

Family Stressors and Strategies for Alleviation of Stressors in Pastors' Families

Final Report to the North American Division Ministerial and Family Ministries Departments in conjunction with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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Seminary Training, Role Demands, Family Stressors and Strategies for Alleviation of Stressors in Pastors' Families

Executive Summary

This is a report from a study of the stressors faced by Seventh-day Adventist pastors and their families in the North American Division. While the data are extensive and complex, we feel that the results are clear: the front-line leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist church, pastors and their families, experience levels of stress that are not sustainable for the future health of the Church. The results of this study comprise a call to action on the part of the higher levels of our Church organization to intervene and reduce the stressors associated with pastoral roles, expectations, and family life.

Researchers and Church administrators have had a long-term interest in the stresses experienced by clergy and how these stressors relate to the ability of the clergy to effectively conduct their ministry. Surveys suggest that clergy are one of the most trusted professions in the United States and that congregants turn to the clergy for assistance for a wide variety of traumatic life experiences. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has high theological and behavioral expectations of its clergy and their families. These expectations can place significant stress on the clergy who are not trained in areas in which congregants expect their help.

This study emerged within the context of a desire on the part of the General Conference and North American Division's Ministerial Department and Family Ministries Department to assess and attempt to develop strategies to alleviate Pastor Family Stressors. The study was conducted by researchers from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the Institute for the Prevention of Addictions, Behavioral Sciences Department and the Social Work Department at Andrews University.

This cooperative study had the following objectives:

1. Examine the training of pastors and how that training relates to their experiences of being a pastor.
2. Examine the stressors that are perceived/experienced by pastors, their spouses, and their adult children using a quantitative survey approach and a qualitative focus group approach.
3. Triangulate the responses from the survey and focus groups to determine the key stress issues that pastors and their families face.
4. Examine the consequences of pastoral family stress.
5. Suggest strategies for alleviating pastoral family stress from clerical training to continuing education approaches based on the study results.

Methodology

Two types of methodology were used in this study. In cooperation with the General Conference and the North American Division, a survey was constructed to assess perceptions of training and stressors experienced by pastors, their spouses and their adult children. A total of 389 pastors, 313 spouses, and 171 pastor children were surveyed. In addition, focus groups were used to further understand the stressors experienced, the strategies used to address these stressors and obtaining information that might help develop educational and intervention programs to alleviate these stressors. Five focus groups were conducted with pastors, 6 with spouses, 4 with children and 5 with pastor family groups.

Note: the quantitative findings regarding pastoral education and continuing education are excluded from this document since this document is targeting ministerial spouses.

Pastoral Family Stress

Personal Challenge Checklist

Spiritual Issues – Two-thirds of pastors reported that they had at least a mild level of concern about the difficulty of making time for personal devotions. Spouses at 75% and children at 92% were significantly higher. Personal prayer and maintaining a personal connection with God were also a challenge for all members of pastoral Families.

Addictions/Health Behavior Issues – The majority of all three groups reported at least a mild challenge with eating unhealthy foods with overeating reported by 40% or higher in each group. While very few pastors and even fewer spouses had a challenge with substance abuse, over 18% of children did. About one-third of pastors and over 45% of children had at least a mild challenge with pornography. Over one-third for pastors and spouses and over 71% for children of pastors struggle with media addiction.

Depression/Anxiety and Mental Health – About 61% of spouses reported struggles with anxiety or depression compared to 56% of children and 49% of pastors. This finding should be of significant concern to the Church. About 9% of spouses reported a concern about mental illness compared to 7% of children and 4% of pastors.

Family Life Issues – The data show very low rates of concern about domestic violence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. Pastors and their spouses show relatively low rates of emotional/verbal abuse, but there is a significantly higher rate of concern among pastors' children (25%), spiritual abuse (17%), extramarital sex (22%) and same sex attraction (10%).

Conflict – The majority of all three response groups expressed concern about church politics at higher organizational levels of the church and similar concern about politics at the local conference level. The majority of pastors and their children expressed at least a mild level of concern about conflict over worship styles, women’s ordination, jewelry, dietary choices and church doctrine.

Recommendations: Overall the data suggest that the Church should take a serious look at the mental health concerns of pastors and their families and consider policies to address these concerns; especially concerns around anxiety and depression. In addition to enhancing counseling opportunities for pastoral families, consideration should be given to developing a treatment facility dedicated to providing a safe place for pastoral families to heal from addiction, marriage, family, perceptions of verbal abuse, and mental health challenges. The data showing significantly higher rates of concern about these abuse issues by the children of pastors suggest the need for prevention programs for pastor’s families. The data suggest that it would be prudent to educate pastoral families about conflict resolution both in university settings and in continuing education.

Clergy Family Life Inventory

Financial Stress – Financial stress received the highest percentage of responses than any other type of potential stress listed in this questionnaire. Over 70% of pastors and spouses indicated at least a mild level of stress with meeting monthly financial needs, saving money, and meeting any financial emergency. Approximately 60% of pastors and spouses perceived at least mild stress in their need for more monthly income, a better financial base, the lack of equity in their homes and the financial stress of frequent moves. About half of pastors and spouses expressed concern about paying for their children’s college costs.

Family Life Stress -- The majority of pastors and pastor’s spouses indicated that they felt at least mild stress in response to the obligation to attend social activities not of their choice, disruption of their vacations by congregational member’s demands, the kind of daily interpretations of family time by congregations, the impact of congregational demands on marital relations. The majority of spouses reported at least mild stress from living in a “fish bowl” and being expected to be a model family.

Relationship Stressors Outside of the Family – The data suggest a considerable stress level from a feeling of isolation from others. A majority of pastors and spouses indicated at least mild stress because they felt that they could not confide in anyone and that that had difficulty in the

balance between being a minister and a friend and because there were no other clergy families that they could be open with or be themselves with as well as no one with whom they could emotionally connect.

Time Demands – Over two-thirds of pastors and spouses felt that the time demands of their roles prevented sufficient leisure time with their families. The majority of both groups reported at least mild stress because they did not have enough time for friends to visit. Over two-thirds of spouses, and 46% of pastors felt at least mild stress because a spouse was expected to participate in almost all church events. Finally, 45% of pastors and 50% of spouses feel at least a mild stress level because they are in a time tug of war between the needs of their congregations and the families.

Moving Stressors – The majority of pastors and spouses reported at least mild stress when they families faced the possibility of moving and because the decision to move was made, not by the pastor and the family but rather by external others. Nearly half of pastors and spouses feel at least mild stress when they have to balance the needs of their families with accepting a call to move.

Recommendations: The data suggest the potential importance of financial counseling services for pastors and their families in pastoral training and through continuing education. Data from family life stress suggest the need for training in managing and prioritizing unexpected congregational demands. Setting healthy boundaries with congregants would be important training for the pastor, the family and the congregation. The data suggest that it is essential to address the sense of emotional disconnect and isolation that pastoral families feel. Building opportunities for pastoral family activities, mentoring and small groups could address this need. Consideration must be given to the policy of frequent moves for pastors. The needs of pastoral families as well as the conference should be considered.

Pastor's Children Concerns

Overall the concerns of the adult children surveyed were similar to the concerns expressed by pastors and spouses. All three groups expressed concern about family finances, frequent moves and feeling alone with no one to talk to as well as mental health issues and the need for counseling. What is unique about the children is the behavioral expectations. There are three areas that the adult children expressed the highest level of concern: first, congregants and the whole community expected the children of pastors to be on their best behavior; second, the expectation that they be available to volunteer to do whatever the church needed; and finally, the congregation's expectations on such routine life decisions and events such as extra-

curricular activities, grades and career decisions. Overall the data suggest that the children of pastors feel “watched” and likely criticized at almost every level of daily life.

Recommendations: The data suggest the need for family counseling for pastor families to find ways protect their children from intrusive congregants and of managing the stress of being so much in the public eye.

