that lead to transition between stages, Hamrick (1988) conducted a study of thirteen middle-aged individuals in a particular Christian denomination. The author was particularly interested in factors that contributed to growth to stage 5, *Conjunctive Faith*. Stage 5 faith usually doesn't emerge until midlife and involves, among other things, a growing tolerance for contradiction and a movement toward justice that transcends the ideology of a particular belief system (Fowler, 1981, 1986, 2001). Given that Fowler has stated that many individuals will never move beyond stage 3 (*Synthetic-Conventional Faith*), factors associated with movement to higher states, especially to stage 5 are of interest. The author selected individuals between the ages of 45 and 60, citing the research of Leean (1985) which found that the two periods of greatest potential faith-stage growth in adults were those between age 25 and 35 and between ages 36 and 45. The ages spanning 45-60 would therefore cover the eras following each of the above age groupings, thus providing rich information as to factors that lead to movement to such a stage.

A purposeful sampling method was used to select individuals that were in the desired age grouping and who demonstrated stage 5 characteristics. This selection was

done by describing stage 5 faith (*Conjunctive Faith*) characteristics in a letter to a number

of ministers and requesting that they refer individuals from their congregations that may

match these stage characteristics. These individuals were then administered the faith

Stage interview as outlined in the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Mosely, et

al., 1986) to confirm and ultimately select the individuals who were indeed at stage 5. A

qualitative approach using intensive interviews was employed.

The above study (Hamrick, 1988) identified five clusters of factors associated

with transition to stage 5. These clusters include; 1) transitional antecedents (e.g. early

religious experiences or desire for knowledge), 2) disengagement and disequilibrium, 3)

expansion and exploration, 4) focusing and equilibrium, and 5) re-integration and

involvement (pp. 73-94). The study observed that the last four clusters emerged in a

sequential manner. The scope of this paper does not permit a thorough discussion of each

of these clusters. However, of particular interest to this researcher, as concerns the faith

development of clergy, is that of "disengagement and disequilibrium." Hamrick

described both 'personal' and 'systemic' disillusionment, the later being a realization that

the system has basic flaws. This is possibly natural and necessary in movement toward a

stage (stage 5, *Conjunctive Faith*) where one begins to understand meaning that

transcends specific ideology (Fowler, 1981). But what might the impact of such a

transition be upon a clergy person's functioning as leader of a faith community? During

this period of disillusionment, how will he/she be received by parishioners who expect

clear articulation of the views of their particular faith tradition?

Limitations of the above study to the issue under consideration in this paper are

that the participants were not professional clergy, but rather lay members of

congregations. The question then arises as to whether the demands and expectations

thrust upon clergy as religious leaders can change or inhibit transitional factors.

Summary of Literature Findings

The above literature review revealed that age and faith stage are related,

particularly during the period of adolescence, where stage 3, *Synthetic-Conventional*

Faith, is generally the norm. Further, advancement in faith stage is related to

advancement in cognitive/affective maturity. Concerning faith stage and adult

development, it was seen that high stress of a negative nature may facilitate growth to

higher levels of faith development, at least in males. Growth to higher levels of faith

stage (stage 4 and above) is associated with intelligence and more self awareness of mid-

life crisis issues.

As far as faith stage and its application to religious life, the research revealed that

advanced faith stage may not correspond with traditional concepts of religious maturity.

Some indicating higher faith stage may rate self as less mature according to the standards

of their particular religious tradition. Churches and religious entities that are

characterized as 'evangelical' in belief and practice may be largely made up of

individuals who demonstrate stage 4 (*Individuative-Reflective*) stage characteristics.

Though not conclusive, there is a possibility that religious study of a cognitive nature

may contribute to advancement in faith stage. Finally, it was seen that transition between

stages among adults involves, among other characteristics, personal disengagement and

disequilibrium which are characterized by both personal and systemic disillusionment.

Unanswered Questions

As concerns clergy, clergy functioning, and faith development, several questions remain unanswered. Most of the research conducted to date concerns faith development among people in general or at least among religious people in general. How is faith development different (if indeed it is different) for individuals such as clergy who have chosen the arena of faith for their career? Does devoting one's life to working within an institutionalized manifestation of faith (church or religious institution) result in any qualitatively different path of growth and change than would be the case for non-clergy?

Clergy have typically been through extensive theological training prior to embarking upon their career and would be expected to give more attention to faith-related issues throughout life than would non-clergy. What are the unique characteristics of faith development among clergy, given the cognitive and experiential challenges they face in this area? If indeed a clergy person has an opportunity to reach higher levels of growth, how might she/he utilize the perspective of such growth in terms of professional functioning? Given that faith involves a dance between self, other, and the 'holy,' (Fowler, 2001) what are the dynamics of the relationship between the clergy person and this collective 'other' (church or religious institution served)? How is this relationship with the religious institution impacted by the clergy person's own faith development and how is the clergy person's faith development impacted by her/his relationship with the church? In short, how might faith stage advancement for clergy result in greater effectiveness on the one hand or increased frustration on the other? Will faith stage growth result in greater understanding or a communication breakdown?

Adolescence is a time when many individuals choose their life career. As has been seen in the literature, the stage most common to this age is that of *synthetic-conventional faith* (White, 1986, Fowler, 1981). This stage is characterized by conformity to the expectations of peers and significant others, and by beliefs that are not yet carefully examined (Fowler, 1981). How, then, does a clergy person negotiate faith throughout life, while continuing to function in a career and perhaps an institution that may be organized around a particular way of understanding, one more characteristic of the clergy person's adolescence?

<u>Present Study</u>

This study attempted to gain a greater understanding of faith development among members of the clergy, more specifically those who serve in the role of church pastor. Particular attention was paid to the relationship between faith stage advancement and career performance/satisfaction. In addition the impact of faith stage advancement upon clergy-congregant relations was examined. The following questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the unique characteristics of faith development among those who have chosen a career in the arena of faith expression?

2. What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his personal faith development?

3. How does growth to stage 5 and above impact career functioning and clergy-parishioner relations?

4. What is the impact of faith stage growth upon career satisfaction among clergy?

Chapter Summary

The above chapter began with a discussion of the importance of faith/religion in the lives of many individuals along with a discussion of the importance of this topic among those in the helping professions. Following was a comprehensive overview of Faith Development Theory. The basic terms and concepts involved in this theory were explained and the construct of 'faith' as addressed in Faith Development Theory was discussed. A brief history of the development of the theory was given and each of the six stages of Faith Development Theory was explained. The 'aspects' used in assessing faith stage were set forth with accompanying explanations. A brief explanation of the major theorists that influenced the development of Faith Development Theory was given.

The chapter also included an overview of how faith stage is assessed utilizing the 'Faith Stage Inverview' and procedures for coding data gained from the interviews was outlined. Details of the original sample used by Fowler and his associates in devising the theory were reviewed.

The chapter also included a review of literature related to faith, clergy career, and Faith Development Theory as applied to clergy-related issues. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the need for further research and a setting forth of research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a phenomenological design in an attempt to understand

more fully the faith development and experience of a select group of clergy and the

impact of this development upon career functioning, satisfaction, and clergy-congregant

relations. This chapter will include a description of the population of interest in the

study, an explanation of how the subjects were selected and confirmed as being

appropriate for the study, procedures to used for collecting data, methods employed for

analysis of the data collected, a discussion of issues of quality and verification of the data

analysis, and a discussion of ethical issues related to the study.

Population of Interest

This study was concerned with professional clergy who have been engaged in a

ministry leadership role for at least 15 years. Further, the study was interested in those

individuals who have worked in such positions full-time or nearly full-time (i.e. work as

clergy was their primary means of financial gain). In addition, the population of interest

is those clergy persons who serve in positions as 'pastor' of a church, as opposed to

subordinate roles such as assistant pastor, associate pastor, youth minister, etc.

The need for a person to have worked in a clergy position for a period of time was

due to the fact that, according to Fowler (1981), it is unusual for individuals to begin

transition to stage 5 (conjunctive faith) before midlife. Given that an individual would

likely be at least in the mid-twenties by the time college and seminary is completed (for

many it may indeed be later) this allows for the development growth that is afforded,

though not guaranteed, by chronological advancement in age. In addition, life experiences serve to promote faith stage advancement (Fowler, 1981) and this period of time in full-time work as clergy would allow for a broad range of experiences, especially as they relate to pursuit of career in this field.

The selection of those clergy persons that had been engaged in clergy roles 'full time' was desired because those who depend upon work as clergy for financial sustenance will find themselves in a position of obligation and allegiance to the membership and leadership of the church/religious entity served. A person whose primary means financial support is from other means (other than employment as a pastor) likely has a quite different relationship with the church. This research was particularly interested in the interaction of faith development and career when a person's primary career is in the arena of faith expression.

In addition, the population of interest was limited to those clergy persons who currently serve in positions as 'pastor.' In one case, the individual had retired after 34 years as senior pastor of a church. This individual was considered to be a potentially rich source of information for this study and met the above criteria up until retirement a few years ago. The term 'pastor' included pastors who serve as 'senior pastor' or 'lead pastor' of churches that have multiple ministerial staffs, as well as those who serve smaller congregations as the only clergy person on staff. The rationale for targeting this population is that church 'pastors', more so than those serving in other supporting roles, are expected to articulate the views of the church/denomination, which is an institutional manifestation of the collective views of the membership (Rizzuto, 1991). This study was interested in how a person balances the personal changes in faith perspective that come

with advancement in faith stage, with the often fixed and unchanging views of the church. In addition, pastors (as opposed to other clergy roles) are more likely to be held responsible for the success/health of the organization. The impact of these expectations upon a clergy person's own faith development, along with the manner in which a person of a particular faith stage engages in this role was of particular interest in this study.

Sample

A "purposeful sampling" strategy was employed in selecting 12 pastors for the first phase of the study. The first phase was the identification of pastors who were at faith stage 4.5 (stage four transitional) and above. Creswell (1998) has stated that in a phenomenological study it is "essential that all participants experience the phenomenon being studied." (p. 118) The accessible population from which these were chosen was the North Star Church Network, which is an association of approximately 85 Baptist churches in the Northern Virginia area near Washington, D.C. These 12 subjects were identified through consultation with the executive director of the North Star Church network, a person who is acquainted with the majority of the pastors and the congregations they serve.

These potential subjects were identified by describing to the executive director the characteristics of individuals who are at stage 4 and 5. The director then was asked to identify 10-12 pastors that, based on his knowledge of these individuals and their manner of conducting their ministry, are potentially at stage 4.5 or above. James and Samuels (1999) in a study that employed Faith Development Theory, give a terse description of the stages that may characterize adults (stages 2-5). Though these descriptions are being used to describe more a 'faith style' that is employed in the Fowler Scale (Barnes, et. al

1989), they nonetheless are good descriptions of a person at these particular stages.

Persons whose faith style is characterized by stages 4 and 5 are described as follows:

> Faith Style 4 (stage 4) Concern for logically coherent beliefs, interest in
>
> understanding the relationships between all aspects of reality, and support for
>
> objectively valid norms rather than group standards.
>
> Faith Style 5 (stage 5) A concern for general human well being above all other
>
> standards. An openness to and tolerance of differences in values and beliefs, and
>
> an appreciation of the tentativeness of all standards. (James & Samuels, p. 253)

A brief introduction to Faith Development Theory was presented to the above

mentioned executive director. In addition, a more thorough explanation of stages 4 and 5

was presented, comparing and contrasting the characteristics of each. This was done

because this study is interested in individuals at stage 4.5 and above. In order to identify

individuals who may potentially be at stage 4.5 or above, the executive director needed to

understand the characteristics of stage 4 and the transition to stage five.

Data Collection Procedures

Phase One

After identifying these potential subjects, each subject was contacted through mail

or e-mail (see Appendix C) and asked if he/she would be willing to participate in a study

involving clergy, clergy growth in faith, and clergy relationships with congregants. A

follow up phone call was made during which time an appointment was set up to conduct

the Faith Development Interview. A one and one-half hour time slot was allotted for this

interview. Prior to the interview (usually 3-5 days) the participant was sent, via e-mail,

the "Unfolding Tapestry of My Life" worksheet (Appendix D) to look at in preparation

for the interview. Brief instructions were included (Appendix I).

Prior to the interview I read the informed consent form (Appendix F) to the

participant and asked the participant to sign. I, as researcher, also signed. The

participant was given a copy with my signature for her/his records. A copy of this

consent form was retained by the researcher as well. Prior to the actual interview the

participant was asked to give a little information about themselves such as age, number of

years in ministry, education, etc. (See Participant intake data form, Appendix E).

The faith development interview was conducted and recorded. The tape recording

was done with two micro-cassette recorders running simultaneously so that, in the event

of malfunction of one recorder, the data would still be recorded on the other. The

interviews were then transcribed. When the transcriber was unable to understand certain

words, I, as the interviewer, went back later and listened to the tape and in most cases

was able to make out what had been said.

If after conducting the interview I felt relatively certain that the participant's stage

rating would likely be well below the criterion stage (4.5), these interviews were not

transcribed. Three of the interviews were treated in this manner. The remaining nine

interviews were transcribed and rated. A second rater was utilized in order to insure

accuracy of rating. The second rater was a person who was well acquainted with

cognitive development theory in general and had been given a thorough training related

to Faith Development Theory and the rating process. According to the Manual for Faith

Development Research (Moseley, et al., 1986), it is recommended that 20% or 20

(whichever is greater) of the interviews be subjected to a second rater. In this study,

since only 12 subjects were interviewed, all transcribed interviews were rated by a second rater. Scores that were within ½ stage of each other were considered valid (Moseley, et al., 1986). According to the Faith Development Manual, an inter-rater reliability of 70% is considered good. In cases where the scores differ (within ½ stage), the score assigned by the primary rater were utilized. The rationale for this was that the primary rater (the author of this study) was most familiar with Faith Development Theory and its accompanying rating procedures.

A simplified rating guide was constructed (Appendix B) in order to facilitate ease of rating. The Faith Development Manual (Moseley et al., 1993) recommends that researcher formulate a workable guide for this purpose. The manual is set up according to stages, with the characteristics arranged according to 'aspect' under each stage. The Scoring Analysis Sheet (Appendix I), on the other hand, is arranged according to aspect and the rater gives the interviewee a score for each aspect. Therefore, a guide which listed the characteristics of an aspect for a particular stage, seemed more useful. Since this study involved adults, only stages 3,4,and 5 were included in this simplified guide. Since stage 6 is extremely rare, characteristics for stage 6 were not included.

Table 3.1
Phase One
Interview Ratings

Participant #	Faith Stage Rating	Participant Age	Pseudonym Assigned
1	4.0	47	
2	3.5	73	
3	4.2	46	
4	4.0	56	
5	4.7	57	Rev. Obadiah
6	4.8	59	Rev. Micah
7	4.0	59	
8	3.5	52	
9	4.5	49	Rev. Habakkuk
10	4.5	51	Rev. Amos
11	4.9	52	Rev. Nahum
12	4.6	70	Rev. Zephaniah

Calculation of faith stage scores resulting in scores other than 4.0, 4.5, or 5.0 was

a result of the rating process. This process involved assigning a score of 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, etc.

to each question that was designed to assess a particular 'aspect' of faith development.

The scores for each question were averaged to produce an average score for each

'aspect.' Lastly, the scores for all 'aspects' were averaged to produce an overall faith

stage rating (see appendix I). This process resulted in some scores being between a whole and a half stage (e.g. 4.6).

Those individuals who scored at faith stage 4.5 (Individuative-Reflec   e faith Transitioning to Conjunctive faith) or above, were then selected for the second phase of the study described below. Six of the participants were found to have characteristics consistent with a rating of 4.5 or above (see table 3.1). In Fowler's original research sample (1981) 14.6% of subjects in the 31-40 year old range scored in the stage 5 range. In the 41-50 year old range, 12.5% of subjects scored in the stage 5 range. Given this finding, one would not expect to be able to identify 6-8 individuals at stage 4.5 or above from a group of 12 subjects. However, given that the potential subjects were selected given their possible match to stage 5 characteristics, the discovery of six participants who were rated at 4.5 or above is reasonable.

Phase Two

Those pastors who were identified as being at stage 4.5 or above were contacted for a follow up interview. This was done by means of a phone call or e-mail. The initial letter had mentioned the possibility of a follow-up interview (Appendix B). Another interview of approximately 1-1 ½ hours was scheduled. The interview was conducted in a setting of the participant's choosing, preferably a quiet setting where there were little or no interruptions. Interviews were tape recorded for transcription and analysis.

Interviews for such a qualitative study are usually 'unstructured' in the sense that they involve open ended questions that are designed to allow the participant freedom to express views and opinions (Creswell, 2003). Patton (1980) suggests a 'semi-structured' interview approach, which allows for flexibility on the part of the interviewer, while

being guided by the same set of questions for each interview. This study employed the semi-structured approach.

The questions used to guide the interviews were developed through four basic avenues: 1) reflection upon my (researcher's) own experience in the ministry, 2) study of the literature related to faith development, 3) study of literature related to clergy career, and 4) three similar interviews with clergy that I conducted in 2002 as a part of an assignment for a class in qualitative research methods. These interviews were of great help in formulating and refining the interview questions for the current study. Table 3.2 lists the questions that were used to guide the interview along with the rationale for designing each particular question. As interviewer, I exercised freedom to omit a particular question if it was felt that the question had already been addressed in a previous response. In addition, I was free to use other questions not listed below when deemed necessary in order to probe deeper into the subject's experience.

Table 3.2

Phase Two Interview Questions

Question	Rationale
1. How long have you been in the vocation of ministry? *Probing:* Have you had other careers? How did it come about that you decided to enter the ministry?	Age at which a person enters ministry may impact career satisfaction (Umeda & Frey, 1974). How is career in ministry viewed? Sense of a 'calling' impacts concept of career as it relates to personal life (Christopherson, 1994).
2. Think about the first 5 years of your career in ministry. How would you describe this period in terms of your level of satisfaction? *Probing:* Give an example incident or duty that was particularly satisfying during this time.	Are career duties congruent with faith stage outlook?
3. Can you remember an incident or duty (during this period) that contributed to your questioning previously held beliefs or attitudes to your faith and/or work? Please explain.	Young adults are often transitioning to stage 4, which involves questioning of previously held beliefs, particularly the 'personal myth' which is characteristic of adolescence (Fowler, 1981).

4. With whom did you feel the closest as far as your faith is concerned during this time? Probing: Were these individuals inside the church or apart from the church?	To what degree does the congregation served function as a part of the 'faith triad' with whom the pastor shares a 'center of value and power' (Fowler, 1981,2001)?
5. Think about the next period of your work, maybe from the 6th to the 10th year of ministry. Do you remember incidents where your beliefs or views had evolved to such a place that you thought of your work in a different way? Probing: How did this impact your level of satisfaction with your work? Were there times when changing views resulted in difficulty or tension in your work?	Dissonance between beliefs and expected function can lead to career dissatisfaction (Rulla, 1971, Lee, 1976) How did the participant balance growth in faith with professional expectations?
6. Think about the period of ministry from around year 11 up to the present. Share some examples of how your faith outlook has changed from what it had been during previous periods. Probing: Share an event or issue that represents a turning point in the way that you viewed your work as a pastor	Movement toward stage 5 is characterized by a broadening of outlook and by an increased tolerance for ambiguity and paradox (Fowler, 1981, 2002)
7. With whom did (do) you feel the closest as far as your faith is concerned during this period (period from year eleven to present)?	With whom does the pastor share the 'faith triad' at this time (faith stage 4.5 or above)?
8. Currently, do you see your ability to function as a pastor to have improved? Probing: What about relationships with congregants? How do you relate to congregants whose faith outlook may be quite different from your own?	How does a pastor relate to congregants who may be at a lower faith stage? Does faith stage advancement beyond that of congregants result in greater effectiveness or a crisis in communication (Fowler, personal correspondence, 2003)?
9. As you reflect on your ministry to this point, do you feel that it has been worthwhile? Probing: Do you see your work as a pastor as being relevant to today's world? What are your thoughts about your future in ministry. How has being in ministry impacted your personal life?	Satisfaction and tenure are related to feelings of the relevancy of work (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970). Attempt to find out the impact of clergy career functioning upon faith development.

