

3-1979

# Counseling the Parsonage Family

Walter McGee

*Western Kentucky University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses>



Part of the [Counselor Education Commons](#), and the [Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

McGee, Walter, "Counseling the Parsonage Family" (1979). *Masters Theses & Specialist Projects*. Paper 2612.  
<https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/2612>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses & Specialist Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).

McGee,

Walter B.

1979

COUNSELING THE PARSONAGE FAMILY

A Specialist Project  
Presented to the Faculty  
of the  
Department of Educational Leadership  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

by  
Walter B. McGee  
March 1979

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF THESIS

Permission is hereby

granted to the Western Kentucky University Library to make, or allow to be made photocopies, microfilm or other copies of this thesis for appropriate research or scholarly purposes.

reserved to the author for the making of any copies of this thesis except for brief sections for research or scholarly purposes.

Signed

Walter B. McGehee

Date

4/26/79

Please place an "X" in the appropriate box.

This form will be filed with the original of the thesis and will control future use of the thesis.

COUNSELING THE PARSONAGE FAMILY

Recommended March 30, 1979  
(Date)

Emmett L. Burkeen  
Director of Project

Robert G. Hayden

Lawrence W. Mitchell

Approved April 26, 1979  
(Date)

Edna Gray  
Dean of the Graduate College

COUNSELING THE PARSONAGE FAMILY

Walter B. McGee

March 1979

54 pages

Directed by: Dr. Emmett Burkeen, Dr. DeWayne Mitchell and  
Dr. Delbert Hayden

Department of Educational Leadership

Western Kentucky University

This historical survey was undertaken to investigate certain adjustment problems faced by parsonage families, ordering the available information into precise and functional categories of non-adjustment and then making recommendations based on the categories. Published literature, previous research, and personal observations were the sources used. The categories were: adjustment problems in the areas of identity, stress, support, and residential mobility. General recommendations resulting from the survey conclusions for the whole church included: an area director of pastoral care and counseling, provisions for psychotherapy for pastoral families, conference retreats, district committees of pastoral care and counseling, sabbaticals, and psychotherapy for bishops and district superintendents. Local church recommendations included: Pastor-Parish Relations Committee meetings with pastor's spouse, sub-district workshops on special subjects, a district "hot-line" for those seeking help, marriage growth experiences, a district committee on the parsonage family, and contact with ex-spouses of clergy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Emmett Burkeen for the assistance, understanding, and wise counsel he provided as chairman of my committee, and to Dr. DeWayne Mitchell and Dr. Delbert Hayden for their helpful suggestions and expertise as members of the committee. I especially thank my parents, Walter and Sue McGee, for without them I would have had no family.

I am also grateful to all those members of parsonage families who sought my advice during troubled times. Those encounters initiated my interest in this project.

I especially thank my wife, Pat, and my son, Todd, for their patience, sympathy, encouragement, and assistance within our own parsonage family.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
TABLES . . . . .	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	1
Importance of the Study . . . . .	2
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	3
Definition of Terms . . . . .	3
Procedure . . . . .	3
II. A SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE . . . . .	5
The Pastor . . . . .	5
The Spouse . . . . .	9
The Child and/or Children . . . . .	13
A Summary . . . . .	15
III. CATEGORIZING THE PROBLEMS . . . . .	16
Adjustment Problems in the Area of Identity . . . . .	18
Adjustment Problems in the Area of Stress . . . . .	20
Adjustment Problems in the Area of Support . . . . .	26
Adjustment Problems in the Area of Residential Mobility . . . . .	33
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	37
A Study of the Bowling Green District . . . . .	38
Some Observations About the Study . . . . .	41
Denominational Responsibility for Counseling Services . . . . .	42
Recommendations to the General Church . . . . .	45
Recommendations to the Local Church, Sub-District, and District . . . . .	46
REFERENCE NOTES . . . . .	49
REFERENCES . . . . .	51



TABLES

	Page
1. Ministerial Terminations in the United Methodist Church . .	23
2. Louisville Annual Conference Ministerial Terminations . . .	25
3. Support Appreciation by Priority and Value . . . . .	27
4. Actual Support by Priority and Value . . . . .	27
5. Parsonage Family Preferences for Support . . . . .	29
6. Pastoral Staff of the Bowling Green District . . . . .	39

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

What kinds of personal adjustments must ministers make today? Any answers to this question must include the minister's family relationships and whether these adjustments are peculiar to and necessary for the minister and his family or are common adjustments necessary in today's society. For many years congregations have falsely assumed that ministers and their families really have had no difficulties in making adjustments.

An increasing divorce rate among ministers and a noticeable increase in the number of ministers leaving the ministry (Board of Ordained Ministry Reports, Journals of the Louisville Annual Conference, 1969-1978) are two of the greatest problems facing the church today. Denominations are now becoming aware of the fact that parsonage families are facing difficulties that are putting an increasing amount of stress on family relationships.

Leading church periodicals are now including articles about the adjustment problems that are faced by and that are unique to the parsonage family as well as those adjustment problems that are faced by all families in today's social and economic setting. Churches are asking members what can be done to help their pastors.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this historical survey was to investigate the adjustments peculiar to and necessary for parsonage families, to order

the available statistical information into precise and functional categories that lead to a better understanding of these adjustments faced by ministers and their families today, and to make recommendations to help alleviate the difficulties in adjusting. A review of the literature will determine the extent of adjustment and nonadjustment and whether attempts are being made to solve or alleviate these adjustment problems.

#### Importance of the Study

Each year some ministers, most of whom are young, leave the ministry (Conference Journals, 1969-1978). Only after these ministers leave are the real reasons for their terminating relationships with the church expressed. Since most denominations have a considerable investment in the minister via education, pension obligations, inventories, and other commitments, denominations seek to maintain individuals who are, or can be, adequate for the task of ministering to congregations (Floyd, 1969).

This study revealed some of the genuine factors contributing to ministerial divorces, terminations of ministerial relationships, and other problems. The study also revealed what counseling services have reduced the number of ministers leaving the ministry, divorcing their spouses, or having other major familial problems, and the kinds of helping services that ministers have sought.

This study served as a basis for formulating recommendations for the establishment of counseling services specifically for ministers and parsonage families. Any denomination must use its own organizational structure to develop proper procedures for referral and

administration of counseling services that would be consistent with denominational policies and legislation.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to basic areas of adjustment in parsonage families since 1968. It was also limited to a study of adjustments within major denominations and excluded any examination of small cults or sects.

#### Definition of Terms

Parsonage family. This term refers to a minister giving full time to a church or churches and his/her spouse and children, who live in a home provided by the church or churches of his/her denomination.

Counseling services. Those services offered by appropriately trained personnel to help persons, especially ministers, to cope with stress, conflict, frustration, death, and other problems involving emotions and relationships.

Marital adjustment. For the purpose of this study this term is defined as the improvement in parsonage family relations which lessen the pressure on the minister.

Job satisfaction. For this study this term is used to mean a ratio between the minister's expected job requirements and the degree of fulfillment actually experienced in his/her work.

#### Procedure

Survey of literature. The primary literature surveyed included pastoral counseling books, dissertation abstracts, and denominational journals and periodicals dealing with the subject matter.

Specific studies. Three specific studies were used. A survey by

Whitman (1968), a dissertation by Engdahl (1977), and a survey by Coots (1978) were particularly helpful in establishing categories of nonadjustment.

Interviews. Personal interviews were conducted by the author of the chief administrative officers of the Louisville Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, of six ministers who have divorced or who have left the ministry, and of 15 spouses of Louisville Conference ministers.

Personal observations. Since the author has been a minister in the Louisville Annual Conference for the past 19 years there are included some personal experiences.

