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Maintaining the well-being of clergy

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The Ohio State University, 1988

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To "Mrs. T."
My life was enriched as you shared your living and dying with me this year.
VITA

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At any gathering of persons in helping professions the observer can see those who appear enthusiastic, energetic, self-confident, and satisfied in work and life and see others who appear depressed, overwhelmed, discouraged. Most fall somewhere between these two ends of a spectrum. In recent years attention has been given to the phenomenon of burnout, including the special dimensions of burnout among those in helping professions. Less attention has been given to the converse of this phenomenon: how do and can persons, especially those within helping professions, maintain a sense of well-being?

The specific helping profession on which this study focuses is ministry and the population is ordained full-time clergy.

The question to be explored in this study is this: how do clergy maintain a sense of well-being within a stressful helping profession?

This general question can be understood more clearly by stating some of its component questions more
specifically. What factors foster and impede a sense of well-being among clergy? What occasions or aspects of ministry and clergy career are most critical in terms of well-being? In what ways do clergy perceive ministry as a stressful helping profession? What are the self-perceptions regarding well-being of those whom others identify as having a particularly positive sense of well-being? What descriptions characterize the careers and ministries of clergy with a sense of well-being? To what or whom do these clergy attribute their sense of well-being?

A derivative question of interest is the place and potential of continuing education in fostering the well-being of clergy. In what ways have clergy used educational programs, events, and practices in maintaining their well-being? What implications for professional continuing education can be derived which can assist clergy in maintaining well-being?

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Of what potential value is the exploration of this question? The implementation and results of this study may offer the following contributions:

1. Encourage clergy who maintain well-being to identify contributing elements and provide for their continuation
and enhancement, helping to insure the well-being of these persons.

2. Give clues to clergy with a poor sense of well-being about how they themselves might enhance their well-being.

3. Provide clues to maintaining well-being in a profession that includes both men and women as the profession moves from being an exclusively male career.

4. Provide a basis for dialogue between clergy, significant others and congregational leaders which might lead to mutual concern for the clergy’s well-being.

5. Assist church leaders in providing guidance, processes, and programs to enhance the well-being of clergy, especially in the area of professional continuing education.

6. Strengthen congregational ministry as the well-being of clergy is enhanced.

7. The specific population to be studied also adds value to this study. Conducted at the time of merger of three Lutheran church bodies into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America the population represents a new constituency not frequently studied as one group. The results of this study may be of particular use to new judicatory leaders as they begin a new chapter in Lutheranism.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study these terms are used in the following ways:

The word "clergy" refers to those persons engaged in professional ministry, who have been ordained by a church body, and whose preparation for ministry has included extensive graduate work such as a seminary's Master of Divinity program. The term "pastor" is used interchangeably with "clergyperson."

"The Lutheran Church" refers to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) which came into being January 1, 1988, and to its predecessor bodies, the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC.) Since the ELCA does not include all Lutherans, other Lutheran church bodies are distinguished by name.

"Well-being" is a state of general health including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions and characterized by positive self-concept, a sense of the meaningfulness of life, a sense of mastery and pleasure, personality hardiness, and appropriate attention to the developmental tasks and concerns of a person's life.

"Burnout" is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion characterized by poor self-concept,
negative attitudes toward work and relationships, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and extreme physical and emotional weariness (Pines and Aronson, 15.)

"Helping profession" refers to any occupation which is primarily engaged in human services and focuses on working with people rather than with products. The term "human services" is used as a synonym.

BACKGROUND FOR THE QUESTION

In April, 1987, a Lutheran minister in a small Tennessee town told his family he was driving to Knoxville to visit friends. Instead he headed to Canada, sold his car, and spent $15,000 in family savings in a four-week escape in Australia and New Zealand. He said that this was the only way he knew to find relief from the stresses of parish ministry (Bristol Herald Courier/Virginia-Tennessean, 5/28/87.)

While this story may not represent the approach to stress taken by a majority of clergy, it does remind us that stress is indeed a part of parish ministry and that clergy differ in their responses to it. Roy Oswald (1982) of the Alban Institute who has conducted research about clergy has accumulated statistics on clergy burnout. He has found 17% percent to have the characteristics of burnout. Among those in long-term
pastorates of ten or more years the statistics are even higher: 25% border on burnout, 16% are in burnout, 10% are in extreme phases of burnout (Oswald, Hinand, Hobgood, & Lloyd, 1983). Some clergy are debilitated by their work, others remain healthy, and many thrive in the midst of this helping profession. Why?

In a study of 1,000 clergy (primarily Lutheran) William Hulme, Milo L. Brekke, and William C. Behrens (1985) found that the majority of Lutheran pastors are dissatisfied with their own spiritual and devotional lives, and that these same persons also more frequently express dissatisfaction or doubts about competence in ministry, value of their work, and general happiness with life. While 75% of clergy and 80% of spouses state they never contemplate divorce, and 54% and 80% of clergy and spouses respectively report they never think of infidelity, this leaves a sizable population of clergy marriages that deserve concern. Do their life-styles make them high risk for a heart attack? Forty-four (44)% agree to some extent. In a profession that calls a pastor to be prophetic at times, 40% tend to put off dealing with conflict, 87% find it hard to confront others with moral and ethical responsibilities, half say their feelings are easily hurt, and one third find it very hard to speak on social issues because of public controversy.
One-third report being frequently torn between conflicting values, beliefs, and desires.

What did these clergy say would improve the state of clergy? The top two responses were (a) opportunities for continuing education for pastors and spouses, and (b) clergy-family retreats and workshops. Many clergy and their spouses feel the pressures of their vocation and its effects on their whole lives. Oswald (Clergy Burnout, 1982) agrees that these highly educated persons continue to look to educational opportunities as a primary source for helping deal with their frustrations and pains.

What is there about ministry that undermines the well-being of clergy? Literature about burnout and stress gives broad insight into the factors that work against well-being in helping professions in general and ministry in particular.

The ordained ministry is a stress-filled vocation. It shares many of the same frustrations and sources of burnout evident in other helping professions. Characteristics of helping professions which may lead persons toward burnout include the following (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980):

1. Idealist desire and expectation for helping people and altruistic ambition for doing good as one enters a
helping profession. Disillusionment and disappointment often follow.

2. Vague and inconsistent standards for measuring success. Evaluation is imprecise in work that does not lend itself to objective measurement of accomplishment and performance. The helper remains unsure if her or his work is adequate or valuable.

3. Salary levels that are lower than those in other professions with similar educational requirements. The contrast between salaries of different occupations becomes painful as those in helping professions experience increasing financial responsibilities within family life or desire a lifestyle similar to those with higher salaries.

4. Career advancement within administrative channels. While increased salary and status may result from administrative positions, these positions greatly reduce one's direct involvement with clients, patients, students...the personal involvement which may have attracted them to this profession initially.

5. Sexism. As in other professions, helping professions are often filled in stereotypical gender roles: nurses, teachers of children, family relations personnel, and social workers are women. Doctors, education administrators and teachers of young adults, judges,
lawyers, and clergy are men. It is sometimes impossible to separate issues of rank, authority, and status from issues of sexism.

6. Lack of adequate financing and institutional support for human services. Commitment to work that does not receive budgetary or bureaucratic priority can be wearing.

7. The dilemma of insufficient resources. When human time and energy are limited (as it always is) choices must be made about how they will be used, but within human services persons expect or are often expected to apportion their resources equally among all clients...which may give great energy to impossible situations and insufficient resources to those which could improve with adequate assistance.

8. Inadequate public knowledge of human services. The public views media coverage of sensational, sometimes scandalous, events in the helping professions, and is aware of society's problems which such professions attempt to address. However, most persons remain distant from such problems and are suspicious and afraid of those engaged in them. Helpers are engaged in professions that experience much public mistrust and misunderstanding.

Pines and Aronson (1981) identify three common characteristics of work in helping professions which lead
to burnout:
(a) performing emotionally taxing work; that is, constantly working with people in emotionally demanding situations,
(b) certain personality characteristics of those who choose these professions which make them particularly vulnerable to stress; including sensitivity to others and their suffering, a desire to help people in trouble, people-orientation rather than object- or subject-centered, personal history similar to clients which intensifies both empathy and pain,
(c) client-centered orientation; that is, a focus on giving and attending to the needs of others while receiving little and feeling that his or her own needs are illegitimate or irrelevant.

Pines and Aronson address both burnout and the related concept "tedium." The symptoms of the two are identical; however, burnout results from long-term emotional pressure of working with people while tedium may result from any prolonged pressure, mental, physical, or emotional.

Bureaucratic organizations, according to Pines and Aronson, exhibit three antecedents of tedium: overload, lack of autonomy, and lack of rewards.
Clergy, as members of a helping profession, experience these sources of frustration. They also experience other sources more unique to professional ministry.

Based on his extensive research and experience with clergy, Roy Oswald identifies several factors present in professional ministry which contribute to stress and burnout (Oswald, *Clergy Stress*, 1982).

1. Role ambiguity - unclear expectations by self and others.
2. Role conflict - tension between personal life and professional responsibilities.
3. Role overload - overwhelming demands and expectations of self, community, and congregation.
4. Time demands - unexpected crises, untimely needs of others; always being on-call or available even on days off.
5. Lack of pastoral care - not having a pastor or spiritual advisor when one is a pastor.
6. Lack of opportunities to step out of one's role as pastor and to be taken care of.
7. Relocation to new job or geography.
8. Political/economic uncertainty - feeling that career future depends on success in this parish.
9. Loneliness - those outside ministry do not understand the sense of isolation even within sense of commitment.
10. A helping profession - as already indicated, the fact that ministry is a helping profession implies that the stresses of all helping professions are present for pastors.
Oswald (Clergy Burnout, 1982) also describes a theory proposed by Bruce Reed of the Grubb Institute in London which helps one understand some of the particular stresses which apply to clergy. This "theory of oscillation" contends that all persons need to and do oscillate between a state of intra-dependence (in which one is dependent on things within one's self, self-sufficient) and a state of extra-dependence (in which one is dependent upon an external source which allows her or him to be cared for.) Movement between the two states is necessary for perspective, energy, and healing. This theory of oscillation states that "the function of religion in society is to manage people's regression to extra-dependence." (Oswald, 1982) People come to the church seeking nurture and healing in contrast to their hours and days of intra-dependence. It is pastors who are expected to provide the experience of extra-dependence in worship, in counseling, in pastoral activities. This demanding role is complicated by the fact that clergy themselves are often without sources of extra-dependent support. Where does the pastor go for experiences of extra-dependence?
CRITICAL EVENTS IN MINISTRY

During some events and situations of ministry clergy appear to be particularly susceptible to stress. A look at some of those points during which the pastor’s well-being may be particularly threatened or vulnerable follows.

From seminary to first call

These first few years of ministry represent the "most traumatic and the most crucial" transition in pastors' careers...the period in which they experience the most difficulties (Oswald, 1980). It may be a time of challenge and stimulation on which some thrive. For many it is a time of intense pain, frustration, and despair.

Oswald (1980) identifies five particular areas of difficulty for the pastor entering a first call.

1. Difficulty converting academic theory and knowledge into parish practice, often complicated by role confusion,

2. Feelings of inadequacy and disillusionment about one's own spirituality and wholeness,

3. Inadequate skill and practice in handling conflict,

4. Inadequate skill in interpersonal relations, when two-thirds of one's time is spent in those relations, and

5. Inability to provide self-care; most underestimate the demands of parish life.
This time of transition finds many new clergy feeling they are "in over their heads" and feeling unprepared and surprised because the reality of ministry does not fit their expectations. This period of ministry is one in which clergy well-being is threatened.

The long-term pastorate

An Alban Institute study of long-term pastorates (Oswald et al., 1983) concluded that the majority of their subjects were in healthy pastorates; a finding that surprised and impressed them. However, the risks and disadvantages of long-term pastorates (ten or more years in one church) are great and these clergy may be vulnerable to unique stresses. As reported earlier, in this study use of the Clergy Burnout Inventory found a higher degree of burnout than expected. Burnout was identified by laypersons as the greatest disadvantage of long-term pastorates.

A "downward spiral" may find a gap expanding between the pastor and the collective parish. Clergy may experience and exhibit stagnation, disillusionment as they are unable to be and do what the parish had hoped and expected. Pastors may sense the discontent of parishioners yet be unattractive for another call because of their perceived lack of vitality. A sense of failure leads to even poorer performance in ministry which
turn leads to further dissatisfaction expressed by members. In a long-term pastorate it is not hard for the disadvantages to begin to outweigh the advantages. In such ministries the well-being of the clergyperson is at stake.

**Being a woman in ministry**

In addition to those factors experienced by all clergy, women clergy encounter additional factors which may affect their well-being. Kanter (1977) discusses the pressure of being tokens in the midst of a skewed group. Kanter argues that the stresses experienced by members of a group are strongly influenced by the ratio between two significant social categories within the group; for example the ratio between black and white or between women and men. Kanter describes four groups based on ratios:

- **Uniform group** - has only one significant component; the ratio is 100:0.
- **Skewed group** - has a large number of dominants and up to 15% of another type (tokens).
- **Tilted group** - a majority of one type and 20-35% of a minority type.
- **Balanced group** - two subgroups; ratio between 50:50% and 60:40%.

The clergy population represents a skewed group. In 1984, women made up 5% of the active clergy in the Lutheran Church in America ("Findings," LCA secretary). Kanter found that being a token in industry resulted in
being treated as a symbol of a category rather than as an individual as well as in extra attention and scrutiny, social segregation, and the denial of support networks usually available for the dominant group.

Other critical events

Additional critical points in ministry that effect the clergyperson's well-being might include conflict within the congregation or between clergy and congregation, the times of transition when leaving one congregation and accepting a call to another, the triangle between clergy and spouse and congregation, and the marriage of two clergypersons.

HOW TO MAINTAIN WELL-BEING

The literature offers suggestions to clergy for avoiding burnout and promoting well-being in ministry. There is a difference between these two; avoiding burnout may not necessarily result in well-being. Much of the literature appears to be written from a medical model perspective—an assumption that there is a problem or dysfunction to be overcome or prevented. However, this literature may be useful in helping identify behaviors or conditions which might not only help avoid burnout but also contribute to a greater state of well-being.
Examination of a variety of resources offered to clergy and others in helping professions yields the following summary of strategies for avoiding burn-out and/or promoting well-being.

I. Increased self-awareness:

1. Assessment of needs, stresses, and coping resources (Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

2. Acknowledgment of vulnerabilities regarding limited energy supply, tendency toward workaholism, feeling overwhelmed (Pines, 1981)

3. Continual reappraisal of long-term and short-term goals, being realistic and setting priorities (Pines, 1981)

4. Monitoring of political, social, and economic ambitions since greater ambitions bring about greater stress (Oswald, *Clergy Stress*, 1982)

5. Examination and evaluation of the irrational ideas one has about one’s job and oneself (Edelwich, 1980)

6. Use of realistic expectations for measuring success and results of work (Edelwich, 1980)

7. Acknowledgment of time: that time is limited and valuable resource and that "now" may not be "the right time" (Pines, 1981)

8. Attitudinal changes based on self-assessment:

   - attitude of trust of God’s Spirit rather than a sense of control of one’s ministry (Hulme et al., 1985)

   - attitude of "detached concern" toward others, balancing objectivity with sensitivity and involvement (Pines, 1981)

   - seeing oneself in situation terms, not dispositional terms (Pines, 1981)
II. Change in self as result of acquisition of knowledge, skills, and new behaviors.