In addition to the above questions that were available for use with all of the interviewees, I, as interviewer, occasionally utilized specific questions that reflected issues that were alluded to during the subject's initial Faith Development Interview and

which were deemed pertinent to the phenomenon under investigation. These questions

were the result of a careful analysis of the transcript of the initial interview.

Interview sessions were tape recorded and transcribed. When deemed

appropriate, notes were taken by the interviewer during or immediately following the

interview. These notes were included in the data that was later analyzed.

Data Analysis Procedures

The interviews were analyzed according to the following steps which are common

to qualitative research, particularly of a phenomenological nature (Creswell, 2003,

Rossman & Rallis, 1998, Rudenstam & Newton, 2001):

1. The interviews were transcribed and any notes taken during the interview were

    typed and prepared as part of the data to be analyzed.

2. All of the interviews were read for initial impression. Any initial thoughts

    were recorded in margins.

3. The transcripts were 'coded.' This was done through the recording of all

    statements that are relevant to the topic under investigation. This

    "horizonalization" (Creswell, 1998) of the data views each statement as of

    equal importance and removes overlapping statements.

4. Themes were identified, based on the statements, and these themes served to

    describe the phenomenon under investigation

5. An overall description of the experience of the particular participant was

    constructed including quotations from the text of the interviews

    (Chapter 4).

6. The descriptions of the entire group of subjects (those participating in phase

two) were then brought together into a cross-case analysis of the

phenomenon (Chapter 5).

Verification of Data Analysis

Qualitative research acknowledges the role of the researcher's own experience

and perspective as relates to the phenomenon being studied (Trochim, 2002, Creswell,

1998). Due to this characteristic, qualitative researchers do not so much speak of issues

of reliability and validity as is the case in quantitative designs. Since no qualitative

research could be exactly repeated due to the setting, researcher, timing, etc., of the

research, the qualitative researcher is more concerned with giving a thorough description

of the characteristics of the research setting, so as to insure that the reader understands the

context in which certain observations were made (Trochim, 2002).

Likewise, qualitative research emphasizes less the 'validity' of its research and

more the extent to which the results can be substantiated by others (Trochim, 2002). This

ability of others to verify or corroborate research findings is referred to by Guba and

Lincoln (1994) as its 'confirmability.'

This study employed several techniques to enhance the veracity and quality of

analysis findings. Creswell (1998) outlines a number of procedures that are useful in this

respect and suggests that researchers engage in at least two of them in a given study.

Following are the techniques that were employed in this study:

Researcher as Instrument: In chapter one, I stated that I have been a member of

the clergy for more than 23 years. After I had been in the ministry for a number of

years, I found that my own faith perspective was changing. There was nothing in my

theological training to help me to understand this. Having come from a religiously conservative and traditional background, my growing tendency to want to accommodate views that were different from those considered 'orthodox' by my church was puzzling and even distressing to certain congregants and/or colleagues. My growing distaste for attempting to convince others that our particular belief system was the only true and correct path to God put me, to a certain extent, in a position of non-compliance with what some considered the 'mission' of the church.

On the other hand, I found myself being able to interact with certain individuals, particularly outside the church or marginally connected with the church, in a more meaningful manner. Less and less, was I viewing them as individuals 'outside' of the faith. I was becoming more patient and understanding with certain others, and more patient and understanding of myself. But, occasionally, certain parishioners or religious leaders above me were becoming less patient with me. To these individuals I was beginning a slide away from the 'strait and narrow way.'

During this period, I came across the writings of M. Scott Peck (1988) in which he set forth a simple process of faith or religious development. This was my first encounter with an approach to faith which viewed it as a developmental process. Starting from that point, I began to view my faith and that of others as being less a matter of my positioning myself in relation to some external, absolute power, and more a matter of a continuous process of growth, seeking meaning through searching and interacting with significant people in my life.

I share the above journey in an effort to acknowledge that, in a qualitative study such as this where the researcher is the instrument; I do bring my own experience into the

research. I recognize that this experience, as well as my orientation toward understanding a person's faith perspective from a developmental perspective, can and likely has impacted my interpretation and analysis of the data. In addition to this and the previous statement of researcher bias, I have indicated, where appropriate in my analysis of the data, those instances where I suspect my own experience and perspective have come into play in analysis. In this manner, the reader is kept informed as to my (the researcher's) biases and orientation and can thus generalize conclusions accordingly (Creswell, 1998).

Peer Debriefing. As the process of analysis of the phase two interviews progressed, I submitted my analyses to a peer reviewer who asked me honest questions about analyses. This person who debriefed me as researcher is sometimes described as a "devil's advocate" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and asked questions that served to keep me honest as far as the analysis of data was concerned. Some examples of comments from the peer debriefing are:

> Re: Within case analysis of one participant: Although I generally agree with the identified themes and sub-themes . . . there is still an obvious need to be liked. More probes in this area would be helpful.

> Re: Within case analysis of another participant: I would have probed more into the nature of her personal journey based on family dysfunction. . . . More probes into the nature of specific change most recent crisis may have been helpful.

The person doing this checking and debriefing brought up issues based on his own orientation toward understanding human development and behavior. The scope of this study did not necessarily lend itself to further pursuit of all of these observations.

Nonetheless, such perspective served to remind me to exercise caution in my own analysis, realizing that my own orientation likely bore heavily on the themes that I picked up.

External Audit: Members of my dissertation committee served as the auditors of the research process. Basically the auditor "examines whether or not the findings, interpretations, and conclusions are supported by the data." (Creswell, 1998, p. 203) This took place after the themes particular to each participant were identified (within case analyses) and later when the overall conclusions as to the phenomenon in question were set forth.

Informed Consent

As stated earlier, participants were informed of the nature and parameters of the study in accordance with standard procedures as outlined by Rudestam and Newton (2001). Participants were informed that the study was being conducted by Brian McDonald who is a candidate for the degree of PhD. at the college of William & Mary in Virginia and that the study was being supervised by Dr. Charles F. Gressard, counseling professor at the same university (Appendix F).

Participants were informed that they were selected for the study because they had served as clergy persons for at least 15 years and because they are currently serving as senior pastor of a church that is a part of the North Star Church Network. Subjects were informed that they had been selected because of their potential to provide greater understanding of clergy faith and professional functioning.

Each participant was initially informed that he/she would be asked to participate in a 1 ½ to 2 hour interview and that he/she may be selected for a second interview of

approximately the same length. Participants were also informed that involvement in the study would not cover a period of more than two months. Participants were informed that there were no anticipated risks to them as participants and that, in addition to assisting this researcher in gaining greater understanding of issues related to clergy, they likely would find the process enriching to their own growth and development as professional clergy.

Clients were informed as to the nature of the interviews; that is that during the interviews they would be expected to share honestly their experiences as relates to their work as clergy. Clients were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. They were assured that I, as the researcher, did not represent the church or association/denomination under which they serve and that their participation in the study would in no way affect their employment status.

Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form (Appendix F) as stated earlier. They were informed of the confidentiality of the information that they would divulge during interviews and that only I as a researcher will be aware of their identity as participants. Neither the person who transcribed the interview nor another person(s) who studies the interview would be informed of the identity of the interviewee. They were informed that excerpts from the interviews may be cited in the eventual report of the study, but any details that could identify the interviewee will be deleted.

<u>Ethical Considerations</u>

The details of the study was presented to the Human Subjects Research Committee of the College of William & Mary and approval was received before proceeding with the interviews.

It was not anticipated that participation in the study would bring any harm to participants. A conceivable result of the interview process would be that participants may experience some confusion or distress due to issues involving faith and/or career that arise during the interview process. I, as a researcher, had available the names of pastoral counselors in the area where the participants live. I informed the participants that should they, following the interviews, feel a need to further explore issues that arose during interviews, that I would be happy to refer them to a pastoral counselor who could assist them in exploring further such issues. No participants have requested such further assistance.

The interview process in a qualitative study may in fact prove beneficial to the participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). My experience of many years as a member of the clergy and pastor of a church has been that it is difficult to find a safe venue to explore and work through one's own faith journey. As a pastor, one is expected to be capable of guiding others and thus is expected to be crystal clear as to the journey. Clergy may find the process of exploration of their faith and career to be rewarding. One of the assumptions upon which this study is based is that individuals, including pastors, change and grow in their conceptualization of faith (Fowler, 1981). To provide pastors an opportunity to reflect upon their own growth and change is to provide a service to them and to the congregants they serve. Those participants who participated in the interviews

seemed to enjoy the process and often expressed appreciation for my interest in them as a part of my research.

Chapter Summary

The preceding chapter included a description of all the procedures used in this study. These included a description of the population of interest and a description of the sample and details of the selection of subjects. Data collection procedures were set forth, including procedures for interviewing subjects for both phase I and phase II of the study. Data analysis procedures were outlined and procedures for verification of data analysis were described. Issues of informed consent were set forth and the chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical issues related to the study. Chapter Four will include within-case analyses of the six subjects included in phase II of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

WITHIN-CASE ANALYSES

The following chapter is composed of the within-case analyses of interviews with the six individuals chosen for this study. A brief description of the analytical process is first set forth. Following is a section for each of the participants. The names used are fictitious. The reader will likely recognize the names as those of the Minor Prophets of the Bible.

For each of the participants, the themes found through analysis of both the Faith Development interview and the subsequent follow up interview are set forth along with sub-themes (where applicable). Excerpts from the text of the interviews are given to illustrate and support each of the themes and sub-themes. An interpretation follows each participant section.

Overview of Analytical Procedure

The interviews were analyzed using the procedures set forth earlier in Chapter Three (Creswell, 2003, Rossman & Rallis, 1998, Rudenstam & Newton, 2001). Following is a brief description of how these procedures were implemented.

The transcribed interviews were first read for general impression. This includes both the initial interview done to assess faith stage (Appendix A) and the subsequent interview which addressed more specifically the questions under investigation in this study (Appendix D). After an initial reading, the interviews were read a second time with an eye for any words, phrases, or sections that addressed in any way the questions that guided this study. These questions were set forth earlier in Chapter Two. Those portions

that seemed informative were copied and pasted onto another page called a 'coding' page.

The 'coding' pages were then reviewed and word/phrases were arranged according to a particular theme they seemed to be revealing. Redundant portions were eliminated. At this point, a word or phrase was chosen to represent the particular theme revealed by each grouping of text portions. In most cases, a word or phrase from the actual interview (language used by the participant) was selected to represent that particular theme. When some themes appeared to be related to a larger theme as a sub-theme, this was noted and the sub-theme was also given a word or phrase to represent it.

A description of each of these themes was then undertaken utilizing excerpts from the text of the interviews. A brief interpretation was then made of these themes in light of the questions guiding the study.

Table 4.1

Descriptions of Participants

Pseudo Name	Gender/ Age	Family	Education	Years in Ministry	No. of Churches Served	Current Position	Faith Stage Rating
Rev. Obadiah	Male 57	Married 1 child	B.A. M.Div D.Min	34	3	Co-Pastor	4.64
Rev. Nahum	Female 52	Married 2 children	B.A. M.A. M.Div.	25	2	Pastor	4.5
Rev. Zephaniah	Male 70	Married 2 children	B.A. M.Div. PhD	34	1	Semi-Retired	4.56
Rev. Habakkuk	Male 49	Married 2 children	B.A. M.Div.	23	4	Senior Pastor	4.5
Rev. Amos	Male 51	Married 2 children	B.A. M.Div. PhD	25	3	Pastor	4.5
Rev. Micah	Male 59	Married 3 children	B.A. M.Div. D.Min.	33	4	Co-Pastor	4.82

M.Div. - Master of Divinty

D.Min. - Doctor of Ministry

Descriptions of Participants and Individual Case Analyses

Rev. Obadiah

Rev. Obadiah is a male, 57 years old, and reported that he holds a bachelor's

degree in English and Philosophy, a Master of Divinity degree, and a Doctor of Ministry

degree. He has been in full time employment as a member of the clergy for 34 years. He

has served as pastor of three churches. He currently serves as co-pastor of a church that

is the result of a merger of two churches approximately one year ago. A rating of the

original faith development interview according to the criteria of Faith Development

Theory indicated that Rev. Obadiah exhibits characteristics of stage 4.64, i.e. Stage 4

transitional, moving toward Stage 5.

Themes for Rev. Obadiah
(Sub-themes in italics)
Curiosity not Despair
Importance of Role Models
Struggle between Caution and Integrity
Relationships over Belief-Systems
Friendship apart from Congregants
Professional Friendships
Family relationships

The themes discovered through an analysis of both interviews, that is those

themes related to the questions under consideration in this study are: Curiosity not

despair, Importance of Role Models, Struggle between Caution and Integrity,

Relationships over Belief-Systems, and Friendship apart from Congregants (with

Professional Friendships, and *Family Relationships* as sub-themes).

Curiosity not Despair

Rev. Obadiah related that throughout his life and career as a member of the clergy he has dealt with perplexing issues with a sense of curiosity rather than despair. This began, he reported, in state university where his beliefs began to be seriously challenged. He particularly admired a particular religion professor whom he credits as "the one who began to marry Christian devotion and academic excellence in my life . . . ." He describes himself as a person for whom things must 'make sense' and this need always urged him to dig for answers and find a certain fascination in the process.

Rev. Obadiah described his coming face to face (as a young minister starting out) with the realities of pain, suffering, and loss that parishioners faced and in trying to reconcile such things with long-held belief systems. He was able to face such questions with curiosity and eagerness to find answers, rather than becoming disillusioned. "[for] a lot of people it [collision of reality and old assumptions] does turn them off, they just kind of bale out. To me, it just generated more curiosity to try to come up with an answer." Because of this approach, he found much companionship in books and authors that grapple with these various questions. "And then I began to find a lot of soul mates in terms of books, you know, authors. . . those were not people I could talk to, except through their writings."

Rev. Obadiah has come to embrace this process of questioning-curiosity-searching as a sign of mature faith, stating, [a person of mature faith is] "a person who has doubts about themselves and about God and a person who is curious and doesn't absolutize those doubts, but struggles."

Researcher Bias: I must acknowledge that my own experience may have contributed to my identification of this theme as important. My own theological training did not encourage questioning or curiosity, but rather cautioned against such.

Importance of Role Models

Rev. Obadiah cited several role models or mentors in his early career that set the stage for him to deal constructively with the perplexities that his work would ultimately bring. He mentioned his pastor during his high school and college years who became a role model for him in certain ways. "The pastor that I had during that period of time [considering a career in ministry] . . . was a profound preacher. He was that model. His preaching was a model . . . was an academician, as well as, a preacher." This, along with the college religion professor mentioned above who managed to "marry Christian devotion and academic excellence," gave him permission early on to pursue the troubling questions of faith in a curious and exploring fashion.

He further credits the pastor of the first church where he served as an assistant, as setting the stage for him not to fear venturing out into uncharted waters with his views and methods. "The senior pastor of the church in [certain city] that I was with was very significant in giving me freedom and yet challenging me theologically to break out of some of the . . . . What he really did was give me permission to go in some of the directions I was going in already and authenticated those as not being too 'un-Christian,' or ridiculous." These early role-models, who seemed to give him permission to explore or try on new views, seemed to help him as he faced the challenge of reconciling life's realities with traditionally held beliefs.

Struggle between Caution and Integrity

Rev. Obadiah stated that he continues to exercise caution in relating his views on certain issues or topics, "I knew I had to beware. If I told them (congregants) exactly what I thought it would not be good for them. It wouldn't be good for me. . . ." He tries to find ways to share his views while not causing consternation among those he serves, "In the church, I would not feel comfortable saying that I don't see (God as) a supernatural being. I have said 'I do not see God so much a supernatural being as being a spirit.'" He relates further, ". . . so I talk about it, but I try to do it very diplomatically."

On the other hand, this cautious dance around certain topics is not without its consequences. He stated that the most tension he feels in his career is the "[tension] between the reality of making a living [at being a pastor] and personal integrity." In addressing the issue of integrity (congruence between beliefs and practice) he stated that for a period of time he tried to move to a more conventional/conservative setting and approach to ministry and even wrote his doctoral dissertation on a topic which attempted to bring harmony between his own heart felt beliefs and the desire of the church he was serving to do evangelism in a traditional manner. He found that this was not workable. ". . . during those seven years . . . I was very uncomfortable because I tried to go back and be who I wasn't." This struggle for 'integrity' actually began early on. The religion professor in college was mentioned as an early role-model. In relating the impact of this individual on his life he noted, "He kind of gave me a sense of integrity." This quest for integrity has been and continues to be a tension he lives with.

Researcher Bias: I, as a pastor, have had similar struggles, i.e. trying to find a way to be true to my own changing beliefs and, at the same time, continuing to use the language of

the church's theological system. My own experience could have influenced my identification of this theme.

Relationship over Belief-Systems

In responding to the question in the initial faith development interview which asks, "Are there any beliefs, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?", Rev. Obadiah responded tersely, "[the belief] that relationships are all important." He related that in attempting to deal with the often-apparent incongruity between his own developing beliefs and those of his congregants, the building relationships with individuals, regardless of beliefs, enabled him to continue to serve among them. He felt that these personal relationships also bought for him not only tolerance of his divergent views, but time for others to come to a greater understanding of his approach to faith.

Rev. Obadiah saw religious conflicts as being easier to resolve if healthy relationships are first in place. "[conflicts] can only be resolved if people refuse to make themselves and their position 'God' and 'absolute' and say [rather] 'Our relationship is more important than our winning, than our ideas'." He sees relationships as being more important than any view and attempted to conduct his ministry more on that level. He indicated a greater emphasis on visitation and pastoral care over preaching. " ... although I like to preach, that's not my favorite thing in ministry. I like visitation and the pastoral ministry much better."

Friendships Apart from Congregants

Professional Friendships

Rev. Obadiah mentioned that a group of somewhat 'like-minded' clergy with whom he met over a bagged lunch monthly proved valuable when he felt lonely because his views were not consistent with the majority of clergy in his denomination's local association. He shared that they didn't necessarily share all of his views, but that "they were very open within the group and I met with them just for support." He has benefited from this type of support group in more than one of the settings in which he has served. His current 'co-pastor' is someone he met in such a group. He cited several times that his co-pastor friend has been a tremendous companion to him as he has dealt with the challenges of ministry. ". . . my colleague has been the strongest relationship that I have had . . . we kind of developed a kind of symbiosis, a kind of marriage. . . ."

Family Relationships

He identifies his wife as having been the consistent support in terms of his struggle with issues related to his faith. "The one that was my primary soul mate was my wife." He expresses admiration for his adult son who has struggled with faith issues and who has decided not to attend church.

Obadiah Summary

The above analysis of the interview with Rev. Obadiah sets forth the themes of Curiosity not Despair, Importance of Role Models, Struggle between Caution and Integrity, Relationships over Belief-Systems and Friendship apart from Congregants. Sub-themes under the theme of Friendship apart from Congregants were *Professional Friendships* and *Family Relationships*. It is worthy of note that included under the theme of "Curiosity over Despair" was indication that during his college years, his beliefs

were seriously challenged and that his approach of dealing with such challenges through curiosity began at that time.