After consideration of these various resources, categorization of findings and recommendations for the alleviation of many of the adjustment problems are made. The following three chapters cover the literature surveyed, a synthesis and categorization of the information, and some conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### A SURVEY OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the literature concerned with the kinds of problems that are faced by parsonage families. The literature is reviewed with three different perspectives in mind: the pastor, the spouse, and the child or children. After a presentation of the information available, categorization of the information is then made.

#### The Pastor

The pastor needs a pastor. There is the need for the Christian minister to bring his problems to a colleague who can fulfill the role of minister to him. There are at least three reasons for this. There is the need for confession. The pastor also needs a pastor because he needs the continuing criticism and help which can come from reflecting with other colleagues upon the exercise of his vocation. Finally, the pastor needs a pastor to help with the adjustment problems and requirements of the ministry.

This "troubled ministry" has received sporadic public attention in the past 25 years with such articles as Shrader's (1956) and Whitman's (1968). Shrader's "Why Ministers Are Breaking Down" stated that every function of the ministry--preaching, teaching, pastoral care--must be carried on in a new kind of world, shaped by enormous new technological forces, conditioned in scientific ways

of thinking, threatened by vast forces of revolutionary political and moral significance. The minister may find himself so involved in keeping a complex organization running that his margin of energy for reflecting upon where he is headed is reduced to the danger point.

A study by Whitman, "The View from the Pulpit" (1968), contained an unusually detailed questionnaire sent to several thousand Protestant ministers of the major denominations in all parts of the country. Returns were received from more than 3,000 ministers.

One significant finding of the survey was that younger ministers, those out of seminary in the last 10 years, were angry and were dissatisfied with the expectations of the church. The study further found that ministers were leaving the church for the following reasons: interference by church hierarchy, critical parishioners, meaningless duties, inadequate funds, feelings of inadequacy, irrelevance, and an inability to adjust. Over two-thirds of the respondents were found to have had thoughts of leaving the ministry.

According to many of the ministers in the survey, funding for church buildings will become less important and monies intended to support their maintenance and repair should be used to support counseling centers and occupational ministries for church professionals.

A study by the United Church of Christ of 240 former pastors (Bustanoby, 1977) pointed to three major trouble areas: trouble with the congregation (such as unwarranted or too high an expectation for the minister and the family in their personal lives); distortion of the role of pastor in how much time is spent in administration and in smoothing easily ruffled feathers of the church members and the amount

of time for study and for personal contact; and personal problems such as a sense of personal and professional inadequacy, insufficient training, and family problems. Salary was not found to be a significant factor in pastoral dropouts.

A survey of 301 clergy in the Minneapolis area by the Minneapolis Star (1978) reported that two-thirds of the sample felt lonely and isolated; four out of five sometimes experienced feelings of futility; nine of 10 suffered stress due to problems with parishioners, and the average respondent was a physically and emotionally spent person after an average 55-hour work week.

Buursma (1978) reports that a clergy study conducted by Sams and Sons, a church-furnishings manufacturer in Waco, Texas, found frustration, personal problems, and conflict with the congregation to be major factors in the decisions of pastors to leave the ministry. Floyd (1969) in his chapter on special problems of the clergy cited 25 factors that contributed to clergymen leaving the ministry of the United Methodist Church. The chief factors in the replies from respondents (clergymen who had left the ministry) were divided into two general areas: the negative influence of the hierarchy and the general field of theology. Disillusionment with the church was the third area.

Main (1977) concluded that occupational hazards of the ministry included alcoholism and divorce as a result in part due to demanding clerical duties for the minister which put a strain on family life. In many denominations the breakup of a marriage was considered to be professional suicide. This is no longer the case unless the divorce is messy.



Ragsdale (1978) focused upon four aspects of clergy mid-life crises: physical, career, family/marital, and meaning. Charles Merrill Smith, a Methodist clergyman for almost 30 years, left the ministry to become a free lance writer. His reasons for leaving included frustration with his job combined with a sense of futility, superiors in the ministry (the hierarchy), and a growing disillusionment with the church's desire to be a club and not a communicator of the gospel (Smith, 1971).

Calian (1977) reported the findings of a study entitled Readiness for Ministry, by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. The respondents to the scientific study were equally divided among laity and clergy. The latter group consisted of seminary professors, clergy active in the field, denominational leaders, and senior seminary students. More than 2,000 respondents indicated a large measure of consensus among clergy and laity in their expectations for fledgling clergy beginning their ministry. The study found that the most significant characteristic or criterion that people across denominational lines seek in their young clergy is to be of service without regard for personal acclaim. The report also indicated that the public rejects clergy who are involved in "illicit sexual relationships and other self-indulgent actions that irritate, shock, or offend." The public is also disappointed with pastors who show "emotional immaturity through actions that demonstrate immaturity, insecurity, and insensitivity when buffeted by the demands and pressures of the profession."

Stress and discord in the parsonage was the central focus of a

seminar which dominated the spring meeting of the United Methodist Council of Bishops in March, 1978. Herron (1978) quotes Elizabeth Achtemeier, a minister of the United Church of Christ who teaches at Union Theological Seminary in New York: "Clergy couples today are having the same stresses and marriage difficulties as other couples in our society and are forced to work them out in the fishbowl of parsonage life. Marital problems are the number one difficulty for which persons need counseling both inside and outside the church" (Herron, Note 1).

Richard A. Hunt, professor of psychology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, offered results of several studies conducted on clergy families in stress. Clergy family stress often involves "conflicts between career and marriage, partly due to conflicting role and accomplishment expectations" between minister and spouse (Hunt, Note 2).

#### The Spouse

Dobson (1977) disclosed that the tumultuous upheaval of sex roles has strained members of both sexes and undermined the foundations of the home, producing widespread dissatisfaction with life as it is. Thus, the seventies have already been called an "Age of Depression," particularly with regard to women in our society. Although Dobson was not speaking particularly to the minister's spouse, he did identify many of the factors that minister's wives said were reasons for parsonage family difficulties. Some of the factors that were reasons for difficulty were: low self-esteem, fatigue, lack of time, loneliness, isolation, boredom, financial difficulties, sexual problems, problems with children, and aging.

Lucille Lavender (1976), the wife of a clergyman, has seen the situation both from outside and within the parsonage and believes that lack of understanding of the clergy is at the bottom of much of the unhappiness and dissatisfaction with the church which is being expressed in many quarters today. Truman (1974), also a minister's wife, shared some of the problems of the wives of ministers. These included: no sense of self, the constant struggle to make homes of houses that are never permanent, no roots for self or children, and the one problem that looms above all else---the disintegration of the family unit.

Williams (1978) revealed the difficulties of parsonage families who must move periodically to new appointments or assignments. She feel that the kinds of passages parsonage families go through in the transition to new surroundings cause many of the adjustment problems that must be faced.

Another problem of the ministerial family was suggested by the title of an article by Wells (1974), "Thrice I Cried, Or, How To Be a Minister's Wife If You Loathe It." Ritzky (1977) concluded that the spouse of the pastor is a most precious commodity and must be allowed to develop and become effective by the same process as any other member of a congregation.

Buursma found that, as a group, clergy wives are ranked third behind doctors' and psychiatrists' wives in suffering emotional breakdowns. The most frequent complaints cited were a lack of a social life and friends, too little time alone with their husbands, and not enough money. The cry for independence, for an identity

apart from her husband, is a common refrain of preachers' wives in the 1970's (Bursma, Note 3).

Floyd (1969) lists some sources of irritation for the pastor's wife: a rather deep involvement in husband's work, little privacy, organizational demands on her time, the "fish-bowl" phenomenon, the parsonage system (in the United Methodist Church), and the denial that parsonage occupants are human beings first, and only secondly members of the work force.

