

ABSTRACT

SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

THROUGH SPIRITUAL FORMATION PRACTICE AND SELF-CARE AMONG

UNITED METHODIST ORDINANDS IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN

CONFERENCE

by

Jane Youtz Riecke

The purpose of this research study was to identify the elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that support the effective spiritual leadership of clergy within the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church in a sustainable practice of ministry. The first phase of this project was the survey of research participants in their knowledge of spiritual formation and self-care. The next phase involved research participants attending a Residency in Ministry retreat entitled, Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership. As a part of the retreat experience, participants were asked to create and follow a *rule of life* for the next three months. The spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey was repeated three months following the retreat. An interview of spiritual formation and self-care practices at that same three-month mark completed the study. This research can be used to create practices that support effective spiritual leaders in ministry.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
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by

Jane Youtz Riecke

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Jane Youtz Riecke

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM

Introduction

As I look back over the past twenty-eight years of local church ministry, I realize that many times I wished God had not called me. The burden of shepherding a congregation with integrity while parenting two sons, caring for ill and dying parents, and sustaining my marriage has been a challenge. I have often considered leaving.

More and more clergy leave the ministry every day because they find themselves unable to sustain effective ministry as spiritual leaders. After trudging through endless days of meaningless meetings, striving to meet unreal expectations from congregations who want their pastors to answer their every need, their creativity and energy become so depleted that nothing is left. Their emotional exhaustion leads to compassion fatigue and, in many cases, complete burnout. Clergy, who continue their ministry despite emotional exhaustion and physical illness, find themselves under greater and greater duress until they are no longer effective in their spiritual leadership of the local church. According to George Barna, “clergy are among the most frustrated occupational groups in the country” (qtd in Forward 159). Their emotional exhaustion leads to compassion fatigue and, in many cases, complete burnout. Clergy, who continue their ministry despite emotional exhaustion and physical illness, find themselves under greater and greater duress until they are no longer effective in their spiritual leadership of the local church.

Some of this frustration has to do with “perceived high role conflict in conjunction with high role ambiguity” (Kemery 561). Often these two issues can be the cause of an underlying malaise in ministry that contributes to the overall stress of the

individual. These frustrations are compounded by the “constant involvement with people, a diversity of tasks and the uncertainty that the pastor is making any difference” (Forward 159). Each day of work is complicated by the random needs of parishioners and the demands of deadlines. Pastors easily find themselves drowning in an endless sea of work.

Pastors begin to wonder whether or not they are making a difference. They begin to question their call. Others begin to question their call as well:

Many well-meaning Christians in their congregations ignored the signs of “battle fatigue.” Instead, congregations overwhelmed my pastor friends with unrealistic expectations, negative criticism and misplaced anger. Some congregations even assumed the perfect pastor was “out there,” so their fallible pastor was terminated (“Ask Our Staff”)

I have also witnessed a similar phenomenon within the United Methodist Church appointment system. District superintendents in the Rocky Mountain Conference spend an inordinate amount of time working with congregations who assume that because their current pastor is unable to fulfill their unreal expectations that a new pastor will. They ask for a change of appointment, not realizing that this request will not satisfy this systemic problem.

Stress is an accepted part of life. Most occupations experience stress, but research indicates that individuals involved in people-intensive, human service organizations may be the most vulnerable to the ravages of stress and eventual burnout. Stress in the pastoral profession has to do with issues of conflict and the high level of ambiguity in the practice of ministry. This stress is compounded by the constant involvement with people, a diversity of tasks, and the uncertainty that the pastor is making any difference. Overall, these factors contribute to the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced accomplishment that signals burnout.

Work-related stressors exact a heavy toll (1) by impairing the ability of clergy to provide spiritual and organizational leadership for their congregations, (2) by increasing the risk of problem behaviors by clergy such as sexual infidelity, and (3) by eroding marital adjustment and quality of life with diminished emotional support available from spouses and children, leading to further distress (Darling, Hill, and McWey 263). All of these factors contribute to the emotional and physical exhaustion of the clergy person: “Stress and burnout are relational rather than quantitative, and are due primarily to getting caught in a responsible position for others and their problems” (Friedman 202). This realization often graduates into a secondary traumatic stress disorder known as compassion fatigue or a variety of stress-related illnesses such as high blood pressure, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and heart disease.

According to a study of pastors done by the George Barna Group in 2005, 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout, or contention in their churches. The concern for clergy leaving the ministry is at epidemic proportions, yet nothing is being done to stem the flow. Clergy leaving has been quite commonplace but no less shocking, as evidenced in this excerpt from a blog:

Today I heard from a friend that she is leaving ministry. Last night's SPRC meeting was the last straw at the end of thirteen years of trying. A very good friend of mine, hearing the story, was shaking his head. I know he is already moving out of ministry. Just before I began to write this I picked up an e-mail from a friend in the southern part of the state, who is leaving ministry for the same reasons. This is three very good pastors in a day. (“District Superintendents, How They Can Help”)

Over 70 percent of pastors regularly consider leaving ministry, and 35-40 percent leave after the first five years. I believe the problem has much to do with their lack of ongoing spiritual formation. Of the 1,050 pastors surveyed in 2004, 72 percent only studied the

Bible when preparing for a sermon or to teach a lesson, and only 26 percent stated they did regular personal devotions (Krejcir). These statistics mirror my own lack of spiritual formation throughout the first twenty years of my ministry.

I also believe clergy burnout and stress has a great deal to do with an individual's perception of being loved, valued, and esteemed. When feeling vital and appreciated in the ministry setting, I have tended to ignore the usual daily, grinding stresses of ministry. I believe the supportive relationships that I have developed with friends, colleagues, and former parishioners, not to mention my spouse and children, have sustained me through difficult times.

Dr. Anthony J. Headley makes a case for self-inflicted abuse: "We sometimes allow ourselves to be hemmed in by an understanding of ministry disallowing personal freedom, leisure and humanity" (20). This restrictive understanding of ministry promotes a sense of false piety, but false piety is not the source of the problem. The problem lies with the pastor's desire for approval and the overwhelming need to please others. Ironically, the desire for approval and the need to please destroy the ministry they feel called to perform. They forget the one who called them. They forget to continue the deep relationship with God that began the journey.

Clergy also forget that they need the support of others. They need time with family, with their spouses, and time with friends to play and relax:

For some pastors, leaving the pastorate was the result of assuming that their calling was permanent and they were therefore protected. They neglected the spiritual disciplines or spiritual integrity needed to continue in ministry. Too often, they had no friend or accountability group to share their pain or provide emotional or spiritual support. ("Ask Our Staff")

Reaching out to someone is always as simple as picking up the phone or going for a cup of coffee, yet many clergy in the midst of burnout tend to spurn supportive relationships. Three obstacles appear to keep clergy from the very support they need: (1) fear of diminishing individual autonomy and reputation by seeking help, (2) competitiveness and distrust of peers, and (3) the nature of pastoral training as care giving and not care receiving (Forward 161).

The distrust of peers is the most common response I heard at the Board of Ordained Ministry pertaining to the lack of participation in clergy clusters. Competition is paramount. The Rocky Mountain Conference has very few large pulpit churches, and many clergy are afraid of someone hearing or knowing something about them that will hold them back from their next appointment. The second most common response to their lack of participation is the fear of a loss of reputation. No one wants to be seen as someone who cannot handle ministry. Very simply, they are afraid of what someone will think of them. If they do attend, their motivation is out of duty and obligation rather than any self-interest. The content of these clergy gatherings tends to be rather shallow. No books are studied and no prayers are given. No active listening takes place because no trust exists. Confidences are only shared one-on-one with trusted colleagues, proven by years of friendship. None of these behaviors even approaches the basic training of pastoral ministry in which pastors are trained to be caregivers and not care receivers. The Rocky Mountain Conference has many lone rangers. This attitude is supported by a Western culture that encourages a strong sense of individualism. Early pioneers to the Rocky Mountains either persevered on the strength of their own abilities or frequently

died trying. This attitude is entrenched in the culture and only contributes to the isolation many pastors already experience.

None of what I have written speaks to the possibility of woundedness on the part of the clergy. The wounds are usually residuals from their past that have not been appropriately dealt with and that cause them to spiral into a cycle of approval-anger-depression, pushing them to leave the ministry. Instead of dealing with their emotional need, they opt for something termed by Stephen Seamands in his book *Wounds That Heal* as “behavioral narcotics” (75). These are habits of behavior that become coping mechanisms: “They rely on them as pain relievers for compassion deficits and anesthetics for a lack of unconditional love” (75). Behavioral narcotics do not provide permanent relief because they do not go to the heart of problem. They do not heal the original woundedness of the individual. Stephen Seamands also notes, “Those on the healing path must be willing to walk into and through—not away from or around—pain” (113). Until pastors are willing to face their own personal pain, instead of avoiding it, they will continue compensating for their pain by masking the source of the problem with behavioral narcotics, such as workaholism, people pleasing, control, perfectionism, and escape.

Wounds are also encountered in ministry. The fact is that countless clergy have recounted experiences of traumatic pain, forced moves, and career destruction, in addition to the typical self-doubts and damage to personal faith due to people commonly called clergy killers: “Clergy killers are people who intentionally target pastors for serious injury or destruction” (Rediger 8). According to G. Lloyd Rediger, “Approximately sixty percent of pastors function competently, even effectively, but at

least one fourth have been forced out of one or more congregations and many more are severely stressed and vulnerable” (7). Unfortunately, church leaders have been slow to recognize the reality of intentional, destructive attacks on clergy.

The reality is difficult to accept, but clergy killers do, in fact, exist. Unfortunately, I have experienced this phenomenon in my own ministry. One episode I experienced in 1999 caused me to question my ability beyond anything I had ever encountered in ministry. I echo Rediger in saying that those who choose to attack clergy do so from an arrested adolescence and inadequate socialization; “they know how to distract, confuse and seduce” (11). They are destructive, determined, and deceitful. Their effect can wound clergy irreparably. Fortunately, I also agree with Rediger that clergy need to develop patience, strengthen their theology and practice, and learn to survive by utilizing self-preservation skills such as seeking out supportive colleagues, utilizing a spiritual director, and standing firm in their spiritual formation practice. Whether individuals are dealing with wounds from their personal past or from within ministry itself, self-preservation requires the use of the basic tools for psychological and spiritual health.

In 2012, of the 616 clergy members of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church, 276 are retired while sixty-one are in extension ministries. Of the remaining clergy in relationship with the annual conference, seventeen clergy received voluntary early retirement, thirteen clergy went on voluntary leave of absence, eleven clergy were placed on incapacity leave, and sixteen were granted honorable location (“Here Are The Keys” 120).

Although pastors understand their stress levels to be increased, very few are doing anything preventative. The risk of burnout and an early exit from ministry are very real,

clergy accept stress as a part of the context of ministry. Even simple preventative measures such as exercise are generally ignored. The issue of stress and the toll it is taking on clergy remaining in local church ministry is being ignored by most church denominations. Denominational leaders are aware of the problem, very little action is being taken to respond to the problem. Judicatory officials need to be more proactive in sustaining effective spiritual leadership. They need to be more proactive to responding to clergy in distress.

Varieties of caring options are available and could be used as interventions to sustain the health and wellness of clergy, but judicatory officials are hesitant in using those interventions. In the end, clergy are wounded and continuing beyond their woundedness into burnout, and eventually, complete ineffectiveness. The problem is then how the United Methodist Church can intervene early enough to strengthen the practice of effective spiritual leadership for the long-term health of the church.

In the United Methodist Church, interventions such as sabbatical leave, voluntary leave of absence, spiritual renewal leave, and family leave are all possible. Clergy, however, rarely take advantage of these interventions for the renewal of their lives and ministry. Instead, clergy continue to work in ministry, allowing their fatigue and ill health to mount until a crisis occurs and their ministry is no longer healthy or effective. Unfortunately, in the United Methodist Church system, few alternative options are available beyond leaves or sabbaticals being considered for viable sustainability and retention in local church ministry.

The clergy of the Rocky Mountain Conference are but a microcosm of the United Methodist Church in North America. The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits

undertook a study of clergy health and the factors that impact clergy health in 2008. This cross-denominational study when analyzed alongside data from a 2006 Church Benefits Association study suggests the same health, well-being, and spirituality problems are present in all annual conferences (General Board of Pensions). Therefore, while the woundedness of the Rocky Mountain Conference is no more or no less than in any other denomination or geographical area, their mounting frustration with local church ministry is very real. Between 1999 and 2011, I gave twelve years of service to the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. During that time, I saw a large number of my colleagues leave local church ministry for voluntary leave of absence, incapacity leave, and honorable location. I witnessed many clergy leave the ministry within the first five to fifteen years. In 2010, three clergy, in the prime of their local church ministries, voluntarily took leaves of absence. These colleagues¹ left local church ministry angry, burned out, and resentful. One clergy, when I spoke with him, stated, “It wasn’t fun at all anymore. There was no satisfaction, no passion and no drive. It had all just drained away.” Another stated, “The last straw was not getting any support from my district superintendent when I needed him most.” The constant stress and a lack of denominational support led to their leaves of absence. They chose an early exit from ministry.

After years of watching effective clergy leave ministry, I believed an intervention was necessary. No one is helping clergy in their first years of appointive ministry to discover and implement self-care and spiritual formation practices that would sustain them in effective spiritual leadership and retain them in ministry. Therefore, I created a

¹ My colleagues’ names are withheld to protect their anonymity.

retreat for the purpose of this study to educate clergy in the first five years of appointment about the practices of self-care and spiritual renewal that would result in the sustenance of the effective spiritual leadership for the church. The retreat was a required part of the residency in ministry requirements of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church and was entitled, Spiritual Formation for Your Spiritual Leadership.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that sustain effective spiritual leadership in ordinands in the Rocky Mountain Conference for the long-term health of their ministry. This research can be used to create practices that support effective spiritual leaders in ministry.

Research Questions

The following three research questions helped to evaluate the research project.

Research Question #1

What were the spiritual formation and self-care practices of the ordinands in the study prior to the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?

Research Question #2

What were the spiritual formation practices and self-care practices of the ordinands in the study after the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?

Research Question #3

How are spiritual formation and self-care practices impacting the ministries of the ordinands in the study?

Research Question #4

What are the recommendations for sustainable spiritual leadership in the practice of ministry for clergy?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following words were used as defined throughout this project.

Provisional Candidate

A provisional candidate is a unique designation in the United Methodist Church. He or she is an individual who has completed seminary and has been accepted into the provisional care process of the Board of Ordained Ministry but has not yet been ordained. The provisional candidate is engaged in part-time or full-time ministry.

Residency in Ministry

For the purposes of this study, residency in ministry refers to the two-year program of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church that prepares provisional candidates by providing an assigned mentor as well as a series of retreats for the practical preparation of the provisional candidate prior to ordination.

Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform the inner nature of a believer to conform to the image of Christ. The possibility of spiritual renewal is improved by the practices of spiritual formation but not limited to those practices.

Spiritual Leadership

Within the scope of this study, spiritual leadership is defined as the use of the clergy's influence to fulfill God's vision for the local church. Spiritual leadership encompasses the principles of humility, integrity, and service toward others.

Self-Care

Self-care refers to decisions and actions that an individual can take to cope with a physical or mental health problem or to improve his or her physical or mental health.

Sustainable Practice

Sustainable practice refers to a work management and lifestyle that assists the clergyperson in creating healthy, effective ministry as a spiritual leader. When a balance is created between work, health and spiritual life, sustainable practices have been utilized.

Ministry Intervention

As a part of the yearly curriculum for the residency in ministry process, I introduced a retreat for provisional candidates in the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference that gives an overview of spiritual formation. The retreat was entitled, Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership. Clergy in the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference in their first five years under appointment and participating in the Residency in Ministry program attended.

Prior to the retreat, participants were given a researcher-designed questionnaire to establish a baseline of self-care and spiritual formation and their integration into the practice of ministry. Participants also responded to a spiritual type indicator (Ware 120-23) as well as a personality and spiritual life indicator (Johnson 21-30) to guide them in their understanding of their spiritual nature. Both instruments were not part of the official

instrumentation. Over the period of the retreat, they were introduced to a variety of classical spiritual formation practices such as centering prayer, the divine hours, corporate worship, Holy Communion, and journaling as well as self-care practices that enhanced their spiritual leadership.

The participants were then asked to establish a rule of life, outlining the practices of their chosen spiritual formation disciplines and practices of self-care. They were asked to follow their rule of life for a period of three months. I then employed the same questionnaire at the conclusion of the study to measure any changes in behavioral and cognitive status after having experienced the retreat and practiced its spiritual formation principles.

Also at the conclusion of the three-month period, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each of the participants in the study by Skype or in person. The interviews lasted no longer than forty-five minutes.

Context

Understanding the context of the local church ministry for the clergyperson is an important step in clarifying the elements needed for a sustainable practice of ministry. The local church is no longer the peaceful refuge once enjoyed by the parish pastor. It has become a battleground of petty grievances, epic struggles for power, and theological skirmishes. Expectations placed upon pastors are greater than ever before. Today's clergy must fulfill many roles. They are expected to be compassionate counselors, capable fundraisers, spiritual friends, outstanding orators, and advocates for the poor and disenfranchised. No one person can fulfill all these expectations, yet because of their vocation, clergy try. Steve Williams, senior pastor of North-Pointe Community Church in

Fresno, California, says, “The times we’re in are putting more demands on pastors. In church life, pastors wear a bunch of different hats, and it contributes to a lot more stress” (Orzoco). The increased expectations have placed unrealistic demands upon the clergy. Clergy who feel compelled toward workaholism will unwittingly become trapped in a very destructive cycle, leading eventually to burn out and complete fatigue.

Denominational leaders want to avoid burnout and damaging behaviors such as marital infidelity, sexual misconduct, addiction, and monetary theft by the clergy. These damaging behaviors lead not only to the loss of pastors in local congregations but result in destructive effects upon churches. Many denominations are turning toward an emphasis on regular self-care and spiritual renewal for their pastors: “The more you allow pastors to learn to rest, the longer they last,” Williams says (Orzoco).

Denominational leaders must emphasize the importance of regular vacations, taking a day off once a week and allowing time for regular exercise.

A worst-case scenario happened in February 2010 when the Jamie Evans, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in downtown Fresno, California took his own life. He had taken a leave in November 2009 because of exhaustion and burnout, church officials say, and received help for depression. He had been in ministry about eighteen years (Rakis-Garabedian).

Although the suicide of a clergyperson has not occurred in recent history, in the Rocky Mountain Conference due to exhaustion and burnout, many clergy continue to work in local church ministry beyond the point of effectiveness. Denominational leaders recognize the desperation of these pastors needing to take sabbaticals or spiritual renewal leave but are lost as to how to assist clergy in accomplishing this goal financially.

Churches within the conference are often not prepared to pay for clergy on sabbatical, and clergy often do not understand the necessity of taking the sabbatical time nor how to use it well.

More United Methodist seminaries, such as Duke Divinity School, Durham, North Carolina, are offering courses in spiritual formation and requiring spiritual formation in small groups for their first year master of divinity students: “Duke Divinity School’s curriculum seeks to cultivate a life of worship, study and service” (“Spiritual Formation,” Duke Divinity School). The Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado, has added the Spiritual Direction Certification program through the Benet Hill Monastery in Colorado Springs but does not offer the means for understanding the need for spiritual renewal in its class offerings. Personal and professional formation is an important part of the Iliff preparation of students, but specific spiritual formation is not offered. Unfortunately, it is offered on very few United Methodist seminary campuses. Of the thirteen officially owned and operated United Methodist seminaries, three offer intensive spiritual formation preparation for the spiritual leader. In addition to Duke Divinity School, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and Perkins School of Theology require a component of spiritual formation as a part of their academic program. Garrett-Evangelical is piloting a special program rooted in the Wesleyan perspective of health as wholeness and self-care in support of vital ministry. The Garrett program is called “Fit to Lead” (“Spiritual Formation,” Garrett-Evangelical). At Perkins, spiritual formation is seen as “an integral part of the school’s theological education”(“Fact Sheet”). Students are placed into diverse groups of ten where they “strive to acquire the ability to integrate the spiritual, theological and social dimensions of life” (“Fact Sheet”). Twelve of the

United Methodist seminaries currently have certification in spiritual formation as a ministry specialty. Gammon Theological Seminary was the only seminary that did not mention any specific emphasis or offering for spiritual formation beyond the weekly chapel experience.

Denominationally, the United Methodist Church is beginning to wake up to the problem of clergy burnout and is seeking ways to sustain their clergy early in their training by offering spiritual formation training. As a whole, mainline churches realize clergy burnout and ineffectiveness are increasing and are offering information on their Web sites relating to self-care and spiritual formation for clergy. Many United Methodist annual conferences have continuing formation policies that reflect both the United Methodist value for “growth in professional competence and effectiveness through continuing education and formation” (*Book of Discipline* 242) and the Board of Ordained Ministry’s concern for effective spiritual leadership. As an example, the Susquehanna Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church makes the following statement in its continuing formation policy:

All Christians need to be involved in a life long process of spiritual formation which includes discernment of God’s specific call, prayer, Christian fellowship, and the other classical disciplines of the Christian life. Clergy also have a responsibility to continue to grow in the skills and knowledge required to participate with Christ in leading the Church in their own time and place.

In 2006 the Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church created the Center for Clergy Excellence to lead clergy toward greater fruitfulness. This annual conference hopes to foster an environment of support and accountability that continuously moves their clergy toward excellence. The center’s purpose is to empower and equip clergy with

the resources necessary to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The Presbytery of San Joaquin is reaching out to clergy by offering resources on depression and mental health on its Web site. Duke University is conducting studies on the health and spiritual vitality of clergy for the United Methodist Church that are affecting health care policy across the denomination. The Rocky Mountain Conference is now offering a listing of spiritual directors who are available for regular consultation and ongoing support for clergy; however, many are concerned most of the recognized spiritual directors are members of the annual conference and colleagues. Each of these programs help to destigmatize the need for care for pastors and their families when they are hurting. These solutions, though, are only a fragment of what is necessary in order to sustain effective spiritual leadership in local ministry settings.

Denominational Description

The United Methodist Church, which began as a movement and a loose network of local societies with a mission, has grown into one of the most carefully organized and largest denominations in the world. The United Methodist structure and organization began as a means of accomplishing the mission of spreading scriptural holiness over the land. John Wesley recognized the need for an organized system of communication and accountability and developed what he called the “connexion,” which was an interlocking system of classes, societies, and annual conferences (*Book of Discipline* 90). The United Methodist Church currently has 7.8 million lay members in the 35,275 churches of North America with sixty-three conferences in fifty episcopal areas. Because of the size of the

denomination, the United Methodist Church can be rather large and impersonal at times when it needs to respond to individual needs (“Church Membership”).

Conference Area

The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church presents some interesting challenges in its scope and diversity. Not only does the conference cover a widely differing geographical area, but it does so with a diverse group of clergy covering an even more diverse group of churches. The Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church has 616 clergy members and 66,716 lay members in 262 churches over a three-state area. The churches are missional, rural, urban, and suburban in context. The conference area includes Colorado, Utah, and southern Wyoming. The bishop is shared with the Yellowstone Conference and includes northern Wyoming, Montana, and a small corner of Idaho. The episcopal offices for both conferences are housed in Denver, Colorado.