9. Development of skills in the following areas:
   - communication of feelings and ideas (Hulme, 1985)
   - interpersonal, group, and organizational management (Oswald, 1980)
   - stress management, (Oswald, 1980)
   - time management, (Oswald, Clergy Stress, 1982)
   - assertiveness (Oswald, Clergy Burnout, 1982)
   - anger (Hulme, 1985)

10. Development of skills needed to cope with bureaucracy rather than escape; that is, the skills to become a "good bureaucrat" (Pines, 1981)

11. Increased knowledge of effective transitions such as closure and start-up (Oswald, 1980)

12. Increased ability to compartmentalize, separating one's home life and work life and decompressing between the two...especially for women. (Pines, 1981)

13. Engagement with one or more areas of life which threaten and/or frighten us. (Oswald, Clergy Burnout, 1982)

III. Self Care

14. Exercise (Oswald, Clergy Burnout, 1982; Hulme, 1985)

15. Attention to diet, especially intake of sugar, caffeine, chemicals (Oswald, Clergy Stress, 1982)

16. Fasting, as a means of cleansing system of toxins (Oswald, Clergy Stress, 1982)

17. Breaks and time-outs (Oswald, Clergy Burnout, 1982; Pines, 1981)
18. Positive addiction...doing something good for oneself everyday (Oswald, *Clergy Stress*, 1982)


20. Spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines (Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982; Hulme, 1985)

21. Laughter and sense of humor (Oswald, 1980; Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

22. Development of letting-go techniques (Oswald, *Clergy Stress*, 1982)

23. Development of detachment capacities; such as hobbies, sports, arts (Hulme, 1985; Oswald, *Clergy Stress*, 1982)

24. Development of an idea of ministry which includes a theology of self-care (Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

IV. Support Systems

25. Establishment of support group of professional peers (Coger, 1985; Oswald, 1982; Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982; Pines, 1981)

26. Enrichment of marriage and family life (Oswald, 1980; Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

27. Development of mutual friendships (Hulme, 1985)

28. Identification of opportunities for extra-dependence such as therapy, continuing education, retreats (Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

29. Identification of spiritual adviser (Oswald, 1980)

30. Identification of a good mentor (Oswald, 1980)

31. Therapy (Oswald, *Clergy Burnout*, 1982)

V. Organizational changes

32. Training prior to and during job regarding job stress (Pines, 1981)
33. Reduced or limited hours in direct service to clients (Pines, 1981)

34. Reduced number of persons for whom one is to care (Pines, 1981)

35. Opportunities for sense of accomplishment, completion, reward, appreciation, and meaning (Pines, 1981)

36. Flexibility in organization to accommodate needs and interests of individuals (Pines, 1981)

37. Effective structuring of relationships within congregation for conflict management, role clarification, and communication (Hulme et al., 1985)

38. Enhancement of lay participation in ministry (Hulme et al., 1985)
CHAPTER II
A LITERATURE REVIEW

What is well-being and how does one know the extent to which he or she possesses it? There are a number of related concepts which help define and describe well-being. This study examines well-being from the perspective of mastery and pleasure, adult development theory, personality theory, life meaning, hardiness and faith-hardiness.

What does good health and well-being look like? It appears easier to examine illness and pathology than to explore positive health. Perhaps this is why so many studies have focused on those with problems and why much of our knowledge about well-being seems to come from the study of stress and burn-out. Freud's theories were based on a clinical practice dedicated to young adults with acute problems (Hale, 1980). Gould's (1982) basic understandings of transformations were developed within his practice of psychotherapy. Are conclusions which emerge from focusing on populations with problems equally valid for all persons? What could be learned from focusing on persons who are healthy, whose sense of well-
being is great? Is there something to be learned from well-being that cannot be learned from ill health? Those questions motivate this study's exploration of a population selected because of its perceived well-being.

Research emerging from positive questions using a perceived healthy and stable population does exist although perhaps not in the quantity of those based in what is called the "medical model" which focuses on problems and disease. As Roy Oswald says, *(Clergy Stress, 1982)* we know much more and deal much more with illness, psychosis, alienation and much less about wellness, stability, integration, and joy.

Oswald credits John Adams with helping him see the concept of overall health on a continuum. We know "too little, Oswald says, "about helping persons move from health to greater health."

Two recent studies have explored vitality among healthy helping professionals: Beck (1986) in *The Revitalization of Hospice Nurses* and Miller-Beach (1982) in *The Revitalization of Persons Who Teach in the Community College* have focused on healthy populations.

**THE POSITIVE APPROACH TO HEALTH**

At least three studies have taken a positive approach to the exploration of health and well-being: the
Grant Study of Adult Development, Baruch, Barnett, and River's study of the well-being of women, and Farrell and Rosenberg's research regarding men at mid-life.

Adaptive Mechanisms

George Vaillant (1977) in *Adaptation to Life* reports on participants in a thirty-five year longitudinal study, The Grant Study of Adult Development. Between 1939 and 1942, 268 male students at Harvard, identified as likely to lead successful lives, were recruited for the study. Upon selection each participant received an extensive evaluation, including eight interviews with a psychiatrist, examinations by an internist, a physiologist, a social investigator, and visits to each family home. Following graduation each man received a questionnaire each year until 1955 and every other year following (at least until the time of this report in 1977.) In the early 1950's a social anthropologist interviewed each man in his home. Vaillant interviewed a subsample of 94 men focusing on "what had gone right in their lives." The Grant Study originated as an attempt to exam the lives of healthy men in contrast to the perceived abundance of studies too weighted in the direction of disease." (Vaillant, 1977, p.3)

Perhaps one reason that illness and disease is subject to more examination than health and well-being is
the relative ability to define and identify the two. Vaillant admits to the difficulty in defining or describing health in any universally accepted manner; therefore, he defines health in terms of work, family, medical and psychological scales. Health, he contends, is complex and men "will be considered well adapted in terms of the number of areas in which they function well." (Vaillant, 1977, p.8)

Vaillant focuses on the strategies by which men "alter themselves and the world around them in order to adapt to life" (Vaillant, 1977, p.13). Eighteen such adaptive mechanisms, or ego defense mechanisms, were articulated and described as a sign of health...since they represent the persons' unconscious devices to resolve internal and external conflicts and to heal themselves. Vaillant asserts that one's adaptive mechanisms are as critical in present and future life success and health as such acknowledged influences as heredity, upbringing, or socio-economic status and set out to determine how ego defenses were used by the men of the Grant Study and the relative health of those whose dominant ego defenses differed. The ego defenses were grouped as follows:

Mature mechanisms: altruism, humor, suppression, anticipation, and sublimation
Neurotic defenses: intellectualization, repression, displacement, reaction formation, and dissociation

Immature defenses: projection, schizoid fantasy, hypochondriasis, passive-aggressive behavior, acting out

Psychotic defenses: delusional projection, external denial, distortion

Among Vaillant's conclusions are these:

(a) The quality of long-term relationships with significant persons is critical in shaping our lives. Occasional traumatic events may affect us, but they are not so important in the whole of life as "the continued interaction between our choice of adaptive mechanisms and our sustained relationships with other people."

(Vaillant, 1977, p. 368).

(b) What sometimes is considered mental illness may be at other times considered adaptive response to life, and we might well consider how to help such processes rather than indiscriminately punish them.

(c) The use of the hierarchy of ego defense mechanisms can be used to examine and define adult mental health or wellness. We should encourage mature defenses, confront or help immature defenses, and focus our attention on helping neurotic defenses since they are likely to be open to review and change. Persons can evolve through the hierarchy of defense mechanisms and come to use the mature mechanisms that are associated with greater health.
(d) Adults continue to change throughout their lifetimes and an understanding of persons' lives can only come through long-term evaluation.

(e) Positive mental health does exist and can be described and evaluated. Health is more than simply absence from disease or disorder.

There are obvious limitations to this study because of its design: the sample is carefully selected, a homogeneous population of white, educated, males born between World Wars I and II identified as likely to succeed in life. However, it presents a positive model for the study of wellness or well-being and provides a responsible longitudinal look at health among those identified as healthy.

Mastery and Pleasure among Women

In their book Lifeprints - New Patterns of Love and Work for Today's Women, Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers (1983) reported on their search to answer the question "what contributes to a women's sense of well-being?" They concluded that well-being has two components: mastery (self-esteem, sense of control over one's own life, and low levels of depression and anxiety) and pleasure (satisfaction, happiness, and optimism.) The authors studied women within six groups described by a combination of work and relationship patterns:
(a) married, no children, employed  
(b) married, children, employed  
(c) married, children, not employed  
(d) married, no children, unemployed  
(e) never married, employed  
(f) divorced, children, employed

This study found that the role of paid work was the single factor which best determined the extent of a woman's sense of "mastery." The three groups of working women ranked higher than the groups of homemakers in mastery. In fact, divorced women ranked highest of all groups in a sense of mastery. "Pleasure" was linked to the presence and use of one's "arenas of intimacy"; that is, close personal relationships. The four groups of married women ranked higher in pleasure than single women. One especially interesting observation is the relatively high ranking in both mastery and pleasure of those women who are the busiest...employed, married, with children.

Although this study was conducted exclusively among women the conclusions may be valuable when exploring well-being among both men and women. From this study it appears that maintaining one's well-being requires attention to both mastery and pleasure. Indeed, it implies that clues to one's well-being lie in the role of one's work and the function of one's close relationships, and that attention to only one of these areas is insufficient for maintaining one's well-being.
Farrell and Rosenberg - Well-being at Mid-life

In their study of men at midlife, Farrell & Rosenberg (1981) while acknowledging that studies have emphasized the importance of work in the development of men also came to the unexpected discovery of the importance of family relationships and the interaction of family and individual processes in a man's experience of mid-life (Farrell & Rosenberg, 1981, p.vii).

This study includes a broad population of men between the ages of 25 and 48 with the purpose of examining the reality of mid-life, including the role of what is popularly known as mid-life crisis. A four-category typology emerged which described men's responses to the stresses of mid-life. One of those types, the transcendent-generative, seems to characterize the greatest well-being. This type, representing 32% of the midlife population, is described as follows:

...able to assess his past and present and match them to inner feelings with a positive sense of satisfaction. This type would tend to exhibit few symptoms of psychological and psychosomatic distress. He would exhibit genuine and positive feelings toward work and marriage and have a definite and satisfactory sense of self. This positive sense of himself would be based on and reflected in an openness to feelings, good relations with his children, and a non-punitive and accepting orientation toward out-groups. He feels in control of his own fate and exhibits a high tolerance for ambiguity. (Farrell and Rosenberg, 1981, p. 33)
DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE THEORIES

In recent decades the work of human development theorists has become more important for our understanding of adulthood. Basic to these theories is the premise that persons grow and change throughout their lives, along an orderly and predictable pattern (often described as "stages"), which is age-related. Individuality within the patterns is expected and age-relatedness is not precise, but human growth is considered a developmental process.

For developmentalists well-being or positive health might be described in terms of how successfully or satisfactorily one is dealing with or living in the current developmental period. In this sense the stresses of a transition or the upheaval of crisis might be the signs of well-being if that stress and that upheaval are part of the developmental process of that person.

Erikson

Erik Erikson's (1950) "Eight Ages of Man" have become classic foundational material for developmental understandings. Erikson describes the crises and challenges that each growing person must confront and the strengths which are the outcomes of emerging from each stage with a more positive than negative ratio. The first four struggles are childhood tasks, the fifth is a
struggle of youth, and the final three are considered
tasks of adulthood.

Basic trust vs. basic mistrust: drive and hope
Autonomy vs. shame and doubt: self-control and
willpower
Initiative vs. guilt: direction and purpose
Industry vs. inferiority: method and competence
Identity vs. role confusion: devotion and fidelity
Intimacy vs. isolation: affiliation and love
Generativity vs. stagnation: production and care
Ego integrity vs. despair: renunciation and wisdom

Each struggle has the potential for opening new
dimensions of life; that is, new virtues. And each
struggle has the potential for "the possibility of an
overall weakening of personhood" (Fowler, 1984, p. 22).
In Erikson's schema, one's well-being may be closely tied
to the extent to which one has favorably resolved the
issues of the present and past stages.

Levinson

Daniel J. Levinson's (1978) report on a study of
forty men between ages 35 and 45 from four occupations
(hourly workers in industry, business executives,
university biologists, and novelists) provided a new
overview of the adult male life cycle. Levinson
introduces the concept of the individual's life
structure, "the basic pattern or design of a person's
life at a given time" (Levinson, 1978, p.41). Each
person chooses primary components of their life
structure, usually only one or two, which are central to
life. The two most frequently chosen components are occupation and marriage-family, although others include friendships and peer relationships, ethnicity, religion, and leisure. According to Levinson one's life structure evolves through "seasons" or eras of about 25 years. Each season is marked by a time of relative stability, a period of building life structure, and a time of transition in which life structure changes.

The first adult season is early adulthood which begins with an early adult transition and moves through entering the adult world, an age 30 transition, and settling down. The season of middle adulthood begins with a mid-life transition which is follow by entering middle adulthood, an age 50 transition, and culmination of middle adulthood to the late adult transition. (Levinson, 1978, p.57)

According to Levinson, middle adulthood can be a time of personal fulfillment and social contribution. "This requires, however," he says, "that a man come to terms with the developmental tasks of the Mid-life Transition" (Levinson, 1978, p.27) In summarizing his book, Levinson focuses on three sets of tasks in adulthood:

1. building and modifying the life structure
2. working on one's choices, one's primary components of life structure, and he singles out five of special importance in his study:
a. forming and modifying a dream  
b. forming and maintaining an occupation  
c. love-marriage-family  
d. forming mentoring relationships  
e. forming mutual friendships

3. becoming more individuated

**Kohlberg and Gilligan**

A theory of moral development emerged from a longitudinal study by Lawrence Kohlberg of a group of young men from the northeast. His resulting schema describing the capacity for making moral judgements is a three-level structure (Scharf, 1978.)

I. Preconventional level  
Stage 1: Reward and punishment orientation  
Stage 2: Self-interest; reciprocity orientation

II. Conventional level  
Stage 3: Approval stage; good boy, nice girl orientation  
Stage 4: Law and order orientation; social order

III. Postconventional, principled level  
Stage 5: Social-contract, legalistic orientation; societal-utilitarian focus  
Stage 6: Universal ethical-principle orientation; justice and dignity of all persons

One critique of developmental theories is that the research on which they were based used exclusively male populations. Questions emerged about the validity of the findings for women.