A study of the pastor-husband and his wife (Smith, 1976) examined the relationship between the professional and family worlds of United Methodist pastors and their wives. His sample consisted of 259 couples randomly selected from across the United States who were questioned through a mail survey. Included in the questionnaire were the Locke-Wallace Short Marital Adjustment Scale and the Brayfield-Rothe Job Satisfaction Scale. A Conservatism Scale measuring theological orientations was devised and included in the questionnaire. Four key variables were operationalized: marital adjustment was used as a measure of the marital success of the respondents, job satisfaction measured the ratio between pastors' expected job requirements and the degree of fulfillment they actually experienced in their work, wives' participation in church activities was used to measure the extent to which they became involved in their husbands' work, fulfilling the traditional role for pastors' wives, and theological perspectives of the couple were treated as an independent variable, and its influence upon the other variables was measured. One finding of the study was that wives' excessive participation in

church activities was dysfunctional for high marital adjustment, although some participation in church activities was conducive. Those respondents rating high in theological conservatism tended to score high in marital adjustment, job satisfaction and participation in church activities.

Schaller, in an interview with Critz (Note 4), believed that one of the greatest problems for the minister's wife was personalizing the parsonage. Schaller asked over 500 wives the question "Which do you prefer, a housing allowance or a parsonage?" The overwhelming majority of 85% preferred a housing allowance.

A study of the minister's spouse (Engdahl, 1977) analyzed the wife from the perspective of traditional expectations laid upon her from the past as well as her subsequent struggle to find meaning, self-esteem, worth, and value in the present as a person in her own right. The study was divided into three major portions. The first portion dealt with a sociological analysis of the minister's spouse. The second portion dealt with a theological basis for the identity of the minister's spouse, and the third portion attempted to interpret psychologically the minister's spouse as a person in the categories of worth and value.

The questionnaire was sent to 48 ministers' spouses, mostly in the Southern California area, some in the Midwest, a few in the East, and one in the South. Twenty-four of the spouses returned the questionnaire answering the questions in full.

A brief summary concluded that ministers' spouses had been dramatically influenced in recent years by the Women's Liberation

Movement. This study was basically an affirmation of women's worth, value and contribution to all of life in general, and the minister's spouse as a person in particular.

Probably one of the most insightful studies that has been made recently was Coots study (1978). Questionnaires were sent to 50 women, all of whom were divorced, in one annual conference. Their ages ranged from 25 to 65. A few were divorced 10 or 15 years ago, but most were separated during the past five years. There were 45 responses.

Total time commitment to work, with its accompanying feelings of self-worth, is an acceptable escape from a non-rewarding marriage by the pastor. Such acceptable escape is less available to the spouse. More than half of the women used "supportive" to describe their role. But their husbands' needs were met by the people in the churches, thus lessening the husbands' need for their families.

Many of the respondents felt that going to a counselor would be threatening to their spouses, and that few of their husbands would go to counseling sessions. The United Methodist system of appointing ministers and furnishing parsonages seemed to be aspects peculiar to the United Methodist system which affected marriages. The respondents to the study offered suggestions to assist marriages and suggestions to aid transition which results from divorce.

#### The Child and/or Children

Larry W. Sonner (1978), director of pastoral care and counseling for the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, found that ministers are twice as likely to have difficulty with their marriages

as they are with their congregations. Many clergy marriages end in divorce because couples marry for the wrong reasons, sometimes because there is a switch in expectations. Some of the danger signals of troubled marriages were listed: couples always together or never together, severe financial difficulties, a workaholic pastor, persons who embarrass their mates in public and individuals who never mention their spouses or who talk about their spouses to an inappropriate degree, and one or more problem children.

Jacobson (1978) suggested that there were two areas which might cause problems in a parsonage where children are present. The first area is the destructive caring for others which gives the child the impression that the parent does not care as much for or about him/her as he (the parent) cares for others. The second area for problems is the subtle destruction of the child's self-confidence. Ministerial parents are overly sensitive about their images or standings in the community and are likely to lay a burden on the child/children which is more than the child/children can bear. Children are people first, the sons/daughters of ministers second.

Some problems connected with being a PK (preacher's kid) seldom get sufficient attention from laity or clergy. Floyd (1969) stated that extensive contacts with children reared in the parsonage revealed many complaints. PK's do not like the fishbowl in which they live, especially the lack of privacy. Also, leniency with time is often denied him/her. There is the problem of the itineracy where children have to move so frequently that they are often forced to give up old friends and make new ones. They are sometimes the recipients of hostilities that are really meant for the preacher.

### A Summary

The professional Christian ministry has felt the emotional and functional stress of cataclysmic change no less (and sometimes more) than the other "helping" professions. The minister has found it necessary to rethink his own professional role and self-image. Increasing demands for personal counseling with parishioners who are coping with change has complicated the minister's adjustment task. In an attempt to maintain a traditional image of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual superiority, the minister has tried to carry burdens he cannot and should not bear. He thus denies his own humanity and affirms a pseudo-divinity that is not consistent with fact. This has given rise to acute personal and professional frustrations that the minister often dares not reveal. The minister's family usually gets the fallout from this condition.



## CHAPTER III

### CATEGORIZING THE PROBLEMS

The difficulty in attempting to categorize the problems of the modern-day minister and the parsonage family can be seen from the following comments of Mowrer (1961):

Personality disorder of sufficient severity to require hospitalization is today commonly acknowledged as the nation's number one health problem; and the prevalence of divorce, delinquency, suicide, perversion, and addictions of various kinds bespeaks the widespread tensions and poor personality integration in the populace at large. Religion, to which we have traditionally looked for redemption from evil and guidance in the Good Life has all but abandoned its claim to competency in these matters. One writer, raising the question of why more and more ministers crack up, maintains that the trouble lies simply in overwork. Modern churches, he argues, make excessive demands on their ministers, and the solution suggested was for all churches of more than 500 members to have one or more ministers with a clearly defined division of labor. While this is no doubt a good practical suggestion, it does not get to the root of the difficulty.

The trouble basically is that the modern clergyman is in

an ambiguous and agonizing situation; pretending to administer the Bread of Life to others and having no deep trust in it himself. (p. 157)

The adjustment problems of the minister and the parsonage family cannot be understood without some understanding of casual factors. No doubt these factors are many and varied; but, unquestionably, Toffler (1970) is on target when he writes of "the dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future" (p. 13). Toffler makes a convincing case for physical and emotional health being jeopardized by the fact of the premature arrival of the future. Additionally, low income, boredom, dullness, increasing disrespect for the minister and general low morale are other problems which almost every minister is called upon to face.

Research into the kinds of adjustment problems faced by the minister and the parsonage family lends credibility to establishing the following categories:

1. Adjustment problems in the area of identity (lack of self-knowledge).
2. Adjustment problems in the area of stress (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and financial).
3. Adjustment problems in the area of support (isolation, loneliness, fear of closeness).
4. Adjustment problems in the area of residential mobility (itineracy, appointive system).

To more fully understand the adjustment problems of the parsonage family, it will be necessary to look at each of these categories.

Any attempt to provide counsel for the pastor and his/her family should certainly involve providing help and suggestions in these major areas.

Adjustment Problems in the Area of Identity

Jourard (1971) has made the statement: "no man can come to know himself except as an outcome of disclosing himself to another person" (p. 6). Those who undertake the care of souls must attain self-knowledge, which includes but transcends intellectual understanding. Recognition of one's motives, fears, hopes, and habitual reactions is required, as well as emotional balance, the capacity to face one's past, confess one's limitations and capacities, and establish one's ultimate loyalties.

Each person possesses within himself certain abilities to face, understand, and use that which is his alone. The Christian pastor must accept this knowledge, not only as a general proposition but also as an aspect of his self-knowledge. Not only what he believes, but also his way of believing--the route which he has taken to his personal conviction--is important in what he brings to his ministry.