The Rocky Mountain Conference is as diverse in its culture and theology as it is in its geography. Over 80 percent of the congregations are under two hundred members in size, and their average attendance is well below one hundred. The conference contains fourteen of the largest churches in the western jurisdiction with well over a one thousand members in each. Theology varies from the highly conservative evangelical to the devoutly liberal and socially active congregation. The clergy also reflect this diverse range of theology in their belief and practice of ministry.

Study Group

The study group consisted of individuals commissioned toward deacon or elder as provisional members of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist

Church currently serving under episcopal appointment. All the participants were in their first five years of ministry. Participants in the study were required by the Board of Ordained Ministry Residency in Ministry Program to participate in the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat but self-selected to participate in the study. The participants in the study numbered fourteen and varied in age from 27 to 58 years in age. Each participant successfully graduated from a graduate degree program in religion with either a master of divinity degree or a master of religious arts.

Methodology

This study evaluated the behavioral and cognitive changes in clergy in their first five years under appointment through the experience of participation in a retreat entitled, Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership. The study used explanatory, mixed methods of both a qualitative and quantitative design. The first instrument was a researcher-designed survey measuring the behavioral and cognitive status of the retreat participants before the workshop. I used the Likert interval scale in collecting information from the survey. I gathered quantitative data through the survey. I then employed the same survey at the conclusion of the study to measure any changes in behavioral and cognitive status after having experienced the retreat and practiced its spiritual formation principles.

The second instrument employed was a personal interview of retreat participants using semi-structured, researcher-designed questions. I conducted a semi-structured interview with the retreat participants. The data collected through the interview was qualitative. I conducted all interviews by Skype or in person. With the permission of the interview participants, each interview was audio-taped for transcription. I also made

notes during the interview to assist transcription. In the rare case a participant did not grant permission to audio-tape the interview, the transcription was made from my interview notes made during the interview. Interviews lasted no longer than forty-five minutes.

Participants

The sample used for this study was a self-selecting sample of the twenty-four provisional candidates for ordination in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2012. The sample was representative of four of the five district areas of the conference. The sample included only those who were currently under episcopal appointment within their first five years of ministry. The population was required to participate in the retreat by the Board of Ordained Ministry, but the sample self-selected to participate in the research.

Instrumentation

To study the behavioral and cognitive changes in the retreat participants, researcher-designed pre- and post-surveys were utilized. Researcher-designed, semi-structured questions were then employed in follow-up interviews by phone or in person.

Variables

The independent variable in this study was the retreat. The dependent variable was the impact of spiritual renewal and self-care practices upon the professional lives of the clergyperson as measured by the survey response and interviews. The intervening variables were the demographic factors of the participants and the possibility of a personal decision to withdraw from the study.

Data Collection

In January 2012, participants were sent an invitation packet by e-mail to attend the Spiritual Formation of the Spiritual Leader retreat and to participate in the study. Participants for the retreat were self-selected and enrolled in the retreat. Each participant was also invited to participate in the study. They were given an informed consent form and a link to the pre-retreat online survey. The survey requested basic demographic information, family and other support background, major life events and transitions, and professional ministry experience. The survey also asked questions pertaining to the participant behavioral and cognitive ability surrounding the spiritual leadership material. The survey required approximately thirty minutes to complete. Survey Monkey was used to complete and codify the information. This same survey was employed at the conclusion of the study to measure any changes in behavioral and cognitive ability surrounding the spiritual leadership material. Survey Monkey was utilized to complete and codify the information.

The interview sample was selected from the retreat and survey population. I interviewed each participant who granted permission using the prior outlined protocol. I sent a letter of thanks at the conclusion of the study that included a Starbucks card worth \$20.

Data Analysis

During the research project, I administered the online survey through Survey Monkey and personally conducted the interviews. I received and analyzed all the data received from the surveys. I conducted content analysis on the survey responses through descriptive statistics and *t*-test analysis. I coded the survey response for nineteen separate

items in four categories: self-care practices, spiritual renewal practices, personal relationships, and self-identity. I then conducted content analysis on the interview transcripts. I coded the interview transcripts for six separate items in two categories: spiritual renewal and self-care. I chose these two categories to represent two primary resources for the sustenance of ministry in the lives of clergy. I anticipated these resources being influential in whether or not clergy members were able to sustain effective spiritual leadership.

Generalizability

The results of this study were utilized by denominational leaders in the Rocky Mountain Conference to improve the sustainability and retention of clergy in ministry. The results impacted policy in the practice of sustaining ministry for the denomination. By using these results, other denominations may reconsider procedures concerning retention of clergy in ministry.

Theological Foundation

To understand how to sustain effective ministry, clergy must first consider who they are as created children of God. God is the source of life. God is the *alpha and omega*. God imparts the breath of life and sustains all life. One's life from conception to death is nothing but an expression of that which creates and sustains one's very being. A relationship with the Creator is primary. God knows people better than they know themselves.

The psalmist is astounded at how well God knows him: "O Lord, you have searched me and known me" (Ps. 139:1, NRSV). He gives praise for God's intimate knowledge of him, knowledge unlike any other. The Hebrew word for knowledge used in

Psalm 139 is rich with meaning: to know, to have intimate knowledge of, to take care of, to understand, to experience. This knowledge is full and complete. Throughout the first eighteen verses of the Psalm, the psalmist reflects deeply on God's searching knowledge of humanity's innermost thoughts, on the limitations of human knowledge, and the inescapable presence of God throughout the created world.

With God as the creator, people understand who they are in connection with who God created them to be. To separate the two is to separate individuals from God. The psalmist clearly understands people cannot separate themselves from God. God is everywhere people turn. The psalmist speaks of trying to hide from God. Individuals do not know whether the psalmist is afraid of God or if the psalmist sees God as a caring presence, but clearly God is always present wherever the psalmist turns.

With such an intimate relationship with God, people might wonder why they were created. People were created for God, although God does not consume them. Individuals fulfill their purpose in God. In communion with God, an individual's identity is authentic and pure; they are their true selves created for God's good purpose. God is at the heart of their identity. Genesis clearly says, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). As creation is a reflection of the creator, so people are a reflection of God. God is the center of being. One cannot stand apart from God to survey life. God's image is reflected through individual lives and as those lives pertain to creation theology through the stewardship of creation. As a reflection of the Creator, an individual's life reflects God's passion for the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth. People are made for this purpose.

God also created people to be unique and individual. Individuals are not to be absorbed into humanity but to discover their own inimitable identity before God. When individuals discover that matchless quality that God has given them and they share it with the world, God is glorified. As Paul, the assumed author to the Corinthians, writes, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-6). Human beings are uniquely created with certain gifts and graces that are like none other. Only people can fulfill God’s purposes through the specific gifts of the Spirit made uniquely available to them. As an anonymous source said, “Without God, we can’t. Without us, God won’t.” Human beings are eternally bound to their Creator.

As children of God, people are valued in and for themselves. This premise does not mean, however, that people have no need of God or of one another. Paul emphasizes that apart from the Spirit of God individuals can do nothing. Paul also emphasizes that these gifts can only be fulfilled in community for the unity of the body. Individuals learn that because they are all so uniquely gifted, they need not carry all the responsibility. They can share the journey with others, liberating and empowering others. No one person is greater than another or more spiritual than another. All persons are all uniquely gifted and are called to build one another up in love as they build up the kingdom of God.

Not only are people created to fulfill God’s purposes through their gifts in community, but they also are created to be in relationship with God. Individuals flourish when they are able to make the connection between God and their truest self. The ground of personhood is in God.

Disorientation or the rejection of the authentic or true self is a basic problem.

People cannot see themselves as God sees them and they strive to re-create themselves in their own image instead of in God's image. People hide themselves in their work. They run away. They brag and alienate those close to them. They struggle against God's call. They bemoan their plight. However, they never think to accept their true selves. Instead, they construct a false self that they think will be more acceptable to God and to others. They become inauthentic, rejecting their true selves, rejecting the soul of who they are, and thereby rejecting God. Often the true self becomes buried so deep that life becomes one long dark night of the soul. In turn, people disassociate themselves from God. People turn away from the One who loves them most.

Moses certainly understood what happened when individuals reject their true selves. As a young man Moses rose up against the Egyptian oppression of his people, killing a man. This action was just one action in a series of actions that responded to the injustice of his known world. His actions foreshadowed God's actions and anticipated the issues that surrounded him as a leader of the Israelites. Eventually, Moses embraced his true identity. Finally understanding who he was as a child of God, Moses said, "I have been an alien residing in a foreign land." (Exod. 2:22b) In response, God called Moses to act on his behalf. God and Moses engaged in a battle of wills throughout Moses' life, but Moses remained faithful, finishing all that God asked of him.

As the created children of God, people are at once capable of loving communion and of disorienting, disconnecting sin. Although individuals have the capacity for sublime connection with God, they too often, through personal choice, choose to separate

themselves from God and, therefore, separate themselves from their soul or true self. That separation is a wound that only God can heal.

Grace heals the void between God and humanity and returns humanity to active communion with God through Christ. Christ is the man of sorrows who bears humanity's sin through the cross. Christ's sacrifice heals the wounds of the world. The cross contains the power everyone needs to confront the darkness of the soul. Only when people face their personal darkness can they begin to see the light of salvation in Jesus Christ. People must offer their false self to Christ for his healing. The false self must die in order that the true self live in union with Christ:

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:22-24)

Only before the cross can humanity begin to understand the power and the depth of God's love for them. In Christ, the wound of separation from God is healed.

One sign of a growing spiritual maturity is the ability to see the need for regular, disciplined communication with God. Clergy must stay connected to the source of their lives, the Creator. John reminds the reader of the end for this deep connection in the fifteenth chapter of his gospel: "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me" (v.4). Through a relationship with God in Christ, the individual receives sustenance and is incorporated into the community of the people of God, bearing Christ's witness in the world. Central to this verse is the idea that people cannot fulfill their purpose and true character without the sustenance of the vine. Therefore, everything depends on remaining in Christ. Remaining in Christ, people bear much fruit in the world. Separate from Christ,

people wither and die. Clergy cannot neglect the source of their being. Clergy cannot reject the necessity of their ongoing spiritual formation and renewal. When clergy reject their spiritual formation, they reject the very means available to them by which their souls are nurtured and sustained. Without spiritual formation, people no longer abide in Christ. Clergy no longer bear fruit for the kingdom.

Another sign of spiritual maturity is a willingness to participate in ongoing practices of self-care. The work of Jesus on earth serves as a model for contemporary public ministry. In the gospels are glimpses of Jesus seeking and practicing health and wellness—physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual. Jesus slept, ate, walked, wept, spent time with family and friends, and went away to seek a quiet place. Although these aspects of Jesus' life and ministry are not often preached about, they are an important part of the story. Jesus was practicing self-care to prepare for and have the strength for his public ministry on earth.

Following the example of Christ and integrating spiritual renewal and self-care practices into ministry gives clergy the strength to respond to the demands of an active ministry. By practicing spiritual renewal and mingling it with the practice of self-care, clergy create the space for their souls to expand enough to love those who are sometimes unlovable, sometimes frustrating, but always children of God in need of a healthy and effective Shepherd.

This study showed that only when clergy acknowledge their intimate relationship with their Creator and live in God's abiding presence through ongoing spiritual formation and practices of self-care can they hope to sustain themselves and finish well. The study

also showed denominational leadership needs to create systems of support to sustain clergy and encourage their continuing spiritual formation and self-care practices.

Overview

Chapter 2 reviews literature associated with occupational studies, occupational stress, practices of spiritual renewal, and practices of self-care. Chapter 3 includes the discussion and explanation for the study, research questions, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection, variables, and data analysis. Chapter 4 details the findings of the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the conclusions derived from interpretation of the data, as well as practical applications of the conclusions and further study possibilities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

The growing problem of clergy exhaustion and burnout is leading denominational judicatories to explore not only the causes of burnout but also preventative measures for sustainable spiritual leadership. The pool of clergy able to serve effectively as spiritual leaders of the local church is decreasing each year. At the same time, the demands upon clergy serving in local congregations increase each year. Solutions for sustaining effective spiritual leadership can be found in biblical witness and theological reflection.

Biblical and Theological Foundations

Ministry is by its nature Trinitarian. As Seamands writes, “The ministry into which we have entered is the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son, to the Father, through the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the church and the world” (*Ministry* 99-103). Only when clergy understand the nature of God, the three in one, and their relationship to God can they begin to understand how they might sustain effective spiritual leadership in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The Nature of God

People are made to be in relationship with God. People can only understand who they are in connection with who God created them to be. To separate the two is to separate humanity from God. Adrian van Kaam and Susan Muto write, “Our life from conception to death must be the expression of that which creates and sustains our very being and inserts who we are in a higher order of coherent truth and meaning” (22). All

life is about relationship whether humanity is in relationship with each other, with God, or with the created order. Relationship is one truth humanity can not deny.

The psalmist well understood the connection between creator and creation:

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed. (Ps. 139:13-16)

Humanity, too, must come to understand God's intimate understanding of its being and open themselves to the communion with God that is always possible.

God does not wish to be alone:

God created man in His own Image, in correspondence with His own being and essence. Because He is not solitary in Himself, and therefore does not will to be so *ad extra*, it is not good for man to be alone, and God created him in His own Image as male and female. This is what is emphatically said by Gen. 1, and all other explanations of the *imago Dei* suffer from the fact that they do not do justice to this decisive statement. God is in relationship, and so to is the man created by Him. This is the divine likeness. (Barth 324)

Understanding the image of God is important to the sense of a person's well-being as it is connected to a human being's identity, significance, and security.

A number of passages in the Scripture refer to the image of God. The most foundational and best known is in the creation narrative of Genesis:

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Gen. 1: 26-27)

God's intention is clearly stated in verse 26, with the word *image* repeated twice in verse 27. Genesis 5:1-2 again mentions this creative act of God. "Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them 'Humankind' when they were created" (v. 2). God wanted creation to reflect God's spirit. Humanity was the result of his desire.

The second creation account in Genesis chapter 3 documents how the Fall of humankind took place. When the first humans chose to disobey God's specific instruction not to eat of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), sin entered the world. Sin brought alienation and broke the bond that humanity had with God, with the self, with others, and with the created order. The image of God in humanity became perverted, and humankind began to malfunction. The Fall resulted in the excessive heightening of humanity's self-image so that the sinful pride of putting self above God was exacerbated. This conceit broke the most fundamental of relationships—the relationship with God, humankind's creator.

Because a person is a creature, humanity suffered from a negated self-image when the first humans had a sense of shame; in their feeling ashamed of their nakedness was the realization that they had done wrong. Shame soon revealed itself in being afraid of God and the culture of blaming others. Humanity now pays the price of disobedience in having a broken relationship with God and with self as humankind plummets into feelings of worthlessness and shame. This fundamental *brokenness* will then affect humankind's governance of the created order in a negative way as humanity becomes self-centered and self-referenced.

A number of passages connect the image of God to the process of sanctification. This process is depicted as a restoration to the original image, which had been marred at

the Fall as depicted in Genesis chapter 3, by being conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ is seen as that true image of God to which humankind had to be restored (Hoekema 73). Romans 8:29 speaks of the believer being conformed to the image of God. Second Corinthians 3:18 states that humanity is being transformed:

All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as being reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Paul adds in Ephesians 4:23- 24 that the new nature of the redeemed is after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. He then provides another angle to this concept in Colossians 3:10 in declaring that the new nature is “being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.” As transformation continues from one glory to another, humanity reflects more of the image of God.

The life of Jesus is the tangible, complete exemplar of what human nature is intended to be. His life was lived for God, focused on obeying God. He lived a life that was for others—his neighbors. He ruled over nature by walking on water and calming the storms. He was also at peace with himself, displaying a deep sense of identity as the Father’s beloved Son, secure in his Father’s love, and knowing his own purpose and significance in doing the Father’s will. Jesus had a sound, healthy relationship with himself, a wholesome self-image based on the right type of self-confidence that is not the inordinate elevation of one’s image in a prideful way. Neither was he suffering emotionally from an unhealthy, excessively low image that leads to crippling unhealthy self-rejection and self-doubt. Self-rejection poses the most fundamental of threats to the spiritual well-being of a believer, including those in pastoral ministry. It keeps on

contradicting the sacred voice of God who calls each human being his beloved, especially believers who doubly belong to him—first at creation, then through redemption by his Son’s blood shed at the cross. The importance of this relationship to self cannot be overemphasized: It underpins all others and makes possible a person’s proper response and performance in relating to God, others and the created order (Hoekema 102). This wholesome self-image is never an end in itself, but a means to the end of living for God, for others, and for good stewardship of God’s creation.

Thomas Aquinas, however, believed that the spiritual soul is the ground of who human beings are and become. Human beings are more than bodies they have souls:

The soul is not the whole of us, no more than the body is; rather, body and soul are intimately interwoven in a unity of matter and form. Our soul is the wellspring of our spiritual emergence from birth to death since it gives form to our body. (van Kaam and Muto 37)

To deny God as creator and sustainer is to deny the true nature of being human. The two are intimately intertwined.

Jesus prayed, “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). People are made for God. “Through faith in Christ, through baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19), individuals “enter into the life of the Trinity and are graciously included as partners” (Seamands, *Ministry* 12). Human beings are not consumed by God but treated as partners in God’s divine nature. Individual identity is not lost. In communion with God, humanity’s identity is authentic and pure; the identity of an individual is the true self created for God’s good purposes.

God has created people to be unique and individual. Human beings are not to be absorbed into the whole of humanity but to discover their own inimitable identity before

God. Parker Palmer understood the source of identity when he wrote, “When we are rooted in true self, we can act in ways that are life-giving for us and all whose lives we touch” (Palmer, *Hidden Wholeness* 39). People flourish when they are able to make the connection between God and their truest self. The ground of their personhood is in God.

The ground of one’s being or the true self, as Thomas Merton calls it, is the soul (Merton, *Choosing to Love* 1). The soul is restless until it is rooted in God (Augustine 3). The soul wants us to be connected. The soul wants to tell individuals the truth about themselves and the world: “The soul wants to give us life and wants us to pass that gift along, to become life-givers in a world that deals too much death” (Palmer, *Hidden Wholeness* 34). People cannot respond because they are not living out of their true identity. Often the true self is buried so deep that life becomes one, long dark night of the soul.

Disorientation or the rejection of the authentic or true self is a basic problem. People cannot see themselves as God sees them, and they strive to re-create themselves in their own image instead of in God’s image: “Self-rejection is the greatest enemy of the spiritual life because it contradicts the sacred voice that calls us the ‘Beloved’ (Nouwen, *Life* 21). Persons hide themselves like Adam and Eve. They run away as Jonah did. People brag and alienate those close to them as Joseph did. They sit under a figurative broom tree and bemoan their plight as Elijah did. They never think to accept their true selves. Instead, they construct false selves that they think will be more acceptable to God and to others. In turn, they disassociate themselves from God. They turn away from the very one who loves them most. Only self-knowledge gained through spiritual formation practice allows individuals to see God’s love and acceptance of them and prepare them to

reveal their true selves. If only people could receive their acceptance from Christ. The concept of the true self is key to understanding this acceptance:

Our true selves—the selves Jesus loves and accepts and gave his life for are both strong and weak, gifted and broken. We must learn to accept ourselves as he accepts us especially, the weak and broken parts that our false self rejects. (Seamands, *Ministry* 135)

Individuals can be no more or no less than what God has created them to be. They need to accept themselves for all their weaknesses and strengths. The denial of weakness is a burden many carry, yet weaknesses are an important part of who individuals can be and who God can be through them. Self-knowledge is an important dividend to the spiritual renewal practice. With spiritual renewal comes the understanding of the self, both strengths and weaknesses. Paul learned God's power is made perfect in the weakness of the individual. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 Cor. 12:9). Individuals must confront the power of their own darkness and false self before they are able to accept the fullness of a relationship with God. Individuals must call upon the power of God to help them put away all that is false so that God's glory might shine through them. The time has come to live as God's beloved.

The Nature of Christ

Living as God's beloved is not possible except through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ is "the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Christ" (John 14:6). Jesus is the connection through whom people experience God and are transformed into beloved sons or daughters through his saving work on the cross: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to

reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:15-20). Christ is the redeemer of all. He takes upon his own body the pain of our sin. The wounds of humanity are healed through his sacrifice:

The way of the cross is a way of absorbing pain, not passing it on, a way that transforms pain from destructive impulse into creative power. When Jesus accepted the cross, his death opened up a channel for the redeeming power of love. When we accept the crosses and contradictions in our lives, we allow that same power to flow. (Palmer, *Promise* 803-11)

The pain of woundedness is replaced by love. The love of God flows through humanity through this supreme sacrifice.

The fullness of life in all its creative power is restored in relationship with the resurrected Christ. Bereft and alone, Mary stood “weeping outside the tomb” (John 20:11). Mary heard her name called by Jesus. The risen Christ calls to each person and invites him or her to new life. Christ enters humanity’s darkness and grief, their fear and doubt with a gentleness and peace. Christ binds up their sorrows, soothes their anxieties, and removes their fears. He is the Great Physician applying the balm of Gilead (Jer. 8:22) that all people might live life as fully as God intended.

Christ is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18) tending to the spiritual needs of his sheep. A relationship with Christ sustains the individual and provides them with the spiritual food for which they long. In the Gospel of John, Jesus commands the believer to abide in him:

Abide in me as I abide in you, Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. (John 15:4-5)

Just as the branch does not stand apart and worship the vine, nor does it try to imitate the vine or become a vine. The branch is intrinsically connected with the vine and shares the

vine's abundant life. A relationship with Jesus, in which individuals' lives are united with and encompassed by Jesus' incredible life and love, releases them to be their true and deepest selves.

Jesus does not stand between the believer and God, but through Jesus the believer experiences God in a direct and intense way. The experience of the risen Christ magnifies the connection with God's love, mercy, and grace and allows God to be experienced more fully through him.

People often try to separate themselves from the reality of sin by thinking that sin is outside and against them: "The cross liberates us from the idea that the world is 'out there,' over and against us; the experience of the cross reveals that the world is in us, in both its glory and its shame" (Palmer, *Promise* 849-58). God is already at work in individuals suffering their brokenness but always offering the gift of reconciliation. By taking up the cross, people are given the gift of hope. This hope gives birth to the true self. The true self then is ready to be shaped and molded into the image of God. This transformation is only possible through Jesus Christ.

Clergy can easily forget their true identity but they also forget in whom their ministry resides. The ministry is not their own. The ministry is the ministry of Jesus Christ. Luke reminds Theophilus "all that Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). By using the imperfect Greek verb tense signifying an ongoing action rather than the aorist tense signifying completed action, Luke implies that Christ's earthly ministry did not end with his death, resurrection, and ascension. Luke goes on to write the Acts of the Apostles as the story of the ongoing ministry of Jesus.

Through the gift of the Spirit, Jesus continues his work. Through Christ's body, the Church, his ministry merely takes a different shape: "The working minister is in a co-working ministry day after day with Christ's own ministry, supported and energized by the Holy Spirit" (Oden 198). The ministry is not what clergy are doing as much as it is what Christ is doing through them.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit inspires clergy toward sustained effective ministry through the work of spiritual formation. Clergy can run away as Elijah did, pretend they can do everything as Moses did and make excuses as Jeremiah did, but God is the one who says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jer. 1:5). Clergy cannot go far enough to escape the lovingly confronting presence of the Almighty God:

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. (Ps. 139:7-10)

Orienting oneself toward God allows God to become the intimate center of one's life.