Carol Gilligan (1982), a colleague of Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard, identified that women are more likely to exhibit an ethic that takes into account the complexity of past, present, and future relationships within the decision-making process and outcome. The
balance between caring for self and caring for others is part of the struggle in moral judgements. For men, however, Kohlberg's schema projects a search for universal principles that transcend the persons or situation in which the judgement is to be made (Fowler, 1984).

Gilligan (1982) suggests that for women the sequence in the making of moral judgements is one of developing an ethic of care:

A. a survivalist mentality that focuses on caring for oneself, followed by a transition during which this is perceived as selfish;

B. a focus on caring for the others for whom one has responsibility, discounting care for oneself;

C. interconnection of self-care and responsibility for others, with a focus on the inappropriateness of hurt and exploitation of persons.

Gould

Roger Gould's (1978) research included both men and women in therapeutic situations and addressed the "illusions that develop during childhood and that have to be discarded during each stage of adult development if individuals are to continue to develop in healthy ways" (Rodgers, 1984, p.492). Gould described four stages during adulthood according to the false assumptions with which that age must struggle (Gould, 1978).
Age 16-22: We will always live with our parents and be their child.

Age 22-28: Our parents will always be there to help when we cannot do something on our own.

Age 28-34: Life is simple and controllable.

Age 35-45: There is no real death or evil in the world.

These false assumptions prevent the adult from fully realizing his or her potential and satisfying developmental tasks. The growth that comes in challenging these false assumptions and developing more independent adult consciousness is what Gould calls "the act of transformation" (Gould, 1978, p. 25).

Fowler

Building on the work of other developmentalists, James Fowler described six stages of faith; that is, six ways in which persons bring meaning to their relationship to the world around them (Fowler, 1981).

Age 3-7: Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective faith, a faith profoundly influenced by the visible faith of parents.

Childhood: Stage 2: Mythic-Literal faith, based in stories and literally-held symbols which are becoming appropriated by the person.

Adolescence: Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional faith, whose authority rests in the external groups or figures and which provides some coherence in an increasingly complex world,
Early Adulthood: Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective faith, search for personal meaning in a previously collectively-based faith,

Mid-life: Stage 5: Conjunctive faith, an integration of symbolic meaning, mystery, social consciousness, and an emerging transforming vision,

Adulthood, if at all: Stage 6: Universalizing faith, self-transcendence and behavior guided by commitment to a transforming vision.

Fowler's work focuses on cognitive development rather than the more psychosocial development addressed by the preceding theorists. His work, however, is important to include in this review for two reasons: first, Fowler makes extensive use of several of these developmentalists (including Erikson and Kohlberg) in positing his own theory, and, secondly, the area of faith development seems particularly significant when studying a population of religious leaders.

Developmental tasks

The concept of developmental tasks is one addressed by several theorists who have attempted to identify the social, physiological, and psychological events and activities which are to be addressed at various periods in the life span "in order to be judged by others and to judge himself or herself to be a reasonably happy and successful person" (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981, p.25). The tasks often center around marriage and family, work,
adjustments to the effects and implications of aging, and civic responsibilities. Robert Havighurst's (1972) initial use of this approach has been expanded by Vivian Rogers McCoy (1977) and others.

Criticism of developmental theory

Developmental theorists have not been without their critics. Janet Zollinger Giele (1980) points to studies by Pearlin and Fiske which indicate that if the proposed stages and developmental tasks indeed exist for all persons, they vary immensely according to socioeconomic status. Certainly the lists of developmental tasks often reflect cultural, economic, and ethnic biases. Giele suggests that the two themes of clear stages of development and vague or nonexistent patterns may both be correct but describing different aspects of life and growth: one which focuses on similarities and universalities and one which focuses on uniquenesses and individuality. "Within the individual, learning may be analogous to processes of differentiation, whereas achievement of identity, integrity, and wholeness may correspond to integration" (Giele, 1980, p.156).

Age has become an increasingly challenged link to stage. Distinctions between life periods "are blurring in today's society" (Neugarten & Neugarten, 1987, p.30). "We have conflicting images rather than stereotypes of
age: the 70 year old in a wheelchair, but also the 70-year-old on the tennis court; the 18 year old who is married and supporting a family, but also the 18-year-old college student who brings his laundry home to his mother each week."

Although age-related tasks and activities may be less clear than in the past, society and individuals still retain powerful expectations of others and themselves that are related to life-period although their connection may be more complex than chronological age. Bernice Neugarten offers a new link between life events and age. She contends that those life events which happen near their anticipated times may cause grief, joy, etc., but do not precipitate crises in most healthy adults. However, those events which are unanticipated, or which happen outside the expected sequence may create trauma and crisis (Rodgers, 1984, p.498). Retirement at age 82 may present problems, but forced early retirement at age 55 may result in much greater trauma.

PERSONALITY THEORIES

Of the many contributions to personality theory the work of three persons, Rogers, Maslow, and Allport, are particularly valuable in a study of well-being among adults. Several themes of interest in this study unite
the approaches of these psychologists:

1. Each theorist focuses on the healthy, mature, normal adult rather than on the neurotic or mentally ill person. Psychology's almost exclusive investigation of the ill or non-functioning person, they contend, has limited our understanding of the personalities of the majority of persons. In addition, although acknowledgment is given to childhood and past experiences, major attention is given to adulthood and the present experiences of these adults.

2. Each proposes a positive and optimistic picture of personality and human nature.

3. Each focuses on growth, on becoming, on the movement toward the fulfilling of potential as motivation within the personality.

Rogers

Of particular value in understanding the nature of well-being is the concept of self. Self-concept is a central component in Carl Rogers' theory of personality. To Rogers, self includes "all of the individual's perceptions of his organism, of his experience, and of the way in which those perceptions are related to other perceptions and objects in his environment and to the whole exterior world." (Evans, 1975, p.16). One's self-concept consists of both self-perception; that is, the
image we have of ourselves, and our judgement of what we see. It includes all of how we think and feel about ourselves.

Several related terms are important here. Self-concept is the total picture a person has of himself or herself. Self-esteem and self-regard refer especially to the sense of value or worth with which she or he views herself or himself. This sense of value is particularly relevant to ideal self; that is, the picture we have of what we should be or want to be.

Persons need and want positive regard from others and from self and therefore develop "conditions of worth", judgements of what thoughts and actions lead to positive regard and positive self-regard. Tension and confusion will likely result from anything experienced as inconsistent with a person's self-concept or inconsistent with one's conditions of worth. (Osipow, 1980, p.27).

Positive self-regard, experiences that are consistent with one's self-image and conditions of worth, and positive regard from others are important ingredient in a person's sense of well-being.

Rogers believed that persons are motivated by one over-riding tendency: to develop and fulfill ability and potential; that is, to actualize themselves, to become a fully functioning person, to become all that they can
become (Schultz, 1981). It is this tendency that gives drive and energy to life. Although this goal is never completely reached, it is the striving which is the motivating factor.

The characteristics of the self-actualizing (again, not self-actualized) person include the following: (Rogers, 1961).

1. An increasing openness to one's own feelings and experiences and a decreasing defensiveness,
2. An increasing tendency to live fully within each moment as it evolves rather than to live out a preconceived life-structure,
3. An increasing trust of their own intuition and inner reactions as a guide to behavior.

These characteristics imply that the fully functioning person lives with a sense of freedom to choose and move in any direction without constraint and with a sense of spontaneity and creativity that allows the person to adapt well to old and new situations. Also implied is the basic positive attitude toward the nature of human beings who, upon shedding defenses, tend to be rational, socialized, and trustworthy.

In describing the good life, the life of the fully functioning or self-actualizing person, Rogers avoids such words as blissful, enjoyable, happy, and contented.
But the adjectives which seem more generally fitting are adjectives such as enriching, exciting, rewarding, challenging, meaningful. This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the fainthearted. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life. (Rogers, 1981, p.195).

Maslow

Abraham Maslow's theory of personality centers on the concept of motivation. Every person, he states, is born with several needs that motivate or drive behavior. The needs are innate, but the behaviors that result vary between individuals and within a lifetime. The needs are presented in hierarchal fashion (Maslow, 1954).

1. Physiological needs for air, sleep, nutrition, and sex are the most basic and critical of all needs, appear early in life, and must be met for survival.

2. Safety needs, seen most clearly among children, include need for predictability and order in life and a sense of security.

3. If physiological and safety needs have been met with sufficient satisfaction, a person develops needs for love and a sense of belonging which can be met within intimate relationships with friends, mates, or groups.

4. Satisfaction of esteem needs, for self-esteem and the esteem of others, allows persons to become more productive in life. Consistency between self-esteem and the opinion of others is of great importance for the genuine meeting of these needs.

5. The final stage of development is the movement toward self-actualization...becoming all one can become, fulfilling one's potential. This need appears later in life than all the others, often in mid-life.
None of these needs are met with complete and absolute satisfaction and each ascending need requires relatively less satisfaction before a move can be made to the next need. The satisfaction of the higher-level needs, especially self-actualization, not only produces greater physiological health but produces "a deeper happiness, peace of mind, and fullness in one's inner life" (Schultz, 1981, pg. 245).

Self-actualizers, although estimated to be a small percentage of the population, share certain characteristics (Schultz, 1981):

1. An accurate perception of reality unbiased by prejudice or preconceptions.

2. An acceptance of themselves, others, and humankind that includes both strengths and weaknesses.

3. Unpretentious, spontaneous, individualistic behavior.

4. Commitment to some goal or work beyond themselves.

5. Autonomy and independence that leads to enjoyment and need for solitude.

6. Continuing appreciation for the common, simple, everyday experience.

7. A tendency to have moments of transcendence, mystical experiences in which the person feels extremely powerful and confident.

8. Attitude of concern and kinship with all humankind.

9. Intense relationships with a small circle of peers. Attracts admirers.

10. Ability to express themselves in undefended and creative ways.
11. Tolerance and acceptance of all persons, ability to relate to those of all status.
12. Guided from within rather than influenced greatly by society's expectations and norms.

Allport

Gordon Allport's concept of propriate functional autonomy (the process that directs and supports one's sense of self) includes a principle of mastery and competence (Schultz, 1981). Persons are motivated to increase mastery and competence and are unsatisfied to perform at minimal or simply adequate levels.

The personality develops, he stated, through a series of changes from infancy (bodily self to self-identity) through childhood (self-esteem to extension of self to self-image) into adolescence (self as rational coper to propriate striving) (Schultz, 1981).

The healthy adult personality is described by Allport using six criteria (Allport, 1961):
1. Extension of the sense of self; a de-centering of focus on self to include focus on others.
2. Intimate and compassionate relationships with others.
3. Emotional security that is characterized by a balance of self-expression and self-control.
4. Accurate perceptions, skills for problem-solving, and the capacity to give oneself to some form of work.
5. Insight regarding oneself, which includes a sense of humor and a lack of affectation.
6. A sense of purpose that gives direction to life.
For Allport, as for Maslow and Rogers, persons are always becoming, achieving, growing, moving. Life is not a search for relief from tension or striving for a status quo to maintain, but a never-ending process of striving toward new goals.

**SENSE OF MEANINGFULNESS**

Explicit in the theories of Allport and Maslow and implicit in the work of many developmental and personality theorists is the importance of a sense of purpose and meaning for well-being. Human beings desire and need a sense of meaning in their lives. Lack of meaningfulness or a sense of purposefulness is accompanied by anxiety, tension, and distress (Yalom, 1980).

In discussing persons' search for life meaning, Yalom surveys seven groups of activities that appear to provide people with a sense of purpose in life.

1. **Altruism.** One source of meaning in life is contributing to the good of others, giving of oneself, offering love and care to other people.

2. **Dedication to a cause.** Giving oneself to a project that is deemed useful, to a worthy cause that is larger than the individual, brings meaning to the lives of many.

3. **Creativity.** "To create something new, something that rings with novelty or beauty and harmony is a powerful antidote to a sense of meaninglessness" (Yalom, 1980, p. 435).
4. The Hedonistic Solution. Purpose in life, for some, is found in living life to its fullest, in appreciating and experiencing as many of the mysteries and rhythms in life as possible.

5. Self-actualization. For Abraham Maslow, as well as others, striving to fulfill one’s potential provides the motivation and purpose for life.

6. Self-transcendence. Viktor Frankel, among others, stresses the need people have to move beyond a concern for self and self-expression to a reaching outside of self and caring for others, whether on a large or small scale.

7. Self-transcendence and the life cycle. Developmental studies have found that as adults mature there is a movement from preoccupation with self to a greater concern for other individuals and society.

These seven categories of events which give meaning to life respond to the question, What is the purpose or meaning of my life, of any individual’s life? A related but separate question is, What is the meaning of life itself? This is a spiritual or religious question about creation, the presence or absence of God or divine being in the world, and about death and immortality. How a person engages this question of more cosmic meaning will greatly influence the response to the question of meaning for the individual’s life (Yalom, 1980).

HARDINESS

A concept helpful in further understanding well-being is that of "hardiness." Salvatore R. Maddi and Suzanne C. Kobasa, (1984) in a study of executives of
Illinois Bell, sought to determine why some became sick and others remained healthy when all were encountering many stressful events. They concluded that the single most important resource for responding to stress was personality hardiness.

Personality hardiness combines three tendencies (Kobasa, 1979; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984):

(a) a tendency toward commitment rather than alienation: evidenced by being interested in what they are doing, involving themselves wholeheartedly, usually give maximum energy rather than finding things boring or meaningless or tiring and withholding their involvement.

(b) a tendency toward control rather than powerlessness: evidenced by believing and acting as if they can influence events and persons around them, turning events toward productive outcomes, rather than acting and feeling like passive victims of forces around them.

(c) a tendency toward challenge rather than threat: evidenced by seeing life as strenuous yet exciting, and seeing change as natural and stimulating, rather than fearing the disruption of the status quo that change brings.

Gary L. Harbaugh (1988), building on Kobasa's concept of hardiness, developed a scale for "faith-hardiness" which examines a person's physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Harbaugh emphasizes the wholistic nature of faith-hardiness, including the inter-relatedness of the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of life. "A faith-hardy Christian is able to see the challenges and the choices
in times of change because he or she is confident that Christ is present and caring during those times" (Harbaugh, 1986, p.10).

Faith-hardiness appears particularly important to the well-being of clergy. They themselves are Christians facing the same challenges shared by all Christians, and faith and the faith-hardiness of their congregations are presumed to be the content and context of their work. Well-being may be affected as clergy struggle with their faith and their faithfulness in ministry.

**SUMMARY**

"Well-being" defies a simple definition. Instead, the concept invites investigation from a variety of perspectives, each contributing to a richer understanding of the whole. Five such perspectives have been chosen to examine in this literature review:

1. Studies taking a positive approach to health,
2. Developmental stage theories,
3. Personality theories,
4. Life-purpose activities, and
5. Personality hardiness and faith-hardiness.

