

# **CLERGY FAMILIES IN CANADA: AN INITIAL REPORT**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CLERGY FAMILIES IN CANADA: AN INITIAL REPORT

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### *PREAMBLE*

The purpose of this brief executive summary is to provide a basic overview of the empirical study of clergy families funded, in part, by 21 member denominations of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. This executive summary includes the actual summaries which appear at the end of chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. Also included is a small excerpt from chapter one, and two excerpts from chapter nine. The excerpt from chapter one and comments from chapter nine provide selected reactions to the study by clergy respondents. The second excerpt from chapter nine lists several specific recommendations for action. The importance of these recommendations are discussed in detail in chapter nine. It is essential that the reader review chapter nine carefully. *Indeed, all of the chapters should be read carefully.* Each chapter contains confidential written comments from our respondents. Several steps have been taken to ensure confidentiality including modifying certain comments and limiting the identifying information exclusively to age and gender. Charts, graphs, and tables are extensively used to illustrate the findings. Each chapter contains important insight and analysis - the report is over 150 pages long.

With the support of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and the 21 denominations involved in the study, a random sample of 3,134 households was drawn from across Canada. Survey packets containing two separate questionnaires each in their own envelopes, one for ministers and the other for the spouses of ministers, were mailed to each of these households in late May, 1993. The response rate was outstanding. Packets were received from 1,294 respondents, a response rate of 41.3 percent. We have nearly 500 pages of typed comments based on the hand written comments on the questionnaires we received. Over 40% of the spouses who sent in their surveys provided written

comments; about 30% of the ministers included comments as well. The comments are often written with passion and deep conviction. They are typically well-thought, sometimes very detailed, often from the heart and revealing. Clergy and their spouses seem to have seen this survey as a confidential outlet for their deepest hurts, frustrations, and insider insights.

*The information in this report is based on the realistic in-depth responses of our respondents. Our careful checks of the response patterns in the data lead us to believe that the responses are factual, honest, and dependable. Even so, responses in all surveys are a subjective reaction to each question and the response categories provided. Some of the questions in this survey dealt with the private psychological and behavioral characteristics of ministers and their spouses. These questions were also answered candidly and we have reported the general patterns of these responses. Although this data may be surprising to some, we believe that pastors and spouses are human. Although immorality among clergy - one of the more invasive aspects of this study - is unacceptable, the percentages of these problems are lower than among men and women in the general population and, in some areas of potential concern, quite encouraging.*

## **1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **1.1 Characteristics of People in Ministry**

.1 Both the minister and spouse mailed in responses in 1,089 clergy households. Only one survey was mailed in from 205 households, 171 from ministers, and 34 from spouses. The average age of minister respondents was 44 compared to 43 among spouses.

.2 About half of spouses were in paid employment, only 25% of whom were fulltime. Two-thirds of spouses work in the church, half of whom work less than 7 hours per week. About 17% of spouses were in paid church positions.

.3 Ministers decided to enter the ministry at an average age of 23 years, most of whom said they felt called of God.

.4 Most ministers had completed a Bachelor of Arts degree or more in a



pastoral or theology field, about half at Bible colleges and half at seminaries. Spouses were more likely to have gone to Bible colleges.

.5 More than 65% of the pastors responding indicated that they were either the only pastor or the senior pastor in their churches. The typical total reimbursement package was under \$35,000. Half of clergy own their own homes, a third live in church-owned houses, and the remainder rent.

.6 About 80% of ministers were ordained or commissioned, the balance licensed. The average years of service as ministers was 15, while the average age of service in present position was 5 years. Nearly 40% of churches represented had less than 100 members, another 37% had 100-299 members. Twenty-seven percent of churches were in urban areas with 100,000+ population. The average minister worked 51 hours per week, including 11 evenings per month.

## **1.2 The Links between Ministering and Clergy Family Life**

.1 About half of ministers and spouses see the ministry as the pastor's career and the spouse as helper in the ministry. About 25% see their roles as equal partners.

.2 The majority of ministers and spouses believe that a minister's spouse should be able to be employed, whatever the gender. Only 28% believed that a minister's wife should not be employed.

.3 Over 30% of both pastors and spouses were extremely satisfied with being in paid ministry generally. However, the percentage drops with regard to the current ministry situation. Only 24% of the sample describe themselves as slightly satisfied or dissatisfied.

.4 Over 60% of pastors believe that the ministry makes marriage more difficult for spouses. About 80% of ministers and spouses agreed that "being a minister is something like being married to both the church and to my spouse." Most ministers struggled with insufficient time with their spouses, although their spouses were seen as the major resource in coping with the demands of ministry.

.5 Similarly, half of both clergy and spouses believe that being in ministry makes parenthood more difficult. However, only a minority (25%) believe that "Preacher's Kids" are more likely to get into trouble.

.6 The overwhelming majority of ministers and spouses consider finances to be a salient struggle for the typical pastor and family. In addition, most think that church matters are difficult to escape in everyday home life and that the expectations for clergy families are too high.

### 1.3 Satisfaction in Clergy Marriages and Families

.1 More than 80% of respondents describe their marriages as fantastic, warm, or supportive. Spouses are somewhat more idealistic about their marriages than ministers.

.2 Ministers perceive their spouses to be more willing to sacrifice, in order to maintain or strengthen their marriage.

.3 The three areas of highest satisfaction for both clergy and spouses are: satisfaction with spouse as partner, satisfaction with their marriage, and satisfaction with their relationship with spouse. The lowest areas of satisfaction are: satisfaction with self as partner to spouse, satisfaction with the way the spouse relates sexually, and satisfaction with the way the spouse shows affection. Clergy satisfaction is lower than spouse satisfaction in these three areas.

.4 Spouses have a close relationship in which they show mutual affection and laugh together frequently, but they spend little time with friends, going out together, or in recreation together.

.5 The highest level of marital stress for clergy was their perception that they had failed to fulfil their fair share of family responsibilities. This was the lowest level of stress for spouses. The highest level of marital stress for spouses was their inability to express their true feelings to the minister to whom they were married. Given the fact that most spouses are wives (98%), this is a surprising finding because wives are more expressive, sensitive, and able to express emotion in communication than husbands.

.6 The area of least satisfaction with family life for ministers is

connected with their assessment of themselves as a parent. Spouses indicate that their lowest level of satisfaction is with the amount of time their clergy spouses spend with their children. It appears that clergy wives bear a disproportionate amount of responsibilities for their families.

.7 Family activities that were engaged most infrequently include Bible study together, playing games together, and recreational activities as a family.

.8 This study shows a fairly low level of family stress, as all of the measured sources of stress fell below "sometimes." The most frequent source of family stress occurs as a result of arguments with children. Responses indicate a healthy approach to solving both marital and family stress - sharing of feelings, and doing whatever is possible to resolve the problems.

#### **1.4 The Psychological Interiors of Clergy and Spouses**

.1 The majority of ministers (63%) and spouses (53%) feel good about themselves most of the time. Only a minority (under 20%) say that they never, rarely, or occasionally do not feel good about themselves.

.2 Ministers have somewhat higher levels of uncertain self-feelings than spouses in the following domains: inadequacy, vulnerability, shame, and abandonment. In contrast, spouses have somewhat higher mean scores for loneliness, depression, and panic.

.3 Most ministers and spouses are rarely or only occasionally angry, bored, apathetic, or bothered by burnout. Between 10 to 30%, however, admit to the experience of these feelings more often.

.4 Ministers and spouses differ significantly with respect to the feelings of lust and competition. Sixty-one percent of spouses have never felt lust, compared to only 12% of ministers. Those who feel lust frequently are six times as likely to be ministers as spouses. Ministers are twice as likely to have competitive feelings as spouses.

.5 Personal struggles, as opposed to experience of feelings, were also examined. Over half of all ministers and spouses struggle with a sense of inadequacy, accepting criticism, and the desire for material goods. Fame and

power issues, however, are less problematic. About 25% indicate that power is an occasional or frequent problem, while only 16% say that fame is a struggle. Seventeen percent struggle occasionally or often with doubts about their faith.

.6 Ministers struggled with sexual issues to a far greater degree than spouses. Over 40% indicated that they had struggled once or twice with improper attractions to the other sex. About 26% struggled occasionally or often. Less than half as many spouses admitted to a struggle with improper attractions. The desire to look at pornographic materials is a minor problem for ministers, nearly 30% said once or twice, another 10% said occasionally or often. Only 4% of spouses indicated that they struggled with pornography. Ministers also struggled with the desire for sexual overtures from others, although more modestly. Fifteen percent once or twice, another 5% said occasionally or often.

.7 The overwhelming majority of both ministers and spouses said that they had never struggled with abusing drugs or alcohol, wanting to leave one's spouse, or wanting a divorce.

.8 Both ministers and spouses were asked to respond to statements concerning "things you might have done during your ministry, with or without your spouse's knowledge." The overwhelming majority of ministers and spouses simply do not engage in sinful sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviours such as rape, fondling children, sex with children, homosexual affairs, sex with prostitutes, buying sexual services almost never occur. Five percent or less of ministers have ever attended live erotic shows, purchased sexual services, made sexual advances, accepted sexual overtures, or had sexual affairs. The frequency of such activities among spouses hardly ever occur. It is apparent, however, that masturbation and pornography are more prevalent. About 45% of ministers admit to masturbating occasionally or often. About 17% say that they have used pornography occasionally or often. About one-third of spouses have engaged in these behaviours. *It is emphasized, however, that the incidence of such behaviours are lower than among men and women in the general population.*

.9 We asked several questions about the sources of help to which ministers and spouses turn in dealing with personal and sexual struggles. Nearly 50% said prayer and worship. Around 25% said "my spouse." Minis-

ters were more than six times as likely to turn to another minister than were spouses. About 5% sought help in workshops, courses, or books. Very few sought the help of counsellors, psychologists or psychiatrists - less than 2%. No one sought the help of their denomination.

## **1.5 Religious Experience and Devotion among Ministers and Spouses**

.1 More than ninety percent of clergy and spouses perceived themselves to be above the mid-point of a seven-point scale measuring present relationship with God. Clergy perceived themselves as being somewhat closer to God than what their spouses perceived themselves to be.

.2 Clergy and spouses are more likely to indicate that their spiritual life is enjoyable, and less likely to indicate that it is rewarding. Clergy are more likely than spouses to see their spiritual life as vibrant rather than lethargic. Almost one-quarter of clergy and spouses see their spiritual lives as hypocritical rather than genuine.

.3 The images of God in the minds of clergy and spouses tend to emphasize a close relationship with God, rather than a distant, threatening relationship. Respondents are almost equally likely to picture God as being intimate and as authority, to see Him as master and as friend. They are more likely to picture God as redeemer than as judge, as protector than as observer, as sovereign than as servant, as father than as mother, as "with us" rather than "out there," and as immanent rather than as transcendent.

.4 Most clergy indicate that they speak to God in their own words when they pray. Prayer is most frequently concerned with asking God to provide guidance in making decisions, and in thanking Him for blessings received. Clergy prayer is least often concerned with social problems or with "world suffering."

.5 The experiences most frequently connected with prayer were reflecting on the Bible, spending time quietly thinking about God, and spending time worshipping or adoring God. The most frequent outcome of prayer for both clergy and spouses is a deep sense of peace and well-being. Receiving a definite answer to a specific prayer request was an important outcome of prayer for both clergy and spouses.

.6 About two-thirds of clergy and spouses indicate that they take time for private prayer daily or several times daily. About one-quarter indicated that they typically spend less than 10 minutes each time they have private prayer; about one-fifth of clergy and spouses spend 30 minutes or more each time they have private prayer.

.7 The two most frequent experiences for both clergy and spouses during a church service is the experience of a deep sense of the presence of God, and a deep sense of peace and well-being. Spouses are more likely than clergy to indicate receiving a deeper insight into Biblical or spiritual truth during a church service.

.8 The four most frequently chosen terms to describe the present theological view of respondents were evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic, and conservative, representing 98% of choices. Those who chose fundamentalist as their first view were most likely to choose evangelical as their second view. Those who chose evangelical as their first view were most likely to choose conservative, charismatic, liberal, or pietistic as their second views.

## **1.6 Family Background of Ministers and Spouses**

.1 Most clergy persons were reared in intact (never divorced or remarried) two-parent families. Less than 6% experienced the separation or divorce of their parents.

.2 The majority describe their parents' marriages as accepting and supportive. However, 26% describe their parents as having an ambivalent, cool or angry marriage. Both ministers and their spouses perceived their fathers to act more unfairly and unkindly toward their mothers than did their mothers toward their fathers.

.3 Clergy persons perceived their relationships with their parents during childhood and adolescence as primarily positive. Even so, about 29% saw their fathers as cool, ambivalent or angry. In contrast, only about 10% saw their mothers in this way. Overall, about 60% of both ministers and spouses thought that their fathers simply did not spend enough time with them.

.4 Frequent abuse was uncommon. Fewer than 10% experienced

emotional abuse frequently. Experiencing other types of abuse frequently were much less common: physical (2-3%), sexual (1-3%), and sexual harassment (1-2%). Spouses were more likely to experience these types of abuse. Infrequent abuse (defined as seldom or sometimes), however, was more common. As many as 37% of ministers had at some time experienced emotional abuse and 27% physical abuse, somewhat higher levels than did spouses. Nearly 20% of spouses had been sexually abused at least once, about twice as many as ministers.

.5 Although most ministers and spouses were raised in Christian families, only 35% were willing to describe their childhood families as "model Christian families," despite the fact that 65% of their fathers had a "born again" religious experience during their childhoods. On another measure, however, about half described their parents as having had a vibrant faith. Mothers were typically perceived to be much closer to God than fathers.

.6 Only 13% of ministers and their spouses were raised in families where their parents were in paid ministry. The majority of both ministers and their spouses were satisfied with their childhoods in a ministry family. Sixty-one percent said that their choice to enter the ministry was not hindered by being a "preacher's kid."

.7 Church attendance and mealtime prayers were very common religious activities in the childhood families of ministers and their spouses, about 80% participated frequently. Less than 40% of the families had regular devotions or spiritual discussions.

.8 The average minister became a Christian at the age of 16, spouses at an average age of 13. The majority had a born again experience, while the next most common choices were best described as a "point in time" when Christ became a reality or that they came to realize that Christ was "a very personal and important part of my life."

.9 The majority of ministers and spouses attended church at least weekly during their teenage years, about 80% of ministers and 89% of spouses. Over half were active as leaders in church youth groups. Spouses seemed to have a closer relationship to God as teens than did ministers.

## 1.7 Perceptions of Issues by Ministers and Spouses

.1 One-fifth or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours do not occur at all among church families: homosexuality, abortion, casual divorce, incest, sexual abuse of children, marital rape, abuse or neglect of the elderly, cohabitation, and casual sexuality (sex for fun).

.2 One-fifth or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours take place among 25% or more of church families: financial problems, sex between persons planning to marry, hypocrisy, rebellious teenagers, sex between unmarried persons who think they're in love, wives unsatisfied with their marriage, and premarital use of contraceptives.

.3 Clergy feel that the three most important areas in which churches should regularly offer courses and resources are premarital education, marriage enrichment, and family relationships. The three areas of least importance, though still above the mid-point of the scale, are coping with stepparenting, coping with singleness, and coping with divorce or separation.

.4 Over two-thirds of clergy and spouses believe that the church, through its Christian Education program, should offer family life education, beginning at the preschool level. An overwhelming majority believe it should be offered at the Junior High level and above, and that the Christian Education curriculum should help parents provide family life education for their children.

.5 Over three-quarters of clergy and spouses feel that it is important for pastors to teach Scriptural principles of sexuality, marriage, childhood, parenting, or family life in their pulpit ministry. Most clergy felt that this emphasis should take place either monthly or in an annual series of four messages.

.6 Despite all the problems faced in the ministry, more than four-fifths of clergy are not interested in pursuing a different career. Almost two-thirds of clergy members, however, indicate that they are unsure of their role and of what they are to be doing in the ministry. This is an area that needs to be addressed by denominations and ministerial training schools. Over two-thirds of clergy feel that prospective ministers should pass psychological competency examinations, and that psychological assessments should be required of all



ministers in training.

.7 Most clergy agree that the training of ministers should include ministering to families, dealing with spiritual warfare, basic courses in marriage and family counselling, courses on the unique issues facing clergy marriages, and setting priorities and managing time. Most ministers feel that their own pastoral training didn't adequately prepare them for ministering to families or for the unique problems faced in parenting their own children.

.8 Despite the fact that clergy have trouble balancing the demands of church and marriage, marriage is still regarded as a powerful resource in coping with the everyday realities of ministry. There is strong support for denominational workshops directed to coping with the problems faced in clergy families. Finances are regarded as an important problem in clergy families, and most clergy and their spouses feel that the expectations for clergy families are simply too high.

.9 Clergy feel strongly that Christian marriages are happier than non-Christian marriages, that marriages would be stronger if husbands and wives considered themselves to be equal, that husbands are giving too little to their wives and marriages, that husbands should be the final authority when spouses are unable to reach agreement, and that husbands typically fail to practice servant-leadership.

.10 There is strong support for the statement that the talents and gifts of men and women are complementary both in the home and the church, that most church members now believe that the spouses of ministers should be able to choose work outside the home, and that fathers and husbands seem to misunderstand the meaning of headship and servanthood.

.11 More than half of clergy believe that homosexuals should be excluded from church leadership, and about two-thirds believe they should be excluded from pastoral ministry, even if they are celibate in their sexual behaviour. About three-quarters agree that divorced and remarried persons should not be excluded from leadership positions.

.12 Clergy are more open to the idea of women's ordination and ministry in the church than what they perceive their church members to be.

## 2. COMMENTS

### 2.1 Comments on the Importance of the Survey

We have selected several comments to illustrate both the positive and negative reactions to this survey. Many emphasized the feeling that somebody is "listening."

"Ministry is a lone profession. Yet, I remind myself that there are blessings - God has never left us, never let go of us, always provided. God bless you for your survey and being a listening ear!" (Female, age 38)

"I think your survey is very appropriate and highly needed. While our experience in ministry has been very positive, I realize that is not always the case... Having a sense of confirmation by God to be involved in the exact ministry we are now in, to be frank, is the rock that I sometimes cling to. Without that I think it 'the job' would be too overwhelming. Thanks for listening!" (Female, age 32)

"I personally was able to address myself to personal hurts and feelings that I would not like to address publically. The family life of pastors needs to be addressed and helped. God bless you for caring." (Male, age 58)

Many emphasized that the survey caused them to think.

"This survey really made me think. Thank you for reminding me how much God has done." (Female, age 24)

"It really made me think. I have realized as I filled out the questionnaire that my husband and I do not spend enough time together in prayer and devotions." (Female, age 33)

"This survey has made a great impact on me regarding the way that I think and what I think. This type of survey should be done by all pastors every 4-5 years to allow them to see what they believe in.

Thank you for helping to open my eyes." (Male, age 34)

"Wow! Questions I have never been asked before! Things I would rather not face, usually. Thanks for helping me to dig deep into my soul. I needed that!" (Male, age 50)

"I found the survey to be both thoughtfully put together and stimulating to consider. Would it be possible to make blank copies available to clergy and their spouses in order to facilitate discussion around some of the specific issues raised by the questions in the survey? ... As I think back, I am awed by how little of my formal theological education really equipped me to minister today." (Male, age 37)

Others emphasized that the survey should have been done long ago.

"Thank you! This survey is long overdue! I hope the results will be beneficial to the many clergy families who are hurting. May God bless your efforts!" (Female, age 46)

"This survey is overdue! Hind sight is always 20/20 - however I'm very glad you are doing this. I'm glad this is being done. Definitely should be dealt with at the seminary level." (Female, age 55)

There were several written concerns about the survey. Two quite different examples appear below.

"It was interesting to do this, but I think this is probably dangerous - I believe there is something inherently unpleasant and unsavoury about this survey. I wonder how you will slant the information once it is in your possession. I also have concerns about the supposed total 'confidentiality' of the thing - your 'assurances' on the front cover certainly do not 'assure' me." (Male, age 46)

"Your questions have revealed your theological, ethical, [and] moral presuppositions. I am dismayed by the ethic-moral small-mindedness this survey is interested in uncovering. The distinctions of church as organization and church as organism needs to be

established if you see the church as [a] force for social/societal reconstruction." (Male, age 44)

We appreciate these comments. A number of respondents were concerned about confidentiality. We take these reactions seriously. The release of any data to whatever audience must first be approved by the chair of the research subcommittee, and second by a committee appointed by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. This three person committee consists of a Director of EFC and two retired clergy both of whom have served in denominational leadership and on the Executive of the EFC. We have no way of linking any of our names on the mailing lists to the actual surveys. The members of the research committee of TFF have committed themselves to protecting the absolute anonymity of our respondents. We are also very concerned about releasing data that may be misused in the media. The second comment is interesting and important. We believe it is impossible to escape labels. One can be indicted as easily by what one doesn't say as well as by what one does say. Even so, we do not believe that this survey, nor its questions, accurately represent particular moral views or theologies. They are simply questions about what clergy, as human beings, think, feel, and do.

A significant number of our respondents pointed out that our estimate of 45 minutes was distinctly inaccurate. Most took twice that long to complete the survey, and some several hours. Indeed, the time factor probably led some ministers and spouses to stop in the middle of the survey and discontinue the "project." **We greatly appreciate the time commitment that 1,294 clergy households set aside for this survey. Thanks!**

## 2.2 Comments from the Heart

Many of the comments were often "from the heart." In this sense, the heading of this section is a misnomer. We think, however, that this phrase best captures the honesty, frustration, pain, and strength of the following comments. They are directed to the denominational leadership, to the colleges and seminaries in which they were trained, to the people they are attempting to serve, or to the complexities of the ministry. These are the cries of the disappointed and disillusioned. They are often powerful and worthy of careful review and genuine caring action. We will occasionally "comment" on the comments but mostly allow the words to tell their own story.

Most of the following comments emphasize some aspect of the failure of denominational leaders. We, of course, do not know who these respondents are. We have identified only their gender and age. We have excluded any information that might facilitate identification. It would be a mistake for any reader (minister, minister's spouse, denominational leader, teacher in college or seminary) to assume that they know the identity of the respondent. These are merely representative voices from clergy in the trenches.

"I'd .. like to emphasize the need for competent and well trained helpers. So often (at least, in my experience), the quality has been embarrassing and even detrimental to those already in CRISES. Too many of our fellow colleagues in the ministry have been 'burned out' as a result of poor and ineffective or power hungry and uncaring mentors. It has made me feel the sorrow deeply. Certainly our God does not possess the qualities we have encountered in the organized church. I find solace in taking a non-institutional approach to faith. Too much of disturbing proportions in church life. I feel liberated and feel free outside of church organization. Many changes in the interpretation of scripture need to occur, otherwise the church remains outdated, rigid, controlling, oppressive and abusive. This is not the Christian message!"  
(Female)

"I think too many of us cannot trust our leadership to be available or impartial in dealing with shared concerns, mainly because [our leaders] are in a position to drastically change the location and type and effectiveness of our ministry if they so choose and they are responsible for too many people over too many miles to physically be available in this role. Our particular denomination has very high standards of its ministers and minister's wives. While in a majority of ways, this is best for all concerned, it does generate a tendency to 'cover-up' or deal with these problems alone - rather than let leadership know you are in any way struggling.... I personally would not be able to trust or share any real concerns with people I: (1) do not know well and respect; (2) see as having direct communication unmonitored by me with those in authority over my husband. The result is that these kinds of problems draw my husband and I closer to each other and to GOD as we seek to solve these problems together." While this is okay, it does create a sense of isolation

and loneliness. However, it is the more desirable of alternatives for me."  
(Female, age 35)

"There are times when I feel that our leaders are more concerned with the work going on or getting done than the worker. Such pat answers as pray about it, or study the Word are turn-offs. In my denomination, I personally feel that we need spiritual leaders not administrators who can care for the flock. There must be some accountability on their (leaders) part to pastor the pastors. Leaders demand and expect pastors to minister to the needs of the flock, but they in turn make the pastor feel guilty or inadequate spiritually when we need encouragement or support in getting family life back in balance. There should be 'Family enrichments for pastoral families'." (Female, age 40)

"Our denomination attempts to encourage their pastors from time to time but NEVER their wives. There are times when I feel desperate for someone to share my feelings with other than my husband. We make many attempts to befriend church couples but they almost never return or reciprocate. We often feel lonely and feel we have no friends." (Female, age 45)

"Sometimes I feel ripped off, like nobody told us what the ministry is really like and that we weren't properly prepared. And even now that we are just some pieces of meat being used to play a role and meet a need without any consideration or support of us as people/young couples/ individuals seeking God's plans for our lives. I personally sort of had the 'rug pulled out from under me' spiritually (which I realize had a lot to do with me) and am only now just starting to get my spiritual footing back. I really hope that in the future there could be more support systems and preliminary, as well as on-going realistic teaching for those going into the ministry as well as the rookies and the veterans. I know God will not allow what's more than we can bear though - He's good that way, isn't He?" (Female, age 50)

"One of the biggest struggles pastors face is knowing where to go when trouble strikes. Theoretically, we should be able to go to our [denominational leaders] but: (1) the problems we share with him

can and often are used against us to terminate our stay at the present church; and (2) some [denominational leaders] gossip which hurts our reputation." (Male, age 40)

"I have seen the marriages and family life of many of my friends break down with increasing regularity over the last few years. We need to be actively sponsoring conferences and seminary training with an aim at preventing this. I believe that if a pastor is not versed in family issues and is not growing [or] modelling positive family values in his/her own life, he/she is in danger of becoming ineffective, obsolete, and irrelevant." (Male, age 36)

"It would be completely safe to say that without exception each and every family in our current ministry situation has faced or is currently facing a major tragedy or breakdown within their immediate family.... The training of seminary students is not designed to deal with many of these issues, nor to the extent that we are facing them. It appears that the clergy themselves have lost the art of self-discipline and are succumbing to the temptations of the world around them. The clergy need to be equipped to serve out of a deep sense of security and health within his/her own family unit. This does not come from seminary training but from total commitment to Christ and His body, the Church. However, this could be aided by seminaries if they would focus as much attention on spiritual life and development as they do on criticism of scripture and theology!" (Female, age 33)

"I feel the pastors-in-training should be given mandatory counselling training. They should also be required to go through counselling themselves. We all have hurts in the past that need healing. We as pastors and wives cannot effectively minister to a broken world when we are broken ourselves... Pastors should be taught reality, e.g. antagonists in churches, how to spot and deal with them. In short, it seems that Bible colleges etc. teach a lot of good stuff but when you're out in the real world, you practically die because good sermon preparation won't help you deal with crisis situations, for example. Before any student ever graduates and becomes a pastor or church worker they should have to interim in a church and find out what it's really like." (Female, age 34)

"Seminaries and/or denominations should offer courses/workshops on financial management, family management, developing organizational skills and spiritual growth for all clergy at all levels. Denominations should encourage and indeed move to implement regular support/counselling sessions for pastors in high stress ministries, i.e. multiple staff churches, church planting, and home mission churches. Denominations should fund and offer professional Christian counsellors in family relations, sexual contentment, and financial management, with confidentiality being a major requirement!!" (Female, age 33)

"I would like to see the results of this survey sent to all seminaries with suggestions to the administrators for improvement in training in areas such as family life, family counselling, crisis intervention, and finances. Thank you for doing this survey." (Male, age 39)

"It is high time that we move away from assuming that God's 'called out' ones have it all together. We need all the help we can get - in marriages, family raising, and relationships. I believe that men (and women) becoming pastors should be carefully screened. Their past should be searched in as much as possible. Too many clergy have been involved in sexual abuse - at home or in the church and they are hiding it. This is extremely detrimental to the spreading of the Gospel and the integrity of the position." (Female, age 57)

### 3. SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

This report would not be complete without some reflections on the implications of this study of clergy families for those involved in preparing men and women for ministry as well as the denominational leaders who are involved in administering and attending to the varying needs of clergy in their churches. The evidence presented in the many pages of this report seem to speak loudly and clearly for **action**. We have organized the many concerns for action into about 13 recommendations. The following recommendations are listed without discussing the rationale, importance, or the procedures that might be followed in implementing the proposed actions. Please see this discussion in chapter nine.



- 3.1 *Seminaries (and related training institutions) should establish one or more required courses dealing with the Biblical foundations of marriage, families, and sexuality.*
- 3.1.1 *This course, or a second course, should emphasize practical ways of ministering to families within the local church and at the denominational level. In connection with this course, or in another course, specific training in basic counselling skills directly related to marital and family issues should be required of all would-be ministers.*
- 3.2 *Seminaries (and related training institutions) should establish a required practical course designed to help ministerial students understand and prepare for the unique issues faced by clergy marriages and families in the pastorate.*
- 3.3 *Denominations and/or seminaries (and related training institutions) should regularly sponsor continuing education programs (workshops, seminars, conferences) to assist and upgrade ministers and spouses already in ministry facing issues relating to ministering to families, family counselling, and coping with issues unique to clergy families.*
- 3.3.1 *Alternatively, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada should assist its member denominations in sponsoring annual interdenominational seminars in two key locations in Canada of the type specified in recommendation 3.3.*
- 3.4 *Seminary education should include a strong emphasis on the development and maintenance of spiritual depth and disciplines within would-be ministers and their spouses, theologically and experientially.*
- 3.5 *All students who apply for admission to seminaries (or related training institutions for ministry) should be required to pass a psychological screening test and an in-depth interview. The first year of study in preparation for the ministry (in seminaries or related training institutions) should be considered a year of probation. In their first year, students in the ministry track should be part of a counselling regime to determine childhood dysfunctions and related emotional or behavioral problems. Counselling should emphasize spiritual, rehabilitative, and restorative modalities. Difficult cases should be 'creatively' removed from the program at the end of the first year.*

3.6 *Consistent with several professions, an "apprenticeship-like" requirement for all ministerial students should be established as part of their degree program.*

3.7 *Training in family life education should be provided in one year certificate programs at seminaries or Bible colleges, and/or through correspondence courses combined with in-residence workshops or month-long residence study requirements.*

3.8 *Denominations, and/or parachurch organizations, must establish confidential trustworthy "ombudsman-like" support ministries for hurting, lonely, bruised, spiritually fragile, clergy and spouses as individuals, as marriages, and as parents of struggling children. These programs need to be at "arms length" from denominational knowledge until the support systems have, if the problems aren't solved, worked out the exit, discipline, and restoration procedures in mutual agreement with the clergy involved.*

3.9 *Denominations and/or inter-denominational structures should be established, funded, or subsidized to provide teaching, counselling, and therapy without charge, or at least minimal charge, to clergy and their families.*

3.10 *Denominational meetings should permit open forums to listen to concerns and problems from individual clergy concerning financial issues, time management problems, working with families in churches, and struggles within clergy families.*

3.11 *A follow-up research project, comparable to the clergy project and investigating similar issues, should be conducted using a random sample of evangelical families active in church, a random sample of main-line church families, and a random sample of secular, unchurched families to better understand the role of faith in everyday life.*

In conclusion, we want to express our gratitude to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, to each of the 21 denominations involved in this study for financial support and official endorsement of this project, and to 1,294 households that chose to participate in this study. We are excited about the unique importance of this study. We believe that the data we have on clergy

families in Canada is unlike any other data base now available anywhere. This preliminary report provides an inside look of what we have learned and are learning already. We now begin to work on the first major research-based book on life in clergy families in Canada. We will be using a number of statistical procedures to enhance our understanding of clergy attitudes and behaviours. This book will be written to be read and enjoyed. Please pray for us as we seek God's help in analyzing the data.



## CHAPTER 1

### HOW THIS STUDY CAME TO BE

The Task Force on the Family was established by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Its members are all committed evangelical Christians who share a concern about families and the role of the church in affirming and rehabilitating individuals and families within and outside the church. The members represent a wide spectrum of concerned citizens: administrators, counsellors, denominational leaders, family organizations, parents, professors, researchers, and teachers. After an important start-up period, which emphasized determining our mandate and developing a position paper on the definition of the family, two subcommittees were formed. One committee was charged with the responsibility of identifying ways of supporting and celebrating family life within the local church and community. The mandate for the second committee was, in general, to locate relevant materials to help EFC better understand what is happening to families in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

The specific mandate of the research committee is to evaluate what needs to be known about families in Canada in order to better understand what we as the church can do to improve our ministry to families nationally, among the members and affiliates of the local church, and within the local communities in which churches are located. Our activities are identified below.

1. The committee has developed and field tested a needs assessment instrument called the Family Ministries Survey and a Neighbourhood Interview Inventory which are now a part of the Family Invitational Resource Binder (available from EFC). The purpose of these instruments is to enable the local church to *really know* its church family and

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<sup>1</sup> The research subcommittee consists of six members - Irwin Barker, a sociologist and researcher with a research organization; Melanie Driedger, a counsellor and CMA pastor's wife; Walter Goltz, a pastor for several years, past President of North American Baptist College, and now a sociologist and professor in family studies at North American Baptist College; Terry LeBlanc, director of Youth for Christ and now a field representative with EFC on behalf of the Task Force of the Family; Lyle Larson, a former home missions pastor and now a professor and researcher in family sociology; and Donald Swenson, a former Catholic priest and now a professor of Family Sociology at Mount Royal College. Brian Rennick, a Director of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, has been an important adjunct member of the research committee throughout the research process. Lyle Larson has been the chair of the research subcommittee since its inception.

therefore to more effectively minister to the needs as shared by those who complete the surveys.

2. We are continuing to collect information related to families in Canada. This includes official statistics, published research articles and books, and information about research studies now in progress. Together with other Task Force members we have identified resources (books, pamphlets, cassette tapes, and video tapes) which may be of help in ministering to families.

3. From the beginning it was our intention to conduct several research projects relevant to family life in Canada including studies of evangelical families compared to secular families, students in Christian schools compared to secular students, clergy attitudes toward issues affecting families in their local churches, and clergy families.

In a fall meeting of the Task Force on the Family (TFF) in 1991, the importance of combining the study of clergy attitudes toward family issues and a study of clergy families was considered and approved.

Based on a review of key research literature on clergy families and relevant survey questionnaires, Lyle Larson prepared a draft research instrument for careful review by the members of the research sub-committee at the February, 1992 Task Force meeting. Between February, 1992 and February, 1993 the whole research committee met in separate day-long sessions prior to each TFF meeting, in spare-time sessions wherever possible, and in a couple of special meetings in which the main researchers met for several days to finalize decisions. The research design, funding mechanisms, wording and organization of questions in each of the surveys (Ministers, Spouses), timing of the project, and many other dynamics of a project of this scope were resolved during this period. The questionnaires were revised many times in preparing the final versions. Even so, despite our best efforts, after the surveys went to press, several minor errors were discovered. It was a "done deal" as the saying goes. Although about 5% of the respondents mentioned selected errors, the errors will not pose any significant problems for us in the data analysis now underway.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada agreed to underwrite the necessary

funds for about half of the cost of the project. Each of the denominations involved in the study also agreed to provide a financial contribution wherever possible. The average contribution was around \$1000.

The total cash outlay for this project was around \$30,000. In addition, government contributed more than \$10,000 as part of a student work program for the coding and key punching of the surveys. Not reflected in this total is the use of privately owned computers and equipment, the free use of space at the North American Baptist College for the student work program, and hundreds of hours of volunteer time by the members of the research subcommittee and the authors of this report. Had this project been conducted or funded by a professional research body the cost would have been about \$250,000.

## **1. RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.1 Confidentiality**

One of the most important aspects of this study was our commitment to maintain the complete confidentiality of the responses. Several steps were taken to facilitate this commitment.

1. Identification numbers were not used on any of the instruments mailed. Respondents were frequently reminded on the surveys to exclude any reference to their own names or addresses.
2. An envelope system was used to separate the minister and spouse surveys; both respondents were instructed not to discuss their surveys or their responses until after the packet was in the mail.
3. Respondents were assured that their denomination would not see their questionnaires, nor a copy of their questionnaires, or any information that might permit the denomination to identify any respondent.
4. Respondents and denominational leaders were assured that no report or publication will compare results by denomination.

As will be indicated below, all of the data has been coded and is now on computer tapes. All mailing envelopes and surveys have now been destroyed.

## 1.2 Sample

Each of the member denominations of EFC were contacted about possible participation in the study of the clergy families. Copies of the survey instrument were mailed to each denomination along with explanatory information about the study. Twenty-one denominations agreed to participate and provided mailing lists for their own clergy.<sup>2</sup> The total clergy household population, as defined by the mailing lists provided, was 4,953. Most participating denominations informed all of their own clergy by mail of their support for the study and that they may be receiving packets in the mail. We drew a random sample of households for the 10 denominations which had more than 170 clergy on their mailing lists. For the other 11 denominations, however, we used the entire mailing list (i.e., the total clergy population) for our sample. Our total sample therefore included 3,134 households. The packets were mailed to each of these households in early May, 1993. Table 1.1 summarizes this information. A total of 1294 packets were received by our deadline (September 1, 1993), a response rate of 41.3 percent. The response rate was over 50% among clergy from the Christian Reformed (57%), Four-square Gospel (57%), Missionary Church (52%), and the Associated Gospel churches (50%). In contrast, the response rate was under 30% among clergy in the two denominations: Brethren in Christ, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland.