Individuals can resist, refuse, and avoid, or they can surrender themselves. Freed from the burden of busyness and self-sufficiency, individuals fall into God's tender embrace. They deepen their relationship with God and are nurtured toward wholeness once again. This journey toward wholeness requires a trusting reliance on God's grace. God's grace works in and through, shaping lives in the image of the beloved.

The Holy Spirit perfects God's love in the individual and guides them toward their truest selves. As God's gift to Christ's disciples for comfort and sustenance, the Holy Spirit inspires and encourages. The Spirit's purpose is to comfort and guide. The

Spirit teaches and brings to remembrance those things that are necessary for living as Christ's disciples.

The Nature of the Call into Ordained Ministry

God has called men and women to his service through out time. They were imperfect people, those who had made mistakes, and those who had no idea what they were getting into. However, through God's grace, God invites individuals to serve and then shows them the way to follow. People are not perfect. No one has all the answers, but they do know they belong to God and that God calls each of person by name. The biblical record contains many stories about how God calls people and what God asks those people to do.

Amos's call came when he was watching the flock (Amos 7:15); Isaiah's came on the year that King Uzziah died when he was worshipping in the Temple (Isa. 6); Ezekiel's came as an adult when he was in exile with the people (Ezek. 1-3). The call was given twice in Jeremiah 1:4 *before* Jeremiah was even in the womb. These stories of call point to the sovereign ordering of life by God. Before God fashions life, God appoints. Other biblical passages explore God's activity in shaping people toward their unique individuality. Psalm 139:13 and 15 are examples of this thought. In any case, Jeremiah 1:5 is a verse of immense comfort because Jeremiah's commissioning happens long before he even was born. His naïve response, "I am only a youth" (Jer. 1:6) is indicative of his fear. The call upon his life is one that seems larger than life, more than Jeremiah can imagine. God does allow Jeremiah to be afraid or to deny his call:

Do not say, "I am only a youth"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord. (Jer. 1:7-8)

The individual's fear is not an excuse when God calls.

The story of Jeremiah's calling is particularly pivotal as a story of calling. Called as a prophet, Jeremiah was not called, as so many before and after him, to prophesy to Israel, but he was called to prophesy to the nations: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 3:5). His calling also reminds the reader that when God calls individuals he gives them the gifts necessary to the particular call asked of them. For instance, God commissions the prophet by putting the Word of God within them. Whether the calling is a vision of Ezekiel eating a scroll, Isaiah having a coal pressed to his lips as in an act of cleansing, or God touching Jeremiah's lips, each prophet is called to speak the Holy Word of God.

Unlike Jeremiah, the prophet Samuel was eager to serve. As a young boy, Samuel lived in the place that housed the ark of the covenant. In other words, he was surrounded by God's holy presence. Paradoxically, he was unable to recognize the voice of God. Although God called three times, Samuel at first did not understand. Finally, he responded to God's call with the words Eli gave him: "Speak for your servant is listening" (1 Sam. 3:10). This story of calling is pivotal in understanding how God can repeatedly call an individual, but that individual may not be able to understand until a skilled mentor or guide interprets God's call for them.

Others experience their calling into ministry more directly. They hear the call to preach, to serve the sacraments, and to order the church as clearly as Jesus' call to the disciples in Matthew 4:19-20: "Come follow me," he said, "and I will show you how to fish for people. And immediately they left their nets and followed him." The call to

follow is not some quasi-invitation to tag along with Jesus if doing so is convenient. This command to follow is an invitation to learn from, abide in, imitate, and bond with Jesus. Leaving their families to follow Jesus was an act of establishing new kinship relationships. They left everything behind in order to give themselves fully to the ministry. They not only followed Jesus; they recruited others to the way of Jesus. The choice to follow Jesus was a radical redirection of their lives. Before Jesus' call to "come follow me," the disciples knew of Christ, but after his call they had to do more than follow. They followed with all diligence, faithfulness, and tenderness, working together with Christ to "fish for people."

The call into the ordained ministry can also be a radical redirection of an individual's life. Engineers who pursue a calling once ignored as a young adult enter the ordained ministry in midlife. Youth attending a spiritual retreat come forward during a time of invitation to answer the call into ministry. The call can come sharply and distinctly, urging immediate action. Candidates for the ordained ministry leave everything behind to respond fully to the call to imitate Christ. A new kinship with men and women also called to follow Christ develops. Life is never the same as the individual takes on the role and the identity of one set apart by God for the work of ministry.

While all persons may receive a call, the role of clergy is unique. Clergy are set apart for a lifetime of service in the administration of the sacraments, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and the Order of the Church. An elder in the United Methodist tradition preaches and teaches the Word of God, administers the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, equips the laity for ministry, exercises pastoral oversight, administers the *Book of Discipline* of the church, and leads in service of mission and

ministry. The servant leadership of an elder is expressed through leading the people of God in worship and prayer and to faith in Jesus Christ, exercising pastoral supervision in the congregation and leading the church in mission to the world.

A United Methodist deacon is a clergyperson called by God and ordained by a bishop to a servant ministry of word and service. A deacon's ministry connects worship with service to God in the world. A deacon's ministry in the United Methodist tradition includes proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, leading in worship and in assisting elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, forming and nurturing disciples, conducting weddings and funerals, leading in the congregation's mission to the world, and interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.

In the United Methodist tradition, deacons serve either in the world or in the church. They may concentrate their ministry in music, administration, mission, Christian education, age-level ministries, health care, counseling, or social work ministries.

Whether ordained an elder or a deacon, both are a part of the servant ministry of Jesus Christ. The bowl and pitcher are an historic symbol of servant ministry. Jesus invested time and energy in serving and helping others. He willingly sacrificed all power and position in heaven in order to take the lowest position of service. Paul writes about sacrifice in his letter to the Philippians:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:5-11)

Christ calls people to serve others in his name. Before Christ gave himself for humanity on the cross, Christ took the most humble role of a servant to teach his disciples the importance of serving others with humility and grace. On the night before he gave himself up for humanity, Christ gave humanity the ultimate example of servant ministry as he washed his disciples' feet. Clergy are called to serve humbly in this same capacity, according to the gifts bestowed upon them.

Called people understand that the key to life is an ordered inner life and understand their lives as being part of the larger purposes of God. Called people know exactly who they are. Jesus had come to the desert straight from his baptism, where God's voice said, "You are my Son, the beloved. With you I am well-pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Jesus knew who he was. Individuals know who they are, too, because Jesus himself has named them. Human beings are children of God. Individuals do not need to create an identity. Humanity already has one. They are the beloved children of God. Understanding humanity's identity as beloved children of God is the foundation of a calling. Parker J. Palmer talks about coming to understand humanity's identity:

If we are to live our lives fully and well, we must learn to embrace the opposites, to live in a creative tension between our limits and our potentials. We must honor our limitations in ways that do not distort our nature, and we must trust and use our gifts in ways that fulfill the potential God gave us. (55)

Called people define themselves according to their relationship with God, valuing God's love and grace-filled approval over any amount of recognition.

Called people possess an unwavering sense of purpose. Jesus understood that his mission was about bringing the kingdom of God to bear through his life, his teaching, his death, and his resurrection. During his forty days in the wilderness, Jesus was able to

challenge Satan with Scripture because he understood that Scripture's story was reaching its climax in his own person. He was able to say no to that which was not his purpose. Called people choose their time and priorities according to their purpose. Called people practice unswerving commitment. Called people are able to receive grace as well as offer grace toward others.

The Nature of Grace

Without an understanding how humanity is wounded, there is no understanding of grace. God's grace is necessity for the restoration of humanity.

Woundedness. As the created children of God humanity is at once capable of loving communion and of disorienting, disconnecting sin. Although individuals have the capacity for sublime connection with God, through a fallen nature, individuals choose to separate themselves from God by sin. The human condition is the source of disconnection (Gen. 3:9). The fact of sinning brings humanity into conflict with their true nature and into conflict with God's purposes for them. Sin, and its consequences, is a woundedness that only God can heal.

Palmer refers to the woundedness humanity experiences and its effects upon lives when individuals do not seek out Christ:

The divided life is a wounded life, and the soul keeps calling us to heal the wound. Ignore the call, and we find ourselves trying to numb our pain with an anesthetic of choice, be it substance abuse, overwork, consumerism, or mindless media noise. (*Hidden Wholeness* 20)

Unable to heal their wounds, individuals disassociate from life, from themselves, and from their God by ignoring their wounds, numbing their pain, and presenting a false self to the world. Individuals turn to what Seamands calls "behavior narcotics" (*Wounds* 117). These behavioral narcotics, in turn, destroy individuals and ministry.

Compounding this woundedness of the false self is a deep, spiritual loneliness that stems from the concept of professional stature. Clergy tend to believe what parishioners say about them. They, in turn, construct a false identity that mirrors the expectations of others around them. This lack of self-awareness and self-knowledge compounds the situation until clergy find themselves alienated from everyone by the identity they have created for themselves.

Henri Nouwen explores the loneliness experienced by the minister that results “from the changing meaning of the ministerial profession itself” (*Wounded Healer* 83). Individuals are set apart for the ministry of Christ. This calling can be a very isolating and stultifying experience. The experience of Christian community can alleviate the woundedness. According to Nouwen, hospitality, as experienced in community, can convert the individuals wounds and make them a source of healing. Individuals do not need to continue carrying the wounds of loneliness. When individuals share their pain, not as a self-complaint but in recognition of God’s saving grace, healing is released for all.

Our dependence on grace. Grace heals the void between God and humanity and returns humanity to active communion with God. Paul reflects upon this grace when he writes, “Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1-2). As Isaiah said centuries before the time of Christ, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, [and] the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:5-6). Christ carries the sins of the world for humanity’s redemption.

Within the cross is “the power we need to confront the darkness of our souls” (Seamands, *Wounds* 127). Only when individuals face their personal darkness can they begin to see the light of salvation in Jesus Christ. Individuals come before the cross and offer their false selves to Christ for healing. Before the cross, individuals begin to understand the power and the depth of God’s love for humanity. In Christ, individuals’ wounds become his and are healed.

Nouwen tells a legend found in the Talmud about the Messiah. The story reveals the Messiah living among the poor, covered with wounds. Each day the Messiah binds his wounds and unbinds them waiting until the day he is needed. Nouwen concludes from this legend that the minister “must be the wounded healer, the one who must look after his own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others” (Nouwen, *Wounded Healer* 82). The burden of woundedness never fully disappears. Woundedness is a reality individuals must accept and continue to offer to Christ.

I know that I can go to the Christ for renewal, restoration, and rejuvenation, and, in turn, Christ, living in me, brings healing to others. The Christ “makes his own broken body the way to health, to liberation and to life” (Nouwen, *Wounded Healer* 82) for those who follow him. Only by offering oneself completely to Christ can one experience the grace that is necessary to face the wounds of others on a daily basis.

Grace is only possible if the individual is open to disclosure and accountability. Despite the desire for grace and healing, the openness needed for healing to occur does not always happen. Even David had to be confronted about his personal sin by Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1-12). Only through an experience of what Susan Muto describes as dislocation

or an experience of the false self are individuals often ready to hear the truth and to grow in spiritual maturity:

God jars us out of our complacency and compels us to appraise our calling. Perhaps the cause is physical illness, a failure of some sort, a signal from within that we must change the course of our life. Whatever the occasion, dislocation is the result. In our desperation we can grow bitter or become more pliable to God's forming hand. (35)

Only confrontation can bring an individual to such a crisis point. God's hands, like a potter's, provide the opportunity to reform the soul. Surrendering one's life to God to make what God will of them is harder than anyone realizes. Individuals are often blind to their own sin, blind to their loneliness, and blind to their weaknesses. Clergy, certainly, think they can hide behind their professional demeanor. Eventually, all is revealed. Only the forgiveness offered by Christ can return individuals to their true identity before God.

God's action in Christ. In Christ, the true self is reconciled. In Christ, wounds are healed. The doctrine of forgiveness, then, is the basis for healing. If individuals have the courage to face their sins, forgive themselves, and forgive those who have hurt them, they can be forgiven. Like David, in 2 Samuel, when confronted with the sin, individuals find themselves ready to confess and receive forgiveness. Psalm 51 reminds individuals of the need to confess: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. 51:1-2). Only when David confessed, could he receive God's mercy and grace.

God responds with all the generosity of his love and grace. God, in Christ, redeems individuals and "puts a right spirit within" (Ps. 51:10) them. Humanity can find wholeness in Christ for their damaged souls. Through the act of Christ's loving sacrifice,

humanity can reorient themselves toward their true selves and embrace the persons God created them to be. Humanity can turn away from addictive behaviors and live as the whole people of God, grace-filled and free to respond in compassion, love, and grace toward others.

For Christians, the cross is the greatest paradox of the gospel: To live, individuals have to die. The desire for success and the fear of failure can pervert life, causing individuals to settle for the appearance of living. From false desire and fear of failure comes the false self—the false ideal of who individuals have become. Individuals have created who they want to be instead of who God created them to be. Merton understands this predicament:

He who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others. He will communicate to them nothing but the contagion of his own obsessions, his aggressiveness, his ego-centered ambitions, his delusions about ends and means, his doctrinaire prejudices and ideas. There is nothing more tragic in the modern world than the misuse of power and action to which men are driven by their own Faustian misunderstandings and misapprehensions. (164)

This misuse of power is the false self feeding its own ego. The false self greedily consumes every bit of love, mercy, and grace offered to it to the detriment of others. It has no concept of self-giving, only of self-promoting. To live fully, as the human beings God created, individuals must die to the false selves they have created and discover in the hope of resurrection the true selves created in God's image. The way of the cross is not an end: "The way of the cross reminds us that despair and disillusionment are not dead ends but signs of impending resurrection. Losing our illusions is painful because illusions are the stuff we live by" (119-28). Only through regular spiritual formation practice can

individuals begin to see the difference between their false selves and the true-selves God intends them to be.

Merton speaks of two illusions that must die on the cross if individuals are to become channels of God's Spirit in the world. The first illusion is the false self, a self that separates human beings from God and each other. This false self is full of pride, pretense, and control for its own benefit. The false self thinks it is God and wants to re-create the world in its own image. The false self must die if individuals are to live, but human beings struggle against losing it. Only in extreme pain are individuals willing to accept the death of the false self so that they can become something much closer to the image of God.

The second illusion that must die is a false concept of the world. Merton fights against the concept that the world is corrupt and the spiritual life is pure. He insists instead that human beings live into the contradictions of the world and discover the underlying paradox that governs their actions. Merton maintains that entering into the spiritual life is not an escape. The internal world is just as real as the external one and more compelling when making choices about life.

To acknowledge the influence of the internal world of the spirit, the ancient fathers and mothers of the faith, most notably St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila, recognized something they called the threefold way (McLaren 147). The threefold way consists of three dimensions of the spiritual life leading to the true self. It is based on the biblical mandate to imitate God with individual lives (Eph. 5:1). Each dimension presupposes a continuation of what has come before.

The first dimension is *katharsis* (Greek) or the *via purgativa* (Latin). This dimension is the first step in the death of the false self. During this time of *katharsis*, all that is evil within the individual (pride, lust, and greed) must be faced and put aside. This dimension is one of self-examination that leads to a liberated, transformed self. Jesuit spirituality uses an Ignatian examen daily to put aside those elements of the false self: “As we have the faith to live fully in the midst of our painful contradictions, we will experience resurrection and the transformation of our lives” (Merton 119-28). *Katharsis* is the process of emptying oneself so that you might be able to see and experience God more fully.

The next dimension is the *via illuminativa* or *fotosis*. This dimension is the process by which individuals allow the light of God into their lives. Through the *via purgativa*, one realizes how destructive the influences of the false self can be. The *via illuminativa* exposes the individual to the light of God through practices of study, prayer, worship, and contemplation. The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola are another means of illuminating God’s presence in one’s life. The United Methodist tradition refers to the *means of grace* as the vehicle by which God’s light becomes a part of the individual. Whatever the Christian traditions used, the *via illuminativa* allows the light of God into one’s life.

The last dimension is the *via unitiva* or, as it is known in the Greek Orthodox tradition, *theosis*. This dimension is complete union with God. It is the union of a human being’s nature with the nature of God. At this point the false self has died and the individual fully reflects the image of God. Complete union with God then is the aim of the Christian life. Humanity’s true identity can only be found in union with God.

The Necessity of Spiritual Renewal

Until the 1920s, the pastor was a *cura animarum*, the *cure of souls*, or *curate*. The curate was a person who cared for souls by helping people locate themselves in God's greater story. The first step in this work was the pastor's own attention to his or her soul care through an intentional focus on his or her personal relationship with the Holy. Unfortunately, this emphasis on soul care was lost by the mid-twentieth century when churches became a place for programs instead of a place of spiritual formation.

John 15:1-11 is an eloquent biblical statement of the necessity for spiritual renewal. The branch must abide in Christ. Flora Slosson Wuellner writes about the necessity of spiritual renewal:

No one had taught me that if the branch detaches itself from the vine and tries to be a vine itself, it will wither and die. No one had pointed out that if a shepherd is not fed as well as the sheep, the shepherd will begin to starve and may even end up devouring the sheep. (20)

In their hunger to survive the vagaries of ministry, clergy feed themselves in many covert as well as overt ways and sometimes in some very damaging ways. In the end, ministry can become a dying experience rather than a fulfilling, life-giving experience.

One study on burnout and clergy at Yale University School of Medicine suggests a strong correlation between emotional exhaustion and the need for employing one's spirituality as a coping mechanism (Doolittle, "Burnout and Coping" 32). In this study of 358 clergy in the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Benjamin R. Doolittle found that a variety of coping skills were utilized in response to stress. Coping mechanisms such as self-blame, disengagement, venting, distraction, and denial only increased stress while healthy strategies such as acceptance, active coping

strategies, the ability to plan and an ability to reframe situations positively were more helpful. Older clergy, with greater experience, especially tended to be less burned out than younger clergy because of their creation of healthy, coping strategies. Younger clergy appeared to be more vulnerable to the stressors of the ministerial vocation because of their lack of experience in developing those same strategies. Spirituality strongly correlated with each of the burnout domains. Doolittle concludes, “Nurturing healthy emotional coping strategies should be specially focused on younger clergy, who are at higher risk of burnout and in the process of refining their pastoral practices” (37). In 2005, the Presbyterian Board of Pensions found that four times as many clergy were leaving in the first five years of their ministry compared to thirty years before. I would add that the use of spiritual formation early in the ordination process of clergy would be helpful to their overall ability to cope with stress and burnout.

Maureen H. Miner has also discovered the association of burnout to younger clergy in a study conducted in Sydney, Australia, with sixty recent graduates of a theological college. Miner found that not only is an internal source of authority and coping, such as spirituality and competence, necessary to cope with the stress of Christian ministry, but that those with a weak orientation to spirituality were especially vulnerable. She concludes that her results should be treated with caution because of a low sample size, but I believe that her results only mirror what others have already found through other studies. Younger clergy do not have training, experience, or internal coping mechanisms developed to withstand the stress of ministry. Peer support groups, spiritual direction, and professional supervision would help create the atmosphere necessary to

prevent burnout in clergy. Miner also suggests that training in good spiritual practice would aid younger clergy in their ministerial practice (27).

The twenty-first century is a challenging time in which to do ministry. The *hyper-individualism* present in Western culture stands in opposition to the biblical concept of ministry. The idols of self-sufficiency and self-determination are worshipped frequently. Western churches bear the effects of a consumer-driven religiosity and personal lives bear the emptiness that a lack of self-denial and self-sacrifice reveal. Each person looks out for his or her own comfort, preferences, rights, and privileges. Individuals do not wish to set themselves aside for another. This selfishness leads to a loss of relationship, not only with others but also with God. When individuals seek only self-determination, they destroy their relationship with God and have no authenticity in their relationships with each other.

Therefore, clergy must rediscover the Christian faith as a way of life, not simply a system of belief. Clergy must rediscover the ancient practices as a means of sustaining ministry. Brian McLaren believes that a return to the ancient practices of the Christian faith is an answer to the clergy's loss of character:

In a wild world like ours, your character, left untended, will become a stale room, an obnoxious child, a vacant lot filled with thorns, weeds, broken bottles. Your deepest channels will silt in, and you will feel yourself shallowing. You'll become a presence neither you nor others will enjoy, and you and they will spend more and more time and energy trying to be anywhere else. (11-12)

With this context in mind, setting a *rule of life* is the means by which individuals might establish a different choice for themselves as a way of contending with the postmodern world. The choice is to be shaped into the image of Christ, to reestablish right relationships with God and with one another, to put aside self-sufficiency and self-

determination, to seek Christ and him only in daily living. By developing spiritual discipline, clergy might find themselves renewed and ready to give witness to the image of Christ at work in their lives so that others might know him and have life in all its abundance (John 10:10). Developing life-sustaining habits that include self-care and spiritual formation is the key to sustaining life-giving ministry. With the help of the Holy Spirit, clergy can become what Andrew D. Mayes calls “contemplatives in action” (25) using prayer as a means for theological reflection, uniting prayer and study and utilizing spirituality resources to underpin leadership skills for the sustenance of clergy in their ministry.

Spiritual Typing

Reginald Johnson uses the widely accepted Myers-Briggs Type Indicator instrument to analyze the various personality types with actual case studies from Scripture. He then offers biblically based guidelines to manage personal vulnerabilities and affirm strengths for individuals to grow spiritually.

The basis of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is the use of four basic questions that reveal the orientation of personality. Johnson refers to this orientation as the “soulprint” (11). The *soulprint* is a gift from God. God endowed everyone with certain traits and abilities. This giftedness is a creation gift:

Our creation gifts can be intensified and expanded as we offer them up to the Lord. By His grace, hidden talents can be released and significant healing experience to enable us to grow so that the fruits of God’s Spirit can be more fully expressed through our personalities. (35)

Becoming aware of one’s creation gifts and how an individual might identify areas of vulnerability and weakness as well as discovering resources conducive to nurturing a relationship with Christ is essential in spiritual formation: “It helps us realize how aspects

of personality can become channels for conveying the grace of God” (19). Individuals’ creation gifts, once identified and nurtured, can fulfill God’s purposes in the world.

Johnson uses the Myers-Briggs designations of personality and creates eight soul types: energizers, stabilizers, crusaders, renewers, organizers, analyzers, encouragers, and enhancers. Each soul type is defined with all its strengths and weaknesses toward the end that individuals could understand and honor who they are as God created them to be and celebrate their uniqueness.

The work of Corinne Ware is instrumental in helping people discover the ways in which one might nurture their spiritual nature according to their specific needs. She begins with the assertion that at the heart of spirituality is the patterning of one’s life after what one knows of the life of Jesus. The path to wholeness has always been the *imitation Christi* or imitation of Christ. In Christ, one sees not only the integration of the unique spiritual traditions of Judaism but also the individuation of his unique spiritual qualities within that tradition. Both these qualities highlight Jesus’ ability to live with spiritual integrity. Integration and individuation are then quite important to spiritual wholeness.

Abraham Maslow, who has done important work on integration and religious experience, believes that most people think in terms of black-white, either-or, and other exclusive categories. The person who is spiritually integrated is able to participate in forms and rituals that are integrated with the experience of the past and the present. The spiritually mature individual is able to integrate form and experience in a way creates a healthy spiritual life.

Urban T. Holmes makes clear through his spiritual typology that individuation, or the developmental progress toward knowing one’s own tendencies and gifts, is the way in

which people find their own unique spiritual expression. Ware sought to use Holmes' theory of spiritual type and make it more accessible to people in spiritual direction. Her work was ground-breaking in that she had few available assessment tools that deal with spiritual type. Her work created an accessible tool.