Pastoral Family Coping Strategies

Pastors were more likely to address the person who caused the stress to find out more about the situation and grow from the experience than both spouses and children. On the other hand, pastors were less likely than spouses or children to accept sympathy and understanding from someone else and less likely to wish the situation would somehow just go away or to talk to someone about how they were feeling.

One of the spouses’ main coping mechanism was anger at those who were causing the problem. Pastors and spouses reported asking a relative or friend for advice more often than adult children. Their adult children did not tend to talk to someone who could do something concrete about the problem and were also much more likely than pastors and pastors’ spouses to fight for what they wanted, to change something about themselves because of the stress, to fantasize about how things might turn out or wish that things would just go away on their own more often than either of their parents.

Both pastors and children tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind and were less likely to report rediscovering what is important than spouses.

Recommendations: Because pastoral families must cope with stress related to the pastoral role, mechanisms such as focus groups would give them a safe place to process their coping strategies and learn how others cope with similar stresses.

PASTOR FAMILY STRESS QUALITATIVE STUDY

Pastor Family Spiritual Life Challenges and Enhancers

Pastors, pastor spouses, and adult children in pastoral families all concur that they face challenges to their spiritual lives that are directly connected to their pastor or pastor-family roles. It appears that the occupational role of being a pastor or being a pastor spouse or a child of a pastor inherently provides a context in which the spiritual lives of these individuals face challenges. While the challenges vary from group to group (pastors or pastor spouses or pastor’s children) the striking finding is that in the very homes and families where it is hoped

that spirituality would be strongest, these family members report significant challenge and difficulty.

The most common thread of spiritual life challenge for pastors and for spouses of pastors centers on developing and maintaining personal and family boundaries. Bolstering these boundaries would allow pastors and pastor spouses the ability to prioritize spiritual growth. When the press of “the work” becomes all-consuming, the spiritual lives of the pastors and spouses suffer.

For pastor’s children, the primary spiritual life challenge concerned the social role expectations associated with being a pastor’s child. Role expectation challenges will be addressed in another section of this report.

Participants in the adult children of pastor’s focus groups shared that church member’s high expectation of them often exacerbated their spiritual struggles. Some examples included expectations to have the pastor’s children behave well, be an example to others, be spiritual, and to have Biblical knowledge similar to a pastor.

When those high expectations weren’t fulfilled, participants reported feeling a certain amount of resentment towards the church. Pastoral children expressed that attending church was like ‘preparing for war.’ This implies a need for protective gear in the form of additional social support that was lacking for them.

The adult children of pastors reported that it seemed they were not allowed to struggle and make mistakes then be able to learn from those mistakes. Since their father was also their pastor, there were certain things they did not want their parents to know. This led to a sense that they didn’t really have a pastor they could confide in which resulted in stunted spiritual growth for some.

While the study participants revealed several challenges to experiencing the level of spiritual life that they desired, participants also shared factors that enhanced their spiritual lives. Pastors, pastor spouses and the adult children of pastors offered differing perspectives about the types of things that enhanced their spiritual lives.

A primary theme for the pastor groups focused on achieving work/life balance (accepting human limitations and engaging in self-care). This finding supports and reinforces the recommendations to address spiritual life challenges by implementing better-defined personal and professional boundaries. A second theme centered on being intentional about spiritual experiences—whether they occurred within the work context or on a personal level.

Pastor spouses echoed the theme of becoming intentional about building their spiritual lives. This happened by setting boundaries and prioritizing spiritual development or taking the time to enjoy the spiritual development of other people. Pastor spouses also focused on how social support positively impacts a sense of a growing spiritual life.

For the adult children of pastors, while some participants experienced challenge with church participation; other participants found that struggles with the church membership led to enhanced spiritual growth. It was also helpful to see God working in the lives of others, which in turn strengthened their spiritual life.

Recommendations:

Starting with the pastor, pastor families need to be explicitly encouraged to prioritize their family and spiritual lives as a part of their ministerial duties. Knowledge and skill development in setting personal and professional boundaries may be a helpful step in heading off the challenges of establishing and maintaining healthy spiritual lives for this group of people.

When participants (pastors and pastor spouses) became intentional about building their spiritual lives, they experienced and reported enhanced spiritual wellbeing. A simple intervention to encourage greater intentionality is for church leaders to regularly remind pastors and their spouses that their spiritual development is paramount.

Since the primary spiritual challenge for children of pastors centers on role expectations and church members, the recommendations for this group will come in the Role Expectations of this report.

Pastor Family Financial Stress Challenges and Stress Alleviators

A major theme in this study concerning stress of pastoral life centered on financial challenges for two groups: pastors and pastor spouses. For adult children of pastors, this theme diminished in significance.

Pastors and pastoral spouses experience income challenges as well as expense challenges. The income challenges for pastors centers on their pay rates while the income challenges for pastor spouses focuses a variety of employment factors. These pastor spouse employment difficulties include interruptions due to mandatory moves, having unpaid duties associated with the pastor spouse role, and through perceived role conflicts with their ministry duties and their paid employment.

Study participants also shared a number of expense challenges unique to the pastoral family such as the obligation they sense for having their children attend Seventh-day Adventist

schools. For pastor spouses, another expense challenge focused on the social expectations of the pastor family and the financial obligations associated with those expectations.

In terms of alleviating financial stress, pastors and spouses expressed a desire to have greater financial literacy. In addition, when a spouse is able to secure a strong supplemental income, financial stress decreases.

Recommendations:

One common theme for both pastor and pastor spouse groups centered on the stressor of mandatory moving and the attending costs associated with those moves. As a result, we recommend that church leadership carefully review policies and processes involved in moving pastors with an eye to reduce these moves over the course of the family's ministry.

In addition, providing either financial education or a financial advising for pastoral families may decrease financial stress. For example, church administrators might consider instituting a pilot program from Financial Peace University that has been shown to be effective in teaching money management from a Christian perspective.

Role Expectation Stressors and Stress Alleviators

A second major theme of the study centered on the stress that comes from the role expectations associated with pastoral ministry. Participants in the pastor focus groups noted that the pastor's role is largely undefined. This role diffusion leads to role expansion and in turn to increased stress due to work overload.

A similar theme emerged among pastor spouses—that the pastor spouse role was ill defined and therefore subject to a myriad of social expectations. The number and variety of expectations proved overwhelming and stressful.

Among adult children from pastor families, role expectations emerged as one of the most painful and predominant themes. The participants' understanding of the role expectations came from interaction with church members. Participants perceived that church members expected pastors' children to: (1) exhibit high behavioral standards, (2) be either perfect or wild, (3) be a good example to others, (4) have high levels of spiritual knowledge, and (5) participate extensively in church groups and activities.

For pastors and pastor spouses the two primary methods of role expectation management included setting personal boundaries and training church members in regards to appropriate role expectations.

Recommendations:

Pastors would benefit by having clear role expectations outlined by church leadership. When the role expectations are diffuse, workload and stress increase. Similarly, church leaders spelling out any expectations that conferences hold for pastor spouses would be very helpful in stress reduction. Pastor spouses also expressed a desire to receive formal training and mentoring provided as the couple is entering pastoral ministry.

Church members should be informed/educated about the role of pastor and pastor spouse so as to reduce the number and types of expectations congregants currently hold.

Children of pastors are clearly the most vulnerable group in terms of role expectations and the stress that results from these expectations. As a result, we recommend that a more in-depth study be undertaken focusing on pastor children and role expectations.

The investigation should aim to uncover the extent of the problem, the negative effects of role expectations and gather data on strategies to intervene with the pressures that accompany role expectations. Following that investigation a pilot intervention should be initiated to address the negative effects of role expectations.

Social Support Needs, Barriers and Facilitators

Study participants discussed at length their need for ongoing, intentional, and confidential social support in their roles as pastors, pastor spouses, and children of pastors. Yet, the analysis reveals multiple barriers to getting the support they needed. While the pastors, pastor spouses, and children of pastors differed in the types of barriers they experienced, the common theme remained--the participants felt there was insufficient support available to them.