Interpretation

Rev. Obadiah began, during his college years, to encounter concepts that challenged previously-held beliefs. This contributed to his beginning to define more-clearly his own beliefs and understanding of life, apart from what had been handed down to him from family and authority figures prior to this point. This is characteristic of the transition from Stage 3 (Synthetic-Conventional Faith) to Stage 4 (Individuative-Reflective Faith).

His ability to face perplexing issues with a sense of 'curiosity' rather than despair has served him well, though it is not entirely clear how he acquired this 'gift.' He benefited greatly from early mentors and role-models who gave permission and even encouraged questioning and risk-taking.

He has struggled with the need to be cautious in sharing his own evolving beliefs with members of the congregations he has served. He has learned how to avoid unnecessary alarm in relating his views as a part of professional functioning, yet still experiences some distress at not being able to be entirely forthcoming (quest for integrity).

Rev. Obadiah has endeavored to deal with the possibility of conflict between his own beliefs and those of congregants by emphasizing 'relationships' as the primary focus of his belief system. He endeavors to make religious views subservient to relationships. The nurturing of relationships, through pastoral care, buys for him tolerance of and hopefully eventual acceptance of his concepts of God and faith.

He has found his most satisfying relationships, those which tend to validate his own faith outlook, to be outside of the local church structure. Included in these are support groups made of other professional clergy of which he as availed himself in several places he has served, and his relationship to his own family members, particularly his wife. He has also found companionship for his journey in books which probe the depths of the faith experience.

Researcher Bias

My identification of 'friendships apart from congregants' as a theme could have been influenced by my own experience in this area. This experience has been that it is quite difficult to establish supportive relationships within the churches I have served as pastor.

Rev. Nahum

Rev. Nahum is a female, 52 years old. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Nursing, a Masters Degree in Psychiatric Nursing, and a Master of Divinity degree. She has been employed as a member of the clergy for 25 years. Before that she worked as a psychiatric nurse. She has worked as a pastoral counselor and hospice chaplain. She has served in her current church as pastor for 7 years. She is married and has two children. A rating of the original faith development interview according to the criteria of Faith Development Theory indicated that Rev. Nahum exhibits characteristics consistent with a rating of 4.5, Individuative-Reflective Faith (transitional).

Themes for Rev. Nahum
(Sub-themes in italics)
From Fear to Curiosity
Soul-Mates
Being is Meaningful
A Non-Anxious Presence
Not Just Some Spiritual Platitude

The themes discovered through analysis of both interviews are: From Fear to Curiosity, Soul-Mates, Being is Meaningful, A Non-Anxious Presence, and Not Just Some Spiritual Platitude. Examples from the text of the interviews will be given for each theme.

From Fear to Curiosity

Rev. Nahum mentioned several times during the interviews that, as a child, she understood God as something to be feared. "I really was an extremely compulsive, extremely fearful [child] . . . God was the God of wrath." During adolescence, she began a shift away from a punitive God toward an accepting, mysterious God. She credits a pastor with assisting her with the transition.

As a teenager, I had a wonderful pastor and I had a real change in that in the image cf God [became] a friend whose love triumphs over judgment. I would say that since early adulthood, late teens to early adulthood, God [has become] mysterious, God [has become] so much more than we could possibly imagine [and] that no one image of God fits. I'm just very open and have a lot depth in the way that I view God. There is just no end to who God can be now.

She began at this time to channel her tendency to fear into something constructive to her developing faith. Speaking of an instrument that assesses why a person may reject faith, she mentions that her issue has always been 'fear.'

I know that is true for me. The way that the spiritual growth comes is by turning that feeling into curiosity . . . . I really feel that I have done that. I'm just curious to see what God is going to do and where this church is going to go, what exciting things may happen. I'm curious to see what things I'm going to learn."

Rev. Nahum related that both in her profession and in her life as a whole, she combats fear and stress through channeling this into a sort of curiosity. "I think that life is basically tough. But we don't go through it alone. I have experienced constantly that God says 'you are going to learn something through this, be curious about what you are going to learn here.'"

Another way that Rev. Nahum framed this approach was to say that she learned to struggle. "I really struggled with my personal faith in seminary. It wasn't just an academic thing. I had grown up fundamentalist with my parents' upbringing . . . . But, my seminary was not. So, I made that transition from not being a fundamentalist to someone who took scriptures seriously but not necessarily literally, someone who learned

to struggle with that type of thing. . . ." She sees this 'struggle' as an ongoing, healthy

part of her journey. "It [my faith outlook] is constantly being challenged. What is truth

in me? What has integrity for me? Where do I stand?"

Soul Mates

She relates that as an adult, close friendships with women who have shared much

of her approach to faith, have been significant to her.

I . . . have always had, since earliest adulthood, really important women

friendships. I would say a lot of real spiritual, emotional energy is with my

women friends. My husband isn't like a soul mate. We don't agree on things.

But I have my prayer partner currently, other women who have been in ministry

with. Those are my 'soul mates' I would say.

Rev. Nahum feels strongly that such relationships cannot be within the congregation

served. "You don't get your spiritual nourishment from your church. No, that is not

what you do. You are there to pastor [shepherd] those people. You get your spiritual

nurture elsewhere." She currently has a 'soul-mate' with whom the relationship is one of

mutual mentoring and support. "We call each other prayer partners although when we

get together we don't pray that much. We talk. We help each other out with our

ministries. We really mentor each other and we have a very strong covenant relationship

of seeking each others spiritual growth."

Being is Meaningful

She shared that she has found it helpful to try to avoid always thinking in terms of

activity, but rather in terms of what she is or is becoming in the moment. "I'd like to

respond in the present moment in a way that is really loving and empowering to

whomever I'm with at that moment, my children, or my husband, or my church members, and to not let fear get in the way of being lovingly empowering." In responding to whether she saw her life as being currently meaningful, she responded, "I'm happy to be helping with your PhD. dissertation. I'm doing something worthwhile." While she indeed desires to do things and be productive, she finds strength in understanding that growth is taking place within her today. "I believe that faith development is a journey, a pathway and I'm still on it. I expect that I'll change something today, tomorrow, and the next day and I'd like to become more spiritually mature all the time."

Non-Anxious Presence

A key to managing differences between her faith outlook and that of congregants has been a concept Rev. Nahum calls being a 'non-anxious presence.' She explains this as follows:

> I think I'm exhibiting more and more a strong 'centered' (from a family systems
>
> point of view) kind of thing. The *non-anxious presence* that says 'here I stand.'
>
> I'm not going to say you are bad if you don't stand with me. I'm also not going to
>
> say that I have to go and stand where you do if I don't [see it that way]. Here I
>
> stand. I would like to inspire you and welcome you to come along on an
>
> adventure with me. . . .

She describes this attempt as that of learning to be a leader, to employ her faith outlook in a non-threatening and minimally conflictual manner.

Researcher Bias: I have endeavored to practice this myself in terms of relationships with congregants. This fact may have alerted me to this theme more than to other possible themes.

Not Just Some Spiritual Platitude

In relating the impact of her profession upon her own development, she assesses as follows:

> I do think that it is spiritually growing [sic] to be a pastor. Because, every Sunday
>
> I have to get up there and say something that is not just some spiritual platitude
>
> not just some [interesting] saying. I put my self into my sermons, so that they are
>
> genuine and I care about what the people get from it that will help their spiritual
>
> lives. It is invigorating and challenging to be the pastor of a church. I really feel
>
> that I am growing spiritually every day.

Though she also cited some negative impact on her life from her profession, particularly in the area of time investment and financial stress, she is emphatic in stating that her career has urged her toward growth in the area of faith.

Nahum Summary

In the preceding section, themes from the analysis of the Nahum interviews were set forth, along with examples from the text of the interviews. These themes were: From Fear to Curiosity, Soul-Mates, Being is Meaningful, A Non-Anxious Presence, and Not Just Some Spiritual Platitude. Though not cited as one of the themes, it is noteworthy that through the influence of an authority figure during adolescence, her pastor, she began her movement away from what she calls a 'fear-based' religion.

Interpretation

Rev. Nahum began to learn, during adolescence, to transform the destructive emotion of 'fear' into a constructive one, 'curiosity.' By her own admission, she was/is a person who tends to be obsessive in temperament. She comes from a family background

that emphasized a literal approach to the Bible, with heavy emphasis upon the wrath of God. Had it not been for this acquisition of the 'curiosity' approach to knotty problems of faith, she would likely have been predisposed to a life of significant anxiety and uncertainty. This 'curiosity' has served her well in navigating the sometimes thorny path of reconciling her faith with the reality of dealing with church life and congregants.

She finds the 'spiritual energy' needed to sustain her own faith journey through close friends or 'soul-mates' apart from the congregations served. This horizontal relationship with others who share her view of 'value and power' lessens the negative impact of being required through career duty to be joined in a faith group with others who may not share this same expression of faith.

In order to avoid some of the frustration that likely ensues from the duty to lead a body of believers with varying faith outlooks, she attempts to find fulfillment in the momentary expressions of her faith, rather than expecting that her faith can be lived out through the organization of the church.

Rev. Nahum has granted herself freedom from being pulled up or down by the changing views of congregants through maintaining a presence that is not anxious. That is, she attempts to live her faith orientation before congregants in a manner that may be helpful, while at the same time not investing herself in their acceptance or rejection of her faith expression.

She clearly values the task and opportunity of daily and weekly needing to give verbal expression to her faith. As a person who is committed to struggling and growing, the need to address a congregation regularly provides for her the motivation to keep this process going.

Researcher Bias

The concept of 'not just some spiritual platitude' or a sense of sincerity in preaching is something that resonated strongly with my own experience. This could possibly have influenced my noticing the emergence of this theme.

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Rev. Zephaniah

Rev. Zephaniah is a male, 70 years old and retired. He was pastor of one church as a full time minister for 34 years. He had been student pastor of a small church during his time in seminary prior to his full time career as a member of the clergy. He holds a B.A. in History, a Master of Divinity degree (then called Bachelor of Divinity), and a Ph.D. degree in ethics. He has extensive post-doctoral training in counseling. He is married and has two grown children. He is currently semi-retired and works as a pastoral counselor and teacher. The initial faith stage interview indicated that Rev. Zephaniah exhibits characteristics consistent with stage 4.56, Individuative-Reflective faith, transitional. The 'transitional' designation indicates that he is showing movement toward stage 5, Conjunctive faith.

Themes for Rev. Zephaniah
(Sub-themes in italics)
Resolving to Doubt
Setting the Tone
Preaching on Two Levels
Nothing I Could Say Would Shock Him
Constant Re-tooling
Re-evaluation of Calling
Acquiring New Skills
I Kept My Feet in Two Worlds
Freedom and Anxiety
Freedom to Probe
No Dame Fool Mistake

Analysis of the two interviews revealed the following themes: Resolving to Doubt, Setting the Tone, Preaching on Two Levels, Nothing I Could Say Would Shock Him, Constant Re-tooling, I Kept My Feet in Two Worlds, and Freedom and Anxiety. The theme of Constant Re-Tooling, has two sub-themes: *Re-evaluation of Calling* and

Acquiring New Skills. The theme of Freedom and Anxiety contains the sub-themes:

Freedom to Probe and *No Damn Fool Mistake.*

Resolving to Doubt

Rev. Zephaniah approached his original training for the ministry with the attitude

that he was going to doubt everything he had previously believed. He attributes this to an

attitude in his family that you had to think things through clearly. He thought, initially,

that this would be a means of confirming what he had previously held to be true. "I had

also said to myself that I am confident that I will at the end come out still believing the

same but with more depth. But, as a matter of fact, I didn't come out still believing the

same." He nonetheless continued   ¬pproach, becoming quite comfortable with a

constant process of reassessment.

He describes studying the work of Gordon Allport (1962) and thus adopting an

approach that guided him amidst this ongoing process. "What Gordon Allport was

saying, you take what you understand, you put it together as the truth and you think and

live and act on it as it was the truth, all the while leaving it open ended to get more data

that may disprove part of it or may require an additional part to be added. I thought when

I read that, that makes sense. And in a sense that has been a sign post along the rode of

my own life and ministry. . . ." He describes this process as being willing to commit

yourself to what you see and believe at the moment, while all the while being ready to

alter it as experience dictates.

As a semi-retired person, Rev. Zephaniah confesses that this process, rather than

enabling him to be more certain of things, has in fact made him less sure. But this is not

alarming to him. "The older I've gotten, the less I'm sure of anything and it is alright.

Early in life, the issue of whother I was going to heaven or not, was paramount. Now it doesn't matter."

Setting the Tone

From the beginning of his ministry, Rev. Zephaniah attempted to create an atmosphere where individuals could express varying views without fear of being viewed negatively. "I tried to set the tone and atmosphere, a culture whereby you could believe ... the scripture anyway you wanted to as long as you were willing to discuss it and accept those who would see it differently from you." He was perhaps aided in this effort, given the fact that the church had just been established prior to his arrival and he was its first pastor.

He was determined to de-sensitize people to the reality of evolving faith viewpoints, even stating, " I wanted to create a church where if they went to seminary they wouldn't be as shocked as I was." This was not without difficulty and conflict. He recounts numerous incidents where individuals were unhappy with his views. He describes the constant process of discussion and debate of various issues as being analogous to "a room hip deep in molasses in which you've got to cross."

Researcher Bias: I, as researcher, must admit that I envy Rev. Zephaniah for having been able to create such an environment. This seemed very attractive to me and may have influenced my enthusiasm for this theme.

Preaching on Two Levels

Rev. Zephaniah relates that during the first segment of his ministry (maybe the first 5-7 years), in order to accommodate the understanding of various congregants, he

found himself attempting to bring sermons that somehow addressed two different audiences.;

> . . . every sermon I preached, I preached on two level   There's the one level that
>
> if people didn't want to think about it, they could take it in and they could hear it
>
> and it would be ok. But there was another level, for those who would have the
>
> ears to hear, that I was saying some rather radical things.

When questioned further as to the deliberate nature of this approach, he stated that it was not necessarily a conscious act, but rather one that he has observed in retrospect. "I think that what I was doing was to speak to the situation that I found myself in and then I became aware of what I was doing."

At times, he acknowledges that, somewhat out of self-preservation, he avoided letting people nail him down on certain things.

> I didn't want anybody to be able to fully label me and know me. I wanted to keep
>
> people a little off balanced. I think that is an issue of my in-security. . . . ministers
>
> live such a public lives with people getting a proprietary sense about who you are
>
> and what you are . . . I wanted them to be a little nervous about me. . . . [you]
>
> can't hit a moving target. Once they got me into a stereotype, I would rattle them
>
> a little bit.

Rev. Zephaniah found that as he entered the later half of his career, denominational controversies were making it necessary to be more forthright in expression of his views. In addition, due to his own growth, he began to find a level of comfort with being more honest about his true beliefs. He states,

. . . I just got more clear and everybody knew where I was. I didn't do it dramatically. I just let the weight shift to[ward] be[ing] clear. . . . I was not as amorphous so people could read into it what they wanted to. That was an absolutely conscious decision.

Nothing I Could Say Would Shock Him.

Rev. Zephaniah describes himself as a person who always had a 'best friend.' During our initial interview, he named these friends, starting with his childhood and throughout his adult life. He hinted at the 'loss' associated with leaving these friends when his family would move from place to place. This became a beneficial pattern during his years as a pastor. "But it was during that second period, but let me say that it was . . . (he) was somebody that I could share anything with. Nothing I could say would shock him." Concerning another long time friend he stated, "I would give him my check book and say just give me what I need. I trust him that much."

Rev. Zephaniah drew heavily upon these friendships in facing the application of his own faith perspective in his career. He states;

> I have this conviction that has come out of my life and my work in which every
>
> minister should have a . . . but we call it different things. We might call it a
>
> mentor. I like the old Celtic phrase, "A Soul Friend", somebody to whom he or
>
> she goes to process the issues of their life and their ministry because loneliness is
>
> so profound in the ministry and, so, I think it is important to have that.

To a certain extent, his spouse served in this role for him. "Another place that I've been blessed is that I've always felt that my wife has also shared my perspective on things.

Even though hers was not an 'educated informed' [perspective] but more of a way she would do it.

Researcher Bias: The ever present tendency to want to avoid alarming congregants with divergent views has been something that I have had to face throughout my own career. Having such a 'soul-friend' who would not be shocked at anything seems very appealing and no doubt influenced my selection of this theme.

Constantly Re-tooling

Rev. Zephaniah alluded to two types of what might be called "re-tooling" that took place during his tenure as pastor. The first was a re-affirming of his decision to enter into this career and the second was an acquiring of new skills to enhance his career performance.

Re-Affirming of Calling

He relates that during the first 20 years of his career , he would find himself asking, ". . . what right did a teenager have to determine what I was ¬oing to do for the rest of my life" This was in reference to his decision at age 19 to pursue a career as a pastor. Further relating his dissatisfaction during certain periods, he says, "I went through some real down periods, times of real frustration and thinking that I wanted to get out of the ministry. I could hardly tolerate it. It looked like working for the government was such a secure place." He reflects that this was a necessary process, stating, "I think that anybody, maybe if they become a Christian and if they enter the ministry have to come back years later and reaffirm that, after they had gone through significant developmental changes in life."

Acquiring New Skills

Rev. Zephaniah attempted to pull himself out of the malaise that he sometimes found himself in due to career dissatisfaction or frustration, by reassessing and seeking new skills. "I entered into another period that probably stretched over nine years that was a time of evaluation. I went to a mid-career re-tooling offered by the Epsicopal church here at their seminary." It was out of this re-tooling process that he began to see the need and value of expanding his expertise.

I Kept My Feet in Two worlds

During much of his career, Rev. Zephaniah pursued another line of work on the side. His second line of work was doing pastoral counseling for several agencies. Even though this took much of his spare time, he viewed it as beneficial. "I kept my feet into two worlds, one within the local parish and one within the professional counseling realm... it has always been clear to me [that this] is one of the things that has helped keep me fresh and healthy."

He viewed this as enabling him to avoid feeling that his identity was totally wrapped up in the church, with its ups and downs. He describes its benefit as follows:

I began to take better care of myself and not just define myself by what was going on in the church. I learned the value for me [of] having my feet in different worlds. . . . having both of them gave me a sense of freedom from being dominated by one or the other.

Freedom and Anxiety

In terms of his view of his career, two distinct feelings stand out. On the one hand, he felt that being a pastor gave him an opportunity to explore life and faith. On the

other hand, he seemed to live with the anxiety that what good he had done may be undone by a mistake.

Freedom to Probe

Upon reflection on his years as a pastor, he notes that its greatest benefit has been in giving him what he called the "freedom to probe" He states,

> Being in the church has given me the freedom to probe the meaning of life and to do it with the blessing of my vocation. That is what I should be doing. And then it has given me the curse, but the incredible blessing, of having to give expression to that weekly.

This has obviously been something he has valued greatly, especially when combined with his "resolving to doubt" as cited earlier.

No Damn Fool Mistake

He has also alluded, albeit indirectly, to a nagging anxiety, especially during the later years, that he might make a mistake that would inflict harm upon what he had accomplished. ". . . I just had to be careful to not make some damn, fool mistake!" In discussing the confining nature of the pastoral role he stated, " But maybe it [stereotypes and limitations put on pastors] was also a way to keep focused and channeled so I wouldn't go out and make some dumb, damn mistake in my life and screw things up. . . . so in ways it provides parameters. "

Zephaniah Summary

The preceding section set forth seven themes that speak to the questions that were guiding this study. These themes were: Resolving to Doubt, Setting the Tone, Preaching on Two Levels, Nothing I Could Say Would Shock Him, Constant Re-Tooling, I Kept

My Feet in Two Worlds, and Freedom and Anxiety. The theme of Constant Re-tooling, had the two sub-themes: *Re-evaluation of Calling* and *Acquiring New Skills*. The theme of Freedom and Anxiety also contained the sub-themes: *Freedom to Probe* and *No Damn Fool Mistake*.