For instance, type 3s, are mystics. This spiritual type is “by nature contemplative, introspective, intuitive, and focused on an inner world as real to them as the exterior one” (Ware 41). Knowing their spiritual type allows individuals to nurture their own specific needs. The spiritual life of mystics is about the journey. They are most comfortable spiritually when engaged in centering prayer. Solitude is a priority. Type 2s, however are oriented toward their emotions for their spiritual nurture and are very outgoing or extraverted. The spiritual life of the type 2 is oriented toward praise worship, fellowship groups, prayer groups and Bible study groups. Extroverts will be fed by corporate experiences of spirituality much more than private ones. Knowing one's spiritual type helps the clergyperson to understanding how they might best serve in ministry. Personality, leadership style and spiritual nature all combine to make clergy unique: “Parish ministry takes on a new dimension when we come to understand more fully that our approaches to prayer, our ways of perceiving God, our preferences for certain spiritual paths are different from others” (Oswald and Kroeger 120). When clergypersons discover their own unique *soulprint* and begins living into it, they are set free from the expectations of others and become the spiritual leaders God called them to be.

W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke also echo the concept that individuals are made in the image of God and are gifted in ways that will lead them to come into God's likeness as they journey toward

wholeness/holiness. They also reinforce the idea that the journey toward wholeness/holiness is unique to each one, as unique as the personality type with which they have been gifted. Grant, Thompson, and Clarke use a Jungian approach to describe the spiritual journey toward wholeness/holiness. They also acknowledge the integration of the shadow side into the spiritual journey so that wholeness might be achieved.

M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. also asserts the importance of considering the shadow side of the individual when considering spiritual type. When people nurture only one way of experiencing the holy, they find themselves drawn to activities that can be destructive to their relationship with God if they do not satisfy those shadow-side needs through spiritual disciplines that fulfill those needs before the needs become destructive. Mulholland's work in his book *Invitation to a Journey* with the Myers-Briggs designations of extrovert/introvert, intuitive/thinking, sensing/feeling, and judging/perceiving is most helpful in understanding how this shadow side exhibits its desires: "Left to ourselves in the development of our spiritual practices, we will generally gravitate to those spiritual activities that nurture our preferred pattern of being and doing" (55). People need to develop not only their overt preferences but their covert ones as well if they are to be truly mature in their spiritual formation.

Mulholland also states, "In order to develop holistically in our spirituality, we also need to nurture our shadow side" (*Invitation* 62). To be spiritually nurtured, one needs to nurture the whole of their being. Choosing to incorporate practices that will nurture one's specific nature will lead to greater wholeness for the individual. For instance, action in addition to reflection, service in addition to ecstasy, knowledge in addition to

compassion, and spontaneity or celebration in addition to competence will only add balance to the spiritual formation of the individual. By incorporating these shadow needs into spiritual formation and practice, the individual gains greater wholeness in their desire to be formed in the image of Christ.

Mulholland's book *The Deeper Journey: The Spirituality of Discovering Your True Self* goes more deeply into the shadow-side conversation by illuminating the many faces of the false self and its distinction from the Christ self. He writes, "Our false self is a self that is playing god in our life" (43). Only through a relationship nurtured in Christ, in loving union with God, can the true self be found. Only through Christlike living will the true self be fulfilled.

Practices of Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual renewal practices help individuals attend to the work of grace in their lives. These practices are commonly known as the spiritual disciplines and include, but are not limited to, scriptural study and meditation, prayer, worship, fasting, journaling, and solitude. Marjorie J. Thompson states, "Spiritual disciplines are practices that help us consciously to develop the spiritual dimension of our lives" (10). Spiritual disciplines, according to Mulholland, are also the means by which a Christian journeys toward wholeness in the image of Christ.

Dallas Willard divides spiritual disciplines into two general categories: disciplines of abstinence and disciplines of engagement. In the disciplines of abstinence, individuals abstain to a degree and, for a period of time, from normal desires. Those disciplines are thought to be solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, and sacrifice. The disciplines of engagement counterbalance those of abstinence. They are study, worship,

celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, and submission. A fruitful practice of spiritual renewal would observe disciplines in both categories so that one's spiritual growth might be balanced. Willard also asserts, "Practicing a range of activities that have proven track records across the centuries will keep us from erring" (158). Both abstinence and engagement are necessary to developing the fullness of individual identity.

The classic Christian journey consists of four stages: awakening, purgation, illumination, and union. These stages move people from their alienation from God toward a transforming relationship with God and wholeness in Christ. Mulholland believes that the classical disciplines of prayer, spiritual reading, worship, fasting, retreat, and the daily office are but a foundation for the Christian journey. The individual must also utilize personal disciplines of silence, solitude, and prayer to move from awakening through the various stages to the ultimate union with Christ. McLaren also writes about the ancient or classic way of spiritual formation. Both McLaren and Mulholland tie the classic Christian journey of spiritual formation to what is called *the threefold way* (McLaren 143) of purgation, illumination, and union, mentioned previously.

However one approaches the Christian spiritual journey, the use of spiritual disciplines are necessary to achieve any momentum or growth toward wholeness or complete union with God. Spiritual disciplines may vary in content and usage but are necessary to the balanced and resilient life of the clergyperson. Care needs to be taken in choosing the disciplines one uses. Choosing disciplines depends upon one's spiritual type and its needs.

Scriptural Study

Lectio divina has long been a practice of entering into the living Word of God. The acts of *lectio*, *meditatio*, and *contemplatio* give time for a long, ruminative reading of the Scripture that allows God to speak through the text and into the heart. Enzo Bianchi writes, “*Lectio Divina* is the most authentic and appropriate way to read the Scriptures and to receive God’s grace through them” (39). The early Church fathers understood this slow method of revelation: “Saint Ephrem the Syrian gives this advice: ‘Before you read, pray and implore God to reveal himself to you’” (41). *Lectio divina* is one practice that can be fruitful for the interpretation of the Scriptures.

Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norissey propose that the use of *lectio divina* is a type of prayer suitable to all four basic personality temperaments and all sixteen personality types within the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. Using *lectio divina* then is conducive to all spiritual types and is a suitable way to meditate on the Scriptures.

Sabbath Rest

Sabbath time, as a time apart, is essential for rest and renewal. The Sabbath is the original feast day, a day of joy and freedom from work. Mandated by God, the Sabbath became a holy day of rest:

Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it. (Exod. 20: 8-11)

The Sabbath, as a holy day, allows one to reconnect with God, family, friends, and nature through simple Sabbath-keeping practices such as rest, play,

companionship, sensuality and delight, feasting, and ritual. Each practice of keeping Sabbath restores the individual in a unique way. Each practice has its own purpose in restoring an individual's sense of holiness about life and living. Sabbath keeping, in turn, transforms how an individual lives and works in the world:

We think we know better than God how to make ourselves happy, so we ignore all these instructions he gave for truly enjoying life: to be devoted to the One who creates life; [and] to live the rhythm of six days of work and one day of Sabbath ceasing, resting, embracing and feasting. (Dawn 89-90)

Sabbath keeping gives the individual the opportunity just to *be* and not *do*. Sabbath keeping allows the space in people's lives to recreate the joy of living by setting aside time separate from all other time. Sabbath keeping invites individuals to turn from the daily grind of meetings and schedules, to enter into the goodness of all that God has created and given freely to them. Kendra Haloviak calls Sabbath "a sanctuary in time" (41). Sabbath comes at a distinct time and then it departs. Sabbath is time set apart. Sabbath distinguishes the ending and the beginning of a week. Sabbath allows one the opportunity to stop, reflect, and recreate oneself in God's image before continuing with the rhythm of work.

Intention is a significant factor in Sabbath keeping. If one is to cease all work, then one must prepare for the time set aside from work so that as much joy as possible can be found in the absence of work. Once Sabbath begins, one must surrender oneself completely this holy time. In today's world of texting, messaging, Facebook, and e-mail individuals find themselves innocently

responding to someone's immediate need. Ensuring that someone will cover any emergencies while clergypersons take their Sabbath is one way of being intentional about taking this holy time of rest. Only a regular, intentional Sabbath observance renews the clergy, their relationships, their creativity, and their physical stamina.

Prayer

Jesus invested time daily with God in prayer, providing an important spiritual model for humanity. The Scriptures describe how Jesus often went apart from the disciples to pray. Luke 6:12 says, "In these days he went out to the mountain to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God." Prayer was essential to Jesus' ministry. Jesus observed the traditional times of prayer in the synagogue. Jesus' life was soaked in prayer. In imitating Christ, prayer, then, is essential to the spiritual journey.

Prayer means living each moment with the heart open to God. Like Paul, individuals are called to pray for others:

Have no anxiety about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:6-7)

Prayer can also be renewing and revitalizing to the ministry of the clergy.

Mayes outlines in his recommendations to the Church of England the benefits of utilizing prayer in its formation of clergy in the ordination process. He makes a strong case for prayer as a means of continuing a lifelong process of inner change. He sees the role of spiritual formation as an intentional, transformational process with far-reaching implications for the practice of theology: "It is truly dynamic, not only energizing ministry but opening up ancient yet ever new possibilities in the quest of 'doing

theology” (197). Mayes promotes prayer and spiritual formation as key elements in the formation of clergy seeking ordination.

Clergy need to find a prayer form that would enhance and sustain their spiritual formation throughout their lives. Thompson speaks of prayer as communication and communion with God. It is the means by which God relates to human beings and human beings relate to God. Many clergy do not find time for prayer in their daily lives. Studies have shown that prayer is one of the most neglected of the spiritual practices by clergy.

The centerpiece of St. Benedict’s Rule is a rhythm of remembrance called the *Holy Hours*. The *Holy Hours* are the framework of a life grounded in prayer. The *Holy Hours* are also known as fixed hour prayer. The hours are a means to find the presence of God within the daily rhythm of life. Praying the hours is a way to redeem daily life rather than escape it. Prayer of the hours brings the companionship of God into daily living and is the work of the *via illuminativa*.

Michael and Norrissey outline the variety of classic prayer forms and their correlation to personality type in a way that is most helpful. Using Benedictine, Ignatian, Augustinian, Franciscan, and Thomistic spirituality, they show how these different spiritual traditions of prayer assist in spiritual formation of the individual. The section on the shadow side of the personality and the inferior function in prayer is particularly helpful. Individuals willing to seek out forms of spirituality according to their spiritual type and those opposite to their spiritual type will have the greatest amount of growth in their prayer life.

At the heart of Benedictine spirituality is the *lectio divina* method of prayer.

Lectio divina is the most conducive to all of the spiritual types, and its four steps reflect the need for different methods of prayer for different spiritual types.

The Ignatian method of prayer is to place oneself in the biblical scene and become a part of it by way of imagination. Ignatius suggests that individuals try to imagine what they might see or hear and what the people in the scene are doing. The challenge is to draw practical fruit from a reflection on contemporary life. The method of prayer recommended by Ignatius contains ten points as opposed to the four in *Lectio divina*.

The Augustinian method of prayer is the prayer of transposition or a dialogue between God and oneself. Again, like the Ignatian method, the use of the creative imagination is essential as well as openness to the Holy Spirit. This method must also make use of discernment as one reviews one's insights or inspiration. Utilizing a journal is helpful in discovering deeper meanings for life and experiencing new spiritual growth.

The Franciscan spirituality makes full use of the five senses and is very flexible and free-flowing. Franciscan prayer is referred to as "spirit-filled prayer" (Michael and Norrissey 71). Fruitful meditations are found in creation or in the life of Jesus. Much of Franciscan prayer is called virtual prayer as their work is their prayer. The Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner," is often used to keep an individual in the constant presence of God.

Thomistic spirituality is logical and rational in its meditation. This spirituality uses the intellect to lead from one proposition to another until a logical conclusion is found. Thomistic prayer seeks new insights from God. Its method refers to "discursive

meditation” (Michael and Norissy 82). This prayer form exercises the mind, will, and intuition by walking all around a problem or topic until a logical conclusion is reached.

In 2007, Christopher Allan Lewis, Douglas W. Turnton, and Leslie J. Francis of the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education employed a modified form of the Maslach Burnout Inventory using a sample of 1,278 Church of England clergy with more than five years of experience in parish ministry. Respondents completed a ten-item scale designed to assess their attitudes toward prayer. The results showed that a positive attitude toward prayer was associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion, lower levels of depersonalization, and higher levels of personal accomplishment (5). The role of prayer in maintaining a healthy psychological dynamic is key.

Whatever method of prayer is used, particular attention must be paid not only to dominant needs but also to secondary spiritual needs. If clergy wish to attain wholeness through the spiritual disciplines, they must work with the shadow side of their personalities as well as their dominant sides. By becoming more aware of their secondary needs or shadow sides, clergy can transform themselves and reduce the capacity to erupt into awkward or self-defeating behaviors; therefore, a variety of prayer forms are recommended when clergy care for the whole person.

Solitude

Jesus and his followers made extensive use of solitude: “Solitude is the most radical of the disciplines for life in the spirit” (Willard 101). When the distractions of the world are taken away, alienation from God disappears. Life in the Spirit is nurtured by time spent alone with God. The practice of solitude opens up the possibility of a radical relationship with God.

Solitude is the purposeful abstention from interaction with other human beings. Solitude frees people from ingrained behaviors that hinder growth in the image of God. Solitude is choosing to be alone and contemplate life in the light of eternity. Solitude gives the psychic distance individuals sometimes need to practice attentiveness toward God.

Fasting

Fasting is a means of grace that connects one to God. Both the Old and New Testaments teach fasting. This discipline can be understood as fasting from the things of earth to allow for feasting on the things of the Spirit. It is seen as a way of concentrating one's focus on God rather than the things of the world: "Fasting brings us face to face with how we put the material world ahead of its spiritual Source" (Thompson 77). One way of thinking of fasting is to consider it as a means of creating enough space in one's life to allow God to enter. Sometimes people must clear a space in their lives, empty themselves before God can enter. The idea of fasting is alien to the Western culture: "Food is necessary to life, but we have made it more necessary than God" (77). Reintroducing fasting as a spiritual discipline can only enhance one's relationship with God.

Worship

Worship was central to the spiritual development of the Hebrew people: "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" (Ps. 122:1). If people do not center their lives in the worship of God, they will begin to worship false gods. Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, is worthy of praise. When people gather in worship, the worship is not for the people. Worship is for God. People worship God to

show their thanks and praise to him, to give glory to the Lord most High, and to remember that God is the one true God from true God and above all living things. Many analogies are used to describe worship but: “Soren Kierkegaard developed an analogy called ‘the theatre of worship’” (Thompson 57). This construct would make the audience God. Worship, then, is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Worship is an offering of self. In worship, people give themselves wholly to God, offering their will, strength, and gifts in gratitude for who God is and what God has done for humanity.

Worship is also a place where God renews the individual:

God fills us with the joy of knowing we are loved, restores our courage through forgiveness, provides the Word for hungry hearts, and fills us with the bread and wine of new life in Christ, giving new purpose to our lives. (57)

Renewal is expected as worship is rooted in God and God’s purposes for humanity.

When people worship God, they find their fulfillment in worship. Through worship people are ushered into the presence of the living God, and they find themselves responding with their whole being in celebration.

According to Willard, celebration is one of the most important “disciplines of engagement” (176). Celebration is the lens through which I choose to see my family and friends and my relationships with them:

It is the completion of worship, for it dwells on the greatness of God as shown in his goodness to us. We engage in celebration when we enjoy ourselves, our life, our world, in conjunction with our faith and confidence in God’s greatness, beauty, and goodness. We concentrate on our life and world as God’s work and as God’s gift to us. (179)

Celebration is about finding joy every day in nature and living. Keeping in touch with the created world in all its glory, and beauty is essential to grounding us in God’s world.

Celebrating the little and big moments of life with friends and family is a way of

nurturing the sense that all of life is to be celebrated. Planning a play day each week and looking for ways to enjoy the company of is one way of celebrating the glory of God's love. Celebrating the joy of God's work in the life of others is God's good gift to enjoy and ultimately sustain life.

Practicing a Rule of Life

Daily, people are formed by the choices they make in this world. Every decision individuals make, every emotion they express, and every action they take shapes their being either toward Christ or toward the world. Christian spiritual formation is a process of being conformed to the image of Christ. It is a slow shaping of one's being into the wholeness of the Christ. As Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians, "We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph. 4:14-15). Being conformed to the image of Christ is a process of discipline, self-denial and self-sacrifice. The process is a journey of faith evidenced in patience, growth, maturity, courage, and discipleship.

When being formed or shaped into the image of Christ, first and foremost, one must decide to "put away your former way of life, your old self ... and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds" (Eph. 4:22-23). This decision will lead one to develop a *rule of life* much as the early Church fathers and mothers developed.

The rule of St. Benedict, established in the sixth century, is a chosen daily pattern of life: "The root meaning of the Latin and Greek words translated as 'rule' is trellis. St. Benedict was not promulgating rules for living, he was establishing a framework on which life can grow" (Black 1). The *rule* does not refer to some regulation, command, or prohibition. It is a support for one's life to find its own direction.

The *rule* is different for each individual. The rule helps one to stay centered and

focused on the Creator and to bring clarity and perspective to their daily lives. Pachomius (c. 290-346) was the first to write a *rule of life* for this purpose. His personal rule included work, study of Scripture, and prayer. Basil, Augustine, and Cassian all wrote rules. The most enduring of those *rules* is *the rule of St. Benedict*, established somewhere between 530 and 550 CE. Established in an obscure monastery south of Rome, *the rule of St. Benedict* is one of the most influential documents of Western civilization and has shaped and nurtured thousands over the last 1,500 years. It developed the *via media* or a balanced life pattern that could, if practiced, free an individual to love God more fully. More importantly, if people attempt to live their lives without a balanced pattern, they will find themselves adrift. The *rule* can sustain clergy spiritually and guide them in living each day recollected in God's presence.

The Necessity of Self-Care

The ability to sustain effective ministry, however, concerns more than spiritual life. It also concerns bodily health. The need to care for the body as well as the spirit is most evident in recent studies done by a variety of denominations. Statistics show that, as a whole, clergy are healthier than the general population but not by much. A study of one denomination's clergy (all male) shows that 23 percent of the clergy were obese and 34 percent were overweight, but clergy were still less prone to weight problems than the overall population where 33 percent of men are obese and 67 percent are overweight (Lewis Center).

A 2002 Pulpit and Pew Survey of United Methodist clergy in North Carolina found that 76 percent of clergy surveyed were overweight compared to 61 percent of the general population. The surveyed population also revealed that they were more stressed

than the general population and had a higher death rate of heart attacks. Statistics show clergy to be healthier over all, but more at risk for major health problems associated with stress (Duke Endowment). The clergy health initiative at Duke University stated in a report from 2008, “Health interventions that address obesity and chronic disease among clergy are urgently needed” (Duke Global Health Institute). However, clergy are a specific population within the general population, and the dynamics of their daily life make consistent self-care problematic.

The *New York Times* has also taken note of the condition of clergy health and well-being. Paul Vitello states, “Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen.” Clearly, clergy must pay attention to their self-care.

The Clergy Health Initiative, a seven-year study begun at Duke University, published the first results of its continuing survey of 1,726 Methodist ministers in North Carolina. Clergy in this state reported significantly higher rates of arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, and asthma than the general population. Obesity was also 10 percent more prevalent in this clergy group than in the general population. The results were much the same in a survey done by the Evangelical Church in America, which found that 69 percent of its ministers reported being overweight, 64 percent having high blood pressure, and 13 percent taking antidepressants (Vitello).

While no one is panicking over the state of clergy health, concern for the state of clergy health is mounting. Numerous Christian denominations are creating agencies and task forces to counter the poor health of their clergy. Much research is being done in this

area. Overall, the literature points to the need to define clergy health broadly and holistically as well-being. Well-being includes physical and emotional health as well as self-care practices, supportive relationships, appropriate coping skills, and a passion for ministry grounded in a robust spiritual life.

The emotional health of clergy has been studied far more than their physical health. Stress is a common concern of clergy health literature, which reveals that clergy suffer high levels of work-related stress. The Lilly Endowment, aware of this factor, has awarded grants of up to \$45,000 each to hundreds of Christian congregations through a project called the National Clergy Renewal Program, for the purpose of giving pastors extended sabbaticals, but clergy persist in believing that they must be available to take care of other people's needs rather than their own (National Clergy Renewal). The National Clergy Renewal Program only underlines the importance of emphasizing the need for self-care.

The Practices of Self-Care

Denominational leadership often gives voice to the importance of self-care for ordinands during their post-educational training. United Methodist Boards of Ordained Ministry often ask candidates for ordination how they are caring for themselves but do not give instruction on what that care might look like. In addition, few seminary educational programs specifically address this issue in their curricula. Studies done in other fields of professional inquiry show that personal and professional growth through self-care practices can help prevent burnout (Nelson and Nelson 20-24).

The inclusion of practices such as ongoing professional mentoring, organizational support, a strong personal community, and a spiritual connection (Chandler 275) in the

ongoing training of professionals in the care-giving arena is necessary in order to prevent burnout and vicarious trauma. These practices anchor the professional within their professional community, which decreases isolation, anxiety, and despair that can arise when professionals feel solely responsible for the resolution of problems within their realm of responsibility.

Holistic self-care is key. Individuals who attend to physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic aspects of self-care will better maintain their professional and personal integrity. Some think of self-care in terms of practicing what they preach. The practice of self-care in both the personal and professional realm and the ability to separate these two realms of life are themselves forms of self-care. Self-care provides balance and, at times, closure. Moreover, it is renewing and allows individuals to be more present when engaging in both personal and professional relationships.

Healthy Habits

As the director of Ministerial Health and Wellness for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Dr. Gwen Wagstrom Halaas is well aware of the deplorable health of clergy. She believes that clergy have a spiritual as well as physical need to care for themselves. Her wellness wheel asserts that spiritual wellness surrounds all other elements of wellness:

God wonderfully creates us as physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual beings. To experience the fullest potential of what God has intended for us as individuals and as members of a faith community, we must nurture ourselves by attending daily to each of these aspects. Rest nourishment, physical challenge, joy, empathy, love, friendship, accomplishment, peace and devotion are as essential to our health as air and water. (8)

She encourages several practical suggestions to maintain good physical health such as keeping the body physically active, feeding the body healthy food, giving the body adequate rest, and having a healthy sex life. Halaas defines health as “a healthy body, high-quality personal relationships, a sense of purpose in life, self-regarded mastery of life’s tasks and resilience to stress, trauma and change” (9). Using this definition of health, I believe few clergy can say they are healthy.

The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church also recognizes several dimensions of health that are essential in assuring clergy are fit to serve and engage their communities in ministry. The General Board lists five dimensions of health: physical vitality, psychological well-being, spirituality, social connection, and financial security. To encourage those healthy characteristics, they have established the Center for Health to conduct research, create awareness, collect data, and assess the state of denominational health. The Center for Health in the United Methodist Church sponsors several activities to encourage good health. These activities are a healthy dimensions assessment, health information collection, analysis and sharing, a task force to study the impact of United Methodist Church (UMC) employment systems and culture on health, a walking program, and, renew *U* workshops to provide an opportunity for those in ministry to evaluate personal dimensions of health and well-being. An analysis of conversations with eighty-eight United Methodist pastors and district superintendents, lead to the creation of a theoretical model for holistic health in United Methodist Clergy. Rae Jean Preschold-Bell, Sara LeGrand, John James, Amanda Wallace, Christopher Adams and David

Toole were the first to hypothesize how to tailor health interventions to clergy (714). Their findings make clear that programs to improve clergy health will succeed only if they address the multiple conditions that contribute to health, especially conditions created by congregations and denominational polities.