For pastors, their family members, including spouses, provided one primary avenue of social support. Another source of social support for pastors and pastor spouses were peer group mentors. For pastors, other pastors served as mentors and for pastor spouses, other pastor spouses provided social support through mentorship. For pastors and pastor spouses who were able to navigate the initial boundary crossing, church members also provided appropriate social support.

Pastoral children did not always feel comfortable speaking to their parents about their struggles. The types of difficulties pastors' children faced in soliciting support included: (1) father often absent, (2) peers believing stereotypes, (3) having to find new friends due to frequent moves.

Recommendations:

Access to social support has been shown to be connected to general human wellbeing. Therefore, it is crucially important that people in church leadership positions begin to examine why pastors and their spouses and children sense such a lack of social support and experience the overwhelming barriers to receiving the support they need.

While preliminary, our sense of the data points to a pervasive set of beliefs about the pastor family role and the boundaries surrounding the pastor family and the congregation. When pastor families cannot be authentic with their parishioners, when they need to uphold a persona of “role model” rather than “fellow traveller” it leads to human disconnection. Examining the question of what healthy boundaries are for pastor families and their church members is a worthy goal for church leaders.

In preparing pastors and their families for the ministry, we recommend that they be made aware of the pressures they will experience and how it uniquely affects the children. Parents can protect their children from the high expectations of the congregation by defending them when necessary and educating the congregation on how that pressure unfairly harms their children. In addition, parents can provide emotional support of their children through encouraging open communication and allowing mistakes and growing pains as their children navigate growing up in a fishbowl.

Because pastor’s children feel like they have to present such a perfect front for their pastoral parent’s sake, they often don’t feel comfortable reaching out to others when they do have a problem. There should be encouragement for pastor’s children to get confidential support through either peers or professional counselors.

Once source of social support for children of pastors proved to be other pastoral children. Participants related that they felt comfortable confiding in other pastors’ children because this group understood them best. Therefore, we recommended church leadership provide regular opportunities, at least once per year, for pastoral families to interact with one another so they can provide understanding and support in ways that no one else can.

Stress Related to Conflict Resolution

Stress related to conflict was an important theme for pastors, but not pastor spouse participants. The sources stressful conflict included conflicts with the local church and conflict with church leadership. Pastors also cited difficulties with lack of appropriate conflict resolution and relocating pastors in times of conflict rather than addressing the problem and resolving it. Both types of conflict contributed to pastors thinking about leaving pastoral ministry.

While conflict is a normal part of human interaction, the pastors noted that the stress often came from inappropriate methods of conflict resolution. Conversely, pastors reported that

having the support of the higher levels of church organization helped to mitigate the stress associated with conflict.

Recommendation:

Because of the connection between conflict stress and pastor burnout, it is important for church leadership to examine ways in which conflict is currently addressed. Pastors may be lacking in confidence or abilities in dealing with conflict. In this case, church leadership can provide targeted training for pastors in conflict management and resolution. It is crucially important for church leaders to be especially skilled in conflict resolution themselves and to model these skills to the pastors they serve.

Stress Management

Methods of stress management were not addressed to a great degree in the pastor or pastor spouse focus groups. Children of pastors spent quite a bit of time discussing the positive and negative coping strategies they used to manage their stress. In response to the pressure, participants identified escape and reaching out behaviors as a way they coped with stress. The escape behaviors included excessive reading, pornography addiction, and partying.

Conversely, participants identified positive coping behaviors such as: having a strong personal relationship with God, vacations, reaching out to others for support using open communication with their support system (parents, counselors, friends), externalizing the pressure, and developing hobbies (music and art).

There were some cultural influences on how these pressures were managed within the family. Some participants from Haitian and Latin cultures reported they felt like they could not reach out to others and that they had to handle their problems on their own.

Recommendations:

Researchers recommend that educational opportunities for children of pastors be made available by church leadership. The educational opportunities could focus on developing positive coping mechanisms such as cultivating peer support, encouraging healthy leisure activities, and communication skills. Open dialog and education about issues of addiction should be initiated with a primary prevention approach. It is crucially important that these educational messages and any accompanying resources come to pastor children without judgment or condemnation and that they are offered with complete confidentiality.

Overall Recommendations

The focus group data point to a complex picture of individuals living their lives with incredible strength and coping abilities and at the same time facing tremendous amounts of stress simply due to being a member of a pastoral family.

It was clear from the data that if pastoral families are to succeed and thrive, corporate intervention is both desired and needed. Therefore we recommend that church leadership initiate an intervention strategy that begins with pilot programs for pastors, pastor spouses, and children in pastoral families. These pilot programs should have a research component that documents the impact of the intervention. As success in the pilot programs is noted, a widespread strategy should be implemented throughout the North American Division.

Integrated Executive Summary of Key Points from the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Introduction

In this study of pastor concerns and family stressors we used two different methodologies; a quantitative survey methodology and a qualitative focus group methodology. We developed the survey drawing on standard questions that have been used in this type of research and also questions tailored for this project. In developing the questionnaire we worked closely with the General Conference and North American Division's Ministerial Department as well as the General Conference and North American Division Family Ministries Department. Each methodology contributes to the findings and recommendations of the study. Quantitative methods provide a mathematical distribution of responses to questions that allow for a reasonably precise presentation of the extent of issues, stressors and concerns. One can tell if an issue/stressor was a concern to just a few or to many of the respondents. One can also see if there are significant differences between the subjects in the study; pastors, spouses and adult children.

Qualitative approaches make at least three distinct contributions to a study. First they provide the narrative context for interpreting the statistical data. Statistics can lack a clear perspective on how individuals actually perceive and think. Narrative qualitative data permit us to understand the statistical data. Secondly, qualitative data allow for issues to emerge that were not covered in a survey. By their very nature, surveys are limited in what they ask. A good survey covers the important issues, but there may be issues that are not covered. A good qualitative approach permits those issues to emerge. Finally, using two methods to examine research questions permits what is called triangulation. That is, we can see what concerns, stressors and coping mechanisms are emphasized in the survey and in the focus groups. When we see similar issues emphasized in both methodologies it suggests that these overlapping concerns/stressors may deserve special attention.

Role Demands/Expectations and Boundaries – One of the most persistent themes to emerge in both types of data collection was concern about maintaining personal and family boundaries in the face of role demands on the pastor, the pastor's spouse and the pastor's children. There were strong feelings expressed about the time demands the congregants place on a pastor's time. All family members tended to perceive that the pastor was taken away from the family with little regard to the pastor's personal time and family responsibilities. There was a tendency for the family to always feel they were being watched by the congregation to make sure they were a model family. Family members felt that they always had to go to services and meet whatever demands were made of them for roles in the church. Children seemed to especially feel that they could never live up to the behavioral expectations of the congregation and even the community.

Impact of Pastoral Role Demands/Expectations on Spiritual Life – Survey data and the focus groups noted that a major impact of the role demands and boundary issues was on the spiritual life of the pastor and the family. In the quantitative data, over 90% of the children, about 75% of the spouses and about two-thirds of the pastors indicated problems with time for personal devotions with the majority also indicating issues around personal prayer and a personal relationship with God. This theme also emerged strongly in the focus groups. It is of significant concern when respondents consistently indicate that their role of spiritual leadership reduces their own spirituality!

Lack of Support/Feeling Alone – Another major theme that emerged in both data sets was a strong sense from all family members of being isolated and without support and with no one to talk to about many issues including mental and physical health issues, behavioral problems and spiritual struggles. Often, Seventh-day Adventist Churches are isolated from each other by considerable distance. This makes the possible support of other pastoral families not readily available. In addition, in the high expectation we hold for pastors and their families, it is difficult for them to admit vulnerabilities. Both of these factors appear to be a cause of considerable stress and concern.

Finances – Consistently, in both data sets, concerns and stressors around finances emerged. All family members felt that there were insufficient resources to meet the expectations that children would be educated in Adventist schools, live middle class life styles and have sufficient funds for retirement. Both data sets also suggest that salary issues also placed expectations that spouses would work and that pastoral moves made a spouse's career difficult. Finances are a complex issue that cannot simply be addressed by salary increases (and there are likely no funds to do that anyway). The data suggest that financial issues are a major source of stress and concern for all family members and the need for financial management to be a key part of pastoral training and continuing education.