The three positive-approach studies cited supported the importance of the themes of work and love in adulthood. Vaillant found that greater health was associated with use of mature defense mechanisms (altruism, humor, suppression, anticipation, and sublimation) in adapting to life. Baruch, Barnett, and
Rivers concluded that well-being has two components: mastery, associated with one's work, and pleasure, associated with one's relationships. Farrell and Rosenberg were able to describe 32% of the male population emerging from mid-life years as "transcendent-generative," characterizing them as persons exhibiting well-being.

The developmentalists describe well-being in terms of how appropriately one is living out the current stage of life. Erikson, from the standpoint of resolving struggles at each life stage; Levinson, in terms of life structure and transitions; Kohlberg and Gilligan, from the perspective of moral and ethical decision-making; Gould, in terms of false assumptions with which each age struggles; and Fowler, in the development of faith and life's meaning...each theorist describes growth into and through adulthood. The extent to which an adult engages the dilemmas, joys, and limitations of his or her current stage of development determines the extent to which one possesses well-being.

Three personality theorists focus on the healthy, mature adult. Rogers, Maslow, and Allport describe persons as growing, moving, becoming, achieving, actualizing persons constantly striving toward new goals. As persons are able to live out the process of becoming
and actualizing they experience well-being. Central to Rogers' theory are that persons need positive regard from self and others and that persons are driven to become all that they can be. Maslow's theory of motivation suggests that satisfaction of higher-level needs, especially of self-actualization, bring greater well-being. Allport sees persons motivated by a desire to increase mastery and competence. All three theorists describe characteristics of the healthy or actualizing person...the persons possessing well-being.

Two additional concepts emerged from the theories described: the concepts of meaningfulness and hardiness.

Well-being appears closely associated with a sense of purpose in life. One important characteristic of a person exhibiting well-being is possessing a sense of the meaningfulness of his or her life. Yalom identifies seven groups of activities that provide a sense of purpose in life: altruism, dedication to a cause, creativity, living life fully, self-actualization, self-transcendence, self-transcendence related to life cycle.

Maddi and Kobasa concluded that the single most important factor that determines why some people remain healthy (maintain well-being) and others become ill when exposed to similar levels of stress is personality hardiness. The hardy personality exhibits three
tendencies: commitment rather than alienation, control rather than powerlessness, and challenge rather than threat. Building on that research Harbaugh describes the faith-hardy person as one meets change and challenge secure in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

In order to explore the well-being of clergy or other helping professionals, it is essential to have first examined the concept of well-being itself. While other perspectives on the concept may be available, these five have been employed: mastery and pleasure, adult development theory, personality theory, life meaning, hardiness and faith-hardiness. Each of these areas contributes to recognizing well-being when it is present, finding a vocabulary for discussing well-being, and making sense of data collected regarding well-being.
CHAPTER III
THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

THE SAMPLE

The subjects of this research were ordained clergy serving in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) within the boundaries of the state of Ohio. This geography is comprised of three synods in the ELCA: Southern Ohio, Northwest Ohio, and Northeast Ohio. These congregations were formerly members of the Ohio Synod, Lutheran Church in America; Ohio District, American Lutheran Church; and Ohio District, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America came into existence on January 1, 1988, with the merger of three Lutheran church bodies. This research began before January 1, 1988, and was completed after that date; therefore, the research took into account the creation of the new church body.

In order to obtain the names of potential participants in the study the bishops of the three previous judicatories were asked, together with whatever
counsel they desired, to list approximately twenty clergy they would describe as persons exhibiting a sense of well-being. The definition of "well-being" as it is used in this study was supplied in written form. In addition, six Trinity Lutheran Seminary faculty and administrators (church leaders with extensive experience with large numbers of Ohio clergy) were also asked to identify such clergy. A total of 140 different clergy were identified in a combined list of 194 suggested names. The persons mentioned most frequently from each of the three church bodies were selected immediately for the population; a total of 8 clergy. The names mentioned most frequently which remained after the initial selection were categorized by church body to insure balance within the final population. A blind draw completed the population: three ALC men, two ALC women, three LCA men, two LCA women, and 2 AELC men.

A representation of each former church body was desired. Although the American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America churches were about equal in number, there were few Association of Evangelical Lutheran Church congregations in Ohio. No similar research had been based on this combined population; therefore, it was anticipated that thoughtful selection would increase the value of this particular study.
In addition, a balance of women and men in ministry was desired in the study. Women have been ordained in Lutheran churches only since 1970 and remain less than 10% of the population. However, seminary enrollment includes increasing percentages of women, and greater numbers of women clergy in parishes can be expected in the future. Because of the small number of women pastors past research has often failed to adequately reflect their impact, if any, on ministry. For instance, the work of Hulme, Brekke, and Behrens, cited earlier in this paper, included 968 men and 32 women. Some research has focused exclusively on women pastors (see Carrol, Hargrove, Lumnis Women of the Cloth and Coger, Women in Parish Ministry: Stress and Support) but those have usually included ecumenical or strictly non-Lutheran clergy. Research which reflects the ministry of women as well as men in Lutheran churches has been lacking.

Spradley (1979) suggests five characteristics of a good informant in ethnographic research. These elements helped guide the criteria for selecting persons to be interviewed and helped identify potential limitations to be recognized and addressed. The five characteristics follow:

1. The informant should be thoroughly enculturated in this environment. Spradley suggests that at least one
year's engagement in the particular culture is necessary for adequate familiarity. For these interviews clergy were sought who had three or more years in parish ministry to insure thorough knowledge of the culture.

2. The informant should currently be engaged in this culture. With two exceptions clergy interviewed were serving full-time in congregational settings. One served 3/4 time as a co-pastor, and one had congregational and campus pastor responsibilities.

3. The cultural scene should be thoroughly familiar to the informant and unfamiliar to the interviewer. Spradley concludes that an interviewer too knowledgeable of the culture may overlook valuable data and find data analysis difficult because too much is taken for granted. While the interviewer was not a clergyperson she was familiar with congregational life and parish ministry. There was continuing attention to the need for objectivity and psychological distance in order to convert a potential liability into an asset based in the understanding and empathy of the interviewer.

4. The informant must have adequate time to give to the interviews. Such availability was determined upon initial contact with the clergyperson and the interviews were scheduled for one and a half hours in order to insure at least one hour of interview time.
5. The informant should be non-analytical of his or her own culture; that is, not particularly attentive to how outsider's might perceive this culture. This is the most difficult of the five characteristics to assess. Informant's analyses of their culture was welcomed to the extent that it evolved from their experience and reflection and discouraged when it attempted to analyze ministry as it might be seen by outsiders or through the social sciences.

In each judicatory permission was obtained from the bishop and a written explanation of the research given before individual clergy were approached.

When the names of participants had been determined, each was sent a letter explaining the project and requesting their participation. Subsequently, they were telephoned to solicit their response, clarify purpose, introduce the interviewer, and schedule the interviews.

A pilot project was conducted prior to the research to refine the data gathering and analysis process. These preliminary interviews were crucial in developing the questions to be used and in practicing good listening.

DATA GATHERING

Data were gathered through two interviews with each participating clergyperson over a period of eight weeks.
With two exceptions the interviews took place in the clergy's office or home setting. Two second interviews were held in a neutral site agreeable to each person. Interviews were between one hour and one and a half hours and were tape-recorded. The first interview sought to establish a relationship between pastor and interviewer, clarify the purpose of the interview, gather factual information about the persons and their careers, and begin to explore the questions regarding well-being. A brief hypothetical situation concerning criticism was included in the first interview. At the conclusion of the first interview participants were asked to prepare for the next interview by identifying peaks and valleys in their lives since ordination. They would be asked to talk about those life events, select one for further discussion, and describe it especially in terms of the effect it had on their later ministry. The second interview also included other pre-determined questions to guide the discussion. Conducting a second interview allowed the pastors to reflect on the questions after they had been introduced and may have insured a more relaxed and productive session since the interviewer and procedures were then familiar (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

Guidelines for the Interviewing Process

The interviews, although intended to be enjoyable
and relaxed, followed a particular process and guidelines. Spradley’s (1979) description of the primary components of an ethnographic interview served as a guide to the interviews:

1. statement and clarification of the interview’s explicit purpose,
2. repeated explanations regarding the process and its components...a valuable tool in establishing rapport between informant and interviewer, and
3. asking ethnographic questions, of which there are many different categories each serving its own purposes.

Spradley (1979) also identified five interpersonal skills helpful during interviewing. These also served as guidelines during the interview process:

1. asking questions,
2. listening rather than talking,
3. taking a passive rather than assertive role,
4. expressing verbal interest in the person interviewed,
5. expressing interest through eye contact and other non-verbal means.

Guidelines for Interview Questions

The shaping and asking of questions was a critical element in these interviews. The work of several authorities were foundational to developing the interview questions. Spradley (1979) describes three categories of questions: descriptive, structural, and contrast, subdividing those categories into more than 25 types of questions. Sudman and Bradburn (1982) discuss questions
about attitudes and questions about facts and behaviors. Griggs (1980) identifies information questions, analytical questions, and personal questions. A typology proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1981) includes these ten categories of questions: hypothetical questions, questions that pose the ideal, devil's advocate questions, interpretative questions, questions that suggest, reason-why questions, argument-type questions, source questions to uncover additional sources, qualified yes-no questions, filter questions which ask for additional clarification of information.

Sudman and Bradburn (1982) provide valuable clues to the art of asking questions, and the guidelines to framing and posing good interview questions in this study were drawn from their expertise.

1. Questions should be grounded in the primary research questions being explored.

2. The level of threat of a question is related to how strongly the respondent feels there is a right or wrong answer to it.

Clues for posing non-threatening questions about behavior:

3. Provide memory cues (lists, examples) for aiding recall.

4. Make questions as specific as possible.

5. The more recent and most significant events will be recalled with most accuracy.

6. Select words carefully to insure that all respondents will agree on their meaning.
7. Longer questions improve recall and include memory cues, give time for thinking, and invite a longer response.

Clues for posing threatening questions about behavior:

8. Use terminology that is familiar rather than clinically correct language that is seldom used.

9. Deliberately load questions to avoid the impression of criticism or judgement of the behavior.

10. Respondents often resent the use of reliability checks during the same interview.

11. At the close of the interview ask questions to determine how threatening the questions were perceived to be.

12. Open questions are more useful than closed ones regarding frequency of socially undesirable behavior.

13. Consider alternatives to questions, such as card-sorting.

Clues for posing questions about attitudes:

14. Consider the value of explicitly stating alternative responses rather than open-ended questions.

15. Avoid questions that introduce multiple concepts that do not have a single answer.

16. Consider possible responses to bi-polar as well as unipolar questions and ask the questions that are more likely to elicit useful responses.

17. If general and specific attitude questions are related, ask the general questions first.

The Interview Questions

A set of pre-determined questions was used to guide the interviews; however, participants were encouraged to respond beyond the scope of the questions whenever they wished.
Demographic questions sought the following information: birthdate, seminary attended, seminary graduation date, ordination date, extent of church involvement before seminary, progression from high school until ordination, current family status, description of ministry experience since ordination, and description of current ministry situation.

Other questions used in the interviews paraphrased and built upon the following questions:

1. What do you think church leaders perceive about you that led them to identify you as a pastor exhibiting well-being? How accurate do you believe is their perception of your well-being?

2. Since ordination, what factors have contributed most to your well-being?

3. How would you describe yourself in each of these categories: personality, leadership style, work habits, relaxation habits, self-concept/self-esteem, professional competence, faith life, friendships and relationships?

4. What are some of the ways in which ministry is a stressful profession for you?

5. In what ways, if any, does working in ordained ministry contribute to your well-being?

6. Suppose an influential member of your congregation criticized you about something in which you were invested. How would you respond in feeling, thought, and action to that criticism?

7. What are some of the peaks and valleys, ups and downs, in your life since ordination?

8. Choose any one of those situations or events, describe it in more detail, speak about how you coped with it, and discuss its long-term effect upon your ministry.
9. Have you always been a fairly healthy person? Do you think others have always perceived you as a person of well-being?

10. What are some of the strategies or techniques you use to cope with difficult times?

11. In what kinds of situations do you put these coping strategies to work?

12. When in ministry do you have the strongest sense of well-being?

13. Describe how your personal and family life is both a source of stress and a source of strength in your well-being.

14. What is it that gives your life a sense of meaningfulness?

15. Regarding continuing education: what are your practices and preferences, what connection is there between continuing education and your well-being, and what suggestions do you have for continuing education to make it more useful in your well-being?

16. What advice would you give to new clergy about maintaining their well-being throughout a long career in ministry?

Following each interview the researcher completed limited field notes which focused on the non-verbal aspects of the interview (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

DATA ANALYSIS

Each tape-recorded interview was transcribed into typed copy which was then checked against the recording to insure accuracy of transcription. Listening to the recorded interviews provided the researcher with review
of the data and allowed common threads of response to begin to surface. A copy of the transcription was sent to the clergy interviewed who was asked to review it for accuracy.

Charts were prepared which placed side by side a summary of all participants' responses to the same questions. Through repeated review of these charts response patterns emerged and consolidation of the data into new categories was achieved. Within most categories check-lists were assembled which identified the variety of responses and the names of those offering that response. These lists were the basis for organizing the presentation of the data and supporting it with quotations from the clergy.

THE AUDIT

Because of the possibility of researcher bias in a familiar setting, an audit of the research was conducted by an external judge familiar with the procedures of naturalistic inquiry. That audit was to judge whether the procedures were implemented appropriately and whether categories and conclusions made sense in light of the data. In order to facilitate the audit, documentation from the data gathering and analysis was provided the judge. That documentation included materials used in
sample selection, all data collected in its original and transcribed forms, field notes, and all charts, checklists, and notations developed during the data analysis process. The report of the auditor is found in the appendix of this study (Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Miles and Huberman, 1984).

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The participants in this study, by their willingness to engage in an interview, made themselves vulnerable by exposing their attitudes and behaviors, strengths and weaknesses, concerns and satisfactions. The following procedures were implemented to insure a high ethical standard in this study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Spradley, 1979).

1. Participants were treated with respect and the research conducted in such a way to avoid their harm, embarrassment, or exploitation.

2. The purpose and process of the interviews were shared with the participants in both written and oral form. Interviews were openly tape-recorded but only after obtaining the consent of the respondent.

3. After the interviews typed transcripts were mailed to each respondent inviting further comments and thanking that pastor for her or his participation.

4. Anonymity was carefully guarded. Data have been reported in such a way that the identity of the respondents are not known. No list of the study population has been or will be available beyond the use of the researcher and auditor for this study.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND SUMMARIES OF THE DATA

In this chapter the comments of the clergy interviewed are presented in a form organized to reveal the patterns that occurred as well as the exceptions to those patterns. Summaries are provided throughout the chapter to enhance the reader's understanding of the data. Further attention to the primary themes that emerged is included in Chapter V. This chapter includes patterns that emerged within these categories: demographics, self-description, factors that threaten and contribute to well-being, continuing education, and advice to new clergy.