The Clergy Health Initiative of Duke Divinity School is the first to examine how to tailor health interventions to clergy. Their findings make clear that programs to improve clergy health will succeed only if they address the multiple conditions that contribute to health, especially conditions created by congregations and denominational polities (“Improving Clergy Health”). Spirited Life is a multiyear health and wellness program and behavioral health study offered by the Duke Clergy Health Initiative to the North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist church. Funded by the Duke Endowment and cast within a framework of Wesleyan theology and spirituality, Spirited Life provides clergy with the tools they need to manage stress, learn to care for their bodies in a healthy, mindful way, and find spiritual renewal (“Spirited Life”).

Whether encouraged by denominational leadership or a local physician, clergy who care for their personal health are more inclined to respond to the stress of their ministry in healthier ways than those who ignore the needs of their bodies.

Occupational Studies

Job satisfaction has been a focus since early occupational studies in the 1930s when the notion that *a happy worker is a productive worker* emerged. Studies continue to this day because many realize that the extent to which workers are satisfied depends on how much they are involved in their work and show organizational commitment. When

someone is dissatisfied, disconnectedness is likely. Work dissatisfaction may generate feelings of depression, health-related problems, and thoughts of quitting. Job satisfaction increases commitment, reduces the likelihood of quitting, and has a direct relationship to productivity (Mueller and McDuff, "Clergy-Congregation Mismatches 270).

Significant within this arena of studies is the idea of clergy job satisfaction and the correlation with their church appointment. Clergy are often stereotyped by the public as being satisfied with their jobs because they have self-selected into ministry following God's call. Data obtained from 293 United Methodist clergy in a study done by Edward Kemery in 2006 suggests that role conflict and role ambiguity each have a negative relationship with appointment satisfaction. However, when considered together, they display a more complex relationship with appointment satisfaction. Contrary to conventional wisdom, results indicate that although these stressors operate together to influence appointment satisfaction, their combined effect is not simply cumulative. That is, when role conflict is low, clergy report the most satisfaction when role ambiguity is high. However, when role conflict and role ambiguity are both high, appointment satisfaction is low (562).

The work of clergy is perceived through their role within the local church. Clergy often find themselves in situations of role ambiguity and role conflict. D. Katz and R. L. Kahn define role conflict as "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult" (204). Role ambiguity is the "uncertainty about what the occupant of a particular office is supposed to do" (206). Every member of a local congregation defines

clergy role differently. Sometimes parishioners cannot even define what a clergy's role is within the faith community.

Charles W. Mueller and Elaine M. McDuff in their article “‘Good’ Jobs and ‘Bad’ Jobs: Differences in the Clergy Employment Relationship” found that pay has a significant negative effect on job satisfaction while informal benefits such as food, the use of parishioner's vacation homes, and reduced insurance rates positively influenced job satisfaction. However, overall, clergy are not significantly different from the general population when understanding job satisfaction: “Job security, autonomy, participation in decision making, justice in the distribution of rewards, and professional growth opportunities are all very important in producing clergy job satisfaction” (270). Clergy have the same concerns and desires as any other worker when considering job satisfaction.

Occupational Stress

Clergy are at the forefront of helping people in troubled times. They must be present when people are dying or critically ill, at times of natural disaster, and in the midst of cultural crises such as terrorist attacks or school shootings. Clergy work long hours and are away from their families due to the everyday demands of ministry. Along with social workers, firefighters, police officers, and healthcare workers, clergy also have high occupational stress.

High occupational stress and a lack of quality of life place clergy at risk for burnout, demoralization, and discouragement. In a study conducted of 2,500 clergy in 2004 to study occupational stress and the quality of life for clergy and their spouses better, researchers found many variables in understanding the particular stressors on

clergy and their families. Some of the variables sighted in the study were the pile up of demands, coping and spiritual resources, perception of stress, and the level of adaptation or the quality of life for the individual. Researchers Carol Anderson Darling, Wayne E. Hill, and Lenore M. McWey found that often the greater stress for clergy and their spouses was within the family.

Critical incident stress can be caused by any action that overwhelms an individual's normal ability to cope. The Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) process has been developed to help first responders understand that the responses they experience following a critical incident are normal. The concept behind CISD is the encouragement of the expression of thoughts, emotions, fears, and concerns in a supportive group environment following the traumatic event (Conroy 20-23). Only recently has this kind of response team been trained in the Rocky Mountain Conference as a way of coping with stresses and concerns following critical incidents in local churches. A response team will help clergy better manage their stress following critical incidents.

One key element in reducing stress upon the clergy and family was found to be spiritual well-being: "Spiritual well-being not only had a positive relationship with quality of life, but also helped to mediate compassion fatigue along with psychological and physiological stress" (Darling, Hill, and McWey 273). A second element in the reduction of stress and the increase of quality of life was assisting clergy and their spouses in understanding the type and magnitude of stress in their lives and how they might cope with them. The article also suggested clergy and their spouses need ongoing support networks for themselves and for their families. Third, the clergy and their

families need ongoing educational programs to address particular issues of boundary issues, family process issues, financial management issues, and health and family wellness issues. Many more recommendations were suggested in the study, including the need for additional study as to why clergy are leaving in mid-career.

A psychological study on the personal meanings of job stress found that in thirty-eight clinical evaluations of individuals experiencing job stress four general problems presented themselves: a high investment in work alone, the poor quality of relationships with coworkers, promotion problems, and role conflicts (Firth 142). An evaluation by therapists through personal interviews discovered that although the clients presented their initial problems as work associated, more often the presented problem led back to unresolved personal relationship problems. Themes for further therapy encompassed ongoing attempts to please a parent, issues with trust, a feeling of responsibility for others' happiness, and the exploration of the meaning of conflict (142). Almost all the clients saw improvement in their stress through therapy sessions. This study concluded that the use of psychodynamic therapy in the evaluation of job stress is a valuable tool in gaining perspective when considering occupational stress (147). This study only reinforces the conclusion of Darling, Hill, and McWey that ongoing support systems and educational opportunities would enhance understanding of boundaries and family process.

Role Ambiguity

Clergy can expect to find themselves in situations of role conflict. As others note, church conflict is inevitable. Conflict most often arises out of differences in core beliefs and values. Because of these differences, conflicts become emotionally laden. When

conflicts arise and no agreement of procedure exists for addressing them, clergy job satisfaction suffers (Kemery 563).

One way to increase clergy satisfaction seems to be to decrease role conflict while at the same time still affording clergy a degree of role ambiguity. Increasing satisfaction by developing procedures that would facilitate intra- and intergroup interactions is necessary. For example, church leaders trained to conduct meetings by developing agendas, encouraging member participation, maintaining accurate minutes, and facilitating effective group decision making are key. Another strategy for minimizing role conflict is to develop ways for a congregation to address conflicts. Minimizing conflict might involve training in conflict management skills for clergy and laity. These skills involve the identification of conflict and various healthy ways to address it.

R. Hoge, Joseph Shields, and Stephen Soroka in 1993 define role ambiguity as a lack of daily structure, uncertainty about authority, unclear planned goals and objectives, and uncertainty about others' expectations. Because a large amount of clergy time is spent addressing issues that are unpredictable, role ambiguity facilitates clergy performance and satisfaction. Role ambiguity also provides an opportunity for clergy to challenge their congregations to new levels of spirituality and ministry, thereby increasing job performance and reducing possible opportunity for clergy burnout. Unsurprisingly, clergy job satisfaction is greater in ministry appointments where the context is more rather than less ambiguous.

Clergy Burnout

Every job has potential stress, but each varies in terms of the degree of stress experienced from factors such as the requirements of the job, expectations and demands,

relationships with others, career development, and organizational structure. Job stress can have a negative effect on personal productivity and society. Chronic stress can be emotionally draining and lead to burnout. The concept of burnout grew out of research in the 1970s by Maslach and colleagues, who noted a loss of purpose and extreme fatigue among those with intense caring professions. This work has continued, and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is widely used to diagnose burnout. While burnout is associated with depression, an important difference is that burnout is job related.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson) is a twenty-two-item inventory with three subscales in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The MBI places the stronger emphasis on emotional exhaustion as a part of the syndrome.

The poor psychological health, stress, and burnout of clergy pose an increasingly serious problem for denominational leaders. The particular circumstances related to spiritual leadership in the postmodern community evidence a unique dynamic. The Christian church has the unenviable task of looking back to its roots while living in the present with the constant changes that face the postmodern world. Combine with the sense of urgency attached to the church's mission, and clergy become victims of their own human frailty (Lewis, Turton, and Francis 5).

Fred Lehr, an Evangelical Lutheran pastor, through personal illustrations, traces the problem of clergy burnout to clergy codependence. He bases his theory in his experience of counseling clergy through the Church Renewal Center in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in which, over an eight-year period, he watched a parade of clergy come through the doors of the Renewal Center exhibiting the behaviors and symptoms of

codependency. Lehr goes on to outline the similarities between codependency and the work of ministry. He concludes his book with a prescription for burnout. Lehr challenges clergy to “untrash our temples” (125) by keeping intellectually stimulated, seeking better emotional and physical care and recognizing the need for a healthy spiritual life.

After twelve years of research with primarily United Methodist clergy, Anne Dilenschneider believes the causes of clergy burnout and poor mental and physical health are far deeper than poor boundaries, the failure to engage in self-care, or the insatiable desires of congregations. Dilenschneider traces the roots of clergy burnout to an emphasis on effectiveness. This current emphasis on clergy effectiveness is due to a change in the role of pastors that occurred in the 1920s, concurrent with the development of the assembly line and the adoption of the production efficiency methodology in corporate America. At that time, as Richard Niebuhr observes, clergy became “pastoral directors” (50) who focused on the administrative tasks of managing and maintaining churches for the benefit of the denomination. Competency, acquired skills, and professional status became the basis for evaluation. Considering the variety of gifts and graces given to individuals, effectiveness in every area of ministry is impossible. Striving to be everything to everyone is a considerable source of burnout.

Much knowledge has been accumulated about burnout and how it correlates with personality syndromes, job satisfaction, and depression, but very few have studied coping strategies, attitudes and spirituality and their effect on burnout. In a study done among parish-based clergy of the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2002, several conclusions were made. First, certain positive coping strategies may protect against burnout. Those coping strategies include accepting, active coping,

planning and positive reframing correlated with an increased personal accomplishment (Doolittle, “Burnout and Coping” 36). Clergypersons’ ability to establish healthy boundaries and time-management skills influences burnout (“Impact of Behaviors” 93). Clergy who can disengage from the demands of ministry and engage in outside activities have a better opportunity to reenergize their ministries. Data also revealed that pastors can be fully engaged in their mission with rich spiritual lives and a high sense of accomplishment yet at the same time feel emotionally exhausted. These findings suggest that if clergy enjoy their calling, feel a sense of mission and accomplishment, they can still be emotionally exhausted.

The study also found that older clergy tend toward less burnout. Dissatisfied clergy, who may soon leave the profession, tend to be younger: “Younger clergy tend to be burned out precisely because they are adjusting to the rigors of their new vocation” (Doolittle, “Burnout and Coping” 36). If adaptation occurs, clergy remain in ministry; if not, they leave: “Newly qualified ministers who lack a coherent, well-integrated world-view struggle to overcome emotional exhaustion resulting from the work and may then succumb to defensive strategies such as depersonalization” (Miner 26-27). In the case of clergy, emotional exhaustion is not an indicator of burnout or dissatisfaction with the work of ministry. Doolittle concludes, “Nurturing healthy emotional coping strategies should be specifically focused on younger clergy, who are at higher risk of burnout and in the process of refining their pastoral practices” (“Burnout and Coping” 37). Those individuals capable of utilizing all their coping resources, including their spirituality, regardless of age, are better able to cope with emotional exhaustion and burnout.

Vicarious Trauma and Personal Resiliency

Vicarious trauma refers to experiences that are painful, distressing, or overwhelming and have lasting physical or emotional effects. Types of trauma include combat/war, sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse, violent crime, natural disaster, accidents, terrorism, and homicide. Those who work with or around trauma, such as clergy and social service or healthcare workers, often encounter compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, which involve the difficulty of being in harm's way while needing to act with compassion. Trauma, which challenges one's control, can result in psychological and physical distress, as well as impairment of family relationships, interpersonal difficulties, and negative attitudes toward work, life, and other people. Compassion fatigue can affect not only the caregivers but also their family members and closest friends who provide their support.

Professional risk factors identified by Terri Spahr Nelson and Patrick R. Nelson in a series of pamphlets about coping with trauma work, are overwork, isolation, lack of professional support, poor boundaries, and high caseloads, including trauma survivors, less experience, too many negative outcomes, and demanding or hostile clients. Personal risk factors include previous history of trauma, increased life stress, temperament and personality factors, lack of social support, and lack of positive coping strategies or the use of negative coping strategies such as avoidance, substance abuse, or overeating (3). The implications of vicarious trauma on individuals vary depending on the individuals and their resiliency as well as risk factors. While the instance of clergy experiencing vicarious trauma is limited, understanding it and developing self-care tools to prevent its effects is recommended.

Studies in the field of the psychology of vicarious trauma show that developing mindful self-awareness, consciously expanding perspective to embrace complexity, actively developing optimism, expanding holistic self-care, maintaining clear boundaries, growing exquisite empathy, expanding professional satisfaction, and creating meaning are important self-care tools (Harrison and Westwood 209-13). Added to those tools is the positive effect of helping others.

The work of ministry, while challenging, also provides meaning and personal resiliency to clergy. Clergy, who can attain “compassion satisfaction” (Nelson and Nelson 24) are able to mediate vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout better.

In a qualitative study done with 398 senior pastors of an evangelical Protestant denomination in the United States, researchers found that personal resiliency in clergy is created from intentionally balancing life, developing a vital spiritual life, emphasizing a sense of calling and an expanding awareness of God’s grace (Meek et al. 341-45). The intent of their study was to move beyond a pathology focus toward an understanding and promotion of healthy functioning. One lesson learned was that being intentional about creating balance and maintaining strong but flexible boundaries is important but so is being intentionally connectional with others. Familial relationships were significant in maintaining the emotional and spiritual health of the clergy. Protecting and nurturing those relationships must be a priority. Relationships outside the family also emerged as a necessary element of resiliency for clergy. Respondents revealed that enthusiasm, vision, and ability to cope wane with isolation. The second lesson was the importance of a sense of calling. The calling makes ministry distinct from other careers. Keeping that calling in mind is another factor in sustaining resiliency. Respondents also found great strength in

the use of spiritual disciplines. Over 66 percent of the respondents listed spiritual disciplines such as retreat and solitude, the reading of Scripture, journaling, fasting, and prayer as significant to their daily devotion. They also had an awareness of their utter reliance upon the power and presence of God. This study showed that resiliency against vicarious trauma, burnout, and stress can be created with the appropriate guidance.

Research Design

For the purposes of this study, I chose a mixed-method design using both quantitative and qualitative measures. The use of these two methods assisted with validity. Within the so-called quantitative tradition, quality standards have been defined using the concept of validity (Cook and Campbell 37). This concept is a cumulative process with four steps. The initial steps are to assess whether a relationship exists between two variables and to determine if this relationship is causal. The third examines if the theoretical model is well depicted by the means through which it was operationalized. Finally, external validity examines if, and to what extent, findings can be generalized to other groups, places, and times.

This conceptualization of validity has been very influential even within the so-called qualitative tradition wherein a solid approach to assess the quality of interpretative inquiry is the trustworthiness criteria (Lincoln and Guba 218). In addition to the critiques to the classical approach of validity, these criteria include the notions of credibility and transferability that are parallels to the concepts of internal validity and external validity, respectively.

These parallels suggest that the dichotomy-quantitative versus qualitative-might not be so incompatible as defenders from both sides have argued. Studies using mixed-

method have shown that integration of these traditions within the same study can be seen as complementary to each other (Greene and Caracelli 14). Moreover, because each of the methods has its strengths and weaknesses, combining them supports the research.

The goal of mixed-method research is not to replace either the qualitative or quantitative method but to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both. This strength is possible because commonalities exist between the two methods. For instance, both qualitative and quantitative research methods use empirical observations to address research questions. Both kinds of research include safeguards into their inquiries to minimize confirmation bias and other sources of invalidity. The mixed-methods approach is a creative form of research, expanding the possibilities for inquiry. By using a mixed-methods approach, questions are more fully answered. To utilize the mixed-method approach best, one must understand more fully the two research methods and their distinctive characteristics.

Qualitative Research Measures

Qualitative research measures emphasize words rather than numbers in collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative measures work with simple scales. This research method seeks to understand and interpret the meaning of situations or events from the perspectives of the people involved and as understood by them. It is generally inductive rather than deductive in its approach, that is, it generates theory from interpretation of the evidence, albeit against a theoretical background.

Qualitative research methods may include observation, structured or semi-structured interviews, life history narratives, critical incidents, questionnaires, and audio and visual recordings with structured or unstructured analysis of the talk and interaction.

The strengths of this method are vast. First, qualitative methods are responsive to local situations, conditions, and stakeholder needs. The researcher can document patterns and change within the project. This method allows the participant to interpret constructs. The qualitative data also lends itself to exploring how and why phenomena occur (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 20).

The negative or weak aspects of this method should not be ignored. Knowledge gained from the study may not generalize to other people or situations. Using qualitative methods, makes testing the hypothesis more difficult. Data collection takes longer, and its analysis is time consuming. The results are also more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 20).

Quantitative Research Methods

Quantitative research measures place an emphasis on measurement when collecting and analyzing data. Quantitative research is defined, not just by its use of numerical measures but also that it generally follows a natural science model of the research process measurement to establish knowledge that exists independently of the views and values of the people involved or objective knowledge.

Quantitative research methods may include surveys or questionnaires, structured interviews, structured observation, secondary analysis and official statistics. Quantitative research methods may also include content analysis according to a coding system, quasi-experiments, and classic experiments.

Summary

Both strengths and weaknesses exist in mixed research (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 17). Words, pictures, and narratives can add meaning to numbers.

Numbers also can add precision to words and narratives. Mixed research can also provide stronger evidence for a conclusion through a corroboration of findings. Using a mix of these two methods is more time consuming and requires the researcher to be familiar with multiple methods. It is also more expensive.

Considering all the strengths and the weaknesses of mixed-methods research, it is the strongest approach. My research design used both quantitative and qualitative measures within this study of establishing spiritual formation and self-care practices in ordinands for the long-term health of their ministry.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Problem and Purpose

Studies show that over 1,500 Protestant clergy leave the ministry every month. They leave for a variety of reasons, both voluntary and involuntary. Clergy within their first five years of ministry comprise the greatest number of those who leave. In many of the situations, the reasons clergy leave are preventable. Often, clergy simply find themselves no longer able to sustain healthy, effective ministry. Establishing healthy sustainable patterns of spiritual renewal and self-care in ordinands of the Rocky Mountain Conference that retain clergy in ministry are urgently needed. Spiritual renewal and self-care will assist clergy in not only continuing in ministry but creating an environment for healthy and effective ministry.

After much study, I believe the solutions to sustaining effective clergy in ministry are astoundingly simple. Spiritual renewal and self-care are key practices to sustain clergy in effective spiritual leadership. The purpose of this study was to identify the elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that sustain effective spiritual leadership for the long-term health of ministry. This research can be used to create practices that support effective spiritual leaders in ministry.

Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

My research questions test the hypothesis that the creation of a *rule of life* in the first five years of ministry will give clergy the foundation needed to sustain the long-term health and effectiveness of their ministries. Whether the candidate for ordination is serving in a local congregation or an appointment beyond the local church, identifying

the elements of spiritual renewal and self-care are key to sustaining them throughout their life's work as clergy. The research questions I used aim to reveal those elements that are most helpful.

Research Question #1

What were the spiritual formation practices and self-care practices of the ordinands in the study prior to the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?

This research question addresses the knowledge of self-care and spiritual disciplines and the behavioral practices of each research study participant prior to the spiritual leadership retreat. Understanding the scope of knowledge of the study participants and their daily practices of self-care and spiritual formation prior to the retreat was necessary to establish a understanding of the study participants and their current practices and possible need for the early establishment of spiritual formation in their lives. I used a researcher-designed survey to collect data necessary to this research question. Survey queries numbered 1-13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, and 25 provide answers to this research question.

Research Question #2

What were the spiritual formation practices and self-care practices of the ordinands in the study after the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?

This research question addresses the specific elements of self-care and spiritual renewal that impacted participant behavior following the spiritual leadership retreat. This question allowed me to understand better whether any changes in the practices of self-

care or spiritual formation following the study participant's attendance at the retreat. Survey queries numbered 1 -13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24 and 25 and interview question 1 provide answers to this research question.

Research Question #3

How are spiritual formation practices and self-care practices impacting the ministries of the ordinands in the study?

This research question addresses the opportunity for participants to make personal recommendations for increased effective spiritual leadership. Interview questions numbered 1 and 3 provided answers to this research question.

Research Question #4

What are the recommendations for sustainable spiritual leadership in the practice of ministry for clergy?

This research question addresses the scope of the research. The answers given by the study participants allowed them to make recommendations for future generations of clergy and their sustenance of effective spiritual leadership throughout their ministry. Interview questions numbered 2, 4 and 5 provide the answers to this research question.

Population and Participants

I sent invitations to participate in the study via e-mail to the twenty-four continuing candidates for ordination as deacon or elder in the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church. I included the informed consent form in the e-mail as an attachment. Although each participant was required by the Board of Ordained Ministry to participate in the retreat, each participant self-selected whether he or she would participate in the study. I hoped to receive a 50 percent return to my

invitation to participate. I was glad 58.3 percent responded to the initial invitation to participate by returning their informed consent form to the researcher thru e-mail. After two individuals withdrew due to personal difficulties, I had the hoped-for 50 percent participation in the research study. Within the sample, two men and ten women participated. All participants were Anglo-American. Four of the candidates for ordination were commissioned toward deacon while eight of the candidates for ordination were commissioned toward elder. The participants were all in active ministry settings at the time of their participation. The sample represented a cross-section of the clergy of the annual conference area; however, the only state not represented in the study was Wyoming. Nine of the participants served in local church settings while the other three served beyond the local church in chaplaincy settings.

Design of the Study

The first phase of the project was the introduction of a retreat into the two-year curriculum for provisional candidates in the residency in ministry process of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The retreat was entitled, *Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership* (see Appendix F). The retreat not only gave an overview of the importance of spiritual formation and self-care practices but also allowed clergy to experience a variety of classical practices. Clergy in the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference and in provisionary relationship participating in the Residency in Ministry Program of the Board of Ordained Ministry were required to attend. The participants in the retreat were not required, however, to participate in the research study.

Prior to the retreat, on 20 January 2012, all of the retreat participants were sent an electronically mailed invitation to participate in this research study. The letter of invitation outlined the retreat, the research study, the process of their participation in the study, an invitation to participate in the study, and an informed consent form (see Appendix D). The invitations were sent via e-mail to the twenty-four continuing provisional candidates for ordination as deacon or elder in the Rocky Mountain Conference. The informed consent form, as well as an information sheet on the research project and its process, was included in the e-mail as attachments (see Appendixes D and E). Each retreat participant was given the option to participate in the research study or not. I asked the retreat participants to print the informed consent form, sign, and return it to me via the US Postal Service by 1 February 2012. I contacted by e-mail or phone retreat participants who had not responded by 1 February on 2 February 2012. I wanted to confirm their desire not to participate. Participants who had given informed consent to participate in the study were then sent the link to a researcher-designed spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey on Survey Monkey via e-mail and asked to complete the survey before 29 February 2012. This survey helped to establish a baseline of self-care and spiritual formation and their integration into the practice of ministry. The results were tabulated through Survey Monkey and reviewed prior to the retreat and aided in the presentation of information to the participants.