Conflict – Another major source of concern and stress, particularly for the pastors in the qualitative data for all in the quantitative data, involved conflicts that occur within the local church as well as conflict issues within the larger church. Some of the major issues noted were gender equal ordination and jewelry. Pastors are in the front lines of any conflict as they attempt to resolve conflicts and explain larger church issues to their congregants. Pastors and their families also felt pressed by conflicts between various levels of the Church. If church members, Conferences, Unions, Divisions and the General Conference were moving in different directions, the pastor and their families felt considerable stress as they attempted to minister to their congregations, be a model family, and be loyal to the church. The issue of gender equal ordination was noted an example of these issues.

Stress Management – The negative impact on the spiritual life of pastors and their families has been noted, it is also important to note the concerns the pastors and their families raised about inappropriate stress coping mechanisms that they may use. Significant substance use, poor dietary habits, excessive media use, and pornography (pastors and their children) were reported. All members of the pastoral family unit also reported significant depression/anxiety. A number of more positive stress management responses were also noted and included a deepening relationship with God, reprioritizing the important things in life, and supportive others. But it must be remembered a high proportion of individuals felt too isolated from others to receive support from them.

Overall, both methodological approaches suggest that there are real concerns and stressors that impact the pastor and the family. These concerns and stressors must be addressed if the spiritual life of the pastor and their family is to be improved and burnout prevented. The reality of the impact of stressors is also indicated by the percent of pastors who had seriously considered leaving the ministry.

While it is important to note that the summary reports from each of the methodologies are important and stand on their own. In this brief section, we focused on key issues where both methods elicited similar concerns and stressors. These findings may suggest the high importance of addressing these issues.

Integrated Recommendations

Spiritual Life Challenges:

Starting with the pastor, pastor families need to be explicitly encouraged to prioritize their family and spiritual lives as a part of their ministerial duties. Knowledge and skill development in setting personal and professional boundaries may be a helpful step in heading off the challenges of establishing and maintaining healthy spiritual lives for this group of people.

When participants (pastors and pastor spouses) became intentional about building their spiritual lives, they experienced and reported enhanced spiritual wellbeing. A simple intervention to encourage greater intentionality is for church leaders to regularly remind pastors and their spouses that their spiritual development is paramount. Pastors should specifically be encouraged to make personal time with God more important than sermon preparation or any other pastoral responsibility.

Since the primary spiritual challenge for children of pastors centers on role expectations and church members, the recommendations for this group will come in the Role Expectations of this report.

Financial Stress:

One common theme for both pastor and pastor spouse groups centered on the stressor of mandatory moving and the attending costs associated with those moves. As a result, we recommend that church leadership carefully review policies and processes involved in moving pastors with an eye to reduce these moves over the course of the family's ministry.

In addition, providing either financial education or a financial advising for pastoral families may decrease financial stress. For example, church administrators might consider instituting a pilot program from Financial Peace University that has been shown to be effective in teaching money management from a Christian perspective.

Role Expectations Stressors:

Pastors would benefit by having clear role expectations outlined by church leadership. When the role expectations are diffuse, workload and stress increase. Similarly, church leaders spelling out any expectations that conferences hold for pastor spouses would be very helpful in stress reduction. Pastor spouses also expressed a desire to receive formal training and mentoring provided as the couple is entering pastoral ministry.

Church members should be informed/educated about the role of pastor and pastor spouse so as to reduce the number and types of expectations congregants currently hold.

Children of pastors are clearly the most vulnerable group in terms of role expectations and the stress that results from these expectations. As a result, we recommend that a more in-depth study be undertaken focusing on pastor children and role expectations.

The investigation should aim to uncover the extent of the problem, the negative effects of role expectations and gather data on strategies to intervene with the pressures that accompany role expectations. Following that investigation a pilot intervention should be initiated to address the negative effects of role expectations.

Social Support Needs, Barriers and Facilitators:

Access to social support has been shown to be connected to general human wellbeing. Therefore, it is crucially important that people in church leadership positions begin to examine why pastors and their spouses and children sense such a lack of social support and experience the overwhelming barriers to receiving the support they need.

While preliminary, our sense of the data points to a pervasive set of beliefs about the pastor family role and the boundaries surrounding the pastor family and the congregation. When pastor families cannot be authentic with their parishioners, when they need to uphold a persona of “role model” rather than “fellow traveler” it leads to human disconnection. Examining the question of what healthy boundaries are for pastor families and their church members is a worthy goal for church leaders.

In preparing pastors and their families for the ministry, we recommend that they be made aware of the pressures they will experience and how it uniquely affects the children. Parents can protect their children from the high expectations of the congregation by defending them when necessary and educating the congregation on how that pressure unfairly harms their children. In addition, parents can provide emotional support of their children through encouraging open communication and allowing mistakes and growing pains as their children navigate growing up in a fishbowl. Some conferences have begun to host regular pastoral family retreats or social events. Others have regular group mentorship calls that provide some social support. We would recommend that such efforts be further explored and recommended to all local conferences.

Because pastor’s children feel like they have to present such a perfect front for their pastoral parent’s sake, they often don’t feel comfortable reaching out to others when they do have a problem. There should be encouragement for pastor’s children to get confidential support through either peers or professional counselors.

Once source of social support for children of pastors proved to be other pastoral children. Participants related that they felt comfortable confiding in other pastors’ children because this group understood them best. Therefore, we recommended church leadership provide regular opportunities, at least once per year, for pastoral families to interact with one another so they can provide understanding and support in ways that no one else can.

Conflict Resolution:

Because of the connection between conflict stress and pastor burnout, it is important for church leadership to examine ways in which conflict is currently addressed. Pastors may be lacking in confidence or abilities in dealing with conflict. In this case, church leadership can

provide targeted training for pastors in conflict management and resolution. It is crucially important for church leaders to be especially skilled in conflict resolution themselves and to model these skills to the pastors they serve.

Stress Management:

Researchers recommend that educational opportunities for children of pastors be made available by church leadership. The educational opportunities could focus on developing positive coping mechanisms such as cultivating peers support, encouraging healthy leisure activities, and communication skills. Open dialog and education about issues of addiction should be initiated with a primary prevention approach. It is crucially important that these educational messages and any accompanying resources come to pastor children without judgment or condemnation and that they are offered with complete confidentiality. Since pastoral families expressed such a high degree of anxiety, depression, addictive behaviors, and overall stress, we would suggest that the NAD investigate how to improve counseling services for pastoral families. One option would be developing a pastoral family retreat center specifically dedicated for pastoral families.

Overall Recommendations

The focus group data point to a complex picture of individuals living their lives with incredible strength and coping abilities and at the same time facing tremendous amounts of stress simply due to being a member of a pastoral family.

It was clear from the data that if pastoral families are to succeed and thrive, corporate intervention is both desired and needed. Therefore we recommend that church leadership initiate an intervention strategy that begins with pilot programs for pastors, pastor spouses, and children in pastoral families. These pilot programs should have a research component that documents the impact of the intervention. As success in the pilot programs is noted, a widespread strategy should be implemented throughout the North American Division.

NEXT STEPS: BUILDING ON THE STUDY EVIDENCE

What are some clear next steps or pathways that will maximize and build on results of the study findings? The two basic pathways utilizing study findings are to deepen and broaden our understanding of the problem of pastor family stress and/or to initiate intervention and change in the areas of concern uncovered by the analysis. There is not one more desirable path than another and both could and over time should be undertaken depending on available funding. The narrative that follows outlines possible projects following each of these pathways.

Full Final Report

Methodology

A three part project was undertaken. Part I of the study addressed the issue of pastoral perception of the linkage between their theological education and the current professional demands/expectations they face. Part II addressed the issue of pastoral continuing education to address training gaps and to alleviate identified stressors. Part III focused on a quantitative and qualitative study of pastoral families examining role and family stressors, the consequences of those stressors and the coping mechanisms used. A more detailed outline of each of these parts:

Part I: Perceptions of Education and Part II: Continuing Education are not included in this document due to the target group of this document.