We come to know ourselves only as we engage in the labor of life, to find our capacities in relation to public tasks and private responsibilities, and in the end to make some kind of peace with the prospects and the tragedies which attend our lives. The Christian pastor must win his self-knowledge as a minister. Indeed, one of his problems in attaining self-knowledge is the necessity of coming to terms with so many demands. Another problem is the discrepancy between what he conceives as his chief ministry and the preoccupation with running the church.

The answer to the question "Why am I a minister?" develops very slowly. It can hardly be otherwise, for the issues of the ministry touch the whole fabric of life. Very often original images of what it means to be a minister have to be changed through gained insight and experience. There is the shock of discovering what others, either in the church or outside it, believe about the role of the minister.

The relationship of ministerial tradition to present ministerial experiences is one of the most confounding aspects of this adjustment problem. It is because of this weight, authority, and distance of the past that many ministerial students find their study remote from life. Many ministers find it difficult to become interested in traditional creeds, forms, and concepts. Others readily lose themselves in the past because it offers a refuge from facing the present. For both groups it may be necessary to clarify that dimension of the self which arises out of the past and which requires us to become ourselves through appropriating the meaning of the past.

Self-doubt is a complex psychological phenomenon involving feelings of inferiority, repression, and guilt. Self-depreciation is a way of gaining attention. To be unafraid--to honestly confess doubt--is a genuine part of gaining self-knowledge. Williams (1961) states that "the pastor must search the springs of human conduct in himself. Perhaps he learns in a new sense the meaning of the words, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself,' for sanctification means making whole, and self-knowledge is the difficult road to becoming whole" (p. 100).

### Adjustment Problems in the Area of Stress

A study of "Career Stress in the Ministry" (Mills and Koval, 1971) was reported to the National Council of Churches General Board. This study included 5,000 clergymen from 21 Protestant denominations. Four out of five of these men confessed the experience of one or more periods of "major stress in their ministry." Twenty percent of the sample recalled that their careers had been disturbed by three or four such periods varying from a few days to a year or more. Half of these ministers attributed their stress periods to problems with the congregation or church financing. Seventeen percent of returns reported that stress had roots in marriage and family problems resulting in stress on the whole parsonage family.

One reason why this condition has not been publicized more in the past is revealed in the study which shows that when problems were career-based, most ministers set about to find their own solutions. Only one in five ministers sought outside help. However, 24% of those in stress situations attributed greatest helpfulness to colleagues or superiors in the ministry although sometimes unsought and unintentional. Thirty percent of the men listed their wives as the most helpful source of aid. A point in the study which emphasizes how necessary it is that the Church begin to exercise influence in these stress situations is the fact that only one in 10 of these ministers said that God was the most helpful resource to him. Only one clergyman in six mentioned prayer, Scripture reading, or other acts of faith as relief for his strain.

Until very recently the religious leader was held in high esteem

even in the eyes of non-churched individuals. This is one of the reasons why the ministry can be a very stressful position. Collins (1977) declares:

Everyone expects the minister to be more spiritual than the rest of the congregation. He/she is supposed to have answers to all theological questions and to be a model Christian with a dedicated, well-behaved family. If the parsonage is near the church, everybody can look into the minister's 'glass house' and family privacy disappears. It is easy, therefore, for ministers to conclude 'I'll never make it, I can't handle the stress.' So they shift to other, less demanding (and more lucrative) jobs. (p. 171)

Another major reason for the stress and tension faced by the pastor, according to Bishop Frank L. Robertson, bishop of the Louisville Area of the United Methodist Church (Robertson, Note 5), is the competition for the time and the attention of the pastor. This demand for time and attention from the congregation affects the pastor's conscientious attention to both his other pastoral duties and to his family. The bishop also notes that there is the tendency for the minister to become a 'professional' person, making religion something that he sells and which results in a loss of personal spiritual life and a subsequent diminishing of the spiritual vitality of the parsonage family. Occupational involvement of the spouse which interferes with the rearing of children, changes the duties of various family members, and lessens the amount of time the family can spend together can also complicate the family structure. The spouse often works because the

income level of the pastor does not meet basic family needs and often is below the average income of the majority of his congregation.

The inability of the family to spend any time together is a problem and a primary concern for Carmen King, District Superintendent of the Louisville South District of the Louisville Annual Conference (King, Note 6). G. Edward Henry, Secretary and Treasurer of the Louisville Conference of the United Methodist Church (Henry, Note 7), believes that one of the serious problems he has experienced has been the lack of privacy and its effect on his children. Hunt (Note 2) quotes James Doty: "Ministers and spouses--contrary to popular opinion--are people. They are tempted; they know fatigue; they make mistakes; they get angry; they conceive children; they face the problems of money, sex, vocation, in-laws, monotony, sin, and drugs. They love and they die. They have victories and defeats. They feel as other persons do" (p. 4).

Some evidence of problems in the area of stress can be obtained from facts and research available. Because of the methods of record-keeping of many denominations it is very difficult to ascertain the precise classifications under which their ministerial relationships are reported. The following information is taken from reports of the United Methodist Church. These are not only the most available but also are the statistics which are most pertinent for substantiating the need for counseling services. Included are statistics for the Louisville Annual Conference as well as statistics for the general church obtained from the General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church, 1976, the most recent

available statistics. Similar statistics will be available in 1980 after the session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana.

TABLE 1  
MINISTERIAL TERMINATIONS IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Classification	Louisville Conference		Total Church	
	1969	1976	1969	1976
Located, withdrawn, discontinued, etc.	3	5	481	353
Supernumerary and disability leave	1	6	473	807
Total	4	11	954	1,160

From Table 1 it is noted that in 1969 954 pastors in the United Methodist Church had their conference relations terminated and were discontinued without retirement benefits. In 1976, the total was 1,160, showing an increase of 206. In 1969, 481 of these were listed as removed by conference action or withdrawal. The number in 1976 was 353, indicating a reduction of 128. In 1969, 473 pastors were separated under the heading of supernumerary and disability. The number in 1976 was 807, an increase of 334. Generally, this latter figure means that these people were no longer appointable because of disabilities not covered by retirement rules. One could assume that many of these were "emotionally burned out" persons with functional disorders. This impression can be verbally confirmed with most



members of the annual conference Board of the Ordained Ministry. While the 1969 figures represent 2.7% of the 1969 ministerial membership and the 1976 figures represent 2.3% of the 1976 ministerial membership of the United Methodist Church, it must be remembered that these were persons who had been screened, chosen, educated, and appointed ministers of United Methodist congregations. Rabior (1979) believes that ministers burn themselves out physically, emotionally, and spiritually because they try to be "bionic ministers." He describes "burnout" as a sense of dead-endedness, a feeling that one has nowhere to go, that nothing new is happening and it is not infrequently accompanied by such psychosomatic complaints as insomnia, excessive fatigue, and/or severe headaches. In some cases it may actually take the form of some kind of emotional collapse. The figures in Table 1 represent families--as well as signifying disturbed situations--in over 1,100 United Methodist Churches in one year's time.

The fact that ministers are having adjustment problems resulting in stress is drastically emphasized by a decrease of 128 in the number located, withdrawn, discontinued, etc., but a 41% increase (334) in the number of ministers under the classification of supernumerary and disability leave. A further look at some available statistics for the Louisville Annual Conference over the last 10 years will illustrate more dramatically the fact that stress is a major problem which annual conferences must consider. Table 2 further breaks down the classifications under which ministerial membership is temporarily or permanently terminated. Included in Table 2 is the total membership for each year and the percentage of

non-appointed persons as listed in the various classifications.