It is well known that ministers are typically incredibly busy people. They receive "bushels" of mail, not the least of which are forms to complete, requests for information, and surveys of various kinds. As will be documented in the chapters to follow, ministers report that they are often overworked. In addition, this particular survey was very demanding of time, careful review, and contemplation. In view of these considerations, and many other factors, we were very pleased with the response rate. Indeed, a response of this magnitude is unique for any mail-out survey.

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<sup>2</sup> Several very small denominations were unable to participate in the Clergy Family Study because the small number of clergy members would have made it impossible to guard the confidentiality of the respondents.



**Table 1.1 SAMPLE SIZE BY DENOMINATION**

<b>DENOMINATIONS INVOLVED</b>	<b>No. of Clergy</b>	<b>Sampling Frame</b>	<b>Percent of Clergy</b>	<b>Total No. Received<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Percent Received</b>
<b>Apostolic Church of Pentecost</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>24.2</b>
<b>Associated Gospel Churches</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>50.4</b>
<b>Baptist General Conference</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>49.2</b>
<b>Baptist Union of Western Canada</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>39.2</b>
<b>Brethren in Christ Church</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29.9</b>
<b>Christian and Missionary Alliance</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>45.4</b>
<b>Christian Reformed Church</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>57.2</b>
<b>Church of Nazarene</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32.1</b>
<b>Evangelical Church in Canada</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>49.0</b>
<b>Evangelical Free Church</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>45.8</b>
<b>Evangelical Mennonite</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>47.8</b>
<b>Fellowship of Christian Assemblies</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47.3</b>
<b>Foursquare Gospel</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>56.9</b>
<b>Free Methodist</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>34.3</b>
<b>Mennonite Brethren</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>36.5</b>
<b>Missionary Church of Canada</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>52.3</b>
<b>North American Baptist Conference</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>39.6</b>
<b>Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>25.1</b>

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<sup>3</sup> The total number received is based on at least 1 survey per household. Both ministers and spouses mailed in their questionnaires in 1,089 clergy households (84%). In 171 clergy households only the minister responded, and in 34 clergy households in the sample only the spouse responded.

Reformed Church in Canada	52	52	All	18	34.6
Salvation Army	627	340	54%	132	38.8
United Baptist Convention of the Atlantic Provinces	453	292	64%	99	33.9
Baptist unspecified	NA*	NA	NA	23	NA
Other (includes no answers)	NA	NA	NA	26	NA
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4953</b>	<b>3134</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>1294</b>	<b>41.3</b>

\*NA means 'not applicable.'

It may also be emphasized that 42% of the spouses provided write-in reactions and comments inside the survey, and 35% wrote comments at the end of the survey. Nearly 30% of the ministers did so as well. We have about 500 pages of typed comments. These responses are uniquely insightful, well-thought, passionate, and often written with deep conviction. It is evident that many ministers and spouses took this survey very seriously.

### 1.3 Research Procedures

After the survey packets were mailed, three follow-up postcards were mailed to every clergy household in the sample, each at 2-3 week intervals. The initial coding of the data, including the entry of hand-written comments, was completed in mid-August, 1993. By January, 1994 all of the data had been checked for errors and entered into the computer. Getting the data ready for analysis took us another couple of months.

This initial report is largely based on the response patterns to the most important questions we asked, and selected written comments. This report does not contain cross tabulations. For example, we do not report whether older ministers responded differently than younger ministers to certain questions. Even so, we believe that you will find the information in this report to be important and relevant to your ministry as a denomination, to your clergy, and to their families. As will be indicated in the chapters to follow, considerable analysis of this data remains to be done. We anticipate writing at least two books within the next three years. The first book will examine the responses statistically and utilize the hand written comments extensively. The second

book will look at the data through the eyes of clergy couples. These will both be exciting projects.

## **2. IMPORTANCE OF THE SURVEY**

### **2.1 A Brief and Selected Review of the Literature**

In this report we have chosen to minimize the review or summary of other relevant research on clergy marriage and family life. The first major book will provide a detailed review and summary of relevant literature.

Clergy families are visible examples of families on display in the research evidence. The minister, whether male or female, has fulfilled the specific denominational requirements to be in a position of leadership. Most are married and have one or more children. Clergy families, by intention or default, become models of the Christian family within their local church and community. As documented in a recent survey by Leadership magazine (Goetz, 1992), 94 percent of the 748 respondents felt pressure to have an ideal family.

The classic study of clergy families - a study of ministers' wives, was conducted by Douglas in 1965. The portrait of the minister's wife was to be the "good wife," to accept her husband's "marriage" to the church, to be a help-mate and gracious hostess, to be an active encourager, called and dedicated to Christian service as a minister's wife. Douglas documented the fact that ministers' wives did not fit this perfect mode, although most were involved, supportive, and helpful to their husband's work. A minority - less than 1%, were either detached or rebellious. The wife satisfaction issue was also apparent in a study by Hartley (1978). The concerns of both clergy husbands and wives became more apparent in the study by Mace and Mace (1980). The problems of time together, family privacy, financial stress and related issues were documented in several studies in the seventies and eighties (Presnell, 1977; Mace and Mace, 1980; Orthner, 1986). Norrell's (1989) recent summary of research on clergy families emphasizes never-ending tasks, insufficient days off, inadequate family time, congregation centred concerns (the needs of spouse and family notwithstanding), keeping internal psychological or family problems secret, being super-human models and multiple other conflicts associated with the time and stress demands of the ministry. These factors are widely

documented in many studies of the "family factor in ministry" (London and Allen, 1985-1986; Glenn and Kramer, 1987; Lee, 1987; London, et al., 1987; Berkeley, 1988; Grauf-Grounds, 1989; Lee and Balswick, 1989; Marciano, 1990; Mickey and Ashmore, 1991; Overstreet and Duncan, 1991). A recent study by Goetz (1992, p. 39) found that the major family problems pastors face include insufficient time together (81%), money (70%), communication difficulties (64%), congregational expectations (63%), and difficulties in raising children (53%). Only 31% of the ministers were "very satisfied" with family life compared with 25% of their spouses. Three other recent books clearly declare that life in the ministry for pastors, their spouses, and their children is difficult (Barna, 1993; Ulstein, 1993; and London and Wiseman, 1993).

Research on clergy families involves many other domains as well. These issues include the kinship factor (Jacobson, 1992), differences in sex-role attitudes and gender behaviours (Steward et al., 1983; Hargrove et al., 1985; Gottula, 1990), and continuing evidence of sexual problems (Editors, 1988; name withheld, 1988, 1992). In the survey by Goetz (1992), 46% admitted that they had sexual problems in their marriage. One in five admitted to having an affair or "inappropriate sexual contact" with someone other than their spouse. About 15% had sought help for their sexual temptations. Divorce among the clergy, has been lower than among other Christian families, but is an increasing fact of clergy life and ministry (Bouma, 1979; Hutchison and Hutchison, 1979; Madsen, 1985; Morley, 1989). Mickey and Ashmore (1991) have also documented several salient transitions in clergy families including the increasing divorce rate, the employment of pastors' spouses, ordained clergy couples, burnout, and the employment of single women as ministers. Some of the issues in dual-work clergy households have been examined (Kieren and Munro, 1988; Grauf-Grounds, 1989). Burnout is a growing concern in ministry (Willimon, 1989; Wolstencroft, 1990).

None of this research is based on Canadian data. Little is known about clergy families in Canada. And not enough is known of clergy family life despite the increasing body of research. We believe the study on which this report is based is one of the most important, comprehensive studies ever conducted. It is our impression, based on the response rate and the quality and depth of the comments we have received on this study, that clergy in Canada were ready and waiting for a study like this.

## 2.2 Comments on the Importance of the Study

We have selected several comments to illustrate both the positive and negative reactions to this survey. Many emphasized the feeling that somebody is "listening."

"Ministry is a lone profession. Yet, I remind myself that there are blessings - God has never left us, never let go of us, always provided. God bless you for your survey and being a listening ear!" (Female, age 38)

"I think your survey is very appropriate and highly needed. While our experience in ministry has been very positive, I realize that is not always the case... Having a sense of confirmation by God to be involved in the exact ministry we are now in, to be frank, is the rock that I sometimes cling to. Without that I think it 'the job' would be too overwhelming. Thanks for listening!" (Female, age 32)

"I personally was able to address myself to personal hurts and feelings that I would not like to address publically. The family life of pastors needs to be addressed and helped. God bless you for caring." (Male, age 58)

Many emphasized that the survey caused them to think.

"This survey really made me think. Thank you for reminding me how much God has done." (Female, age 24)

"It really made me think. I have realized as I filled out the questionnaire that my husband and I do not spend enough time together in prayer and devotions." (Female, age 33)

"This survey has made a great impact on me regarding the way that I think and what I think. This type of survey should be done by all pastors every 4-5 years to allow them to see what they believe in. Thank you for helping to open my eyes." (Male, age 34)

"Wow! Questions I have never been asked before! Things I would rather not face, usually. Thanks for helping me to dig deep into my soul. I needed that!" (Male, age 50)

"I found the survey to be both thoughtfully put together and stimulating to consider. Would it be possible to make blank copies available to clergy and their spouses in order to facilitate discussion around some of the specific issues raised by the questions in the survey? ... As I think back, I am awed by how little of my formal theological education really equipped me to minister today." (Male, age 37)

Others emphasized that the survey should have been done long ago.

"Thank you! This survey is long overdue! I hope the results will be beneficial to the many clergy families who are hurting. May God bless your efforts!" (Female, age 46)

"This survey is overdue! Hind sight is always 20/20 - however I'm very glad you are doing this. I'm glad this is being done. Definitely should be dealt with at the seminary level." (Female, age 55)

There were several concerned comments. Two quite different examples appear below.

"It was interesting to do this, but I think this is probably dangerous - I believe there is something inherently unpleasant and unsavoury about this survey. I wonder how you will slant the information once it is in your possession. I also have concerns about the supposed total 'confidentiality' of the thing - your 'assurances' on the front cover certainly do not 'assure' me." (Male, age 46)

"Your questions have revealed your theological, ethical, [and] moral presuppositions. I am dismayed by the ethic-moral small-mindedness this survey is interested in uncovering. The distinctions of church as organization and church as organism needs to be established if you see the church as [a] force for social/societal reconstruction." (Male, age 44).

We appreciate these comments. A number of respondents were concerned about confidentiality. We take these reactions seriously. The release of any data to whatever audience must first be approved by the chair of the research subcommittee, and secondly by a committee appointed by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. This three person committee consists of a Director of EFC and two retired clergy both of whom have served in denominational leadership and on the Executive of the EFC. We have no way of linking any of our names on the mailing lists to the actual surveys. The members of the research committee of TFF have committed themselves to protecting the absolute anonymity of our respondents. We are also very concerned about releasing data that may be misused in the media. The second comment is interesting and important. It is impossible, we believe, to escape labels. One can be indicted as easily by what one doesn't say as well as by what one does say. Even so, we do not believe that this survey, nor its questions, accurately represent particular moral views or theologies. They are simply questions about what clergy, as human beings, think, feel, and do.

### **3. THE CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW**

#### **3.1 Some Conventions**

It might be helpful to identify a few of the conventions we will employ in presenting the data in chapters 2-8.

3.1 We will focus on the data from ministers unless there are important differences in the minister and spouse responses. When there are differences, minister and spouse data will both be reported.

3.2 Graphs and tables are used extensively to illustrate the findings. The text, however, also reviews material that does not appear in tables or graphs.

3.3 Percentages are used frequently to describe the response patterns to questions. However, another quite common convention is the use of the mean (e.g.  $X=5.6$ ). The mean is the average score that is obtained by dividing the sum of the measurements by the number of respondents. For example, we asked a question about the age of the respondent: Question 2 simply asked "How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ (Age in years to nearest birthday)." Their answers give us a frequency distribution of the number of pastors who are 20, 21, 22,

23, 24, etc. all the way to the age of 93. Eighteen pastors were under the age of 25, 1.4% of all pastors in the sample; 48.8% of the pastors were 44 years of age or less. The mean can be used to calculate the average age of pastors in this study. In this study, the mean age of pastors is  $x=44.29$ , which would typically be rounded to 44.3. In contrast, the mean age of spouses is  $x=42.90$ . This convention is just another way to analyze the data and is sometimes more useful than comparing percentages.

3.4 We will be including several of the comments that were hand written on the surveys in each chapter. Every comment has been typed into the computer. When comments are used they are presented verbatim in the style and language in which they were originally written. We do, however, use two conventions. A series of periods after a sentence and before the next sentence indicates that we have skipped some of the material in the original comment. The second convention is the use of brackets, e.g. [or]. Words occurring within brackets means that we have added a word to link ideas.

It should be emphasized that we are not using correlations, significance tests, and other forms of statistical analysis in this report. These are important ways of understanding and explaining data of the kind in this study. This type of analysis requires more in-depth examination and will be utilized in future publications.

### 3.2 Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 provides basic demographic information on the clergy in our sample such as age, gender, marital and family status, training, work patterns, income, denominations, and related background information. Chapter 3 focuses on the personal satisfactions and difficulties of clergy families posed by ministering in the local church. Chapter 4, in contrast, examines whether clergy marriages and families are satisfying, their activities together, the stressors they experience, and how they cope with them. Chapter 5 deals with the private psychological and behavioural struggles of ministers and spouses. The current spiritual experiences of clergy and their spouses are explored in chapter 6. Chapter 7 looks at the childhood experiences of both ministers and their spouses. In chapter 8, we describe what clergy and their spouses think about many church and family issues in contemporary society. The final chapter provides a summary of the findings, illustrates some of the frustrations that



ministers and spouses have experienced within their churches and denomination, and presents twelve recommendations for actions in improving individual and family well-being among clergy families. A selected bibliography of relevant references appears at the end of the report.



## CHAPTER 2

### CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE IN MINISTRY

This chapter provides information on the characteristics of those people who responded to the survey. It includes normal demographic information, as well as background information regarding the person's decision to enter the ministry, the employment status of their spouse, and related characteristics.

#### 1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

##### 1.1 Sample Characteristics

As you are aware, this study included information from both ministers and their spouses. The minister's sample included 171 responses from the minister only, and 1089 responses from both minister and spouse, for a total of 1260 respondents. Of these responses, 1,222 (97%) were male, and 37 (3%) were female. The spouse's sample included 34 responses from the spouse only, and 1089 responses from both, for a total of 1,123 respondents. Of these responses, 22 (2%) were male, and 1,099 (98%) were female. Thus, female spouses of male ministers were more likely to respond to the sample than were the male spouses of female ministers.

##### 1.2 Age

The age of the minister's sample ranged from 20 to 93, with an average age of 44. The age of the spouse sample ranged from 20 to 85, with an average age of 43. Table 2.1 provides a breakdown of age by categories for both the minister and spouse sample. As the table indicates, the largest group of ministers and spouses (about one-third) is found in the 35-44 age range.

##### 1.3 Marital Status

The measurement of current marital status of ministers indicates that 37 (3%) are single, 1,189 (94%) are married, and 34 (3%) are either separated, divorced, remarried or widowed. The previous marital status of ministers indicates that 97% were never married, 4 (0.3%) had been living common law, and 37 (3%) were either divorced, remarried, widowed or married. In the

spouse sample, 1,103 (98%) are presently married, and 15 (1%) are presently separated, remarried or widowed.

The previous marital status of spouses indicates that 98% were never married, 6 (0.6%) had been living common law, and 21 (2%) had been divorced, widowed, or in a previous marriage.

**TABLE 2.1 AGE OF MINISTER AND SPOUSE**

MINISTERS			SPOUSES		
AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT	AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT
20-34	287	22.9	20-34	306	27.4
35-44	427	34.1	35-45	365	32.7
45-54	257	20.5	45-54	233	20.9
55-64	203	16.2	55-64	158	14.2
65+	78	6.2	65+	54	4.8

#### 1.4 Present Family Situation

A total of 34 (3%) of the ministers were single with no children, 1066 (85%) were in their first marriage, and living in a two-parent family, 34 (3%) were remarried and presently living in a two-parent family, and 73 (6%) were married but had no children. Approximately 71% of ministers have children at home now, whereas 29% do not. Almost 90% of the sample reported having biological children. Of these, 9% had only one child, 33% had 2 children, and 32% had 3 children. Also, 100 families (8%) had adopted children, 17 families (1%) had foster children, and 14 families had stepchildren. Fifty-six families (5%) reported having handicapped children.

#### 1.5 Spouse Employment

Approximately 50% of ministers reported that their spouses were in paid employment. This is lower than the national average of over 60% of all

spouses being in paid employment. There is no indication that pastors are opposed to the employment of their spouse, since 71% disagree with the statement: "If a pastor is a male, his wife should not be employed outside the home." Of those spouses who are employed, 78% work less than 40 hours per week, and only 22% work 40 hours or more per week. Of those who work in paid employment, almost half (44%) are classified as professional, 18% as semi-professional, 26% as skilled, and 10% as semi-skilled. Thus, almost two-thirds of spouses who work (62%) are either in professional or semi-professional vocations.

Spouses were asked to report on their own work situation. Almost half (47%) indicated that they were full-time homemakers, 35% reported they worked outside the home part-time, and 18% reported that they worked outside the home full-time. Of those who specified the type of work outside the home, 39% were in professional work, 18% were in semi-professional work, 27% were in skilled work, 8% were in semi-skilled work, and 8% were in other types of work. Twenty-seven percent of spouses reported working 15 or fewer hours per week, 58% reported working between 16 and 39 hours per week, and 15% reported working 40 hours or more per week.

It is interesting to note that while 50% of spouses are in paid employment, two-thirds of all spouses (66%) work in the church. It is obvious that some spouses are both employed and work in the church as well. On the other hand, it needs to be noted that one-third of all spouses do not work in the church. Of those who do, 90% work 40 hours or less, and 50% work 7 hours or less in the church. The average number of hours of work in the church is 13 hours per week. Over 50 different types of church work were listed. We have summarized these in 9 categories as indicated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 shows that one-quarter (25%) of minister's spouses are involved in teaching or administrative work in the church, but less than 10% are involved in women's ministries as their work in the church. This involves a significant change from the past, when minister's spouses were *expected* to be an important part, if not to lead women's ministries in the church. It is also interesting to remember, as noted above, that one-third of clergy spouses do **not** work in the church. About one-fifth of the spouses (21%) are paid by the church for the work which they do.

When spouses were asked if they had a specific paid position in the church, 188 (17%) indicated that they did. When asked to specify this paid position, 61% indicated that it was as a minister. An additional 23%

**TABLE 2.2 TYPE OF CHURCH WORK OF MINISTER'S SPOUSE**

CATEGORY OF WORK	NUMBER	PERCENT
Teaching	146	18.5
Administrative	137	17.4
Music Ministries	112	14.2
Church Ministries	99	12.6
Minister	91	11.5
Child Ministries	76	9.6
Women's Ministries	65	8.2
Youth Ministries	44	5.6
Other	18	1.4

indicated that they were paid for administrative work, and the balance were in various other kinds of ministries. About 100 spouses indicated that they had a paid position in some other kind of ministry, with over 24 different ministries specified.

When asked if they had been involved in ministry in the church their spouse pastors during the last two years, the great majority (95%) indicated that they had. When asked to check those ministries that applied to them, the following ministries were checked (in order of priority): teaching (72%), visitation (70%), committee work (58%), counselling (48%), assisting in church classes (40%), nursery (37%), preaching (17%), and library (8%). A number indicated that they were involved in other ministries, of which the most frequently mentioned were music ministries (19%), women's ministries (6%), and unspecified ministries (6%).

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1 Age at Decision to Enter Ministry

A number of questions in the survey provide background information on the individual's decision to enter the ministry. The age at which the individual decided to enter the ministry varied from the age of 4 through the age of 53, with the average age being 23. About 15% of ministers decided to enter the ministry after the age of 30.

### 2.2 Influences on Decision

The most significant factor in the decision to enter the ministry is the strong belief that God had called the person to be a minister (indicated by 60% of the ministers). Secondly, 18% indicated that over time, it seemed as if God wanted them to be a minister. Thirdly, 10% indicated that contacts and events seemed to fit together. In summary, almost two-thirds of ministers reported experiencing a call from God, which may represent an interesting change from previous generations in which it was expected that a call from God was necessary in order to consider the ministry. It is also interesting to note that only 1% of ministers indicated that the affirmation of others was important in their decision to enter the ministry. While this would not be the experience of most pastors, one pastor comments:

"It was mainly a vocational opportunity that provided us income and a job."

The support of various people may be important in the decision to enter the ministry. The support of four family members was measured. The strongest support was experienced from spouses ( $\bar{x}=6.5$ ), followed by mothers ( $\bar{x}=5.9$ ), fathers ( $\bar{x}=5.5$ ), and siblings ( $\bar{x}=5.3$ ). This support is certainly crucial for spouses. One spouse comments as follows:

"As a young girl I felt a call to be a pastor's wife. I love the ministry and feel a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment being a pastor's wife. Perhaps my contentment and joy in this has had a positive effect on our children--they are all strong Christians and enjoy the church as well. In speaking with many other pastor's

wives, I've heard a similar complaint several times. One is that they did not really feel 'called' to the ministry, but because their husbands did they went along and now feel frustrated, unhappy, even bitter. Also the issue of loneliness--they feel they should not or cannot have a good friend in the church. For myself, I have always had a good trusted friend that I could 'dump' on. This has been most beneficial for my emotional well-being."

Bearing out the above comments, another spouse comments:

"A lot of issues are addressed here--but just one thought I have as a minister's spouse. I have not felt 'personally' called to the ministry, however I haven't been able to share that with my spouse as I did not want to discourage his 'calling.' However, 12 years later, I have struggled as a minister's spouse being in the ministry anyway. It pays to be honest--we're in counselling now."

The time of life at which the decision to enter the ministry was made also shows some variation. The majority of ministers (52%) made the decision to enter the ministry before they met the person they married, and an additional 16% made this decision after they had met their future spouse. A fairly significant 32% made the decision to enter the ministry after they were married, which likely demonstrates the impact of the ministry as a second career choice. Indeed, 39% of clergy aged 35-44, and 25% of clergy aged 45-54 made their decision to enter the ministry after they were married. When asked if their spouse supported their decision to enter the ministry, 38% said yes, the decision was made together, and an additional 35% indicated that the spouse had supported their decision without much hesitation. Twelve percent indicated that their spouse supported their decision, but that it was a difficult decision, and only 6 ministers (0.5%) indicated that their spouse did not support their decision.

### **2.3 Education of Ministers and Their Spouses**

As indicated in Figure 2.1, the highest level of secular education attained by ministers in the sample was quite low, and spouses had completed even less education than ministers. Over half of ministers (55%) and more than two-thirds of spouses (69%) had not completed a college degree (6% of ministers

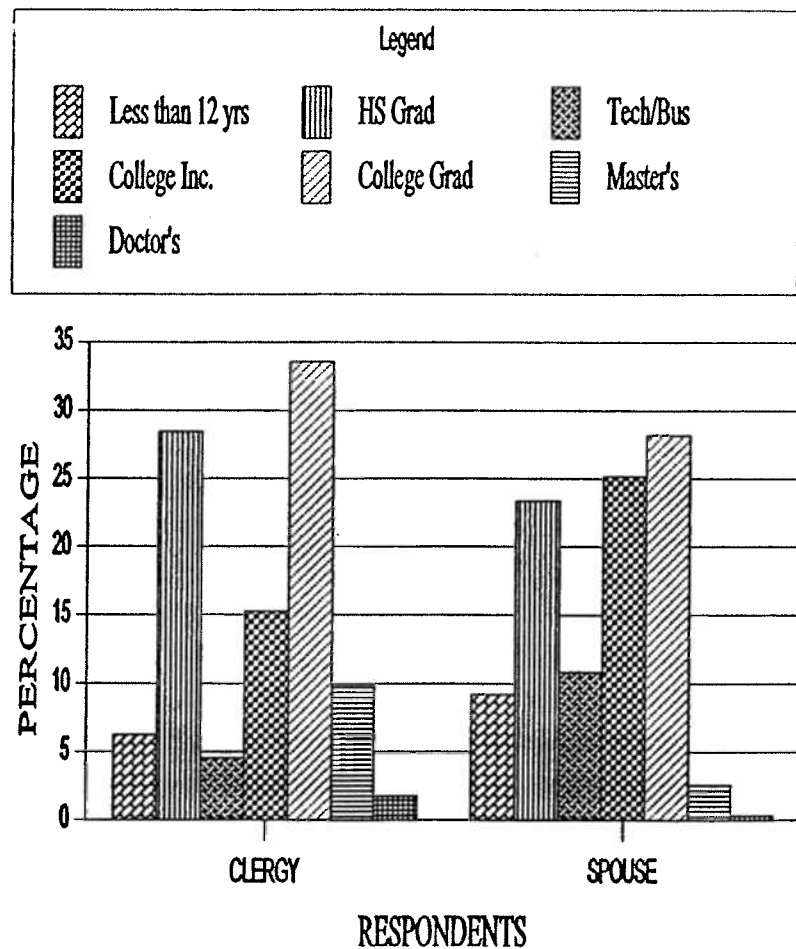


and 9% of spouses had not completed high school, 29% of ministers and 23% of spouses were high school graduates, 5% of ministers and 11% of spouses had completed some technical or business training, and 15% of ministers and 25% of spouses had completed some college). About a third of ministers (34%) but only 28% of spouses had completed a college degree; and 12% of ministers and 3% of spouses completed graduate training (10% of ministers and 3% of spouses had completed a master's degree, and 1.8% of ministers and 0.4% of spouses had completed a doctor's degree).

Though ministers' secular education was somewhat low, most had completed a fairly high level of pastoral/theological education. A total of 71% completed a bachelor's degree or higher. The breakdown of pastoral education is as follows: Bible college - 29% for clergy and 30% for spouses; Bachelor's degree - 26% for clergy and 53% for spouses; Master's degree - 37% for clergy and 8% for spouses; Doctor's degree - 3% for clergy and 5% for spouses; and other - 5% for clergy and 0.1% for spouses. Forty-six percent

Figure 2.1

### CLERGY/SPOUSE EDUCATION



of clergy and 59% of spouses completed their pastoral/theological education at Bible schools or colleges, 49% of clergy and 8% of spouses completed their pastoral/theological education at seminaries, and 5% of clergy and 33% of spouses completed their pastoral/theological education at various other types of institutions. Of these schools, 81% were accredited, and 19% were not. It is apparent that clergy members were almost equally likely to complete their pastoral/theological education at seminaries or at Bible schools or Bible colleges (49% versus 46%), whereas clergy spouses were much more likely to complete their pastoral/theological education at Bible schools or Bible colleges than at seminaries (59% versus 8%). While the great majority of pastors do not comment about their theological education, those who are unhappy with their training do comment.

"Seminaries typically teach 'knowledge' but do not deal with the aspects that make up a would-be minister. I wish we were helped, given courses, in dealing with our past hurts, dealing with 'difficult' people of the congregation, dealing with apathetic people, finding a support group among other ministers, and ways of reinforcing each other as a pastoral couple so that one can encourage and support each other as well as ways of nurturing our marriage under a very hectic lifestyle. We are presently contemplating leaving the pastorate, and we know of a number of friends who are leaving or thinking of leaving. The great deal of emotional and psychological abuse taken particularly by 'caring ministers' points to the deficiencies in their training and in learning how to cope with these."

Another pastor comments:

"I felt my seminary work taught me mostly how to write research papers and do class work to please professors. I gained very little in terms of sharpening any skills and abilities to deal with people and their problems and the dynamics of working with volunteers and resolving interpersonal conflicts. I found that people problems and dealing with people issues is about 80% of the pastor's job. Study and research and theological issues are only about 20%. I also find the expectations of pastors and their families are unreasonable, you just can't do enough to please them."

A former superintendent makes the following observation:

"Christian colleges and seminaries, I find, do not adequately balance their emphases on the polishing and honing of the horizontal relationships of ministry (skills and competence in organizational relationships management, including exegetical and homiletical abilities) with their emphases on the VERTICAL relationships (prayer, prayer warfare), and FAITH that works with God to bring it to pass."

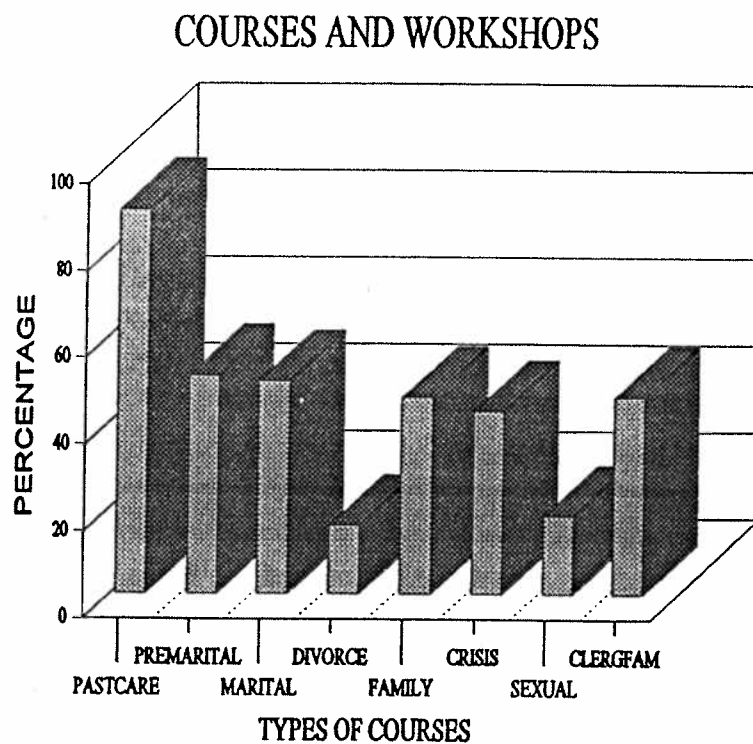
An important part of clergy education is composed of courses or workshops in particular areas of pastoral care.

Several important areas were identified in the survey. As indicated in Figure 2.2, almost 90% of clergy have taken courses or workshops in the area of general pastoral care, the most frequently chosen area. Approximately 50% of clergy have taken courses in such areas as premarital counselling (50%), marital counselling (48%),

courses emphasizing the unique issues and concerns faced by clergy

families in ministry (45%), family counselling (45%), and crisis counselling (42%). The two areas in which pastors had taken the least amount of additional training were the areas of counselling in sexual problems (18%) and divorce counselling (15%). It may very well be that counselling in sexual problems is an area in which the pastor may wish to refer church members to professional

Figure 2.2



agencies. Divorce counselling, however, is an area that is being increasingly confronted in the evangelical church, and may very well require significantly more attention. Those areas in which only 50% of clergy had received additional courses or workshops should also be addressed by seminaries and denominational leaders. The helpfulness of these courses or workshops were rated on a 7-point scale. Nineteen percent of the respondents were at or below the mid-point of the scale, indicating that this training was not particularly helpful. Over 80% of the respondents were above the mid-point of the scale, indicating that the courses or workshops were helpful to them.

"We have found that much of what was dealt with in seminary was good--however, after a few years of ministry you wanted to go back to seminary because your understanding and context had changed from the theoretical to the practical. . . we wanted to have a 'refresher' course essentially, and talk through issues again that we now knew something about." (Male clergy, age 38)

A clergy wife, age 54, comments:

"Pastoral inservices should be mandatory. Courses on these issues, and perhaps sermon outlines should be provided for all pastors and spouses. Accreditation and certification standards should be raised to include frequent and updated knowledge and practice requirements. We need to have competent, available, affordable services for pastors facing family crisis, burnout, fatigue, psychological breakdowns, etc. As the societal demands are increasing and the types and frequency of severe problems are brought to pastors, a greater emphasis will need to be placed on putting and retaining healthy, competent personnel in churches."

The importance of such courses is further emphasized by another pastor:

"Our denomination has not sponsored any workshops, seminars or conferences focused on marriage and the family, especially with regard to its pastors. . . I have seen the marriage and family life of many of my friends break down with increasing regularity over the last few years. We need to be actively sponsoring conferences and seminary training with an aim of preventing this. I believe that if a

pastor is not versed in family issues and is not growing or modeling positive family values in his/her own life, s/he is in danger of becoming ineffective, obsolete, and irrelevant." (Male, age 36)

## 2.4 Ministry Experience

The survey provides background information on a number of factors related to respondents' ministry activities and experiences. Two-thirds of the respondents (66%) list their specific position in the church they are serving as senior pastors or only pastors, 10% as associate pastors, 11% as assistant pastors, 4% as specialized pastors, and 9% indicate they are serving in various other capacities. If not pastoring, respondents were asked in what type of ministry or activity they were presently engaged. Of the 215 respondents engaged in other than pastoral ministries, replies included: denominational leadership (18%), chaplain (15%), retired (13%), missionaries (11%), parachurch organizations (10%), teachers in Christian schools or seminaries (6%), pulpit supply, (6%), on leave (5%), counselling (3%), and various miscellaneous responses. Although the survey did not investigate the area of staff relations, this area needs to receive further attention. One spouse comments:

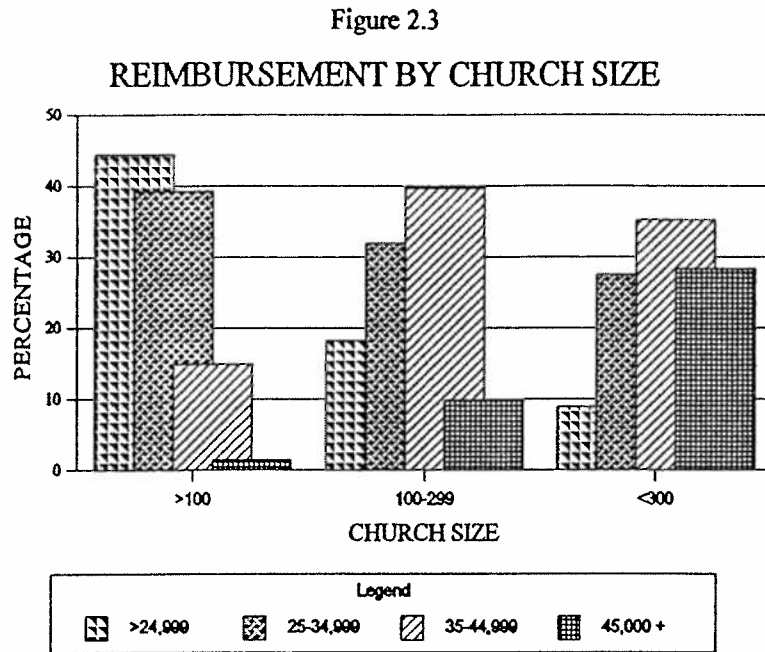
"My husband is the associate pastor. The congregation is very supportive, but the senior pastor is not. This is a great source of stress--training should be given to a senior pastor regarding the caregiving and guidance s/he needs to give to her/his 'staff.' Ideally I would like to see some team work, but they work individually because the senior pastor doesn't want to take time for his associate."

Clergy were asked to indicate what their total reimbursement package was, including salary, housing allowance, car allowance, and any other allowances provided. The figures provided are surprisingly low. Twenty-seven percent of the sample report a total reimbursement package of less than \$25,000, and 34% report a total package of between \$25,000 and \$34,999, making a total of 61% of the sample reporting a total package of less than \$35,000. These figures were broken down by specific position in the church, church location, and church size. There was not a great deal of variation by position in the church (senior vs. associate or assistant) or by location of the

church. The variable that created the greatest differences in reimbursement was the size of the church, as indicated in Figure 2.3. Forty-four percent of pastors serving churches with less than 100 members reported a reimbursement package under \$25,000, compared with 18% in churches with a membership of 100 to 299, and 9% in churches with a membership of 300 or more.

In contrast, about 2% of clergy in churches with a membership of less than 100 received a salary of \$45,000 or more, compared with 10% in churches with a membership between 100 and 299, and 28% in churches with a membership of 300 or more. It appears that the most significant factor in a

pastor's salary is the size of the church he serves. Pastors in churches of less than 100 members certainly face significant financial struggles.