Part III: Pastoral Family Stress:

1. Examined how pastoral families function exploring both areas of strength and challenge using a quantitative survey research methodology. To achieve this objective we:
 - a. Documented family structure (length of marriage, ages of children, whether children are in the home or not, etc.).
 - b. Surveyed NAD clergy and spouses and adult children of clergy attending Andrews University and Southern Adventist University on the stressors they have experienced and the consequences of those stressors as measured by the “Stress Coping Scale” developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1985), “Stressors of Clergy Children Inventory” developed by Ostrander, Henry, & Hendrix (1990) and the Clergy Family Life Inventory (see Morris and Blanton, 1998). The “Personal Challenge Checklist” was compiled by the researchers in close cooperation with the NAD/GC Family Ministries and Ministerial Departments.
 - c. Inquired about the strategies clergy and their spouses as well as adult children of clergy use to manage stressors and obtain ideas from pastoral families about how to relieve the stressors.
 - d. The survey (using Survey Monkey) was sent to NAD Pastors with the support of the NAD Ministerial Director. The request went from the NAD to the Unions and then to the local conferences. Spouses were contacted with the support of the NAD Spouses Association Leader. Pastors and spouses were emailed and two follow up reminders were sent. Three hundred and

eighty-nine pastors and 313 spouses responded to the survey.

e. We surveyed adult children of pastors at Andrews University and Southern Adventist University and received 171 responses.

1. Qualitative Methodology

This study included a qualitative component to provide additional context for and understanding of the quantitative data. We used focus group methodology with pastors, spouses, and their children to facilitate: (1) understanding the areas of challenge identified by the quantitative analysis; (2) identifying strategies used by clergy and spouses to manage stressors; (3) gathering information to develop programs to reduce stress among these groups, and; (4) eliciting data from which to improve clergy training in dealing with stress and role expectations.

Our research team conducted 20 focus groups consisting of five to ten participants with each participant group (pastors-- 5, spouses-- 6, adult children of pastors-- 4). In addition, five pastoral families were interviewed to examine in more depth the stressors and dynamics of SDA pastoral families. Data gathering occurred for pastors and spouses at conference-level retreats. For adult children from pastor families, data was gathered through purposive sampling on the Andrews University or Southern Adventist University campuses. The research team developed a moderator guide to facilitate and center the discussion. The moderator guide included questions on the issues identified above, tailored to the particular participant group. The focus groups lasted from 45 to 90 minutes to facilitate an in-depth discussion of the topics.

To allow for verbatim transcription, the focus groups were audio and video taped. The analysis approach used the classic constant comparison tradition (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), using qualitative software, QDA Miner.

Seminary Training, Role Demands, Family Stressors and Strategies for Alleviation of Stressors in Pastors' Families

What follows is a the final report of the results of the quantitative study of pastors, their spouses and their adult children regarding their perceptions of their seminary training, the need for and interest in continuing education for pastors and stressors on pastoral families and how the members of the pastoral family are coping with them. In this study, 389 pastors, 313 spouses and 171 adult children responded to the survey. Sixty-two percent were Caucasian pastors, 13% Black, and 15% Hispanic/Latino. Ninety-six percent were male and married, and 57% were 51 year of age or older. Forty-nine percent had spent 20 years or more in pastoral

ministry with 85% reporting that they were now senior pastors. Seventy percent of our sample had earned an MDiv, an MA in Religion, Youth Ministry or related theological program, a DMin or a PhD. An additional 26% had earned a bachelor's degree as their highest education to date.

NOTE: Part I -- Pastoral Education: Perceptions of Pastors in the Field and Part II -- Pastoral Continuing Education: Perceptions of Pastors in the Field have been omitted from this document due to the target audience being ministerial spouses.

Part III -- -- Pastoral Family Stress and Coping

Data are shown in Table Five below reporting responses to a series of 28 questions from the Personal Challenge Checklist from Pastors, Spouses and the adult children of pastors. It is important to note that these three groups are independent samples. That is, they are not matched to each other. The percentages reported are a combination of mild, moderate or severe concern for each of the questions asked.

Table Five: Personal Challenge Checklist

To what extent are the following a personal struggle for you? Percentage agreeing that item is of mild, moderate or severe concern:

Question	Pastors	Spouses	Children
1. Difficulty keeping the Sabbath day holy	40.3	43.7	67.5
2. Difficulty with personal prayer	55.9	55.0	74.4
3. Trouble maintaining personal connection with God	53.9	62.8	84.8
4. Making time for personal devotions	66.6	75.2	91.7
5. Substance abuse	3.3	.4	18.9
6. Gambling or overspending	8.9	12.4	18.3
7. Pornography	32.6	6.4	45.8
8. Media Addiction	44.8	35.5	71.1
9. Eating unhealthy foods	54.3	61.0	72.4
10. Overeating or overindulging	40.1	51.9	52.1
11. Avoiding food or "purging" to stay thin	5.6	4.0	15.8
12. Depression and/or Anxiety	49.1	60.9	55.8
13. Severe Mental Illness	3.7	8.8	6.6
14. Domestic violence	3.0	2.0	3.3
15. Physical abuse	2.7	1.6	1.6
16. Emotional or verbal abuse	12.7	18.0	25.0
17. Sexual abuse	2.3	2.4	4.2
18. Spiritual abuse	5.3	6.8	17.4
19. Extramarital sex	3.7	1.6	21.5
20. My own same sex attraction	1.1	.8	10.0
21. Church discipline	34.7	18.1	46.6

22. Conflict over differing worship styles	55.6	33.6	57.8
23. Conflict over dietary choices	23.0	29.2	44.6
24. Conflict over jewelry in the church	41.4	31.1	47.1
25. Conflict over women's ordination	46.6	37.6	45.5
26. Church politics at the local conference level	48.5	50.7	59.5
27. Church politics at the Union, Division or General Conference level	56.5	58.8	51.3
28. My own conflict with church doctrine	15.2	18.0	38.1

Spiritual Issues (questions 1-4) – The first set of issues focused on personal spiritual aspects. Two-thirds of pastors reported that they had at least a mild level of concern about the difficulty of making time for personal devotions. Spouses at 75% and children at 92% were significantly higher. This was the only statistically significant difference between pastors, spouses and children. The area of personal devotions appears to be of the greatest challenge to all three groups. The majority of pastors, spouses and children also reported at least a mild personal challenge in personal prayer and maintaining a personal connection with God. Keeping the Sabbath was less of a challenge to pastors, spouses or children (though two-thirds of children reported it to be at least of mild challenge). Overall, these data suggest that the majority of pastors and spouses as well as over three-fourths of children of pastors experience at least a mild challenge in these important spiritual areas.

Addictions/Health Behavior Issues (Questions 5-11) – A series of items on addictions and unhealthy behaviors were listed. The majority of all three groups reported at least a mild challenge with eating unhealthy foods with overeating reported by 40% or higher in each group. This likely occurs because of the strong Adventist emphasis on eating healthy foods. While very few pastors and even fewer spouses had a challenge with substance abuse, over 18% of children did; this was a statistically significant difference. About one-third of pastors and over 45% of children had at least a mild challenge with pornography compare to only 6% of spouses. The wide spread availability of pornography via the internet and the privacy that affords is a major issue that has often been studied among clergy. Similar data exists for media use with spouses joining pastors and children in the challenges they face with Media Addiction; over one-third for pastors and spouses and over 71% for children of pastors. Overall these data suggest that pastors and their families face at least mild challenges in dealing with health behaviors with the highest rates involving pornography (for the pastors and their children), food and media (for all three groups).