Interpretation

Rev. Zephaniah encountered challenges to his faith perspective during seminary. His orientation toward doubting as a way to strengthen his faith may have served to lessen the distress at having his adolescent faith challenged in such a way. His tendency, later in life, to feel little concern for growing uncertainty, is consistent with movement toward stage 5 where one is able to hold contradiction and paradox in tension, not needing to resolve it in one direction or another.

His approach to conducting his ministry by attempting to create an atmosphere where it was safe to question and hold conflicting views may have served to lessen the anxiety associated with a pastor's evolving faith, which may be incompatible with established views of a church and its congregants.

The reality that his faith outlook was often different from a significant portion of congregants is evident by his admission of 'preaching on two levels.' He seemed not entirely comfortable with this, nor is there evidence that the results were entirely positive. This may be evidenced by the fact that as time went on, he felt the need to be more forthright. This change in approach could also be related to his own development and level of acceptance of his own outlook.

The horizontal side of the Faith Triad for Rev. Zephaniah was clearly with individuals who were not congregants. He values strongly friends who can share his faith perspective and be confidants for him.

His pursuit of side-line careers may have served to allow him to live out more of what he was experiencing in his own development. Thus, he may have avoided some of the anxiety at not always being able to express his true outlook in his role as pastor of a church. For this pastor, the need to articulate constantly his evolving faith through weekly sermons and lessons, served to facilitate the growth that is the result of a constant questioning and probing into matters of faith and life.

Rev. Habakkuk

Rev. Habakkuk is a 49 year old male. He has served as a member of the clergy

for 23 years. He holds a B.S. degree in Psychology and Religion, a Master of Divinity

degree, and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree. He served as an associate

pastor for the first 6 years of his career and has since served three churches as Senior

Pastor. He is currently serving as Senior Pastor. He is married and has two children.

The initial Faith Development interview revealed that Rev. Habakkuk demonstrates

characteristics consistent with a rating of stage 4.5, Individuative-Reflective faith

(transitional), with evidence of movement toward stage 5, Conjunctive faith.

Themes for Rev. Habakkuk
(Sub-themes in italics)
Off the Roller Coaster
What am I Doing?
    Crushed the Pride Out of Me
    Self-Differentiation
    Considering My Demise
A Very Wise Old Guy
Don't Become the Role
An Anchor

Analysis of the two interviews revealed the following themes: Off the Roller

Coaster, What am I Doing?, A Very Wise Old Guy, Don't Become the Role, and An

Anchor. The Theme of 'What am I Doing?' contains three sub-themes. They are:

Crushed the Pride Out of Me, Self-Differentiation, and *Considering My Demise.*

Off the Roller Coaster

During both interviews Rev. Habakkuk referred to his early embracing of the

religious faith (during adolescence) and subsequent decision to pursue a career as a

minister, as having been impacted by getting off what he called a 'roller coaster' of

emotions. ". . . The most important thing he [a counselor at a religious event] said was 'Don't expect an emotion.' You see, I thought everything was an emotion. . . . So, that kind of got me off the roller coaster."

In connection with this change in his approach to faith, he states that it was not long after this that he began to consider a 'calling' or career as a minister. "It wasn't too long after that I just began to feel uncomfortable." This discomfort, he went on to share, was interpreted as some sense that he should enter the ministry.

He sees this change in approach to faith as having been significant throughout his life. "So I found a way to come back without waiting for something to happen to me which has helped tremendously as I've drifted in life."

What am I Doing?

When facing some serious difficulties and challenges in the second church where he served as senior pastor, Rev. Habakkuk recalls often saying to himself, "Who am I and what am I doing? What's wrong with me. . . ?" This theme of 'What am I Doing' seems to encompass three *sub-themes* which are discussed below. They are: *Crushed the Pride Out of Me, Self-Differentiation,* and *Considering My Demise.*

Crushed the Pride Out of Me

Rev. Habakkuk related his experience at the first church he served as senior pastor. "I was feeling the little congregation grew a lot percentage wise. It's hard to grow a lot when you start with ninety, but it grew a lot percentage wise and I really thought that was about me. That was a big spiritual mistake. That was prideful." He claimed credit for some successes, something which he later determined did not serve him well in

his next assignment. He continued to describe this 'pride' as a determination that he could make it work.

> I felt like I had to do this myself which hurt my relationship with Sarah. In terms of ministering together with my wife. . . . I really was sort of cutting her out of that. What was happening was I had this need, because I was experiencing conflict, to prove I could do it. I was just going to try harder and keep trying harder and prove to everybody that I could succeed.

Later, when Rev. Habakkuk served a church for over 6 years, an experience he described as 'hell', this issue seemed to become clearer to him. He described the leaders of this church as 'resilient conflicters' and 'board room types' of whom he recalls, "If they lost one, that was fine, next week then they might win one, so their eyes would twinkle." Of this difficult period, he concluded, "That was very formative, in that it crushed a whole lot of pride out of me." This seemed to initiate a new way of interacting with people who held differing viewpoints. "You know, I'd try to get them to change to be like me and, you know, that was partly pride."

Self-Differentiation

In relating his evolution in this area, Rev. Habakkuk speaks of this concept which he later learned and had begun to exercise.

> I think what's been happening, recently, is I've been working toward what one of the writers calls *self-differentiation*. I've been working toward just being me and if they're different from me . . . that's OK. I think I know what I'm called to do and I believe in what I believe and that's just what I am. And if they don't agree, it's OK. I don't feel nearly as much need to defend all my positions. I think that I

influence them more that way than if I argue with them anyway so I don't really argue with people very much, certainly not about debatable things.

This has relieved him of much of the tension of having views and goals that differ from particular parishioners. "I can hear somebody say, 'You know, this is not for me, I'm going to another church,' I can now say, 'OK.'"

Considering my Demise

Rev. Habakkuk recalled the effect of suffering from cancer a few years prior to our interview. He believes the result of this experience was to lessen the impact of dealing with differing views within the church. ". . . as a result [of cancer surgery] I stopped paying attention and that, as much as anything else, calmed the conflict." Facing his own mortality has resulted in his being more forthright as far as his views and being able to choose not to engage in some discussions. "I get kind of blunt with them sometimes, much more than I would've before and, I think considering my demise just made me realize that it's OK. I don't have to do that and maybe I don't want to."

A Very Wise Old Guy

Rev. Habakkuk made numerous references to individuals who mentored him, especially during the first 1/3 of his career. One such person was the senior pastor under whom he served as associate during his first assignment.

I came here and got my first full time job and had a really, really good mentor. A very wise old guy and he would let me try things, you know he didn't have to tell me what to do all the time, but he would stop me if I were going to lose a hand or an arm.

This relationship seemed to be valuable in his development, even though he didn't see this older minister as an ideal role model in some ways. "... he didn't teach me much about leadership ... he was just a wonderful pastor... a thoughtful guy. He would worry about ethical issues that I hadn't considered or that I'd even think about. He was so intellectually honest."

He recalls an elderly lay person in a country church that he subsequently served. "... there was a little old man named Henry who grew up Amish, so his whole world outlook was colored by that. ... He asked me to meet with him and pray once a week and he became my mentor and my closest friend." Again, as in the relationship with the elderly pastor, it was not necessarily career related skill or insight that he learned from this mentor, but rather, he benefited from the relationship, which seemed to put his career in perspective.

> ... he was a good solid church member but he was not really a leader in the church and so the fact that he would meet with me and pray, nobody felt like he was trying to run things from behind the scenes. We didn't talk about what to do with the church. ... I didn't know what it was and he didn't know this name, but he was a 'spiritual director' and he found me like a spiritual director is supposed to.

Rev. Habakkuk expressed his desire to experience such a relationship in his current position. "You know that's an area that I struggle with here. I haven't been able to find the old mentor, and maybe I'll never get another Henry .... I found a little bit of that in this doctoral program, but it's not regular because we're not in session all the time."

Don't Become the Role

In pursuit of his career, Rev. Habakkuk seems concerned that he as a person will somehow be absorbed by the role. He states, "I'm aware of the fact I don't want to become my role, my job." He seems to see something threatening about ceasing to be a 'regular person.' For example, he appreciates his teenaged children for reminding him of this. "My kids keep my feet on the ground. They help me to remember I'm just a regular guy and they remind me that I don't have all the answers."

This fear of becoming his role seems to have much to do with how he sees himself for the future. "I've become more of a preacher than I ever had been before. And I'm a little concerned about that, because one of these days that job is going to end...." He seemed to have some anxiety about what lay ahead beyond his career in the ministry. "I'm a little concerned about what is going to happen when I move out of that and into the next 'whatever.'"

An Anchor

Relating the isolation he often feels as a minister, he states, "it's kind of a deep balance of trying to stay really in contact with people and relational, but [also]to lead. . . there are a few people, if you say a dirty word in front of them, their faith is not shaken, it's OK. . . . But, I did have to come to accept that most [congregants] couldn't really be buddies because they just couldn't handle that."

In numerous instances during the interviews, Rev. Habakkuk cites his relationship with his spouse as the source of strength needed to face this isolation:

And that relationship has been an anchor for both of us, since we went through a

lot of stress and through some hard times. At least we held on to each other and

I'm thankful for that. I realize that's sort of a gift not only from her but from God as well.

She was not as able to be as involved in the ministry as she was in [previous church town] and [that was] good. We needed some insulation. But we became closer just because we were under so much pressure, we needed each other, so we were sort of partners in pain more than partners in ministry.

Habakkuk Summary

The preceding section set forth five themes found during analysis of the two interviews with Rev. Habakkuk. These themes were: Off the Roller Coaster, What am I Doing? A Very Wise Old Guy, Don't Become the Role, and An Anchor. The theme of 'What Am I Doing?' contained three *sub-themes: Crushed the Pride Out of Me, Self-Differentiation,* and *Considering my Demise.* Quotations from the text of the interviews were provided to illustrate each theme.

Interpretation

Rev. Habakkuk made a commitment to pursue a career as a member of the clergy as an adolescent. His embracing of a faith which was less dependent on the latest 'high' from whatever event attended enabled him to stick with this decision, even though the 'high' that may have precipitated it had passed.

The difficulty experienced by Rev. Habakkuk which he described as 'crushing the pride' out of him was evidence that even though he was in a professional relationship with these individuals as their pastor, he did not relate well to them in the area of the faith. This change in relationship with a supposed faith group, in turn, impacted his relationship to 'ultimate concern' or 'God.' He describes this as 'crushing his pride.' By

this he seemed to be saying that he was challenged by these events into altering his understanding of God. He was becoming less determined to prove himself and perhaps more willing to depend on the 'Holy.'

His relationship with nurturing mentors seemed to serve to enable him to continue his own faith ideation, even when the challenges of career as a clergy person seemed to cloud that. Clearly, these individuals became the horizontal axis of the faith triad, that is those with whom he most shared his concept of God. This gave him distance from career duties and made less disconcerting his lack of identification with congregants as a whole.

He struggles with a desire to become more competent and at ease in his career on the one hand, and allowing his personal identity to be consumed by his role on the other. To him, key to his attempt to continue in this career, is his capacity to maintain an identity for himself beyond his role as pastor. The issue of defining of ministry as an occupation as opposed to an 'identity' is an important discussion with implications for the pastor and her/his family (Hagedorn, 1990). Through the changes in career setting, Rev. Habakkuk's spouse has been the constant soul-mate who shares his approach to faith.

Rev. Amos

Rev. Amos is a 51 year old male. He is married and has two children. He holds a

Bachelors Degree in Religion, A Master of Divinity Degree, and a PhD. in Theology. He

has been in full time ministry positions for 25 years. He has served three churches as

pastor. He is also an adjunct professor of World Religions at a local university. He

currently serves as senior pastor of a church and has been at this church for 14 years. A

rating of the original faith development interview indicated characteristics consistent with

a rating of 4.5 (transitional), i.e. Individuative-Reflective Faith (moving toward stage 5.0,

Conjunctive Faith.)

Themes for Rev. Amos
(Sub-themes in italics)
Put It Out There
Integrity
>*Worldly Minister*
>*Vulnerability*

Not in Isolation
Just Great People

The themes that came forth through an analysis of both interviews are set forth

below, along with quotations from the text of the interviews. The Themes (along with

sub-themes) are: Put It Out There, Integrity (with the sub-themes of *Worldly Minister*

and *Vulnerability*), Not In Isolation, and Just Great People.

Put It Out There

Rev. Amos faces the possibility of differing views between himself and

congregants by making every effort to bring varying views out in the open and

encouraging open discussion. He admired this in an early mentor, of whom he said, "He

was a man who emulated that very style, that you've got to put it out, you've got to talk

about it." He has used this approach in a variety of circumstances in the churches where

he has served. One such circumstance is his church's current discussion of homosexuality and the possibility of homosexual unions taking place in connection with the church.

> I think the greater danger is not talking about it. There are those who think the greater danger is talking about it and I'm not disparaging that decision for them. For me to make that decision is dishonest. . . . My experience with the church here is, given the opportunity in a discussion, folks here will do as well as they possibly can, to deal with it.

He does not expect that this will always result in a unity of ideas or viewpoints. He feels that a coming to an acceptance of disagreement is not always a bad thing. "We choose to live with the tension [of disagreements]. Sometimes we move too quickly toward resolution." He sees this whole process as a desirable one for his church and for himself.

> Everybody ought to have a say... our responsibility is to listen to one another and learn from one another, and grow with one another and that means we are going to have to deal with these divergences in our midst...otherwise we stagnate.

Integrity

Rev. Amos has tried to adhere to what he refers to as 'integrity' in the interaction of his personal beliefs and his functioning as a pastor. He described another minister of a different denomination in a town where he formerly worked as pastor. Though he differed considerably in terms of some religious viewpoints, he developed a meaningful friendship with the other minister. He describes him as follows:

He lived with integrity. He was who he was, whether he was in the pulpit,

whether he was riding with me in the car, whether we were having lunch, playing

golf, or at a church worship service. He wasn't different [toward different]

people. He was the same person all the time and he lived with a tremendous

amount of integrity. I admired that.

This theme of integrity encompasses two sub-themes that emerged in the interviews.

These sub-themes are, *A Worldly Minister*, and *Vulnerability*.

Worldly Minister

Rev. Amos feels that an aspect of this integrity is the avoidance of separating

one's self, as a member of the clergy, from people in the community at large. He recalled

becoming friends with a neighbor of one church he served. They had many common

interests unrelated to religion. One day this friend commented, "I think you're the most

worldly minister we've ever had here." He interpreted this comment as meaning that he

didn't attempt to hide his 'worldly' interests in an attempt to preserve some kind of

ministerial façade.

He views 'fear of being one's self in front of church members' as an indication of

some kind of disconnect between faith and life.

. . . folks who live out what they believe and think, whether it be at church or with

their kids or wherever it is. [For people of mature faith] there's not an internal or

external kind of duplicity about it, i.e. one way here and another way outside. I

don't think we worship to come to do something different. I think what we come

to do is what we've been doing all week; it's just a different focus, a more

intentional focus.

Vulnerability

He acknowledges that to practice this integrity as an integral part of life and profession is not without risk. He views his teaching and preaching as a very personal act. ". . . preaching is one of the most vulnerable things that we do. It's not a show, but it is who we are. If there is integrity in it, then we are very, very vulnerable." To have integrity is to make one's self vulnerable.

Not in Isolation

Rev. Amos states that he has attempted to avoid isolating himself and his thoughts and views. He has taught, for a number of years, as an adjunct faculty member at a local university. He views the benefit of this side-line work as follows:

> I teach World Religions. That has been one of the most helpful things I've done for me and the ministry because it keeps me honest. . . . Twice a week I deal with a group of folks that do not share my core values or beliefs. What I think is important has no correlation to what they think is important. To be with them is my contact with people who are non-churched, so I don't become insulated and isolated in the belief that this is what the world is really like.

He promotes the welcoming of divergent views within the church as a means of avoiding this isolation on the corporate level. For the church to isolate itself from the views of the community within which it functions is to betray its purpose. "I think we are here for community, not for isolation. And I think that the struggle of how we live is, 'How do we live with one another?' And we realize now that the 'one-another' is a whole lot bigger than we used to think."

Just Great People

Frequently, during the interviews, when referring to individuals whom he had encountered in his work (both professional colleagues and congregants) Rev. Amos would use phrases like, "Great people. Just down to earth folk." This capacity to find the pleasure in relationships of various kinds seems to have made less stressful the need to be frequently negotiating beliefs as a part of career. Referring to a Catholic Priest with whom he became friends, he recalled, "He was a lot of fun. A big cut-up."

He has made, as a central part of his approach to his work, the cultivation of intimate relationships with congregants. One way this has been done is through being present for people during life's difficult times. He recalled, as a young pastor, the first time he was required to perform a funeral of a member with whom he was not well acquainted. He recounts the following conversation with another minister about this duty:

> Before the service I turned to him and I said, 'From my perspective, it's really hard to do a funeral for somebody you don't know.' He said, 'You think that's bad, wait until you know them.'

Many clergy hold to the conventional wisdom that close friendships cannot be pursued among members of the congregation one serves. Rev. Amos approaches this issue differently. " . . . I kind of think that if there aren't good friends within the church then why are you wasting your time or spending your time this way. . .?"

Amos Summary

The preceding section set forth the themes found in the interviews with Rev. Amos. These themes were: Put It Out There, Integrity (with the sub-themes of *Worldly*

Minister and *Integrity)*, Not in Isolation, and Just Great People. Excerpts from the text of the interviews are given to illustrate each of the themes and sub-themes.

Though not mentioned as a theme, it is noteworthy that Rev. Amos indicated having his faith significantly challenged through his college experience and his view of ministry significantly influenced by his experience in his first ministerial position.

Interpretation

Rev. Amos has faced the possible tension between his own evolving faith and that of the church or individual congregants through endeavoring to bring issues to the surface and encourage discussion and even debate. This may well have lessened the potential stress caused by feeling you are operating out of a different faith outlook than that of congregants or the church as a whole. He may have benefited from the presence of this culture within this particular church prior to his arrival, but has continually utilized open discussion in relating his faith to congregants.

Rev. Amos cites the issue of 'integrity' as precluding any effort to behave in a particular way because it is expected of one as a pastor, or concealing any views out of fear of negative reaction. This has, no doubt, resulted in problems of its own, but it may have served to free him to allow his own faith to evolve without fear that the eventual result of this evolution would be something he would need to conceal.

His refusal to 'isolate' himself gives him opportunity to employ a characteristic of those moving toward stage five, i.e. to exhibit an openness to different perspectives and to be willing to live with tension between opposing viewpoints. Rev. Amos has perhaps avoided some of the loneliness of which many clergy complain by eagerly pursuing close relationships with congregants, relationships that go beyond the performance of pastoral

duties. He feels that the benefit attained through this approach is well worth the vulnerability that one risks in employing it.

Researcher Bias

Rev. Amos spoke so happily about his friendship with some of his congregants. This was surprising to me both in contrast to my own opposite experience in this area and those of the other interviewees. I acknowledge that I may have been drawn to this theme, in part, due to its somewhat refreshing difference from mine and others' experience.

Rev. Micah

Rev. Micah is a male, 59 years old. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Religion, a Master of Divinity Degree, and a Doctor of Ministry Degree. He has extensive training in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), training for clergy to give pastoral care in a hospital setting. He has been in full time positions as a member of the clergy for 33 years. He is married and has three adult children. Early in his career he served a large church as an associate pastor, working in the areas of education and youth. He has since served three churches as senior pastor. He currently serves as co-pastor of a church which is the result of a merger of two churches approximately one year prior to this interview. The initial interview, which assesses faith stage, found Rev. Micah to display characteristics consistent with a rating of 4.82, Individuative-Reflective Faith (transitional), i.e. moving toward stage 5, Conjunctive Faith.