The names of the participants have been changed. The first letter of the pseudonyms used corresponds to the relative ages of those interviewed: the youngest participant is referred to as Ann, the next youngest is Bev, and so forth. The oldest pastor is given the name Lou.
THE PARTICIPANTS

Twelve clergypersons perceived by one or more church leaders as persons of well-being were interviewed. They represent a balance of age, gender, geography, seminary background, and former denominational association. All serve congregations of the three Ohio synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Eight of the clergy are men, four are women. Nine are in first marriages with children. One pastor is in a second marriage with children. One pastor is an expectant parent, and one is single. Three of the clergy are married to other ordained pastors.

The average age of the clergy is about 43 years. The four youngest clergy are the four women who range in age from 29 to 35 years. Because women have been ordained in the Lutheran church only since 1970 it was likely that women identified for the study would be younger than men. The youngest man is 38, the oldest 64.

Five clergy serve congregations in the Southern Ohio Synod, ELCA. Four clergy are in the Northeastern Ohio Synod, and three are from the Northwestern Ohio Synod.

Before the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in January, 1988, five were pastors of the Lutheran Church in America; five were of the American Lutheran Church; two were of the Association of
Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

They received their theological education in five different seminaries. Six are graduates of Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, or one of its predecessor schools. Four attended other Lutheran seminaries. Two attended non-Lutheran seminaries. Their patterns of schooling and experience until ordination generally are that of full-time students with various summer experiences from high school through ordination. Only one interrupted that traditional pattern with a two year international experience between high school and college. However, for two there was a full year between seminary graduation and ordination. One awaited a call for a year. One was in graduate study in Europe for a year before ordination. For four of the clergy education was accelerated: one graduated from high school at sixteen; one finished college in three years. For two, seminary education was condensed during World War II because theological students were required to attend classes year around. Two were products of the traditional Missouri Synod preparatory school program prior to seminary.

All twelve reported active church involvement for themselves and their families prior to attending seminary, although one family became inactive during the
person's youth. Two were baptized in childhood at ages nine and eleven respectively, others apparently in the more traditionally Lutheran ages for baptism nearer infancy. None of these persons were children of clergy. Eight persons have no clergy in their families at all while four have siblings or extended family members who are ordained. Three describe college years as times when their church involvement lessened or times when they felt their faith challenged significantly.

The ministry histories and current situations of these clergy show some variety, although not as much as might be expected. These clergy have been in ordained ministry for an average of almost seventeen years, ranging from four years to almost forty. Two are in their first calls. Two have served five calls. Ten serve full-time in churches; one serves 3/4 time in a congregation as a co-pastor; one both serves a congregation and has responsibilities as a campus pastor. Two have served in judicatory or church-wide staff positions at some time in their ministry.

The congregations they currently serve range in size from 350 members to 2500. Six congregations are suburban, middle or upper-middle class, white congregations of a thousand members or more. Another congregation of 1750 members is in the outskirts of a metropolitan area and
has a membership which is economically and geographically mixed. Three are small town congregations. Two are congregations in blue collar, transitional areas.

Eight of the clergy are in multi-clergy staff positions, some with the longer tenure, others as newer staff members. The four remaining clergy all have some form of paid pastoral or administrative assistance: laity, seminary intern, part-time clergy.

**SELF-DESCRIPTION OF THE CLERGY**

In an attempt to identify any significant common characteristics of these clergy of perceived well-being the interviewees were asked to describe themselves in several categories: personality, leadership style, work and relaxation habits, self-esteem, faith, friendships. In addition some comments related to these categories were found throughout the interviews. While descriptions were varied, some significant patterns emerged in most categories.

**Personality**

Almost all these clergy describe themselves as outgoing or extroverted. Seven were aware of their Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory results which identified them as extroverts to varying degrees. Others
said they were energized by being with other people. 

Carol's self-description appears to fit many. 

I'm really nurtured and fed by people....So I would say in terms of the personality an overall outgoingness. I'm sure people would probably say I'm easy to work with and genuinely caring. (p.6) 

However, six clergy offer a more complex description. 

Carol talks about becoming "increasingly introspective" (p.6) and Lou found that nearing retirement he enjoyed quiet time. 

I've found in recent years probably more trying to withdraw from people. Although I'm with people all the time, but seeking more and more opportunities to be alone, to have some quiet time....I think at one time I was much more gregarious and I wanted to be in every party and kind of thing, and now I could care less. Now I'm really treasuring the evenings I can spend at home because I never had that before. (p.6) 

"I am an extrovert, but I have a real strong introverted side, too. I need time to be by myself. But I do tend to get energized when I'm around folks." (Bev, p.12) 

Greg describes himself as "an introvert that has become a professional extrovert."

I don't think I'm a cocktail party, back-slapping kind of person, but I know as a pastor you have got to be,...chatting with people and so forth, and the door open...but when I'm on my own I'm pretty much on my own. I don't seek out a whole lot of company. (p.8) 

While Bev talks about being perceived as easy-going she knows herself to be very intense. (p.11) Donna and
Frank talk even more directly about the public and private sides of themselves. Donna feels she is both introvert and extrovert.

...In a public setting I am out-going. I am one who will take great initiative to draw people into conversation, to make them feel at home in a social setting, that would work hard and enjoyably in getting a group to come together....My public personality is basically a friendly, not-intimidating personality.

My at-home personality, I am in truth a much shyer person....[Some] people would know a side of my personality that's much more reserved, a little bit harder to know, less accessible, maybe even sometimes more thoughtful rather than spontaneous. Both are me, that would be my reflection. And it depends a little bit on the context that I'm in. (p.6)

Frank does not claim a description of either extrovert or introvert, but says, "I think I'm socially minded. I love people but there is that side of me that also enjoys solitude." In fact, Frank spoke at greatest length about his quiet side.

People have told me that I'm a serious fellow and I agree with that. I do a lot of thinking. Not always profound, but I do take life seriously I think. I take other people's difficulties seriously. I'm inquisitive and so I do like to learn new things, but it's not a driving compulsion....I just enjoy the stimulation of new ideas, new insights. My public presence in the ministry is in a sense very different from what my personal inclinations are. I could very much be the second inhabitant at Walden Pond. I enjoy time alone. My idea of vacation is not going to explore a city. My idea of vacation is to go out into God's country to find as much solitude as I possibly can. (pp.7,8)
Bev, Earl, Greg, Jim, and Karl know themselves as persons with a sense of humor, as Earl says, to "get close to people with a light touch." (p.8) Ann, Donna, Earl, and Hank express emotional high's and low's, and are sometimes volatile or impulsive. But Lou, Jim, Carol, and Frank describe themselves as particularly even-tempered, indeed finding it somewhat difficult to identify peaks and valleys in their lives.

These clergy appear to be out-going, friendly, caring people especially in their professional ministry. Many balance this with personal lives which are more introspective and quiet.

Leadership Style

Self-description in the category of leadership style seemed to be the one presenting greatest difficulty for the pastors. Most of these clergy claim a leadership style that is active yet not dictatorial. Most fall between the style of Earl (p.8) whose basic philosophy is "leaders must lead" and describes his leadership style as "very, very aggressive" and Lou (p.7) who says "my style of leadership has simply been to win the trust of the people so that they will follow your leadership....They know whether you love them, whether you're trying to help them." For Lou working with committees or councils to make decisions "would never be one of my strong points."
The clergy spoke of consciously affirming the gifts and leadership of laity, of a collegial style of leadership, and of varying abilities to delegate responsibilities to others.

While they struggled with articulating their leadership positions, several wanted to reject the perceived passivity of an "enabler" model. Bev and Jim seem to speak for many.

I don't lead from the middle, exactly. I lead from with the people. I work on stuff with folks. I help them a lot of time to develop a position, but I'm not an enabler, I guess....I'm not content with that. I sometimes know where we ought to be going and I think it's important that if you are going to be a leader you ought to have some sort of vision. (Bev, p.12)

Leadership style is pretty collegial. I don't buy into enabler very much....I like it best when I can be the conductor and I can also kind of play one part along with them. It might be a little more like [my wife's] bell choir. Usually there will be one person that doesn't show up so she plays a bell or two while she is able to manage the rest of it also. (Jim, p.8)

In summary, most clergy seek a leadership style that is active and engaged but not autocratic or dictatorial.

Work and Relaxation Habits

The clergy were asked to describe their work and relaxation habits. While particular styles of relaxation are described elsewhere, the responses allow the identification of patterns of work and play.
The most consistent response, articulated by six of the clergy, can best be summarized as working long and hard and effectively and enjoying it.

When asked to describe how he worked, Lou said, "forever and ever and ever." Donna seems to speak for several.

I work hard....I have probably too grand of a task commitment. I get things done....

I work whatever it takes to get the job done. I can also be fairly efficient, so it means sometimes I don't work long just to work long. If it takes a long day to get everything done, I'm real likely to put in a long day. And it took me a while to see that that was a difference. Some people who know me would say, "You always work too much." I don't. Sometimes if there is something else to be done in the afternoon...I manage to get a lot done very quickly so that I can go and do other things. Some days I just know there is so much that it will take all my waking hours to feel I've done what I can plow away at that day. (Donna, pp.7,8)

Although most speak of enjoying their work and their willingness to work long and hard, the drawbacks of the long hours are also observed. Earl acknowledged that his long working hours often rob his family of time with them. But while Hank recognizes the long hours many weeks, "when I listen to other executives in this community I'm not certain that's so different." (p.9)

The pastors struggled with the identification of "workaholic" acknowledging the long hours but resisting the negative connotations of that label.

The question would really be, would I say that [I'm a workaholic] with pride or with grimace?
It's a touchy category. I think I suffer from some of what people say is dangerous about being a workaholic....Some of us who work very, very, very hard and find great satisfaction in it always say, "Well, I'm a workaholic, but...." So I'm not ready for a Workaholics Anonymous Group where I disclaim that I want to give up all those habits. I think there are some drawbacks to the way I work. (Donna, p.7)

Greg, however, chastises some of his colleagues for their work practices. He admits that he also works long hours. "I don't pride myself on that. I've known too many pastors who seem to brag about how many hours a week they work and how tired they are...." (p.9) Ivan tells his staff colleague that most of the work should be completed by Friday. "If we don't work Saturday that means we're getting the job done." (p.16)

Many clergy have established a routine to the days and weeks. Sunday through Thursday are extremely busy, although a few take a day off early in the week. Mornings are usually office time, afternoons for visits and hospital calls, and evenings for meetings and programs. For Frank at least part of Thursday is for sermon reflection and Fridays for sermon writing. Hank has his sermon completed on Thursday. Saturdays become catch-all days for some, a shorter workday structured on responsibilities that arise. The three oldest pastors are the three earliest starters, arriving in their offices by 8:00 a.m.
While Hank and Ivan are careful to plan ahead, Ann claims to be "randomly organized" and Donna feels "fairly organized." Jim believes he is "a little erratic in his work habits, and Bev finds herself working "in spurts on different things." "I used to hate deadlines and in school that wasn't such a big deal, but in the parish every Sunday at 8:30 you've got to be there. So I work to deadline very well." (Bev, p.12) But a priority on people supersedes all else for Ann, Jim, and Hank and perhaps for others as well. As Hank says,

I like to plan ahead, but I can be kind of a time-waster sometimes I think. I get started with stuff at my desk and end up chatting. If people come in I just put aside whatever I'm doing and just get right to the people. I think that's a good work habit for clergy. (p. 9)

Jim says, "I'm so much into people that I can easily be distracted by any person that comes in, especially if they need something." (p. 9)

Relaxation is directly tied to family and spouse for some. Karl says, "...if my wife were working on Friday, I think I would have a hard time taking it off and just sitting at home." (p.13) And Hank admits that although Friday is his day off "the only disadvantage is that it's always a day alone which I don't enjoy all the time. All my family is gone." (p.9) Many, like Lou and Greg, reserve Friday evenings as a special time for spouse or family, and others, especially Ann, Bev, Ivan, and Frank,
talk about the enjoyment of time together with their children.

Five of the clergy find days off to be something of a problem, from Lou who simply preferred to work seven days a week catching blocks of hours during the week for relaxing, to Donna who finds congregational events intruding into her day off, to Earl who works until noon on his day off. Earl says, "my wife says you can tell when I take a day off because I don't wear a tie into the office." (p.7)

Both Earl and Greg find that if they are in town they are working, and so days off are difficult. For Earl relaxation requires physically getting away, out of town, so vacations are of more value than days off.

I like to get away and be anonymous. I hate to shop where people know me. I like to be anonymous and on vacation I've found the only way to really get vacation is to get away. I can't take vacation at home. I can't be in town and not be in the office at some point in the day. Even if it is just to check the mail. I can't stay away. But when I do get away I get away. I don't think twice about what is going on back here. (Earl, p.7)

Vacations are cherished by these clergy. As Bev says, "...every minute of the four weeks that are allowed we take." (p.13) Eight of the clergy emphasized the importance of their vacations and the planning that went into them. Greg is adamant about that time and criticizes clergy colleagues who are not.
I've always been very strict about taking my vacation. I've known pastors that are both lax about it and brag about it. "I only took one week last year." What a jerk you are! You get four weeks. Take them. Because I think I'm a better pastor when I have that. (p. 34)

Relaxation for at least two of the clergy must also be productive. Jim and his wife use most vacations to participate in or lead educational travel trips around the world. "That takes a lot of time but I always enjoy it. That is renewing. It is a different kind of thing. I really get charged up doing it." (p.10)

My husband would describe me as one who works hard and plays hard but he perceives my play as working. Like working in the yard. I'm not going to watch TV unless I am reading a book at the same time or doing needlework or doing something else, but for me that's fun. (Carol, p.8)

In summary, most clergy work hard and long and enjoy their work, yet find time away from the job for relaxation to be necessary.

Self-Esteem

In the category of self-concept and self-esteem, eleven of the twelve articulated very positive feelings about themselves. Four of the clergy spoke directly about their self-esteem in terms of their roles or work.

I feel pretty confident in who I am and don't think I have any problems in regard to self-esteem.

In terms of leadership abilities, my role as spiritual leader for this community, my role as a father, husband, I feel very good about who I am in those places. (Ivan, p.8)
I feel pretty good about myself. I think I'm a good pastor. I think I'm a good husband and I think I'm a good father. (Greg, p.11)

I guess I would feel pretty good about myself. I recognize that I'm not perfect, and I recognize there are lots of things I could have and should have done and maybe would do differently, I don't know, if I had another go-round at it. But I think, basically, I felt pretty good about ministry and my ministry. I guess I just feel confident about what has happened. (Lou, p.9)

I think if I might turn to some heresy, I'm basically a good person. I know I'm sinful, but apart from that idea, I'm basically a good person. And I'm good at what I do, and I like what I do. (Bev, p.14)

Two of the clergy based their positive self-concept in Scripture and theology.

I think I feel good about myself. That I'm a person of worth, yes. I think it is important that one thinks that way. That we have somehow come out of this business that we shouldn't love ourselves, and that is not what the scripture says. Jesus said that you shall love your neighbor as yourself, which means you love yourself also. You have a good self-esteem. (Karl, p.13)

Carol speaks of the balance between being nurtured by others and needing their approval as part of self-esteem.