Depression/Anxiety and Mental Health (Questions 12 & 13) – There was a statistically significant difference between pastors and their other family members in terms of reporting concern about anxiety/depression. About 61% of spouses reported this concern compared to 56% of children and 49% of pastors. While exact comparable data are not available, these

relatively high rates and particularly the high rates of spouses expressing at least mild concern about anxiety and depression should be of significant concern to the Church. It is also important to note that there was a significant difference between pastors, spouses and children relative to concern about severe mental illness. About 9% of spouses reported this concern compared to 7% of children and 4% of pastors. Overall the data suggest that the Church should take a serious look at the mental health concerns of pastors and their families and consider policies to address these concerns; especially concerns around anxiety/depression!

Family Life Issues – (Questions 14-20) – These questions cover a series of items about family life problems. The data show very low rates of concern about domestic violence, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. What any rate is of concern, the low rates of at least mild concern reported is of note. Relatively low rates of concern are also evident in the reports from pastors and their spouses, but there is a significantly higher rate of concern from the children about emotional/verbal abuse (25%), spiritual abuse (17%), extramarital sex (22%) and same sex attraction (10%). These data showing significantly higher rates of concern about these abuse issues by the children of pastors suggest the need for prevention programs for pastor's families.

Conflict – (Questions 21-28) – These questions examine concerns about a wide variety of possible conflicts with the Church. The majority of all three response groups expressed concern about Church politics at higher organizational levels of the Church with close to a majority expressing similar concern about politics at the local conference level. Interestingly, the majority of pastors and their children expressed at least a mild level of concern about conflict over worship styles. The next highest level of conflict concern focused on women's ordination with over 45% of pastors and their children expressing at least mild concern and 38% of spouses expressing this level of concern or higher. Interestingly, the data also show that conflict over jewelry remains a significant concern among pastors and their family members with over 40% of pastors and their children expressing at least mild concern and 31% of spouses expressing this concern. About one-quarter of pastors and their spouses expressed at least mild concern about conflict over diet choices with 45% among the adult children expressing concern about this conflict. This difference was statistically significant. The other significant difference in this section was over conflict with church doctrine. About 15% of pastors expressed at least mild concern about conflict with church doctrines, 18% of spouses, but 38% of adult children! Overall these data show a relatively high percentage of the respondents are concerned about many types of conflict issues in the Church with church politics at every organizational level. This concern received the highest percentage of concern from all three respondent groups. It is also important to note that the adult children of pastors were more likely to express concern about more conflict issues than the pastor or spouse group.

Summary of Pastoral Challenge Check List

1. A large majority of pastors and their families are concerned about the difficulties they have in maintaining a strong spiritual life.
2. Anxiety and depression are concerns for a majority of pastors, spouses and children.
3. Between 10% and 25% of the children of pastor's express concern about various non-physical abuse issues.
4. For the majority of all three study groups there are concerns about conflict at all levels of church organization.

Clergy Family Life Inventory

Table Six reports responses from the pastors and spouses indicating a mild, moderate or severe stress from 52 items. In order to avoid what is called response set questions of similar type are spread through this questionnaire. In this report, these questions will be organized together for purposes of discussion.

Please indicate how stressful each situation listed is for you. (Clergy Family Life Inventory) Percentage reporting that item creates mild, moderate or severe stress

Question	Pastor	Spouse
1. It is difficult to make it through each month without worrying whether or not our financial resources will be adequate for our needs.	72	73.3
2. Our family is expected never to need outside professional intervention like therapy or counseling.	31.7	38.5
3. Our congregation's expectations for our children are unrealistically high.	30.0	34.4
4. Most of our social activities are out of a sense of obligation rather than choice.	53.3	61.2
5. Our family has a public lifestyle that is different from our private lifestyle.	27.3	31.6
6. Our congregation expects the needs of our family to be secondary to their needs.	44.1	49.5
7. My spouse's expectations for how our family should function are too high.	32.4	29.0
8. Our family's financial situation requires more than the salary received from the church.	67.5	70.1
9. My spouse is expected to participate in most every church event even though our members are not always expected to participate.	45.9*	67.6
10. Our family is expected by our congregation to be a "model family".	42.7	55.9
11. My expectations for how our family functions are too high.	39.6	41.3
12. My compensation package does not provide adequate periods of paid vacation.	36.6	33.2
13. We do not have a network of other clergy families with whom we can really be open.	56.5	59.6
14. I feel we are caught in a tug-of-war between "church" and "family".	45.2	50.4
15. Our family does not have enough privacy.	33.5	36.2
16. It is difficult to maintain relationships that were made in former pastorates.	36.8	43.1
17. I am concerned about the level of retirement benefits we will have in the later years.	73.4	75.2
18. Our family's inability to save money on a regular basis is a worry for me.	70.7	75.0
19. Our family does not have affordable and comprehensive medical coverage.	31.5	30.2

20. Our congregation feels our marriage should be a role model for them to look to in shaping their own marital relationships.	27.8	32.0
21. Our congregation does not accept our family's expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction.	30.0	34.3
22. It is difficult for us to provide the same standard of living for our children as most of their peers have.	34.3	37.4
23. Clergy salaries in our organization simply do not provide a strong enough financial base for our family.	65.3	61.8
24. Our family resents having congregational input on how our house is decorated and/or maintained.	12.4	10.1
25. Congregation members believe that they have a right to know what goes on in our family.	22.6	26.3
26. Our family resents congregational influences on our decision-making.	22.1	22.8
27. We find it difficult to establish times for our marital relationship without having interruptions related to the needs of our children.	36.0	40.1
28. It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates.	49.7	44.1
29. Our congregation disrupts days off and vacations for reasons other than emergencies.	50.5	52.8
30. Selflessness is an important aspect of ministering effectively to a congregation.	41.7	47.8
31. The leadership of my denomination does not respond in a positive manner to evidence of human failings or family problems in clergy families.	39.9	39.3
32. Planning times away from our congregation for vacations is problematic if congregational needs arise.	39.9	54.9
33. Our family does not feel close to our denomination's leadership.	38.0	37.7
34. There are not enough hours in the week to handle all our responsibilities and still have enough leisure time together as a family.	67.4	68.4
35. Our children have difficulty adjusting to new people and new situations when we move.	35.3	34.4
36. I have very few people I can confide in about the really important matters in my life.	64.7	71.0
37. When our family changes pastorates, we find it difficult to make new friends.	37.7	41.9
38. Our family is upset when faced with the possibility of moving.	58.9	54.3
39. The lack of equity acquired in owning a house is a concern for our family.	60.4	57.0
40. The moves our family has made have created financial concerns for us.	63.6	56.4
41. Moves are difficult to cope with because they are the result of decisions external to our family.	51.2	51.6
42. The free time most families have during the week are times when congregational demands interfere with our family's time together.	55.6	58.5
43. We have moved because at times we did not feel a sense of belonging to the community.	23.7	19.0
44. Our family is living in a "fish bowl".	39.3	50.3
45. Our family does not get to spend enough time with our relatives.	64.2	63.9
46. There are not enough relationships in our lives where we feel we can be	53.5	56.9

ourselves.		
47. Our family stays so busy that it is hard to find time for friends to visit with us.	58.3	58.9
48. We find it difficult to establish times for our marital relationship without having interruptions related to the needs of our congregation.	50.6	56.5
49. It is difficult to maintain friendships with congregation members because of the complications of being both friend and minister.	62.0	71.4
50. There are too few relationships in my life that make me feel “emotionally connected” with others.	57.2	65.8
51. Any unexpected financial demand plays havoc with our family’s financial situation.	70.0	74.7
52. I am concerned about how well we will manage financially to provide college educations for our children.	52.6	51.6

Financial Stress (Questions 1,8,12,17,18,19,22,23,39,40,51,&52) – First of all it is important to note that there are not significant differences in perceived stress between pastors or spouses. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it should be noted that financial stress received the highest percentage of responses than any other type of potential stress listed in this questionnaire. Over 70% of pastors and spouses indicated at least a mild level of stress with meeting monthly financial needs, saving money, and meeting any financial emergency. Over 60% of pastors (and about the same percent of spouses) perceived at least mild stress in their need for more monthly income, a better financial base, the lack of equity in their homes and the financial stress of frequent moves. About half of pastors and spouse expressed concern about paying for their children college costs with about one-third of pastors and spouses indicated at least a mild stress over the lack of money for vacations, adequate living standards, and medical coverage. Research shows that no one enters the Christian ministry expecting material wealth. However, these data suggest that the initial idealism of pastors and spouses may be confronting the reality of daily life, monthly bills and retirement. The data suggest the potential importance of financial counseling services for pastors and their families in pastoral training and through continuing education!