Themes for Rev. Micah
(Sub-themes in Italics)
From Answers to Questions
Reaching Out
Holding Back
Ideological Companionship
Island of Sanity

Analysis of the first and second interviews revealed a number of themes that are pertinent to the questions under consideration in this study. These themes are: From Answers to Questions, Reaching Out, Holding Back, Ideological Companionship, and Island of Sanity.

From Answers to Questions

Rev. Micah shared that his life had been characterized by a steady movement away from set answers and toward an increasing number of questions. Having come

from a fundamentalist church background, he relished the seminary experience, stating,
"Seminary was one of the just real intellectually liberating experiences of my life." He
recalled during the time that he was working as an assistant pastor in a church that was
very fundamentalist in perspective, he grappled with the choice between the clear
answers offered by that approach, and the less safe yet, more honest questioning that he
was beginning to experience. The following excerpt illustrates his struggle at this time:

> . . . I remember at one point when I was doing CPE. I remember struggling with a
> lot of things and saying to my supervisor in a supervision session one time that I
> looked at these fundamentalists and they seemed so comfortable. They have their
> world all fixed up and knew exactly what it was like and it was very attractive to
> me sometimes. I said I wish I were like that. He said 'Do you really?' And I
> said, 'No, I don't really.'"

Rev. Micah shared that this questioning continues to be on-going in his life even
to this present time. "I guess my basic thing is that it's more of the same. By that I mean
that I come up with more questions all the time instead of answers." He describes a
person of mature faith as, "someone who doesn't over-simplify the issues of faith, who's
willing to struggle with those issues, who doesn't talk in kind of a simplistic God talk ..."
In relating his interest in writing, he mentioned a story that he wrote for youth that was
designed not so much to give clear-cut answers, but to encourage readers to ponder the
right questions. "One of the things that I can also do and did do in writing is [to] try to
not give pat answers but to raise the question and leave it there. . . . One [piece of
writing] in particular... this story was about this girl . . . at the very end I threw in this
question and then she said 'well I'll think about that another time.'"

Rev. Micah cites a professor during his doctoral studies (which took place after he had been in the ministry for a number of years) that was beginning to do a lot of studies on various world religions and what they might teach about God. This professor was suddenly killed in an accident and Rev. Micah shared that this seemed to result in a resolve within him [Rev. Micah] to continue to follow the questioning process. Following is an excerpt from the interview regarding this professor:

> He had just started but he was a brilliant guy, just a real brilliant guy; and I remember thinking at the time we have now lost something because his mind was not going to take this journey. I suppose that cracked something somewhere in me that we are to think more about this. I don't mean that I sat down and in kind of a logical way explored this intellectually myself. It's just more, allowing questions to come and thinking about them.

Reaching Out

Rev. Micah attempted to work with congregants who may have differed or didn't understand his views by making efforts to reach out to them with respect and a desire to understand their viewpoint. "I had learned to begin to actively reach out to people. In the very beginning [of his tenure at this particular church] we would have listening sections and things like that to make connection to get to hear one another and that kind of stuff." When responding to congregants whose theological viewpoints put them at odds with him, he endeavors to understand their position, ". . . first of all, I try to understand it. . . I don't try to directly challenge that as much as I try to present other alternative ways of thinking and evaluating it."

Rev. Micah has applied this approach in professional relationships as well. "I had some friends, we had a group before I came out here [current church] that met every Friday for lunch and I was on one end of the spectrum [theologically] and one guy was on the other end and there were two who were more or less in the middle. We could do that on a personal basis because we knew each other."

Holding Back

A theme that came out in several instances in the interviews with Rev. Micah was his need to hold back from pursuing his interests or questions in certain areas. The primary reason given for this was that dedication to his particular task in life may not be served well by going in these directions. The following excerpts illustrate this:

I don't feel like I can be as openly involved in those things [causes, etc] as I'd like to be. [It is] not so much out of fear of career as it is, it's just not my primary calling and I don't want to do things in a way that would hurt what I think is primary for me right now.

I think that the biggest negative thing [about being a member of the clergy] is . . . because I do feel like I am constantly evolving, there are just some areas that I choose not to go into, by that I mean 'mentally' now, I am thinking, because they would be too disruptive at this time. I won't say that I won't ever do it.

Ideological Companionship

Rev. Micah indicated that he doesn't tend to have a lot of friends, but that he has had certain very close friends that he has felt shared his approach to faith to a significant degree. This appears to have been a key in his ability to find considerable satisfaction in his career. "We are in a group and have been the whole time I've been here. It is kind of

a sharing group. Some of those guys I'm real close to. . . . It is [a] similar faith and ideological perspective . . . ."

He speaks much of the close relationship with the colleague with whom he has undertaken the current experiment of merging the two churches (his co-pastor, Rev. Obadiah, is also a part of this study). He shares, "I think the relationship with [co-pastor] ... it's been a more intellectual kind of thing as we've challenged preconceptions, and ways of thinking, and ways of doing church for one another." After experiencing some disillusionment with his work and career at other periods of his life, his current teaming with this colleague has given him a sense of hope and anticipation for the remaining years of his career.

> I'll be 60 later this year and I will probably stay with it until I am 70 or so. I hope that [co-pastor] and I together can leave an impact and imprint on this congregation that reflects some of the things that we are struggling with. I'm invigorated with what is happening here.

Island of Sanity

Though he touched upon it only briefly, something that seemed to be quite significant for Rev. Micah was the opportunity he has had to give voice to some of his questioning through writing and publication. In talking about the times he has written curriculum for church classes he mused, "That was a little island of sanity within the rest of the world . . . ." Complementing the theme of 'questioning' discussed above, he found writing to be an ideal venue to do this. "I can say things in writing that I would find very difficult to say in a sermon . . . or teaching or in one on one conversation with

someone. One of the things that I can also do and did do in writing is to try not to give pat answers but to raise the question and leave it there."

Micah Summary

The above discussion of the interviews with Rev. Micah set forth five themes that relate to the questions that are guiding this study. These themes were: From Answers to Questions, Reaching Out, Holding Back, Ideological Companionship, and Island of Sanity. Excerpts from the text of the interviews were given for each of these themes.

Interpretation

Rev. Micah's evolving faith has evidenced a steady movement from the clear answers characteristic of childhood and adolescence to a greater tolerance of uncertainty which is characteristic of movement to higher stages of faith development. His feeling of exhilaration during seminary, at being able to shake off the shackles of his fundamentalist roots, is a part of the 'de-mythologizing' of stage 3, Synthetic Coventional faith, and may show movement toward Stage 4, Individuative-Reflective faith (i.e. beginning to own his own beliefs). His first ministry position under the more fundamentalist senior pastor forced him to begin to own his own beliefs, a sometimes uncomfortable process. Here he is moving into stage 4, Individuative-Reflective Faith, where he begins to firm up his own inner beliefs and to weigh all of life's experience against these beliefs.

His growing acceptance of the inevitability of more questions than answers and his embracing of the process of questioning as a key to greater insight is evidence of movement toward Stage 5, Conjunctive Faith. Conjunctive faith is characterized by

movement away from the quest to attain closure and toward a level of comfort with the tension between varying viewpoints.

As his own faith outlook has evolved and as he continues to entertain questions, he has attempted to face the inevitable clash of viewpoints with congregants by reaching out to understand individuals' perspectives. It appears that this is a genuine effort to understand their viewpoints and, as such, avoids the friction resulting from needing to defend or validate one's own position.

Rev. Micah has indicated that he has, to some degree, held himself back from some questions or causes. He sees this as resulting not out of fear of congregants' reaction or the threatening of his job, but out of a sense of commitment to his calling. He suspects the pursuit of these questions or causes may in some manner inhibit or conflict with the performance of his duty or calling. Though this does not seem to result in significant anxiety, he does share it with a tinge of regret, as a sort of downside to his chosen profession.

Rev. Micah has seemed to make his close relationships apart from the congregants that he has served. Though, by his own admission, not a person who has a lot of friends, he seems to have benefited, in terms of his ability to continue in this career, from having a few close professional relationships. His friendship with the co-pastor with whom he currently is leading a congregation seems to have given a new sense of optimism for the years remaining before retirement. He describes himself and this colleague as "more or less being on the same page theologically" and this appears to be a tremendous refuge to him as he attempts to negotiate the intersection of his own faith with that of congregants.

He has found a voice for the questions he has entertained through his periodic writing for publication in religious educational materials. He seems to feel more comfortable in expressing his view of faith through writing. And though this is not a regular endeavor, he seems to be reassured by the prospect that the future will afford more opportunities to do this and he will indeed have a workable platform from which to articulate his faith. The difficulty of being true to his deepest viewpoint in his career setting is, to some degree, tempered by the ever-possible opportunity to put his thoughts to paper.

Chapter Summary

The preceding chapter included a section setting forth the themes discovered through a within-case analysis of the twelve interviews (2 interviews for each participant). The chapter begins with a brief description of the procedures used to analyze the interviews followed by six sections, one for each participant. Each of these sections presents the themes (and sub-themes where applicable) for that particular participant. Each section concludes with a summary and researcher interpretation. The next chapter will present the results of a cross-case analysis of the six cases.

CHAPTER FIVE

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

This chapter will present an analysis of the themes revealed in the interviews from a cross-case perspective. Beginning with those themes that appeared most often, these themes will be set forth, with representative quotations from the interviews to illustrate each theme. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the cross case analysis and the researcher's interpretation.

Explanation of Cross-Case Analytical Procedure

The cross-case analysis was conducted by examining all of the themes and sub-themes that were discovered through within-case analyses. Though like themes sometimes had differing titles due to having utilized words or phrases from the actual interviews, an inclusive title for each theme was created for purposes of cross-case analysis. All cases were examined to see which themes they had in common with other cases. It was decided that if a theme was mentioned in some fashion by at least three participants, that this theme would be included for description in the cross-case analysis. Table 5.1 illustrates the grouping of themes according to participant. Those themes that appeared in two or less cases were not included in the cross-case analysis. These themes had been set forth in Chapter Four as a part of the within-case analyses.

The themes that appeared in at least three cases were: A Personal Confidant (4 cases), Questioning is OK (4 cases), Creating an Environment (3 cases), Extra-Career Activity/Work (3 cases), Caution/Anxiety (3 cases), and Integrity (3 cases). The themes of Relationships Within the Church and Self-Differentiation each appeared in 2 cases. These are not included in the cross-case analysis.

Table 5.1

Reduction of Within-Case Themes into Cross-Case Themes

Participant Name	A Personal Confidant	Questioning Acceptable	Creating the Environment	Extra-Career Activity/Work	Caution-Anxiety	Integrity
Obadiah		Curiosity not Despair				Caution vs. Integrity
Nahum	Soul-Mates	From Fear to Curiosity				No Spiritual Platitudes
Zephaniah	Nothing Could Shock Him	Resolving to Doubt	Setting the Tone	Kept Feet in Two Worlds	*No Damn Fool Mistake*	
Habakkuk	A Very Wise Old Guy				Don't Become the Role	
Amos			Put it Out There	Not in Isolation		*Worldly Minister, Vulnerability*
Micah	Ideological Companionship	From Answers to Questions	Reaching Out	Island of Sanity	Holding Back	

Cross-Case Themes

The following discussion of the cross-case themes is set forth in a sequence not necessarily the same as they appear in the chart above. Neither is the sequence according to frequency of occurrence among the cases. Rather, the themes are discussed in a sequence that seems logical in terms of the questions that have guided this study and in terms of the logical progression of a pastor's faith development and career as a member of the clergy.

The Themes will be discussed in the following sequence: 1) Questioning is Acceptable, 2) Creating the Environment, 3) Integrity, 4) A Personal Confidant, 5) Extra-Career Activity/Work, and 6) Caution-Anxiety.

Theme 1: Questioning is Acceptable

This theme sheds light upon one of the questions that guided this study, i.e. "What are the unique characteristics of those who have chosen a career in the arena of faith expression?" Four of the six participants responded with some form of the concept that at some point, usually during their training or early in career, they came to a level of acceptance, even welcoming of constant questioning of established or previously held beliefs. Following are examples of how these four participants addressed this issue:

Rev. Obadiah described himself as a person for whom things must make sense. When he, as a young pastor, began to encounter realities that seemed to conflict with what he had known and believed, he faced it with a kind of positive questioning that he calls 'curiosity.' . "[for] a lot of people it [collision of reality and old assumptions] does turn them off, they just kind of bale out. To me, it just generated more curiosity to try to come up with an answer." He stated further that doubting and questioning are marks of a maturing faith.

Rev. Nahum also uses the word 'curiosity' in describing this continual questioning process. She notes that she was able to deal positively with the tendency to be fearful in terms of belief in God by turning this fear into curiosity. "The way that the spiritual growth comes is by turning that feeling [fear] into curiosity." She has faced the fears that life and ministry have brought her by imagining God saying to her, "be curious about what you are going to learn here."

Rev. Zephaniah began his training for the ministry resolving to doubt everything as a means of becoming clearer about his faith. Though the result of this 'resolving to doubt' was not always the clarity of belief that he had originally desired, it became a pattern for him that became the impetus for continued growth. This doubting, rather than

being disheartening, has become even comfortable to him. "The older I've gotten, the less I'm sure of anything and it is alright."

Rev. Micah describes his life and career as pastor as a progression from answers to questions. He had come from a fundamentalist background where giving a clear-cut answer to every question was essential. He found being freed from this need was extremely liberating. "Seminary was one of the just real intellectually liberating experiences of my life." He related that the neat package of answers offered by setting down clear answers, while appearing much simpler to manage, could never work for him after experiencing the freedom to question. This questioning, he says, is characteristic of spiritual maturity. " [a person of mature faith is] someone who doesn't over-simplify the issues of faith, who's willing to struggle with those issues, who doesn't talk in kind of a simplistic God talk . . . ."

<div align="center">Interpretation</div>

From this theme, we learn a bit about the nature of faith development among clergy who have developed to stage 4.5 or higher. Somehow, they have found a level of comfort with a questioning stance toward faith. These individuals, rather than being troubled by persistent questions and/or doubts, they viewed this as healthy and an opportunity to strengthen their faith and probe the mysteries of God.

<u>Theme Two: Creating the Environment</u>

This theme emerged from three of the cases. It refers to the conscious effort on the part of the pastor to create an environment in the church where varying faith concepts and outlooks are not only openly discussed and tolerated, but welcomed and affirmed.

Rev. Zephaniah calls this concept 'setting the tone.' He was involved in the establishing of a new church almost from the start. From the beginning he had this concept of a place with an atmosphere of open discussion on a variety of viewpoints. "I tried to set the tone and atmosphere, a culture whereby you could believe . . . the scripture anyway you wanted to as long as you were willing to discuss it and accept those who would see it differently from you."

Rev. Amos set forth a similar concept when he spoke of his desire to 'put it out there,' referring to the open discussion and even debate of sometimes controversial issues.

> I think the greater danger is not talking about it. There are those who think the greater danger is talking about it and I'm not disparaging that decision for them. For me to make that decision is dishonest. . . . My experience with the church here is, given the opportunity in a discussion, [they] will do as well as they possibly can to deal with it.

He stated that it is not always the healthiest thing to move too quickly to resolution. There is value, he says, in creating an atmosphere of open discussion, without which a church may 'stagnate.'

Rev. Micah emphasized a slightly different, but similar approach which he refers to as 'reaching out' to congregants. "I had learned to begin to actively reach out to people. He attempted to create an atmosphere, through his own example, of allowing congregants to have a voice. ". . . we would have listening sections and things like that to make connection to get to hear one another and that kind of stuff."

Interpretation

Pastors who are growing to stage 4.5 and beyond are getting more and more comfortable with holding varying views in tension. They are also likely to be able to take multiple perspectives on issues. By encouraging an atmosphere where a variety of viewpoints are expected, the pastor may experience more freedom in personal growth and less surprise from congregants when he/she expresses views with which they are not familiar.

While clergy at lower stages of faith development may find the presence of divergent views among congregants to be annoying, even threatening, those at higher levels welcome the greater insight gained through multiple perspectives.

Theme Three: Integrity

Three of the participants expressed the desire for integrity in their lives as members of the clergy. By integrity, they seemed to all three be referring the avoiding of projecting an image, either through words or demeanor, that was not a true representation of 'who' they really are.

Rev. Nahum speaks of the sermons and lessons that she prepares and presents each week. " . . . every Sunday I have to get up there and say something that is not just some spiritual platitude, not just some [interesting] saying. I put myself into my sermons, so that they are genuine and I care about what the people get from [them] that will help their spiritual lives." She doesn't want to merely use well-worn words and concepts that don't resonate within her. She desires that there be a congruity between what she says in sermons and the way she lives.

Rev. Obadiah expressed the high value he places upon integrity, starting when he studied under a particular professor who helped to instill this in him. He seems to be

referring to the perceived 'need' or, perhaps more accurately, 'temptation' for pastors to conceal their true views out of fear of jeopardizing their employment or creating friction with congregants or church leaders. "If I told them (congregants) exactly what I thought. . . . It wouldn't be good for me. . ." He relates this as truly a struggle for him " . . . between the reality of making a living [at being a pastor] and personal integrity."

The issue of integrity came up frequently during the interviews with *Rev. Amos*. He recalls a neighbor saying that he (Rev. Amos) was the most 'worldly' minister he had ever known. This, he recalled, was because he had been open to sharing his personal interests, which had nothing to do with his position as a pastor. The effort, apparently pursued by some clergy, to conceal their 'human' side is to him a lack of integrity. In an observation similar to that of Rev. Nahum above, Rev. Amos sees the need to make one's self vulnerable in preaching. This is accomplished through the bringing forth of one's true self when in the pulpit. By 'vulnerable' he seems to be referring to the possibility that not everyone will respond positively when you present your true self. As a person of integrity, he sees this as a risk a pastor should be willing to take.

<div align="center">Interpretation</div>

One of the questions guiding this study was the question, "What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his personal faith development?" Clergy who attempt to maintain outward behaviors or viewpoints that safely meet expectations or conventions of the church, congregants, or even society as a whole (as far as stereotypical impressions of clergy), may find themselves conflicted and stifled to the point that upward growth in faith is inhibited. The quest for and determination to practice integrity means that the pastor will not seek or even allow behaviors or language that is not consistent with the

inner self. Therefore, it appears that for these individuals at least, growth in the area of faith is not inhibited by expectations placed on them due to their role as clergy persons.

Theme Four: A Personal Confidant

Four of the participants indicated that some kind of personal confidant had been invaluable in enabling them to navigate the path of pastoral ministry. This person was referred to by several different designations: Soul-Mate, Mentor, Companion, Prayer Partner, or Spiritual Director. In each case the person was someone that the pastor felt he/she could completely trust and with whom he/she could share absolutely anything. Interestingly, the benefits gained through this relationship were usually not in the area of skills to be applied in the pastoral role. Rather, the relationship was one of nurturance and support. In three of the four cases, this confidant is someone outside of the congregation that the pastor serves in employment.

Rev. Habakkuk cites two such individuals whom he credits with being of tremendous help to him. One was the senior pastor under whom he served in his first position as an associate pastor. The other is an unlikely candidate for becoming a mentor. He describes this individual as follows:

> . . . there was a little old man named Henry who grew up Amish, so his whole world outlook was colored by that. . . . He asked me to meet with him and pray once a week and he became my mentor and my closest friend. . . . we didn't talk much about what to do with the church. . . . I didn't know what it was and he didn't know this name, but he was a 'spiritual director' and he found me like a spiritual director is supposed to.