TABLE 2  
LOUISVILLE ANNUAL CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL TERMINATIONS

Classification	1969	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78
Discontinued on trial	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Withdrawn	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0
Located (Voluntary)	1	3	1	1	1	1	0	4	1	1
Located (Involuntary)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Supernumerary	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	1	0	0
Disability Leave	9	9	7	5	6	7	7	5	6	9
Transferred	2	3	2	5	5	3	2	2	1	3
Leave of Absence	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	2
Total	16	19	15	15	15	14	15	13	15	15
Total Membership	357	343	340	310	324	328	333	336	337	345
% Not Appointed	4.2	5.5	4.4	4.8	4.6	4.3	4.5	4.8	4.0	4.3

Table 2 indicates that the greatest number of unappointed ministers are included in the disability leave and supernumerary classifications. This is a much larger number than those included in the classifications of discontinued, withdrawn, and located. The assumption can again be made that many of these terminations involve emotionally burned out persons. This number of individuals who find themselves fighting a "losing battle for survival" in the ministry to which they have committed themselves causes the question to be raised of how many more

are still in the ranks of active service leading lives of hopelessness and dejection.

#### Adjustment Problems in the Area of Support

Clergy are human beings who are considered to be creative and innovative persons and who are deeply committed to their work. Because of these factors clergy tend to work alone, to work too long, and to hold unrealistic expectations about themselves. When problems arise, they tend to assume that their origin is in some personal failing. When trying to work out their problems alone they only add to their sense of isolation. As a result the strengths of the church (especially the United Methodist connectional system), the gifts of the ministerial profession, and the caring possibilities of the Christian Church to which they are committed are often overlooked.

One approach to looking at the problem of supportive systems is to look at a study as reported by Lavelle (1977) made by the Board of the Ordained Ministry of the Iowa Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. A research questionnaire was developed in consultation with Ellis Larsen, then director of the Bureau of Social and Religious Research at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. The number of responses from Iowa United Methodist clergy was 482 from a mailing of 690 questionnaires, representing a 70% rate of response.

The first two questions of the questionnaire dealt with support systems and their effectiveness. The first was: "Please indicate how much you value the appreciation of each of the persons or groups listed below." The ranking was doubly recorded-by priority and by

value (on a scale of one to six). The mean response is presented for each person/group below:

TABLE 3  
SUPPORT APPRECIATION BY PRIORITY AND VALUE

Item	$\bar{x}$
Wife or husband	5.24
Lay officers in your congregation	4.89
Denomination executive who knows your work best	4.60
Others on your church staff (if any)	4.57
Close friends not included above	4.48
Other clergy of the United Methodist Church	4.10
Clergy in nearby churches	3.83

The second question requested a slightly different evaluation about these persons or groups: "How supportive (helpful) actually are they?" The respondents ranked and valued each person/group as follows:

TABLE 4  
ACTUAL SUPPORT BY PRIORITY AND VALUE

Item	$\bar{x}$
Wife or husband	5.12
Lay officers in your congregation	4.29
Others on your church staff (if any)	4.24
Close Friends not included above	4.12

TABLE 4 (continued)

Denomination executive who knows your work best	4.01
Other clergy of the United Methodist Church	3.32
Clergy in nearby churches	3.28

---

In Table 3 the ranking for the denomination executive was third with a mean response of 4.60 for appreciation of support. But the ranking for the denomination executive's actual support dropped to fifth with a mean response of 4.01, in Table 4. Evidently, ministers do not receive the support from their denominational executives to the degree that they want or need that support. The order for the other persons/groups was basically the same for both questions.

At the 1978 session of the Louisville Annual Conference Bishop Frank Robertson appointed a Task Force on the Parsonage Family at the instruction of the annual conference. Nine members were named to the task force. They developed a Parsonage Family Counseling Service Questionnaire (1979) and mailed it to 395 parsonage families in the Louisville Conference. There were 182 families that responded to the questionnaire, which represented a 46% return. Ministers, spouses, and children were each given a color-coded copy of the questionnaire. The three groups were subdivided according to three age groupings.

Included in the questionnaire was this question of support: "If you were faced with a concern or problem regarding your family and/or ministry, who would you turn to for assistance, help, or support?" The following responses were given:

TABLE 5  
PARSONAGE FAMILY PREFERENCES FOR SUPPORT

Individual	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
Minister Age 35 or less	Spouse	Another United Methodist Minister	Counselor/ Psychologist
Minister Age 35-54	Spouse	Another United Methodist Minister	District Superintendent
Minister Age 55 or more	Spouse	District Superintendent	Another United Methodist Minister
Spouse Age 35 or less	Spouse	Another Methodist Minister's Spouse	A Respected Layperson
Spouse Age 35-54	Spouse	Counselor	Family Physician
Spouse Age 55 or more	Spouse	Another United Methodist Minister	Family Physician
Children Age 12-14	Parent	Friend	Counselor/ Teacher
Children Age 15-18	Parent	Friend	Teacher/ Counselor
Children Age 19-22	Parent	Friend	Another United Methodist Minister

Not one individual in Table 5 named a denominational executive as first choice for help. Ministers aged 55 or more listed a district superintendent as a second choice and ministers between the ages of 35 and 54 listed a district superintendent as the third choice. Without exception, every individual named either spouse or parent as the first choice for assistance, help, or support when they were faced with a concern or problem regarding the family and/or the ministry (Note 8).

Although peer support ranked second in the Louisville Conference generally, low priority for peer support among clergy is a common finding. It has practical consequences. Most ministerial associations or denominational groupings of clergy which might have the potential for mutual support are poorly attended unless required--which can be an obstacle in building support. In addition they are badly structured and seldom programmed to create a caring community among clergy. Competitiveness is often a hidden issue in ecumenical and denominational groups.

Lowder (1979) reported that a major problem faced by divorced clergy was the attitudes of their peers and their church hierarchy. In clergy divorces both husband and wife need emotional support from their peers. Only when divorce is accepted as reality with possibilities for good will the church be in a position to help the healing process instead of delaying it. Some clergymen reported that divorce would have taken place whether or not the husband was in the ministry. Congregations were accepting and supportive of the ministers despite their divorces. However, most of the ministers and their ex-wives complained about lack of support from their denominations.

Oglesby (1978) believes that there is a kind of loneliness in the ministry which is shared by everyone in professional life who daily finds himself or herself confronted with issues and problems for which there is no "blueprint" for solution. It is a loneliness which wells up whenever decisions must be made that affect the lives of others and for which there can be no definite assurance as to the

final outcome. It is a loneliness which becomes increasingly poignant for the minister who realizes that he deals with time and eternity-- that questions put to him are concerned with life and death and life again. It is a loneliness which tends to overwhelm when it emerges in a realistic consciousness of personal inadequacy. According to Pattison (1977) "Pastors may exist in isolation from the church system because they have isolated themselves from it. The systems model of ministry aims to restore the pastor to the parish, not only to serve the people, but to be served by them with a reciprocity that enables mutual growth" (p. 84).

Every pastor requires an intimate psychosocial system. Such a system must be constructed and maintained. It should include not only family and parishioners but also close friends and colleagues. The pastor needs to develop a personalized system that provides personal support. A pastor should look at his psychosocial system and ask himself the following questions: "Which people do I find there? What are my relationships with these special people? What are the problems in these relationships? How might I improve them?"

Hulse (Note 9), a Louisville Conference District Superintendent, thinks that pastors feel that they have no one with whom they can talk. Flener (Note 10) a district superintendent, believes that many pastors have a fear of talking to their district superintendents.

One reason why members of the denominational hierarchy are not a part of the minister's psychosocial system can be seen in one of the most definitive studies of the hierarchy of the United Methodist Church (Gerdes, 1976). Gerdes stated, "In the temporal realm we



speak of power, in the spiritual realm we speak of authority. Power is there. Bishops know and gain power increasingly as years go by. Power accrues to the bishops. It is power over people. Bishops wield it through the appointment-making process" (p. 42).

We should be careful not to confuse the appointive process (in the United Methodist Church) with overseeing or supervision. It may even be asked whether the appointive process may not be in the way of proper supervision. There are many cases where pastors and even district superintendents would not reveal their feelings to bishops because bishops hold power over them through the appointment-making process. In this case temporal power is clearly in the way of spiritual authority.