Family Life Stress (Questions 3,4,5,7,11,15,20,21,24,25,29,31,32,42,44,45,&48) -- A number of questions focused on possible stressors concerning family life. The majority of pastors and pastor’s spouses indicated that they felt at least mild stress in response to the obligation to attend social activities not of their choice, disruption of their vacations by congregational member’s demands, the kind of daily interpretations of family time by congregations, the impact of congregational demands on marital relations. The majority of spouse reported at least mild stress from living in a “fish bowl” and being expected to be a model family. About one-quarter to one-third of pastors and spouses reported at least a mild level of stress regarding items that focused on congregational expectations of their children and their marriage. Overall the data suggest that pastors and their spouses perceive the most family life

stress from unexpected congregation demands on planned family activities. This may suggest the need for training in managing and prioritizing unexpected congregational demands. This might be important training for the pastor, the family and the congregation.

Relationship Stressors Outside of the Family (Questions 2, 16, 27, 33, 35, 36, 37&46) – A number of questions focused on relationships outside of the family. The data suggest a considerable stress level from a feeling of isolation from others. Between 62% and 72% of pastors and spouses indicated at least mild stress because they felt that they could not confide in anyone and that that had difficulty in the balance between being a minister and a friend. A majority of both felt at least mild stress because there were no other clergy families that they could be open with or be themselves with as well as no one with whom they could emotionally connect. This feeling of isolation may be reflected in the fact that 32% of the pastors and 39% of the spouses reported at least mild stress because they were expected to not need the services of a professional counselor. Other relationship stresses are noted, but they do not appear to be a source of stress for a majority of the respondents. Overall the data indicate a profound sense of isolation on the part of pastors and spouses; a feeling that they cannot emotionally connect with anyone! The data suggest that it may be crucial to address this sense of emotional disconnect and isolation.

Time Demands (Questions 9, 14, 34, & 47) – Over two-thirds of pastors and spouses felt that the time demands of their roles prevented sufficient leisure time with their families. The majority of both groups reported at least mild stress because they did not have enough time for friends to visit. Both of these items are very consistent with previous data about stressors in family life and a sense of isolation. Over two-thirds of spouses, and 46% of pastors felt at least mild stress because a spouse was expected to participate in almost all church events. It is interesting to note that spouses felt significantly more stress than pastors which may suggest a bit of lack of sensitive on the part of pastors about how their spouse feel. Finally, 45% of pastors and 50% of spouses feel at least a mild stress level because they are in a time tug of war between the needs of their congregations and the families.

Moving Stressors (Questions 28, 37, 38, 41&43) – The majority of pastors and spouses reported at least mild stress when they families faced the possibility of moving and because the decision to move was made, not by the pastor and the family but rather by external others. Research suggests that the lack of control over these major life decisions is a major source of stress. Data are also reported in this section that indicate that nearly half of pastors and spouses feel at least mild stress when they have to balance the needs of their families with accepting a call to move. Over one-third of both groups reported at least a mild level of stress because of the difficulty of making new friends when they move and about one-quarter of pastors moved because they did not feel a part of the community they left. Generally the data in this section

indicates that the lack of control over a move could be a major source of stress for pastors and their families. There appears to be a sense of alienation related to the process of moving.

Summary of Clergy Family Life Inventory Stressors

1. Financial concerns are the major source of stress for pastors and spouses, from meeting today's needs to meeting educational expenses of children to being able to have a reasonably comfortable retirement.
2. The regular and unexpected time demands of congregations are a major source of stress for pastors and spouses as they try and have family time.
3. Pastors and spouses report a strong sense of emotional isolation from others and strong needs for connection to others.
4. Pastors and spouses reported that the lack of ability to control when and where they moved a significant source of stress.

Pastor's Children Concerns

Data are presented in Table Seven below regarding concerns expressed by the adult children of pastors. Specifically, the percentages shown are the respondents' expression of somewhat concerned, quite concerned, or very, very concerned.

Table Seven: Think back to when you lived with your parents. At that time, how concerned were you about the following?

Percentage reporting that they were somewhat concerned, quite concerned, or very, very concerned as opposed to not concerned or a little concerned.

Question	Adult Child Response
1. How the people in my clergy parent's congregation thought I should behave	58.7
2. How our town/neighborhood people thought ministers' children should behave	50.4
3. Lack of privacy for our family-the feeling that people could see into our Home	57.9
4. The amount of time I was expected to work at church-singing, cleaning, etc.,	46.3
5. The number of services I was expected to attend	52.9
6. Missing out on things because my parent was a minister	49.6
7. The number of times we moved	41.3
8. Missing out on things other kids do because of moving	46.6
9. My clergy parent was gone a lot on weekends and evenings when I was Home	50.8
10. The house we lived in was not large enough for our needs	25.9
11. Whether my clergy parent practiced what he or she preached	34.0

12. Whether or not the church or the family was more important to my clergy parent	35.8
13. The way my clergy parent talked to me as compared to the way he or she talked to church people	35.1
14. Time our family spent praying and/or reading the Bible	38.3
15. My non-clergy parent worked because we needed the money	40.1
16. My non-clergy parent worked	32.8
17. The amount of time my non-clergy parent was home when I was home	30.7
18. My clergy parent's second job	13.4
19. Another family member's emotional/mental health	34.1
20. The death of a close relative	37.1
21. A family member's physical health	43.3
22. The church people's help, or lack of help when one of us was sick	25.6
23. My parent's divorce, or talk of divorce	8.4
24. My parent's fighting	32.6
25. Having to leave my pet when we moved	14.3
26. Feeling all alone or different from my friends	46.7
27. Not having close friends	39.0
28. Whether or not I could ask for help for my emotional/mental health	44.5
29. Having to be the new kid in school	38.4
30. The way I was allowed/not allowed to express my anger and other negative emotions	52.5
31. The things I did to get attention in school	26.6
32. Whether or not I could ask for help for my physical health	20.1
33. My health in general	27.7
34. My physical health	24.6
35. My emotional/mental health	45.0
36. Whether or not I had an adult I could talk to	43.3
37. Career decision-making	45.8
38. Extracurricular activities	45.8
39. School grades	48.2
40. Things I did to get attention	25.5
41. Dating	43.6

Behavioral Expectations Concerns (Questions 1,2,4,5,30,31,37,38,39&40)– This area received some of the highest level of expressed concern. The research literature often notes that the behavioral expectations of congregations toward pastor’s children are a major source of stress and concern. The majority of the children of pastors reported at least having somewhat of a concern about the congregation’s expectations of how they should behave (59%) and even how the town they lived in expected them to behave (50%). A majority (53%) expressed concern about the emotional control they were expected to maintain. Relatedly, about one-quarter expressed at least somewhat concern about behavior they engaged in to get attention in general or in school. Concerns were also expressed about a number of specific church related

behavioral expectations. Almost 53% noted concern about the number of services they were expected to attend, with 46% expressing concern about the number of specific things they were expected to do at church. It is interesting to note that between 46% and 48% reported concern about even every day and routine life issues they dealt with from career decisions to grades and even extracurricular activities they engaged in at school. The data suggest that the adult children of parents often felt that they were a center of congregants behavioral focus at every level; from the extra-curricular activities they engaged in at school to church involved time demands that were placed on them by congregants as well as the feeling that they were always expected to be on their best behavior not only by congregants but by the whole town.