"The issue of salary needs dealing with. Our conference leaders are simply wimps in dealing effectively with pastors' salaries. There are NO guidelines. Each pastor is left to fend on his own. The world has unions and negotiations! It seems ironic that the most 'important work' (pastoring), which requires higher standards of education than many other professions, receives the smallest pay. Quite honestly, there seems to be a low value attached to pastoral ministry - and our church or denominational leadership promotes it by their aloofness to the issue." (Clergy, age 27)

"Some congregations look at the working spouse as a 'reminder'

that they are not paying the minister an adequate salary. . . I am finding at age 62 that I should have worked out more. Retirement is not easy on low income. Too often, the spouse works out and then is expected by the church to be the 'assistant pastor' as far as responsibilities go - without recompense. It is OK to say that 'God will provide' and He does; but I think that more serious thought should be given to the expectations of the clergy family and the '2 for 1' syndrome that seems prevalent. I wish I had learned to say 'NO' 30 years ago. It would be easier today." (Spouse, age 62)

Fifty percent of clergy members indicated that they owned their own home, 33% lived in a home owned by the church or the denomination, and 17% lived in rented accommodations. About 15% of clergy residences were located next to the church, 24% were within walking distance of the church, and 61% were located more than 1 kilometre from the church.

The majority of clergy members (80%) are ordained or commissioned, 18% are licensed, and the remaining 2% are unlicensed or unordained. Clergy were asked how many years they had spent in ministry. Forty-five percent had spent 10 years or less, 34% had spent between 10 and 25 years in ministry, and only 4% had spent more than 40 years in ministry. About 72% had spent 5 years or less in their present position, with 52% having spent 3 years or less in their present position. Only about 7% of the sample had spent more than 10 years in their present position. These figures indicate a fairly short tenure of ministry in a particular church. When asked how many churches or ministries they had served, 19% indicated only 1, 23% indicated 2, and 23% indicated 3. Thus 35% of the sample had served 4 or more churches or ministries.

The current denominational affiliation of respondents to the survey is indicated in Table 2.3. This table provides information on the denomination, the number of respondents from each denomination, and the percentage of the total sample these respondents represent. A total of 592 respondents (47%) had served in one previous denomination, 148 (18%) had served in two previous denominations, and 44 (6%) had served in 3 previous denominations. Over one-third of respondents (39%) serve in churches of less than 100 members, 37% serve in churches with a membership between 100 and 299, and 24% serve in churches of 300 members or more. Of these churches, 35% are in rural areas or in small towns (under 5,000), 39% are in centres with a

population between 5,000 and 99,000, and 27% are in cities with a population of 100,000 or more.

**TABLE 2.3 CURRENT DENOMINATIONAL AFFILIATION**

<b>DENOMINATION</b>	<b>N OF RESP</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Apostolic Church of Pentecost	55	4.4
Associated Gospel Churches	63	5.0
Baptist General Conference	58	4.6
Baptist Union of Western Canada	62	4.9
Brethren in Christ Church	32	2.6
Christian and Missionary Alliance	133	10.6
Christian Reformed Church	83	6.6
Church of the Nazarene	17	1.4
Evangelical Church in Canada	24	1.9
Evangelical Free Church of Canada	43	3.4
Evangelical Mennonite	64	5.1
Foursquare Gospel	41	3.3
Fellowship of Christian Assemblies	26	2.1
Free Methodist	62	4.9
Mennonite Brethren	66	5.3
Missionary Church of Canada	69	5.5
North American Baptist Conference	44	3.5
Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland	45	3.6
Reformed Church in Canada	18	1.4
Salvation Army	131	10.5
United Bapt. Convention Atlantic Provinces	99	7.9
Other	18	1.4

A total of 76 respondents did not indicate the province in which their church or ministry was located. As Table 2.4 indicates, most respondents were from the Province of Ontario, followed by Alberta and British Columbia. There were few respondents from Quebec, PEI, or the Territories.



PROVINCE	N OF RESP	PERCENT
British Columbia	206	17.4
Alberta	223	18.8
Saskatchewan	98	8.3
Manitoba	110	9.3
Ontario	331	28.0
Quebec	10	0.8
New Brunswick	79	6.7
Nova Scotia	46	3.9
Prince Edward Island	6	0.5
Newfoundland	71	6.0
Yukon Territory	1	0.1
Northwest Territories	2	0.2
Other	1	0.1

Clergy members report devoting an average of 51 hours per week to their work as a minister, and about 30% report devoting 60 hours per week or more to their ministerial responsibilities. Spouses also estimated that clergy members spent an average of 51 hours per week in ministry activities, but only 14% of spouses (compared to 30% of clergy) reported that clergy devoted 60 hours or more per week to ministerial responsibilities. Clergy members also report spending an average of 11 evenings per month providing pastoral care and other ministry-related functions (spouses also estimated an average of 11 evenings per month), and 5% report spending between 20 and 28 evenings per month in ministry-related activities (compared to 6% of spouses). This represents a significant amount of time, and a significant number of evenings in church-related functions, which involve being away from the family.

"My question is, what difference does it make if he is gone or at home, because when he is at home he is either on the phone or his mind is on a church related/member's issue?" (Spouse, age 23)

Another spouse, aged 31, comments:

"As a pastor's wife I find the most difficult part is the demand on my husband's time. I said he works an average of 70 hours a week. That's the scheduled minimum, and when emergencies or phone calls come, they steal more precious family time. When such cases persist for weeks (or seasons), the toll on the wife and family is great. It is easy to become bitter towards the people and their insensitivity to the demands on the pastor. We have found that one of the saving graces in our marriage has been a planned 'date night' every Tuesday. We consider it a set appointment so unless a really big emergency comes about we guard that night. It tells me that I'm important and that if I haven't seen my husband all week I will see him Tuesday night. I think that each Board should insist that their pastor take his day off, and shoot him if he is seen around the church on that day. Not only is it wise and beneficial, it is obedient to God."

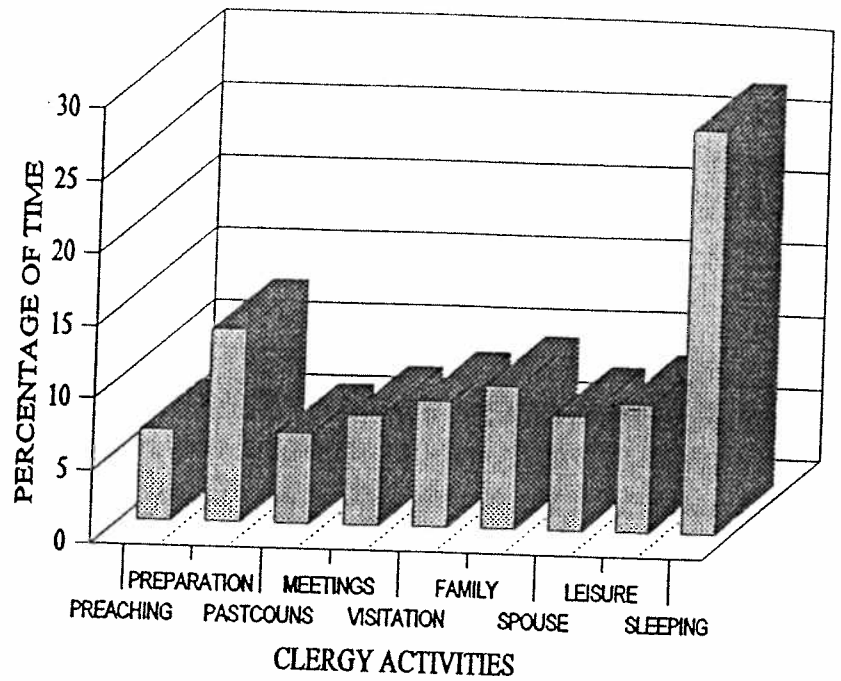
Clergy were asked to think of a typical week in their life as a minister, and to estimate the percentage of their time that is actually used for various activities. The percentage of time varied greatly from one clergy member to another. A total of nine activities were included in the survey. The average percentage of time spent in various activities was calculated. As indicated in Figure 2.4, the greatest amount of time was spent sleeping (28%), followed by sermon or class preparation (13%). Time is relatively evenly divided between the other seven activities, in the following rank order: private time with family (9%); leisure time (9%); visitation (9%); private time with spouse (8%); church meetings (8%); preaching/teaching (6%); pastoral counselling (6%). It is rather interesting to note that pastoral counselling receives the least amount of time relative to other activities.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to specify other important activities in which they engaged. Various other activities were suggested. The two most frequent responses included administration and personal activities. It

is evident that clergy members balance their time between the activities outlined in the survey, with the greatest amount of time (apart from sleeping) being devoted to sermon and class preparation. It is interesting to note that, on the average, clergy members spend more time in leisure activities than they spend in private time with their spouse.

Figure 2.4

### TIME ALLOCATION





### 3. SUMMARY, CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE IN MINISTRY

This chapter has provided demographic as well as background information on the characteristics of clergy and clergy spouses who responded to the survey.

3.1 The clergy sample included 171 responses from ministers only, and 1089 responses from both ministers and spouses, for a total of 1260 respondents. The spouse sample included 34 responses from spouses only, and 1089 responses from both clergy and spouse, for a total of 1123 respondents. Clergy ranged in age from 20 to 93, with an average age of 44. Spouses ranged in age from 20 to 85, with an average age of 43.

3.2 Approximately half of ministers report that their spouse was in paid employment. Of the spouses who were employed, only about one-quarter worked 40 hours or more per week. Two-thirds of all spouses work in the church, but half of these work 7 hours or less per week. Only one-tenth of spouses are involved in women's ministries in the church. Seventeen percent of spouses indicated that they had a specific paid position in the church.

3.3 The average age of ministers at the time of their decision to enter the ministry was 23 years. About 15% of ministers decided to enter the ministry after the age of 30. The most significant factor in the decision to enter the ministry was the experience of a call from God.

3.4 The highest level of secular education attained by ministers and their spouses was quite low, but most had completed a bachelor's degree or more education in the pastoral/theological field. Clergy members were almost as likely to have completed their pastoral/theological education at Bible colleges as at seminaries. Spouses, in contrast, were more likely to complete their pastoral/theological education at Bible colleges than at seminaries. Almost one-third of the sample of spouses had not completed any Bible college or seminary training. Clergy frequently upgrade their skills by completing courses in particular areas. The area in which courses or workshops were most often

completed was that of general pastoral care. The areas in which courses or workshops were least often completed were counselling in sexual problems and divorce counselling. Most clergy indicated that courses or workshops they had taken were helpful to them.

3.5 Two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they were the senior pastor or the only pastor. The total reimbursement package of clergy was relatively low, with almost two-thirds of the sample receiving a total reimbursement package of under \$35,000. One-half of clergy own their own home, one-third live in a home owned by the church or denomination, and the rest live in rented accommodations. Four-fifths of clergy members were ordained or commissioned, and about one-fifth were licensed. The average number of years in ministry for the clergy sample was 15, and the average number of years in the present position was 5 years. Most churches in the sample were small, with 39% being less than 100 members, and 37% having a membership between 100 and 299. Only 24% of churches had a membership of 300 or more. Twenty-seven percent of the churches were in urban areas with a population of 100,000 or more. Clergy report devoting an average of 51 hours per week to ministerial responsibilities. Clergy also report spending an average of 11 evenings per month in ministry-related functions. Time-allocation reports indicate that clergy spend most of their time in sermon and class preparation, and the least amount of their time in pastoral counselling.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLERGY FAMILIES AND THEIR MINISTRIES

This chapter deals with the ongoing relationships between the marriages and families of clergy men and women and the churches and related ministries in which they serve. Chapter two summarized what clergy men and women do in the church. This chapter examines how clergy marriages, parents, and families are influenced by the multiple and demanding tasks of ministry. Is ministry satisfying? Do ministers and the spouses of ministers feel similarly about ministry? Do they accurately perceive how their partners in ministry feel?

We asked several different types of questions. The first set dealt with the degree of satisfaction with ministry as perceived by ministers and what ministers thought that their spouses felt about ministry. These questions were also asked of spouses. The second set of questions dealt with the difficulties of the ministry for clergy marriages, parenthood in clergy families, children in clergy families, and clergy family life in general.

#### 1. SATISFACTION IN MINISTRY AMONG CLERGY

##### 1.1 Minister's and Spouse's Roles in Ministry

We gave ministers and spouses five possible choices in defining their own view of ministry. After reviewing the responses, we have since collapsed the responses into the following four categories. The spouse wording appears in (*italics*) if the wording was different. The respondent was asked to "circle one answer for yourself and tell us what **you think** your spouse's view would be on the same question."

- (1) The ministry is my career, my spouse's ministry is caring for me and our children. (*The ministry is my spouse's career, my ministry is caring for my spouse and our children.*)
- (2) The ministry is my career, my spouse is free to have his/her own full- or part-time career. (*The ministry is my spouse's career, I am free to have my own full- or part-time career.*)

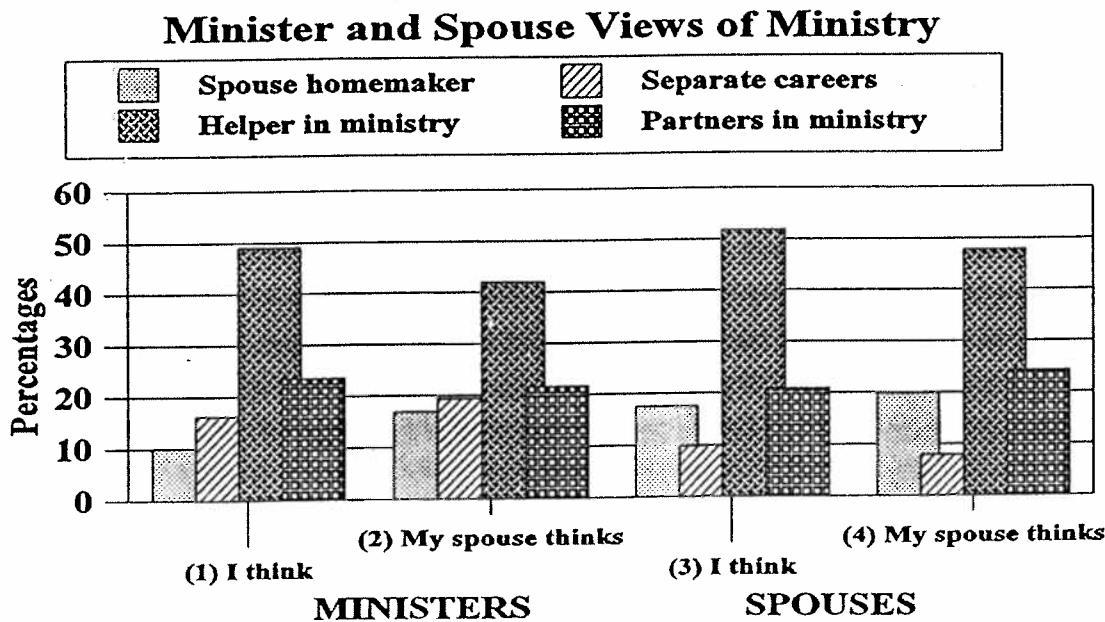
- (3) My spouse has a very important role to play in helping me in ministry. (*I have a very important role to play in helping my spouse in ministry.*)
- (4) My spouse and I are equal partners at home and in ministry.

Figure 3.1 compares the views of ministers and spouses, i.e., their own views, and their views of their spouse's views. They were, in this case, asked to respond to the question in terms of what "I think." It will help us understand the meaning of the graph if we discuss self views first.

**1.1.1 Self views of ministry roles** [see (1) and (3) in Figure 3.1].

Nearly 50% of the 1,260 ministers in our sample see their own role as being in the ministry, and their spouse's role as being a helper in doing ministry. Ministers are saying that they depend on their spouses for support, understanding, and assistance. In making this choice, these ministers are emphasizing that paid ministry is their job and they must bear the brunt of the responsibilities. Slightly more spouses (52% of the 1,123 spouses in our sample) define their role in ministry in exactly the same way. It is clear that both ministers and spouses typically hold a traditional view of ministry.

**Figure 3.1**





Several written comments effectively illustrate this conception of role complementarity.

"I think my husband and I would agree that although he is the pastor we both play important roles in the ministry here. Of course my main objective is to create a family life that is both happy and healthy in all aspects. My husband does, however, help with the decision and the daily aspects of family life." (Female, age 38)

"My husband, who is a minister, would be very accepting if I chose to have a full- or part-time career outside the home or church. However, I have chosen not to have an outside career, but rather to manage our home's daily running, have my own ministries at church. That way, for ministries where we both are involved, we get to spend time together, rather than he being at church and me sitting at home. This works out well for us now - I'm not sure how we could do it if we have children in the future." (Female, age 39)

"My husband and I both feel that God has to call both of us into ministry. Although my husband is the one who will be ministering and leading the church. I, as a wife, play an important supportive role in raising our children although I am with them for most of the day, as the father, he plays a vital role in their growth and development and must also make time to be together with them and be a family." (Female, age 28)

Other spouses seem to emphasize a more housewife type role, apparently due in part to the reactions of the church.

"I intentionally try to be less visible as a pastor's wife. I have quite a few of my family in our congregation and people have this 'thing' about a family running the church. My husband is a great help with the family. He loves kids and understands women remarkably well." (Female, age 48)

A large number of spouses emphasized the importance of the family role particularly during the childrearing years. The comment below emphasizes this

perspective in a unique way.

"As the spouse, I think churches too often feel (not necessarily say) that when they hire the pastor, they hire the wife as well. I don't believe it is healthy if the spouse is made to feel she has to do all that the congregation expects of her to do. Yes - the spouse should be involved but only if she feels that part is her gift and is able. I believe my part (now with the small children) at this time is to support my husband, take part in visitation and raise my family. If I can fit other things in, I do. If I can't, due to family demands, I try not to feel guilty. My motto has become "there are different seasons of life. Now I am in the season of small, young children. My ministry involvement will increase/decrease accordingly to each 'season.' This keeps my demands on myself and my husband balanced. . . ." (Female, age 27)

About 24% of ministers, compared to 21% of the spouses, defined their role in ministry as an equal partnership with their spouses. The strongest differences between the self views of ministers and spouses, however, occur with respect to "spouse as homemaker" and "separate career" roles. Ministers are half again as likely to see their ministry as their "own career" and their spouses as being free to pursue their own careers (16% compared to 10% of spouses). Spouses, in contrast, are nearly twice as likely as ministers to see their primary roles as homemakers - caring for their spouses and their children (17% for spouses compared to 8% for ministers).

As reported in chapter 2, 35% of spouses worked outside the home part-time and 18% worked full-time. We received a number of comments from working women about their satisfaction with ministry. The following comment illustrates this concern, particularly with her husband.

"I have found my attitude toward church in general decline as I have been a pastor's wife. In the past, I loved church and all it represents. Now that love is mingled with real resentment that has been transferred to the church and even to my relationship with God. I also find it frustrating as a working woman when my husband expects me to be part of his job. I want to be, but do not feel particularly gifted. I admit his job is more important - in light

of eternity - than mine, but the attitude is my job is of no consequence. We only talk about the details of his job. He doesn't even really understand or know what I do!" (Female, age 24)

*1.1.2 Views of spouse's views* [see comparisons in Figure 3.1 between (#2 - clergy perceptions of spouse response) and (#3 - actual spouse response), and between (#4 - spouse perceptions of clergy response) and (#1 - actual clergy response) in Figure 3.1]. The respondents were secondly asked to respond to the categories in terms of "My spouse thinks." The differences between ministers and spouses are even greater in their predictions of each other's views of these roles. Ministers thought that their spouses defined their role as a separate career, a ratio of 2 to 1. In sharp contrast, twice as many minister's spouses thought that the ministers to whom they were married would have said that they were strictly homemakers. And a greater number thought ministers would choose the helpmate role for their spouses. Even so, the sense of "equal partnership" as a ministry role is quite consistent for about 20% of ministers and spouses. At the very least, however, this data offers a striking insight.

- Ministers more frequently think that their spouses see themselves as having a separate non-ministry oriented career.
- Spouses more frequently think that the ministers in their lives see their role as primarily helpmate or homemaker.

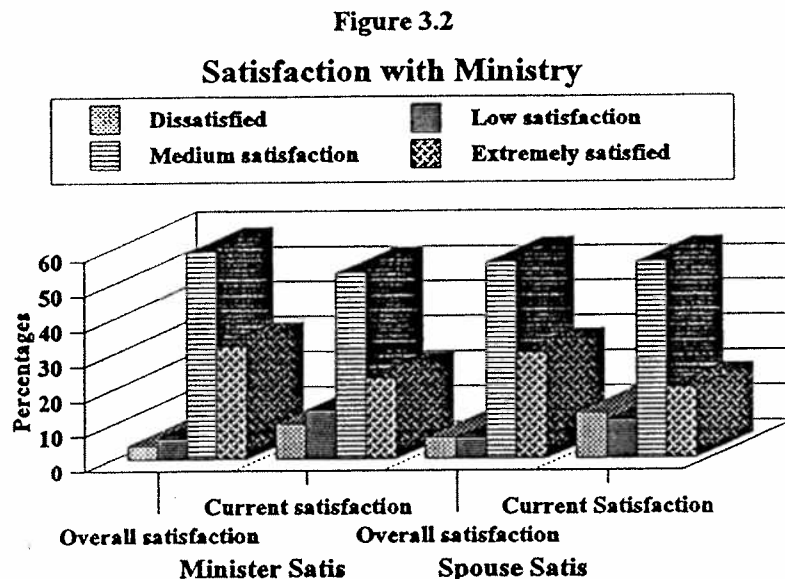
## **1.2 Opinions about Ministry and Spouse Employment**

In an attempt to clarify the meaning of the concept of separate careers for the non-minister spouse, we asked our clergy respondents about the advisability of spouse employment outside the home. About 28% of both ministers and their spouses agreed that a minister's wife should not be employed. This question was also reversed. What if the pastor is a female, should her husband be able to obtain independent employment? In this case, 15% of the ministers and 10% of the spouses agreed that the male spouse of a minister should not be employed outside the home. A significant minority of ministers and spouses apparently believe that their spouses need to be available for ministry, supportive to their spouses who minister, and primary caregivers to their children. In contrast, far fewer believe that male spouses of ministers need to be unemployed. We will be examining the reasons for this difference in

follow-up analysis. It is clear that the majority believe that a minister's spouse should be able to be employed, whatever their gender.

### 1.3 Personal Satisfaction with being in the Ministry

We asked two questions about satisfaction with being involved in ministry. The first question dealt with the general level of satisfaction with paid ministry as a way of serving God. The second question examined the particular ministry in which the clergy person was now serving. Satisfaction ranged from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Ministers and spouses were each asked to indicate their own level of satisfaction, and then were asked to predict their spouse's level of satisfaction. Figure 3.2 illustrates some of these findings.



Nearly 32% of both pastors and spouses are very (extremely) satisfied with the principle of being in paid ministry. Similar to the recent Leadership survey, about the same percentage of Canadian clergy in our sample are very satisfied with ministry. High satisfaction with one's current ministry situation, however, drops significantly - to 23% for pastors, and 20% for spouses. Even so, the overwhelming majority of ministers and spouses are satisfied with the principle of being in the ministry and with their current situation (about 76%). The remaining 24% describe themselves as either slightly satisfied or dissatisfied. Spouses are more **dissatisfied** with their ministry situation than ministers (5.8% compared to 3.6%).

We also asked ministers to predict their spouse's response, and spouses to predict their spouse's response to the "satisfaction with ministry" question.

Ministers predicted that their spouses were much less satisfied than they really were, while spouses seemed to know with much greater accuracy what ministers really thought about their ministry. These findings seem to indicate that ministers 'experience' more spouse disappointment with ministry than they themselves feel. As a result they judge their spouses to be less satisfied.

A large number of spouses pointed out that their gender - almost all spouses of ministers were wives - was a problem for them in ministry. This issue was not adequately addressed with the survey questions. Accordingly, we received quite a few written comments. A sample of these comments appear below.

"We need to be balanced and gracious as we deal with the issue of women in ministry. Often I feel like I am passed over and ignored for my gifts and abilities because they aren't typical for a woman. There are some things that I do better than some men but am not asked because I'm the wrong gender." (Female, age 32)

"The spouse should not be included in a 2 for 1 deal. She is her own person." (Male, age 31)

"If only churches would recognize pastor's wives who have a call to the ministry and are trained!! Why couldn't they hire 'ministry teams'? I realize some women whose husbands are clergy want to pursue their own career and that is fine, but some of us want to minister, have a call and are trained but are not recognized by the church, do not have pension benefits, etc. and basically spend our lives in the church so the church can have 2 for the price of 1. No wonder we sometimes struggle." (Female, age 44)

Several spouses wrote of their experience as missionaries and of their experience as wives when they returned to ministry in Canada. A good example of their feelings and dissatisfaction with ministry appears below.

"First I was a pastor's wife, and then a total of 20 years [as] a missionary wife. Once we returned to Canada I found the male chauvinism in the church very disorienting and I lost tremendous self-esteem. In [the country in which we served], I had to do

everything a man does - be on boards, drive the Landrover, teach in Bible school and this stretched me, by reading, studying and I felt challenged, involved and needed in God's kingdom. Once back in Canada, in our church I was no longer appreciated for sharing any kind of ideas or opinion. It embarrassed my husband. We had a tough readjustment. But God's faithful in all things."  
 (Female, age 57)

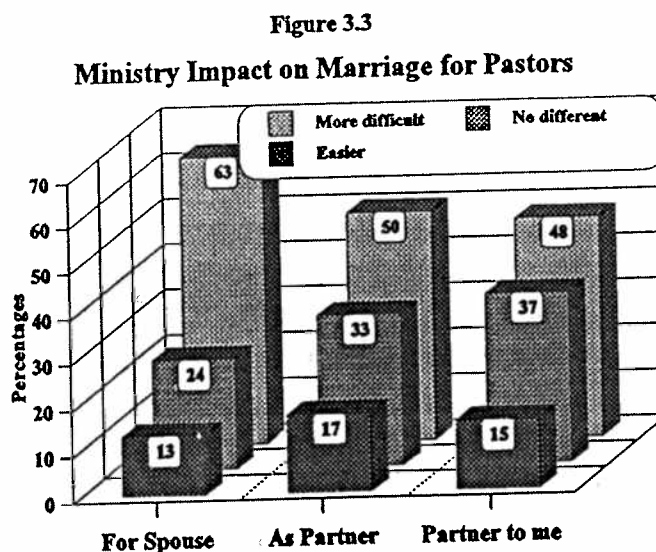
## 2. DIFFICULTIES OF CLERGY FAMILIES IN MINISTRY

We now turn to what ministers and spouses are saying about the various types of struggles they experience in marriage and family life as a result of being in ministry.

### 2.1 Difficulties for Clergy Marriages

**2.1.1 As seen by pastors.** The majority of ministers (63%) believe that pastoral ministry makes the meaning and experience of marriage more difficult for their spouses (see Figure 3.3). A small minority think that the ministry actually makes marriage easier (13%). As illustrated in Figure 3.3, about 24% see the ministry as having no effect on marriage.

When asked about marriage *roles*, however, pastors think that their own roles as partners to their spouses are somewhat less difficult (about 50%). They perceive their spouse's roles as partners to them in a similar way. In responding to the word "roles" they are likely thinking of household and child care opportunities and duties. This is illustrated by the strong change in the amount of no difference. Nonetheless, the most apparent evidence is that



ministry does make marriage more difficult for half or more of clergy, as perceived by pastors.

**2.1.2 As seen by spouses.** There is a significant difference in the perceptions of spouses. Only 40% of spouses see their marriages or their roles as spouses/partners as being difficult because they are married to ministers, about 10% fewer than among pastors. In other words, the majority of spouses (60%) either see their roles as no different or even easier because they are not directly involved in ministry. The meaning of this finding is unclear; however, it would seem that spouses have a somewhat more positive view of life in the ministry than their "minister spouses" think they do. Even so, a solid minority see marriage as more difficult. We found numerous comments hand written on the surveys about the impact of the church on marriage - most by spouses.

"The stress in our marriage and family came as a **complete** surprise to us and we've had to sort things out ourselves - we had **nowhere** to go. It has been harmful and difficult - but, **fortunately** my spouse listens and values our marriage and God is faithful. We all need to be **more** prepared in this area of warfare." (Female, age 37)

"There is a need to address the stresses that are placed on couples who are doing ministry together. It often happens that due to living in the same house, church decisions affect marital relationships. In some cases, it leads to disillusionment and divorce! There are dynamics happening here that are not easily identified in evaluations of ministries." (Male, age 41)

**2.1.3 Church as spouse.** In the opinion section of the questionnaire, we asked the following question:

"Being a minister is something like being married to both the church and to my spouse."

About 80% of both ministers and spouses agreed with this statement. Eighteen percent of pastors and 23% of spouses strongly agreed that ministers have two spouses. The phrase "something like" in this question may have facilitated a stronger response. We think, however, that the phrase is apt. Among pro-

fessions where the demands on one's time are very high, and the work is considered uniquely important by the employee, there is a sense of spouse-like commitment. The ministry obviously has a very special component - this work is God's work! The pressure is on to give one's all. Nearly 92% of both ministers and spouses believed that it was difficult to take time away from church, 43% (41% of spouses) thought that this was mostly or completely true. Despite the complexities of this spouse-like commitment to church life, it is interesting to emphasize that over 95% of ministers said that their marital partners were a major resource in coping with the ministry (41% strongly agreed). Nearly all spouses (97%) as well said that marriage was a powerful resource in coping with the everyday realities of ministry - 44% strongly agreed with this statement.

The "not enough time together" theme is mentioned often.

"The work load and what is 'expected' by the congregation and by the organization needs to be examined. Working 7 days a week and being out an average of 4-6 evenings a week is ridiculous! No wonder there is clergy 'burn-out'!" (Female, age 50)

## **2.2 Difficulties for Parenting, and for Children, in Clergy Families**

Table 3.1 summarizes the perceptions of ministers and their spouses concerning the impact of full-time ministry on parenthood and on their children. As is evident in Table 3.1, about half or more of clergy and spouses believe that being in the ministry makes family life more difficult. Clergy spouses (55%) are more likely to see the parent role as more difficult than do ministers (48%). Spouses, however, are less inclined to see the problems for their children as unique to clergy families, particularly with respect to teenagers (46% compared to 53% for ministers). About 44% of clergy apparently feel that there is pressure on children in clergy families to spend most of their play time with children from their church - spouses in contrast are somewhat less concerned (35%). About 15% consider the "pressure on clergy children" factor to be a mostly true issue. Further, most ministers and spouses (75%) do not believe that "preacher's kids" are more likely to get in trouble than kids in other families.



**Table 3.1 Percentage saying "More difficult" for Children in Clergy Families**

<b>Question asked</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Spouse</b>
<b>Effects of ministry on role as parent</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Effects of ministry on spouse's parent role</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>More difficult for our children</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Children feel pressure to spend time with children in church families</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>More difficult for teenagers in clergy families</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Preacher's kids are more likely to get in trouble</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>

Many of our respondents wrote of their concerns about the impact of full-time ministry on their families. Several selected comments from the responses are provided below.

"I find our biggest problem as a clergy family is time. There is never enough time. My husband is constantly trying to keep up with all the responsibilities at the church and then trying to fit in time for his wife and children. It is a constant struggle. Because we are in a smaller church, there is no other full-time staff and in respect to this, there is no one else to share the load with." (Female, age 35)

"It would be helpful if the minister and family could be seen to be as human (emphasis ours) as any other member of the church. Being put on a pedestal is extremely difficult for all concerned! It is difficult to give children the freedom to fail and the knowledge that they are unconditionally loved when they are being criticized and judged by unfairly high standards." (Female, age 42)

"I wish the congregation (some of them) would not expect my kids to be perfect. Some members seem to think that my children have

to set an example for theirs. What a bunch of baloney! What a burden to put on young children." (Female, age 38)

"Churches need to demonstrate their love and support in overt ways so that children of pastors can see as well as the wife that they are loved and supported. Too often kids are only aware of problems and conflicts and come to resent the church for high demands and low rewards." (Male, age 57)

"Our children experienced harassment and the antithesis preferential treatment because of their unique position as 'preachers kids' within the church family, personal family, personal family/relative situation, school, and peers ... the repercussions of stressful situations, and conflicts with church members, inadvertently (or not) being overheard by our children. How [does one] keep the children respectful of these individuals and not be defensive for their parents?" (Female, age 38)

It is well to point out that several ministers and spouses commented directly about the strong support they as a family received from their congregation. One such comment appears below.

"Our congregation has been exceptional in their ability to let us live as any other family, i.e., little if any criticism of our lifestyle or our children. Consequently, the pressures referred to in this questionnaire simply did not exist for us. All of our children and their spouses are happily involved in the same congregation in which they were raised. Perhaps it's congregations who need to rethink their attitudes toward pastors and families." (Female, age 53)

We also asked a more general set of questions about the problems that clergy families face. These questions related to finances, independence from church life, and expectations. The findings are presented in Table 3.2. The majority of both ministers and spouses believe that their own financial situation is more difficult than people in other professions (over 60%). Note that the percentage who feel strongly about each of the situations, as defined in Table 3.2, is enclosed in parentheses. As can be seen, about 20% believe that their situation is much more difficult. When asked to describe the situation of clergy

families in the typical church, however, it is clear that the majority of pastors (87%) believe that finances is a major struggle. In this question, there were three possible measures of agreement - somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. About 20% strongly agreed.

**Table 3.2 The Impact of Ministry on Clergy Family Life**

<b>Question asked</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Spouse</b>
<b>Difficult financial situation as a clergy family</b>	<b>61 (20)%</b>	<b>64 (21)%</b>
<b>Finances are one of the major struggles clergy families face in the typical church</b>	<b>87 (18)%</b>	<b>81 (22)%</b>
<b>It seems like there is never any place to get away from church matters in our house</b>	<b>82 (42)%</b>	<b>78 (40)%</b>
<b>Members of my family feel guilty if they stay at home rather than going to church</b>	<b>84 (40)%</b>	<b>80 (49)%</b>
<b>The expectations for clergy families are simply too high</b>	<b>74 (9)%</b>	<b>74 (12)%</b>
<b>Our best friends are part of the church</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>

The intrusiveness of ministry in everyday life is likewise apparent. Eighty-two percent of ministers believe that it is difficult to escape from church matters at home. This includes those who said somewhat true, mostly true, and completely true. A large percentage of both ministers and spouses experience this problem in an invasive way, i.e. those who responded "mostly or completely true" (about 40%). A corollary question - family members feeling guilt if they do not attend church services - confirms the strength of this lack of independence from church life. Forty percent of pastors say that this is mostly or completely true, compared to 49% of spouses. A strong connection to guilt is the perceived expectations of others. Indeed, this is apparent for clergy as well. Three-fourths of all ministers and spouses consider the expectations of the church for clergy families to be simply too high. About 1 in 10 have strong feelings about the severity of these expectations.

The last question deals with both independence from and close ties to the church. About 18% of ministers do not have close friends within the churches they pastor, spouses slightly more frequently than pastors. The data, however, shows that nearly 40% of ministers say they have best friends within their own churches (compared to 50% of spouses).

### **3. SUMMARY, CHAPTER THREE: THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CLERGY FAMILIES AND THEIR MINISTRIES**

3.1 About half of all ministers see their ministry as their own career and their spouse's role as helpmate. Spouses see the ministry and spouse roles in much the same way. One-quarter of the clergy defined their roles as an equal partnership with their spouses.

3.2 When ministers and spouses "guessed" each other's responses, pastors were much more likely (compared to spouses' self-views) to predict that their spouses would say they had a separate non-ministry related career. Spouses, in contrast, predicted that the "ministers" in their lives would see them as a helpmate or homemaker.

3.3 The majority of both ministers and spouses believe that a minister's spouse should be able to be employed, whatever the gender. Only 28% thought that a minister's wife should not be employed. When this question was reversed, only 15% of the ministers thought that male spouses should not be employed.

3.4 Nearly 32% of both pastors and spouses are extremely satisfied with being in paid ministry. However, when asked about the current ministry situation, the percentage extremely satisfied drops to 23% for pastors and 20% for spouses. Only about 24% of the sample describe themselves as either slightly satisfied or dissatisfied, spouses being much more dissatisfied.

3.5 The majority of pastors (63%) believe that ministry makes marriage more difficult for their spouses. Only 38% of the spouses believed that marriage was made more difficult for their "spouses in ministry." This difference was reduced, however, when the spouse was asked about their clergy spouse's marital role as a partner to themselves (from 25% to a 10% difference in perception of reality). It seems that some ministers are more concerned about their marriages than they need to be.

3.6 About 80% of both ministers and spouses agreed with the statement that "being a minister is something like being married to both the church and to my spouse." Most ministers struggled with insufficient time with their spouses, while also seeing their spouses as a major resource in coping with the demands of ministry.

3.7 Fifty percent of both clergy and spouses believe that being in ministry makes parenthood difficult. Sixty percent believe that the clergy life is difficult for their children. However, only about 25% believe that preacher's kids are more likely to get into trouble.