Rev. Habakkuk has longed for such a mentor in subsequent churches where he has served, but has not found one.

Such a confidant for *Rev. Micah* was found in a colleague with whom he serves as co-pastor of a church. Actually it was a close personal relationship with this individual that prompted the two to undertake the merger of two churches into the one over which they currently preside. In this case, Rev. Micah may not see his colleague as the 'spiritual' director that the above pastor described, but his relationship nonetheless invigorates his approach to his work. He speaks of the manner in which he is challenged for this colleague and is extremely optimistic about the last chapter of his ministry, in large part, due to this friendship. "I'll be 60 later this year and I will probably stay with it until I am 70 or so. I hope that [co-pastor] and I together can leave an impact . . . .I'm invigorated with what is happening here."

Rev. Nahum feels that it is not wise to attempt to find close friendship among congregants she serves as pastor. She speaks of a friend with whom she meets regularly as a 'soul-mate.'

> We call each other prayer partners although when we get together we don't pray that much. We talk. We help each other out with our ministries. We really mentor each other and we have a very strong covenant relationship in seeking each other's spiritual growth.

Rev. Zephaniah has been purposeful about seeking out such friends. Stating that he had always had 'best friends' dating back to childhood, he has pursued this throughout his adulthood and career, something he credits with assisting him greatly in his life and work.

I have this conviction that has come out of my life and my work in which every

minister should have a . . . but we call it different things. We might call it a

mentor. I like the old Celtic phrase, "A Soul Friend", somebody to whom he or

she goes to process the issues of their life and their ministry because loneliness is

so profound in the ministry . . . .

Of one such 'soul-friend' he says, "Nothing I could say would shock him."

Concerning another long time friend he stated, "I would give him my check book and say

'Just give me what I need.' I trust him that much."

Interpretation

Faith Develoment Theory posits that the 'faith triad' includes a person and his/her relationship to the 'holy' (center of value and power). In addition, it includes one's relationship to others who share this view of the holy. One's evolving view of the holy impacts relationship with others in the triad and relationships with others impacts one's view of the holy, or God. A pastor finds him/herself in a contractual relationship with a faith entity (church) but may not entirely identify with the church and/or its members as those who share his/her concept of God. To this degree, this mentor, soul-friend, spiritual director, or whichever designation is used, can be of tremendous value to the pastor if faith is to develop and flourish.

The 'loneliness' alluded to by one pastor needs to be addressed if a career as a pastor is not to have a negative impact upon the clergy person. The above pastors have found part of the solution to this problem through the relationships described.

Theme Five: Extra-Career Work/Activity

For three of the participants, some form of work or endeavor beyond their specific duty to their own local church was extremely beneficial. Even though, as stated by one participant, it used much of their spare time, it was generally felt to be worth the time investment for several reasons.

Rev. Micah found expression for his continually evolving faith outlook through opportunities to write for publication in religious literature and curriculum. He referred to any period during which he pursued this side-line as 'an island of sanity.' The possibility of putting his deepest thoughts on paper proved to be a meaningful outlet as he

continued his questioning. "I can say things in writing that I would find very difficult to say in a sermon."

The feeling of needing to avoid 'isolation' prompted *Rev. Amos* to seek an avenue of work beyond the specific duties to his church. He saw his teaching at a local university as a safeguard against becoming isolated from the real world. "To be with them is my contact with people who are non-churched, so I don't become insulated and isolated in the belief that this is what the world is really like."

Rev. Zephaniah refers to this issue as keeping 'feet in two worlds.' Throughout his career as pastor, he pursued, as side jobs, work or activities that were related to and yet qualitatively different from his duties to the church where he was employed. He describes this approach in the following way: "I kept my feet in two worlds, one within the local parish and one within the professional counseling realm. . . . [which], it has always been clear to me, is one of the things that has helped keep me fresh and healthy." Of this attempt always to have 'feet in two worlds' he observes, "Having both of them gave me a sense of freedom from being dominated by one or the other."

Interpretation

The above issue speaks to the issue of career satisfaction and how a pastor can avoid feeling trapped in a place where he/she may find difficulty in expressing personal views, religious or otherwise. Being able to be more aware of the world beyond the walls of the church may be a factor for clergy in finding satisfaction over the long haul.

<u>Theme Six: Caution-Anxiety</u>

Up to this point, the themes that have appeared at least three times across the cases have been, at least in some fashion, positive in nature. The theme of Caution-Anxiety, however, is a bit different. Despite the positive strategies, outlooks, and viewpoints shared by a number of the participants, at least three of them expressed a sort of anxiety related to the performance of their duties as pastor or to some aspect of their career. In some cases, this anxiety manifested itself in significant caution as to the manner in which the pastor role was approached.

In the case of *Rev. Micah*, there were several instances throughout the interviews when he experienced a mild sense of anxiety that resulted in his avoidance of certain activities of interest or avenues of thought. This seemed to produce some regret, though it was not explicitly stated. He indicates part of this as follows:

> I don't feel like I can be as openly involved in those things [causes, etc] as what I'd like to be. [it is] not so much out of fear of career.... It's just not my primary calling and I don't want to do things in a way that would hurt what I think is primary for me right now.

Rev. Micah hints that his exploration and growth is somewhat hindered by this propensity toward caution. "... there are just some areas that I choose not to go into, by that I mean 'mentally' now, I am thinking, because they would be too disruptive at this time. I won't say that I won't ever do it."

Rev. Zephaniah seemed to verbalize some anxiety concerning the possibility of making some 'damn fool mistake' that could somehow impact his career negatively. The presence of this concern in Rev. Zephaniah's interviews is interesting in that he is semi-

retired and his years as a pastor are behind him. In recounting the manner in which he went about his role as a pastor, he remarked, ". . . I just had to be careful to not make some damn, fool mistake!" In reflecting upon the confining nature of the pastoral role (i.e. pastors are more closely scrutinized than the average person), he mused, "Maybe it was also a way to keep focused and channeled so I wouldn't go out and make some dumb, damn mistake in my life and screw things up. . . ." It seems that this fear of 'messing things up' had been a part of his experience as a pastor.

Rev. Habakkuk experienced an anxiety of a different kind. He seemed to fear that somehow he would be swallowed up by his identity as a pastor and there would, thus, be nothing for him beyond this role. He states, "I'm aware of the fact I don't want to become my role, my job." Some of this anxiety seems to be around an uncertainty about the future, i.e. life beyond his identity as a member of the clergy. "I'm a little concerned about what is going to happen when I move out of that and into the next 'whatever'."

Interpretation

In such a small sample (six participants) it seems significant that three of the participants would make reference to anxiety, not related to a particular duty which is a part of career function, but rather toward issues that are really part and parcel of the nature of the career; fear that one will 'become the role,' fear of ruining everything by making some mistake, and caution about pursuing healthy thoughts or activities. This clearly speaks to the issue of career satisfaction and why some find it difficult to find satisfaction in this role. Unfortunately, these case studies do not give us the solution to this problem.

Chapter Summary

The preceding chapter set forth the results of a cross-case analysis of the themes set forth in Chapter Four. The cross-case analysis was conducted by examining all of the themes and sub-themes that were discovered through within-case analyses. All cases were examined to determine themes that were common to more than one case. Themes that appeared in at least 3 cases were included for discussion in the chapter. Quotations from the interview texts were provided to support the theme analysis.

The six themes that were found common to three or more cases were: 1) Questioning is Acceptable, 2) Creating the Environment, 3) Integrity, 4) A Personal Confidant, 5) Extra-Career Activity/Work, and 6) Caution-Anxiety. Each theme was followed by a researcher interpretation of that particular theme.

The next chapter will discuss further the result of the thematic analysis and will review the literature in light of these results. Recommendations for further research will be set forth. Implications for greater understanding of clergy faith development, insight for clergy in pastoral roles, the role of the counselor in working with clergy will be discussed. Reflections on the research by the researcher will also be included.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapters Four and Five presented within-case analyses and a cross-case analysis, respectively. This chapter will summarize and discuss further the results of the thematic analysis presented in the previous two chapters. This chapter will also review portions of the literature in light of these results. Recommendations for further research will be set forth. Implications for clergy training, clergy practice, and the counseling of clergy will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with this researcher's reflections on the study.

Re-statement of the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand more fully the experience of clergy who are at the more advanced stages of faith development, i.e. stage 4.5, Individuative-Reflective Faith (transitional) or above, and to analyze their career experience in light of their faith stage development. This analysis had particular emphasis on clergy career functioning, satisfaction, and clergy-congregant relations.

The following questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are the unique characteristics of faith development among those who have chosen a career in the arena of faith expression?

2. What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his own faith development?

3. How does growth to stage 4.5 or above impact career functioning and clergy-parishioner relations?

4. What is the impact of faith stage growth upon career satisfaction among clergy?

In the sections following, each of the above questions will be set forth and application of the thematic information gleaned through within-case and across-case analyses will be discussed. Table 6.1 shows the four questions, along with the themes that will be discussed under each question. The applicable themes will be represented, throughout the discussion, using italics.

Table 6.1
Research Questions with Applicable Themes

Question	Applicable Themes
#1: What are the unique characteristics of faith development among those who have chosen a career in the arena of faith expression?	*Challenge of Belief *Questioning *Isolation
#2: What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his own faith development?	*Caution *Crafting the Message *Responsibility to Articulate *Integrity
#3: How does growth to stage 4.5 and above impact career functioning and clergy-parishioner relations?	*Creating the Environment *Caution-Anxiety
#4: What is the impact of faith stage growth upon career satisfaction among clergy?	*A Personal Confidant *Work/Activity beyond the Church

Question #1

What are the unique characteristics of faith development among those who have chosen a

career in the arena of faith expression?

Discussion

Part of the study was to gain greater understanding of faith development among faith's leaders. Though the primary focus of this study was upon the impact of faith stage upon clergy career functioning and satisfaction, it was believed that in order to address this adequately, some greater understanding of faith development as it applies specifically to clergy would be useful. Most adolescents are characterized by stage 3, Synthetic-Conventional Faith (Fowler, 1981, 1986, White, 1986). Given that many individuals decide upon a career during adolescence, the study was interested in following, to some degree, these individuals' development from the time they embarked upon their career up to the present.

Challenge of Belief

Clergy may find their faith outlook challenged earlier and more extensively than the average person due to the rigors of theological study during the seminary experience. Understandably, the degree of rigor and the nature of this challenge depends upon the emphasis of the particular seminary. However, several of the participants of this study cited college religion classes or seminary studies as real eye openers for them. Being exposed to information or events that challenge previously held beliefs can provide impetus for faith stage advancement (Fowler, 1981).

Questioning

Four of the participants indicated that there had been a decision, at some point early in their adult life, (including adolescence) to accept questioning, doubting, or curiosity as a part of a healthy faith outlook. One factor that seemed important to more that one pastor was that they had somehow gained 'permission' to take this route. This

seemed to have been through the influence of key role models or mentors near the beginning of the participant's embarking upon a career in the ministry. This was not prominent enough in the interviews to be picked up as a theme, but it did come up several times. Rev. Nahum cited her pastor during adolescence as helping her come to a view of God different than what a literal reading of the Bible might suggest. Rev. Obadiah credited a college religion professor with instilling in him the desire for integrity and the need to ask honest questions.

The need to reconcile the beliefs carried from childhood with the stark realities of helping people face real life problems also served to push one participant to probe and search for answers.

Isolation

Clergy have a tendency to be somewhat isolated in their own religious world and thus miss having their faith outlook challenged. This was not one of the cross-case themes that appeared in at least three of the interviews. But, it was alluded to by at least two of the pastors (Zephaniah & Amos). In acknowledging the possibility of researcher bias at this point, this particularly resonated with my experience and I have included it here. I have found that my own interaction with individuals outside the church, (e.g. extensive graduate studies in a secular setting) has provided constant challenge and opportunity for growth. Some other pastors I have encountered, contrastingly, seem to never really encounter divergent views and thus seem to continue to respond to issues in the way expected by their church. To the degree that a member of the clergy ventures out into the 'real world' and has beliefs challenged, faith growth may be facilitated. This brings up the question, are clergy who allow themselves to be isolated within the

religious community they serve, less likely to encounter the dilemmas or challenges that would promote growth?

Comparison to Literature

Regarding the challenge to belief that is presented to pastoral candidates during seminary, there is some indication that individuals who experience high dissonance (i.e. one's beliefs are contradicted by other beliefs) during seminary are more likely to drop out (Rulla, 1971). Perhaps it is the presence of some 'permission' to doubt, from someone such as a respected mentor as mentioned earlier, that enables one move ahead with a sense of curiosity and avoid 'bailing out.'

A study by Tullock (1985) suggested that religious study of a cognitive nature may be instrumental in promoting faith stage advancement. The questioning or curiosity characteristic of several of the participants may indicate that clergy who do emerge from formal academic preparation with a questioning and/or curious approach to their faith may be open to growth in a manner different from the average congregant.

Hamrick (1988) found that one of the factors associated with transition to stage 5, (Conjunctive Faith), was 'early religious experiences' or 'desire for knowledge.' This appears consistent with several of the participants in this study who decided to be curious and question early in life and thus have shown growth approaching stage 5.

Question #2

What is the impact of clergy career functioning upon her/his own faith development?

Discussion

This question was selected, in part, to investigate the common sense assumption that clergy would have the opportunity to develop in the area of faith more than the

average congregant. After all, clergy are the leaders and they would logically be more advanced than lay-people (congregants). However, given that clergy are expected to articulate set of beliefs representative of the church and/or denomination, do they then have the freedom to explore and question sufficiently in order to experience advancement to higher levels? Fowler, in a book on faith development and pastoral care (1987) cites the work of Bridges (1980) in describing transition at the adult level as involving four aspects: (1) disengagement, (2) disidentification [sic], (3) disenchantment, and (4) disorientation. (Fowler, 1987, pp. 107-109) Following these aspects, associated with transition is what Fowler and others refer to as a 'neutral zone.' Fowler describes this time as follows; "It means the dismantling or disintegration of a way of seeing and being in the world, and living through the ragged period of struggling to compose a new and more adequate meaning." (1996, p. 74) It would seem that one would find it extremely difficult to continue to articulate a faith outlook to congregants during such a time. Therefore, does serving as pastor result in one resisting transition and its attendant crises or could the pastoral role in some way facilitate transition?

Caution

Chapter five revealed the struggle that some pastors felt between the desire to have integrity on the one hand and the reality of avoiding conflict that could impact employment on the other. To the degree that a clergy-person is determined to follow the path of 'integrity' or 'caution' (which ever the case), then faith stage development may be influenced. My preliminary conclusion is that constant effort to exercise behavior that is consistent with belief could result in challenge to belief and thus opportunity for growth. Keeping faith views inside, away from the challenge of testing them in the

public arena, could result in stagnation. But, this conclusion needs substantiation through further research.

Crafting the Message

One of the participants stated that he found himself 'preaching on two levels' in order to meet the needs of congregants who wanted something more thought challenging on the one hand and those who wanted something straight forward to take home with them. This effort at preaching to two audiences using the same sermon would appear to require the ability to take the perspective of both groups. Rev. Nahum spoke of her struggle to articulate her social concerns such as peace issues and the affirming of gays and lesbians while at the same time keeping her message consistently religious in nature. She mentioned that some individuals were more in tuned with the social concerns than with the religious message. She shared attempting to find ways to do both things with one message and, to some degree, satisfy the desires of both types of listener. According to Faith Development Theory, the ability to take multiple perspectives is characteristic of stage 5 (Moseley, et al., 1993). This constant challenge to formulate a message that can be received by both groups may indeed be somewhat unique to those in the role of pastor and may be an impetus toward faith stage growth.

Responsibility to Articulate

More than one participant cited that the responsibility of standing weekly before a congregation and being forced to articulate the result of faith probing provides tremendous fuel for growth. Rev. Zephaniah stated that one of the benefits of being a pastor is 'freedom to probe.'

> Being in the church has given me the freedom to probe the meaning of life and to
>
> do it with the blessing of my vocation. . . . And then it has given me the curse,
>
> but the incredible blessing, of having to give expression to that weekly.

Rev. Nahum put it this way:

> I do think that it is spiritually growing [sic] to be a pastor.... every Sunday I have
>
> to get up there and say something that is not just some spiritual platitude, not just
>
> some saying.

Quest for Integrity

This search for integrity requires an ongoing process of evaluation of beliefs and

behavior. It involves a certain amount of risk. This amount of risk results in individuals

thinking harder about beliefs, before putting one's self on the line with them. "...

preaching is one of the most vulnerable things that we do. It's not a show, but it is who

we are. If there is integrity in it, then we are very, very vulnerable." It may be that some

members of the clergy do not feel the need to pursue this 'integrity' of belief. But, for

several pastors in this study, this was crucial. This may indeed be a unique aspect of faith

development among many members of the clergy

Comparison to Literature

Clergy often describe their decision to enter the ministry as a 'call.' O'Niell and

Grandy (1994) described individuals who sought clergy positions as those who were

following the ideal of 'being the right kind of person.' Just how many give up this 'ideal'

is not known. But, to continue to live in a way consistent with professed belief is the

'integrity' these participants speak of. This may indeed have the effect of either urging

them toward greater faith stage growth on the one hand, or a decision to leave the

profession on the other.

Question #3

How does growth to stage 4.5 or above impact career functioning and clergy-parishioner relations?

Discussion

This question arose, to some degree, out of my own experience as a member of

the clergy for many years. It has been my observation that the average church tends to be

somewhat organized around a particular faith outlook (Rizzuto, 1991). We might say

that, in some sense, the church is at a particular stage corporately. Of course, there will

be diversity within a particular church. However, the pastor was likely chosen due to

perceived compatibility with the prevailing faith outlook among congregants. This is

especially true for the Baptist clergy under consideration in this study, since individual

Baptist churches select their own pastors through their own search process, rather than

having a minister appointed by their denominational headquarters. In addition, pastors

under this form of church structure must walk the fine line between leading and guiding

the church on one hand, and obliging the views and desires of congregants on the other.

Participants in this study were selected because they exhibited traits characteristic

of stage 4.5. This means that they were beginning to take on some characteristics of stage

5, Conjunctive faith. It would appear that many characteristics of stage 5 would enable a

pastor to be able to better understand and meet the needs of congregants at various levels.

Following are some examples from the Faith Development Manual (Moseley, et al.,

1993) that illustrate this.

Stage Five Characteristics:

Logic: Will often display a knowledge of or openness to the depth dimension in

human beings. (p. 61)

Perspective Taking: Ability to take the perspective of another with less concern

for the defense of one's own perspective. (p. 62)

Stage 5 characteristics, it appears, can result in a pastor being more understanding

of the viewpoints and attitudes of other congregants at various stages of development.

But, could it be that some characteristics of stage 5 (pastor's current stage) result in

congregants at a lower stage feeling frustrated or dissatisfied with the pastor. In table 6.2

following, stage 4 and 5 characteristics are contrasted.

Table 6.2
Comparison of Stages 4 & 5 by Selected Aspects

Aspect	Stage 4	Stage 5
Social Perspective Taking	Others will be perceived, construed, and evaluated through the lenses of the person's self selected world view or thought system	Reflects the ability to take the perspective of the other with less concern for the defense of one's own perspective
Bounds of social awareness	Judges who is included and who is alien on the basis of ideological compatibility	Is willing to include persons and groups that are different or unusual in its social awareness
Form of world coherence	Tendency to dichotomize, a striving for closure and comprehensiveness in one's world view	Shows an awareness of ambiguity and complexity in thinking about the world, and willingness to embrace these.