I think I've been greatly nurtured and fed by people and yet I'm not dependent upon them for approval which I think could be [a] danger...even for myself at a very young age. That I would have been more dependent upon others for their approval. But I have a strong sense of direction and decision-making in my own mind. (p.8)

Frank speaks even more directly about the origin of his positive self-esteem.
I am really grateful to be a Lutheran Christian. I think that what I learned about myself in studying theology was extremely important to me. Reading [theology], understanding the constant tension between the old us and the new us, the dichotomy that exists in a person's life between what one wills and desires and what one often ends up being and doing and having to put up within one's self--living under grace. Knowing that there is no condemnation for people who are in Christ Jesus. Meeting some people who have helped me to see that that is where you begin and end as a Christian has been extremely helpful to me. I think having the models of the seminary professors that I had was fantastic....They were trying to help me find the life, spirit, and soul of what Christianity and Lutheranism were all about. That has really stood me in good stead in terms of self-image and I think it is something that I can pass on to other people by sharing some of the insights into what it is like to be a human being when you look at yourself through the eyes of Lutheran Christianity in its best possible form. Again, a wife who is supportive of me. Who not only loves me and tells me that she does, but who affirms what I do, I think so much of the time, because when you don't get the affirmation maybe at time that you do need, and I think we all need it. My wife and family and kids too are supportive of me being in the ministry. I know that is not the case of everybody that is in the ministry and so that is a plus. (Frank,p.11,12)

While Frank hears important affirmation from his family, Hank finds that affirmation in ministry itself and like several others feels confidence in his pastoral roles.

I think [my self-esteem is] very healthy. I mean all the way around. And I mean that in its full aspect. I feel good about who I am, and I think I feel good about the people who are around me. My self-esteem has not always probably been there, but it is more and more so, I think, as I get older--I have more self-esteem than I ever did when I was younger.

I think I just feel more assured at what I'm doing. I know I'm doing the right thing. That
doesn't mean that I don't question or don't feel like one day I want to become a plumber or something. I think I have all those—I assume that's pretty normal. But my self-esteem is pretty high. Part of it is that, for me, the ministry has just been extremely affirming. It's not negating of who I am or negating of anything, it's really affirmation. No, I get negative comments. Certainly if you talk to the congregation there'd be people who have some negative things to say, but I just find it over-all, it's just a very affirming life. (Hank, p.11)

Ivan, like Hank, has higher self-esteem than in earlier years. Strong feelings of inferiority accompanied Ivan into adulthood and he struggled with schoolwork and leadership roles in his youth. He talks about his self-esteem today and joins Frank and Karl in speaking theologically about it.

[I am] confident, assured, progressing. On the way to becoming more than what I am. It seems like—using the old cliche for football—no pain, no gain. Where there has been gain in my life there has been significant pain as well. I suppose if I were to characterize my self-esteem it is my greater adaptability at surviving than ever before....I'm pretty elastic when it comes to bouncing back. My turnaround time on being blown out of the saddle and getting back on is less than what it was before as a younger pastor. ...Whether it is wisdom—I have more of that— I'm able to see things coming. I'm not sure, but I still get hurt by parishioners. I still am shocked at what some Christians will do but I can still love them. I will be angry about it for a time but recognize that my whole theological framework is built around my Lord and He has loved me as I am. He knows what kind of ass I can be from time to time....The God I know and the repentance that I've experienced and the forgiveness that has come through that is who God is....I have become confident, progressive in my thinking. It has to do with my ability to survive. (Ivan, pp. 19,20)
While most spoke only in positive terms about their self-esteem, Donna said, "I think I'm probably more fragile and vulnerable than people realize...." (p.9) Jim discussed his vulnerability in terms of continuing competence as he grows older.

I've always had high self-esteem and there was a point when I was young, in my 20's, where I thought there probably wasn't anything I couldn't do if I wanted to do it, although I don't think that I had an undue estimate of myself. I didn't want to get over my head and I got scared to death when I read The Peter Principle. It was the last thing I ever wanted to do—get so far extended that I was beyond my capabilities, and I've worried a little bit more about that in the last couple of years....I struggled a little more with competence in the last couple of years than I have but then I've got a harder thing to do and I'm older and everybody that I work with has more recent information.... (Jim, p.11)

High self-esteem is a characteristic of these persons, and this positive self-regard is often related to their roles and work. This was further clarified when the pastors were asked about their professional competence.

**Professional Competence**

Many of the clergy were emphatic about their competence in ministry. Do you consider yourself competent as a pastor? "One of the most competent pastors," said Earl. (p.8) "Yes, you bet I do," said Karl. (p.13) "I feel I'm very capable," said Hank "I really do. I just feel capable at almost anything that
comes across for ministry." (p.11) Room for growth was acknowledged, but the primary feelings are summarized by Donna.

It would be hard for me to think of an area I feel incompetent in. There are a lot of areas where I feel overwhelmed because of not enough time to do what a task might take. And there are some areas I don't have very much interest in. I'm not sure that's incompetence; it's just not much interest. (p.11)

Ann and Bev agree.

I always feel that if I had more time to work on something...it would go better, but the reality is I don't have that extra time, and things seem to go pretty well anyway. I feel I would be better at everything, but I guess everybody does. (Ann, p.4)

I'm not that interested in administration so I don't give that always the attention that it needs, but if I had to do it I'd be good at it, I just don't like it much. And, this is going to sound really ridiculous, but I haven't run into anything that I'm not good at if I give it the time. There's things I'm not that interested in. (Bev, p.14)

As already noted, Jim struggles more with his feeling of competence as he ages. Frank feels much the same way.

I think [I'm capable], as much as anybody can do that, although I think the longer you are away from the seminary training, the more years tick by, the more you start to ask questions of "shouldn't I be seriously going back and digging some more and refreshing, and so forth. (p.12)

The participants were asked to identify those areas of ministry in which they felt the greatest and least competence. The list of strengths far exceeded the
weaknesses.

The area in which the most clergy, nine, felt competent was preaching. Five feel teaching is a particular competence, and counseling and pastoral care, worship planning and leadership, and people skills were each identified by four of the clergy. Each of the following areas was mentioned by two of the pastors: ministry in hospitals, administration, and visitation. The clergy speak for themselves about their areas of competence.

In terms of competency what I feel best about is the ability to meet people, remember names, genuinely like people. Hardly have anybody that I have to fight to like. That's really important in a big congregation. I generally feel very competent in leading worship and I always think our music is good. I can think through and creatively develop a liturgy that works well and people understood what it was trying to get at and liked it. Preaching, I think I'm feeling much better right now than I did about a year ago. I'm changing my style a little bit. (Jim, p.12)

I enjoy preaching and I think I'm a pretty good preacher. Again that's a relative statement. I think that I can get along with people, that I can work with people. I believe that I am a competent pastor in terms of being interested in people and listening to them, visiting them, and it has been my experience over the years that I've really carried on the ministry a lot through hospital calls. (Karl, p.14)

[I feel] most competent in terms of organizing and managing the business of the church. Second would be in worship leadership and preaching, actually proclaiming the Word in a relevant manner that is going to make a difference in peoples' lives for the week ahead and hopefully longer....I guess I attribute the competency to my willingness to invest
what I have to do to do it. A lot of it doesn't come easy. I'm a good preacher because I work hard at it, and I really have to work hard at it. It still doesn't come easy to me. I feel I'm a better preacher when I don't preach full time and so I don’t have any problem with my staff person or partner preaching half time. (Earl, pp.8,9)

I think preaching is one of my finest traits. Teaching is something I do equally well....There is probably no area of congregational life save music that I couldn't do or at least take time to become knowledgeable at—to experiment with some styles of doing it. I think a lot of what [I] have to do with is [my] competence in handling people. People skills. I think that [I, the person am] the cake and the icing is all the skills I have. (Ivan, p.20)

I feel very comfortable as a worship leader. And I feel very, very comfortable as kind of a spiritual leader to the people, with retreats, and that aspect of life of a congregation. (Hank, p.11)

As far as strengths are my ability to relate to people. I would think my preaching has been probably, I spent a lot of time on preaching. I love, I love the preaching and I spend a lot of time in preparing for sermons. I would never think of going into a pulpit unprepared. I think that was a strength. I think my visitation with people in the parish. (Lou, p.10)

It's taken me years to realize this but I'm a good preacher...not a great preacher but I'm a good preacher. And I'm consistent, consistently good. I haven't had a really stinky sermon in years. And I work hard to make sure that that's right.

And I'm great at working with the kids and I love it. And I think I'm very effective when people are in the hospital. I like to do that. And I'm a good teacher. Which makes sense with my college major. But I really enjoy that and I'm good at that. (Bev, p.14)

The areas of most disagreement among the clergy were counseling and administration. While four identified counseling and pastoral care as particular strengths,
four mentioned it as a source of concern, especially as it became long-term, specialized counseling.

[I feel] least competent in the areas of specialized counseling. I don't do enough counseling to keep the skills sharp enough that I become more and more confident in referring most of my counseling and then working with the family simply as a support person in the background. (Earl, p.8)

I guess another weakness would be [that] I don't have the patience to do a lot of long-term counseling...some of my colleagues talk about how many hours a week they spend in counseling....I think I'm a fairly good listener and counselor but it's not something I particularly enjoy. I think sometimes that comes off as a lack of patience because I think people are sometimes dumb--"get your life together," and I know that is not a good approach to take as a counselor. And so I tend to refer things that look like they are going to be long-term. And a fear I have is maybe I don't attract people that maybe might come to me for counseling. I hope I don't turn people off. (Greg, pp.11,12)

Hank says, "I do not feel as comfortable counseling, basically because I have not just launched out to do any really struggling with that." (p.11) When Lou was in seminary there were no courses related to counseling and that has contributed to his sense of incompetence.

I did a lot of counseling because I think people knew that I cared, so they came to me because of that. I felt I was a good listener and I think they needed that. They needed someone to listen to them....No one ever said that we were going to have to do this in the church. So I missed all of that, and in a sense I've regretted it, too...although I think it's always made me conscious of the fact that I wasn't there to be a psychiatrist to those people. I was there to help them and to enable them. If I sense that they were telling me something where I was swimming way out of my depth I very quickly said, "Hey, I'll help you all I can, but you really
need some professional help beyond what I can give." (p.10)

Three persons named administration and planning as particular strengths, however two spoke of it as a weakness. Frank explains his sense of incompetence with placing administration in low priority.

I figure that if somebody came in and analyzed my administrative skills, they would probably throw their hands up and go "aah!" I don't feel like I'm a competent administrator but then frankly it has never been one of my goals to be a competent administrator. I do it; I think I have to do it. I'm sure there are ways of doing it better. It has never been a priority for me to want to take a whole heck of a lot of that. (p.12,13)

While Frank and Bev are not very interested in administration and several others mention they prefer to work directly with people rather than sit behind a desk, Ivan focuses on administration as an important component of pastoral ministry.

I'm very decidedly a pastoral administrator. I do not excuse that. I think it is a valid—years ago ...administration was the last things you wanted to do, but now I think we've come a long way in capturing a legitimate sense of pastoral administrator. There is a need for that and it is a gift. It is spoken of in the scripture I guess. (p.16)

In addition to administration and counseling only two other weaknesses were identified. One pastor lamented the difficulty in relating to youth, especially of confirmation age, as he grew older, and another does not consider himself "as much of a theologian."
Carol chose not to talk in areas of particular skill. "I guess by and large I would see it as a well-rounded picture. I'm not a specialist in anything particular." (p.8) Jim also talks about being generalist instead of specialist.

This is still one of those professions where you have to be kind of good at a lot of different things and you have to settle for the fact you'll never be as good as each one of these people [in your congregation] in their own competency. (p.12)

These clergy express confidence in their pastoral abilities, especially competence in preaching. Counseling and administration are areas in which the clergy are least consistent in their feelings of competence and incompetence.

**Faith Life**

Two questions asked in the interviews brought extensive comments about the participants' relation to God. The first asked the clergyperson to give some description to her or his faith life. A question about what gave meaning and purpose to life frequently brought additional description of faith and God. Other comments were scattered throughout the interviews.

Two primary themes emerged from the participants' comments: a strong relationship with God is an underlying reality for these persons, and they do not engage in a structured and disciplined devotional life. Looking at
the second of these themes will lead to a fuller understanding of the first.

Two of the twelve clergy talked about a disciplined personal devotional time. For Hank this began to take shape during his internship when his supervising pastor was "very clear that Tuesday mornings we had the two of us for breakfast."

We just ate in a restaurant and shared a devotional life. It was around just a variety of things, whatever he might have been reading or thinking about. And then he was very disciplined that sermons should be done on Thursday....It took a while before I found out that nobody else had to do it, and then I found out that I really liked it. So I've just maintained some of that discipline. He shared with me, and that really has helped my faith grow a lot, in terms of setting aside the time, alone time or shared time with someone you really feel close to or working with, that can just be a kind of a sharing or growing time in the faith. And I've really been able to maintain that, whether I've been alone or whether I've been with staff situation, whatever it is. I've always found that that was there. And a lot of prayer in those times and that's really helped me. (Hank, p.12)

Karl tries to have a regular devotional life although he admits of sometimes giving in to the busy day. He reads portions of Scripture when he arrives in his office each morning.

Right now I'm reading through Joshua and Judges which I hadn't used for a long time. I'm trying to build devotions around them. I am not a person who does well with prepared prayers although I have a high respect for them and I know that some people do that very well. I've got prayer books but I seldom use them. (p.15)
Although Hank and Karl structure their devotional life, nine of the twelve clergy said that the discipline of devotion was either difficult or not meaningful or both.

For some the discipline is meaningful but difficult or impossible to maintain.

Devotional life is not a very big part in my life. I really like it when I get into a pattern of beginning the day over at the church, and when I do that—I'll go in spurts.... I do it for a while and then I get out of the habit and I have to make a resolution to do it again. I really love that. I get renewed by doing that. I just take the morning suffrages and I sing through it by myself, usually turn the light on on the altar. I kneel for the whole time at the altar. I will generally pray for the sick and for myself when I have things that are troubling me that I'm not quite sure how I'm going to get them organized or done. I use the daily lectionary at that time and I generally will sing three hymns.... (Jim, p.14)

But the structure is not helpful to others. "I've tried to have disciplined prayer time for myself privately in the sanctuary every day...and I can't maintain that. I'm doing the discipline but not getting anything out of it. That just didn't work for me."

(Earl, p.9)

If a structured devotional life is not a big part of the lives of these clergy, how do they describe their faith, their spirituality, their relationship with God? Frank speaks for several when he talks about practicing the presence of God. Frank remembers taking a course
with Eugene Peterson in which he addressed the spirituality of the pastor.