Relationship Concerns (Questions 26,27,36,41) – The data presented in Table Seven focused on the concerns that the adult child of pastor's had about how being a pastor's child impacted relationships. About 48% indicated being at least somewhat concerned about feeling all alone and different than their friends with 39% indicating that they were concerned about not having friends. This sense of being alone was further noted when about 43% indicated that they were concerned that they had no adult they could talk to. About 44% indicated a concern about dating. Throughout this study the data on all three groups of respondents often indicates a profound sense of being alone; of not having anyone to really connect with or talk to. The data presented in this table clearly show pastor's children were concerned about not having friends and feeling alone.

Family Concerns (Questions 3,6,9,11,12,13,14,23,24) – Data are presented in Table Seven showing concerns about family issues. The majority (58%) of the adult children of pastors reported being at least somewhat concerned that they had no family privacy; that people could always see what was happening in their homes. About half (51%) reported a concern about their pastor parent being absent in the evenings and on weekends; about half also reported being concerned that they missed out on doing things because of having a minister parent. Around one-third of the respondents indicated a concern about the public vs. the private parent; they seemed to feel that their pastor parent did not treat them in private as they did in public. About one-third also expressed concern that the family was not as important as the congregation. One-third also expressed concern about their parents fighting. About 38% expressed concern about family time spent on religious activities. Overall, these data suggest the children of pastors express concern about privacy and having a parent that is different in public than in private family interactions; with about one-third expressing concerns about parents fighting. These data suggest the need for family counseling being available for pastor's families.

Family Finances (Questions 10,15,16,17,18,) – Data are presented in Table Seven showing concerns about family finances. Between one-third and 40% expressed a concern about their

non-clergy parent having to work and how that impacted the time they could be with the child at home. A concern was also expressed by about one-quarter of the respondents about living in a small house. In many ways these data also fit general society in modern two income family issues. Children often report feeling a sense of being alone because of being a part of two-income professional families.

Moving Concerns – (Questions 7,8,29) – Data are shown in Table Seven expressing concerns about moving. Over 40% reported being at least somewhat concerned about the number of times they moved and missing out on things because they moved so much. Over 38% reported concerns about being the new kid in school with all of its incumbent stress. Overall, the data suggest that the frequent moves of clergy do impact the concerns of their children.

Physical and Mental Health Concerns (Questions 19,20,21,22,28,32,33,34,35) – The data in Table Seven show the level of concern about a wide variety of health issues. The highest proportion of health concerns expressed regarded mental/emotional health issues. About 45% indicated a concern about being able to seek help for mental health problems with 45% indicate a concern about their mental health. There was also concern expressed about physical health with 43% expressing concern about a family member’s physical health with about one-quarter expressing concern about the church not helping out when a family member was sick. About one-quarter also expressed concerns about their physical health. The data in this table suggest, particularly that the adult children of pastors expressed the most concern about how they could deal with mental health issues. There was a much higher level of concern about mental health issues than physical health. The data suggest that within the Adventist community, it may be much easier to express concerns about and seek help for physical health than emotional/mental health issues.

Summary

Overall the data presented in these tables are similar to the concerns expressed by the parent of these children. All three groups expressed concern about family finances, frequent moves and feeling alone with no one to talk to as well as mental health issues and the need for counseling. What is unique about the responses from pastoral children are the behavioral expectations. There appear to be three areas regarding behavior that the adult children expressed the highest level of concern:

1. Outstanding Behavior Expectations – It was not surprising to learn that congregants expected the children of pastors to be on their best behavior, but it was interesting to note that the children felt a concern about the whole town expecting the best behavior.
2. “Volunteering” for Church Activities – The respondents expressed concern about being expected to do things that the church needed; to kind of always be available.

3. Life Choices Expectations – It was a bit surprising to note that the respondents felt concern about the congregation’s expectations on such routine life decisions and events such as extra-curricular activities, grades and career decisions.

Overall the data suggest that the children of pastors feel “watched” and likely criticized at almost every level of daily life. The data suggest the need for family counseling for pastor families from establishing and maintaining boundaries to ways of managing the stress of being so much in the public eye.

Pastoral Family Coping Strategies

When pastors, pastors’ spouses, and adult children of pastors were asked to think about a stressful event that occurred recently and how they responded, they all responded in a similar way to prayer, personal growth, and hoping for a miracle. In every group (pastors, spouses, and children), prayer was the most frequently used coping mechanism. All three groups also reported similar levels of personal change or growth and level of hoping for a miracle.

Numbers are in percentage of responses that indicated they used this technique	Pastors	Spouses	Children
I prayed.	90.8	86.5	67.0
I changed or grew as a person in a good way.	56.5*	51.3*	53.0*
I hoped a miracle would happen.	41.6	47.8	40.0

*Statistically significant correlation at $\alpha=.05$

When looking at pastors, spouses, and children, there were several areas where spouses and children reported similar responses, but those responses were different than pastors. Pastors were more likely to address the person who caused the stress to find out more about the situation than both spouses and children. Additionally, they were more likely than both spouses and adult children to come out of the experience better than when they came in. On the other hand, pastors were less likely than spouses or children to accept sympathy and understanding from someone else. They were also less likely to wish the situation would somehow just go away or to talk to someone about how they were feeling.

Numbers are in percentage of responses that indicated they used this technique	Pastors	Spouses	Children
I talked to someone to find out more about the situation.	69.2	48.9	55.2
I came out of the experience better than when I went in.	52.3	43.9*	41.0*
I accepted sympathy and understanding from someone.	28.5	40.4*	42.2*
I let my feelings out somehow.	28.5	47.3*	48.3*
I wished that the situation would go away or somehow	34.3	52.0	63.8

be over with.			
I talked to someone about how I was feeling.	42.3	58.4*	61.5*

*Statistically significant correlation at $\alpha=.05$

Additionally, spouses were more than three times more likely to become angry than pastors and children were more than four times more likely than pastors to become angry.

Numbers are in percentage of responses that indicated they used this technique	Pastors	Spouses	Children
I expressed anger to the person(s) who caused the problem.	5.0	15.9	20.7

Pastors and spouses also had some responses that were in common, yet different than that of adult children. Pastors and spouses reported asking a relative or friend for advice more often than adult children. When asked if they talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem, children expressed that this was their response about half as often as pastors and spouses. Pastors and spouses were also more likely than children to ask a relative or friend for advice about the situation. On the other hand, children were also much more likely than pastors and pastors' spouses to fight for what they wanted. Children were also more likely than both pastors and spouses to change something about themselves because of the stress. Additionally, children reported fantasizing about how things might turn out or wish that things would just go away on their own more often than either of their parents.

Numbers are in percentage of responses that indicated they used this technique	Pastors	Spouses	Children
I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.	50.0	43.9	27.6
I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice.	46.7*	47.9*	59.1
I stood my ground and fought for what I wanted.	33.1	28.5	46.9
I changed something about myself.	33.4	37.9	45.3
I had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out.	30.8	35.1	54.3

*Statistically significant correlation at $\alpha=.05$

Additionally, there were two coping responses for adult children mirrored that of pastors, but not that of pastors' spouses. Pastors and children tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind more often than spouses. In addition, pastors and children were less likely to report rediscovering what is important than spouses.

Question	Pastors	Spouses	Children
I tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind.	29.7	19.4	33.7
I rediscovered what is important in life.	41.1*	56.5	43.9*

*Statistically significant correlation at $\alpha=.05$

The instruments that were used in the data represented above were the following:

Pastors, spouses and adult children of pastors were each given the “Stress Coping Scale” developed by Folkman and Lazarus (1985).

All groups were also given the “Personal Challenge Checklist” compiled by the researchers.

Pastors and spouses were given the “Clergy Family Life Inventory” developed by Morris and Blanton (1998). This instrument did not, however, relate to pastors’ children.

Adult Children were instead given the 41 item “Stressors of Clergy Children Inventory” developed by Ostrander, Henry, & Hendrix (1990).

Except for the “Personal Challenge Checklist” compiled by the researchers, the other instruments were located in the literature and judged by the researchers to be valid and reliable instruments. Further analysis of this data can be done as requested by our research partners.