3.8 The overwhelming majority of both ministers and spouses consider finances to be a salient struggle for the typical pastor and family. Furthermore, most believe that church matters are difficult to escape in everyday home life and that the expectations for clergy families are simply too high.

## CHAPTER 4

### SATISFACTION IN CLERGY MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

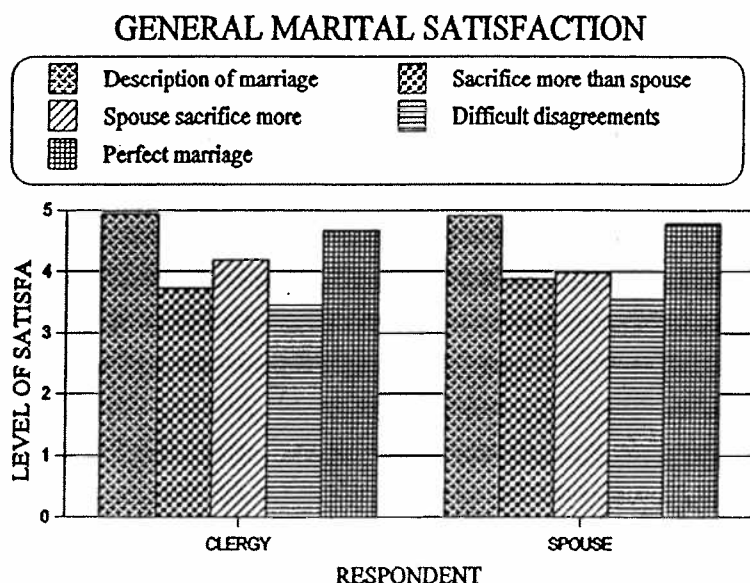
In this chapter we will examine various measures and specific areas of satisfaction in clergy marriages, the frequency of various marital activities, and the sources of and reactions to marital stress. We will also report on various measures of satisfaction with family life, the frequency of activities within the family, and the sources of and reactions to family stress.

#### 1. SATISFACTION WITH MARRIAGE

A great deal of research has been devoted to the issue of satisfaction with marriage. General opinion surveys have usually found a fairly high level of satisfaction with marriage and family life. Over 84% of a random sample of respondents in the 1980 Edmonton Area Survey, for example, reported that they were satisfied with family life, and nearly 45% reported that they were *very* satisfied. Similar results are found in the present study.

##### 1.1 General Measures of Marital Satisfaction

Figure 4.1



A number of general measures of marital satisfaction were included in the clergy survey. Figure 4.1 summarizes these measures.

Respondents were asked to indicate a term which best described their marriage on a six-point scale. Terms included angry, cool and distant, ambivalent, tolerant, warm and supportive, and fantastic. Sixteen percent

of both clergy and spouses described their marriage with one of the first four terms. The remaining 84% described their marriage as either warm and supportive (69%), or as fantastic (15%). Few differences between clergy and spouses were found. Respondents were asked to respond, on a seven-point scale, to the statement, "For all practical purposes, we have a perfect marriage.." Spouses were somewhat more likely ( $x=4.78$ ) to perceive their marriage as perfect than clergy ( $x=4.67$ ). In response to the statement, "We have not yet experienced any difficult disagreements in our marriage," spouses were more likely to agree ( $x=3.56$ ) than were clergy ( $x=3.45$ ). It appears that spouses are likely to be more idealistic, and that clergy are somewhat more likely to be realistic in their perceptions of their marriage.

"The ministry is not an easy life but has tremendous rewards in the lives of people as the years go by. We have served in the largest and smallest churches in our convention, country, town, city, mostly at minimum wage. God provided for us when our parishioners did not. We have served in churches, community, denominational offices, and can say we have met and know some of the finest people in the world, and enjoy friendship and fellowship across the constituency. Our children and grandchildren are a joy to us, our blessings are many, and most of them have come through serving in the Christian ministry. . . God does not have a payday every Saturday but the dividends come and are worth striving for."  
(Spouse, age 75)

Two questions measured the willingness of respondents to sacrifice in order to maintain or strengthen their marriage. Participants were asked to respond to the statement: "I am willing to sacrifice much more than my spouse, if necessary, to maintain or strengthen our marriage.." They were also asked to respond to the statement: "My spouse is willing to sacrifice much more than I am, if necessary, to maintain or strengthen our marriage.." This measure has been interpreted in other studies as an indicator of perceived commitment to the marriage for both the respondent and the spouse. As Figure 4.1 indicates, clergy think their spouses are much more willing to sacrifice ( $x=4.19$ ) than they were ( $x=3.74$ ) in order to maintain or strengthen the marriage. Spouses perceive their 'husbands' ( $x=3.98$ ) to be slightly more willing to sacrifice to maintain or strengthen the marriage than they are ( $x=3.89$ ), but the difference is not as great.

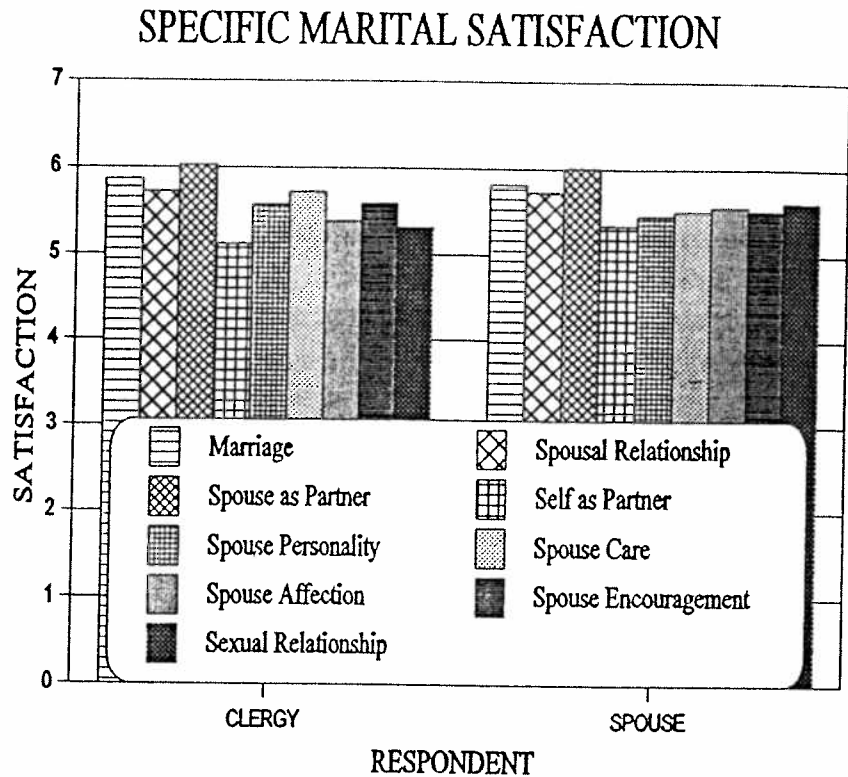


## 1.2 Specific Areas of Marital Satisfaction

Respondents were also asked to indicate their satisfaction, on a seven-point scale, with nine different areas of their marriage. Their responses are summarized by Figure 4.2. As indicated in the Figure, the three areas of highest marital satisfaction for both clergy and spouses are 1) satisfaction with the spouse as a partner ( $x = 6.03$  for clergy and  $6.01$  for spouses); 2) the person's own marriage ( $x = 5.86$  for clergy and  $5.82$  for spouses); and, 3) the person's relationship with their spouse ( $x = 5.72$  for clergy and  $5.73$  for spouses). It should be noted that for all three areas, clergy satisfaction

and spouse satisfaction are very close, although clergy satisfaction is somewhat higher. The three areas of lowest marital satisfaction for both clergy and spouses are: 1) satisfaction with self as partner to the spouse ( $x = 5.12$  for clergy and  $5.35$  for spouses); 2) satisfaction with the way the spouse relates to the person sexually ( $x = 5.32$  for clergy and  $5.62$  for spouses); and 3) satisfaction with the way the spouse shows affection ( $x = 5.39$  for clergy and  $5.57$  for spouses). The three areas of lowest marital satisfaction are areas in which the greatest differences are found between clergy and spouses, and they are also those areas in which clergy satisfaction is lower than spouse satisfaction.

Figure 4.2



## 2. MARITAL ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 Activities at Home with Spouse

Respondents were asked to indicate how many times each month they had special activities at home together with their spouse in worship, Bible study, prayer together, and discussing spiritual things. The most frequent activities were praying together (an average of 14 times per month for clergy and spouses), and talking about spiritual things (an average of 14 times per month for clergy and 13 times for spouses). One spouse comments that they talk about spiritual things "every time they walk the dog."

A total of 55% of clergy and about 66% of spouses did not spend special times together in worship or in Bible study, and the average for clergy was 5 times per month, and that for spouses was 4 times per month for each of these activities. The higher number of spouses reporting not spending time together in these activities may indicate that clergy are reluctant to admit not spending time in worship or Bible study because they may feel that they are expected to engage in these activities.

### 2.2 Other Marital Activities

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had engaged in each of seven activities with their spouse during the past month. These activities included the following: 1) had a discussion about important things; 2) helped out on something without being asked; 3) laughed together about something; 4) gave affection to (hugged or kissed) my spouse; 5) went out to dinner together; 6) had a time of recreation together such as games, hobbies, walking, hiking, etc.; and 7) spent time together with friends, other than church friends. The activity that takes place least frequently is spending time together with friends other than church friends. About one-quarter of the clergy report that they had not spent time together with friends during the past month, and only 3% report spending times with friends at least once a week or more often. About 12% of clergy and 19% of spouses reported that they had not gone out to dinner together in the past month, and 9% of clergy and 5% of wives reported going out to dinner together at least once a week or more often. The activities most frequently reported were giving affection to one's spouse and laughing together about something. Only 7% of clergy and 8% of spouses reported giving affec-

tion to their spouse once a week or less often. Sixty-eight percent of clergy and 74% of spouses reported giving affection to their spouse daily or almost daily. Nineteen percent of clergy and 17% of spouses reported laughing together once a week or less, and 34% of clergy and 44% of spouses reported laughing together about something daily or almost daily. The picture that emerges from these activities is that spouses have a close relationship in which they exchange affection and laugh together frequently. On the other hand, they spend very little time with friends outside the church, or in going out to dinner together, or even in a time of recreation together. The following two comments illustrate something of the dilemma.

"As we near retirement age, I see little help for pastoral couples who have devoted all their time and interests to ministry. Little time was given to hobbies, etc. How does a clergyman retire? What does he do? Can he ever lay down his 'calling' without guilt?" (Spouse, age 63)

"I think sometimes pastor's wives are left out of things and feel very lonely, especially when they have small children and are short on finances. Our church helped me by paying my way and providing help for the children so I could attend some of the retreats and seminars available. I also think sometimes the pressures of ministry bring stress, and the pastor's wife becomes very tired. It's hard for the wife to stay unaffected when her husband is given a hard time by people. Perhaps some support groups or special time for pastor's wives alone would be good." (Spouse, age 50)

### **3. MARITAL STRESS**

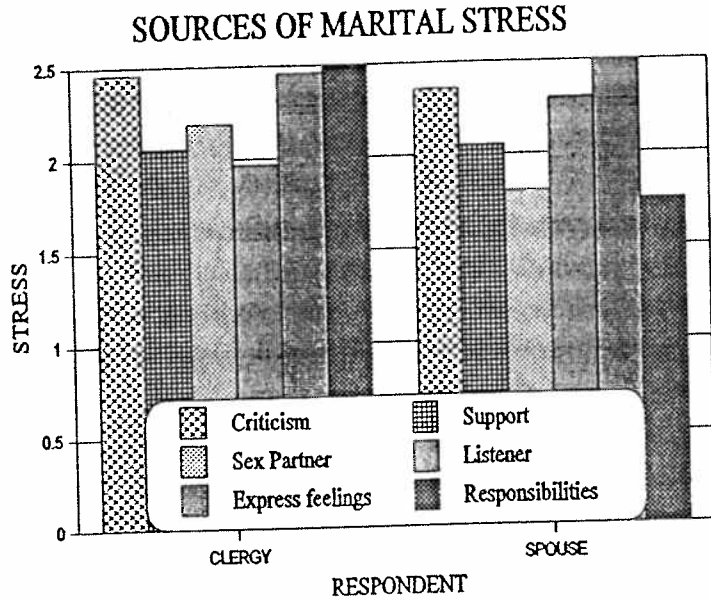
We were also interested in determining the factors that contributed to marital stress in clergy couples, as well as establishing how clergy couples reacted to stress within their marriage. A number of questions dealt with the issue of marital stress.

#### **3.1 Sources of Marital Stress**

Six different sources of marital stress were enumerated in the questionnaire, and spouses were asked to indicate how often during the past

year these issues had created stress in their marriage relationship (See Figure 4.3). On a five-point scale from 'never creates stress' to 'often creates stress,'

Figure 4.3



respondents were asked to indicate how frequently the following issues had created stress in their marital relationship: 1) My spouse criticizes me; 2) My spouse does not support or encourage me; 3) My spouse is not a good sex partner; 4) My spouse is a good listener; 5) It is easy for me to express all my true feelings to my spouse; 6) My spouse is disappointed because I fail to fulfil my fair share of family responsibilities. The highest level of marital stress for clergy members was experienced as

the result of the perception that their spouse was disappointed because clergy members had failed to fulfil their fair share of family responsibilities. In contrast, spouses experience the lowest level of stress in response to this particular variable. In other words, spouses feel that their husbands are not disappointed with their performance of their fair share of family responsibilities.

"Our experience in ministry has been that we do not have time or opportunity to develop friendships outside of the church to give opportunity to be 'normal people' or a 'normal couple' (e.g., sitting together), or even the chance to talk out feelings with someone." (Spouse, age 41)

"I feel that every denomination should provide names and phone numbers of counsellors, and some access to confidential counselling services to every pastor. My biggest frustration has been that the

pastor and his family have no one to turn to for support for their marriage/family. Peers or those over you aren't even a consideration for counselling, and often professional counselling isn't affordable." (Spouse, age 38)

The second-highest level of stress for clergy members is experienced as the result of their inability to express their true feelings to their spouse. This is in keeping with the traditional stereotype of the male as the strong, silent type. Research has demonstrated that men are not as open about their emotions or feelings as women, and they are not as likely to express feelings such as love, happiness, and sadness (Balswick, 1980). It is apparent, however, that the inability of males to express their feelings and emotions does create a high level of stress.

"As a pastor's wife I have many mixed emotions and opinions and I think that shows. I feel that we have great expectations placed on us and so are caught between striving to be everyone's ideal and being ourselves, accepting both our strengths and weaknesses. I think women have stronger emotional needs than men. Men can assume everything's fine when the wife feels quite different. Men also tend to minimize what are big issues to women." (Female, no age provided)

It is interesting, however, that the highest level of stress for clergy spouses is created by the perception of their inability to express their true feelings to their husbands. This is rather surprising in light of the frequent finding that wives are more expressive and sensitive in relationships, and are much more likely to express emotion in communication than their husbands. Is it possible that clergy wives are more reluctant to express their true feelings because of their perception that their husbands are involved in doing "God's work," and any interference or complaint is working against God? This may be borne out by the finding that clergy experience the lowest level of stress in response to the issue of the spouse being a good listener, whereas spouses experience fairly high levels of stress in response to this statement. Spouses express the feeling that their husbands are ready to listen to and to meet the needs of everyone else but them.

" 'Being a minister is something like being married to both the

Church and to my spouse.' Amen to this statement. I find it difficult sharing my husband with the church at times. He gives all his time and energy to the ministry, and what's left for me and my children?" (Spouse, age 34)

"I struggle with being jealous of the church because it takes up so much of my husband's time, although he tends to be a workaholic by nature. But because ministry is 'God's work' I sometimes feel guilty for wanting to take my husband away from his work. I'm sure this is a problem with many pastors' spouses, but I'm not sure how it could be addressed by the church. I think most of the people in our church would feel indignant, offended or gypped if the pastors decided to 'skip' church meetings in the evenings to spend time with their families, yet it is so important that pastors work at good relationships with their families. I think it's not only a question of the pastors trying to prioritize, but the church members' attitudes need to be more understanding and less demanding." (Spouse, age 41)

A more frequent source of stress for clergy ( $x=2.2$ ) than for their spouses ( $x=1.8$ ) is the feeling that their spouse is not a good sex partner. Husbands are more likely to be disappointed with their wife's sexual performance than wives are with their husband's sexual performance.

### 3.2 Reactions to Marital Stress

There are many possible reactions to marital stress, and different couples deal with marital stress in different ways. The same couple may also deal with marital stress in different ways at different times. The survey asked couples to indicate how often they displayed 9 different reactions to marital stress on a scale from never (1) to often (5). Responses of husbands and wives were similar, and so we present only the responses of clergy in Table 4.1. Their responses are ranked from least frequent to most frequent. It is apparent from Table 4.1 that couples feel that they typically are able to resolve their disagreements through discussions which lead to an equitable solution. Clergy couples appear to demonstrate effective means of conflict resolution.

"There are no doubt stresses upon myself, my wife, and my

children as a result of my being a pastor. But there are also benefits. I cannot categorically say it is easier or more difficult. Any profession can have risks to personal life. Being a pastor is no different so, as a family, we accept the challenges and try to deal with them as best we can. But we also enjoy the benefits immensely." (Clergy, age 31)

**TABLE 4.1 REACTIONS TO MARITAL STRESS**

REACTION	MEAN
We make decisions impulsively	2.1
We become more rigid and controlling of each other	2.3
We raise our voices at each other	2.4
We avoid talking about it	2.5
We stay out of each other's way	2.6
My spouse gives in to me	2.6
I give in to my spouse	2.9
We talk about it together to find an equitable solution	3.7
When we have problems, we typically solve them	3.9

#### **4. SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE**

The survey not only asked questions about marital satisfaction, but it also measured the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of respondents with various aspects of family life. Nineteen questions measure the perception of satisfaction of respondents with their family life. Results are summarized in Table 4.2, which provides the mean level of satisfaction with family life of both clergy and their spouses in the 19 areas.

It is impossible to comment on all of the relationships which are found in Table 4.2. A number of summary statements will be made:

**TABLE 4.2 SATISFACTION WITH FAMILY LIFE**

AREA OF FAMILY LIFE	CLERGY	SPOUSE
1. Your ability to talk with your children	5.58	5.82
2. Amount of respect received from family members	5.91	5.78
3. Your relationship with your children	5.80	5.97
4. Recognition from family as family leader	5.92	5.67
5. Your ability to express yourself to your children	5.54	5.65
6. Amount of support from spouse to be a good parent	6.03	6.01
7. How much your children talk to you	5.45	5.71
8. With yourself as parent	5.08	5.21
9. With your spouse as parent	5.88	5.54
10. The time your spouse spends with your children	6.02	5.11
11. Your ability to relax and have fun with your children	5.37	5.36
12. Spouse's ability to relax and have fun with children	5.62	5.37
13. Family's ability to resolve conflict	5.52	5.44
14. Degree of closeness between family members	5.74	5.80
15. Your family's ability to share positive experiences	5.89	5.97
16. The relationship you have with your own parents	5.28	5.38
17. The relationship you have with your spouse's parents	5.42	5.16
18. Relationship children have with your own parents	5.41	5.55
19. Relationship children have with spouse's parents	5.62	5.35

1. Clergy responses indicate that the area of least satisfaction with family life comes from their assessment of themselves as a parent ( $x=5.08$ ). Spouse responses suggest that their lowest level of satisfaction is with the amount of time clergy members spend with their children ( $x=5.11$ ). It is apparent that both clergy and their spouses are least satisfied with the level of involvement of clergy members in family life. At the same time, spouses report the second-highest level of satisfaction in response to their own relationships with their children. "I feel I have neglected the needs of my family. I also want to take good care of them. I'm afraid if I really make them an active priority, I'll lose



the support of my congregation as many of their needs will simply not be met. Then what?" (Clergy, age 30)

2. In contrast, clergy are most satisfied with the amount of support they receive from their spouse to be a good parent ( $x=6.03$ ) and with the amount of time their spouse spends with the children ( $x=6.02$ ). We have noted earlier that clergy spouses are less likely to be in the working force than the general population of wives. It appears that clergy wives tend to enhance and encourage family relationships and activities.

3. Clergy members are more likely to report satisfaction with the recognition they receive from their family as the leader ( $x=5.92$ ) than their spouses are ( $x=5.67$ ), and with the amount of respect they receive from family members ( $x=5.91$ ) than their spouses are ( $x=5.78$ ). This may suggest that concerns with position and power carry over from the church to the family.

4. Clergy members are less satisfied with the relationship they have with their own parents ( $x=5.28$ ) than with their relationship with their spouse's parents ( $x=5.42$ ). This is also true of the relationship their children have with their paternal grandparents ( $x=5.41$ ) as compared with their maternal grandparents ( $x=5.62$ ). Clergy spouses are also more satisfied with the relationship with their own parents ( $x=5.38$ ) than with the relationship with the clergy member's parents ( $x=5.16$ ).

#### **4.1 Contact with Parents**

Contact with parents was measured on a five-point scale, from never (1) to often (5). The least frequent form of contact was by letter, and the most frequent form of contact was by telephone. Contact of own parents by clergy was almost as frequent as contact with the spouse's parents by telephone and letter, but personal contact with own parents was less frequent ( $x=2.88$ ) than personal contact with spouse's parents ( $x=3.08$ ). Spouses were more likely to contact their own parents more frequently than their spouse's parents by letter ( $x=2.38$  vs.  $2.24$ ), by telephone ( $x=3.97$  vs.  $3.41$ ) and by personal contact ( $x=3.12$  vs.  $2.97$ ). Spouses are more likely to report being in contact with their own and with their spouse's parents than clergy members are, and they are more likely to maintain contact with their own than with their spouse's parents.

## **5. FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

The frequency of a number of general activities, as well as the frequency of a number of spiritual disciplines and other interaction, was measured.

### **5.1 Frequency of General Family Activities**

The frequency of 5 different activities was measured on a five-point scale from never to daily. Ranked from least frequent to most frequent, the activities are as follows: 1) went out and had a meal together; 2) worked together on a project; 3) had a time of recreation together, such as games, hobbies, skating, hiking, etc.; 4) had an important discussion about a meaningful topic; and, 5) laughed together. Many pastors and pastor's wives feel that the expectations placed on them by the church infringe on their time with their families. One pastor's wife states:

"I find I am very protective of my husband and children (therefore very defensive of them). I find I am not very forgiving of people who infringe on my time with my husband (very possessive of our time together and days off). I find much of the time that my husband is too tired for me - in other words, I get the leftovers (holidays are wonderful)." (Spouse, age 31)

### **5.2 Frequency of Spiritual Activities and Interaction**

Respondents were asked how many times each week they had special family times together at home in a number of activities. The activities that were engaged in least often (less than twice a week, on the average), were Bible study together, playing games together and recreational activities as a family. The activities that were engaged in most frequently (about 4 times a week, on the average), were family prayer and bedtime prayer. Reading stories together and family worship together were reported to take place between 2 and 3 times a week, on the average.

"My denomination needs to address the financial needs of its clergy. Also, the work load and what is 'expected' by the congregation and by the organization needs to be examined. Working 7 days a week and being out an average of 4-6 evenings a

week is ridiculous. No wonder there is clergy 'burnout.'" (Spouse, age 50)

## 6. FAMILY STRESS

### 6.1 Sources of Family Stress

Respondents were asked to indicate how often each of five different issues created stress in their family relationships during the past month. Responses were not significantly different for clergy and spouses, and we will therefore report only on clergy responses. When sources of stress are rank-ordered from lowest to highest frequencies, the following order is found:

1. Emotional problems with members of my family	2.0
2. Arguments between myself and my spouse	2.3
3. Difficulties in managing children	2.4
4. Arguments between myself and my children	2.4
5. Arguments among my children	2.9

As indicated above, the least frequent source of family stress is emotional problems with members of the family, and the most frequent source of family stress is arguments among the children. All of these sources, however, fall between 2 (seldom) and 3 (sometimes), indicating that they do not contribute to high levels of stress within the family.

"I suggest that you could have asked more questions on the effect 'financial pressure' brings to the pastor and his family. Also on the topic of the 'integrity' of the church. For example, after you moved to the church (or joined a multi-staff) did they (they being 'board' or 'pastor'), keep their word regarding promised workload or financial income. As you can guess, this has been a major concern to me (and my family). It creates stress." (Clergy, age 52)

Another pastor comments:

"Your survey fails to address one of the most significant pressures which clergy families face which is job security and the impact of frequent moves. The instability created by the average ministry

length in a locality is as detrimental to family life as it is in the armed forces. Perhaps a comparison of these two groups and a study of the reasons why the average tenure has gone down over the decades would reveal a major stressor in clergy family life."  
(Clergy, age 39)

## 6.2 Reactions to Family Stress

Six different reactions to family stress were suggested, and respondents were asked to indicate how frequently each of these reactions occurred within the family, on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Responses of clergy and spouse were very similar, and so we present the responses of clergy, ranked from least to most frequent on the five-point scale.

1. We avoid talking about it	2.1
2. We become more disorganized	2.5
3. We raise our voices at each other	2.6
4. We become more strict and controlling with the child(ren)	2.9
5. We share our feelings about the issue	3.6
6. We do everything we possibly can to resolve the problems	4.0

Responses indicate a healthy approach to resolving stress within the family, with the two most frequent reactions being sharing of feelings and doing whatever possible to resolve the problems. Nevertheless, significant pressures and stresses are also encountered. A spouse comments:

"One of my big concerns has been the ministry and success in ministry has become so important. Relationship with God and family seem to take the back seat. More than ever, I believe that ministry flows out of a relationship with God and my family. If I'm struggling in either of these areas, my 'ministry' will show it. If my motives are wrong, nobody will be happy. I think people need to go through a marriage course together before going into a ministry situation. . . We need to be told we're called as a family - not just the spouse who's the visible minister. We need ministering to as family units. There are times my kids are totally stressed out along with us." (Spouse, age 39)

"I was scared to send this in. I am having to deal with deep emotional problems. I cannot tell anybody because it might affect my husband's ministry. It is hard sometimes. I envy other women who are not married to pastors. They do not realize our stress. I feel very guilty and ashamed of my feelings. I do not want to let God down. Please pray for us." (Spouse, age 33)



## 6. SUMMARY, CHAPTER FOUR, SATISFACTION IN CLERGY MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES

This chapter dealt with satisfactions and stresses within clergy marriages and families. The major findings are as follows:

6.1 In agreement with other studies of marital satisfaction, more than four-fifths of respondents described their marriage as warm and supportive (69%), or as fantastic (15%). Few differences were found between clergy and spouses, except that spouses are more idealistic than clergy in their perceptions of their marriage.

6.2 Clergy perceive their spouses to be much more willing to sacrifice, in order to maintain or strengthen their marriage, than clergy themselves were. In contrast, spouses perceive their mates to be slightly more willing than they to sacrifice in order to maintain or strengthen their marriage.

6.3 The three areas of highest marital satisfaction for both clergy and spouses are satisfaction with the spouse as partner, satisfaction with the person's own marriage, and satisfaction with the person's relationship with his/her spouse. The three areas of lowest marital satisfaction for both clergy and spouses are satisfaction with the self as partner to the spouse, satisfaction with the way the spouse relates sexually, and satisfaction with the way the spouse shows affection. Clergy satisfaction is lower than spouse satisfaction in these three areas.

6.4 Spouses have a close relationship in which they exchange affection and laugh together frequently, but they spend very little time with friends outside the church, or in going out together, or in times of recreation together.

6.5 The highest level of marital stress for clergy members was in response to the perception that their spouse was disappointed because clergy members had failed to fulfil their fair share of family responsibilities. In contrast, spouses experienced the lowest level of stress in response to this particular question. The second-highest level of stress for clergy members is experienced as the result of their inability to express their true feelings to their spouse. It is interesting that the highest level of stress for clergy spouses is created by the perception of their inability to express their true feelings to their

husbands. This is a surprising finding in light of the frequent finding that wives are more expressive and sensitive in their relationships, and are more likely to express emotion in communication with their husbands. Husbands are more likely to be disappointed with their wife's sexual performance than are wives with their husband's sexual performance. Clergy couples feel that they are typically able to resolve their disagreements through discussions which lead to an equitable solution.

6.6 The area of least satisfaction with family life for clergy comes from their assessment of themselves as a parent. Spouse responses suggest that their lowest level of satisfaction is with the amount of time clergy members spend with their children. In contrast, clergy are most satisfied with the amount of support they receive from their spouse to be a good parent, and with the amount of time their spouse spends with their children. It appears that clergy wives may bear a disproportionate amount of responsibility for family life.

6.7 Both clergy members and spouses are less satisfied with the relationship they have with the clergy member's parents than with the relationship with the spouse's parents. They are also more likely to be in contact with the spouse's parents.

6.8 Family activities that were engaged in least often were Bible study together, playing games together, and recreational activities as a family.

6.9 The study indicates a fairly low level of family stress, at least with those sources of stress measured in the study. All of the sources of stress measured fell between 2 (seldom) and 3 (sometimes). The most frequent source of family stress is brought about as the result of arguments among the children. Responses indicate a healthy approach to resolving family stress, with the two most frequent reactions being sharing of feelings, and doing whatever possible to resolve the problems.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE PRIVATE INNER WORLDS OF MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

This chapter addresses the private interior psychological and behavioural spaces of ministers and their spouses. The general public, let alone the Christian public, seems to idealize clergy men and women as God's special representatives. Clergy are often seen to have a "connection" in the spiritual domain which enables them to practice their faith in everyday life in an almost super-human way. The fact is, ministers are human beings like the rest of us. Clergy have feelings too. They struggle with inner hurts and disappointments. Clergy, let alone their spouses, are not always contented. They want justice. They do things that they wish they had not done. This chapter briefly introduces these innermost individual feelings and struggles, as reported by our respondents, to the confidential questions we asked. We also asked a series of confidential questions related to various behaviours that may have occurred during one's ministry.

#### 1. CURRENT PERSONAL FEELINGS

After a careful review of the various feelings that may be experienced by individuals as they live out their lives in their jobs, leisure, and families we developed a list of 24 feelings that we believed would be most relevant to ministers and their spouses. We asked both ministers and their spouses to indicate how often they felt each of these 24 feelings. The responses were classified into the following six categories:

1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = more often than not, 5 = most of the time, and 6 = all of the time.

We have organized the responses to the 24 feelings into three groups. The first group reflects more positive self-attitudes.

## 1.1 Positive Self-Attitudes

Table 5.1 identifies the mean (or average) response for both ministers and spouses on five obviously healthy feelings that contribute to psychological and spiritual well-being.

**Table 5.1**  
**Mean Positive Self-Attitudes for Ministers and Spouses**

<b>POSITIVE SELF-ATTITUDES</b>	<b>Ministers</b>	<b>Spouses</b>
<b>Feel secure</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>4.66</b>
<b>Feel good about myself</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>4.33</b>
<b>Feel hopeful</b>	<b>4.70</b>	<b>4.61</b>
<b>Feel contented</b>	<b>4.44</b>	<b>4.45</b>
<b>Feel fulfilled</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>4.41</b>
<b>Feel joyful</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>4.33</b>

It is apparent that most ministers and spouses do have positive feelings "more often than not" or "most of the time." Hope is the most apparent positive feeling for ministers (4.70), while security is the strongest feeling for spouses (4.66). Of all these positive attitudes, spouses are least joyful (4.33) and least likely to feel good about themselves (4.33). Ministers are likewise least joyful (4.34). Using percentages instead of means to illustrate this pattern, 47.7% percent of spouses feel good about themselves most of the time, and 4.6% feel good about themselves all of the time. In contrast, 55.6% of ministers feel good about themselves most of the time, and 6.3% feel good about themselves all of the time. Spouses are not as pleased about their sense of contribution to ministry. On the whole, however, the differences in positive attitudes between spouses and ministers are quite small.

## 1.2 Uncertain Self-Attitudes

The list of more negative feelings is somewhat longer. As can be seen in Table 5.2, the means (averages) are lower reflecting the fact that these negative

emotions are not as salient in the inner worlds of clergy. We have arranged the mean scores from high to low, the highest mean score meaning that this feeling is the most problematic for respondents. A mean of 3.16 for "feel inadequate," in other words, indicates that this feeling is most likely to occur "occasionally." Among ministers, about 26% never or rarely experience inadequacy, while another 43% checked the category "occasionally." Therefore, a majority of ministers (69%) are troubled with feelings of inadequacy. Spouses are somewhat less likely to experience these feelings (74% compared to 69% among ministers).

**Table 5.2**  
**Mean Uncertain Self-Attitudes among Ministers and Spouses**

UNCERTAIN SELF-ATTITUDES	Ministers	Spouses
Feel inadequate	3.16	3.10
Feel vulnerable	3.11	2.94
Feel isolated	2.75	2.72
Feel guilty	2.57	2.56
Feel lonely	2.54	2.72
Feel depressed	2.36	2.45
Feel afraid	2.29	2.32
Feel shame	2.19	2.02
Feel panic	1.97	2.08
Feel abandoned	1.88	1.77
Feel suicidal	1.21	1.17

Overall, the data in Table 5.2 indicates that ministers seem to have somewhat higher levels of uncertain feelings than spouses in the following domains: inadequacy, vulnerability, shame, and abandonment. These concepts together seem to suggest a somewhat greater struggle with the uncertain outcomes of what they do in ministry - how well they perform. In contrast, spouses have somewhat higher mean scores for loneliness, depression, and

panic. These concepts seem to indicate an uncertainty driven by being neglected or ignored.

One of the most common areas for written comment related to loneliness, lack of friendship, or lack of someone with whom to share private struggles. The following quotes illustrate these concerns.

"It would be great if we had someone that we could talk to about problems in the ministry confidentially. However, many times when things have been expressed in confidence, they have suddenly made the circuit among pastors. We, therefore, have a tendency to keep things just between husband and wife for fear of minor problems becoming major public problems. After awhile many small problems add up to major problems physically and spiritually. You feel all alone and shut out." (Female, age 45)

"I feel that as a pastor and pastor's wife we have very few if any close friends. We don't have anyone we feel we can trust within the church or community and our families live far away. I find it extremely frustrating and depressing not to have anyone I can share heart to heart with (besides my husband). When will they realize we are only human!?" (Female, age 34)

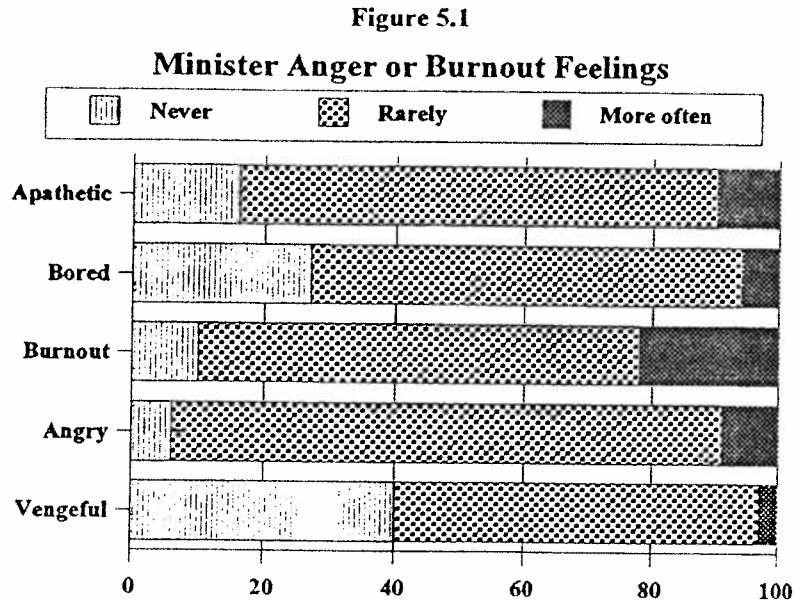
"I sometimes wish our congregation could hear about the stresses and needs of a pastor and his family from someone else besides the pastor and wife. I sometimes feel that when I do share things it comes across as complaining, and often I just need a lending ear just like anyone else. Some are feeling we love others more because we spend more time with them. They don't realize that we need close intimate friends just like anyone else." (Female, age 31)

"The problem I see in being a pastor's wife is loneliness and being removed from the people who would like to be there for them: husband (if he had more time), parents and extended family members (if they lived closer)." (Female, age 29)

### 1.3 Other Feelings

Figure 5.1 illustrates the degree of hostile and burnout-type feelings that ministers personally experience. Anger, boredom, apathy, and vengeful feelings are distinctly uncommon among ministers (less than 10%). About 22% admit to feelings of burnout. Figure 5.1 clearly illustrates that these emotions are rarely or only occasionally felt.<sup>1</sup>

Fifty-seven percent are rarely vengeful, 85% rarely angry, 68% rarely experience burnout, 67% are rarely bored, and 74% are rarely apathetic. Only 6%, however, say that they never get angry, and only 10% indicate that they have never felt burnout. Nearly 30% say that they have never been bored. Nearly half (40%) say they have never been vengeful.