Accountability and support go together. According to Gerdes (1976):

The theological starting point for processes of accountability and support is given with the understanding of mutuality. Mutuality is the very description of personhood. Persons are not self-sufficient, independent individuals. Indeed, those are mostly monsters. Persons find the very core of their own being in the network of interrelationships which connects them to other people and beyond. Applying such an understanding of personhood to our concern for accountability and support yields a process of three steps. These steps are: (a) to agree to disagree; (b) genuine self-appraisal; and (c) an evaluation of each other. Putting these three elements together, commonality, self-appraisal, and evaluation of each other as an ongoing

process will create both accountability and support" (p. 61).

Not only are bishops and district superintendents excluded as possible sources of support because of temporal power but those persons who may become denominational officers or who are perceived to be in other positions of power are also excluded for the same reason. On the one hand, denominational executives (primarily bishops and district superintendents for United Methodists) who are perceived to be in a position to be of help are most often contacted in times of severe stress and also see themselves in that role. On the other hand, in actual practice, they are thought to be too busy or unavailable when most needed!

A psychosocial support system is especially needed for those "ministers to society" as Hopkins (1978) calls those who are serving in assignments other than with the local church or church agencies. Hopkins stated, "When a minister leaves the familiar setting of a local church or a church agency and is not engaged in religious rites on a daily basis, the problem of keeping one's identity becomes acute. Yet, it is in this particular context of service that ministers are frequently abandoned, if not rejected, by the annual conference" (p. 7).

#### Adjustment Problems in the Area of Residential Mobility

The itinerant system guarantees a place of ministry for the ordained person. At the same time it effectively militates against the building of a career on the part of the spouse although an increasing number of ministers spouses have been able to find employment in professional or support fields. Probably more than any

other profession couples in which one is an ordained minister can operate as a team. "It is a hopeful sign when bishops and cabinets (their district superintendents) are sensitive to the effects on both of the partners in the ministerial family when appointments are made. But the church still does not provide a means of support for women who face frequent forced transition" (Williams, 1978, p. 17).

Until very recently, it was simply assumed that the husband's work was of utmost importance and the wife would adapt herself to all changes as her primary function was seen to be that of homemaker. New social change phenomenon in our day has left us with few models to follow in decision-making. As Engdahl (1977) found in his study the wives of ministers have been affected today by contemporary social changes and influences especially and specifically the Women's Liberation Movement.

Robertson (Note 5) felt that a growing problem within the ministerial ranks is the itineration of the minister when the spouse's itineration is not as possible. Henry (Note 7) stated the problem this way, "The parsonage is, and is not, my house." When the ministerial couple moves into a different parsonage because they change churches, the spouse must make that house a home. This process takes time and energy and tends to become a never-ending task as some families move every two or so years.

Floyd (1969) found that the parsonage system itself is often a source of discontent for wives of pastors. Buying new curtains for a bedroom is often a major chore and involves getting the approval of numerous committees. Parsonages are often furnished with cast-offs

from the homes of parishioners. Any attempt to do any decorating becomes an exhausting attempt to exhume, restore, refinish, reupholster, and repaint.

If a parsonage family owns furniture it rapidly deteriorates from the series of moves brought about by changes in appointments. Only those who have experienced frequent moves can understand the plight of the parsonage family. There is not only the feeling of no permanent possessions, but there is also the feeling of "no roots," the task of giving up old friends and making new ones, the inordinate amount of time and energy necessary to make a parsonage liveable, as well as the financial cost of moving and remodeling.

Some ministerial spouses have called the experience of moving and relocating a "cycle of grief." But "One of the exciting things about the cycle of grief is that after the denial, tears, depression, guilt, panic, hostility, inability to function, almost inevitably the grieving person begins to see signs of hope and eventually comes to acceptance, readjustment, and integration into the new situation" (Williams, 1978, p. 17).

The itinerancy, the accepted method of the United Methodist Church by which ministers are appointed by the Bishop to fields of labor, is being studied by a special commission under the auspices of the Division of Ordained Ministry, Nashville, Tennessee. The study is to be carried out by the Study Commission on the Itinerancy System, chaired by Donald H. Treese, pastor of the Allison United Methodist Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and chairperson of the Central Pennsylvania Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Treese

(Note 11) noted that historically, itineracy was built on the principle of self-denial but in practice it guarantees security. The study of the itineracy should not suggest the church is about to abandon the practice because the itineracy is a viable system but one that is disabled and needs adjustments. Besides these concerns, the commission will study the problems of part-time appointment, the worker-priest, the economic impact of working spouses, work load, appointments beyond the local church (special appointments), and the re-entry process of chaplains, campus ministers, pastoral counselors, and others.

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the problems faced by pastors and their families today, there is an increasing need for psychological services sponsored by the church. The United Methodist Church has an organizational structure that permits it to approach the problems of pastors and parsonage families in a more realistic way than almost any other church structure.

United Methodism and its clergy need to look seriously at what kind of caring structures it already possesses. It is a contention that the church operates in an individual, crisis-intervention model, rather than in a more healthy preventing, supporting, and community-building model. That is true whether we look at the local parish, the Board of Ordained Ministry and/or Cabinet at the conference level, or peer support among clergy. We spend inordinate amounts of time and personnel--and structure ourselves accordingly--to put out fires, to deal with problems and cases and emergency interventions.

Clergy do have and use support systems. The next step is to intentionally strengthen and develop these systems. That task falls mainly to the profession itself. The studies consistently report, for example, a great potential for mutual caring among clergy. When clergy get together regularly for support they have innate sensitivities and learned skills to care deeply and creatively for one another. The

problem is that of getting the clergy to set the priority of taking care of their profession and one another.

Recommendations regarding counseling services for pastors and parsonage families will only be helpful as they relate to specific people. Recommendations should not be made without a study of the particular group to which they are to be related. To make recommendations to the Louisville Conference, it is necessary to research particular needs. A study within the Bowling Green District of the Louisville Conference of the United Methodist Church shows the kinds of problems experienced by its clergy, as well as the way the existing structure of the church can be used to provide counseling services.

#### A Study of the Bowling Green District

In response to expressed concerns by the District Council on Ministries and the Bowling Green District Committee on the Ordained Ministry, the author (chairperson, Bowling Green District Committee on the Ordained Ministry) appointed a District Sub-committee on the Parsonage Family. The first meeting was held on February 14, 1977 (Note 12).

The committee began with a discussion of the question, "Is there a ministry which the Bowling Green District can provide to its parsonage families?" The discussion immediately turned to reflection upon the concerns that weigh upon parsonage families. Some of those mentioned were:

1. The family is placed on a false pedestal (unrealistic expectations).

2. Financial hardships.
3. Alienation from fellow parsonage families; fear to reveal anything which might be damaging to the family's image in the system because of lack of confidentiality.
4. Parsonage families face the same identity struggles and "life passages" as all other families, but with the additional peculiar stresses and relationships of the pastorate.
5. Many parsonage families are lonely.

The committee then reviewed the pastoral staff of the Bowling Green District, discovering some interesting contrasts:

TABLE 6  
PASTORAL STAFF OF THE BOWLING GREEN DISTRICT

Pastors' Ages/Experience	Number	%
Just beginning (Student, first charge, etc.)	5	11
Up to five years in pastorate (Basically under 30 years age)	9	20
Age range 30 to 40	3	7
Age 40 and above (At least a dozen or more years of experience)	27	61
Total	44	99

Almost one-third of the pastors are under thirty years of age, several still in school and just beginning their families. Almost two-thirds of the pastors are over 40, with teenage or grown children.



Thus, there are two rather distinct clusters of parsonage family situations in the district. Some of the feelings that present difficulties are those resulting from different salary levels and living standards, competitiveness, and age/generation preoccupations.