(Moseley, et al., 1993)

A pastor's 'functioning' includes not only giving care to congregants but also the

making of proposals for the church's future objectives and strategies. For example, a

pastor may be called upon to make proposals for expenditures of 'missions' funds for the

coming year(s). Individuals at stage 4 or below may see as the primary objective of

missions, the 'conversion' of individuals to the church's theological beliefs. A pastor at

or approaching stage five, may view 'missions' activity as attempting to meet practical needs of community members, whether it be shelter for homeless, tutoring for inner-city students, or other such outreach-related activity.

In addition, individuals approaching stage 4, or currently at stage 4, may feel threatened by the attitudes of a pastor at stage 5. For example, a stage 4 congregant will likely emphasize the distinctive beliefs of her/his church and the correctness of these beliefs in contrast to those of other churches or religions. A stage 4.5 or 5.0 pastor, on the other hand, may be expressing an increased willingness to dialogue with others of different viewpoints or beliefs. Again, this speaks to what may be considered the duty or 'functioning' of the pastor. Congregants may feel that the pastor's job (function) is to clearly and convincingly articulate the beliefs of their church. The stage 4 congregant who desires to justify his/her own beliefs and tends to dichotomize and strive for closure around beliefs may feel betrayed by a pastor who seems comfortable with ambiguity. M.Scott Peck, in a book which makes a simplified application of Fowler's stages, observes, "Perhaps predictably, there exists a sense of threat among people in the different stages of religious development. Mostly, we are threatened by people in the stages above us." (1988, p. 194-194)

Therefore I am interested in clergy, such as those who are part of this study, who have advanced to stage 4.5 or above and have been pastors for a minimum of 15 years. How have these individuals gone about interacting with and serving as a leader to congregants at various stages? Following are some insights gained through this study.

Creating the Environment

Three of the participants had a deliberate strategy of promoting an atmosphere within the church of entertaining a variety of viewpoints. Whether it was Zephaniah's 'setting the tone,' Amos's "getting it out there,' or Micah's 'reaching out,' there was deliberate effort made to accommodate a variety of viewpoints in a non-judgmental atmosphere. This may serve to lessen the surprise when the pastor verbalizes new or different viewpoints, something he is likely to do due to increased ability to take the perspective of others. This ability is characteristic of movement toward stage 5 (Moseley, et al., 1993). However, this is an atmosphere that is not created overnight. Rev. Zephaniah was pastor of a church starting from nearly its inception and Rev. Amos acknowledged that this feature was present at his church to some extent prior to his arrival. Nonetheless, it seems reasonable that by working hard to protect the right of others to express divergent views, the pastor may earn that same right to some extent.

Rev. Amos spoke of an incident involving the desire of some members to display the American flag as a part of the worship service. Rev. Amos felt that since the church actually had members from 7 different countries, this would not be appropriate. He was concerned about the church somehow giving the impression that God favored America over other nations/peoples. Some individuals were extremely angry with the pastor over this. His ability and desire to try to understand all perspectives of an issue resulted in allowing this to be a long and somewhat painful discussion. Nonetheless, he felt that overall it was a healthy and beneficial process. In this case, the pastor's tendency to take the perspective of non-Americans in the congregation resulted in some friction with

others. His strategy of bringing all issues to an open discussion facilitated a resolution of the matter.

Caution-Anxiety

It was apparent in interviews that these pastors had to exercise some caution in terms of expressing their inner views. In the interview with Rev. Obadiah, he mentioned several times that he did not believe that God was a supernatural being. I probed, "Do you say that kind of thing in your sermons?" He responded, "In the church, I would not feel comfortable saying that. . . . I have said 'I do not see God so much a supernatural being as being a spirit.'" Perhaps caution is the better part of wisdom, even for most p. ors. Even Rev. Zephaniah, the pastor who tried to 'set the tone,' spoke of 'preaching on two levels.' A sense of 'caution' against alarming some people may have been at least part of the motivation for this effort.

One pastor avoided allowing his thoughts to go in certain directions due to the possible result of conflicting with his role as pastor. Perhaps it was not as feasible for this pastor to create the kind of atmosphere that could tolerate the possible direction his thoughts may take him. If so, is this a healthy approach? Is this an admirable denial of 'self-interest' that has been said to be a part of the 'call' to be a pastor (Christopherson, 1994)? It is one thing to be cautious in speech, but another to be cautious in thought. One can only speculate as to the impact of this upon continued faith development.

This, at least, suggests that even for the pastor in the most tolerant church setting, some caution is always warranted. The potentially negative impact of this 'caution' may be able to be mitigated to some extent by means of a 'personal confidant' which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Question #4

What is the impact of faith stage growth upon career satisfaction among clergy?

Discussion

The theory of faith stage brings clarity to question of why ministers may find themselves viewing faith quite differently, as a middle-aged pastor, than they did as an adolescent deciding to embark on a career as a member of the clergy. The question remains, nonetheless, does growth to higher stages make serving a particular congregation more satisfying or less satisfying? On the one hand, such growth enables a pastor to be more understanding and accepting of congregants, as discussed above. On the other hand, churches and denominations are collective groupings around certain beliefs and values. These beliefs are often firmly ingrained in the church's identity, if not engraved on the walls. Earlier in this paper, the words of James Fowler himself were cited in this vein. They are again applicable here. "When pastors' struggles with and in faith, and with the processes of aging and developing a rich range of experiences lead them to stage change, it can create crises of communication and of authenticity. . . ." (Personal communication, e-mail, Feb. 4, 2003)

This study sought to find out whether the impact of growth to stage 4.5 or above contributed to greater satisfaction or dissatisfaction as far as career was concerned. Following is some information gleaned from this study that may shed light on this question.

A Personal Confidant

Four of the six pastors referred to some kind of close relationship, an individual who was of extreme importance in his/her life. As discussed earlier, the benefit of such a

person was not primarily in the expertise that the person could offer in the area of career. Rev. Habakkuk said of the elderly church member whose companionship he valued, "We didn't talk about much about what to do with the church. . . . I didn't know what it was and he didn't know this name, but he was a 'spiritual director.'" It seemed to be the personal relationship, the sense of being accepted and valued, that had such a beneficial impact on the pastor.

One aspect of the relationship with such a 'soul-friend' or 'mentor' is that the person seems genuinely committed to the pastor's welfare. Rev. Nahum referred to her relationship with her 'prayer partner' as a 'covenant' to assist in each other's spiritual growth. This sense of commitment or devotion to the pastor seems to blunt, to a significant degree, the stress of needing to accommodate or please so many congregants.

Fowler describes faith as being a triad, with God being at the top, and others who share this belief in God (shared center of value and power) at the other corner (1981, 2001). According to faith development theory, a person's trust in God is always related to his/her relationship to others who, at least in some fashion, share that trust and belief. It is difficult for pastors to find this person(s) within the church. As already cited, four of these pastors mentioned a significant confidant in their lives and all but one, Rev. Amos, identified this person as being from outside of their church. However, all of the pastors except one, Rev. Nahum, cited a spouse as a trusted confidant. The consensus, at least among this group, is that it is difficult to find such a soul-mate within the church one serves as pastor.

It appears that, in order for the pastor to be able to avoid dissatisfaction with career in the arena of faith expression, this kind of horizontal relationship (i.e. mentor,

soul-friend, soul mate, etc.) needs to be established. Rev. Zephaniah described this need as follows: [a soul-friend is] somebody to whom he or she goes to process the issues of their life and their ministry because loneliness is so profound in the ministry . . . ." It appears that such a relationship will most likely be found outside of his/her church.

Work or Activity Beyond the Church

Finding meaningful part-time work outside of pastoral duties was cited by three of the pastors as being very important to them. In each case, the activity was related to their primary career (counseling, teaching religion at a university, writing for religious publications) but was, at the same time, significantly different in nature or setting. Whether it was to avoid isolation (Amos), to provide an oasis from stress (Micah), or to keep oneself fresh and avoid feeling controlled by primary career (Zephaniah), all credited this activity with making it possible for them to continue to work as a pastor with a reasonable degree of optimism and satisfaction.

Comparison to Literature

This work beyond the regular duties of being pastor may help to secure the sense of accomplishment that often eludes members of the clergy. Lee (1976) found that in a study of Catholic priests, those who were in administrative roles or on special assignment found satisfaction more often than those who were in traditional parish roles. Schneider and Hall (1970) have proposed a model stating that people experience psychological success career meets the following criteria:

1. a person chooses an active goal for him or herself

2. the person works autonomously to seek the goal

3. the goal is central to one's self concept

4. the person achieves the goal

These pastors found part-time work or activities that were qualitatively different and separate from the often nebulous and sometimes frustrating duties of a parish pastor. This may indeed provide the necessary feelings of success needed so as to avoid dissatisfaction in their primary career. The following quotation from pastoral psychologist Henri Nouwen describes frustration often faced by clergy.

> The first and most obvious question seems to be: Do we [priests] actually have a profession? We live in a society which is characterized by a rapidly growing professionalization [sic]. . . . Where does this leave the priest? . . . Is it not true that many priests feel extremely frustrated because they feel that they know a little bit of everything but are not really good in anything? (p. 120)

Perhaps involvement in some work or activity that may afford the pastor to use some skill or expertise can serve to facilitate over all satisfaction. The experience of these few pastor in this study at least suggests that having 'feet in two worlds' may be helpful in continuing to function in a career as clergy, even after the pastor's personal faith development has become somewhat different with many congregants.

Limitations of the Study

This study examined the experience of six Baptist pastors who were selected from a metropolitan association of churches of that particular denomination. They were all relatively well educated. All of the six had at least a seminary degree (M.Div); two had

professional doctorates (D.Min); and two had academic doctorates (PhD). They all served churches in a metropolitan area (greater Washington D.C.) where the income and educational levels of citizens are likely much higher than nationwide averages. All of the participants were Caucasian and five of the six were male. Therefore, there are many aspects of the sample that limit the application of findings beyond this very narrow population.

In addition, the study was done with clergy who are part of a particular Christian denomination, Baptist. Given the different structures and beliefs of various religious groups, application to clergy of other denominations would be highly speculative. In addition, six subjects is a small sample. Any themes that have emerged as a result of this study should be regarded as extremely preliminary and would need verification through studies with larger samples.

Faith development is but one aspect of clergy make up. There are other aspects such as personality, cultural background, family of origin, nature of denominational beliefs, etc., that should be considered when examining clergy experience. Hopefully, a greater understanding of the impact of faith development upon clergy career will prove enlightening to the questions guiding this study. It is, however, but one piece of a larger picture.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Research</div>

The findings of this study suggest a need for further research in several areas. A few of those are discussed in the following section.

Seminary Preparation

Study needs to be done to determine the nature of seminary training that not only encourages faith development, but also equips clergy with the insight necessary to navigate their own growth while at the same time managing to serve a congregation as pastor. In talking with pastors, I have discovered that a number of them have been exposed to Faith Development Theory during their seminary training. However, it seems that the emphasis in this training is to enable pastors to understand the development of congregants and to design teaching and programs that are appropriate (Fowler, 1987). Often, this is applied to the designing of programs for small children, elementary age children, and adolescents. Less attention seems to be paid to adult development. A study that explored the nature of seminaries' use of this theory would be useful. In addition, a study which compared the career satisfaction of pastors who had experienced such emphasis during their seminary training with those who didn't would be meaningful.

Clergy Faith Stage vs. Congregant Faith Stage

This study looked at pastors who had attained at least a 4.5 stage rating. It would be helpful to know what percentage of pastors reach this level in comparison to non-clergy church members. Do pastors attain this level at a greater proportion than their congregants? This study made some observations concerning factors unique to clergy that may facilitate faith stage advancement. Studies that could come closer to confirming these observations are needed.

Clergy Drop-out and Faith Stage

A study that could look at pastors who had dropped out of parish ministry would be helpful in testing some of the findings of this study. A study was done in 1970 among United Church of Christ ministers (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970) which sought to find out why clergy decided to leave pastoral ministry. This current study has suggested that certain factors (i.e capacity to accept questioning as healthy, presence of a mentor or soul-friend), factors that may enable pastors to avoid dissatisfaction and continue in pastoral roles. A new study is needed that would give greater understanding of the experience of pastors who have dropped out, especially in light of the issues related to faith development that have arisen in this study. Such a study could begin to validate some of the suggestions which have emerged through this current study.

Church Climate and Clergy Satisfaction

One suggestion of the current study was that pastors who promote open discussion and tolerance of differing views as a part of church life may avoid frustration and dissatisfaction with ministry and thus stay in the profession longer. A study is needed which would compare pastors' attitudes and practice in this vein, with satisfaction and tenure.

Second Job and Clergy Satisfaction

The present study found that three of the pastors benefited greatly from work apart from their congregations. The casual observer would likely surmise that clergy do this [work on the side] out of a need for added income. A survey of pastors who work or volunteer beyond their pastoral duties, along with their reasons for doing so and perceived benefit (or burden) from such activities, would be useful in advising clergy

who consider this option. Another question related to such a study would be, to what degree do congregations generally approve of or object to their pastors pursuing work apart from pastoral duties. In other words, is this a feasible option for most pastors?

Implications for Clergy Training

The findings of the current study raise questions as to the adequacy of seminary education for members of the clergy. To what degree are seminarians prepared, not only for their own eventual faith development, but also for the challenges of effectively utilizing the greater perspective afforded by such growth in the role of pastor? Seminaries should study the nature of issues faced by clergy in pastoral roles.

Seminaries should design training programs that would bring older, more seasoned clergy back to the seminary to discuss their experiences and dilemmas as regards their own faith development. Seminaries tend to want to present clergy career in the most positive, optimistic light. Perhaps this is out of fear that an honest look would discourage students from continuing in their pursuit of this career. A frank divulging of feelings on the part of seasoned clergy, such as took place in the interviews for this study, could be done in a variety of ways. Students could be assigned to interview clergy with questions similar to those used in this current study. Seminaries could have a regular 'seminar' style class that meet regularly throughout their period of study, which seriously address changes that may take place in clergy faith outlook and how one must deal with this in the light of pastoral duties. Students should be guided in their reflection of changes that take place across the 2-3 years that seminarians usually spend in formal study. Curriculum should put as much emphasis on the interaction of the pastor's faith outlook with his role in the church as on the mastery of theological concepts. Veteran

pastors could be brought back to have round table discussions of how their faith may have been challenged and altered by pastoral duties and also how their changing faith impacted their performance and relations with congregants. Though students may not be advanced enough in their own development to fully relate to pastors' honest sharing of such experiences, nonetheless having been exposed to this will become a resource to them if/when such does occur.

One of the pastors interviewed recalled an incident during his seminary study. An old, somewhat ill-tempered, professor was discussing a somewhat disturbing theological view. One well-meaning seminarian raised his hand and asked, "How would I tell that to my students in Sunday School?" The old professor became very annoyed and snarled, "You don't tell them this in Sunday School!" Hopefully, seminaries are aware of the difficulties of applying one's own developing faith to leadership as a pastor. A systematic approach needs to be made to prepare clergy to do this successfully.

Application to Clergy Career Practice

As a member of the clergy for 24 years, I have found that there is very little advice for pastors that is more than inspirational 'hang in there' type books or 'This is what I did and it worked for me' testimonials. Guidelines based on sound research are desperately needed. Clergy receive mixed messages as to how to approach relationships with congregants. One book says 'Get close to members so that they know you and trust you,' and another warns, 'Don't make close friends within the church.' This study suggests that having a personal confidant, usually outside of the congregation, is of immeasurable benefit in facing the kind of issues raised in this study. Clergy would do well to actively pursue such relationships. Denominational associations or local

seminaries could participate in assisting clergy in finding such a person. Pastors tend to move from city to city. A move to a new ministry site often means the end of the relationship with a soul-mate that may have been carefully and patiently nurtured. This just may be the area where denominational associations are most relevant to a pastor's work.

Pastors could benefit from a supervisory relationship with someone outside his/her own church for the first 3-5 years of serving as a pastor. Such a relationship could also be implemented for the first year of any new pastoral assignment. This supervision would not be 'overseeing' the new pastor's work as a supervisor would in a factory. Rather, the kind of supervision referred to would be similar to that which a new counselor receives from a supervisor. The supervision would assist the pastor in implementing the kind of strategies that will facilitate smoother and more functional relationships with congregants. For example, if fostering an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance of divergent views is helpful, as this study has suggested, the pastor could be guided as to how to establish such a culture at her/his church. If some kind of activity beyond the realm of duties to the church would contribute to the pastor's developmental health, this could be encouraged and perhaps facilitated through a relationship with such a supervisor.

Implications for Counselors

Pastors can benefit greatly from counseling and are themselves in need of 'pastoral care' (Oswald, 1990). Yet, studies have shown that most counselors are less religious than their clients (Worthington, 1989). Where will a pastor find a counselor who has some feel for the issues raised in this study? Counselors who find themselves

offering services to clergy would do well to understand the dynamics of faith development. They also need to understand the unique challenges faced by these individuals who have chosen the arena of faith expression for their career.

The counselor could be, to some degree, the confidant that was described by the pastors in this study. However, due to the need to maintain an appropriate counselor-client relationship, it is not likely that a counselor could fully fill the role of the 'soul-friend' or 'mentor' that was described by participants in this study. A counselor, however, can certainly provide the reflection and support needed for pastors as they face the challenge of applying their ever-evolving faith to their career responsibilities.

Counselors may facilitate the 'questioning' that is necessary for stage transition. Counselors need to keep in mind that, though questioning previously held beliefs may seem advisable to the counselor, it may feel threatening to clergy in light of their career and job security. Counselors must be very careful, making sure to understand, as fully as possible, the pastor's caution in this area.

Counselors, during sessions, could facilitate learning to begin to share their own heart felt views, perhaps in preparation for doing so at appropriate times in their job setting. In doing thus, they are assisting pastors in their quest for the 'integrity' desired. The counseling session could become somewhat of a laboratory for learning to create the environment for openness that this study found to be helpful for pastors in their churches.

One concrete way that counselors may help clergy would be through exploration of career interests beyond the church. This could lead to the seeking of a second job, as described earlier, which could prove beneficial to the pastor. Based on my own

experience, even the mere discussion of this option can be somewhat liberating, as one considers a contribution to the world beyond the often ambiguous duties of the pastor.

People in other professions, particularly those professions that do not involve pleasing many people and their demands, may not understand the anxiety that is a part of the pastoral role. Counselors who are more acquainted with this issue will be better able to assist pastor-clients in strategizing to cope with this anxiety.

Personal Reflections

My personal interest in the topic of this study grew out of my own experience as a member of the clergy for more than 23 years. Some years ago I discovered that my faith outlook was changing. This was a concern, given that my career involved giving expression to faith sentiment. My background and training offered little help in understanding what was happening. Faith Development theory brought me to an understanding that changes in faith outlook are a healthy result of a person's growth and development.

Cognitive developmental theory has been emphasized in the Ph.D program where I have studied (see Chapter Two for definition of cognitive developmental theory). From almost the first class during which we discussed the various theories of development, especially those addressing adult development, I have been pondering the application of developmental theory to the experience of clergy. This study has been an exciting opportunity to take this pondering to another level.

I have found the interviews with the pastors to be some of the most interesting and enlightening experiences of my faith journey. I have gained much personally. I only wish I could have heard such frank and honest discussion of these issues early in my

career. The pastors gave generous amounts of their time. Nearly every one seemed to deeply appreciate the opportunity to tell her/his story. One pastor seemed to pour out his past, as if he had never been listened to in such a way. After an hour and a half he said, "I guess I've rambled a long time. I didn't realize how this would be."