I remember talking with him (Peterson) in somewhat embarrassed terms about the fact that I don’t have a real strong prayer discipline. I don’t spend a lot of time at it. I continue to practice what my parents taught me - prayers at bedtime at which I sometimes fall asleep in the process of. I said I spend a lot more time disciplining myself physically because of my diabetes than I do in my own spiritual life with the disciplines that historically have been associated with the study of scripture for meditation purposes, prayer life and so forth. He said, 'What do you think about when you are jogging?' I told him and he said, "It sounds like prayer to me." ...I needed somebody to tell me because I really think that is true. And he talked about practicing the presence of God and I think I do a lot of that. I think pretty much I go through life aware almost constantly that there is someone, namely God, who is not at my shoulder to bug me or to snoop on me but that His presence is there and so...I often think it is the two of us thinking together rather than that I'm by myself. I have seldom ever felt alone. Maybe that's why I don't mind being alone and indeed seek it out at times. (pp.13,14)

For Carol there is the sense "that God's hand is there directing and guiding." (p.11) A similar awareness of the presence of God is true for Ann.

I have an incredible trust that God is there.... I don't have a daily devotional time or anything like that, but I do feel very moved and driven by what God is doing in my life and in the lives of others. I have, I guess, a sixth sense that God is there as I'm writing sermons and teaching kids and sitting with someone in counseling and along with that trust I have a need to have my eyes wide open not to have to simplify life to make faith fit it or simplify faith to make life fit it. (p.4)
Earl and Lou are finding other less traditional times and styles of meditation, more in harmony with the "jogging" meditation of Frank. "I've just recently come to feel pretty good about an awful lot of meditational time that takes place while riding in the car, while cutting the grass, working around the house and trusting that that is important spirituality time for me too. (Earl, p.9) For Lou, since retirement it comes daily "for an hour or so as I'm walking I'm not talking to anybody, and it's a time for prayer and meditation." (p.11)

Ivan's relation to God is experienced in common, everyday events and not in the more traditional disciplines.

For years I felt guilty and I tried all sorts of devotional life styles....My understanding of how the Lord interacts into my life in a very simple and common way and I've learned to accept that in myself without feeling terribly guilty....I need the Lord and I do receive him in many different ways but not in what is usually seen as the typical Bible study, prayer group, devotions at the table. For me devotional life is, 'Lord we ate out as a family last night and we laughed and we had fun. To me that was priceless.' I don't know what that says....oftentimes I feel I'm kind of out of 'sync' here. (Ivan, pp.23,24)

Ivan is not the only one who feels out of 'sync' because faith is not experienced in traditional devotional terms. Donna said, "I always think if people knew how little I did in a real directed, disciplined way
they'd sit me down and say, 'You work on this.' (p.12)

For Earl, Frank, and Donna relation to God is closely connected with public worship and Sacraments. "Word and Sacrament have always been important to me," says Donna. "That's the part of the church I didn't drop out of in my growing up years." (p.11)

...Where I am fed the most spiritually is in preparation for worship and actually leading worship. The worship service of this congregation really feeds me and when I deliver a sermon if it is not a message that is relevant to me then I don't feel that I've done a very good job.... I see [worship] as a primary thing that we do. I pretty much orient the parish that out of our worship life all the other things happen. That is the way I organize it in my own head. That is where we are energized to be the church.

We offer the sacrament on a first and third Sunday of a month at one service and second and fourth Sunday at the other service so I celebrate the Eucharist weekly because we alternate services, but I feel I'm fulfilling my responsibility in offering it that way and they're feeling like I'm not jamming it down their throats, and for me personally that means weekly Eucharist and that feels very good. (Earl, pp.9,10)

Frank, too, finds corporate worship to be a special part of his spirituality.

I enjoy public worship. I really enjoy being with a worshipping community so that when I function there, yes, I am the worship leader and I have a task to perform but at that point I do try and discipline myself, my thoughts as I'm leading liturgy, leading prayers, consecrating the sacrament, to be present myself for that and not just functioning. I enjoy singing, I always have. I have been in a lot of choirs and I usually don't mind singing the same hymn three times on a Sunday morning. I think that is part of my spiritual life. (p.14)
Another pattern in the relationships with God came in the form of theological principles that served as foundations for life for these persons. For Jim it centers in the concept of "Immanuel." "I like the concept of incarnation for Christ and for myself, for the parish and try to make anything that is theoretical visible." (p.22) Jim found the concept to be the basis of coping with his daughter's serious illness.

I wish I could say I did it by a lot of prayer and internal being fortified. I don't think that is the way it came to me. I think it came to me as more of a theological premise that I found to be true. Which would be 'I'm with you.' ...I just felt that whatever, he would be with us. (p.25)

For Carol an undergirding theological principle focuses on the relational aspect of faith, being part of the Church, the body of Christ.

...[The] Church is bigger than this church and the Church is bigger than [this synod] or the Lutheran church in this country or the world. That grand body of believers for me is very significant. That affects our worship and how we live and how we try to educate our people ongoingly. That faith is more than just a personal me-and-Jesus thing. That I'm part of something bigger and that is very real for me. (p.25)

A new sense of that community is described by Donna who is finding, more and more, that...

The true community around me is one of the sources of nurturing my faith....I think it's also a sign of my maturing that I don't have to feel simply responsible for people but there are some people who will also carry me and take care of me ...and [I] need to allow the community to feed me. (p.11)
Donna also describes another theological premise when speaking of life's meaning and purpose. She feels her life style and life choices are very much a result of "my belonging to Christ." For her, that reality changes everything. (p.33)

What other descriptions characterize the understanding of and relationship with God for these clergy? Carol and Greg talk about action-oriented faith. Bev thanks her parents for instilling in her a sense that God "was not just trivial...but was a being, a personal being, not just some abstraction...."(p.10) So, in times of crisis she has "spent a lot of time having these huge fights with God, but never felt abandoned or that God's presence wasn't there. I think I felt closer in those kinds of times." (p.15) And Donna refers to "a couple of crucial friendships that really feed me in terms of my faith, in terms of helping me through very difficult times, but really causing me to grow and move into some new direction." (p.12)

For at least four of these clergy part of the relationship with God is also expressed in terms of their call to ordained ministry.

Ivan talks about God apparently wanting him in ministry and his being there because of his faith.

...[I] realize that [I] was called....The Lord Jesus Christ is my savior and he has literally saved
me in many different ways, not just my salvation. In life and through so many different ways, and I can only calculate that he really wanted me where I am. He was molding me and shaping me.

Even in my darkest moments when I have cried out and I didn't think he was there, the Lord God, He/She, God was there. Even if I've gotten angry -- I can remember walking into one of the sanctuaries, the church where I served, and yelling at the top of my voice probably five, ten minutes, hoping no one was there. Not a madman but just talking to him and angry and then sitting down in the pew exhausted and looking up at the cross that was hanging there and saying, "But you still love me, don't you?" I'm in this solely because of my faith in the Lord and what he wants me to do. (p.22,44)

While Bev and Jim also talk about feeling called to ordained ministry, Lou's response to the question about life meaning touched on his sense of call and helped him describe his relationship with God.

...I always have had the feeling that God put me here upon this earth for a purpose, and I tried to live out my life as best as I can in accordance with what I think God's purpose was for me here. That is to live a life that would be exemplary as I can be, but also to recognize in a very specific way that I really feel that he called me to be a pastor of a church and to me that was a terrific responsibility, a terrible responsibility in a sense. But at the same time to feel--I don't know whether the right word is 'honored' or not--that he felt that I could do that and so I've tried to discharge that responsibility as faithfully as I can and to recognize the fact that I'm not perfect; far, far from it. I'm a simple human being and prone to make lots and lots of errors and to recognize how wonderful God is. You can feel like you can be forgiven. (pp. 28,29)

But ordained ministry does not automatically mean unstruggling, unquestioning faith. Karl makes it clear
that part of faith "is having one's doubts and struggling through them." (p.14) Greg expressed more discomfort in his relationship with God than did most other clergy.

I think I preach and teach with a genuine honesty of faith but I don't think of myself as particularly pious, devotional, religious, whatever....I am doing some devotional reading, kind of a cautious discipline for Lent, but I don't do it on a regular, year around basis. So I sometimes wonder if I weren't in the ministry how active a church member I would be. I'm not sure what the answer to that would be.

I guess I feel like I'm doing God's work and, as I said, I think I'm doing it well....I'm not on any big guilt trips. I don't think God is up there judging me or have a bad relationship. I'm not sure we're that close either at the moment. It's a difficult area for me and therefore it's kind of difficult to deal with some of the people sometimes when they come with questions like that. After a session like that I'll sit back on the couch and think, "I've spent so much time being a pastor I'm not sure how much personal relationship I've got sometimes."

...Being a pastor for me has become so much more of an active life kind of thing. The doing of ministry, whether it be preaching, teaching, social ministry, all those sorts of things that I need to restock sometimes. There is also a personal dimension to them. They need to be accentuated sometimes and that is one of the things I need to work on, at least I think I do. (p.12)

Earl also expresses some of the less frequently discussed concerns about the spirituality of the pastor. Sometimes being in ministry does not deepen one's faith but challenges its existence.

As a result of being in this vocation there are times where it almost strips me of any religious value. It doesn't last forever. At least it hasn't yet, but there are times where I have to
check myself in terms of where does the performance end and worship begin for me? It doesn't happen often, but when it happens it is significant. I have to slow down and take a look at what am I doing here. Am I allowing myself to worship too? There are other things where the demands seem to feel so overwhelming that it is easy to lose sight of your own religious convictions. If there is anything that is given extra to an ordained pastor I haven't discovered it yet, other than the authority to be the person in this place designated to proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments. I more often have found it to be--I could easily become the least religious person here on occasion. (p.13)

In summary, the clergy reveal a strong relationship with God which has great influence in daily living, meaningfulness of life, and sense of vocation. However, it is seldom expressed as a structured, disciplined devotional life.

Friendships

Participants were asked to describe themselves in terms of friendships. Answers reveal a variety of preferences and emotions, from cherishing a few close friends, to seeing oneself as friend to the world, to experiencing frustration in forming significant friendships while in the parish.

Ann and Bev talk about having a few, very close friends. Ann also talks about friendships with parishioners, a tension discussed by several.

I have always been the sort of person that had very dear friends...but I found seminary to be some of the loneliest days of my life except
for my relationship with [my future husband.] [He and I] learned very quickly that we could not be friend and spouse and co-workers and parents and everything to each other and while I've been here at [this church] I've been able to find those friendships...two of them now with other female pastors...and...three other friends who are parishioners, and those friendships are a bit different because I do not share everything with them. Although I do share a lot, particularly of my family struggles, of my personal struggles, but...all of them have come to me with pastoral needs in the midst of our friendship and so I'm pretty sensitive to that balance. (p.5)

I tend to have a couple of close friends.... With one or two people besides my husband I feel free to speak openly about how I feel, how things are going.

What's the old joke? 'I'm going to invite two or three dozen of my most intimate friends.' I don't think that's possible, maybe it's just the way I'm put together, to have really close empathetic relationships with [so many] people...I couldn't do it. I have lots of friends and even more acquaintances and a lot of people with whom I'm very comfortable, but really close friends, no...only a couple. (Bev, p.16)

Earl, also, spoke of the importance of intimate friendships outside his marriage, adding comments about friendships with women and other clergy.

I don't have that many friends. I have a few people that I consider to be my friends and they're also confidants and I guess that's extremely important to me—to have a confidant-type relationship beyond my marriage. That is very very important to me to have that ability to talk with someone on a level where I don't have to weigh my words, and you just can't do that every where, and so I'm very guarded with where I do that. I would say that some of my best friendships are with females, not males. I feel like I relate better to females than I do males. I guess I've never sat down and figured out why but I think that's the way I am. And when it comes to clergy I don't have the respect for very many clergy to trust
them as friends, to be very frank about it. That is something I'm not real proud of, but that is where I'm at. I don't have a very high regard for very many colleagues. There are a few that I trust and hold in very high esteem and consider only a couple of them close friends. (Earl, p. 10)

Carol, Greg, and Ivan talk about their spouses being their best friends, but then differ in relationships with other friends. Carol speaks of "quite a few" good friends, "six or eight... that I would include in the very close category." Greg and his wife plan on getting together with other people but find they never get around to it. Says Greg, "I have very few, almost none, close friends, which is kind of sad, I think, but I'm not particularly unhappy." But he is also aware that the last few close relationships he had developed had terminated through death or moving, and he has not replaced those friendships.

One of the characteristics of Ivan's whole family is "that we really don't know any strangers." Among his friends are people from parishes and communities of previous calls, "but out of those friendships there are those that we call very intimate friends, very close." Among the clergy Ivan is the one who seems to have developed most friendships within the community.

[In our first parish] my entrance into the community was helped significantly because my wife was a teacher and she substitute taught, and I got to know a lot of teachers who either had no church relationship or were non-Lutheran and...we had as
many friends in the community as we had in the church [there.] Maybe it was our understanding of ministry—that we were called to be who we were to ever who needed us wherever we were at—not just called to a congregation.

I think I have many friends apart from my wife in my profession. She has many friends apart from me in her profession, although we do meet each others friends. But yet we have many friends together. Friends we enjoy together. I suppose the older we get the more that's true. (p. 26)

For Hank there is a special bond with several seminary friends and although geography separates them they work at maintaining those relationships.

We just feel we have always had very, very strong friends. Particularly people from seminary days. We have some friendships we just maintain, you know, we see with great regularity. They live great distances. We just sort of arrange summers to see them or to get to where they are. (p.13)

But several clergy talked about the difficulty of establishing friendships while in the ministry.

We have lots of friends and we have no friends. We have a lot of acquaintances through the church, lots and lots of folks. But very few people you'd just call up on the spur of the moment and say, "Let's play bridge tonight" or "Let's go out and eat tonight." Because basically we never had that time to develop that, and that's sad....And sometimes I've felt that even when I've made some kind of an effort it's almost as though, well, I was somehow different anymore. I was the pastor. But that has never bothered us particularly except as we got to thinking about retirement, and we said, "Now what are we going to do with our time?" (Lou, p.12)

Frank identifies two common threats to maintaining friendships in ministry: moving from call to call and developing friendships with members of the congregation.
I enjoy friendships. I miss a couple of friends I have lost because of geography. I think it is difficult having that kind of friendships in a parish setting that I would look for. I said to [my wife]...that we're going out with a number of couples socially but only a few of them are our own age. I said I really wish that we could find some more friends our own age. (p. 14)

When asked if parishioners were included among his friends, Frank replied:

A few. I have some difficulty there I guess. I have some difficulty truly being myself, unwinding in the presence of parishioners because either my expectations of the role or theirs or both.... (p.15)

Like Frank, Earl worries about close relationships with parishioners.

I have a couple of friends that are parishioners; I also have a couple of friends that are former parishioners and those are the ones that are probably safer. I'm still a little gun shy of real close friends in the parish. I have a couple but I worry about that. I worry about what effect that will have on my ability to minister to the whole group, and what it is going to do to me if they ever turn on me some day. (p. 10)

Other clergy, like Jim and Hank, enjoy their friendships within the parish more freely. Now that Hank has accepted a call to another parish he faces the pain of moving away from friends, a phenomenon that comes with a mobile profession. "I have good friends in this parish. In every parish, but particularly this parish. It's really kind of hard for us to leave them." (p.13)

Although there is disagreement about friendships with parishioners, sometimes the situation clearly
indicates that to pursue such friendships would be unwise.