Since a few of the retreat participants were second career clergy and had considerable life experience, particularly in the spiritual disciplines, I was careful in considering the material I presented. The basic material on the variety spiritual disciplines became a fundamental review of material with which many were already

familiar. Giving a theological and biblical foundation for the necessity of spiritual formation and self-care was primary. Sharing my own life experience as clergy became a key component to describing the necessity of spiritual formation and self-care for the spiritual leader.

During the retreat, participants were also given a spiritual type indicator (Ware 120-23), as well as a personality and spiritual life indicator (Johnson 21-30) to guide them in their understanding of their spiritual nature. The discussion of the participants' spiritual type and their personalities with other participants was one of the most appreciated sessions during the retreat. Appropriate explanation of spiritual type, personality, and their needs was helpful in allowing retreat participants to understand themselves and their spiritual needs more fully.

Over the three-day period of the retreat, participants were introduced to a variety of classical spiritual formation practices such as centering prayer, the divine hours, corporate worship, Holy Communion, and journaling as well as self-care practices that would enhance their spiritual leadership for the long-term health of their ministry. Participants were encouraged to lead each other in the disciplines as they were practiced throughout the three days.

A key part of the research study was to have the study participants establish a *rule of life*, outlining the practices of their chosen spiritual formation disciplines and practices of self-care. The study participants were asked to follow their *rule of life* for a period of three months, following the retreat, noting any changes in personal attitude and behavior. These changes formed the basis of the interview at the end of the research study period. Throughout the research study period of ninety days, I sent periodic e-mail to the study

participants as a way of gently reminding them of their participation in the research study (see Appendix G).

Phase two was the comparative data phase, which began when I sent the first e-mail to each research participant on 28 March 2012. A second electronic mailing was done on 27 April 2012. On 9 June 2012, I e-mailed the study participants the electronic link to the post-retreat survey on Survey Monkey to measure any changes in behavioral and cognitive status after having experienced the retreat and practiced its spiritual formation and self-care principles for three months. I asked the study to complete the survey by 22 June 2012. I sent a by e-mail to participants who had not completed the survey on 23 June 2011. I tabulated the responses to the survey through Survey Monkey, and I noted and analyzed the results.

Beginning 9 June 2012, I contacted each study participant by e-mail to schedule a personal interview throughout the week of 13-16 June 2012. I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants in the research study (see Appendix I). I conducted all interviews in person. The interviews lasted no longer than twenty-five minutes. I digitally recorded each interview with a voice activated recorder. I transcribed the interviews into Microsoft Word documents. The personal interviews concluded phase two of the research study process.

The third phase of the study project began with the examination of the transcribed interviews. Microsoft Word analyzed the interviews through its word-search function. Key phrases of participant interviews were placed into an Excel document for ease of comparison. The software looked for the following phrases: rule of life, solitude, self-care, spiritual practice, stress, denomination, and health. These phrases were then

categorized for easy review. I then considered the context of the use of each of the phrases within the interview and compared the material with data from the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey (see Appendixes A and H) for any similarities, differences, or changes.

At the conclusion of the third phase, I sent a letter of thanks to each participant in the study (see Appendix J). I included a survey of their experience of the retreat and how the retreat might be improved along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and a \$20 Starbucks card (see Appendixes J and K).

The explanatory mixed-method design used in this study consisted of a pre- and post-retreat quantitative survey (see Appendixes A and H) and a qualitative semi-structured interview (see Appendix I). The quantitative measure was a survey using queries that established both a pre-retreat baseline of knowledge and current behavior. The post-retreat survey was also a quantitative measure using queries to indicate knowledge acquired in the retreat and behaviors changed as result of the retreat. The qualitative measure was a semi-structured interview with researcher-designed questions conducted with all the participants in the study. The interview questions not only pursued participants' changes in knowledge or behavior but also their recommendations for future candidates for ordination in the residency in ministry process.

Instrumentation

Researcher-designed pre- and post-surveys (see Appendix A and H) studied the behavioral and cognitive changes in the retreat participants. In person follow-up interviews used researcher-designed semi-structured questions (see Appendix I). The pre-

and post-surveys were quantitative measures while the semi-structured interview questions were qualitative measures.

The first instrument was a researcher-designed questionnaire measuring the behavioral and cognitive status of the research study participants before the retreat. The instrument was known as the spiritual renewal and self-care knowledge survey (see Appendix A). I then employed the same questionnaire at the conclusion of the study to measure any changes in behavioral and cognitive status after having experienced the retreat and practiced its spiritual formation and self-care principles.

The second instrument used was a personal interview of research study participant using semi-structured questions I designed. This instrument was known as the spiritual renewal and self-care interview (see Appendix I). I conducted all interviews in person. With the permission of the interview participants, each interview was audio-taped for transcription. I also made notes during the interview to assist in transcription. In the rare case a participant did not grant permission to audio-tape the interview, a summary was made from my interview notes. Interviews lasted an average of twenty-five minutes. The interview design was semi-structured. Exploration of pertinent areas beyond the scope of the interview instrument took place.

Standardized Measure and Expert Review

I established the reliability of the first instrument by the test-retest form of reliability. One version of the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey was used and administered twice to the same participants in the study. Results were consistent with prior testing and only reflected the behavioral changes that took place in the participants over the scope of the three-month study period.

To establish content validity, three expert reviewers evaluated the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey and the spiritual formation and self-care practices interview questions (see Appendixes A and B). The reviewers were sent letters of invitation, including the title of my research, the abstract, the purpose of the study and the research questions and asked to complete and return the expert evaluation form. Upon receipt of the expert evaluation forms, I made the suggested changes to the survey questions and interview questions (see Appendixes A and I).

Variables

The independent variable in this study was the retreat. The dependent variable was the impact of spiritual renewal and self-care practices upon the professional lives of the clergyperson. The intervening variables were the demographic data of the participants and the possibility of a personal decision to withdraw from the study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability was established with the test-retest reliability method. This method was used on the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey. Validity was established by an expert review of both the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey and the spiritual formation and self-care practices interview questions. Alignment with my research questions was a further assurance of validity.

The spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey was conducted both prior to the retreat and three months after the retreat. The spiritual formation and self-care practices interview was also conducted three months after participants finished the retreat.

Reliability. I utilized the test-retest measure of reliability. I used one version of the instrument and administered the survey at two different times. The participants completed the survey twice.

Validity. I utilized an expert review of the instrumentation as a measure of validity. I asked the experts to review the alignment of the research questions with the instruments. Their responses were helpful in strengthening the instrumentation.

Data Collection

Participants, who had given informed consent to participate in the study were sent an electronic link to a researcher-designed spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey on Survey Monkey via e-mail and asked to complete the survey before 29 February 2012. The letter of invitation and informed consent form are included in Appendixes B and D.

On 9 June 2012 fourteen participants in the research study were sent an e-mail requesting the participants to take the spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey again. The participants were given the link to the survey on Survey Monkey and asked to complete the survey by 22 June 2012. A reminder was sent on 23 June 2012 to those who had not yet completed the survey. Two participants in the research study chose not to continue in the study at that time and were noted as an intervening variable.

The scheduling of personal interviews for the twelve remaining research study participants began 10 June and continued through 13 June 2012. Interviews of research study participants were scheduled throughout the week of 13-16 June 2012. Interviews that could not be scheduled for this time period were conducted 30 July through 6 August 2012. I conducted all interviews either by phone or in person. The interviews lasted no

longer than twenty-five minutes. Interviews were taped for transcription by a voice-activated tape recorder. I transcribed all interviews and observations into a Microsoft Office 7 Word document. The transcribed data was then analyzed using the search function in Microsoft software entitled Microsoft Office Word 7 for Mac. All tapes of interviews, transcribed notes, researcher observations and notes were then placed in a locked cabinet in the researcher's locked home office.

At the conclusion of the interview process, a letter of thanks was sent, 7 August 2012, to each participant in the study. A survey of their experience of the retreat and how it might be improved was included in the mailing along with a self-addressed stamped envelope and a \$20 Starbucks card. The thank-you letter and survey of their retreat experience is included in Appendix J.

Data Analysis

The spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey was the instrument used in gathering quantitative data. Data from the survey was exported into an Excel document and downloaded. This data was then analyzed by using descriptive statistics as well as *t*-test analysis. These methods allowed me to summarize the overall trends in the data.

The spiritual formation and self-care practices interview was the qualitative instrument used in this study. Each interview was taped. Transcription of the interviews allowed for coding through the use of Microsoft Word which searches for words or phrases. Several themes were coded after the first reading. The themes selected for final coding were rule of life, solitude, self-care, spiritual practice, stress, denomination, and health. I then organized the coded themes into an Excel document. Twelve respondents

replied to the six preset themes for coding. I analyzed the coded data according to theme and content for comparison against the post-retreat survey results.

Ethical Procedures

Each participant was informed of the full process of the study, the expectations of participation, and the confidential use of any data gained by participation. A consent form was sent by e-mail to the participants along with all information about the study. Instructions on printing the consent form, signing it, and returning it to me before beginning the research study were outlined in the informed consent letter.

To ensure confidentiality, the participants of this research study were assigned a code known only to me. A letter was assigned to each study participant. The letters A thru L were used to code the study participants for confidentiality. I kept the code key of assigned letters and the corresponding study participant names. I alone had access to the code key to ensure confidentiality. Records of the subjects and their codes were kept in a locked file in my home office. All survey responses, interview tapes, transcripts, and researcher observational notes were coded to the study participant. At the conclusion of the study, all interview tapes of study participants were destroyed. All observations of the behavior of participants are contained in my personal journal. This journal is kept in a locked file cabinet in my home office. Transcripts of interviews and researcher observational notes were stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Collected data was used only for the purposes of this study and its findings. All care was taken in the protection of the confidentiality of participants and their identities and their responses to research instruments.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Problem and Purpose

Clergy are leaving the ministry at epidemic proportions, yet very little is being done to stem the flow. Research has shown that high role conflict added to high role ambiguity culminates in the emotional exhaustion, physical illness, and, finally, burnout of the clergyperson. The burnout of clergy, left unattended over a period of time, creates ineffective spiritual leadership. The creation of sustainable spiritual formation and self-care practices needs to take place at the beginning of a clergy's ministry to nourish an effective practice of spiritual leadership throughout a lifetime.

The purpose of this study was to identify the key elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that sustain effective spiritual leadership in the ordinands of the Rocky Mountain Conference for the long-term health of ministry. My research can be used to create practices at a local and denominational level that support effective spiritual leaders in ministry.

Participants

Of the twenty-four possible participants for my study, fourteen or 58.3 percent initially responded to my invitation to participate in the study by returning their informed consent. By the end of the three-month study, however, two participants completely dropped out, leaving me with a 50 percent of my original possible research study participants with which to complete the study.

The post-retreat research sample of twelve research participants included two men and ten women (Retention rate = 83.33 percent). All were Caucasian (100 percent), with

nine of the twelve (75 percent) being married. As for age, four were under 40 years (33.33 percent), and eight were over 40 years (66.67 percent). Of the twelve participants, 66.6 percent attended Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. For specific details view Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Participant Demographics

People in Study	Deacon/ Elder Status	Moving in 2012	Seminary	Under 40	Over 40	Gender	Ethnicity	Marital Status
A	Deacon	No	Asbury	No	Yes	F	White	Married
B	Deacon	No	Iliff	No	Yes	F	White	Married
C	Deacon	No	Iliff	No	Yes	F	White	Divorced
D	Elder	No	Iliff	Yes	No	F	White	Married
E	Elder	No	Iliff	No	Yes	F	White	Married
F	Elder	No	Iliff	Yes	No	M	White	Married
G	Elder	No	Iliff	Yes	No	F	White	Married
H	Deacon	Yes	Wesley	No	Yes	F	White	Single
I	Elder	No	Asbury	No	Yes	F	White	Remarried
J	Elder	No	Perkins	No	Yes	F	White	Married
K	Deacon	No	Pfieffer	No	Yes	F	White	Married
L	Elder	No	Iliff	No	Yes	M	White	Married

I found significant homogeneity in the population of this study as evidenced by the commonality of marital status, educational background, and ethnic background. Of note was the fact that 41.6 percent of the participants were provisional deacons while 58.3 percent were provisional elders.

Spiritual Formation and Self-Care Practices prior to the Retreat

Discovering the underlying understanding of the spiritual formation and self-care practices of the ordinands was essential to the study. Understanding what provisional

candidates for ordination use as spiritual formation and self-care practices gave me a picture of their post-seminary self-care while in the full-time ministry setting. The ability to measure their knowledge and behavior before the retreat was necessary to see if they made any significant changes following the retreat.

Means and standard deviations were computed for nineteen of the item responses prior to the retreat (see Table 4.2). At pretest, mean responses for all subscales ranged between neutral and strongly agree with the exception of the mean response for fasting ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 0.62$). The spiritual formation and self-care knowledge survey with these nineteen items showed fair internal reliability at pretest with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70.

From these items, I found two subscales spiritual practices and self-care, and means and standard deviations were found. The mean for spiritual practices was 3.60 (0.53), which was not significantly different than the mean for self-care ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.63$; $t [8] = 1.39$; $p = 1.92$).

I saw very little difference between what the participants did for spiritual formation and self-care prior to the retreat and what they did post-retreat. This conclusion shows that the habits of self-care and spiritual formation by the participants were already formed before or during their candidacy or seminary experience and little change occurred following their participation in the retreat. Participant A stated, "I enjoy solitude. I go off by myself and walk the dog. Solitude helps me fill up when I'm empty." This participant continued a spiritual practice she had done for many years. Another participant practices yoga as a daily spiritual discipline. While another has had a spiritual

director for thirty years and enjoys the time they have set aside to see each other. Another participant ran to maintain her focus on her relationship with God (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Means and Standard Deviations for the Survey

Spiritual Formation and Self-Care Practices	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	W (SE)	<i>p</i>
Spiritual friend	3.92 (1.78)	4.70 (0.48)	7.00 (2.69)	458
Small group	3.67 (1.37)	2.90 (1.20)	1.50 (3.67)	102
Healthy relationships	4.33 (0.78)	4.30 (0.68)	12.00 (5.29)	705
Bible study	3.00 (1.04)	2.90 (1.10)	8.00 (4.62)	589
Worship	3.42 (1.38)	3.20 (2.04)	3.50 (2.72)	581
Daily prayer	4.00 (1.04)	4.10 (0.99)	3.50 (1.84)	785
Tithe	4.08 (1.24)	3.60 (1.35)	0.00 (2.65)	059
Fast	1.75 (0.62)	1.90 (1.20)	9.50 (3.62)	581
Solitude	3.58 (1.17)	3.50 (1.35)	9.50 (3.62)	.00
Centering prayer	3.42 (1.24)	2.80 (1.23)	2.50 (3.54)	157
Journaling	3.08 (1.62)	3.20 (1.40)	10.50 (4.29)	.00
Arts	3.75 (0.87)	3.00 (0.94)	3.00 (5.69)	053
Christlike life	4.00 (1.04)	3.50 (0.71)	3.00 (5.69)	053
Confession	3.67 (0.99)	3.22 (1.20)	2.50 (3.54)	157
God's presence	4.33 (0.65)	4.40 (0.70)	1.50 (1.06)	.00
Positive change in health	3.08 (1.08)	3.30 (0.68)	8.00 (2.65)	257
Positive change in self-care	3.67 (1.07)	3.60 (0.84)	7.50 (3.54)	.00
Change in leisure life	3.33 (0.89)	3.40 (0.70)	8.00 (3.64)	891
Ability to play	3.00 (0.85)	3.40 (0.70)	14.00 (4.29)	414

In reviewing the possible spiritual formation practices, none of the participants practiced fasting as a discipline before the retreat. Participants also did not practice fasting after the retreat. The spiritual practice of fasting was the exception. As a rule, the participants continued the same spiritual practices as they had done before the retreat. I would also like to note that participants preferred, in Willard's terms, disciplines of engagement rather than disciplines of abstinence. Certainly, research participants were

familiar with all the classic spiritual formation disciplines and had formed habits of practice that were comfortable for them.

Spiritual Formation Practices and Self-Care Practices after the Retreat

Studying the spiritual formation and self-care practices of ordinands after the retreat was integral to this study. I wanted to be able to see what changes occurred in the behavior and knowledge of participants concerning their spiritual formation and self-care. Unfortunately, no one tried any new spiritual disciplines to enhance their spiritual practice or self-care. Behaviors had already formed at this point in their lives and practice of ministry.

Participant A said, “I didn’t try anything new. I’ve been doing what I normally do and giving myself permission to enjoy it.” Most participants responded much the same response. Overall, most continued pursuing the same spiritual formation and self-care practices they were comfortable with before the study began. Spiritual practices used by the participants included solitude, contemplation, study, prayer, regular devotion, and worship. Acquiring the knowledge of spiritual formation and self-care practices did not appear to be the problem. Studies used in my research show though that clergy tend to practice their spiritual formation disciplines and self-care less in succeeding years of ministry.

Three participants wrote and followed a rule of life. Participant C said, “Writing a rule of life brought me a daily awareness of my needs. My practices became consistent. The rule of life was a daily reminder to take care of myself.” Seeking out regular spiritual direction was another factor that was important for others.

Means and standard deviations also were computed on the nineteen items regarding spiritual practices and self-care at posttest (see Table 4.2). At posttest, mean responses for all subscales ranged between neutral and strongly agree with the exception of the mean response for small group ($M = 2.90$; $SD = 1.20$), Bible study ($M = 2.90$; $SD = 1.10$), fasting ($M = 1.90$; $SD = 1.20$), and centering prayer ($M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.23$). The survey with these nineteen items showed good internal reliability at posttest with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79.

These results are significant in that these spiritual formation practices are seen as key elements in the long-term effectiveness and health of the clergy. The need for colleagues with whom the clergy can process their frustrations, doubts, and personal challenges is key to their spiritual sustenance. The lack of participation in a small group will eventually add to the feelings of isolation and despair. Regular Bible study is an important means of filling the spiritual well of clergy, yet previous research studies have shown that clergy tend only to read the Bible in conjunction with the writing of a sermon and not for their own spiritual sustenance. The lack of using centering prayer and fasting as spiritual practices belies a need for quick and easy answers for clergy who find themselves pressed for time and unaccustomed to using these two practices as means to deepen their spiritual walk with God.

I again found the means and standard deviations of the two subscales-spiritual practices and self-care. The mean for spiritual practices was 3.44 (0.61), which was not significantly different than the mean for self-care ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 0.60$; $t [8] = 0.29$; $p = .778$).

A series of related-samples Wilcoxon signed-ranks tests explored any changes in item scores from before to after the retreat. None of the individual items showed a significant change; however, the subscale of spiritual practices overall did show a significant decrease from prior to the retreat ($M = 3.60$; $SD = 0.53$) to after the retreat ($M = 3.44$; $SD = 0.61$; $W = 2.00$ [$SE = 8.36$]; $p = .014$). I observed no significant change in the subscale of self-care, suggesting scores at pretest ($M = 3.27$; $SD = 0.63$) were equivalent to those at post-test ($M = 3.36$; $SD = 0.60$; $W = 23.50$ [$SE = 6.95$]; $p = .429$; see Table 4.2).

Table 4.3 shows the correlation coefficients for the pre- and posttest scores on the two subscales of spiritual practices and self-care. All of the pretest scores appear strongly positively correlated with the posttest scores for that factor, with Pearson product moment correlation coefficient for spiritual practices at pre- and posttest being .939 ($p < .01$) and the correlation coefficient for self-care being .790 ($p < .01$). These positive correlations suggest that as subscale scores are higher at pretest, they also are higher at posttest.

These results suggest that both spiritual formation and self-care were recognized both before and after the retreat as significant factors in the lives of the research subjects. An increase in spiritual practice posttest shows the participants were more aware of the need and made a significant commitment to spiritual formation. Although the increase in spiritual formation practice was not extremely significant, I believe it does show that highlighting the need for spiritual formation for the spiritual leader made the participants focus more upon this area of their self-care.

Table 4.3. Correlation Coefficients for Spiritual Practices and Self-Care at Pre- and Posttest

	Spiritual Practices at Pretest	Spiritual Practices at Posttest	Self-Care at Pretest	Self-Care at Posttest
Spiritual practices at Pretest	1	.939**	.022	.167
Spiritual practices at Posttest	.939**	1	.229	.004
Self-care at Pretest	.022	.229	1	.790**
Self-care at Posttest	-.167	-.004	.790**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Despite the obstacles of time, relentless meetings, and being on call twenty-four hours a day, participants had a sense of growth and of God's presence in their midst. Whether time was taken in the steam room at the gym to meditate or a special prayer room was set aside in their home, participants found a way to fulfill their deep need for connectivity with God. Individuals had a heightened awareness after the retreat that encouraged them to make time to connect with God and with their bodies.

Despite perceptions, only the clergy have control over their time. Setting appropriate boundaries allows clergy the time to pursue the spiritual formation and self-care practices that will sustain their ministry. Some of our participants were very aware of the need for spiritual formation and self-care practice and had taken steps to make those practices happen. Other participants were waiting for denominational leadership to assist them in establishing appropriate boundaries with their congregational or ministry settings. In truth only the clergy themselves can establish these practices for themselves. The problem lies not only with the pastors' desire for approval and the overwhelming need to please others but also in their failure as spiritual leaders to lead in self-defining ways. Spiritual leaders are called by God to lead others by establishing healthy

boundaries for themselves and for their congregations. Clergy are called to lead others spiritually by the example of their own spiritual and self-care practices. By abdicating responsibility for the creation of healthy boundaries to denominational leadership, they are denying the authority of their own spiritual leadership. Ironically, the lack of establishing healthy boundaries and an example of strong spiritual practice allows the ministry of the clergy to evolve into a constant search for approval from the very people they are called to lead. Eventually, the need to be loved and to please destroys the ministry God called them to perform. Learning to establish good boundaries and an active practice of spiritual formation and self-care will only add to the health and the sustenance of the ministry of clergy.

Impact of Spiritual Formation and Self-Care Practices on Participants

Understanding how spiritual formation and self-care practices impact the sustenance of ministry for ordinands in the Rocky Mountain Conference was key to this study. Whether spiritual formation and self-care are integral to the practice of ministry of clergy or not is the heart of this research study. Through the interviews of study participants, a detailed picture of the necessity of spiritual formation and self-care can be seen in their responses. Each participant described in detail those practices that impact their daily lives and the ministry they are called to perform.

Spiritual Practices

Participants used a wide variety of traditional spiritual practices. Participant B said about her spiritual practices:

The greatest impact I've had on my spiritual life has been the self-understanding of what I personally need. By working in the world as I do, as a deacon, I have to be able to maintain centeredness if I am to give my best. Solitude and prayer have helped me greatly.