We have not included data for spouses in a table or figure because the data does not significantly vary from these patterns. However, there are two feelings that do vary significantly between ministers and spouses - lust and competition. About 61% of spouses have never felt lust compared to only 12% of ministers. This contrast is equally sharp with respect to those who admit to rare or occasional feelings of lust - 76% of ministers compared to 37% of spouses. Similarly, those who struggle with lust are 6 times as likely to be ministers as spouses - 12% compared to 2%. Competition is also an apparent characteristic of ministers, not spouses. Thirty-seven percent of ministers see themselves as often having competitive feelings compared to only 17% of

<sup>1</sup> The term rare in Figure 5.1 includes those who checked occasionally, while more often includes most of the time and all the time.

spouses.

## 2. PERSONAL STRUGGLES

We introduced the subject of personal struggles into this study to highlight some of the unique personal issues that ministers and other prominent Christian leaders have either been charged with, or have admitted to having a personal struggle with in their everyday lives. One prominent example of the latter is the two-part series in Leadership entitled "Name Withheld." Our lead-in phrase was worded as follows: "Most Christians have personal struggles which are a very real part of simply being human." We provided four response possibilities: 1 = never, 2 = only once or twice, 3 = occasionally, and 4 = often. We have organized these issues into three groups: faith and ministry, sexuality, and coping thoughts.

### 2.1 Faith and Ministry Struggles

Table 5.3 identifies the mean or average score for pastors and spouses on 8 measures relating to the practice of faith and ministry in the local church. The means are rank ordered from the highest level of struggle to the lowest level of struggle.

**Table 5.3**  
**Personal Struggles with Faith and Ministry**

Type of Potential Struggle	Ministers	Spouses
Feeling inadequate as a <u>pastor</u> (as a minister's spouse)	2.68	2.50
Accepting criticism	2.67	2.67
Material desires	2.38	2.42
Ministry burnout	2.17	2.26
Desire for fame	1.94	1.56
Desire for power	1.76	1.54
Doubts about my faith	1.59	1.71
Dishonesty	1.52	1.51

Both pastors ( $x=2.68$ ) and spouses ( $x=2.50$ ) struggle with a sense of inadequacy in the typical pastorate, nearly 60% of the pastors and 53% of the spouses. The ability to accept criticism from others ( $x=2.67$ ) is also a major struggle. As has already been shown in chapter 3 in this report, the desire for material goods is an ongoing struggle, the third in rank order with other ministry issues. Forty-six percent of the ministers say it is a struggle compared to 54% of spouses. Spouses seem to experience the fallout of finances more directly. Burnout in this series of questions emphasizes struggle rather than a feeling. It also focuses on burnout specifically related to ministry. As a struggle, it ranks fourth immediately after finances. Twenty-five percent of pastors say that they have never experienced ministry burnout, while 35% say that they grapple with it occasionally or often. Spouses are somewhat more likely to say that they are struggling with ministry burnout - 43% say that it is occasionally or often a problem for them. According to their self-report, fame and power are not major struggles for most ministers, power less so than fame. Forty-two percent say they never struggle with power compared to 33% who say they never struggle with fame. About 25% admit that fame is an occasional or frequent problem for them, and 16% say that power is. As can be seen in Table 5.3, fame and power are less salient struggles for most spouses.

Doubts about one's faith are not uncommon among the general church-going public. It is generally assumed that ministers, of all people, would never have any doubts about their faith. Among spouses, 49% said that they had never had doubts, 15% said occasionally, and 2.4% said often. Although the spiritual factor is examined in chapter 6, quite a few comments relating to spiritual "honesty" and satisfaction with one's life in the ministry appeared at the end of surveys. Two such comments are quoted below.

"I feel very frustrated in one aspect of my ministry and marriage, that is the lack of spiritual depth and commitment. I grew up in a very committed Christian home where we read God's Word daily and prayed. That is how I was before I got married. I guess I expected it to be the same or even better seeing we would be going into ministry. I haven't held up my end of the spiritual life for my own growth but I'm resentful that my husband hasn't done a thing either. In fact, he doesn't seem to care. This makes me very resentful towards my husband who is supposed to be a spiritual leader at home (which he's not) and in the ministry. I know I have

to stand before God to give an account for my own life but I also blame him (my husband) for dragging me down." (Female, age 32)

"I feel as if I could not be honest with the people in our church about my lack of 'spirituality' because they would expect more from me, 'a minister's wife.' So I feel rather hypocritical, allowing them to imagine how I am rather letting them see how I really am. Maybe that all has to do with how I think a minister's wife should be and knowing I'm not nearly at that standard. I don't know if that makes sense to you, but that's my initial gut feeling." (Female, age 30)

Ministers are somewhat less likely than their spouses to struggle with doubt. Only 11% said occasionally or often, and 53% said never. Dishonesty is least likely to be a problem. Only 6% struggle with this problem occasionally or often, while 39% admitted to being dishonest once or twice. There are no differences in this pattern among spouses.

## 2.2 Sexual Struggles

Sexuality is a gift from God, one of many unique and special blessings of human life. God's word on this subject is candid, articulate, and persuasive. Even so, too many Christians hide from it, tip toe around it, or ignore it. Unlike the teachings of God's word on the purposes, potentials, and abuses of our sexuality, secular society has adopted a casual view of sexual activity.

"Sex is for fun. Love is sex and sex is love. Enjoy. Oh yes, use contraceptives to avoid diseases and pregnancy. And by the way, it is probably a good idea to know your partner." (Author's mini-version of societal attitudes)

Sexual freedom dominates movies, theatre, music, magazines, talk shows, and television. Most of us were born and reared in a sexually permissive culture, and many of us were reared in a Christian community that avoids, neglects or regards sexuality as sinful. It seems reasonable therefore to assume that sexual purity in thought, word, and deed are not givens whether in God's church or in its pulpits.



Given the recent fall of several prominent ministers or evangelists, and many articles in Christian journals such as Leadership, the research committee decided to include questions in the clergy survey on sexual struggles and behaviours. This section focuses on sexual struggles. Figure 5.2 contains horizontal bar graphs which illustrate these struggles for ministers and spouses. Each bar shows the percentage which admit to a problem "once or twice," "occasionally," or "often." "S" stands for spouse and "M" for minister. It is important to clarify the terminology in four of the labels relating to four of the questions.

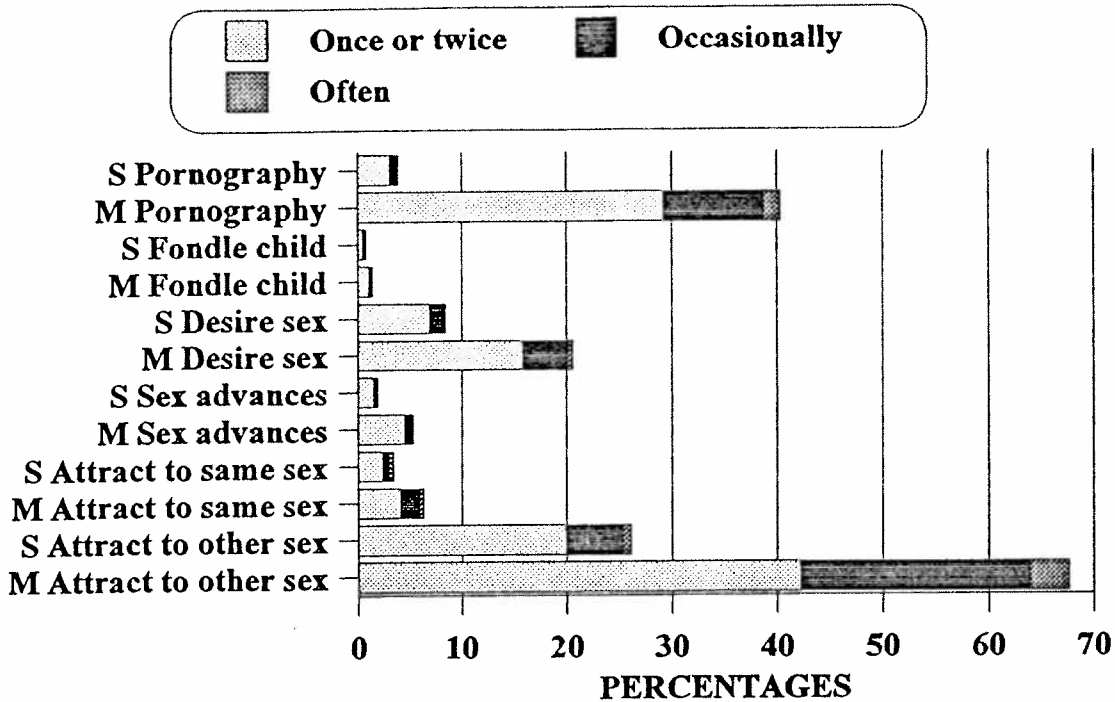
- Attractions to the opposite sex was worded "improper attractions to the opposite sex."
- Sex advances was worded "making sexual advances to others."
- Desire sex was worded "desiring sexual overtures from others."
- Fondle child was worded "wanting to fondle children."

Therefore, all of these measures deal with the internal psychological struggle with the possibility of "making, desiring, or wanting" to engage in such behaviours. We carefully chose the language "once or twice" and "occasionally" in the design of the questionnaire to permit our respondents to admit to only "minor struggles." We would argue that those who chose these categories may well experience these problems more frequently than they would prefer. It is likely that these respondents have understated the scope or significance of their very private struggle. On the other hand, we would also emphasize that the "once or twice" may represent a realistic assessment of one's humanness as a sexual person. These once or twice feelings are very real but effectively managed for a good number of the respondents. Those who chose "occasional," however, are probably underestimating the frequency of their struggle. Signs of these struggles are things like flirting behaviours, over personalizing conversations, excessive or intensive noticing, or redefining sexual nuances as caring, loving actions to persons in "need." In contrast, those who chose "often" are likely to have a serious problem of which they are fully aware. Such respondents want to declare themselves to something or somebody with safety.

Now to Figure 5.2. It is clearly demonstrated that only three of the sexual issues addressed in the study stand out, particularly for ministers. Over 40% of the ministers indicate that they have struggled with improper attractions

FIGURE 5.2

SEXUAL STRUGGLES AMONG CLERGY



to the opposite sex at least once or twice. About 22% indicate occasional attractions and 4% admit to this struggle occurring often. The following quote aptly illustrates the struggle with lust, a situation - as can be seen below - not unlike the author of the "Name withheld" articles in Leadership.

"For many years, I've struggled with lust for the opposite sex. At one point, thinking I was the only one with this struggle in the ministry, I considered a change of career. I feel so unworthy to serve God in this position when my thoughts are at times improper. A few years ago Leadership magazine put out a whole issue on this problem in ministry. I realized I was not alone. I have fought hard to throw this, too embarrassed to approach anyone, especially my wife. For stretches of time I have victory and then it returns for a season. I must confess I still wonder if it is a struggle other ministers go through. Shame, disgust,

even anger with myself result when I go through a season with this struggle. Yet despite this battle, God keeps blessing my ministry. Gaining complete victory is my goal. I wonder how much more God would do if this is finally ended. Anything that could be done, published, presented on such struggles is so valuable whether it comes from my denomination or others." (Male, age 34)

The next comment further illustrates how particularistic this struggle can become.

"My greatest downfall in life was and still is my sexuality. Dissatisfaction in my sex life has led me to all sorts of wrong thinking and action at times. My struggle is real and my desire for a person who is able to satisfy me completely is still getting stronger. All that stops me is my wife's faithfulness [and my] ministry. What hurts the most is that there is someone else who lives far away, but who hides 'in' me. Above all I desire to be faithful to my Lord and Saviour." (Male, age 43)

The struggle often takes other forms. One pastor suggests that the problem may be connected with the way in which the other sex presents themselves.

"Today, pastors are the object of attack by media and women's rights groups. We are being intimidated and afraid to be a normal person among the opposite sex. I believe we are experiencing a one-sided attack - what about sexual harassment which pastors face constantly by how the opposite sex dresses. If a man touches a woman it's called sexual harassment, but she can "knock his eyes out" and it's his fault. Is it?" (Male, age 63)

Between 50 and 60 ministers chose not to answer the questions relating to sexuality. It isn't possible to know with accuracy why these questions were ignored.<sup>2</sup> The issue of improper attractions to the opposite sex is also the

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<sup>2</sup> Because the number who chose not to answer these questions is significantly higher than for other questions, we assume that some of these people were facing struggles in these areas that they were not willing to admit in the questionnaire.

largest sexual issue with which spouses struggle. Twenty percent of spouses admit to a once or twice problem, 5.4% to an occasional struggle, and less than 1% to a frequent struggle with improper attractions to the opposite sex. Between 25 and 35 spouses chose not to answer these questions.

The second most apparent issue for ministers is pornography. Nearly 30% say that they have struggled with pornography once or twice. Ten percent said that it is an occasional problem, and 2% said that they struggled with the problem frequently. As can be seen in Figure 5.2, very few spouses have any problem whatsoever with pornography. The third stand out issue for ministers is their desire for sexual overtures from others. To put it another way, they struggle with the desire to be wanted or to be sexually attractive to a person of the other sex. This may be related to feelings of inadequacy discussed in the previous section. To be desired by a person of the other sex may make positive contributions to the person's ego when they are struggling with feelings of inadequacy. Sixteen percent of ministers said once or twice. This likely means that they have entertained such thoughts with respect to at least two particular individuals. Four percent said occasionally and less than 1% said often. Spouses, although to a considerably smaller degree, also indicate that they have struggled with such thoughts. About 7% said once or twice, and about 1.5% said occasionally. Although the following quote belongs in chapter 7, we will use it here because of its relevance to sexual struggles among the wives of ministers.

"Looking back over my life and the struggles I had with 'sexual overtures,' I realize that through my constant 'fear of the Lord' and continual prayer and Bible reading the Lord protected me. I also remember that as a youngster and teenager I was quite a flirt. However, no one at that time came along side me to challenge me in this behaviour. After I was married it again became an issue, but of course more serious in its implications. Now I am happy to say that through years of struggling, fighting it and at times failing, I have found complete healing. I am older and wiser. I firmly believe that as 'older' Christian ministers and spouses, we need to be there for the younger. Not to share our dirty laundry but to identify with their struggles and to offer hope." (Female, age 41)

The other forms of sexual struggle are much less significant among

clergy. However, it should be noted that 77 ministers out of the 1206 who chose to answer this question, or approximately 6%, indicated that they have had some degree of struggle with attractions to the same sex. Nearly 65% of these 77 ministers chose the response category of once or twice. Among spouses, 36 individuals out of the 1088 who answered the question, or approximately 3.5%, admitted to some struggle with same sex attraction. Seventy-two percent chose the category of once or twice. The following two comments relate to a struggle with same sex desires and pedophilia feelings.

"I appreciate your endeavour to deal with the practical struggles of human sexuality. This survey made me realize how blessed I am to have both a loving and forgiving God and a loving and forgiving spouse. The reality has allowed me to deal openly with my own struggle, come to terms with it, and find joy and fulfilment in my God, my spouse, my family, and my vocation. The touch of bisexual sin remains but its destructive power is broken." (Male, age 37)

"My contact with children has been in times of sports (e.g. swimming) and my contact with them has been inappropriate because I have experienced sexual arousal. I do not feel I have abused a child but I have experienced guilt feelings due to the sexual arousal." (Male, age 45)

It is important to note in concluding this section, that none of the sexual issues we measured failed to "register" on the graph, however few the respondents who chose to register their struggle.

### **2.3 Coping Thoughts**

This title may seem like a strange phrase to use for what follows. We have classified four "mind struggles" as a form of coping strategies -- abusing drugs, abusing alcohol, wanting to leave spouse, and wanting a divorce -- in reaction to various vicissitudes of living. In our view, these questions may not have measured what we had intended. Table 5.4 illustrates why. Drugs and alcohol are obviously not a coping strategy for either ministers or spouses. One possibility in interpreting these strong answers is that the respondents assumed that they reflected actual behaviour. Our intention, however, was to measure

thinking about abusing drugs and alcohol. We think that a similar distinction was made between "wanting to leave spouse" and "wanting a divorce." The latter may be interpreted as behavioural intentions whereas wanting to leave spouse was seen as a struggle with such thoughts. About 9% of ministers said they had struggled with wanting to leave their spouses once or twice (2.6% said occasionally, and .4% said often). Spouses were more likely to consider leaving - 13% struggled with the idea a couple of times, 4% occasionally, and 1% said often.

**Table 5.4**

**PERCENT WHO SAID THEY NEVER STRUGGLED WITH FOUR ISSUES**

<b>Coping thoughts</b>	<b>Ministers</b>	<b>Spouses</b>
<b>Abusing drugs</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>99.5</b>
<b>Abusing alcohol</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>99.5</b>
<b>Wanting to leave spouse</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>81.3</b>
<b>Wanting a divorce</b>	<b>95.4</b>	<b>95.4</b>

**3. BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS IN MINISTRY**

This section of the study was the most difficult dimension of inquiry. We decided that it was time to examine a number of behaviours which are typically defined as sin, immoral, or dysfunctional. The following introduction was used to help prepare the respondent for the 38 questions we asked.

*"Some of the things we have done occurred before we became Christians. Others have occurred, in a weak moment, after we became Christians. Some of us just thought it was okay in the circumstances, or simply didn't think there was anything wrong with the behaviour. [The questions] on the next page deal with very personal and private aspects of your behaviours before and after you entered the ministry. These questions may be difficult for you to answer. As the researcher responsible for this study, I want to personally reassure you once again that all your answers to the*

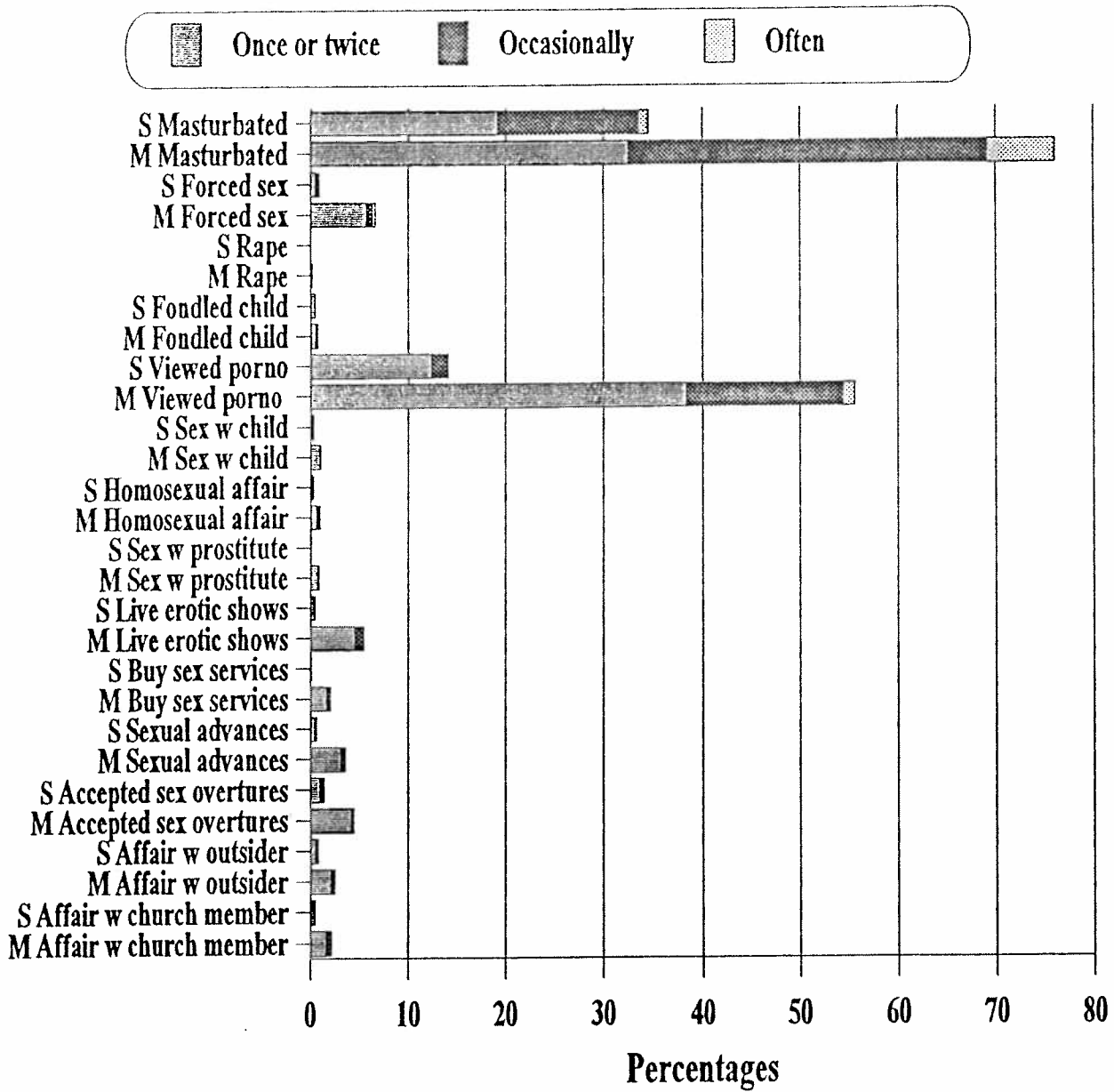
*questions in this survey will be absolutely confidential. Your responses can never be traced to you or to your spouse. Even so, if you are uncomfortable with this section please leave it blank and move on [to the following page]."*

Even so, a minority of ministers and spouses who mailed in completed surveys nonetheless strongly disagreed with many of the questions in this section - definitions, perceived assumptions, inclusion of certain questions. These questions may also have been a significant reason why some ministers and/or their spouses decided not to complete the survey. We would emphasize, however, that we believe the biggest factor in choosing not to mail in the surveys was simply "not enough time."

In this report we will summarize the behavioural data for the period of time after the respondents entered the ministry. The respondents were requested to respond to statements concerning "things you might have done during your ministry, with or without your spouse's knowledge." We will report the data using the same format as in Figure 5.2. Please see Figure 5.3 on the next page for an illustrative picture of the findings. It will be apparent as you look at the chart that the overwhelming majority of ministers and spouses simply do not engage in most of what would be typically referred to as sinful sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviours such as rape, fondling children, sex with children, homosexual affairs, sex with prostitutes, buying sexual services, and related activities almost never occur. Five percent or less of ministers have ever (one or more times) attended live erotic entertainments shows, purchased sexual services other than intercourse, made sexual advances to members of their churches, accepted sexual overtures from church members, or had sexual affairs with church members or individuals outside the church. Less than 5% typically means that a maximum of about 55 ministers of the 1210 ministers who answered these questions admitted to one or more of the sexual behaviours listed in our survey. And depending on the question, as few as 10 engaged in any one of these behaviours. For example, 11 ministers admitted to engaging in sexual intercourse with a prostitute, while 13 admitted to fondling or molesting children. Nine ministers admitted to fondling one or more of their own children. About 7% admit to forcing sex on their spouse without their consent, 6% once or twice, and the other 1% occasionally or often. These actions, involving a total of 78 ministers, are traditionally referred to as marital rape.

FIGURE 5.3

SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG CLERGY





It can also be seen in Figure 5.3 that the overwhelming majority of spouses hardly even register on each of the bar graphs with regard to rape, fondling children, sex with children, homosexual affairs, sex with prostitutes, attending live erotic shows, buying sexual services, and related sexual activities. Fewer than 1.5% have been involved in any way in these activities. Fifteen spouses admit to responding to overtures from a church member, 8 chose to report that they had made sexual advances to a church member. Nine spouses indicate that they have had a sexual affair with someone outside the church, 5 say that they have done so with someone in the church. In contrast to ministers, 9 spouses admit to forcing their spouses to have sexual intercourse against their will.

It is also clear from even a casual look at Figure 5.3 that two sexual issues stand out - masturbation and pornography. Both of these sexual behaviours are significantly more prevalent among ministers than spouses, although spouses are also much more likely to be involved in these sexual activities than any other form. Masturbation is the most common sexual activity reported. Only 24% of the pastors have never masturbated since becoming a minister. Thirty-three percent have done so once or twice, 37% occasionally, and 7% often. Sixty-five percent of spouses, in contrast, have never masturbated, 19% once or twice, and 15% occasionally or often. Masturbation, as is well known, is very common among unmarried men - most surveys show that 90% have masturbated. Masturbation among married men, however, is much lower particularly if marital sexuality is a regular and fulfilling experience. The fact that 44% of ministers masturbate regularly as an adjunct to marital sexuality may not be problematic. However, this behaviour may also be indicative of a strain in the marital relationship, unsatisfying or infrequent intercourse with spouse, the possible development of a psychological addiction, or a coping mechanism in dealing with lust.

It may be noted that several respondents wrote personal comments about masturbation and selected other sexual behaviours. One such comment appears below.

"I strongly disagree with these questions - especially when normal sex becomes linked in your list of sins or deviations, i.e. masturbation is not a violation." (Female, age not provided)

In developing the instrument, we debated with our colleagues on the research sub-committee of the Task Force about the use of an adverb with masturbation such as "excessive" or "frequent" and ultimately opted not to use such modifiers. We believe that the choice was the right one given the response categories provided.

The use of pornography is also a factor in masturbation among ministers as an alternative source of sexual release and fulfilment. Fifty-five percent have looked at pornographic materials, 38% once or twice, and 17% regularly (occasional or often). This usage is higher than expected among ministers now in the ministry. It would seem more understandable among teenage men, or among ministers prior to entering the ministry. We suspect that there is a connection between sexual liberation in our culture, an active sexual diet in the media, and an undisciplined understanding of the meaning and importance of one fruit of the Spirit - self control.

Preliminary data analysis indicates that there is a very strong correlation between the use of pornography and masturbation. Further, those ministers whose private relationship with God is weak are much more likely to struggle with lust, improper attractions to the opposite sex, the use of pornography, and masturbation. As can be seen in the chart, spouses are much less likely to look at pornographic materials. More than 12% have looked at pornography once or twice, and about 1.5% have looked more often.

It is important to emphasize that this data does not document the common secular impression that clergy are widely involved in sexual escapades. Active sexual immorality, either in thought or deed, is extremely uncommon. The incidence of the use of pornography and the practice of masturbation is higher than might be expected among clergy. **However, the incidence of these practices is far less than is found in the general population.**

All of these situations, and others that could be mentioned, are of concern including those in which the numbers are small. Why do such things happen among ministers? In what ways have we as denominations erred in our selection, training, and commissioning these pastors to serve our churches. In what ways can we reduce or eliminate these behaviours among those who represent the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How can we help our clergy to overcome these types of sexual concerns? These are important questions and should not remain

unanswered. Finally, we turn to several questions we asked about the ways in which ministers and spouses cope with those aspects of their inner world which are of concern to them.

There were many written comments about matters related to various forms of failure. The following are good examples of what was written.

"[There is a need for] more emphasis on restoration - pastors are sinful people too! But when we sin, we have **no one** to go to because of the current consequence of certain sins, i.e., lose your job, never pastor again. I believe that good men can make mistakes, yet be used by God when they have been dealt with and restored." (Male, age 29)

"I feel the issue of clergy sexual abuse needs to be addressed more honestly and with greater determination. Too many times, these occurrences are swept under the carpet to keep the pristine reputation of our denomination." (Female, age 37)

"I participated in a survey a few years ago related to physical and sexual abuse in our denomination. When the results were tabulated and released to the press, the churches looked like a dirty lot of people. While this is true (in a way), what the secular media do not take into consideration is the possibility of complete forgiveness. These surveys tend to dip too much into the pool of forgiven sins. If we are still dirty, let's make our confession to God and to each other (with proper coaching), but let's not make our confessions through the media. I feel **very strongly** about this!" (Male, age 45)

"My main concerns are that I had sex before marriage and now I have [several] daughters [with] boyfriends. It is very difficult to tell them to say no when I didn't - my husband and I have had long, long discussions on this one!" (Female, age 38)

One spouse described in some detail their marital struggle with each other and their denomination after her husband committed adultery. Her comments

emphasize the importance of restoration.

"How can people in ministry who find themselves in trouble get help without signing their own 'death warrant'? I would like to see some intermediate provision for those who voluntarily confess and seek help to personal problems." (Female, age 46)

#### 4. COPING STRATEGIES

##### 4.1 Getting Help for Feelings and Struggles

The first question dealt with the primary source of help in coping with feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of concern. This question specifically related to feelings and struggles as defined in sections one and two of this chapter. Seven possible categories of response and one open-ended response category was provided. Table 5.4 summarizes the results.

**Table 5.4**  
**SOURCE OF HELP IN COPING WITH PROBLEMS**

Source of Help	Ministers	Spouses
Prayer, Worship	47.5	46.3
My spouse	25.8	27.6
Another minister that I trust	5.9	.7
Workshops, courses, or books I have read	4.1	4.6
Counsellor, spiritual director, psychiatrist	1.1	1.5
Support group	1.0	.7
Denominational support staff	0.0	0.0
Bible	.5	.4
Friends	.7	1.3
Journalling	.1	.1
Music	0.0	.1
Many of above	3.2	4.5
Combinations (several checked)	9.9	12.1

The predominant sources of help to which ministers and spouses turn are private prayer and worship, and secondarily to their spouses. Ministers turn to

other ministers that they trust, spouses do not go to other ministers. Spouses are more likely to turn to friends. Not a single minister or spouse indicated that they would go to denominational support staff as a primary source of help. Very few sought help from counsellors, 11 ministers and 15 spouses. Although a large number checked several categories (i.e., combinations), or simply wrote in "many of the above," the most apparent evidence is reliance on God to somehow see them through their trial of hope, each other - husband to wife, wife to husband, and a seeming avoidance of trained helpers or designated denominational helpers.

When asked about whether their concerns had been adequately resolved, however, the responses were largely very positive. Over 67% of ministers said that they have been making significant progress, and 24% said that they have found complete healing. Even so, nearly 9% (98 individuals) said that their concerns have not been resolved. Spouses gave very similar responses to this question.

## 4.2 Getting Help for Sexual Concerns

We specifically asked our respondents the following question: "Have you ever sought professional help for any sexual concerns in particular?" Most ministers (93.6%) and 94.8% of spouses said that they have not sought professional help for sexual concerns. These responses are consistent with low response to counsellors with respect to feelings and struggles. The final question dealt directly with the resolution of sexual concerns. Ten percent of the ministers said that their sexual concerns are not resolved. Thirty-four percent said that they had experienced complete healing, while 57% indicated that there had been significant progress. Spouses gave similar responses.

We are a little uncertain about the meaning of the responses to the question dealing with the resolution of "sexual concerns." Potential psychological struggles and sexual behaviours were measured. We are assuming that most ministers and spouses chose to answer this question in a long-term perspective. Indeed, their initial answers to the diversity of specific questions on sexual struggles and behaviours likely reflect their progress and healing. We also think that their responses are based on their reflections on the overall quality of their sexual relationship with their spouse as well.



## **5. SUMMARY, CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRIVATE INNER WORLDS OF MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES**

5.1 The majority of ministers and spouses feel good about themselves most of the time - 63% of ministers and 53% of spouses. Only a minority (under 20%) say that they never, rarely, or occasionally do not feel good about themselves. On each of the positive self-attitude measures, most ministers and spouses feel secure, hopeful, contented, fulfilled, and joyful.

5.2 We also examined uncertain self-attitudes. Ministers have somewhat higher levels of uncertain self-feelings than spouses in the following domains: inadequacy, vulnerability, shame, and abandonment. In contrast, spouses have somewhat higher mean scores for loneliness, depression, and panic.

5.3 Most ministers and spouses are rarely or only occasionally angry, bored, apathetic, or bothered by burnout. Between 10 to 30%, however, admit to the experience of these feelings more often.

5.4 Ministers and spouses differ significantly with respect to the feelings of lust and competition. Sixty-one percent of spouses have never felt lust, compared to only 12% of ministers. Those who feel lust frequently are six times as likely to be ministers as spouses. Ministers are twice as likely to have competitive feelings as spouses.

5.5 There are several types of personal struggles with which ministers and spouses must deal. Over half of all ministers and spouses struggle with a sense of inadequacy, accepting criticism, and the desire for material goods. Fame and power issues, however, are less problematic. About 25% indicate that power is an occasional or frequent problem, while only 16% say that power is a struggle. Seventeen percent struggle occasionally or often with doubts about their faith.

5.6 Psychological struggles with various aspects of sexuality - the possibility of making, desiring, or wanting to engage in certain behaviours were also measured. Ministers struggled with sexual issues to a far greater degree than spouses. Over 40% indicated that they had struggled once or twice with improper attractions to the other sex. About 26% struggled occasionally or often. Less than half as many spouses admitted to a struggle with improper

attractions. The desire to look at pornographic materials is a minor problem for ministers, nearly 30% said once or twice, another 10% said occasionally or often. Only 4% of spouses indicated that they struggled with pornography. Ministers also struggled with the desire for sexual overtures from others, although more modestly. Fifteen percent said once or twice, another 5% said occasionally or often.

5.7 The overwhelming majority of both ministers and spouses said that they had never struggled with abusing drugs or alcohol, or wanting to leave one's spouse or wanting a divorce.

5.8 Both ministers and spouses were asked to respond to statements concerning "things you might have done during your ministry, with or without your spouse's knowledge." The overwhelming majority of ministers and spouses simply do not engage in sinful sexual behaviours. Sexual behaviours such as rape, fondling children, sex with children, homosexual affairs, sex with prostitutes, buying sexual services almost never occur. Five percent or less of ministers have ever attended live erotic shows, purchased sexual services, made sexual advances, accepted sexual overtures, or had sexual affairs. The frequency of such activities among spouses hardly even registered on the chart. It is apparent, however, that masturbation and pornography are more prevalent. About 45% of ministers admit to masturbating occasionally or often. About 17% say that they have used pornography occasionally or often. About one-third of spouses have engaged in these behaviours. It may be emphasized, however, that the incidence of such behaviours are lower than among men and women in the general population.

5.9 We asked several questions about the sources of help to which ministers and spouses turn in dealing with personal and sexual struggles. Nearly 50% said prayer and worship. Around 25% said "my spouse." Ministers were more than six times as likely to turn to another minister than were spouses. About 5% sought help in workshops, courses, or books. Very few sought the help of counsellors, psychologists or psychiatrists - less than 2%. **No one** apparently sought the help of their denominational support staff.



## CHAPTER 6

### RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND DEVOTION AMONG MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

The measurement of religious experience and devotion is a difficult task because of the personal and subjective nature of the topic. It may be particularly difficult among clergy and spouses because of the expectations which church people have for spiritual leadership. It is also more difficult because of the spiritual expectations of clergy job descriptions, and the accompanying temptation to provide socially desirable answers. In order to minimize these difficulties, we have used more definitive indicators than are commonly used in studies of religious faith. We would emphasize, however, that it is necessary to treat these data with caution in light of the nature of the investigation. This chapter examines four major areas of religious experience and devotion among clergy and spouses: current spiritual life, prayer life, worship experience, and present theological views.

#### 1. CURRENT SPIRITUAL LIFE

A number of areas were addressed in the investigation of the current spiritual life of clergy and their spouses. These included their present relationship with God, the description of their spiritual life through the use of a number of graphic descriptors, and their reactions to a number of contrasting images of God.