The group believed that the United Methodist connectional system ought not by necessity to be a liability; rather, it ought to be potentially a unique opportunity for strengthening and supporting one another. The group discussed the need for small support groupings which would meet on some continuing interval basis, recognizing that these groupings can be a mixed experience, sometimes helpful, sometimes not so helpful. The group felt that with proper guidance and a suitable launching such groups could be made to provide needed and valuable assistance. Such groups could be a sharing/sounding board experience, and a network for discovering opportunities for special help when occasionally needed.

The sub-committee discussed the need for counseling in cases of serious marriage and family problems and recommended the availability of professional counseling referral. Such agencies as Comprehensive Care were not particularly recommended because it is believed that the best counseling could be found from someone with a pastoral orientation who has lived in the system and knows experientially its role and relationship context.

The sub-committee recommended the following general plan for implementation of a district support group program:

1. All pastors and spouses plan to participate in an afternoon and evening workshop on a specified Sunday afternoon to launch the

program. The District Superintendent would be asked to contact the local churches for their support in getting the parsonage couple freed from normal responsibilities and making possible their attendance.

2. At this workshop, a qualified resource leader would make one or more presentations on the parsonage family, setting the stage for the small groups to begin. There would have to be very careful pre-planning for this meeting. Small group convenors would have to be trained in advance. The groups would then meet and work together for a period of time on a planned agenda (the resource leader would help in the planning of this small group agenda). There would be time for a leisurely dinner and free conversation, and then a closing session as designed by the leader. This workshop would last from approximately 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

3. The small groups would then continue to meet at periodic intervals, working at the task of supportive ministry.

#### Some Observations About the Study

The group, as it studied the problems of the pastor and the parsonage family, listed five major concerns of the parsonage family. It reviewed the pastoral staff of the district and categorized the staff according to age and experience. It also recommended a general plan for implementation. All of the above was accomplished by a group of pastors and their spouses with a minimum of direction from the District Committee on the Ordained Ministry.

These results certainly seem to confirm LaVelle's (1977) statement that 'when clergy get together regularly for support they have innate sensitivities and learned skills to care deeply and creatively

for one another" (p.7). The group developed a support system to meet their present needs.

The problems listed by the group seem to fit into the categories developed by the author in the preceding chapter. The family being placed on a false pedestal is covered in the category of Adjustment Problems in the Area of Stress. Parsonage families facing the same identity struggles and life passage tasks as all other families, but with the additional peculiar stresses and relationships of the parsonage, are covered in the category of Adjustment Problems in the Area of Stress, which also covered the problem of financial hardships. The fact that many parsonage families are lonely is covered by the category of Adjustment Problems in the Area of Support. The only category not represented in the list is that of Adjustment Problems in the Area of Residential Mobility. With three of the four categories being represented in the problems as seen by a particular group (the district sub-committee), the accuracy of the research on parsonage family adjustment problems in the preceding chapters seems to be validated.

#### Denominational Responsibility for Counseling Services

Paragraph 731, section 2.i. of the 1976 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church states that one of the duties of the Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry to be "to provide support services for the minister's career development, including personal and career counseling, continuing education, assistance in preparation for retirement, and all matters pertaining to ministerial morale" (p. 295). Hightower (Note 13) declares that the Church has a moral

responsibility to provide the same quality of service for the emotional needs of its ministers as it does for his physical and intellectual needs. The fact that the Church requires its candidates for the ministry to undergo psychological evaluation raises the question of its moral responsibility to provide equal service and requirements for its present ministers as well. Still another implication is the fact that the recommendations involved in these psychological evaluations should be followed up with a continuing program of psychotherapy directly related to the ministers and their families. Since the Church requires of its ministers and lay employees activities, schedules, and responsibilities which put them under peculiar and great strains which are inevitable as they interact with a secular society, the Church should in love and justice provide its ministers with the best resources available to meet those tensions and stresses.

In accepting the responsibility for providing support services for the minister and parsonage family many episcopal areas and/or annual conferences of the United Methodist Church have Commissions or Offices on Pastoral Care and Counseling. A survey of some of these area and conference pastoral counselors was made by the Board of Ordained Ministry National Office, The United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. Twelve questionnaires were sent, and there were eight respondents to this 1977 study (Note 14).

When asked "Who do you talk to and where do you get your stability?" the pastoral counselors most often named peers, friends, and wife. When asked "Where do you find your spiritual needs being met?" over half of the respondents said from the local church.

Another item on the questionnaire was "Describe your job description in percentages." In the responses counseling ranged from a low of 30% to a high of 65%. Pastoral care ranged from a low of 2½% to a high of 30%. Administration ranged from a low of 5% to a high of 20%. Most of the offices were funded by the respective annual conferences. Total budgets averaged \$39,616.14 each. Most conferences provided the services free to conference ministers.

Guidelines for adequate pastoral counselor training have been given by Brammer and Shostrom (1977), Clinebell (1966), Hauck (1977), and Hiltner (1949), May (1967), and Oates (1974).

According to Hiltner (1969), the Board of Pensions of the United Presbyterian Church entered into a relationship with the Menninger Foundation in 1965 according to which any minister or his spouse or minor children might go to Kansas for a psychiatric evaluation lasting one to two weeks, with most of the bill being paid by the Board of Pensions. The Board did not need to be given details, and once the evaluation is completed, the Foundation reports only to the persons involved.

Floyd (1969) advocates counseling centers financed by the church but administered by professionals who have no responsibility for making appointments or in recommending men to local churches. The answer lies in the establishment of professionally staffed facilities where pastors can receive help when it is needed, for pastors know that getting help from local psychiatrists or psychologists can be inimical to their careers.

The minister cannot be a pastor to his wife and children. In

other professions there is a practice known as professional courtesy, whereby doctors and lawyers arrange for their families to go to other members of the profession for professional services. Glasse (1968) believes that the parsonage family needs pastoral care as well as psychological counseling. Psychological services help with deep problems and in personal crises but "they do not provide pastoral care. Nor can the minister, as a professional, provide it (for his family). He just cannot manage the necessary professional distance in relation to his family in order to be their pastor, without ceasing to be a loving husband and father. What is needed is an arrangement whereby the wives and children of ministers can receive the pastoral care of the church" (Glasse, 1968, p. 50).

The preceding information leads to the conclusion that there are recommendations that should be made to the General Church which will affect every annual conference, and that there are recommendations that should be made to the local churches, the districts, and the annual conferences in any given area.

#### Recommendations to the General Church

Doty (Note 15) made the church aware that even bishops need the help of a pastoral counselor occasionally. The following recommendations are made to the general church, including bishops, district superintendents, and general church staff and other personnel:

1. There is a need for an area director of pastoral care and counseling to counsel clergy families in any particular area.
2. The provisions for psychotherapy for pastoral families should be made in confidentiality and without expense to the families.

3. Clinical groups sharing on the district level provide healthy encounters, openness, and trust of peers.
4. Creative ministry today requires new opportunities for families to have continuing education together.
5. An annual lectureship on pastoral care provided through or in addition to the annual conference.
6. A specialist to serve as a consultant to the bishop and the cabinet. He may be an area director of pastoral counseling, a dedicated lay psychiatrist or psychologist.
7. An area or conference cabinet retreat to discuss and implement specific areas of pastoral care.
8. Psychotherapy for bishops and district superintendents as needed to help them cope with their own stress and bring added empathy for other clergy families facing similar problems and stress.