In interviewing the 12 pastors for the first phase of the study and then attempting to analyze the interviews, I realized the complexity of the construct of faith and also the uniqueness of each and every individual. Though Faith Development theory attempts to rate individuals at a particular stage of development, I have come to feel that this should be done always with a heavy dose of skepticism as to the accuracy of one's rating. On the surface, it is tempting to view individuals with more 'liberal' social or theological views as more advanced and those with 'conservative' views as at a lower stage. But, a careful study of the process of stage assessment reveals that faith stage is less about the content of one's faith and more about the process of formulating faith. This became more apparent to me through the process of interviewing and rating the participants.

I must acknowledge that my own experience has been that, as my faith has evolved, I have experienced some difficulty meeting the demands of congregants that seemed to be at a more 'dichotomizing' stage of development. For example, I have found that my expanded ability to look at many sides of an issue has caused consternation among some congregants who are hoping the pastor will give a clear answer to confusing issues. I say this to acknowledge that this experience may have colored, to a certain extent, my interpretation of the data that the interviews yielded.

In conclusion, I have gained a greater admiration for pastors who attempt daily to translate the mysteries of faith for people who often demand simple answers. Several of

the pastors I interviewed shared difficult relationships that they had experienced with some of the churches they had served. More than one had experienced personal crises and one had even been fired on one occasion. Their faith is quite different than it was when they started, but they have found a way to continue and are doing so with a considerable amount of optimism.

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Appendix A

FAITH DEVELOPMENT INTERVIEW

LIFE TAPESTRY/LIFE REVIEW

- ➤ Reflecting on your life, identify its major chapters, what **marker events** stand out as especially important?
- ➤ Are there **past relationships** that have been important to your development as a person?
- ➤ Do you recall any **changes in relationships** that have had a significant impact on our life or yourway of thinking about things?
- ➤ How has your **image of God** and relation to God changed across your life's chapters?
- ➤ Have you ever had moments of intense joy or **breakthrough** experiences that have affirmed or changed your sense of life's meaning?
- ➤ Have you experienced times of **crisis** or suffering in our life, or times when you felt profound disillusionment or that life had no meaning? What happened to you at these times? How have these experiences affected you?

RELATIONSHIPS

- ➤ Focusing now on the present, how would you describe your **parents** and your current relationship to them? Have there been any changes in your perceptions of our parents over the years? If so, what caused the change?
- ➤ Are there any other **current relationships** that seem important to you?
- ➤ What groups, institutions, or **causes,** do you identify with? Why do you think that these are important to you?

PRESENT VALUES AND COMMITMENTS

- ➤ Do you feel that your life has **meaning** at present? What makes life meaningful to you?
- ➤ If you could **change** one thing about yourself or your life, what would you most want to change?
- ➤ Are there any **beliefs**, values, or commitments that seem important to your life right now?
- ➤ When or where do you find yourself most in communion or **harmony** with God or the universe?
- ➤ What is your image or model, (an idea or a person) of **mature faith**?
- ➤ When you have an important **decision** to make, how do you generally go about making it? Can you give me an example? If you have a very difficult problem to solve, to whom or what would you look for guidance?
- ➤ Do you think that actions can be right or wrong? If so, what makes an **action right** in your opinion?
- ➤ Are there certain actions or types of actions that are **always right** under any circumstances? Are there certain moral opinions that you think everyone should agree on?

RELIGION

- ➤ Do you think that human life has a **purpose**? If so, what do you think it is? Is there a plan for our lives, or are we affected by a power or powers beyond our control?
- ➤ What does **death** mean to you? What happens to us when we die?
- ➤ Do you consider yourself a **religious person**? What does this mean to you?
- ➤ Are there any religious ideas, **symbols**, or rituals that are important to you, or have been important to you? If so, what are these and why are they important?
- ➤ Do you pray, meditate, or perform any other **spiritual discipline**?
- ➤ What is **sin**, to your understanding?
- ➤ How do you explain the presence of **evil** in our world?
- ➤ If people disagree about a religious issue, how can such **religious conflicts** be resolved?

Appendix B

SIMPLIFIED RATING GUIDE

Stages 3, 4, & 5

LOGIC

Stage 3

*doesn't distinguish thoughts about reality (social) from external world
*does not form explicit systems (thinking is tacit)
*blends fantasy and reality
*no second order reflection (reflection on thought itself)
*tends toward stereotyping, incapable of rigorous systematic/critical thought

Stage 4

*Concern with situating self with regard to others and their world views
*dichotomizing, concern with boundaries
*logical justification of world views and commitments
*thinking places value on logical, conscious processes
*linear reasoning, deductive, tends to be one dimensional

Stage 5

*openness to different perspectives
*dialogue between perspectives
*understands limits of human understanding
*less concerned with achieving closure around concepts
*logic points toward process rather than systems

PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Stage 3

*can recognize that others have an interiority of their own
*often blends fantasy and projection with observation
*gives more power to the other than to self
*does not construct self apart from relationships
*gives power to others to dispute his/her perceptions or opinions of self
*embedded in social relationships
*social context determines "significant others"
*oriented toward meeting expectations of "generalized other"

(Appendix B, cont)

Stage 4

*view of other based on critically examined rules/principles of relationship
*concerned with justifying personal world view
*chooses personal relationships
*can analyze personal relationships, gaining critical distance
*others viewed through lense of one's own chosen world view
*can analyze others' viewpoint, but with defensive stance

Stage 5

*Multiple perspectives
*Increased ability to construct perspective of other
*able to 'bracket' his/her own feelings/thoughts in order to see from others'
    perspective
*critical self-awareness
*open to being changed
*less defensiveness (more self-critical)
*can affirm the interiority of the other
*other is valued for uniqueness, not group membership

MORAL JUDGMENT

Stage 3

*displays values that maintain interpersonal relationships and harmony within the
    group with which one identifies
* "Our group and the rest of the people" mentality
*Law and Order statements, only if the goal is to defend the maintenance of the
    group as a value in itself
*moral judgments based on the valuing of interpersonal harmony, concordance, &
    consensus.

Stage 4

*Moral judgments emphasize law, rights, or duties in terms of their function of
    maintaining a social system or order
*judgments reflect conventional positions of one's self chosen class or group, no
    "prior to society' perspective (principles that underlie the social order)
*moral judgments are explicitly and rationally defended

(Appendix B, cont)

Stage 5

*An action is advocated on the grounds of upholding the principles that underlie
the social order (prior to society perspective) rather than simply the social
order
*maintains 'critical distance' by espousing principles by which a social order can
be criticized
*capable of taking multiple perspectives on issues or moral concern

BOUNDS OF SOCIAL AWARENESES

Stage 3

*statements take the perspective of one's social group
*boundaries of social group extend beyond immediate family to peer group.
*mode of valuing centers on group goals
*values membership of the peer group to the exclusion of other groups

Stage 4

*judges who is included and who is alien on the basis of ideological compatibility
*tends to see other individuals as part of a system or group rather than as
individuals
*can consider a wide range of viewpoints, but only does so in order to preserve its
own perspective
*divides people or groups into categories of ideologically compatible or
incompatible.
*may embrace pluralism when it is a part of an explicit system

Stage 5

*willing to include persons and groups that are different or unusual in its social
awareness
*will actively seek contact with groups and persons that are different for the
purposes of comparison
*affirms pluralism as an enriching phenomenon, seeks principles upon which
pluralism can be workable

(Appendix B, cont)

LOCUS OF AUTHORITY

Stage 3

*statements reflect a trust in socially approved figures and institutions (in absence of systematic thinking about such issues)

*often selects authority figures on basis of personal charisma

*tendency to select authorities on the basis of feelings, appearances, or tacit images

*accommodation with traditional forms of authority that have not been critically examined or rationally legitimated

*tendency to select authority figures on the basis of group consensus or on the basis of approval by significant others

Stage 4

*authority figures identified usually in terms of compatibility with the self-selected set of ideological or relational principles

*relationship to authority is explicit and rational

*tends to locate authority in ideas, systems and institutions, rather than in persons.

*ability to stand back from an authority relationship and evaluate it from the perspective of a worldview or ideology.

*authority is internally located, based on a self-ratified, ideological perspective

Stage 5

*displays a tensional or mediated approach to any form of authority or authority figure as a result of multiple perspective taking.

*judges authority from the perspective of universalizable principles

*there will be a dialectical joining of experience, situation and principles in evaluating the relation to authority

*willing to consider cumulative human wisdom and tradition in selecting authorities

*conscience and the social contract are important for the legitimating of authority to the individual

(Apprendix B, cont)

FORM OF WORLD COHERENCE

<u>Stage 3</u>

*represents a synthesis of conventional values and attitudes, rather than a
   critically appropriated system of ideas about reality
*legitimates world view by appeals to feeling and external authorities, not by
   rational reflection
*beliefs and concepts exist as tacit value orientations, not as theories about the
   world as such
*value orientations often center around inter-personal concerns
*tacitly held values and belief systems (i.e. the person is likely not aware of
   having a system or ideology)
*statements defer to others as authoritative for the acceptance of a view of the
   world
*attempts to deal with dissonant views by exclusion
*sees consensus as the primary criteria of truth in the absence of other mediating
   forms of reason
*simple and uncritical pluralism
*romantic or heroic views of self in the world
*little evidence of reflection or abstraction

<u>Stage 4</u>

*an explicit system, rationally defended and maintained
*concerned with system boundaries and definitions
*emphasizes difference between systems and world views, tendency to
   dichotomize
*concern with general rules, laws and norms
*strives for closure and comprehensiveness in one's worldview
*statements evidence the collapsing of tensions and paradoxes in one direction in
   order to maintain the coherence of a system or ideology

(Appendix B, cont)

<u>Stage 5</u>

*shows an awareness of ambiguity and complexity in thinking about the world, willing to embrace such ambiguity and complexity to some degree
*emphasis on the mediation of different perspectives and methods to yield more complete understanding
*openness to "understanding" and "experienced complexity" rather than "explanation."
*generally open to depth phenomena in all of reality, particularly in human beings, aware that much may be hidden
*world views are multidimensional and pluralistic, has sense of responsibility for holding pluralistic perspectives in tension and will not attempt to collapse tensions to achieve closure

SYMBOLIC FUNCTION

<u>Stage 3</u>

*open to multi-leveled nature of symbolism , at least in part
*does not perform critical analysis of symbols, may resist such analysis
*interpretation of symbols often be strongly influenced by trusted authorities and by group or communal norms
*conventional interpretation of religious symbols which orient toward interpersonal qualities

<u>Stage 4</u>

*tends to translate symbols into concepts or ideas
*reduces interpretations of symbols to the truth criteria of the self-selected ideology or worldview.
*makes statements that attempt to place symbols within a systematic framework or world view
*uses statements that reflect conscious de-mythologizing and the de-bunking of myth
*views symbols and myth in terms of their functional impact on social systems and groups

(Appendix B, cont)

Stage 5

*evidences an increasing openness to the evocative power of symbol
*aware of the multivariate nature of symbol, symbol not reduced to one meaning
*takes the history of the interpretation of the symbol into account
*explicit concepts or ideas are only one of a set of possible meanings for a symbol
* the evocative power of the symbol and its ideational content are held in tension, one is not reduced to the other
*the time, place, and relativity of symbols and their interpretation is acknowledged

(Adapted from the Faith Development Manual, Moseley, et al., 1993, pp. 31-74)

Appendix C

Letter of Invitation to Participate in Study

Brian R. Mc Donald
6870 Rolling Creek Way
Alexandria, VA 22315

December 17, 2003

Pastor John Doe
Oneofmany Baptist Church
Anytown, VA

Dear Pastor Doe,

I am writing to request your assistance with a research project in which I am involved as a part of the requirement for dissertation research for the degree of Ph.D. at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, VA. This project is under the supervision of Dr. Charles F. Gressard, my dissertation supervisor.

The research project examines the faith journey of members of the clergy and the interaction of this journey with career in the pastoral role. You have been chosen as a possible participant due to the fact that you are a senior pastor of a church in the North Star Church Network, have been in the ministry for at least 15 years, and will be able to provide greater understanding of clergy faith and professional functioning.

If you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will take between 1 and 1 ½ hours. You may be asked to participate in a second interview that will take between 2 and 2 ½ hours. It is expected that the two interviews will span a time period of no more than two months.

Participation in the study is voluntarily. You may withdraw from the study at any time should you choose to do so. I do not represent your church or the North Star Church church network. Participation in the study will in no way impact your employment status with your church or your association with the North Star Church Network.

I fully expect that your participation in this project will be rewarding to you personally and professionally as you explore your faith journey and career experience. There are no foreseeable risks to you as a participant in the interviews. If, during the interview process, issues arise that you would like to explore in further detail with a professional familiar with such issues, I would be glad to refer you to such a person.

I will be contacting you soon and I sincerely hope to be including you in the project.

Sincerely,

Brian R. Mc Donald
Phone: (703) 629-3248   e-mail: slidevibrato@aol.com

Appendix D

The Unfolding Tapestry of My Life

Calendar year	Your age	"Place" Geographic or economic	Key Relation-ships	Uses and direct-ions of the self	Marker Events	Events & Conditions in Society, world	Images of God	Centers of Value and Power	Authorities

Appendix E

PARTICIPANT INTAKE DATA FORM

Interviewee Code: _____

Age: _____

Gender_____

Number of years in full time clergy positions:_____

Education_____

Marital Status_____Children_____

Current Career Position:_____

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form

This study involves a study of the characteristics of the faith journey of clergy and the interaction of such with career in the pastoral ministry. The research is being conducted by Brian R. Mc Donald in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in Counselor Education at the College of William & Mary in Virginia.

There are no foreseeable risks to this project. The benefits are that the participant will be given the opportunity to explore his/her own faith experience and career journey and also will be contributing to a greater understanding of clergy life and career. In the event that the project results in the participant feeling a need to explore in more detail certain issues that have arisen during the study, the researcher is able to provide the name of a professional familiar with such issues to further assist the participant.

I, as a participant in this research project, understand that:

1. I will be asked to participate in a 1 - 1 ½ hour interview.
2. I may be asked to participate in a second interview of 1 ½ -2 hours in length.
3. The nature of my participation involves my honestly and forthrightly talking about my life experience in response to a set of questions.
4. The interviews will be tape recorded. Even though the interviews may be transcribed and read by someone other than the interviewer, only the interviewer will be aware of the identity of the participant.
5. Excerpts of the interviews may be included in the final report of the study, but any identifying details will be altered or omitted so as to maintain the anonymity of the participant.
6. The study is for research purposes and will not impact my employment in any way.
7. If I have questions about the research I may call the researcher's supervisor, Dr. Charles F. Gressard at (757) 221-2352 or the researcher at (703) 629-3248.

Researcher's Mailing Address:
Brian R. Mc Donald
6870 Rolling Creek Way
Alexandria,VA 22315

Signed_____ Date_____
              (participant)

Signed_____ Date_____
              (researcher)

Appendix G

Second Interview Questions

Question	Rationale
1. How long have you been in the vocation of ministry? *Probing:* Have you had other careers? How did it come about that you decided to enter the ministry?	Age at which a pers n enters ministry may impact career satisfaction (Umeda & Frey, 1974). How is career in ministry viewed? Sense of a 'calling' impacts concept of career as it relates to personal life (Christopherson, 1994).
2. Think about the first 5 years of your career in ministry. How would you describe this period in terms of your level of satisfaction? *Probing:* Give an example incident or duty that was particularly satisfying during this time.	Are career duties congruent with faith stage outlook?
3. Can you remember an incident or duty (during this period) that contributed to your questioning previously held beliefs or attitudes to your faith and/or work? Please explain.	Young adults are often transitioning to stage 4, which involves questioning of previously held beliefs, particularly the 'personal myth' which is characteristic of adolescence (Fowler, 1981).
4. With whom did you feel the closest as far as your faith is concerned during this time? *Probing:* Were these individuals inside the church or apart from the church?	To what degree does the congregation served function as a part of the 'faith triad' with whom the pastor shares a 'center of value and power' (Fowler, 1981,2001)?
5. Think about the next period of your work, maybe from the 6th to the 10th year of ministry. Do you remember incidents where your beliefs or views had evolved to such a place that you thought of your work in a different way? *Probing:* How did this impact your level of satisfaction with your work? Were there times when changing views resulted in difficulty or tension in your work?	Dissonance between beliefs and expected function can lead to career dissatisfaction (Rulla, 1971, Lee, 1976) How did the participant manage growth in faith with professional expectations?
6. Think about the period of ministry from around year 11 up to the present. Share some examples of how your faith outlook has changed from what it had been during previous periods. *Probing:* Share an event or issue that represents a turning point in the way that you viewed your work as a pastor	Movement toward stage 5 is characterized by a broadening of outlook and by an increased tolerance for ambiguity and paradox (Fowler, 1981, 2002)
7. With whom did (do) you feel the closest as far as your faith is concerned during this period (period from year eleven to present)?	With whom does the pastor share the 'faith triad' at this time (faith stage 4.5 or above)?
8. Currently, do you see your ability to function as a pastor to have improved? *Probing:* What about relationships with congregants? How do you relate to congregants whose faith outlook may be quite different from your own?	How does a pastor relate to congregants who may be at a lower faith stage? Does faith stage advancement beyond that of congregants result in greater effectiveness or a crisis in communication (Fowler, personal correspondence, 2003)?
9. As you reflect on our ministry to this point, do you feel that it has been worthwhile? *Probing:* Do you see your work as a pastor as being relevant to today's world? What are your thoughts about your future in ministry. How has being in ministry impacted your personal life?	Satisfaction and tenure are related to feelings of the relevancy of work (Jud, Mills, & Burch, 1970). Attempt to find our the impact of clergy career functioning upon faith development?

Appendix H

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT TAPESTRY FORM

(The following message was sent via e-mail to the participant with the tapestry exercise attached)

Dear Pastor_____,

Attached is a form for you to use do begin thinking about the interview. Take a few minutes to think about the major periods of your life. In the first column, divide your life into segments of maybe 5 or 10 years. Then, make some notes about your life at each of these stages right up to the present.

Here are a few clarifications;

5. Uses and Directions of the Self: refers to how you used your time and what you thought you were doing at that time

9. Centers of Value and Power: refers to the persons, objects, institutions, or goals that formed the center of your life at this time.

10. Authorities: refers to whom or what you looked to for guidance and direction during this time.

The others are self explanatory. These notes are just to facilitate our discussion. You don't have to give them to me.

I look forward to our meeting.

Brian Mc Donald

Appendix I

FAITH STAGE INTERVIEW
SCORING ANALYSIS SHEET

Interview ID: _____   Scorer: _____

Note: The prompts are printed in **Bold** in the interview.

Interview Question, Description Passage #, Stage   Scoring Criteria

A. LOGIC
Decisions ___/___
Breakthroughs ___/___
Crises ___/___
Change in Self ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Logic Score_____

B. PERSPECTIVE TAKING
Past Relationships ___/___
Current Relationships ___/___
Parents ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Perspective Taking Score_____

C. MORAL JUDGMENT
Right Action ___/___
Sin ___/___
Evil ___/___
Religious Conflicts ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Moral Judgment Score_____

D. BOUNDS OF SOCIAL AWARENESS
Marker Events ___/___
Groups ___/___
Changes in Relationships ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Bounds of Soc. Aware Score____

E. LOCUS OF AUTHORITY
Your Life Meaning ___/___
Beliefs ___/___
Always Right ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Locus of Authority Score_____

F. FORM OF WORLD COHERENCE
Purpose of Human Life ___/___
Death ___/___
Religious Person ___/___
Mature Faith ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Form of World Coherence_____

G. SYMBOLIC FUNCTION
Image of God ___/___
Symbols, Rituals ___/___
Spiritual Discipline ___/___
Harmony ___/___
_____ ___/___

Average Symbolic Function Score_____

Other: DISCREPANT DATA

_____

AVERAGE OF ALL ASPECTS_____