##### 1.1 Present Relationship with God

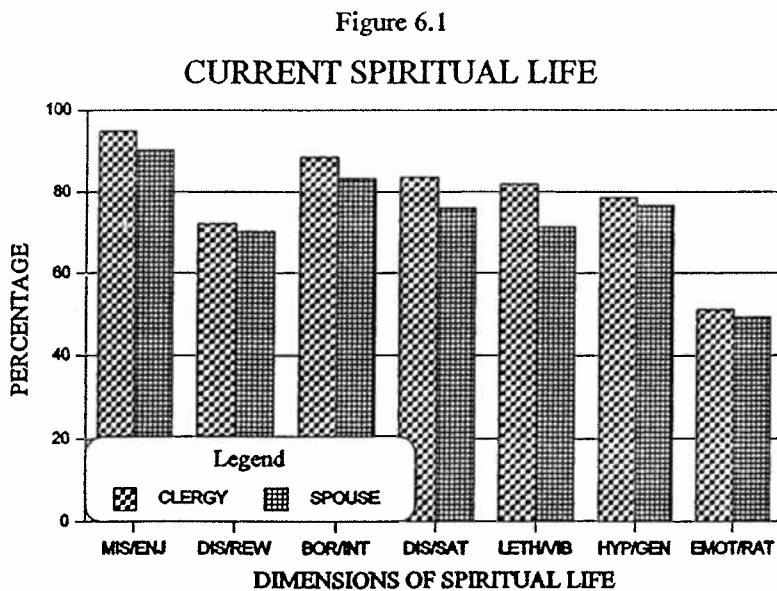
Respondents were asked to describe their present relationship with God on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being distant, and 7 being close. There were no significant differences between clergy ( $x=5.9$ ) and spouses ( $x=5.8$ ) in their descriptions of their closeness to God. About 95% of clergy compared with 92% of spouses perceived themselves as being above the mid-point (above 4) on the scale. Overall, we conclude that both clergy and spouses perceive themselves as having a very positive relationship with God. There is also a recognition of some need for improvement. One clergy member comments:

"This [the survey] has helped my wife and I with family

spirituality. We will be discussing again our lack of worship and prayer time together and with our family. While we have personal devotions, there is none as a couple or family outside of church. It has always been difficult to find a time for this." (Clergy, age 38)

## 1.2 Description of the Spiritual Life

As noted above, the spiritual life is difficult to measure because of its personal and subjective nature. We asked respondents to describe their current spiritual life on the basis of 7 different dimensions, with each dimension on a continuum from negative (1) to positive (7). The seven dimensions include the following descriptions: 1) miserable/enjoyable; 2) disappointing/rewarding; 3) boring/interesting; 4) dissatisfied/satisfied; 5) lethargic/vibrant; 6) hypocritical/genuine; and 7) emotional/rational. Figure 6.1 indicates the percentage of respondents who fall above the mid-point of the scale.



As Figure 6.1 indicates, clergy members assess their spiritual life more positively on each of the seven dimensions than spouses do. It is interesting that both clergy and spouses score high on the enjoyable dimension, but score rather low on the rewarding dimension. Thus, 95% of clergy and 90% of spouses see their spiritual life as

enjoyable, but only 72% of clergy and 70% of spouses see their spiritual life as rewarding. This suggests that about 30% of clergy and spouses see their spiritual life as disappointing.

The greatest differences between clergy and spouses are found on the

lethargic/vibrant and the dissatisfied/satisfied dimensions. Eighty-two percent of clergy, compared with only 71% of spouses, see their spiritual life as vibrant. Spouses are more likely to perceive their spiritual life as lethargic than clergy. Similarly, 84% of clergy, compared with 76% of spouses, indicate that they are satisfied with their spiritual life. A significant number (21% of clergy and 23% of spouses) perceive their spiritual life as being hypocritical rather than genuine. While there is no clear explanation of these findings, we would suggest that they may be related to the fact that clergy families are constantly on display, they are expected to always present a positive approach to life, and they are expected to model the Christian life even when they are facing struggles and personal disappointments in their family or in the church. A clergy spouse comments:

"I feel as if I could not be honest with the people in our church about my lack of 'spirituality' because they would expect more from me, a 'minister's wife.' So I feel rather hypocritical, allowing them to imagine how I am rather than letting them see how I really am. Maybe that all has to do with how I think a minister's wife should be, and knowing that I'm not nearly at that standard."  
(Spouse, age 30)

It may be that clergy spouses are much more sensitive to these issues than clergy members, or that clergy are responding more in terms of expectations. This would help to account for spouses' higher levels of disappointment and dissatisfaction. On the emotional/rational dimension, clergy and spouses have similar scores, with an approximately even division between being emotional or being rational.

"My main struggles right now are very severe but not considered severe in this survey. I'm dying inside. I feel overwhelmed. I'm not tempted sexually, maritally, etc. I just don't hear from God anymore. I honestly don't know what's wrong or what to do about it or who to talk to." (Clergy, age 30)

### 1.3 Images of God

Our spiritual lives may be related to the pictures or images which we have of God. If we picture God as a harsh taskmaster, who is ready to punish

us severely for the smallest failure, this may have a significant effect on how we understand and seek to serve God. We used eight different pictures or images of God in the survey, and asked respondents to indicate for each continuum that number which best represents their description of God. Their responses may be summarized as follows:

**1.3.1 Judge/Redeemer.** Both clergy and spouses were more likely to view God as redeemer rather than as judge, with spouses being more likely to see God as redeemer ( $x=5.9$ ) than clergy were ( $x=5.7$ ).

**1.3.2 Protector/Observer.** Clergy and spouses were more likely to perceive God as protector rather than as observer, with little difference between clergy and spouse.

**1.3.3 Sovereign/Servant.** Respondents were more likely to see God as sovereign rather than as servant ( $x=2.6$ ), with no differences between clergy and spouses.

**1.3.4 Intimacy/Authority.** The contrasting images of God as intimacy or as authority are almost equally likely to be embraced by respondents, who fall nearly at the mid-point of the scale ( $x=3.4$  for clergy and  $3.6$  for spouses). Spouses are somewhat more likely to emphasize the authority aspect of God's nature.

**1.3.5 Master/Friend.** Respondents are somewhat more likely to picture God as friend, rather than as master, with spouses being more likely to see God as friend ( $x=4.7$ ) than clergy are ( $x=4.3$ ).

**1.3.6 Mother/Father.** Both clergy and spouses were more likely to see God as father than as mother ( $x=5.0$  for clergy and  $6.0$  for spouses).

**1.3.7 God "out there"/God "with us."** Both clergy ( $x=6.3$ ) and spouses ( $x=6.4$ ) were much more likely to see God as "with us" than as "out there."

**1.3.8 Transcendant/Immanent.** There was a slightly greater tendency to picture God as immanent rather than as transcendent ( $x=4.8$  for both clergy and spouses).

In summary, the images of God which clergy and spouses have in their minds tend to emphasize a close relationship with God which definitely downplays the image of God as a harsh taskmaster. Respondents are as likely to picture God as intimacy as they are to picture Him as authority. They are as likely to picture God as master as they are to picture him as friend. Respondents are more likely to picture God as redeemer than as judge, as protector than as observer, as sovereign than as servant, as father than as mother, as "with us" rather than as "out there," and as immanent rather than as transcendent.

## 2. PRAYER LIFE OF CLERGY AND SPOUSES

An important part of spiritual development and growth is the prayer life of the individual. This is as true for clergy as for lay persons. The survey asked clergy and their spouses to indicate the content of their prayers, that is, for what they prayed, the experiences connected with prayer, the outcomes of prayer, and the frequency of prayer.

### 2.1 Content of Prayers

The survey contained 7 questions about the various reasons for prayer. The frequency (from 1=never to 5=very often) of each type of prayer was assessed. There were few differences in the responses of clergy and spouses, so we will report only on the responses of clergy. Table 6.1 provides information on the mean or average score of the 5-point scale for each type of prayer, and also the percentage of clergy who indicated that they often or very often included these dimensions in their prayers.

Table 6.1 reveals that clergy prayer is least concerned with social problems or with world suffering. Only 34% of clergy pray for world suffering often or very often. Over two-thirds (69%) of clergy members often or very often spend time in expressing their love to God, and almost three-quarters often or very often ask God to forgive their sins. Three percent never or rarely, and 15% sometimes ask God to forgive their sins. Most clergy (98%) indicate that they most often speak to God in their own words. Most clergy prayer (95%) is concerned with asking God to provide guidance in making decisions, or in thanking Him for blessings received.

**TABLE 6.1 CONTENT OF PRAYERS**

<b>SUBJECT MATTER OF PRAYERS</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>%</b>
Ask God to provide guidance in making decisions	4.6	95
Thank God for blessings received	4.6	95
Ask God to forgive my sins	4.2	72
Talk with God in my own words	4.8	98
Ask God to lessen world suffering	3.2	34
Spend time expressing my love to God	3.9	69
Tell God how I am really feeling	4.1	80

## 2.2 Experience of Prayer

Five questions were devoted to the issue of how often clergy and their spouses had various specified experiences connected with prayer. The experiences, were measured on a five-point scale (1=never and 5=very often), and are summarized in Table 6.2 for clergy and spouses.

**TABLE 6.2 EXPERIENCES CONNECTED WITH PRAYER**

<b>EXPERIENCES CONNECTED WITH PRAYER</b>	<b>CLERGY</b>	<b>SPOUSE</b>
Spend time reflecting on the Bible	4.0	3.5
Spend time quietly thinking about God	3.7	3.6
Spend time worshipping or adoring God	3.7	3.6
Spend time being in the presence of God	3.6	3.5
Ask God to speak, then listen for an answer	3.4	3.4

It is apparent that the experiences connected with prayer are very similar for clergy and spouses. Clergy are more likely to spend time reflecting on the Bible ( $x=4.0$ ) in connection with their prayer life than spouses ( $x=3.5$ ). This

may be the result of the fact that clergy are likely to pray as they prepare sermons, asking for God's wisdom as they declare God's Word. Otherwise, their experiences in prayer are fairly similar.

"At the heart of this survey is a person's personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Prayer is hard work but it is vital to growth. When we stop growing we die. Personal private prayer and Bible study is sadly lacking in my life. I can pinpoint this to uncertainties in my life as a result of change in ministry in our denomination - from pastoral to administration. . . This is so foreign to how I began my ministry. What has made the difference? I have recognized the accuser of the brethren in all of this - have asked forgiveness and healing. A wounded bird can't soar. Thank you for including questions about personal prayer and Bible study. I can't wait for my husband to complete his form so we can make some changes and get back to basics." (Spouse, age 59)

### 2.3 Outcomes of Prayer

Five questions were devoted to the usual outcomes of prayer. What are the results of prayer? Table 6.3 provides the mean (or average) response on a scale of 1 to 5 for at least 5 possible outcomes of prayer listed in the survey. As Table 6.3 indicates, the most frequent outcome of prayer for both clergy

**TABLE 6.3 OUTCOMES OF PRAYER**

<b>OUTCOMES OF PRAYER</b>	<b>CLERGY</b>	<b>SPOUSE</b>
Felt led to perform some specific action	3.47	3.38
Received deeper insight into Biblical/theological truth	3.85	3.50
Received a definite answer to a specific prayer request	3.81	3.87
Felt a strong presence of God during prayer	3.69	3.70
Experienced a deep sense of peace and well-being	3.88	3.90

and spouses is the experience of a deep sense of peace and well-being during prayer. Prayer most often becomes a means of settling some of the troubling and distressing aspects of one's life, and achieving a sense of the acceptance of God's will. For clergy, the second most frequent outcome of prayer is receiving a deeper insight into Biblical or theological truth. This is not surprising, since the experience of prayer for clergy was most often connected with reflecting on the Bible. Receiving a definite answer to a specific prayer request was also an important outcome of prayer for both clergy and spouses.

## 2.4 Frequency of Prayer

Clergy and their spouses were asked how often they take time for private prayer. Two percent of clergy and 8% of spouses indicated that they took time for private prayer several times a month; 27% of clergy and 31% of spouses indicated several times a week; 50% of clergy and 41% of spouses said they prayed daily; and 21% of clergy and 21% of spouses indicated that they prayed several times daily. Thus, 71% of clergy and 62% of spouses say that they take time for private prayer at least daily or several times daily. The frequency of prayer for spouses may be affected by the presence of children in the home. Several made statements such as the following:

"My response to the part about my spiritual walk is all depending on the stage of life I am in with my children! I now have three preschoolers at home, so I don't have the same "quiet time" I did before and hope to have again once they're in school." (Spouse, age 31)

Another comments:

"My life is in transition and rather unique since we have 3 very young children. Hopefully, my situation and viewpoint on many of your questions are not typical. I would like to spend more devotional time but physically cannot. My husband is busier than most, juggling work and family and our relationship requires special care." (Spouse, age 33)

Respondents were also asked how many minutes they typically take each time they have private prayer. Twenty-three percent of clergy and 32% of



spouses indicated that they spent less than 10 minutes; 40% of clergy and 40% of spouses spent from 10 to 19 minutes; 13% of clergy and 12% of spouses spent from 20 to 29 minutes; and 24% of clergy and 16% of spouses spent 30 minutes or more each time they had private prayer. The average number of minutes in private prayer was 19.3 for clergy and 16.3 for spouses.

"I feel very frustrated in one aspect of my ministry and marriage, that is the lack of spiritual depth and commitment. I grew up in a very committed Christian home where we read God's Word daily and prayed. That is how I was before I got married. I guess I expected it to be the same or even better seeing we would be going into ministry. I haven't held up my end of the spiritual life for my own growth, but I'm resentful that my husband hasn't done a thing either. In fact, he doesn't seem to even care. This makes me very resentful towards my husband who is supposed to be a spiritual leader at home (which he's not) and in the ministry. . . I know I have to stand before God to give an account for my own life, but I also blame him (my husband) for dragging me down. And I also worry about my children - will they follow the Lord with poor examples as us? I feel so burdened and so frustrated but I have absolutely no one in the whole world I can talk to. Who could I tell that my husband, a pastor, doesn't spend time praying or reading God's Word? And the same goes for me - I don't either."  
(Spouse, age 32)

### **3. WORSHIP**

What kinds of emotions and feelings do clergy and their spouses experience during worship services? What are some of the usual outcomes of worship? Five questions addressed the responses of clergy and spouses regarding their experiences during worship services. On a four-point scale, respondents indicated their responses to worship. Ranked from least frequent to most frequent, these responses are summarized in Table 6.4.

As Table 6.4 indicates, the most frequent experience for both clergy and spouses is that of a deep sense of the presence of God during a church service. Ninety-six percent of clergy and 93% of spouses said they had this experience occasionally or regularly. Second in order of frequency is a deep sense of

peace and well-being during a church service. Ninety-two percent of both clergy and spouses experienced this sense of peace occasionally or regularly. The greatest difference between clergy and spouses is in the reception of a deeper insight into Biblical or spiritual truth, which is reported more frequently by spouses.

**TABLE 6.4 EXPERIENCES DURING CHURCH SERVICES**

<b>EXPERIENCE DURING CHURCH SERVICE</b>	<b>CLERGY</b>	<b>SPOUSE</b>
Experienced a sense of the demonic or other forms of spiritual warfare	2.36	2.20
Had a sense that God was speaking directly to you in a very personal way during a church service	2.98	3.03
Received what you believed to be a deeper insight into a Biblical or spiritual truth during a church service	3.06	3.20
Experienced a deep sense of peace and well-being during a church service	3.32	3.33
Experienced a deep sense of the presence of God during a church service	3.36	3.33

This is not surprising, since spouses are more often the recipients of the message, while clergy are most likely delivering the message. Section 2.3, however, reported that clergy had received a deeper insight into spiritual or Biblical truth as an outcome of prayer, which probably took place as they were preparing the message. The least frequent experience during a worship service is that of the sense of the demonic or other forms of spiritual warfare.

#### **4. PRESENT THEOLOGICAL VIEW**

Respondents were provided a choice of six different terms by which they were asked to describe their present theological view. These terms included fundamentalist, evangelical, conservative, neo-orthodox, and charismatic. The four terms most frequently chosen were:

Evangelical	78%
Fundamentalist	13%
Charismatic	4%
Conservative	3%

These four terms include 98% of all responses. Other terms suggested by some respondents included Anabaptist, Calvinist, Neo-Evangelical, Pentecostal, Pietistic, and Vineyard, each of which was chosen by less than 1% of the sample.

Some 329 clergy checked more than one term to represent their present theological view. We have cross-tabulated their first theological view with their second theological view. Of those who chose fundamentalist as their first view, 33% chose evangelical as their second view. Of those who chose evangelical as their first view, 41% chose conservative as their second view, 17% chose charismatic, 3% chose liberal, and 1% chose pietistic.



## 5. SUMMARY, CHAPTER SIX: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND DEVOTION AMONG MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

This chapter has examined the religious experience and devotion of ministers and their spouses. Major areas included current spiritual life, prayer life, worship, and present theological view. A number of findings are summarized below:

5.1 Overall, clergy and their spouses perceive themselves as having a very positive relationship with God. Clergy perceived themselves as being somewhat closer to God than what their spouses perceived themselves to be. More than ninety percent of clergy and spouses perceived themselves to be above the mid-point of a seven-point scale measuring present relationship with God.

5.2 Clergy members assess their spiritual life more positively on each of seven dimensions. Clergy and spouses are more likely to indicate that their spiritual life is enjoyable, and less likely to indicate that it is rewarding. The greatest differences between clergy and spouses are found on the lethargic/vibrant and the dissatisfied/satisfied dimensions. Clergy are more likely than spouses to see their spiritual life as vibrant rather than lethargic. Almost one-quarter of clergy and spouses see their spiritual lives as hypocritical rather than genuine.

5.3 The images of God in the minds of clergy and spouses tend to emphasize a close relationship with God, rather than a distant, threatening relationship. Respondents are almost equally likely to picture God as being intimate and as authority, to see Him as master and as friend. They are more likely to picture God as redeemer than as judge, as protector than as observer, as sovereign than as servant, as father than as mother, as "with us" rather than "out there," and as immanent rather than as transcendent.

5.4 Most clergy indicate that they speak to God in their own words when they pray. Prayer is most frequently concerned with asking God to provide guidance in making decisions, and in thanking Him for blessings received. Clergy prayer is least often concerned with social problems or with "world suffering."

5.5 The experiences most frequently connected with prayer were reflecting on the Bible, spending time quietly thinking about God, and spending time worshipping or adoring God. The most frequent outcome of prayer for both clergy and spouses is a deep sense of peace and well-being. Receiving a definite answer to a specific prayer request was an important outcome of prayer for both clergy and spouses.

5.6 About two-thirds of clergy and spouses indicate that they take time for private prayer daily or several times daily. About one-quarter indicated that they typically spend less than 10 minutes each time they have private prayer; about one-fifth of clergy and spouses spend 30 minutes or more each time they have private prayer.

5.7 The two most frequent experiences for both clergy and spouses during a church service is the experience of a deep sense of the presence of God, and a deep sense of peace and well-being. Spouses are more likely than clergy to indicate receiving a deeper insight into Biblical or spiritual truth during a church service.

5.8 The four most frequently chosen terms to describe the present theological view of respondents were evangelical, fundamentalist, charismatic, and conservative, representing 98% of choices. Those who chose fundamentalist as their first view were most likely to choose evangelical as their second view. Those who chose evangelical as their first view were most likely to choose conservative, charismatic, liberal, or pietistic as their second views.

## CHAPTER 7

### FAMILY BACKGROUND: THE CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE OF MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

It is often said that our families have a lot to do with who we become. Jesus emphasized this concept in Matthew 18:6 when he said "whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea" (NAS version). Consistent with this passage and others, the Scriptures emphasize the importance of parenting in human development. All of us as adults have been influenced, in varying degrees, for good or for ill, in the families in which we were raised. Those who became ministers, as well as those who are married to ministers, are not excluded from these realities. Accordingly, we asked several important questions to help us better understand the family background of the clergy persons in Canada.

#### 1. TYPE OF FAMILY IN WHICH REARED

Nearly 95 in every 100 ministers and their spouses<sup>1</sup> were born and reared in intact two-parent families. There was only a small difference between ministers and spouses. Five point four percent of ministers and 5.8% of spouses experienced the separation of their parents, and 4.2% of ministers and 3.9% of spouses experienced one or more divorces in their families of origin. Ministers "in the making" were more likely to live with their mothers in situations of divorce than were spouses who would later become the spouses of ministers (72% versus 56%). Almost all of these parents eventually remarried. On the whole, these statistics do not differ from the general pattern among the senior generation of non-clergy couples.

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<sup>1</sup> As reported in earlier chapters, only 3% of the ministers in this sample were females, a total of 37 individuals (14 had never been married, 1 was widowed, and 22 were married). Of the 1,123 spouses in the sample, only 2% were males - the 22 married to the female ministers. Despite these small numbers, we will use the language ministers and spouses throughout this chapter.

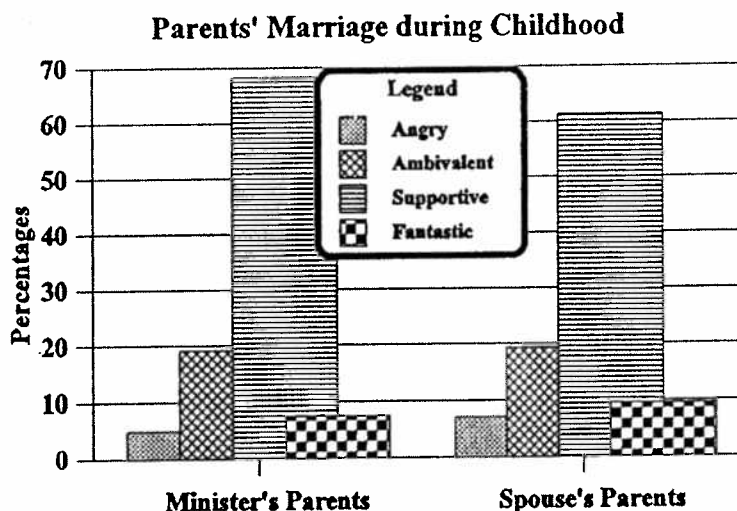
## 2. THE MARRIAGES OF THE PARENTS OF CLERGY COUPLES

Marriage is the major dimension of strong families. When marriages are happy and satisfying, parenting is much less stressful. We asked both ministers and their spouses to describe the marriages of their own parents, first, during their childhoods, and secondly during their adolescent years. They were asked to make a choice among seven types of marriages: abusive, angry, cool, ambivalent, accepting, supportive, or fantastic. We created four categories to analyze the responses. As can be seen in Figure 7.1, the majority of the ministers (68%) and 61% of the spouses describe their parents' marriages as accepting or supportive. About 19% of both ministers and spouses believe that their parents had an ambivalent or cool marriage. Less than 10% consider their parents to have a fantastic marriage, and between 5 and 7% consider their parents to have an angry marriage. The marriages of parents during adolescence are described in a very similar way.

We also asked our respondents to evaluate whether their parents treated each other fairly and with kindness. Among ministers, 14% think that their fathers often treated their mothers unfairly or unkindly during their childhoods. In contrast, only 9% think that their mothers acted unfairly to their fathers. The spouses of ministers are somewhat more inclined to see

their parents as often acting in unfair and unkind ways. Nearly 19% saw their fathers as acting unfairly to their mothers, while 12% believe that their mothers acted unfairly toward their fathers. The majority of both ministers and spouses saw their parents as fair and kind. However, it is clear that spouses seem to see evidence of unfairness and unkindness to a greater degree than do ministers.

Figure 7.1





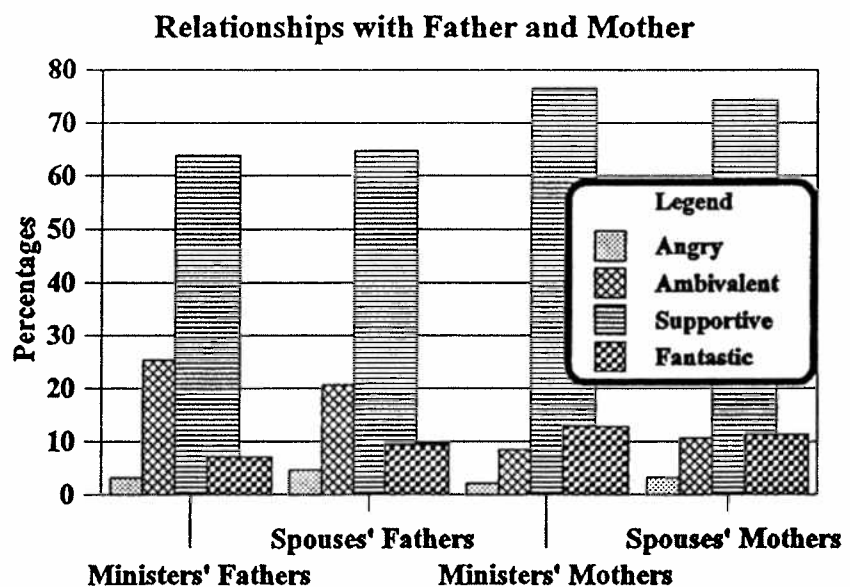
### 3. FAMILY SATISFACTION IN THE CHILDHOOD FAMILIES OF CLERGY

We asked several questions about the quality of parent-child and family relationships in the families in which ministers and their spouses were reared. We are interested in what it was like in father-child, mother-child, and sibling relationships. Did any ministers or their spouses experience abuse during their childhood and adolescence? Their answers are reviewed below.

#### 3.1 Childhood Relationships with Fathers and Mothers

We asked ministers and their spouses to describe the relationship with their fathers and mothers during childhood. Figure 7.2 graphically illustrates the variations in the responses. A minority of ministers think that they had a fantastic relationship with their fathers (7%). About 3% more of the spouses consider the father-daughter relationship to have been fantastic. The majority of both ministers and their spouses describe their association with fathers as supportive or accepting (64%). However, 26% of ministers compared to 21% of their spouses said that their fathers were cool or ambivalent. About 3% of ministers saw their fathers as abusive or angry compared to 5% of the spouses. The minister's situation with their fathers seemed to deteriorate during adolescence for an additional 4% of the ministers (47 teenage men) and 4% of the spouses (41 teenage women) who defined their relationship as angry or ambivalent.

Figure 7.2



As is apparent in Figure 7.2, the childhood relationships with their mothers were distinctly more positive for both ministers and their spouses than they were with their fathers. About 77% of the ministers see their mothers as supportive, an increase of 13% relative to fathers. About 74% of spouses see their mothers as supportive, an increase of 10% relative to fathers. Figure 7.2 also dramatically illustrates the sharp change in the amount of ambivalence or coolness in the descriptions of both ministers and their spouses. Whereas 26% of ministers saw their fathers as ambivalent, only 9% felt the same way about their mothers. The change is not as dramatic for spouses, a drop from 21% who thought their fathers were cool or ambivalent to 11% who thought that their mothers acted in this way toward them. These patterns also illustrate the strong attachment between ministers and their mothers. Spouses, in contrast, have a somewhat more modest attachment to their mothers than ministers and a somewhat stronger attachment to their fathers than ministers.

We asked the question about the father-child bond in a more general way a little bit later in the survey - "How satisfied were you with your relationship with your father when growing up?" Only 50% of the ministers said they were satisfied. It is clear that a lot of ministers wanted more from their fathers than they received. Evidence for this interpretation is found in the response to the question "my father spent hardly any time with me." Over 36% said that their fathers did not spend enough time with them. Consistent with the evidence above, nearly 60% of the minister's spouses were satisfied with their relationships with their fathers, although 32% of the spouses felt that their fathers did not spend enough time with them.

The same satisfaction question was asked concerning the mother-child bond. The difference is again dramatic. Sons, who are now ministers, were overwhelmingly satisfied with their mothers (74%), compared to only 50% feeling this way about their fathers. Likewise, only 14% said that their mothers did not spend enough time with them. Spouses were likewise distinctly satisfied with their mothers (73%) and only 16% felt that their mothers did not set aside enough time for them.

Several respondents wrote very positive comments about their childhoods as they reflected on the many questions we asked about parent-child relationships. An example follows:

"Thanks! Reflecting on my childhood has made me very grateful once again for wonderful parents, grandparents, etc." (Female, age 57)

Others wrote of another kind of thank you.

"The questions posed, and my responses confirmed the truth of the premise that the way we look at God our Father, is often determined by the type of earthly father we had. Thank you for showing me where to begin restoring my relationship with God!" (Female, age 29)

### 3.2 Childhood Relationships with Siblings

Both ministers and their spouses seemed to get along quite well with their siblings. About 80% said that their relationships with their siblings were accepting, supportive or fantastic. Nearly 3% of spouses, compared to 2% of ministers, considered their sibling relationships angry or abusive, while the other 17-18% saw their sibling ties as ambivalent or cool.

## 4. ABUSE DURING CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

We asked several questions about several possible types of abuse including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. We also asked about neglect and sexual harassment. The possible responses included never, seldom, sometimes, often, and very often.

### 4.1 During Childhood

It may be emphasized that the **majority** of both ministers and their spouses did not experience any kind of abuse during their childhood. Emotional abuse was defined as attempts to control through threats, harassment, insults, cursing, constant criticism, or public embarrassment. Figure 7.3 illustrates the responses. More than 37% of the ministers experienced one or more forms of emotional abuse, spouses somewhat less frequently than ministers. Physical pain or injury was the second most common type of childhood abuse, somewhat more common for ministers than spouses. Childhood sexual abuse (defined as fondling, rape, or incest) and sexual harassment (persons exposing themselves,

sexual innuendos, or requests for sexual activity), however, were much more common among spouses than ministers. As can be seen in the chart, the experience of these types of abuse were nearly twice as high among spouses. Neglect (defined as *not* receiving adequate food, clothing, or shelter) was an uncommon experience.

Very few ministers or their spouses said that they experienced any of these types of abuse often:

**Ministers**

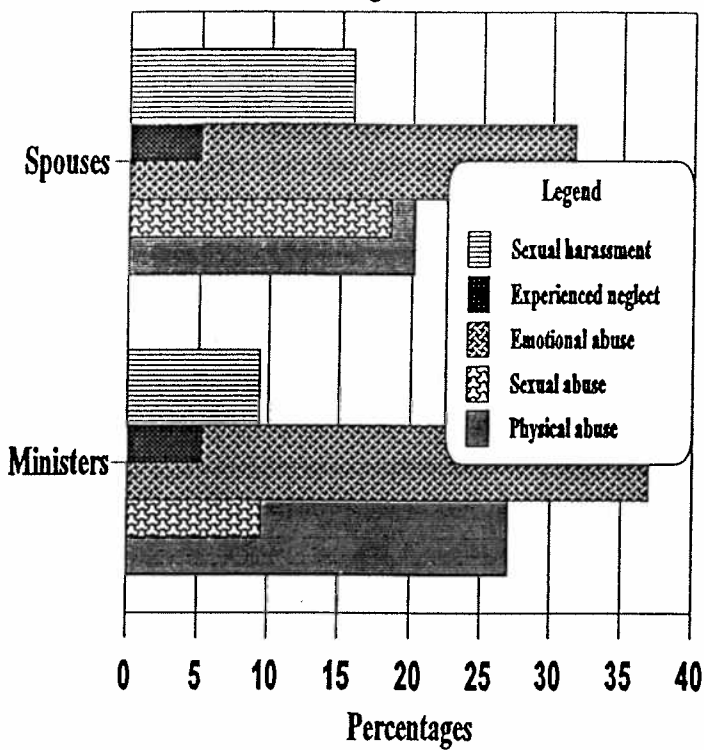
Emotional	6.4%
Physical	1.9%
Sexual	1.0%
Sexual Harassment	.7%

**Spouses**

Emotional	8.8%
Physical	3.0%
Sexual	2.6%
Sexual Harassment	1.8%

Figure 7.3

**Abuse during Childhood**



Even so, it is apparent that spouses experienced abuse more frequently than ministers as children. More than 2½ times as many young girls, for example, experienced frequent sexual abuse compared to young boys. This involved 12 ministers and 28 spouses during their childhoods.

**4.2 During Adolescence**

On the whole, there were only minor changes in the experience of abuse during adolescence. Among ministers, the prevalence of physical abuse dropped

from 27% during childhood to about 19% during adolescence. Similarly, the prevalence of sexual harassment among ministers as teenagers dropped from 9% to 4%. Both physical and sexual abuse dropped significantly among spouses during their teenage period of life, a reduction of about 60% (i.e., from 20% during childhood to 12% during adolescence). The prevalence of emotional abuse, in contrast, increased slightly. There were no salient changes in the relative frequency of abuse between childhood and adolescence.

We are including several personal comments below to illustrate the significance of being reared in dysfunctional or abusive families. The first two illustrate the general impact of growing up in dysfunctional families on ministry as an adult.

"This survey has been an eye opener - not necessarily revealing things that I didn't know but caused self analysis and reflection. Both my husband and I came from dysfunctional homes and have tremendous leadership inadequacies so therefore are quite discouraged in our parenting skills and church leadership skills. Our home church called my husband out as a minister but he really doesn't have strong leadership abilities so we are at present experiencing a big mid-life crisis. My husband became a farmer two months ago [but we are] doing church work as time permits."  
(Female, age 42)

"The need for clergy to deal with their pasts (childhood, teens) and all the issues that go along with that, I feel needs to be addressed. With the number of people that are identifying such problems, the clergy must find the healing in their own lives to be better able to equip and help others. My own experience has proven to me that until we do deal with the dysfunction in our own lives, we will never know the fullness of a relationship with God. I have been a "Christian" for approximately 18 years, been involved in ministry as a pastor for 10 and it was only in early 1993 that I have begun to enjoy the freedom of being born again and knowing and experiencing the love of God." (Male, age 36)

The following comments are more definitive, typically identifying specific types of childhood abuse.

"I found this survey to be personally helpful. Some issues that I [have] battled with I've been able to write the real answer to it, and now I feel that I can help overcome them. It was very personal. I had many sexual abuse encounters as a child, and God has given me an understanding wife who has helped me overcome my fears and memories. These encounters occurred with uncles, cousins, and older boys. I thought having feelings towards boys was right until the Lord showed me it was wrong. I love my wife and children and God has given us a beautiful marriage." (Male, age 30)

"I have been in counselling for the past two years dealing with child sexual abuse which happened while my parents were at church. [I am] learning to accept myself and realizing I'm worthy to be loved and love myself. It is hard to be a preacher's kid. There should be some sort of pastoral care offered to clergy families including children. The transition from preacher's kid has unique aspects too." (Female, age 31)

"They thought they were [good parents]. Anyone outside of the home thought we were the perfect family. I was the only member who experienced the abuse. My mom did the abusing. She saw herself as a vibrant Christian. To this day I'm not sure why?" (Female, age 40)

Finally, a comment about the implications of being abused for entering the ministry.

"From what I read, study, and hear, it seems that potential clergy should be screened as to their abuse in childhood. If one was sexually abused that person should get extensive counselling before becoming a clergyman or clergywoman, or perhaps that person should be steered into some other profession. Perhaps a similar screening should take place regarding psychological abuse." (Male, age 58)

The experience of abuse, as well as the relative frequency of abuse, among ministers and their spouses, during their own childhood and teenage

years do not appear to significantly differ from those who grow up in families and enter other professions or domains of paid employment. There are many questions that will need to be examined to better understand the linkages between childhood abuse and the individual and family realities of the life of men and women in the ministry. These questions will be answered in further data analysis to be done later this year.

## **5. RELIGIOUS FAITH OF THE PARENTS OF CLERGY COUPLES**

### **5.1 Spiritual Experience and Commitments**

We asked a number of questions about the religious characteristics of the minister's and spouse's parents. The majority (about 69%) of both ministers and their spouses said that their fathers were Christians during their childhood. Nearly 80% said that their mothers were Christians. Ministers, whose parents were not Christians during their childhood, reported that 54% of their fathers and 65% of their mothers had now become Christians. Spouses, in contrast, indicated that fewer of their parents had converted to Christianity - 48% of their fathers and 60% of their mothers.

Despite the fact that ministers and their spouses typically were raised by Christian fathers and mothers, only 35 percent agreed with the statement that they were raised in a "model Christian family." A follow-up question provided a set of descriptive categories regarding the nature of the faith of their fathers and mothers during childhood. A summary of their responses are presented in Table 7.1.

About half of the clergy respondents see their own parents as having had a vibrant faith during their childhoods. It is apparent, however, that both ministers and spouses perceive their mothers to have had a somewhat stronger faith than their fathers. Using a different measure, a 7-point scale often called a "semantic differential" (i.e., distant ---- close), the evidence of the difference between the faith of fathers and mothers is even more apparent. The mean score on closeness to God for fathers is 4.2 compared to 4.9 for mothers, a significant difference. Ministers report that 65% of their fathers, compared to 73% of their mothers, had a born again experience during their childhoods. The reports of spouses are nearly identical.

**Table 7.1 Description of Faith of Parents during Childhood  
(in percentages)**

<b>Faith Description</b>	<b>Ministers' Fathers</b>	<b>Ministers' Mothers</b>	<b>Spouses' Fathers</b>	<b>Spouses' Mothers</b>
<b>Vibrant</b>	47	55	45	53
<b>Attend, not vibrant</b>	24	23	23	24
<b>Inactive faith</b>	9	10	14	12
<b>A "category"</b>	20	13	18	11

## 5.2 Parents in Ministry

The overwhelming majority of ministers were not raised in a minister's family. Nearly 87% of both the ministers and spouses in our sample said that their parents were not in the ministry. The question was asked in a very general way "Were your parents in the ministry during your childhood?" In doing so, we did not limit the meaning of "ministry" to being in *paid* ministry. Thus, only 162 of the 1,260 ministers and 141 of the 1,123 spouses in our sample were raised in a family where the parents were in ministry. On the surface, this evidence seems to indicate that "preacher's kids" are less likely to go into the ministry than children reared in other families. However, this understanding must be qualified. The level of satisfaction among ministers reared in a minister's family is reasonably high - 62% said that they were satisfied. In contrast, more than 74% of the ministers' spouses were satisfied with being reared in a minister's family. The mean difference in the level of satisfaction in a ministry-based family of origin is 4.8 for ministers and 5.2 for spouses, a significant difference. This level of satisfaction is higher than for ministers and spouses raised in non-ministry families, 4.2 for ministers and 4.9 for spouses as noted above. Furthermore, in answer to the question "Did your experience as a "preacher's kid" make your decision to enter the ministry more difficult?", 61% said no. Even so, there are a significant number of children from ministry families that were not satisfied and who did say "yes, it was more difficult." It will be important for us to better understand the characteristics of these respondents.