Each participant interviewed saw his or her spiritual formation as integral to his or her ministry. Participant A said, “It’s like a water pitcher, we pour ourselves out all the time and eventually we empty ourselves. [When we’re empty we can’t be in ministry.] We need to fill up the pitcher. We need to take care of ourselves as pastors.” Another participant shared this, “I pray before I enter a hospital room. I’ve been relying more on the Holy Spirit and not on me.” Still another study participant said about her spiritual formation, “I’m encouraged by how much my spiritual formation feeds me. There are times of worship and stillness that feed my soul. I’ve also been journaling and singing.” The stories of these participants revealed a common thread. All the participants talked about the ways in which their spiritual formation and self-care supported them over the previous three months of the study. Spiritual formation and self-care practices improved the participants’ ability to cope with the everyday stresses of ministry. They not only coped; they thrived, often in the face of multiple challenges to their personal boundaries, their authority as pastors, and their relentless schedules.

Rule of Life

Those who chose actually to write a rule of life found that their practice of spiritual formation and self-care became more consistent. They appreciated how the *rule of life* created a consistent daily rhythm for their lives. Participant E said these words about her *rule of life*: “The *rule of life* impacted me greatly. The rule gave me stability and obedience to my spiritual practice. I now have spirituality for everyday living.” Since clergy usually have such a random schedule, the consistency of a regular time for prayer, solitude, and study was comforting to those who followed a *rule of life*. They found their lives and ministry more balanced and less overwhelming.

The *rule of life* gives the individual clarity and perspective. St. Benedict's *rule* was a means to free the individual from the concerns of daily living in order to be better able to love God and neighbor better. *The rule of St. Benedict* has shaped and nurtured thousands over the last 1,500 years. It developed the *via media* or a balanced life. The participants who used a *rule of life* over the three-month test period found the middle way of life St. Benedict intended.

Self-Care

Physical self-care was a primary concern for the clergy of this study. It was mentioned thirteen times in interviews by a variety of participants (see Table 4.4). Participant H said about self-care: "We need to be held accountable for our own self-care. I turn my phone off. We can't be the hands and feet of God when we are stressed and worn out." Another participant had this revelation of understanding; "Over the past months I've had a heightened sense of the importance of self-care in terms of being more effective for my congregation. When we are diminished in body, we can't be effective in ministry." Participants talked about a renewed commitment to walking, exercising, dancing, running, yoga, and other self-care practices. Each participant made his or her physical self-care a priority.

Studies done by the Clergy Health Initiative at Duke Divinity show preventable diseases plague clergy. Obesity, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure are preventable with regular self-care practice. Studies by the Clergy Health Initiative are ongoing. A variety of methods are being used to encourage clergy to be accountable for their self-care ("Body and Soul").

Health

Three of the participants had significant health issues during the study and concentrated on self-care. The participants did not concentrate on self-care to the exclusion of spiritual formation, but they made self-care a priority in their lives during the study period. Their interview responses echoed this emphasis.

The Clergy Health Initiative at Duke University has shown that health care of the clergy person has several different dimensions and is quite particular in regards to this specific population. The United Methodist General Board of Pensions and Health has encouraged annual conferences to enroll their clergy in the Virgin Health Miles program as a means of encouraging clergy to exercise. Monetary rewards have been offered for getting an annual physical examination. The concern of participants for their health and their focus in that area is mirrored by the denomination's concern.

Recommendations for Sustainable Spiritual Leadership

The ordinands shared several observations and recommendations for the sustenance of spiritual leadership. Although the ordinands in this study are just beginning their ministry journey within the annual conference, they already observed many areas where changes called for the support of sustainable spiritual leadership. They easily suggested a variety of recommendations to sustaining leadership in the light of spiritual formation and self-care practices within the denomination.

Many thought the denomination could take clear actions to sustain spiritual leadership (see Table 4.4). Two participants stated that greater systems of accountability could be put into place pertaining to self-care and spiritual practices. Another participant called for requiring every clergyperson to have a spiritual director with whom he or she

regularly meets. Others thought clergy needed to create covenants for self-care or a *rule of life* and regularly reviewed this *rule of life* with the district superintendent. Another participant suggested district superintendents teach congregations and clergy to create and respect healthy boundaries:

Our congregations need education as to what a spiritual leader is and how a spiritual leader needs to have time for self-care. I've worked with my Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) about specifics but there is still a lingering sense that people wonder why things haven't gotten done when I'm gone.

Certainly appropriate education for lay leadership could be helpful in understanding the need for clergy self-care.

Two of the study participants particularly remarked on the revelation they had in finally understanding their spiritual typology. For years, they had struggled to understand why they did not feel comfortable with certain spiritual formation practices and thought something was innately wrong about them. They had even doubted their call. Participant A said, "The teaching section in the retreat on 'investigating your unique soul print' was very meaningful for me. I now understand how God made me who I am and what I need to do to nurture myself." Both participants recommended everyone have the opportunity to discover his or her own soul print and how the individual might understand how to nurture his or her unique nature.

Participants were looking for the local denominational leadership to lead the way in spiritual formation and self-care. They know that self-care practices will not be sustainable unless denominational leadership is supportive and gives emphasis to its necessity by leadership's own transparency of practice. Participants in the study expressed that many people talk about self-care but few leaders take substantive action

toward spiritual health and wholeness. Local and denominational leadership leading spiritually is key to the future health of the whole system.

Stress

Five of the participants responded with significant concerns about stress. Participant B said, “I think it’s just the busyness of life that gets in the way. I tend to get very stressed.” Another participant is part of a dual clergy household and recognized that although the stress does not seem to affect them as a couple they do tend to bring ministry-related issues into their personal time. This clergy couple had difficulty nurturing their relationship by finding time for just the two of them. The clergy under age 40 spoke at length of the particular stressors they felt were unique to young clergy, such as seminary debt, isolated or difficult ministry settings with little hope, and a lack of supportive colleagues with which to share their struggles. One participant talked about the frustration and stress of not being able to fulfill her spiritual gifts in her current appointment. Participant I stated, “My appointment feels like an administrative machine. I’m constantly feeding the machine.” The stress in each of these personal situations appears ongoing with little end in sight. Certainly, this kind of chronic stress, studies have shown can lead to compassion fatigue and eventual burnout without strong spiritual formation and self-care practices e.g. Kemery, Lewis, Turton, and Francis, Maslach and Leiter.

Denominational Concerns

A significant concern by many participants was the lack of healthy role modeling by the district superintendents and the bishop. Participant L said, “They seem to talk about it [self-care] a lot but I don’t see it [self-care] modeled very well. Look at our

district superintendents. They are constantly working.” District superintendents’ calendars are full of appointments. Conference obligations make the role modeling of self-care difficult for denominational leadership. Participant C said, “Tell the denomination to not underestimate the power of self-care. Make sure they build in opportunities for self-care. If you do not fill your cup, how can you fill the cup of others?” Study participants want a clear path of expectation at all levels of the denomination when it comes to spiritual formation and self-care.

The *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* provides a long list of expectations for clergy and their performance of ministry in the local church and in the world. The *Discipline* also provides the opportunity for times of renewal and self-care. The problem is that few conference boards of ordained ministry have utilized the *Discipline* to outline clear expectations for spiritual formation and self-care. Very few conferences have established clear expectations and systems of accountability.

Table 4.4. Common Response Factors in Semi-Structured Interviews

Common Responses	# of Times Mentioned
Spiritual practice	16
Self-care	13
Rule of life	5
Health	10
Stress	7
Denomination	8

The responses of the participants during the semi-structured interview reflected the nature of the questions used. The interview protocol allowed little deviation.

Summary of Major Findings

After reviewing the accumulated data from the study, I decided upon five major findings:

1. The Spiritual Formation for the Spiritual Leader retreat highlighted the need for self-care, but it did not significantly change the habits of the participants.
2. The participants who wrote a *rule of life* found the *rule of life* provided a daily awareness and a consistency to their practice of spiritual formation and self-care.
3. The United Methodist denominational leadership could make their spiritual leadership through spiritual formation and self-care practice a priority for themselves and for their clergy.
4. A regular program of spiritual formation for the spiritual leader could be designed as a primary focus in the first year of ministerial candidacy or the first year of seminary education or the first year of provisional membership with a covenant for accountability to be continued throughout the life of the clergyperson.
5. Developing an early understanding with ordination candidates of their uniquely designed spiritual nature would allow them to develop their spiritual leadership and practices in ways that are sustaining for the long-term health of the ministry.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Major Findings

More and more clergy leave the ministry every day because they find themselves unable to sustain effective ministry as spiritual leaders. Because of the nature of ministerial work, the emotional exhaustion of clergy leads to compassion fatigue and, in many cases, burnout. Clergy who continue their ministry despite emotional exhaustion and physical illness find themselves under greater and greater duress until they are no longer effective in their spiritual leadership of the local church.

The purpose of this study was to identify the key elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that sustain effective spiritual leadership in ordinands of the Rocky Mountain Conference for the long-term health of the practice of ministry.

The Highlighted Need for Spiritual Formation and Self-Care

Although I observed no significant changes in the practices of spiritual formation by the ordinands, I believe my personal examples and the general information gathered from previously done studies on the necessity of spiritual formation and self-care practices given during the retreat was a helpful reminder to the participants of the crucial need for regular spiritual formation and self-care. The problem later indicated by the ordinands was that they had difficulty setting aside a regular time for those practices that sustain them (Wuellner 20). Thompson writes, “How often I hear others echo my own struggle: our hopes for regular spiritual practice are eroded by time constraints, fatigue, or simple inertia and procrastination” (10). Clergy, in general have a difficult time prioritizing time for their own spiritual formation and self-care.

In part, the problem of clergy prioritizing their spiritual formation and self-care has developed over the last few generations of clergy. The dramatic change in emphasis as to the role of clergy in the local church evolved into a change in how they cared for themselves. The emphasis on clergy providing soul care was lost by the mid-twentieth century when churches became places for programs instead of places of spiritual formation. Churches used a business model, offering age-level programming, children's preschools, and gymnasiums for exercise instead of offering Christ. McLaren speaks about a "shallowing" of character (11-12). McLaren believes that this "shallowing" occurs because the loss of spiritual practice contributes to a loss of purpose in ministry.

Other authors (e.g., Barton 28; Thompson 7) have also alluded to a return to the ancient paths of our faith to remember our purpose: "to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10: 27). Clergy have lost the sense of being a spiritual leader for spiritually hungry people.

Clergy, above all other groups of professionals working in the realm of human relationships, understand the need for constant contact with God. They already understand, as the writer of the Gospel of John did, that the vine cannot grow or exist without the branch. Clergy must depend upon God to sustain them. The purpose of clergy is only fulfilled when they recognize their need for the one who came that they might have abundant life (John 10:10).

The church and its clergy cannot continue to put off their need for the regular practice of spiritual formation and self-care. More must be done to inform and guide clergy in how to become spiritual leaders and not program directors in local ministry

settings. Instead of workshops on how to create the next great program for youth, children or adults, I believe more education needs to be offered on how to model the image of Christ in the leadership of the local church. Church leadership is spiritual leadership in the image of Christ and not an administrative exercise in power and authority.

Denominational leaders could encourage clergy to teach classes on prayer. Clergy could return to a weekly observance of Holy Communion. Clergy need to remember the Wesleyan means of grace as a means of continuing the work of making disciples. Using the means of grace, already a part of the Methodist heritage, as means to sustain spiritual life in the ministry setting will change not only the laity but also the clergy who are also thirsting for living water (John 4:10) and emphasize the need for the clergy's own spiritual formation and self-care.

The Rule of Life Providing Consistency to Daily Living

Although only three participants wrote and used a *rule of life*, those who did fulfill this part of the research study found it exceptionally helpful to their daily practices of spiritual formation and self-care. Setting a *rule of life* became the means for establishing a different choice for the participant as a way of contending with the postmodern world. The rule of life shaped them daily into the image of Christ. Mulholland writes about the process of being shaped into the image of Christ:

The image of Christ is that which brings cleansing, healing, restoration, renewal, transformation and wholeness into the unclean diseased, broken, imprisoned, dead incompleteness of our lives. It brings compassion in place of indifference, forgiveness in place of resentment, kindness in place of coldness, openness in place of protective defensiveness or manipulation, a life lived for God and not self. (*Invitation* 34)

The choice to be shaped into the image of Christ helped reestablish right relationships with God and with others, putting aside self-sufficiency and self-determination and placing a priority on seeking Christ and him only in daily living. The *rule of life* established a balance of life. Balance is key to the participant's relationship with God, self, and others.

One sign of a growing spiritual maturity is the ability to see the need for regular, disciplined communication with God. Clergy must stay connected to the source of their life, the creator. John reminds the reader of the end for this deep connection in the fifteenth chapter of his gospel (John 15:4). Through a relationship with God in Christ, the individual receives sustenance and is incorporated into the community of the people of God, bearing Christ's witness in the world. The *rule of life* is a tool to ensure that clergy are staying connected to their creator.

Using the *rule of life* as a means of personal accountability allows the clergypersons to measure whether they are accomplishing what they need in their spiritual journeys. McLaren writes about the need for a "new order, a new array of priorities and commitments in life" so that Jesus' intent for our ministry might be fulfilled (34). Clergy are called to an uncommon way of life. Unfortunately, their way becomes lost for the lack of a framework for regular sustenance. The *rule of life* serves as that framework (Black 1).

Using a *rule of life* changes the practice of ministry for clergy from a ministry of basic survival against the onslaught of postmodern change to a fruitful, spirit-filled ministry built on the image of Christ. Careful work in writing a *rule of life* centers ministry in spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is then no longer a superficial support

for the clergy but central to their ministry, life, and work. Mulholland makes this point when he writes, “Holistic spiritual disciplines are acts of loving obedience that we offer to God steadily and consistently, to be used for whatever work God purposes to do in and through out lives” (*Invitation* 103). The discipline of seeking Christ daily then informs, shapes, and guides every aspect of the ministry of the clergy.

Making Spiritual Formation and Self-Care a Priority in the Denomination

The participants expressed their frustration and sometimes anger with denominational leadership and their lack of a workable plan to support and nurture clergy in such a way as to give them the sustenance they need to fulfill their ministries. A workable plan of action at several levels (e.g., local, district, conference, and denominational) is needed for the nurture of spiritual leadership in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Although the denomination is spending a great deal of time and money working with self-care issues through the General Board of Pensions and Health, no one is addressing the spiritual crisis that has inflicted the clergy. Instead, much attention and money has been given to the Center for Health in the United Methodist Church. The Center has chosen to concentrate their time and attention on the health practices of clergy but not the spiritual practices (General Board of Pensions).

Wesley’s model of small group support, accountability, and nurture for clergy has all but been abandoned to the competitive nature of the itinerate system. Clergy are afraid to make and keep deep spiritual friendships among their peers. They withhold the very personal struggles they need to share with one another because of a lack of trust. Each member of the United Methodist clergy knows that someday the peers with whom they

have shared their innermost struggles with could be their district superintendents (*Book of Discipline* 311). The structure of the United Methodist itinerate system precludes any ability to trust one another with spiritual doubts and burdens because of the fear that those same spiritual doubts and burdens could one day be used against them.

Looking at the model given to us in the New Testament, the first disciples struggled with the same temptations clergy do today. However, Christ always brought them back to what was truly important (Matt. 20:20-28). Unfortunately, centering on Christ and his teachings has not been a priority for clergy self-care and spiritual formation.

From the time of the early church, disciples and followers gathered regularly for prayer, study, and fellowship (Acts 2:43-47). The nurture that is available through regular interaction with one another as followers of Christ is necessary to the sustenance of spiritual leaders as well as laity. Studies in the field of vicarious trauma (Nelson and Nelson) have shown that peer support groups, spiritual direction, and ongoing professional coaching help create the atmosphere necessary for peer support. Support groups, spiritual direction and professional coaching are also key factors in preventing burnout.

Denominationally leaders need to do more than talk about spiritual formation and self-care for clergy. Leaders need to legislate at the annual conference or general conference level the absolute need for spiritual directors and small group or covenant group attendance for our clergy. The evidence shows that the participants in this sample were frustrated at the lack of modeling by the denomination. They are looking for spiritual leadership that makes a difference not only for themselves but for their

colleagues. Local leadership assumed that seminaries were accomplishing the work needed to sustain our clergy beyond their academic study into the work of ministry. My research shows that few seminaries are taking the spiritual sustenance of future clergy as seriously as they might. Making self-care and spiritual formation a personal option continues not to be helpful to the sustenance of healthy long-term ministry in the United Methodist Church.

Early Support for the Program of Spiritual Formation for the Spiritual Leader

The basics of spiritual formation are reviewed throughout the academic training of clergy, but my research has shown very few seminaries require any participation in a covenant group or spiritual formation class. Duke Divinity and Perkins School of Theology are two of the seminaries that currently require a spiritual formation class and covenant group as a part of the preparation of students. The assumption of many seminaries and of Boards of Ordained Ministries is that candidates for the MDiv degree and ordination already understand the need for spiritual formation as a means of sustenance for their future ministries. However, Boards of Ordained Ministries are to “[s]tudy and coordinate mutual ministry between United Methodist schools of theology and annual conferences in the fulfillment of their responsibilities for the education and formation of candidates for ordained, licensed, and certified ministries” (*Book of Discipline* 619). Considering the scope of the work of the Boards of Ordained Ministries, coordinating with United Methodist schools of theology on the formation of candidates is but a small part of their yearly work. Because of the lack of time to coordinate, I believe either the seminaries must change their academic expectations to include spiritual formation or self-care training or the United Methodist annual conference Board of

Ordained Ministries must institute spiritual formation and self-care training early in their care of new ministerial candidates.

In the Board of Ordained Ministry interviews of possible provisional candidates, I have witnessed lip service given to the need for spiritual formation and the practices the candidates currently had in place. I also found that not all interviewing committees asked about the spiritual sustenance or health of the candidate. The practice of spiritual formation was a foregone conclusion. Asking about health concerns was considered inappropriate and not included in the interview process.

Instead of seminaries and Board of Ordained Ministries continuing to assume spiritual formation and self-care is a personal choice more could be done to make spiritual formation and self-care the choice of the community of faith for the health of the ministry of Christ in the world. If the spiritual leader is not healthy in mind, body and spirit, the church is not healthy.

I would like to see a change in the policies and practices of United Methodist seminaries, Boards of Ordained Ministry, and the orders of deacon and elder to give early and continuous support to the need for spiritual formation and self-care practices as a part of the healthy and effective ministry of clergy. I believe that a variety of options might be considered as a way of changing how clergy and churches view not only the ministry of clergy but their role as spiritual leaders.

Johnson's research outlines eight spiritual types as unique creation gifts to humanity: energizers, stabilizers, crusaders, renewers, organizers, analyzers, encouragers, and enhancers. Each spiritual type he has developed is defined with all its strengths and weaknesses toward the end that individuals could understand and honor who they are as

God created them to be and celebrate their uniqueness. When an individual, whether clergy or lay, understands who they are created to be as God's child and begins to nurture their unique *soulprint*, they begin the journey of fulfilling their human potential. Research has shown that clergy who have explored their *soulprints* are better able to fulfill their potential in ministry. Clergy become more self-aware, able to give strong spiritual leadership because they now have a unique understanding of God's call upon their lives as they were created to fulfill.

To be spiritually nurtured, individuals need to nurture the whole of their beings. Choosing to incorporate practices that nurture their specific nature leads to greater wholeness for individuals. The work of Ware, in her book *Discover Your Spiritual Type* echoes the groundbreaking work of Urban T. Holmes in understanding the personality and its spiritual needs. Johnson builds on this work with his own interpretation of spiritual typing, which he names the *soulprint*. The research of each of these writers points to the necessity of understanding ourselves as God's unique creation. Effective integration of the individuals' unique spiritual needs will only strengthen clergy as spiritual leaders.

Mulholland writes eloquently about the need to understand the whole of who individuals are: their strengths and our weaknesses (*Invitation* 62). The constant temptation toward the shadow side must not be ignored. When people nurture only one way of experiencing the holy, they find themselves drawn to activities that can be destructive to their relationship with God if they do not satisfy those shadow-side needs through spiritual disciplines that fulfill those needs before the need becomes destructive. Although research by Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger in a Pulpit and Pew study

show that only 6 percent of the clergy in their sample were actually forced to leave the ministry because of sexual misconduct, the possibility for irreparable damage to a congregation is always present when a clergyperson is not attending the needs of the whole self (130).

Instead of waiting until a problem of effectiveness is identified within the work of clergy, resources would be better spent if leadership could help clergy better understand who they are beyond a psychological profile or a spiritual gifts inventory. Both the psychological profile and gifts inventory are tools used early in the candidacy process for ordination, but neither have the effect that spiritual typing would. I believe before clergy begin active ministry in the world, a retreat could be developed to enhance the clergy's understanding of their spiritual nature and how to accept and nurture the whole of who they are. Tying together spiritual typing along with spiritual giftedness and leadership development (Oswald and Kroeger) allows clergypersons to develop their ministry into the fullness of its capacity. The clergyperson is able to live and work toward their strengths.

I believe ministry in the Rocky Mountain Conference could be strengthened by the early development of spiritual leadership in ordination candidates through a spiritual formation retreat where clergy are given the opportunity to investigate their *soulprints* and then write a *rule of life* that would enhance their unique spiritual nature. Intentional spiritual direction could be offered by the use of Ministerial Education Funds as a follow-up. With a concentrated effort to affect incoming candidates for ordination, effectiveness no longer becomes an issue later in ministry.

Implications of the Findings

I hope this study will be used to inform the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Ordained Ministry on how they might influence not only the local United Methodist seminary, Iliff, about their training of MDiv students as spiritual leaders, but also how they might encourage greater use of spiritual formation by candidacy mentors, provisional classes of deacons and elders in residency in ministry, ministry mentors, and provisional coaching by interview teams.

The Board of Ordained Ministry could strengthen its relationship with Iliff School of Theology by actively meeting with the academic dean and discussing the spiritual formation plan for MDiv students at Iliff. Representatives of the Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM) could volunteer to lead accountability covenant groups for spiritual formation within the seminary. Iliff School of Theology could be challenged by the Rocky Mountain Conference (RMC) cabinet and Bishop to focus their education of MDiv students as spiritual leaders in the ministry of Christ instead of theologians leading faith communities.

The BOM could emphasize the candidacy mentor use of the spiritual formation materials provided within the denominational candidacy material to help the candidate reflect upon their call and begin the process of a lifelong practice of spiritual formation. The training for candidacy mentors could be more about becoming a spiritual leader and less about administrative forms and policy. Provisional classes of deacons and elders in the residency in ministry program could be introduced to the necessity of spiritual formation and self-care at an abbreviated retreat in spiritual leadership and spiritual formation at the spring provisional interview. Candidates for ordination could be required

to create a *rule of life* at that retreat that is then used as a tool for interview teams to measure the growth of the ordination candidate toward spiritual leadership in the full membership in the annual conference. The BOM could institute a program of individual spiritual direction by certified spiritual directors for the provisional period, establishing a pattern of practice and accountability in the future spiritual leader. Instead of the current two-year provisional mentor program, the BOM could institute a program of professional coaching through certified coaches in the conference to work on issues of effective spiritual leadership. Utilizing both the professional coach and the spiritual director as a means of affecting the spiritual leadership of the ordination candidate could eventually strengthen the churches and ministries within the Rocky Mountain Conference.

The cabinet of the RMCUMC could make spiritual formation and self-care a priority in their district by establishing clergy accountability covenant groups that meet monthly for clergy spiritual formation and self-care. The cabinet could covenant with one another to be more transparent about their own spiritual and self-care practices. Cabinet members could reorient their own spiritual leadership priorities to include regular visits with clergy and their churches. Yearly clergy review sessions with the district superintendent could include a time of silence and prayer before beginning holy conversation. District superintendents could include in the training of the staff-parish relations committees the importance of self-care for the clergy. They could include a review of the conference rules for continuing education, vacation and appropriate categories of renewal, sabbatical, and medical and family leave available for clergy.