Recommendations to the Local Church, Sub-District, and District

The recommendations made here concern how we can provide locally some answers and/or suggestions for receiving help with adjustment problems in the areas of identity, stress, support, and residential mobility:

1. The pastor's wife should meet occasionally with the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. They could discuss such matters as: the role of the pastor's spouse; the general situation of the parsonage family; the general state of the parsonage facilities; the pastor's needs, interests, and abilities; and ways the committee might help incoming ministers' families at moving time.
2. Sub-district or district workshops on such subjects as

sexual difficulties in clergy marriage; creative marital fighting; re-contracting or recovenanting marriages; parsonage children; retirement; family communications; group discussion, with no didactic input, but with a resource person present and available for dialogue.

3. A district "hot-line" for those seeking help or counseling services. By calling this number and remaining anonymous, clergy family members can receive the name or names of those people whom it is believed can work with them on their problem.

4. Marriage growth experiences where all parsonage couples are encouraged and enabled to participate every one to five years.

5. A person in each district to be given the name, or names, of former spouses who have left the parsonage, that they might be offered support in the name of the church.

6. That each district publish addresses of former spouses of pastors and urge local churches to include these persons on mailing lists, etc.

7. The assignment of "mentors" to ministerial students to offer insight and experience. These persons can serve as "sounding-boards," give personal testimonies regarding the joys of ministry, and serve as a general confidant.

8. A district committee on the parsonage family. This committee would keep the parsonage families in the district informed of developments in the church that affect the family, of speakers and/or seminars in the area of family relations, and of changes in parsonage families (births, deaths, marriages, divorces).



9. The introduction of sabbaticals and mini-sabbaticals of three to six months where clergy families can have concentrated time for growing close, learning to communicate, etc.

Implementation of these recommendations will not guarantee the elimination of any of the adjustment problems in the areas of identity, stress, support, or residential mobility. Implementation would show the pastor and the parsonage family that the church is not hiding its head in the sand or hoping that problems will simply disappear. The structure of the United Methodist Church provides for all types of support systems. This structure can be the organizational basis for facing any and all adjustment problems of the parsonage family with genuine honesty and concern.

## Reference Notes

1. Herron, Bud. Bishops study stress. The United Methodist Reporter. Volume 6, Number 17. April 7, 1978.
2. Hunt, Richard A. Studies on clergy families in stress. Presentation to a United Methodist Council of Bishops seminar, Oklahoma City, March, 1978.
3. Buursma, Bruce. "The 'typical' preacher's wife no longer exist, if she ever did," Louisville Courier-Journal, July 9, 1978.
4. Critz, Richard L. "The Future of the Church in America: An Interview with Lyle Schaller." Your Church, September-October, 1977. pp. 11, 68-73.
5. Robertson, Bishop Frank L. Personal interview, January 26, 1979.
6. King, Carmen. Personal interview, January 26, 1979.
7. Henry, G. Edward. Personal interview, January 26, 1979.
8. Parsonage Family Counseling Service Questionnaire. Task Force on the Parsonage Family, 1979. (Available from 319 Browns Lane, Louisville, Kentucky 40207).
9. Hulse, Bennett. Personal interview, January 26, 1979.
10. Flener, Kermit. Personal interview, January 26, 1979.
11. Treese, Donald H. Higher Education and Ministry Report. Nashville, June, 1978.
12. District Committee on the Parsonage Family, Report to District Committee on Ordained Ministry, February 15, 1977. Bowling Green, Kentucky.
13. Hightower, Ted. Rationale, Reasons and Plans for the Establishment and Maintenance of An Area Counseling Clinic for the Louisville Area of the United Methodist Church. Unpublished thesis, Western Kentucky University, 1972.

14. Survey of Area and Conference Pastoral Counselors, Board of Ordained Ministry, Nashville, 1978.
15. Doty, James E. Working with clergy families in trouble. World Parish, Volume XVII, Number 8, May, 1978.

## References

- Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1976. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- Brammer, Lawrence, & Shostron, Everett L. Therapeutic Psychology (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977.
- Bustanoby, Andre. Why pastors drop out. Christianity Today, January 7, 1977, 14-16.
- Buursma, Bruce. The 'typical' preacher's wife no longer exists, if she ever did. Louisville Courier-Journal, July 9, 1978, p. G1.
- Calian, Carnegie Samuel. Today's Pastor in Tomorrow's World. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1977.
- Clinebell, Howard J., Jr. Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.
- Collins, Gary. You Can Profit from Stress. Santa Ana: Vision House Publishers, 1977.
- Coots, Patricia Evans. Queens without kingdoms: women divorced from United Methodist ministers. Occasional Papers, Volume 1, No. 17, February 14, 1978. (Monograph)
- Dobson, James. What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1977.
- Engdahl, Richard Clinton. The minister's spouse as a person. Dissertation Abstracts International, Volume 36, No. 3A, September, 1977. (Abstract)
- Floyd, William A. Your Future as a Minister. New York: Richards Rosen Press, Inc., 1969.

- General Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the United Methodist Church, 1976. Evanston: The General Council on Finance and Administration.
- Gerdes, Egon W. Informed Ministry. Zurich: Publishing House of the United Methodist Church, 1976.
- Glasse, James D. Profession: Minister. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968.
- Hauck, Paul A. Reason in Pastoral Counseling. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977.
- Hiltner, Seward. Pastoral Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1949.
- Hiltner, Seward. Ferment in the Ministry. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969.
- Hopkins, Sam. Ministers to society need a support system. The Circuit Rider, February, 1977, pp. 6-7.
- Jacobson, James. Parsonage children are children first. The Circuit Rider, June, 1978, pp. 12-13.
- Jourard, Sidney M. The Transparent Self. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1971.
- Journals of the Louisville Annual Conference, 1969-1978. Louisville: Eve Printing Company.
- Lavelle, Larry. Who is pastor to the pastor? The Circuit Rider, February, 1977, pp. 6-7.
- Lavender, Lucille. They Cry, Too! New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1976.
- Lowder, Paul D. The forgivable sin: clergy divorce. The Circuit Rider, February, 1979, pp. 8-9.
- Main, Jeremy. A troubled calling. Money, December, 1977, pp. 76-80.
- May, Rollo. The Art of Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969.

- Mills, Edgar W. and Koval, John P. Stress in the ministry. Washington: Ministries Study Board, 1971.
- Ministerial Survey. Minneapolis Star. May 9, 1978, p. 11.
- Mowrer, O. Hobart. Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1961.
- Oates, Wayne E. Pastoral Counseling. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974.
- Oglesby, William B., Jr. Referral in Pastoral Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978.
- Pattison, E. Mansell. Pastor and Parish - A Systems Approach. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Rabior, William. Ministerial Burnout. Ministry, March, 1979, p. 25.
- Ragsdale, Ray W. The Mid-Life Crises of a Minister. Waco: Word Publishers, 1978.
- Ritzky, Garry M. Role and status of clergy spouse. The Circuit Rider, July-August, 1977, p. 17.
- Shrader, Wesley. Why ministers are breaking down. Life, August 20, 1956, pp. 95-104.
- Smith, Thomas Reeves. The pastor-husband and wife: correlates of theological perspectives, marital adjustment, job satisfaction and wife's participation in church activities. Dissertation Abstracts International, Vol. 38. No. 4A, October, 1977, 2362. (Abstract)
- Smith, Charles Merrill. How to Talk to God. Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1971.
- Sonner, Larry W. Clergy more likely to encounter problems at home. The Circuit Rider, November-December, 1978, p. 13.

- Toffler, Alvin. Future Shock. New York: Random House, 1970.
- Truman, Ruth. Underground Manual for Ministers' Wives. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974.
- Wells, Meredith. Thrice I cried, or, how to be a minister's wife if you loath it. Chirstianity Today, January 18, 1974, pp. 7-8, 10.
- Whitman, Ardis. The view from the pulpit. McCall's, February, 1968, pp. 83, 145-150.
- Williams, Daniel Day. The Minister and The Care of Souls. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961.
- Williams, Florence Lund. So Abram took Sarai and they set forth. The Circuit Rider, January, 1978, pp. 16-17.