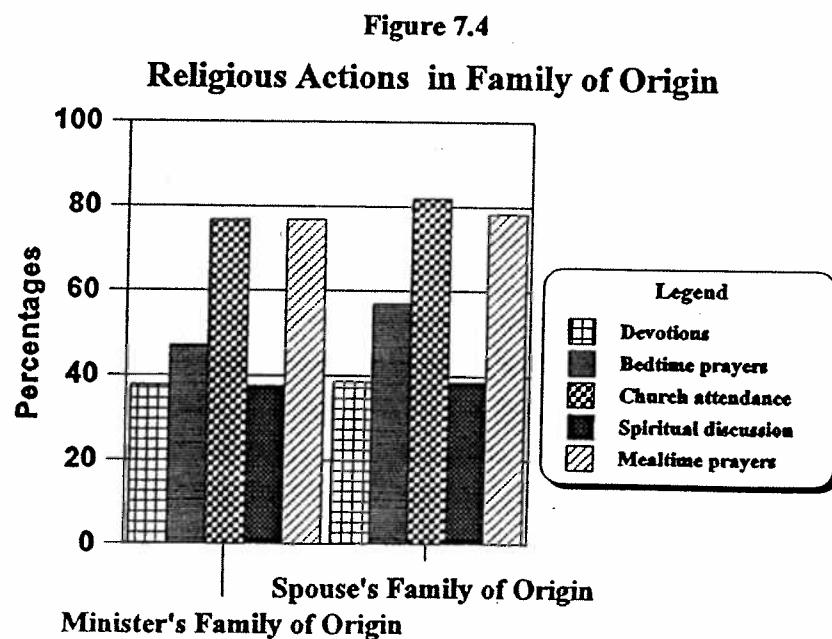


There is no particular pattern in the denominational affiliation of the ministers' or spouses' parents in ministry. The distribution is similar to the distribution of denominations of those currently in the ministry as defined in chapter 2. For example, we obtained a somewhat larger random sample of the Christian Missionary Alliance and the Salvation Army due to the larger number of ministers in these two groups. Therefore, we had a larger number of respondents in these groups. The fact that a few more of our ministers were raised in families where one of their parents were in ministry in the CMA or the SA therefore merely indicates the sample is larger for these groups.

## 6. Religious Activities in Families of Origin

We asked both ministers and spouses to indicate "how often your family participated in the following religious activities each month, during your childhood." These activities included family devotions, night/bedtime prayers, attending church, discussions of spiritual values, and prayer before meals. Figure 7.4 illustrates these patterns for the minister's and spouse's family of origin. The graph is based on the percentage who said often in response to each question.

It is apparent that the families in which our sample of ministers and spouses were reared were quite active in doing religious activities. Essentially 80% of these families frequently went to church and prayed at mealtime. Going to church and praying before meals are a significant part of the religious



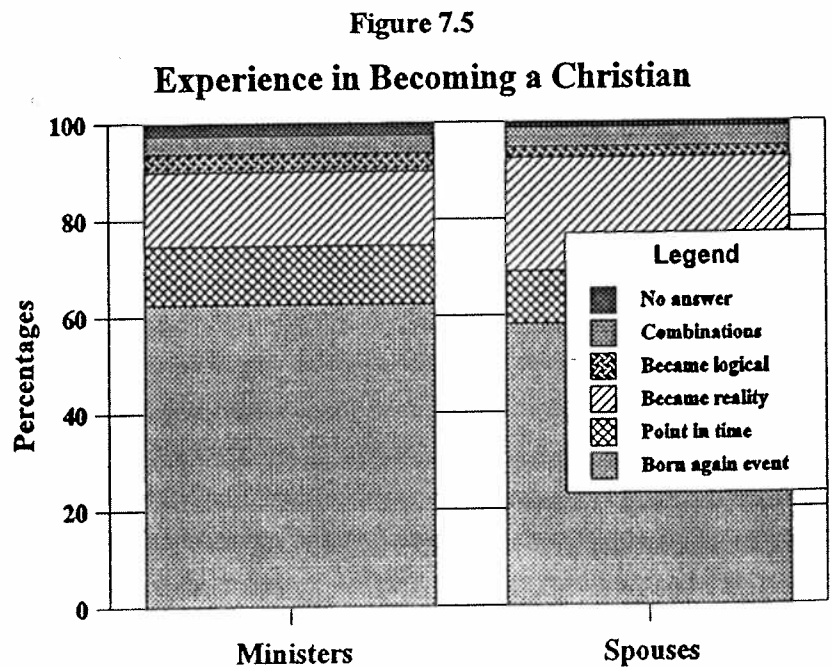
activities among Christian families. In contrast, bedtime or evening prayers were less common, about 45% did so in minister's families compared to nearly 60% in the families in which the spouses of ministers were reared. Spiritual discussions and devotions occurred in less than 40% of the families. The more spiritual disciplines encouraged in the scriptures, particularly within Jewish families (see Deut. 6), are not as apparent in these families. It would seem that this data confirms an earlier assessment of both ministers and spouses - only 35% of their families of origin were defined as model Christian families.

These findings lead quite naturally to a question about the actual individual religious experience of ministers and their spouses during their childhood and adolescence periods of life.

## 7. PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE OF MINISTERS AND SPOUSES DURING THEIR CHILDHOODS

We first asked the following question: "Which one of the following best describes your experience in becoming a Christian?"

Four response categories were provided, and an "Other (please specify)" category. We have carefully reviewed the many "other" responses and have redefined six new categories. Please refer to the legend in Figure 7.5 where the six categories are identified. The most prominent response for both ministers and spouses is a "born again" event (about 60% chose this category). The question read "A 'born again' event where I can pinpoint the time and place." The second most common response, although a much smaller



category, was that "I grew up in the Christian faith and progressively realized that my faith in Christ was a very personal and important part of my life." About 15% of the ministers and 24% of the spouses made choices or wrote out responses very similar to "became a reality." The third most common response was "a point in time when I realized that I was now committed to living for Christ." Ministers chose this category somewhat more often than spouses. The other major choice we provided in the questionnaire was the following: "The Christian faith progressively made sense to me and I eventually came to identify myself with Christianity." This might be referred to as a progressive logic or that it became logical to be a Christian. Only a small group reflected this type of Christian experience, 4% of the ministers and 2% of the spouses. The balance of the responses were either a choice not to answer the question or the respondents checked several categories. These divergent views of becoming a Christian undoubtedly reflect the differing theological orientations or denominational persuasions held by clergy as they attempt to reconstruct their childhood experiences. In subsequent analysis we will examine the linkages between theology and one's childhood experience of becoming a Christian.

The average age of becoming a Christian for spouses was about 13 years of age and 16 years of age for ministers. The differences in age in becoming a Christian between spouses and ministers are further illustrated below. It is apparent that women, who are now married to men in the ministry, were more likely to become Christians at a younger age.

### **Becoming a Christian**

	<u>Age 10 or under</u>	<u>Age 20 or later</u>
<b>Ministers</b>	23%	21%
<b>Spouses</b>	41%	11%

The majority of ministers attended church at least once weekly during their teenage years, nearly 81%. Indeed, about 49% went to church 2-3 times a week. Clergy spouses were even more likely to go to church as teenagers. Eighty-nine percent attended once a week and 54% two to three times a week. Over half of the ministers and spouses were leaders or officers in church youth groups, 59% of the ministers and 54% of the spouses. Females served in these capacities an average of 39 months and males an average of 37.5 months.

Just as we asked our respondents to judge their parent's relationship with God during their childhoods, we also asked ministers and spouses to evaluate their own closeness to God during their adolescent period. About 55% of the ministers said they were close to God compared to 67% of spouses. The average level of closeness for ministers was 4.3. Spouses, in contrast, perceived themselves to be closer to God - an average of 4.8 on the 7-point scale.

Although it is probably not unexpected, it seems evident that spouses (in this case, 98% of which are women) had a distinctly more spiritual experience during their adolescence period of life than did ministers.

## 8. SUMMARY, CHAPTER SEVEN: FAMILY BACKGROUND: THE CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE OF MINISTERS AND THEIR SPOUSES

This chapter has briefly described the family of origin situations in which ministers and their spouses were reared. As in previous chapters, we will summarize the findings in point form.

8.1 Most clergy persons were reared in intact (never divorced or remarried) two-parent families. Less than 6% experienced the separation or divorce of their parents.

8.2 The majority describe their parents marriages as accepting and supportive. However, 26% describe their parents as having an ambivalent, cool or angry marriage. Both ministers and their spouses perceived their fathers to act more unfairly and unkindly toward their mothers than did their mothers toward their fathers.

8.3 Clergy persons perceived their relationships with their parents during childhood and adolescence as primarily positive. Even so, about 29% saw their fathers as cool, ambivalent or angry. In contrast, only about 10% saw their mothers in this way. Overall, about 60% of both ministers and spouses thought that their fathers simply did not spend enough time with them.

8.4 Frequent abuse was uncommon. Fewer than 10% experienced emotional abuse frequently. Experiencing other types of abuse frequently were much less common: physical (2-3%), sexual (1-3%), and sexual harassment (1-2%). Spouses were more likely to experience these types of abuse. Infrequent abuse (defined as seldom or sometimes), however, was more common. As many as 37% of ministers ever experienced emotional abuse and 27% physical abuse, somewhat higher levels than did spouses. Nearly 20% of spouses had been sexually abused at least once, about twice as many as ministers.

8.5 Although most ministers and spouses were raised in Christian families, only 35% were willing to describe their childhood families as "model Christian families," despite the fact that 65% of their fathers had a "born again" religious experience during their childhoods. On another measure, however, about half described their parents as having had a vibrant faith. Mothers were

typically perceived to be much closer to God than fathers.

8.6 Only 13% of ministers and their spouses were raised in families where their parents were in paid ministry. The majority of both ministers and their spouses were satisfied with their childhoods in a ministry family. Sixty-one percent said that their choice to enter the ministry was not hindered by being a "preacher's kid."

8.7 Church attendance and mealtime prayers were very common religious activities in the childhood families of ministers and their spouses, about 80% participated frequently. Less than 40% of the families had regular devotions or spiritual discussions.

8.8 The average minister became a Christian at the age of 16, spouses at an average age of 13. The majority had a born again experience, while the next most common choices were best described as a "point in time" when Christ became a reality or that they came to realize that Christ was "a very personal and important part of my life."

8.9 The majority of ministers and spouses attended church at least weekly during their teenage years, about 80% of ministers and 89% of spouses. Over half were active as leaders in church youth groups. Spouses seemed to have a closer relationship to God as teens than did ministers.

## CHAPTER 8

### CHURCH AND FAMILY ISSUES AS PERCEIVED BY MINISTERS AND SPOUSES

This chapter measures the perceptions of ministers and spouses related to a number of general issues, beliefs, opinions, and behaviours. These relate to both clergy and non-clergy family members within the church as well as within contemporary society. The first section examines clergy perceptions of the incidence of issues and behaviours among Christian families associated with the church. The second section explores clergy views of the role of the church in ministering to families, including family courses and resources, family life education, and pulpit ministry. The third section investigates clergy opinions related to a number of broad issues associated with clergy ministries, clergy marriages and families, and Christian families and contemporary issues.

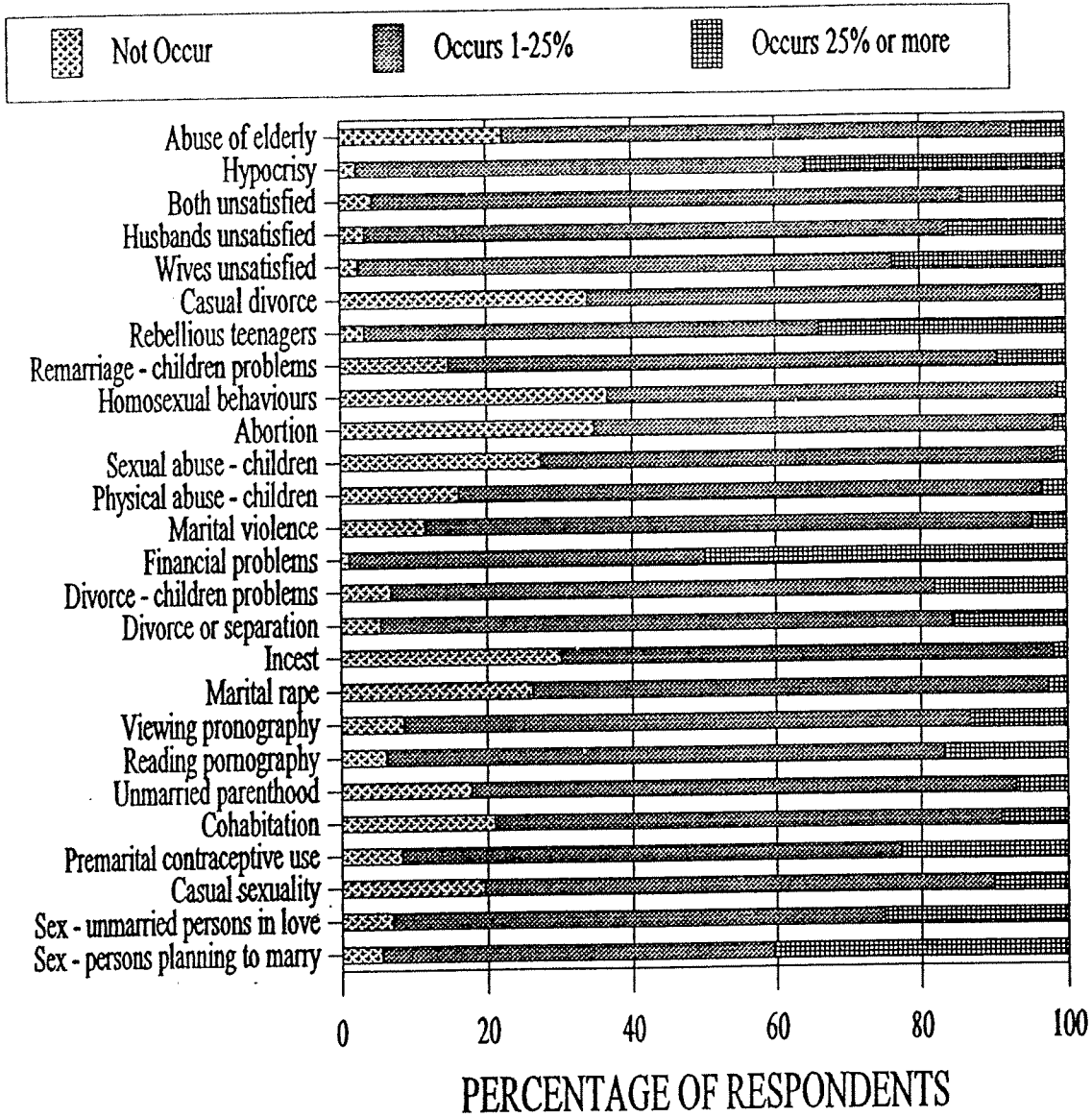
#### 1. PERCEPTION OF ISSUES OR BEHAVIOURS AMONG CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

Clergy members were asked to share their perception of how common 26 different issues or behaviours are today among Christian families who attend or are members of their church. We emphasize that this does not provide information on how common these experiences really are, but rather the perception of clergy regarding these issues. In fact, between 5 and 10% of respondents failed to reply to some of the issues, suggesting they were uncertain of the information regarding these issues. Respondents could choose one of seven different responses: 1=Does not occur in families; 2=Occurs in less than 5% of families; 3=Occurs in 5-15% of families; 4=Occurs in 15-25% of families; 5=Occurs in 25-40% of families; 6=Occurs in 40-60% of families; and, 7=Occurs in 60% or more of families. In order to simplify analysis, we have divided responses into three categories: 1=Does not occur; 2=Occurs in 1-25% of families; and 3=Occurs in 26% or more of families.

Figure 8.1 provides a visual representation of the perception of clergy members with respect to the incidence of the issues examined. The spouse questionnaire did not include these questions. According to the perception of clergy members, one-fifth (20%) or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours simply do not occur among families who are

Figure 8.1

## CLERGY PERCEPTION OF ISSUES





associated with their church (the percentage of respondents are indicated in brackets); homosexuality (37%), abortion (35%), casual divorce (34%), incest (30%), sexual abuse of children (27%), marital rape (26%), abuse or neglect of the elderly (22%), cohabitation (21%), and casual sexuality or sex for fun (20%).

On the other hand, one-fifth (20%) or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours take place among 25% or more of church families: financial problems (50%); sex between persons planning to marry (41%); hypocrisy (36%); rebellious teenagers (34%); sex between unmarried persons who think they are in love (25%); wives unsatisfied with their marriage (24%); and premarital use of contraceptives (23%). It is not surprising that, in this time of financial recession, financial problems are such an important issue faced by so many people in the church. Only 1% of clergy said this problem does not occur; 49% said it occurred between 1 and 25% of church families, and 50% said it occurred in over 25% of families (23% said it occurred in 26-40% of families, 20% said it occurred in 40-60% of families, and 7% said it occurred in 60% or more of families). The second-most frequent issue perceived by clergy is sex between people planning to marry. Forty-one percent of respondents indicated that this occurred in 25% or more of families (16% said it occurred in 25-40% of families; 16% in 40-60% of families; and 9% in 60% or more of families). The third most frequently mentioned issue is hypocrisy, which is defined as being one way in church and another elsewhere. Over one-third (36%) of respondents perceived hypocrisy as a problem among church families. It is interesting to note that 24% of clergy perceived that 25% or more of wives were unsatisfied with their marriage, but only 17% perceived that 25% or more of husbands were unsatisfied with their marriage.

## **2. THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN MINISTERING TO FAMILIES**

Clergy were asked to indicate their view of the role of the church in ministering to families on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). Clergy were asked to indicate whether churches should regularly offer courses and provide relevant resources on a number of topics, whether Sunday schools (church schools) should include family life education in their curriculum, and whether clergy should teach Scriptural principles of family life in

their pulpit ministry.

## 2.1 Courses and Resources

Thirteen different areas were suggested in which churches might regularly offer courses and resources. Table 8.1 provides a rank ordering of these courses and resources as they are perceived by clergy. According to this rank ordering, the three most important areas are premarital education, marriage enrichment, and family relationships. Essential agreement is found between clergy and spouses, except that spouses rank the area of family education as being more important than that of marriage enrichment. The three areas of least importance, although they are still above the mid-point of the scale, are coping with stepparenting, coping with singleness, and coping with divorce or separation. Again, clergy and spouses are in essential agreement regarding the importance of these areas. It should be noted, however that all of the suggested

**TABLE 8.1 COURSES AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILY LIFE**

<b>Courses or Resources</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Spouse</b>
Premarital education	4.63	4.55
Marriage enrichment	4.54	4.44
Family relationships	4.46	4.46
Fatherhood course	4.26	4.16
Motherhood course	4.23	4.15
Families in crisis	4.22	4.33
Death and dying	4.19	4.23
Sexual relationships	4.14	4.16
Parenting as a single parent	4.14	4.16
Preparent education	4.12	4.04
Coping with divorce or separation	4.08	4.12
Coping with singleness	4.07	4.05
Coping with stepparenting	3.78	3.86

courses or resources fall above the mid-point of the scale, suggesting that they are all viewed as being important. It is interesting to note that clergy regard a course on fatherhood and motherhood (parenting) as being more important than

courses on families in crisis and death and dying, whereas spouses place these in the opposite order. This is in keeping with the previously noted trend for clergy members to feel less adequate than spouses in the area of family relationships.

## 2.2 Family Life Education

This section was introduced with the following statement: *"Our Sunday schools (church schools) should include a family life education emphasis (importance and meaning of God's design for family, marriage, intimacy, sexuality, etc. at appropriate ages) in the Sunday school curriculum, classes, and ministries for the following groups:"* A 5-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=somewhat agree, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree) was used to measure responses. The percentage of those who agreed (3-5) is indicated in Table 8.2.

**TABLE 8.2 FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION**

Groups	Clergy	Spouse
Preschool children	66.8%	73.3%
Elementary (Grades 1-6)	87.3%	84.9%
Junior High	96.9%	95.9%
Senior High	98.9%	97.5%
College students	98.7%	97.7%
Helping parents provide family life education to their children	98.9%	98.7%

An overwhelming majority of both clergy and spouses (over 90%) believe that family life education should be provided at the Junior High level and above, and that the Christian Education curriculum should give help to parents in providing family life education to their children. About two-thirds of clergy (67%) and three-quarters of spouses (73%) think that a family life education emphasis should be provided at the preschool level, and over four-fifths of clergy (87%) and spouses (85%) think it should be provided at the elementary school level.

### **2.3 Family Life Education and Pulpit Ministry**

Both clergy and spouses feel that it is important for pastors to teach Scriptural principles of sexuality, marriage, childhood, parenting, or family life in their pulpit ministry. Only 4% of clergy and 8% of spouses were unsure or indicated that this emphasis should not be included in the pulpit ministry. Eighteen percent of clergy and 20% of spouses felt that it probably should be included. Seventy-eight percent of clergy and 72% of spouses felt this emphasis definitely should be included in the pastor's pulpit ministry.

When asked how frequently these Biblical and theological principles should be examined in the pulpit, 80% of pastors felt that it should take place either monthly (16%) or in an annual series (64%) of four messages. An additional 12% felt that this emphasis should take place only when specific concerns require a "word from God." Seventy-two percent of spouses felt that this emphasis should take place either monthly (19%) or in an annual series (53%) of four messages. Eighteen percent felt the emphasis should be made only when specific concerns require a "word from God."

## **3. CLERGY, CLERGY FAMILIES, AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

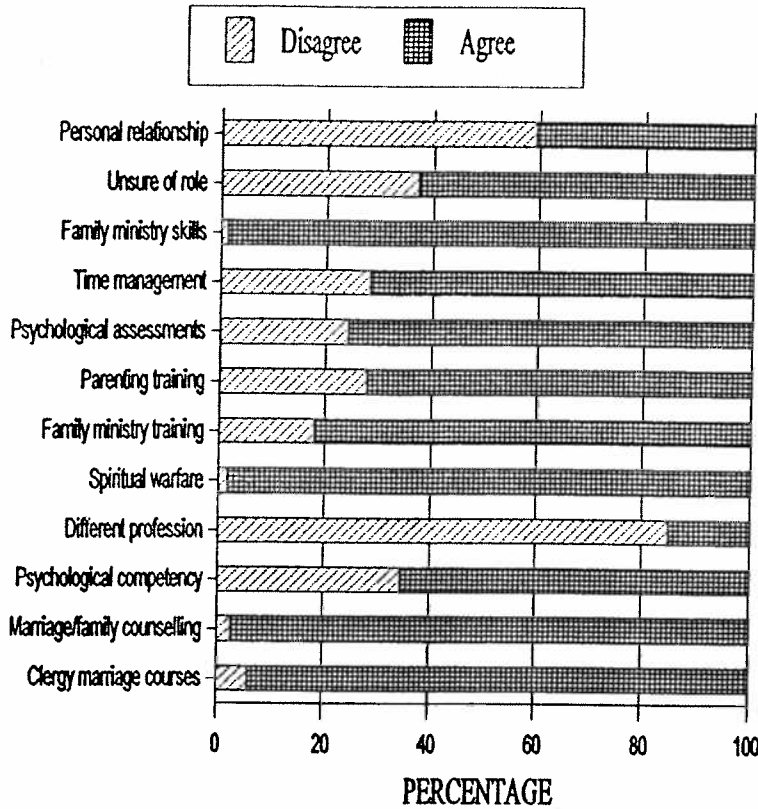
This section investigates clergy opinions toward a number of broad issues associated with clergy training and ministries, clergy marriages and families, and Christian families and contemporary issues.

### **3.1 Clergy Training and Ministries**

A number of questions elicited opinions about issues related to clergy training and ministries. Figure 8.2 presents the level of agreement and disagreement with each of these statements (disagree includes strongly disagree and disagree; while agree includes somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree). There was very little variation between the responses of clergy and spouses, and so we will use clergy responses only, except when there were larger differences.

Figure 8.2

### CLERGY TRAINING AND MINISTRIES



It is very interesting to note that, despite all of the problems faced in the ministry, most clergy members are not interested in pursuing a different profession. In response to the statement: *"If I had to do it over again, knowing what I know now, I would have entered a different profession,"* an impressive 85% of clergy disagree. Considerable disagreement was also expressed with the statement: *"The everyday life of being a minister seems to undermine one's personal relationship with God."* Almost two-thirds (59%) of clergy disagree with this statement. Over one-third of clergy (37%) disagree with the

statement, *"Sometimes, in my role as a minister, I simply am not sure what I am doing."* This means that almost two-thirds of clergy (63%) are unsure of their role and of what they are to be doing in the ministry. This is an area that certainly needs to be addressed by the denominations and ministerial training schools. Related to this, is the feeling expressed by 65% of clergy that *"every would-be minister should be required to pass psychological competency examinations before obtaining a license or ordination to preach."* In addition, 76% of clergy feel that psychological assessments should be required of all would-be ministers in training for the ministry.

Over two-thirds of ministers agree with the following statements:

1. Skills in ministering to families should be a part of the training of all ministers (98.8%).
2. Ministers should be prepared to deal with spiritual warfare (98.4%).
3. Basic courses in marriage and family counselling should be required in the training of all would-be ministers (97.4%).
4. All would-be ministers should be required to take courses on the unique issues facing marriages among clergy (94.3%).
5. My training for the ministry didn't adequately prepare me for ministering to families (82.0%).
6. Psychological assessments should be required of all would-be ministers in training for ministry (75.8%).
7. My education for ministry didn't adequately prepare me for the unique problems we have had in parenting our children (72.0%).
8. Setting priorities and managing my time are quite difficult for me as a minister (71.7%).

These questions clearly indicate that active clergy feel that it is very important to include courses in family ministries and marriage and family counselling in their seminary training. About three-quarters of clergy feel that their training did not prepare them adequately for ministering to families, or for the unique problems they faced in raising their own children. Most clergy also experienced problems in setting priorities and managing their own time.

### **3.2 Clergy Marriages and Families**

The survey addressed a number of general issues related to clergy marriages and families. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. These statements are listed below, with the percentage agreeing with each statement in brackets.

1. Marriage is a powerful resource in coping with the everyday realities of ministry (97%).
2. Ideally, workshops on coping with the problems in clergy families should be offered by my denomination (91%).
3. Finances are one of the major struggles clergy families face in the typical church (87%).
4. Being a minister is something like being married to both the church and to my spouse (79%).

5. The expectations for clergy families are simply too high (74%).
6. Clergy parents have more difficulty in dealing with their teenagers than other parents (53%).
7. If a pastor is a male, his wife should not be employed outside the home (29%).
8. The "preacher's kid" is more likely to get into trouble than other kids (26%).
9. If a pastor is a female, her husband should not be employed outside the home (15%).

In summary, despite the fact that clergy members have trouble balancing the demands of church and marriage (see #4), marriage is still regarded as a powerful resource in coping with the everyday realities of ministry. The concept of a celibate ministry is certainly not supported (see #1). In keeping with the previous sections, there is strong support for denominational workshops directed to coping with the problems faced in clergy families.

"Courses and seminars should be held in churches to 'educate' or 'acquaint' the congregation with respect to the unique stresses, expectations, and problems faced by clergy families and ministers themselves. It is hard for the minister to speak up for himself/herself given the 'idea' that we are all supposed to be self-sacrificing. In this way, hopefully, the congregation will show more understanding and adjust their expectations. Some sort of support group or 'confidential' counselling services should be offered to ministers and their families in every denomination (confidentiality guaranteed). Courses on how to deal with the 'great expectations' of the congregation should be offered to ministers and their families as well" (Spouse, age 30).

Finances are regarded as an important problem for most clergy families. Most clergy members also feel that the expectations for clergy families are simply too high.

"I believe that it is very important to see that clergy families experience the same stresses and difficulties that are experienced by families in different professions. I believe that there seems to be almost a hidden rule that clergy families ought to model true Christian life principles in all their doings. This places great stress on the

children of the clergy. It is unfair." (Clergy, age 38)

About half of respondents agree that clergy parents have more difficulty in dealing with teenagers than other parents, but only one-quarter believe that the "preacher's kid" is more likely to get into trouble than other kids.

"I really don't think that our family faces any unique problems because we are in the clergy. My values for myself and my family would be the same whether or not I was in full-time ministry. I think too many clergy families run into problems when they try to pretend that they and their families are perfect. Their expectations of their children are too high. I think people will relate better to a minister if they can see them as being 'normal' and they stop pretending that their children are 'perfect.' God can use us better if we are ourselves, than if we try to be someone that we are not." (Spouse, age 32)

Another spouse provides the following useful insight:

"Because we entered full-time ministry after 10 years of being lay people, married with 3 children - we realize that the challenges we face are the same as any other Christian family serving Christ in whatever calling he has placed them. A lot of problems I face now I think I would have blamed on being 'the pastor's wife' if I had not had the 'life experience' God allowed me to have as a wife, mom, and business partner before my husband formally went to school and became a full-time church-planter." (Spouse, age 45)

There is little support for the concept that the pastor's spouse should not be employed outside the home.

### **3.3 Christian Marriages, Families, and Contemporary Issues**

There is a widespread perception in our society, including the Christian community, that contemporary marriages and families are deteriorating, and that increasing divorce rates signal the impending doom of the family. While the survey did not address such questions directly, it did ask clergy and spouses to provide their feelings regarding general marital, family and societal issues. In addition to information regarding clergy marriages and families found in the



rest of the survey, this section provides the perceptions of clergy and spouses with regard to Christian marriages, families, and contemporary leadership issues in the church.

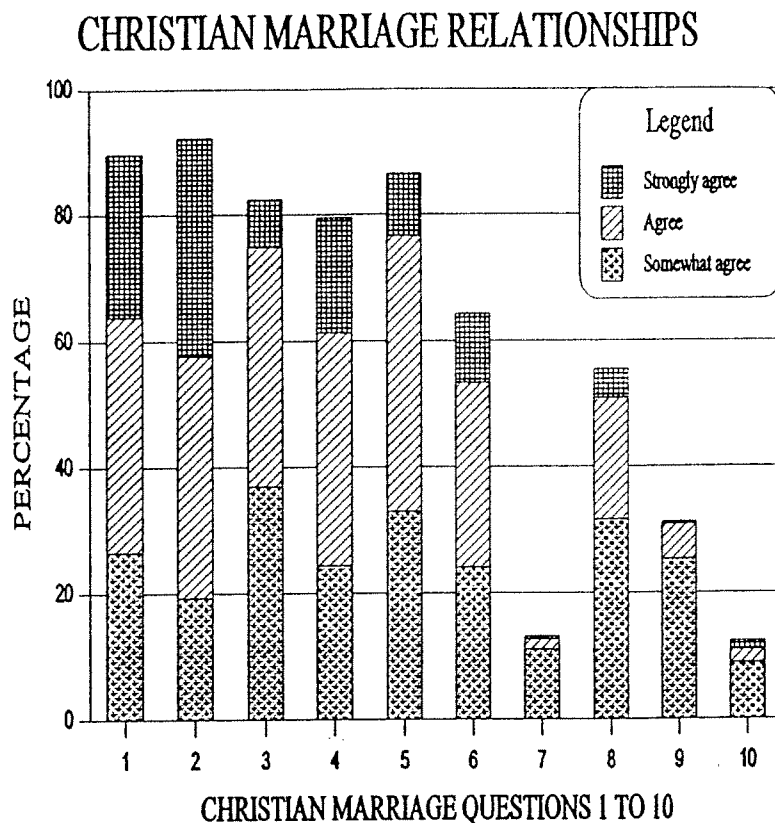
**3.3.1 Christian marriage relationships.** Clergy and their spouses were asked to agree or disagree with a number of general statements related to Christian marriage relationships. The following statements were included:

1. Christian marriages are happier than non-Christian marriages.
2. Christian marriages would be stronger if husbands and wives considered themselves to be equal before God.
3. Husbands in Christian marriages seem to be giving too little to their wives and to their marriages.
4. Husbands should be the final authority when couples are unable to reach agreement in any matter that requires resolution.
5. Husbands in Christian marriages typically fail to practice the principles of servant-leadership.
6. Husbands are called by God to give more than their wives to strengthen their marriages.
7. Non-Christian marriages have fewer problems than Christian marriages.
8. There would be fewer problems in today's marriages if wives were submissive to their husbands.
9. Wives in Christian marriages seem to be demanding too much of their husbands and of their marriages.
10. Wives are called by God to give more than their husbands to strengthen their marriages.

Figure 8.3 indicates the percentages of clergy who somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree with each of the above statements. As the figure indicates, 80% or more of clergy agree with the first five statements. This suggests that clergy feel strongly that Christian marriages are happier than non-Christian marriages (90%); that marriages would be stronger if husbands and wives considered themselves to be equal (93%); that husbands are giving too little to their wives and marriages (83%); that husbands should be the final authority when spouses are unable to reach agreement (80%); and that husbands typically fail to practice servant-leadership (87%).

"In responding to the questions about husband-wife relationships, I struggled with them some because I believe the whole concept of submission has been mis-taught and mis-applied in many marriages. I believe that the husband is accountable to God for his wife and children, but that does not give him the right to be 'heavy-handed' in his leadership. He is to lead with love and by example, taking the initiative, but not driving his followers." (Clergy, age 39)

Figure 8.3



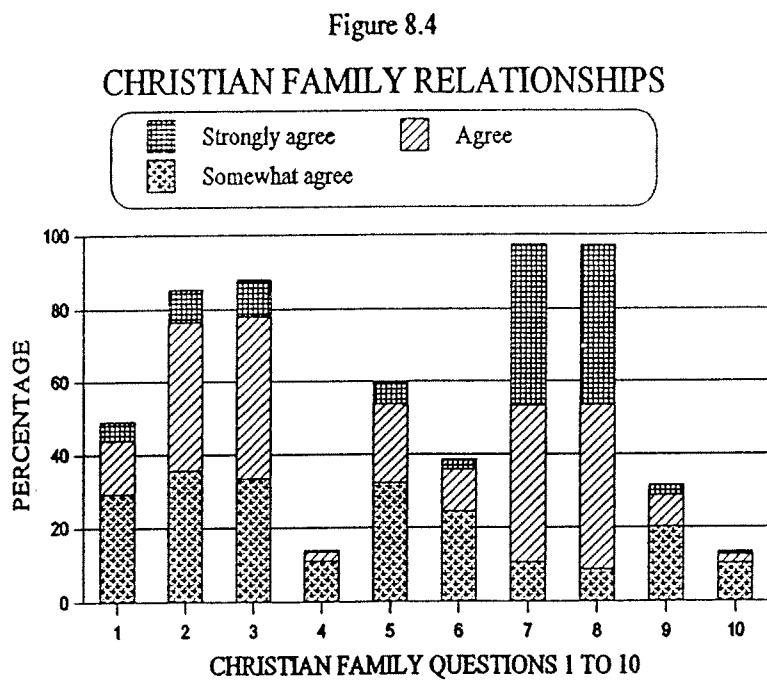
There are no significant differences in the responses of clergy and spouses with the exception of questions 3 and 5. As we have noted, 83% of clergy feel that husbands in Christian marriages are giving too little to their wives and their marriages. In contrast, only 59% of spouses feel that way. Similarly, 87% of clergy feel that husbands in Christian marriages typically fail to practice servant-leadership, while only 64% of spouses feel that way. A similar contrast between the responses of clergy and spouses is found with respect to question 6. Almost two-thirds of husbands (64%) agree that husbands are called by God to give more to strengthen their marriages, while 64% of spouses disagree with this statement. It is apparent that clergy are more critical of the marital performance of husbands than spouses are. This may reflect the negative evaluation of their own marital performance as we

have noted in previous chapters.

There is weaker support (56% of clergy and 62% of spouses) for the statement that there would be fewer problems in today's marriages if wives were submissive to their husbands. Little support is found for the ideas that non-Christian marriages have fewer problems (13%); or that wives in Christian marriages are demanding too much (31%); or that wives should give more than their husbands to strengthen their marriages (12%).

**3.3.2 Christian family relationships.** A number of questions examine the perceptions of clergy and their spouses with regard to general Christian family

relationships in a complex and changing society. Clergy and their spouses were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following ten statements:



1. Christian families have fewer problems than non-Christian families.
2. Husbands and fathers in Christian families seem to misunderstand the meaning of headship and servanthood.