Making spiritual formation and self-care a priority of the work of the seminaries, denominational leadership, and boards of ordained ministry will only affirm the

importance of spiritual leadership and clarify the integral role these two areas of personal growth have in the long-term sustenance of the ministry. A renewed emphasis on spiritual formation and self-care will serve to revitalize the image of clergy as spiritual leaders providing spiritual nurture and guidance to the laity they serve in a variety of ministry settings.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the small population of provisional candidates available to participate. Another limitation was the homogeneity of the population. The third limitation was the lack of comparison between research subjects and populations of clergy in other denominations and at other times in their ministerial careers. The fourth limitation was the short study timeline. Ninety days was not long enough to see any real consistent change or improvement in the life and ministry of the study participants.

Unexpected Observations

The research clearly indicated in that the participants already were practicing a wide variety of spiritual disciplines and self-care. I unfairly assumed that the spiritual formation material would be educational for the study group.

Another surprise was the strong feelings expressed about the role modeling of spiritual leadership by the district superintendents and bishops of the church. Study participants expect to be spiritually led by their designated denominational leaders in action as well as word.

Recommendations

I have several recommendations for future use of this study that are in two categories: potential follow-up studies and potential denominational impact.

The first category, potential follow-up studies, has three recommendations. I believe these recommendations will allow for a better understanding of the need for spiritual formation and self-care.

First, a follow-up study over the next two years with the individuals involved with the original research study would be appropriate. The study period was too short a period of time to see any major affect on the ministry of the participants. Evaluating the effect of spiritual formation and self-care practices over an extended period of time with the same research subjects would give a fuller picture of the possible effect on spiritual leadership.

Second, the research study could be expanded to include additional provisional deacon and elder candidates in other United Methodist annual conferences. The added information from studying other annual conferences would help to give a broader picture of the need for the establishment of a priority for spiritual formation and self-care for the spiritual leader.

Third, a comparison research study could be done on those clergy who have been in ministry fifteen-twenty years or longer. Comparing incoming clergy and their self-care practices and those who find themselves in the middle of their ministry years could be a great help to understanding exactly what is needed to sustain spiritual formation and self-care practices for clergy over a lifetime of spiritual leadership.

The second category, potential denominational impact, has eight recommendations. I believe the denomination is at a critical turning point in history. The following recommendations could have a strengthening affect upon the larger church.

First, Boards of Ordained Ministries in the United Methodist tradition could reconsider their policies as they regard the spiritual formation and self-care of clergy.

They could clarify how they are currently sustaining and supporting clergy in their spiritual leadership and what policies could be created to support and enhance spiritual formation and self-care.

Second, clearer communication with the clergy of the annual conference could be created by the Board of Ordained Ministry about spiritual formation and self-care programs already in place and how clergy might access those programs recommended by the Board of Ordained Ministry for use.

Third, district superintendents and bishops in the annual conferences of the United Methodist Church could be more transparent about their own spiritual formation and self-care so they might provide good modeling of spiritual leadership for the clergy under their care.

Fourth, a greater emphasis on the spiritual formation of disciples and less emphasis on programming for numerical growth could come from the various boards and agencies of the United Methodist Church.

Fifth, monies could be made available from the UM Ministerial Education Fund at the national and local level for ongoing spiritual direction, spiritual retreats and quality sabbatical time for our clergy.

Sixth, Boards of Ordained Ministries could review more closely the events clergy are attending for their spiritual formation and make stronger suggestions to enhance spiritual leadership.

Seven, clergy, with the support of the United Methodist District Superintendent, could set clear personal boundaries with the Church or ministry beyond the local church for their own self-care and spiritual nurture.

Eighth, Wesleyan accountability groups could be organized and used by clergy for their ongoing sustenance and growth.

Postscript

Feeling a deep need for connection with the Divine, I have always felt a yearning to immerse myself in the art of spiritual formation. Therefore, the experience of writing this dissertation has been a profound personal journey. I began deep in burnout with a curiosity about the place of spiritual formation in the working ministry lives of clergy. I was looking for answers in my research and realized the answers I sought most were in the fact that God called me for a purpose and I needed to change how I viewed ministry. I now conclude my writing of this dissertation with a new understanding and a new passion for ministry.

Because of my renewed passion for ministry, I plan to write a summary article for the Rocky Mountain United Methodist cabinet and bishop. I hope also to make a presentation about my findings to the Rocky Mountain Board of Ordained Ministry. I also intend to write a book for the general public about humanity's spiritual needs and God's answer entitled, *Life with God Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint*. I plan to highlight the need for individuals to attend to their unique spiritual nature and seek the ancient paths to be in close relationship with God by offering myself as a retreat leader and spiritual director. Most of all, I plan to make my passion for spiritual formation and self-care a map for the continuing journey of ministry.

APPENDIX A

Pre-Retreat Research Survey

Spiritual Renewal and Self-Care Knowledge Survey

Demographics

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Preferred Phone No. _____

Commissioned toward Deacon Yes/No

Commissioned toward Elder Yes/No

Current Appointment _____

Do you expect to move at the 2012 Annual Conference? Yes/No

College _____

Degree Received _____ Major _____ Year Received _____

Seminary _____

Degree Received _____ Year Received _____

Ethnic Background _____ (Choose from the list below.)

1=Asian

2=Black

3=Hispanic

4=Native American

5=Pacific Islander

6=White

7=Multiracial

Date of Birth _____ (dd/mm/year)

Present Marital Status _____ (Choose from the list below.)

- 1=Never married
- 2=Married
- 3=In a committed relationship
- 4=Separated
- 5=Divorced
- 6=Widowed
- 7=Remarried

Spiritual Formation in the Previous Three Months

(Choosing a 1 means you strongly disagree, 2 means you somewhat disagree, 3 means you are neutral, 4 means you agree, and choosing a 5 means you strongly agree.)

1. I have a relationship with at least one other person in whom I can confide
in and seek help from in times of need and crises1 2 3 4 5
2. I meet at least monthly with a small group for the purpose of prayer,
Bible study, fellowship, and encouragement.....1 2 3 4 5
3. I develop and maintain healthy relationships in my immediate family
(significant other, spouse, parents, children).....1 2 3 4 5
4. I read, study, and use my Bible daily for spiritual formation purposes1 2 3 4 5
5. I attend and participate in worship services when I am not leading worship1 2 3 4 5
6. I spend time daily praying.....1 2 3 4 5
7. I tithe my money to the church1 2 3 4 5
8. I fast once a week for spiritual formation purposes.....1 2 3 4 5
9. I spend time in solitude as a part of my spiritual renewal practice.....1 2 3 4 5
10. I spend time in centering prayer as a part of my spiritual renewal practice1 2 3 4 5
11. I spend time journaling as part of my spiritual renewal practice.....1 2 3 4 5
12. I use the arts as a part of my spiritual renewal practice1 2 3 4 5
13. I believe my spiritual disciplines are helping me to grow into the likeness
of Christ1 2 3 4 5
14. I have discovered my spiritual gifts and feel I use my spiritual gifts in my
ministry1 2 3 4 5
15. I know myself and understand how to nurture my spiritual renewal in ways
that sustain the work of my ministry..... 1 2 3 4 5
16. I see myself as a spiritual leader in ministry.....1 2 3 4 5

17. I see confession and submission as spiritually renewing.....1 2 3 4 5
18. I experience the presence and power of God in ordinary living1 2 3 4 5
19. I believe in serving others through mission as a part of my spiritual renewal
practice.....1 2 3 4 5
20. I believe my spiritual renewal practices have changed.....1 2 3 4 5

Self-Care in the Previous Three Months

(Choosing a 1 means you strongly disagree, 2 means you somewhat disagree, 3 means you are neutral, 4 means you agree, and choosing a 5 means you strongly agree.)

21. I have noticed positive changes in my health1 2 3 4 5
22. I have made positive changes in how I take care of myself physically1 2 3 4 5
23. I have noticed other changes in my daily life routine1 2 3 4 5
24. I have made positive changes in my leisure life1 2 3 4 5
25. I have noticed changes in my ability to have fun.....1 2 3 4 5
26. I experience more stress.....1 2 3 4 5
27. I experience less stress1 2 3 4 5
28. I have noticed positive changes in my sense of identity1 2 3 4 5
29. I believe I am healthier than I was three months ago1 2 3 4 5
30. I use all available resources to know myself better1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B

Letter of Invitation to Expert Reviewers

May 31, 2011

Dear Dr. Stout:

As you are aware, during the last four years, I have been working on my doctoral dissertation through Asbury Theological Seminary. I have made great progress over the last three months and now find myself ready to submit my instruments for research for expert review. As you have worked in the education field and have done review work previously, I would like to invite your participation in reviewing these instruments. The research instruments are

- . The Spiritual Renewal and Self-Care Knowledge Survey
- . The Spiritual Renewal and Self-Care Practices Interview

The purpose of this study is to identify the elements of spiritual renewal and self-care that support effective spiritual leadership of clergy within the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church in a sustainable practice of ministry. Hopefully, this research can be used to create practices that support effective spiritual leaders in ministry. The heart of my project centers around a three-day retreat entitled, Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership. Participants in this retreat will be invited to participate in my research study. My four research questions are:

- What were the spiritual formation and self-care practices of the participants in the study prior to the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?
- What were the spiritual formation and self-care practices of the participants in the study after the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership retreat?
- How were spiritual formation and self-care practices impacting the ministries of the participants in the study?

- What were the recommendations for sustainable spiritual leadership in the practice of ministry for clergy?

The expert review of my two research instruments needs to take place as soon as possible. A form for the review is included in this mailing along with the instruments for review. I would appreciate your conducting the review of these documents by June 6. There is some flexibility in this schedule if you are unavailable during this time period. Your comments and suggestions about the research instruments will be very valuable to my dissertation process. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are able and willing to participate in this review process. If so, please read the attached materials and fill out the review form and return it to me.

Humbly,

Rev. Jane Y. Riecke

APPENDIX C

Letter of Invitation to the Study Participants

January 24, 2012

Dear Provisional Candidate,

My name is Rev. Jane Youtz Riecke and I am a doctoral candidate in the Beeson Program at Asbury Theological Seminary. I am going to be conducting your March RIM Retreat on Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership. In addition, I am conducting a research study as part of the requirements of my doctor of ministry degree, and I would like to invite you to participate.

I am studying spiritual formation and its ability to sustain spiritual leadership in healthy and effective ministry. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey about spiritual formation and self-care practices prior to the March Residency In Ministry retreat on Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership and then meet with me for an interview about spiritual formation and self-care three months following the retreat. You will also be asked to complete the survey again after the conclusion of the retreat. In particular, you will be asked questions about *prayer, study, maintaining healthy relationships, solitude, journaling, the importance of spiritual renewal, and small group fellowship, among many other topics.*

The pre-retreat and post-retreat survey can be taken online through Survey Monkey. I will e-mail you the electronic link to the pre-retreat survey after receiving your signed consent form. I ask that you take the survey as soon as possible. The post-retreat survey link will be sent to you three months following the retreat.

Interviews will take place at a mutually agreed-upon time and place, approximately three months post-retreat, and should last about 45 minutes. The interview will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will only be reviewed by myself, and only I will transcribe and analyze them. They will then be destroyed.

You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. Although you probably won't benefit directly from participating in this study, we hope that others in the ordination process of the United Methodist Church will benefit from your participation.

Participation is confidential. Study information will be kept in a secure location in my home office. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed. Participation is anonymous, which means that no one will know what your answers are.

If you withdraw from the study prior to the conclusion, your information will not be

included in the study and all documents pertaining to your participation will be destroyed. Taking part in the study is your decision. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also withdraw from the study at any time or decide not to answer any question you are not comfortable answering. Participation, nonparticipation or withdrawal will not affect your ordination in any way.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at 970-692-3620 or RevJYRiecke@yahoo.com. You may also speak with my faculty advisor, Dr. Randy Jessen at 719-244-2222 or Randy.Jessen@AsburySeminary.edu.

Thank you for your consideration. If you would like to participate, please open the attached Study Participant Consent Form and Information Sheet. Please read the information sheet and then fill out the consent form and return it to 3747 Jefferson Dr., Loveland, CO 80538. If I have not heard from you by February 15, I will call you to see whether you are willing to participate. Once I have received an answer I will send you the electronic link to the survey. Please complete the survey online by February 28.

With kind regards,

Rev. Jane Youtz Riecke
3747 Jefferson Dr.
Loveland, CO 80538
970-692-3620
RevJYRiecke@yahoo.com

APPENDIX D

Participant Informed Consent Form

The Problem of Sustaining Effective Spiritual Leadership in the Clergy
of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church

I _____ agree that I have

- read the information sheet;
- had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study with the researcher and/or their mentor;
- received satisfactory answers to all my questions or have been advised of an individual to contact for answers to pertinent questions about the research and my rights as a participant.

I understand that my participation will be tape-recorded and I am aware of and consent to, your use of these recordings for research purposes.

I understand my interview will be transcribed and used in publications but that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me from this quoted material.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study without penalty if I so wish and I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this study only and that it will not be used for any other purpose. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the data protection policy of Asbury Theological Seminary.

Signed:

Date:

APPENDIX E

Research Study Information Sheet

Sustaining Effective Spiritual Leadership

Through Spiritual Formation Practice and Self-Care

*Researcher: Rev. Jane Youtz Riecke
3747 Jefferson Dr.
Loveland, CO 80538
970-692-3620*

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or you would like more information.

This research project will evaluate the behavioral and cognitive changes in clergy in their first five years under appointment through the experience of participation in the RIM Retreat entitled, “Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership.” The study will use two research instruments. The first instrument is a survey entitled Spiritual Formation and Self-Care Knowledge Survey and you will be asked to take this survey prior to the retreat. Once you have participated in the retreat, you will be asked to create a ‘rule of life’ and practice it for three months. The researcher will then ask participants to answer the same questionnaire after having experienced the retreat and practiced its spiritual formation principles. Both surveys will only take approximately 30 minutes to complete online. The second research instrument is a personal interview of retreat participants entitled Spiritual Formation and Self-Care Practices Interview. You will be interviewed by Skype or in person, at the conclusion of the three-month study period. Each interview will be audio taped. The researcher will also make notes during the interview to assist transcription. The interview will last an average of 45 minutes. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. Your participation will help in the understanding of spiritual formation and self-care for individuals in the provisionary process.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you choose not to participate it will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

All data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy of Asbury Theological Seminary.

APPENDIX F

Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership Retreat Outline

Tuesday

1:30pm	Opening contemplative worship led by Jane Riecke
2 pm	Investigating Your Soul Print and How You Might Nurture Your Unique Nature
4:30pm	Break to Use the Outdoor Labyrinth
6 pm	Dinner
7 pm	Break Out Sessions
9 pm	Compline Prayer
10 pm	Great Silence

Wednesday

7 am	Lauds
8 am	Breakfast
9	Morning Session on Enhancing Your Spiritual Leadership in the Midst of Spiritual Desolation
Noon	Lunch
2:30 pm	Afternoon Session on Spiritual Formation Disciplines for the 21 st Century
5:30pm	Break
6 pm	Dinner
7:30 pm	Questions and Answers for Those Participating in the Research Project
9 pm	Compline
10 pm	Great Silence

Thursday

7 am	Lauds
8 am	Breakfast
9:30 am	RIM Paperwork and Details
10 am	Creating a Rule of Life for the 21 st Century
11:30 am	Closing Worship Celebration
Noon	Depart!

APPENDIX G

Post-Retreat Electronic Mail to Research Study Participants

Subject: Research Study Check-In

Hi, all!

As we go into Holy Week, I just wanted to check in and to say I really enjoyed being with you all during our RIM Retreat. I hope it was refreshing for you and that it helped you take a deep breath in preparation for Easter.

Holy Week for those who minister in the church can be very stressful. The added services, the extra details, the preparation of music and word fill every waking moment. I hope you will take time this Friday/Saturday to pause and prepare. Fill the well so living water may flow through you.

Again, thank you for participating in my doctoral project. I'm so very excited to complete my work and you are helping to make that happen.

God bless you all,
Jane

Rev Jane Y Riecke
Pastor
FUMC
533 Grant Ave.
Loveland, CO 80537
970-692-3620

www.seekchristtoday.org.

“Joy is God in the marrow of your bones.” Eugenia Price

Subject: Research Study Check-in

Dear all,

I don't know if you are as wired in as I am, but I've been reading the updates from Tampa as they come in and praying for God's Spirit to move mightily among those gathered. I think we all are looking for not just a Pentecost moment, but a resurrection moment for our beloved UMC. Much is at stake these next 7 days.

As we all know, only God can raise dry bones and the UMC bones of North America are pretty dusty right now. So, I've concluded that I will continue to pray for living water for you and me and all UMC clergy faithfully struggling to bring a message of God's hope, love, grace and peace in the midst of an anxiety driven world. Only living water can refresh those tired bones, renew our spirits and inspire us to go forth to serve yet another day.

Paul's letter to the Colossians, 2: 6-7, exhorted the people of the early church to be "rooted," "built up," and "established" firmly in faith. The question for each of us is not "What does the future hold for the UMC?" but "How deeply am I rooted in my faith?" AND "How might I nurture and grow that faith in others?"

As you continue to practice your *rule of life*, take time to BREATHE and remember regardless of what petitions are passed, regardless of any crisis, regardless of the powers and principalities of this world....God loves you. Go forth and love in Christ's name!

Your friend in Christ,
Jane

Rev Jane Y Riecke
Pastor
FUMC
533 Grant Ave.
Loveland, CO 80537
970-692-3620
www.seekchristtoday.org
"Joy is God in the marrow of your bones." Eugenia Price

Subject: Research Study Check-in

Dear all,

It's hard to believe but the end of our 90 days of living our *Rule of Life* has come to end and now its time to take the post-retreat survey. I hope you will take a few moments between now and next Saturday to take the survey I have again posted to survey monkey. **The link is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DGY9NPN>.** Just copy and paste into your browser. I'm sure it will only take you a few moments.

As to the interview phase of the project, I'm hoping to consolidate the interviews and sit down with as many of you as possible during annual conference. I have included an interview schedule as an attachment. I would ask that you choose a time that will most suit your attendance and participation at annual conference and respond to me by e-mailing all your choice. Emailing all will assist us all in keeping track of times that are available.

We will meet in the lounge area of the hotel near the front desk for your appointment. The interview is a total of 5 questions and should not take too long.

Again, I am so grateful for your help in my research project. You have no idea how much this means to me.

See you at Annual Conference!
Jane

THANK YOU!

Rev Jane Y Riecke
Co-Pastor
FUMC
533 Grant Ave.
Loveland, CO 80537
970-692-3620

www.seekchristtoday.org

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Emerson

APPENDIX H

Post-Retreat Survey

Post-Retreat Spiritual Renewal and Self-Care Knowledge Survey

Demographics

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Preferred Phone No. _____

Spiritual Formation Throughout the Last Three Months

(Choosing a 1 means you strongly disagree, 2 means you somewhat disagree, 3 means are neutral, 4 means you agree, and choosing a 5 means you strongly agree.)

1. I have a relationship with at least one other person in whom I can confide in and seek help from in times of need and crises 1 2 3 4 5
2. I meet at least monthly with a small group for the purpose of prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and encouragement..... 1 2 3 4 5
3. I develop and maintain healthy relationships in my immediate family (significant other, spouse, parents, children)..... 1 2 3 4 5
4. I read, study, and use my Bible daily for spiritual formation purposes 1 2 3 4 5
5. I attend and participate in worship services when I am not leading worship 1 2 3 4 5
6. I spend time daily praying..... 1 2 3 4 5
7. I tithe my money to the church 1 2 3 4 5
8. I fast once a week for spiritual formation purposes 1 2 3 4 5
9. I spend time in solitude as a part of my spiritual renewal practice 1 2 3 4 5
10. I spend time in centering prayer as a part of my spiritual renewal practice 1 2 3 4 5
11. I spend time journaling as part of my spiritual renewal practice 1 2 3 4 5
12. I use a *rule of life* as a guide for my spiritual renewal practice 1 2 3 4 5
13. I believe my spiritual disciplines are helping me to grow into the likeness of Christ 1 2 3 4 5
14. I have discovered my spiritual gifts and feel I use my spiritual gifts in my ministry 1 2 3 4 5

15. I know myself better and understand how to nurture my spiritual renewal
in ways that sustain the work of my ministry 1 2 3 4 5
16. I see myself as a spiritual leader in ministry 1 2 3 4 5
17. I see confession and submission as spiritually renewing..... 1 2 3 4 5
18. I experience the presence and power of God in ordinary living 1 2 3 4 5
19. I believe in serving others through mission as a part of my spiritual
renewal practice 1 2 3 4 5
20. I believe my spiritual renewal practices have changed..... 1 2 3 4 5

Self-Care in the Previous Three Months

(Choosing a 1 means you strongly disagree, 2 means you somewhat disagree, 3 means are neutral, 4 means you agree, and choosing a 5 means you strongly agree.)

21. I have noticed positive changes in my health 1 2 3 4 5
22. I have made positive changes in how I take care of myself physically 1 2 3 4 5
23. I have noticed other changes in my daily life routines 1 2 3 4 5
24. I have made positive changes in my leisure life 1 2 3 4 5
25. I have noticed changes in my ability to have fun..... 1 2 3 4 5
26. I experience more stress..... 1 2 3 4 5
27. I experience less stress 1 2 3 4 5
28. I have noticed positive changes in my sense of identity 1 2 3 4 5
29. I believe I am healthier 1 2 3 4 5
30. I use all available resources to know myself better 1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX I

Post-Retreat Interview Questions

1. What spiritual renewal and self-care practices have provided the most sustenance for your ministry in the last three months?
2. What are some of the challenges and obstacles to remaining healthy spiritually and emotionally as a pastor?
3. What elements of the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership Retreat impacted your life the most in the last three months?
4. What is the most important thing the denomination could do to increase spiritual renewal and self-care knowledge?
5. What do you think it is important for others to know regarding your current spiritual, emotional, and physical health as a minister?

APPENDIX J

Letter of Thanks to Study Participants

August 13, 2012

Dear Participant,

I want to personally thank you for all your hard work and patience throughout the research study. Your participation was a great help to my dissertation project. I hope that you received more than you expected and that it was easier than you expected.

It would be a further help to others who may participate in the Spiritual Formation and Your Spiritual Leadership Retreat if you would please fill out the enclosed satisfaction survey and return it to me in the enclosed stamped envelope. Your honest response will help me to better serve other clergy in the future.

As a thank you, I am enclosing a small token of my appreciation for your time and effort.

May God Abide in Us All,

Rev Jane Youtz Riecke

APPENDIX K

Post-Retreat Satisfaction Survey

1. What did you like most about the spiritual formation and your spiritual leadership retreat?
2. What changes would most improve the retreat experience?
3. What did you like most about other spiritual formation retreats you have attended?
4. If this spiritual formation experience or others like it were regularly available, how likely would you be to participate or recommend it to others?
5. If you are not likely to attend a spiritual formation retreat, why not?
6. What would make you more likely to attend a spiritual formation retreat?
7. What is most important to you when choosing a spiritual formation retreat option?
8. What comments would you like to add about the retreat and/or its leadership?

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