3. Most church members now believe that the spouses of ministers should be able to choose work outside the home.
4. Non-Christian families are happier than Christian families.
5. Physical and sexual abuse occurs just as often in the average Christian family as in non-Christian families.
6. The problems of sexual harassment are as common in church

organizations as in other organizations.

7. The talents and gifts of men and women are complementary in marriage and the parenting of children.

8. The talents and gifts of men and women are complementary in the church.

9. When it comes down to it, there are few differences between Christian families and non-Christian families.

10. Wives should be the final authority when couples are unable to reach agreement in any parenting matter that requires resolution.

As Figure 8.4 demonstrates, overwhelming support is found for statements #7 and #8, which indicate that the talents and gifts of men and women are complementary in marriage and parenting (97%), as well as in the church (97%). Over 40% of respondents indicate strong agreement with these two statements. This calls into question the common assumption that the wife must be the primary family caregiver and homemaker. Strong support is also found for the statement that most church members now believe that the spouses of ministers should be able to choose work outside the home (88%). Over four-fifths of clergy (85%) indicate that fathers and husbands seem to misunderstand the meaning of headship and servanthood, but only 63% of spouses indicate this to be the case. Once again, clergy express a more negative view of the way in which husbands and fathers perform their roles. It should be noted, however, that though the feeling may not be as strong among spouses, almost two-thirds believe that husbands and fathers have problems in this area. This suggests that most clergy and spouses disagree with the patriarchal approach to family relationships that is thought to be common among conservative Christians.

A moderate amount of support is found for the ideas that physical and sexual abuse occurs as often in Christian as in non-Christian families (60%); that Christian families have fewer problems than non-Christian families (49%); that sexual harassment is just as common in Christian as in non-Christian organizations (39%); and that there are few differences between non-Christian and Christian families (31%). Little support is found for the statements that non-Christian families are happier than Christian families (14%), or that wives should be the final authority in matters related to parenting (14%).

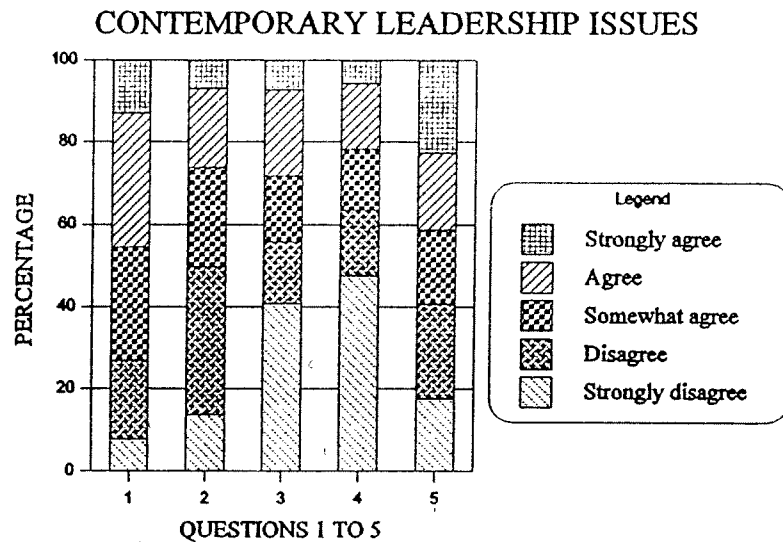
**3.3.3 Leadership issues in the church.** Five questions addressed leadership issues in the church created by changes in contemporary society. The following

questions were included:

1. Divorced and remarried persons should not be excluded from leadership positions in the church.
2. Most church members now support the ordination of women and their involvement in full- or part-time ministry.
3. Persons with a "homosexual orientation" should not be excluded from church leadership (teachers, deacons) as long as they remain celibate.
4. Persons with a "homosexual orientation" should not be excluded from pastoral ministry as long as they remain celibate.
5. Women should have the same rights as men in being ordained and obtaining part-time or full-time positions in ministry.

As Figure 8.5 indicates, over 50% of clergy disagree with the statement that persons with a "homosexual orientation should not be excluded from either church leadership or pastoral ministry, as long as they remain celibate." In other words, clergy feel that homosexuals **should** be excluded from church leader-

Figure 8.5



ship (56%, with 41% having strong feelings), and from pastoral ministry (64%, with 47% voicing strong objection), even if they are celibate in their behaviour. In contrast, only 27% feel that divorced and remarried people should be excluded from leadership positions in the church (that is, 73% agree that they should not be excluded from leadership positions). Questions #2 and #5 present rather interesting findings. On the one hand, 50% of clergy agree that most church members now support the ordination of women and their involvement in full- or part-time ministry. On the other hand, 59% of clergy agree that women should

have the same rights as men in being ordained and obtaining part-time or full-time positions in ministry. It is evident that clergy are more open to the idea of women's ordination and ministry in the church than what they perceive their church members to be.

#### **4. SUMMARY, CHAPTER EIGHT: CHURCH AND FAMILY ISSUES AS PERCEIVED BY MINISTERS AND SPOUSES**

This chapter examined the perceptions of ministers and spouses with regard to issues or behaviours among Christian families, the role of the church in ministering to families, and investigated clergy opinions associated with clergy training and ministries, clergy marriages and families, and Christian families and contemporary issues. A number of interesting findings emerge. They include at least the following:

4.1 One-fifth or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours do not occur at all among church families: homosexuality, abortion, casual divorce, incest, sexual abuse of children, marital rape, abuse or neglect of the elderly, cohabitation, and casual sexuality (sex for fun).

4.2 One-fifth or more of respondents believe that the following issues or behaviours take place among 25% or more of church families: financial problems, sex between persons planning to marry, hypocrisy, rebellious teenagers, sex between unmarried persons who think they're in love, wives unsatisfied with their marriage, and premarital use of contraceptives.

4.3 Clergy feel that the three most important areas in which churches should regularly offer courses and resources are premarital education, marriage enrichment, and family relationships. The three areas of least importance, though still above the mid-point of the scale, are coping with stepparenting, coping with singleness, and coping with divorce or separation.

4.4 Over two-thirds of clergy and spouses believe that the church, through its Christian Education program, should offer family life education, beginning at the preschool level. An overwhelming majority believe it should be offered at the Junior High level and above, and that the Christian Education curriculum should help parents provide family life education for their children.

4.5 Over three-quarters of clergy and spouses feel that it is important for pastors to teach Scriptural principles of sexuality, marriage, childhood, parenting, or family life in their pulpit ministry. Most clergy felt that this emphasis should take place either monthly or in an annual series of four messages.





## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this report has been to provide a basic overview of an empirical study of clergy families in Canada. With the support of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and the 21 denominations involved in the study, a random sample of 3,134 households was drawn from across Canada. Survey packets containing two separate questionnaires each in their own envelopes, one for ministers and the other for the spouses of ministers, were mailed to each of these households in late May, 1993. The response rate was outstanding. Packets were received from 1,294 respondents, a response rate of 41.3 percent. We have nearly 500 pages of typed comments based on the hand written comments on the questionnaires we received. Over 40% of the spouses who sent in their surveys provided written comments; about 30% of the ministers included comments as well. The comments are often written with passion and deep conviction. They are typically well-thought, sometimes very detailed, often from the heart and revealing. Clergy and their spouses seem to have seen this survey as a confidential outlet for their deepest hurts, frustrations, and insider insights.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents some of the reactions to the study and their implications for ministry. In the second section, we propose several recommended actions for improving individual and family well-being among ministers and their spouses.

#### **1. REACTIONS TO THE STUDY: IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY**

There are a large number of written comments that seem to belong in this final chapter in this report. We have chosen several key examples of feedback that need to become a matter of careful reflection and review by those who train "would-be" ministers, those who endorse them for ministry in the "trenches," and those who provide leadership within the denominations in which they serve.

## 1.1 Importance of the Survey

First, however, we turn briefly to several comments on the importance of the survey. As indicated in earlier chapters, most respondents believed that this study is uniquely important. Words like long overdue, thanks, interesting, revealing, surprising, great, and painfully helpful are common. Even so, a significant number of our respondents pointed out that our estimate of 45 minutes was distinctly inaccurate. Most took twice that long to complete the survey, and some several hours. Indeed, the time factor probably led some ministers and spouses to stop in the middle of the survey and discontinue the "project." **We greatly appreciate the time commitment that 1,294 clergy households set aside for this survey. Thanks!**

The following comments illustrate some of the reactions to the time frame as well as concerns about the quality of the survey itself.

"No survey is perfect. You have tried to deal with current issues and I respect your effort. However, I suspect that the results of the survey may be less valuable than expected. Clergy are no different in many respects (family, personal relationships, personal conduct) than any other test group of professional people and their spouses. Common sense would pre-empt conclusions about better training and preparation of clergy. Personal values change in most individuals over time, Christian or non-Christian. You need caution in evaluating the results of this survey.... This survey took me two hours to complete. Your estimate of 45 minutes is off base, unless you encourage superficiality. Similar psychological testing with more than 100 multiple-choice questions is rated at 2.5 hours."  
(Male, age 61)

"Time wise, this survey takes about an hour and a half to complete. Even then, I'm not sure how reliable a survey of this sort is in drawing any hard and fast statistics. It rather frightens me how this will be used even by a Christian organization. We all know that we can make statistics say anything we want them to." (Male, age 57)

"This exercise has been quite revealing, forcing me to think along certain lines and to face issues that I seldom consider. Some questions were difficult to answer as none of the options seemed to fit without qualification. However, it seems to me to be quite comprehensive. It had taken me much longer than the '45 minutes' suggested to complete the questionnaire." (Male, age 59)

"Interesting and draining to do! It took me 2 hours - not 45 minutes! I endeavoured to answer the questions as accurately as possible and that took a lot of thinking for some questions. I hope I interpreted all questions correctly. May God use these to be of help to the Christian community." (Female, age 41)

We agree - no survey is perfect. Ours is certainly no exception. There were unacceptable errors in some of the questions, however infrequently they occurred. Some of the questions were more difficult to understand due to left out words or wording. Thankfully, these problems were minor.

One thing this study cannot assess is whether clergy families are distinctly different from other professional families. We would need a comparison sample to test this important hypothesis. We suspect that there may be salient similarities and differences. What we are able to report, based on the results of this survey, is how ministers and spouses **define and interpret their own realities in ministry**. What they feel, think, and do is their reality.

Surveys can be improperly used, and they sometimes are. Statistics are likewise misused. We appreciate this comment and others like it. The research committee, from the beginnings of this project, has sought to create mechanisms to ensure confidentiality and the circumspect release of the data. A committee within the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has been established to monitor all written information (reports, articles, books) based on the data we obtained. We as the authors of this report are firmly committed to this process. We will take seriously the need to be fair to the data and to honourably uphold our commitments.

Our goal, as the research committee who designed this study, was to undertake a comprehensive survey of ministers and their families. Comprehensive it is, perhaps too much so. Believe it or not, there were many other issues

we wanted to examine. We did underestimate the time. Given the time this survey took to complete by most clergy - most were uniquely conscientious - we were astounded by the response rate. Again, we say thank you!

## 1.2 "Comments from the Heart"

Many of the comments were often "from the heart." In this sense, the heading of this section is a misnomer. We think, however, that this phrase best captures the honesty, frustration, pain, and strength of the following comments. They are directed to the denominational leadership, to the colleges and seminaries in which they were trained, to the people they are attempting to serve, or to the complexities of the ministry. These are the cries of the disappointed and disillusioned. They are often powerful and worthy of careful review and genuine caring action. We will occasionally "comment" on the comments but mostly allow the words to tell their own story.

Most of the following comments emphasize some aspect of the failure of denominational leaders. We, of course, do not know who these respondents are. We have identified only their gender and age. We have excluded any information that might facilitate identification. It would be a mistake for any reader (minister, minister's spouse, denominational leader, teacher in college or seminary) to assume that they know the identity of the respondent. These are merely representative voices from clergy in the trenches. Regardless of their denominational connection, these are ideas and issues that all denominational leaders must carefully ponder. Just as the clergy on the front lines are very human and imperfect members of God's family so also are those clergy who have found themselves in positions of leadership. The need for informed, well-trained, effective, and caring servant-leaders in the churches and in denominational headquarters has never been more crucial.

"I'd .. like to emphasize the need for competent and well-trained helpers. So often (at least, in my experience), the quality has been embarrassing and even detrimental to those already in CRISES. Too many of our fellow colleagues in the ministry have been 'burned out' as a result of poor and ineffective or power hungry and uncaring mentors. It has made me feel the sorrow deeply. Certainly our God does not possess the qualities we have encountered in the organized church. I find solace in taking a non-

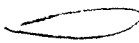
institutional approach to faith. Too much of disturbing proportions in church life. I feel liberated and feel free outside of church organization. Many changes in the interpretation of scripture need to occur, otherwise the church remains outdated, rigid, controlling, oppressive and abusive. This is not the Christian message!" (Female)

"Our church has had .. crises in recent years.... the denomination leaders became involved and were a dismal failure. They failed to support me as pastor and walked a middle course between church leadership and a factious group, resulting in further division. The support, understanding, and ability to get help from other church denominational leaders has been extremely disappointing and disillusioning. It has added to my sense of alienation, anger, and malaise." (Male, age 43)

"I think too many of us cannot trust our leadership to be available or impartial in dealing with shared concerns, mainly because [our leaders] are in a position to drastically change the location and type and effectiveness of our ministry if they so choose and they are responsible for too many people over too many miles to physically be available in this role. Our particular denomination has very high standards of its ministers and minister's wives. While in a majority of ways, this is best for all concerned, it does generate a tendency to 'cover-up' or deal with these problems alone - rather than let leadership know you are in any way struggling.... I personally would not be able to trust or share any real concerns with people I: (1) do not know well and respect; (2) see as having direct communication unmonitored by me with those in authority over my husband. The result is that these kinds of problems draw my husband and I closer to each other and to GOD as we seek to solve these problems together." While this is okay, it does create a sense of isolation and loneliness. However, it is the more desirable of alternatives for me." (Female, age 35)

"There are times when I feel that our leaders are more concerned with the work going on or getting done than the worker. Such pat answers as pray about it, or study the Word are turn-offs. In my

denomination, I personally feel that we need spiritual leaders not administrators who can care for the flock. There must be some accountability on their (leaders) part to pastor the pastors. Leaders demand and expect pastors to minister to the needs of the flock, but they in turn make the pastor feel guilty or inadequate spiritually when we need encouragement or support in getting family life back in balance. There should be 'Family enrichments for pastoral families.'" (Female, age 40)

"The completion of this survey has not 'raised' my awareness of issues and concerns unique to clergy families, but affirmed concerns and issues I have observed and had on my heart for years. There has been little venue of such topics, certainly none at the congregational or denominational level. The only venue available is in conversation with other clergy spouses who suffer the same feelings of helplessness as I do. The fear of recrimination is acutely high. We serve in a denomination that increasingly places the needs and concerns of its clergy and their families well below that of denomination and congregational concerns. Our denomination has continually sought and put forth the 'success' syndrome of numbers, 'CEO' and dollars over any substantial regard for we who are on the 'firing lines.' Leadership (denominational) are fully aware of those in congregations who have continually destroyed successions of clergy and/or their spouse and family. God alone knows why the clergy serve as the 'sacrificial lamb' in  confrontations and disputes. Our denomination encourages success over faithfulness. They have disregarded the Biblical principle that some water, some sow, and others reap. They support and endorse the reapers only. Faithfulness to ethical, moral, and spiritual conduct seem to account for nothing. Recent graduates are viewed to be better equipped and in tune with today's churches, yet there has been limited and inadequate provision provided for those already serving who need upgrading in their pastoral continuing education. Financial resources are many times elusive if non-existent to those who have been in the pastorate for any length of time. The little provided for clergy in terms of continuing education has proved to be far less than inadequate for the clergy and anything for the clergy spouse is virtually non-existent. There

is little available for spiritual and marital renewal for the clergy. Churches and denomination provide little in this area and it is not until clergy and their spouses are in critical danger does anyone take seriously the extreme need in this area. In the whole area of placement in our denomination I am also concerned with our encouraging and embracing of those who want to leave other conventions and denominations, yet all the while still claiming to be inundated by a surplus of clergy. While not disclaiming the competency and level of spiritual commitment of those wanting to join our denomination, it suggests that our leadership sees my husband as dispensable as anyone. This is the reward for years of faithful service to a denomination so caught up in it's own agenda it has forgotten those it serves and for whom they represent.... One can also then understand how we have overlooked the hurting and bruised clergy in our denomination. I strongly suspect there are a large portion of clergy spouses, such as myself, devoid of any hope or help. May God help us before we lose too many good men and/or women and their families." (Female, age 43)

The next set of comments emphasizes the lack of denominational support that many ministers and spouses feel as they try to do God's work. The threat of clergy breakdown is sometimes very real. A couple of the comments specifically illustrate the unique concerns of spouses.

"Our denomination attempts to encourage their pastors from time to time but NEVER their wives. There are times when I feel desperate for someone to share my feelings with other than my husband. We make many attempts to befriend church couples but they almost never return or reciprocate. We often feel lonely and feel we have no friends." (Female, age 45)

"Throughout our years in ministry, I have seen the respect of a pastor's authority under God as the shepherd of the flock erode even as respect of other authorities has eroded. As a result, there is much more criticism, antagonism, and even 'unearthly' expectation placed upon both pastor and his family. As well, a business-like attitude has also seeped into the church treating facts as greater than faith. These two trends within our churches have strongly

tarnished my view of ministry. I know what it feels like to leave a church and healthy ministry to move on and be rejected by those you leave behind just because you're leaving. It hurts! I know what it's like to be fired by a church because results weren't living up the business projections. It hurts. After [several] months of watching a husband try to put the pieces together, God opened another door to ministry. I know what it's like to move into a 'country' culture and be treated suspiciously for being city bred.... I know what it's like to move over 1000 km's .... to uproot children and have them forfeit a year to meet this calling that really is a 'precious' calling. Ministry scars in many ways, and I feel there's a desperate need for counsellors to offer free counselling (there is never enough money for a luxury such as help), support groups to be available just to listen and affirm. Although as a minister's wife I haven't found such a group, my husband has among the faculty [at a Christian school]. Despite distance, they listen on the end of the phone, pray, and write notes of encouragement. Oh, how I would love to have a support group such as this. Ministry is a lonely profession. Yet, I remind myself that there are blessings - God has never left us, never let go of us, always provided. It's a matter of remembering to turn our eyes upon Him, daily, hourly, even minute by minute." (Female)

"Sometimes I feel ripped off, like nobody told us what the ministry is really like and that we weren't properly prepared. And even now that we are just some pieces of meat being used to play a role and meet a need without any consideration or support of us as people/young couples/individuals seeking God's plans for our lives. I personally sort of had the 'rug pulled out from under me' spiritually (which I realize had a lot to do with me) and am only now just starting to get my spiritual footing back. I really hope that in the future there could be more support systems and preliminary, as well as on-going realistic teaching for those going into the ministry as well as the rookies and the veterans. I know God will not allow what's more than we can bear though - He's good that way, isn't He?" (Female, age 50)

"One of the biggest struggles pastors face is knowing where to go



when trouble strikes. Theoretically, we should be able to go to our [denominational leaders] but: (1) the problems we share with him can and often are used against us to terminate our stay at the present church; and (2) some [denominational leaders] gossip which hurts our reputation." (Male, age 40)

"There are no places (that we are aware of) for hurting pastors and spouses to go to for healing and counselling. Money is often a problem. There is a terrific need for such facilities. Often, when you are 'burned out' you are 'dumped out' of the ministry.... I feel denominational leaders should go through extra training for their jobs and yet must deal with special clergy problems every day. To them it's often easier to uproot and move the pastoral family than deal with the problems in the church and realize how great a part spiritual warfare plays." (Female, age 40)

"I have seen the marriages and family life of many of my friends break down with increasing regularity over the last few years. We need to be actively sponsoring conferences and seminary training with an aim at preventing this. I believe that if a pastor is not versed in family issues and is not growing [or] modelling positive family values in his/her own life, he/she is in danger of becoming ineffective, obsolete, and irrelevant." (Male, age 36)

"It would be completely safe to say that without exception each and every family in our current ministry situation has faced or is currently facing a major tragedy or breakdown within their immediate family.... The training of seminary students is not designed to deal with many of these issues, nor to the extent that we are facing them. It appears that the clergy themselves have lost the art of self-discipline and are succumbing to the temptations of the world around them. The clergy need to be equipped to serve out of a deep sense of security and health within his/her own family unit. This does not come from seminary training but from total commitment to Christ and His body, the Church. However, this could be aided by seminaries if they would focus as much attention on spiritual life and development as they do on criticism of scripture and theology!" (Female, age 33)

The final representative selection of comments we have included focus on various recommended actions. We will report them below without comment as we will turn to recommendations in the final section of this chapter.

"I would highly recommend that all church leaders be trained in (or made aware of) how to deal with sexual abuse when it occurs in the church. This is a serious matter that all will have to deal with in view of the rising abuse in our society." (Male, age 31)

"I would like to see an open forum and panel discussions within our own denominational fellowship [to] cover problems that arise within a pastor's family due to the amount of time a pastor has for his own family (especially for children)." (Female, age 32)

"I feel the pastors-in-training should be given mandatory counselling training. They should also be required to go through counselling themselves. We all have hurts in the past that need healing. We as pastors and wives cannot effectively minister to a broken world when we are broken ourselves... Pastors should be taught reality, e.g. antagonists in churches, how to spot and deal with them. In short, it seems that Bible colleges etc. teach a lot of good stuff but when you're out in the real world, you practically die because good sermon preparation won't help you deal with crisis situations, for example. Before any student ever graduates and becomes a pastor or church worker they should have to interim in a church and find out what it's really like." (Female, age 34)

"Seminaries and/or denominations should offer courses/workshops on financial management, family management, developing organizational skills and spiritual growth for all clergy at all levels. Denominations should encourage and indeed move to implement regular support/counselling sessions for pastors in high stress ministries, i.e. multiple staff churches, church planting, and home mission churches. Denominations should fund and offer professional Christian counsellors in family relations, sexual contentment, and financial management, with confidentiality being a major requirement!!" (Female, age 33)

"I would like to see the results of this survey sent to all seminaries with suggestions to the administrators for improvement in training in areas such as family life, family counselling, crisis intervention, and finances. Thank you for doing this survey." (Male, age 39)

"Our denomination has not sponsored any workshops, seminars, or conferences based on marriage and the family, especially with regards to its pastors. I feel strongly that it should and actually lobby in this direction. I have seen the marriages and family life of many of my friends break down with increasing regularity over the last few years. We need to be actively sponsoring conferences and seminary training with an aim at preventing this. I believe that if a pastor is not versed in family issues and is not growing [and] modelling positive family values in his/her own life, he/she is in danger of becoming ineffective, obsolete, and irrelevant." (Male, age 36)

"It is high time that we move away from assuming that God's 'called out' ones have it all together. We need all the help we can get - in marriages, family raising, and relationships. I believe that men (and women) becoming pastors should be carefully screened. Their past should be searched in as much as possible. Too many clergy have been involved in sexual abuse - at home or in the church and they are hiding it. This is extremely detrimental to the spreading of the Gospel and the integrity of the position." (Female, age 57)

"I am certain from my own experience and listening to others that clergy and their families need more care. It is hard for denominations to do this because of some of the deeply personal issues and needs. What I think is needed is a transdenominational structure with specific goals to teach, counsel, and care for clergy and families." (Male, age 33)

"If you consider singleness as part of the scope of 'family issues,' I believe there are unique issues single clergy face as they serve in churches: discrimination [against] unmarried males for pastoral positions; needs for singles in leading a balanced life; establishing

meaningful friendships outside of 'church'; finding confidants to help singles cope with concerns; sexual harassment by parishioners in the name of care [or] manipulation; coping with celibacy and living/working in a couples' world - workshops my denomination offers at pastors' retreats never relate to singles or allow for singles issues to be addressed inequality of position/salary for single clergy; coping with the parishioners' perceptions that you must be married to be fulfilled in life; and coping with senior pastors that would rather relate to you as a father than a boss." (Male, age 41)

The last comment in this section illustrates a minority opinion but nonetheless makes an important point as a counter balance to the 'workshop syndrome.' The focus on an other-centred and caring character, spirituality, and being an effective model should not go unnoticed.

"Clergy need to get off their self-pity trip. I worked much harder, our family made more sacrifices, and there were more opportunities for moral misconduct when I worked in the marketplace before I became a full-time minister. I'm not a lazy pastor, but seeing how members of my congregation struggle, I have no reason to complain or feel sorry for myself. Ministry to families does not depend primarily on better training for pastors. For one thing, no pastor can be an expert on all the areas of concern our congregations face (for partial listing note questions 28 and 29!) A pastor can attend workshops ad infinitum and still not be equipped for the next phone call or drop-in office visit. Of far greater importance is the pastor's personal and family life, modelling what Godly manhood/womanhood and parenthood can be. No family is perfect; we all have our dysfunctions. *How I live with my own crises, how I handle anger, how I relate to my wife and kids speaks far more than a sermon series or parenting seminar [emphasis ours]* (although these can be helpful)." (Male, age 45)

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This report would not be complete without some reflections on the implications of this study of clergy families for those involved in preparing men and women for ministry as well as the denominational leaders who are involved in

administering and attending to the varying needs of clergy in their churches. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada affirmed the value of this study as part of the research mission of the Task Force on the Family. Nearly \$30,000 was set aside to get the study off the ground. The overwhelming majority of our respondents, both ministers and spouses, appreciated the unique and timely importance of this survey. The 21 denominations who chose to become involved in this study likewise did so because of the perceived importance of the results for improving ministry and more effectively fulfilling the call of Jesus Christ.

The evidence presented in the many pages of this report seem to speak loudly and clearly for **action**. There are always salient concerns with recommended actions to any organization (governments, schools, social agencies, businesses), let alone churches, denominations, or national organizations such as EFC. These include, but do not exhaust, something of the following list.

- 1) Money! Most improvements or changes in how things are done often involve significant financial commitments. In these difficult times, churches, denominations, and religious organization such as EFC are struggling to meet their present budgets which deal with current priorities, let alone taking on a new set of priorities.
- 2) The needs are already so large and getting larger everyday. Reading almost any Christian magazine, journal, or newsletter will lead to a list of urgent priorities which require immediate action in order to clarify, stop, or start actions of significant concern to Christians.
- 3) Even though the actions to be recommended below are based on solid evidence, it is apparent that these actions will need to go through various processes of review and prioritizing. This often means establishing committees, attempting to reach agreements on which steps to take and when to take them, obtaining the necessary support of the various relevant constituencies, finding the necessary funds and personnel to implement these plans, and obtaining the necessary commitment to achieve the intended goals over the long term. Having been members of such committees, we understand the complexities very well.
- 4) There is often a situational context that will affect how actions must

be defined and the processes through which they are to be enacted. The 21 denominations involved in this study will have differing perspectives, agendas, and procedures.

Even so, this is the time for action. Taking no action at all, in our view, **is action**, by intention or default. The concerns and problems will continue to escalate. Even small steps will be of value. We are presenting the following recommendations based on the data as we understand it. We do so recognizing that we are outsiders and do not fully understand many of the nuances, contingencies, or beneath the surface issues about which we are uninformed. If we, or any other members of the Task Force on the Family, can be of help in the process of reviewing and implementing these recommendations please feel free to call on us. We have organized the many concerns for action into 13 recommendations.<sup>1</sup>

***2.1.1 Seminaries (and related training institutions) should establish one or more required courses dealing with the Biblical foundations of marriage, families, and sexuality.***

***2.1.2 This course, or a second course, should emphasize practical ways of ministering to families within the local church and at the denominational level. In connection with this course, or in a another course, specific training in basic counselling skills directly related to marital and family issues should be required of all would-be ministers.***

Over 70% of the respondents believed that Biblical principles of family life should be included in pulpit ministry. This means that the theology of sexuality, marriage, and family life must be taught in schools where clergy are trained. Nearly all respondents said that ministering to families (99%) and marriage and family counselling (97%) should be part of the training of would-be ministers.

***2.2 Seminaries (and related training institutions) should establish a required practical course designed to help ministerial students understand and prepare***

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<sup>1</sup> None of the proposed actions are in order of priority. Certain denominations may have greater need in certain areas than in others. The details in how to deal with each recommendation are also issues to be resolved by denominations.

*for the unique issues faced by clergy marriages and families in the pastorate.*

The central purpose of this course would be the uniqueness of the issues which families will face in entering the ministry and their effect on marriage and parenthood. However, such courses must really be driven by understanding and enriching marriage and family life (sexuality, marital relationships, raising children, time management, self-discipline, working through childhood hurts and dysfunctions). The course should include individual and couple-oriented exercises designed to develop awareness of potential problem areas, problem-solving skills, and communication skills. Such courses, according to our survey, were helpful for 80% of those who took them. Ideally, this course should be perceived as helpful to all who take it.

***2.3.1 Denominations and/or seminaries (and related training institutions) should regularly sponsor continuing education programs (workshops, seminars, conferences) to assist and upgrade ministers and spouses already in ministry facing issues relating to ministering to families, family counselling, and coping with issues unique to clergy families.***

***2.3.2 Alternatively, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada should assist its member denominations in sponsoring annual interdenominational seminars in two key locations in Canada of the type specified in recommendation 2.3.1.***

Again, 80% of those who took workshops of this kind found them helpful. Obviously, they need to be done well obtaining the necessary expertise to ensure their popularity and effectiveness. The cost and quality issues of these workshops could be facilitated by interdenominational cooperation. A transdenominational organization like EFC might be the ideal vehicle for coordinating these practical seminars with the financial support of member denominations.

***2.4 Seminary education should include a strong emphasis on the development and maintenance of spiritual depth and disciplines within would-be ministers and their spouses, theologically and experientially.***

Many respondents emphasized their struggle with spiritual emptiness or dryness, hypocrisy, burnout, and being inadequately equipped spiritually during their time in seminary. A minority of clergy couples had devotions together -

one of the strongest indicators of a strong, healthy marriage. Daily chapel is a factor but the nurturance of spiritual disciplines requires much more. Retreats, denominational meetings, must emphasize spiritual equipping.

***2.5 All students who apply for admission to seminaries (or related training institutions for ministry) should be required to pass a psychological screening test and an in-depth interview. The first year of study in preparation for the ministry (in seminaries or related training institutions) should be considered a year of probation. In their first year, students in the ministry track should be part of a counselling regime to determine childhood dysfunctionalities and related emotional or behavioral problems. Counselling should emphasize spiritual, rehabilitative, and restorative modalities. Difficult cases should be 'creatively' removed from the program at the end of the first year.***

The evidence in our study indicates that only 50% of ministers were satisfied with their fathers when growing up. Over 60% said that their fathers did not spend enough time with them. About 27% of ministers and 20% of spouses experienced physical abuse during childhood. Nearly 20% of spouses and 10% of ministers experienced some form of sexual abuse. Even so, 70% said fathers and 80% of mothers were Christians. Most of their parents were frequent church goers and frequently said meal-time prayers. Even so, most said their family situations during childhood were not model Christian families. Yet, these clergy by default will find themselves in the role of "role model marriages and families" in the churches they pastor. Most (76%) of ministers and spouses agreed that psychological assessments should be required of all would-be ministers. We believe that the time has come to adopt careful standards for those who enter the ministry. The thrust of our recommendation, however, is careful. It seeks to minimize the hurt to would-be ministers by precluding admission based on careful criteria, to emphasize a counselling regime of all admitted students in the first year of study to facilitate growth and restoration, and to permit the transfer of questionable students to other channels of ministry or professional activity.

***2.6 Consistent with several professions, an "apprenticeship-like" requirement for all ministerial students should be established as part of their degree program.***

The nature of actual ministry, as several have pointed out, cannot be fully



comprehended through textbooks and classroom experience. In our view, much like medical doctors, would-be ministers and their spouses need several months (ideally a full year) as an "intern clergy family" under the supervision of a seasoned pastor and spouse. Certain churches might be identified as ideal locations for these apprenticeships. Guidelines for evaluation should be carefully established. A modest salary should be provided by the church. "Intern churches" will need to organize their programs and planning strategies to effectively include "intern clergy families."

***2.7 Training in family life education should be provided in one year certificate programs at seminaries or Bible colleges, and/or through correspondence courses combined with in-residence workshops or month-long residence study requirements.***

As documented in chapter 8, clergy respondents strongly support family life education in Sunday schools (importance and meaning of God's design for family, marriage, intimacy, sexuality, etc., at appropriate ages) in classes at all levels beginning in grade 1-6 classes (85% or more), junior high classes (96%), senior high classes (over 98%), and in college student classes (over 98%). In addition, nearly all clergy support helping parents provide family life education to their children. We agree. Local churches might encourage selected teachers within their own congregations to pursue certification. Strong references should be required in support of applicants for these programs.

***2.8 Denominations, and/or parachurch organizations, must establish confidential trustworthy "ombudsman-like" support ministries for hurting, lonely, bruised, spiritually fragile, clergy and spouses as individuals, as marriages, and as parents of struggling children. These programs need to be at "arms length" from denominational knowledge until the support systems have, if the problems aren't solved, worked out the exit, discipline, and restoration procedures in mutual agreement with the clergy involved.***

The "biggies" for clergy stand out in this survey. Spouses, typically wives, often feel neglected by their spouses and by their denomination. Ministers have private feelings and struggles that they feel they have to keep to themselves. Loneliness is too often a feature of ministry. Singles often feel mistreated. Clergy and spouses need someone to talk to, someone to listen to them, in safety. They need friends.

The feelings, struggles, and behavioural failures are salient - sexual, spiritual, marital, parental, moral, and ethical. Few ministers or spouses feel any sense of safety with their denomination. "The struggle festers, the desires become more difficult to control, ultimately the struggle becomes a justified behavioural infraction. Attractions are natural, the alternatives and implications so inconsequential. Once reasonable and wise servants of God suddenly become slaves of their own perceived rights. Discipline is not a friend but an infringement of one's inherent rights. Anything so necessary can't be wrong." Although this is a sharply simplified description of the evolution of moral failure it is reasonably accurate. We believe that the evolution of clergy breakdown and eventual moral or marital failure must be stopped before it begins.

This recommendation is broadly based under the rubric of "support ministries." These ministries might include confidential telephone "hot lines," interdenominational support networks within specific communities, denominationally based support networks where there are several churches in a reasonable geographical area, a designated and paid denominational "ombudsman-like" appointee who travels to meet with struggling clergy without "listen and tell" obligations. The nature of the struggle or actual failure is not as important as the process. We believe that this system will facilitate help, if not resolution, before the problems get out of hand and where necessary reduce the fall-out within local churches and their communities.

***2.9 Denominations and/or inter-denominational structures should be established, funded, or subsidized to provide teaching, counselling, and therapy without charge, or at least minimal charge, to clergy and their families.***

These services should be available in geographically accessible locations and be offered initially on a part-time basis until the need justifies a full-time service.

***2.10 Denominational meetings should permit open forums to listen to concerns and problems from individual clergy concerning financial issues, time management problems, working with families in churches, and struggles within clergy families.***

Many clergy complain about the professionalization of ministry, the significant cost of higher education, and the low-end salaries they must graciously endure in the churches they serve. These forums should lead to a careful review and responsive action as a consequence of what is shared. Salary and benefit guidelines, for example, might be a natural outcome of such a meeting. These guidelines will need to be developed and officially confirmed within each denomination. Every member church should be appraised of these guidelines in reviewing potential pastoral candidates. As with financial concerns, each of the many issues that are of concern to clergy need to be aired and processed in forums. These meetings could well lead to significant improvements in the quality of ministry, the connections between clergy and their denomination, the connections between ministers and their churches, and the relational qualities within clergy marriages and families.

***2.11 A follow-up research project, comparable to the clergy project and investigating similar issues, should be conducted using a random sample of evangelical families active in church, a random sample of main-line church families, and a random sample of secular, unchurched families to better understand the role of faith in everyday life.***

Such a study will require financial support from many possible sources including religious organizations, scholarly organizations, foundations, religious denominations, and successful businesses with a concern about the religious factor in everyday life.

In conclusion, we want to express our gratitude to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and to each of the 21 denominations involved in this study for financial support and official endorsement of this project. We are excited about the unique importance of this study. We believe that the data we have on clergy families in Canada is unlike any other data base now available anywhere. This preliminary report provides an inside look of what we have learned and are learning already. We now begin to work on the first major research-based book on life in clergy families. We will be using a number of statistical procedures to enhance our understanding of how clergy attitudes and behaviours vary by age and education of minister, church size, church location, childhood background, and many other factors, this book will be written to be read and enjoyed. Please pray for us as we seek God's help in analyzing the data.



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