The previous pastor had a group of people who were his cronies and there was a lot of pain when we came in here amongst the cronies in the last three years of ministry here, and so we learned very quickly that it might not be well in a congregation this ingrown and this old to start picking friends and spending a lot of time with anyone. We have intentionally tried to respond to invitations, but we are not ones that are going to invite people back into our home. (Carol, p.9)

But ministry can take its toll in friendships and bring with it loneliness.

In more public ways I'm friend to the whole world and find some enjoyment in that....But the real depths of friendship...over my lifetime I've probably had a handful. I've realized in the context of ordained ministry they are less and less likely to happen right where I live. I think that is not necessarily for the good.

In terms of living in a place like where I live, I don't have all the time in the world to pursue friendships and I add to that fact that I'm real picky who I would want to know real well or want to know me real well. I get enough of knowing people in general just day by day. It maybe means that I've closed off some avenues of friendships and relationships needlessly, except that that's been my way. Also there's a real toll for loneliness in where I live....Pretty much all the time since I've been in school it's been rare to have my closest friends live where I live. Maybe that's what being an adult means. I haven't figured that one out yet. (Donna, pp.12,13)

Jim was more ambiguous about the extent of his friendships. While reflecting on past friendship patterns what comes through most clearly is his desire to be more attentive to those relationships at this new stage in his life when his children are now grown.
I've generally worked so that I have not done a good job of fostering relationships. I really shouldn't say that. I should back up. As a couple we've not done that as well as we might have. I've not kept real close seminary relationships although with [one classmate] we have done that. And maybe a couple of other persons. (p.15)

After talking about the continuing close friendships from a clergy group in a previous location, Jim continues.

A couple of friends from internship we keep in touch with. Generally our friends are from the congregation. In each place we've been able to find somebody whose kids are about our age and their interests like ours. We have a lot of friends. I would have to say we don't have really close friends but I have a lot of friends and we have started now—we have said to ourselves now that our kids are gone and that we have a staff here we can do some weekends and we can meet some friends....During the Christmas break we met [some friends]...and we must have talked for 24 hours straight. That is so rewarding and so enriching. We are going to start doing a better job of that. (p.15)

For some adulthood has included friendship with parents and siblings. Bev speaks of a good relationship with parents and brothers, and Carol is particularly close to her mother. Donna speaks of the year before her mother's death when Donna had moved within driving distance of her mother.

It's also a time in my life where I was at a pretty good resolution in terms of my mother and myself and really very enjoyable kind of year, so that that was a good relationship. My mother was healthy, a spirited older woman, and she and I had come to terms with each other in a way that made it a real delightful part of my life. (p.20)
In adulthood Earl, also, found friendship with a parent and with his brother.

I consider my Dad a friend and have developed a new relationship with him these last five or six years that has been very gratifying and even somewhat of a confidant that I never had when I was home. It is now an adult-to-adult relationship. I really enjoy that. And the same way with my brother. The three of us try to spend a lot of time together whenever we can considering that we are spread out as much as we are. That is important to me. (p.11)

Friendships are seen as important to these clergy and to some they are vitally important, but the nature of ministry presents problems for developing and maintaining close friendships.

How do these clergy who are perceived to exhibit well-being describe themselves? They are out-going people who enjoy being with others. Although they want to avoid being autocrats, they choose to be active and engaged leaders. They work hard, enjoy their work, and feel good about themselves as persons and pastors. They have a strong relationship with God but do not have structured devotional lives. They enjoy friendships but sometimes find them difficult to develop and maintain because of the nature of ministry.
WHAT IS THERE ABOUT ORDAINED MINISTRY THAT POSES GREATEST THREAT TO THE WELL-BEING OF CLERGY?

Some of the responses were peculiar to individual clergy, but patterns did emerge. Three interview questions provided specific opportunities for the participants to describe those threats. The question "In what ways is the ordained ministry a stressful profession for you?" brought a multitude of answers from enthusiastic agreement about the stress involved to declarations that "I don't find ministry that stressful." The two other questions which opened this topic focused on the occasions or "tough times" when their coping mechanisms were used and the invitation to speak about marriage and family life as source of both stress and strength. In addition occasional comments related to threats to well-being appeared throughout the interviews.

Three clergy stated that ordained ministry is not particularly stressful for them. "I don't find the ministry that stressful to be real honest," said Carol. "I know pastors do and perhaps it is the personality they bring to it. But I don't mind complaining either and maybe that helps to get it off your chest." (p.10) After identifying some stressful times in ministry Lou was asked "Anything else about ministry that's stressful?"
His reply: "No, because I love so much of it." (p.14)

Hank contrasts his situation with that of clergy colleagues. "I truthfully haven't had a lot of what I would call parish frustration here. Not like I hear my counter-parts talking about." (p.19)

However, even these three clergy also identified tensions and frustrations in ministry that created stress. In contrast, Bev and Ann were emphatic in their agreement that this profession was a stressful one. Nine of the twelve clergy were easily and quickly able to point to sources of significant threat to their well-being.

Earlier in this chapter the geographic and socio-economic settings in which these clergy serve was described; primarily white and middle-class. The nature of the settings may influence the stresses on clergy, and those serving in other settings may experience additional or different sources of stress.

While the stresses identified were many and varied, the stresses held in common by many of the clergy were in the broad areas of the demands of the job and difficulties in relationships. After considering those areas first, other threats to well-being will be discussed.
The Demands of the Ordained Ministry

Not simply long hours, but the nature of the schedule of the pastor threatens the well-being of the clergy, especially younger clergy. There is a lot to be done, the hours are not always convenient, clergy have expectations of themselves to do things well, and parishioners expect clergy to have the time and energy to respond to their needs—these make up some of the stresses of the pastor's schedule.

[The hours] run together. The most difficult time of the week for me is to go from Sunday to Monday and the reason is that we have two worship services and Sunday School and then there are always two or three or four or five things that happen in the afternoon and evening, and then to get home...last Sunday night I got home at 11:00 p.m. I had visited a funeral home, I had gone to a dinner, I had done a Luther League event, I had done a [teaching] event. I got home at 11:00 p.m. and I was back here at 9:00 on Monday morning and I had no energy whatsoever to start another week, to begin a sermon, to...do all that you have to do. So that's what I mean by hours, that rude awakening that Monday follows Sunday, and Tuesday follows Monday, and just goes on and on. (Ann, p.6)

...There are not a lot of breaks in the schedule. It just seems to keep rolling...There is a lot in the parish that I'm serving here that just keeps things rolling. There used to be down times in the season. You made it through Easter and somehow there was a little bit of a letup. I don't find any letup here....It just keeps rolling. (Frank, pp.30,21)

One [stress] would be simply the amount of time and energy it takes to do well the things that are really worth doing. And the second feature would be that the universe is not organized according to my schedule, so most things come at odd moments. Right when I'm thinking of going out the door some place else it's a crucial moment to be on the
phone or somebody is there in the doorway. I might be able to master the first, of giving a lot of time to projects, if I weren't always being called in some other directions. So, I think, the stresses for me come primarily in trying to figure out how to live without ever having anything done quite the way it might have been done. (Donna, p.13)

Bev also talks about the reality of a job that is never finished, there is always something left undone.

But a source of stress...[is that] there are only so many hours in a day and this place, the church--I heard Bill Kinneson say one time, "If you let it the church will take all of your time," and that is exactly true. Nothing is ever really done-done. There's always folks out there. There is this sense that I've got to be doing my job. (p.30)

Earl speaks about that tension between getting it done and doing it well as the tension between effectiveness and efficiency. Those are important themes for him.

...Two key words for me are efficiency and effectiveness, and to me it's a constant tension because when I'm off one place being efficient I may not be very effective. When I'm in another place trying to be effective, I may not be very efficient. But it's not an either/or. (p.12)

Two things come to mind immediately and they're kind of interrelated. One is always being on call which partly relates to the phone can ring any time and you're got to respond, whether you're asleep, whether it's your day off, whether you've had a couple of beers, whatever. You are supposed to be there and then that also translates into, not so much the ivory tower syndrome, but you are always the pastor wherever you are, whether it's in a local restaurant or in the church or on the street or at a meeting or wherever. And the other which is also kind of a consistency is that there is always work to be done. I constantly have a list of people that could be called on....There [are] too many meetings to do any calling. (Greg, p.14)
Parishioners’ expectations that the clergy will be present both physically and emotionally produce stress when combined with an already hectic schedule.

It is sometimes stressful to meet the demands of people because they don’t realize what other demands you may have just come from. Last Thursday we had a death in the congregation. I was with the family all day long. The man died at 3:00 p.m. I got back here...only to find that there was another family who had called in, who wanted a pastoral visit, who the husband also had cancer, was also dying, also needed me, and there were no other pastors here. And I got there and she said, "Why weren’t you here sooner?" (Ann, p.6)

One of the frustrating things for me is that... many people...know their pastors are busy but they’re not sure they know exactly what they’re busy about, and it still looks like they have a heck of a lot of discretionary time, and so they expect you to be fresh when they meet you, as though you had had no other prior experiences that day that might have drained you, and it is tough living at times with my own expectations of myself to be fresh. I can’t always be fresh, high energy, because there have been other things that have been draining some of that energy away. And yet you want to be, and you have the feeling that other people expect you to be, and some people downright tell you that they expect you to be that way. I think there [are] also a whole lot of roles that you have to fill in the parish ministry....[All that] demands energy for that task.... Those things just keep happening and they involve you in some intense situations with people’s lives. (Frank, pp.15,16)

I can feel a resentment building up when I’ve been working too long for too many days or weeks and there doesn’t seem to be any let-up, and I can’t get away. When people are just always there with something they need. And there’s always a committee meeting, always a counseling appointment, always somebody in the hospital. And sometimes if you go on with that for two weeks straight, I’ve had it for fourteen straight nights a meeting, and all day long, then that gets to be stressful. (Bev, p.17)
Greg also talked about the stress of several consecutive full days.

Especially evenings for some reason. I guess because evenings usually come after a morning and an afternoon and most of the people here for these meetings have also worked the day too, but when you get too many of those days in a row, but that's not uncommon for pastors, and we live with them. (p.26)

Stresses involving the schedule, parishioner's expectations, and the never-ending nature of the work were expressed by six of the youngest seven clergy, between the ages of 29 and 42. Of the five clergy ages 45 to 64, only one made a comment relative to such stresses, but that reference talked about how the multiple roles of the generalist were both rewarding and stressful.

[To be a pastor] means to be a generalist. And that's the rewarding part of it. I don't know of any other profession that has the opportunity to get next to so many different people and to learn something about them....What is stressful about it is trying to keep all those areas of ministry in motion. You could make a whole ministry out of teaching. You could make a whole ministry out of preaching, doing the business, the finances, of evangelizing. (Jim, p.16)

That does not necessarily mean that the schedule is always lighter for clergy as they age. For Lou, the oldest of the clergy interviewed, the schedule may be overwhelming but he seems not to focus on that as stress.

Because a long time ago I came to the realization that I can't do it all. The ministry is a never-ending thing and the pressure of the schedule is
there and you live with it, and you realize that it is never going to be completely different, no way. It is humanly impossible to finish it.... So I have learned to accept that as part of the ministry and then go on from there and do the best that I can and say, "The people have to accept that I'm doing everything that I possibly can do as well as I can do it, and that's all that they can ask of me." (p.25)

The Stress of Relationships

Eleven of the twelve clergy talked about stresses within the field of relationships: relationships with family, with colleagues, with parishioners, between parishioners. For some the stresses were simply acknowledged; for some those stresses were described as profoundly difficult.

In another portion of this chapter relationships are identified as a source of strength for clergy. However, balancing attention to family, work, and self were concerns of several. None of these clergy said that work suffered when balancing these three, but attention to family and attention to self were the losers.

...I realize I'm taking care of a job as best I can, taking care of my personal relationships...in my case my husband and child as best I can...and then somewhere I suddenly remember that I exist. And that really comes way down on my list. When I finally get to the point where I'm thinking, "Poor me," then I realize the stress has been too much. (Bev, p.17)

...I'm not sure I take very good care of myself. It's the area in which I cut corners. And it also helps me be more effective in what I do. That's the toll. I'm able to be part of a very very complicated
parish and pull it off because there are some personal corners that I'm willing to cut to do it. ...I'm not miserable in that. I know folks who would cut some of the same corners and be so angry about that and sorry they were doing it. Unfortunately for me it feels good. (Donna, p.5)

[I work] long hours, oftentimes robbing my family of the time. Knowing I'm doing it but somehow that seems to be important to me. I was once accused by my first associate--I accused him that every time there is a decision between the church and his family, his family always won and the church always lost. He told me just the opposite was true for me. My family always lost. We both agreed we needed to meet somewhere in the middle on that but never did budge from either end on that. (Earl, pp.6,7)

For one clergywoman awaiting the birth of a child the question of family/job tension is already present.

I suppose [what is stressful] would be a conscientious effort to balance the profession and family, and I'm probably projecting that into the future. And I've seen enough pastor relationships where their children were not primary in their life or that their spouse was not and they didn't seem to have a healthy balance of that. That has not become a stress yet. There is probably a fear of that being a stress. (Carol, p.10)

As noted elsewhere Lou and Karl, the oldest of the clergy interviewed express regret about the lack of time they spent with the children years earlier.

Several of these clergy spoke with intensity about the pain of difficult relationships with parishioners. Ann and Donna and Lou talk about times of personal attack and their responses.

I guess the things that have been most stressful to me in the ministry are the times when my relationships with individuals have gotten out of
"sync"....I guess the times where I really felt stressed, where I really hurt, have been the times when something has happened that has upset me terribly because relationships either between me and people or between people within the congregation....

I had a man here in the church that...would write the nastiest notes to me and pin them on the side of [the monthly newsletter] and slip them under the door, or else post them on the bulletin board where everybody could see them. Of course, send them through the mail to me. Always anonymous, and yet I knew very well who it was that was doing it. One night he called me. It was Saturday night about 11:00 p.m., and he wouldn't identify himself. It was just filthy the talk that he handed out about me and about [my wife.] And I'd hang up, and then about fifteen minutes the phone would ring again. This kept going on and on and on 'til about 2:00 a.m. And I'd even tried the police, and the police said they couldn't do a thing. So, finally, about 2:00 a.m. in the morning I was getting tired of this, so when he called I simply [called him by name] and said, "Can I help you?" And the phone went dead, and that was the last because he knew I had identified him. But he still kept sending me these notes. So, finally, I did the same thing. I just "xeroxed" off one of his notes and sent it in an envelope back to him so that he knew that I knew who had been sending me these things. And that stopped it, but those things grind me.

(Lou, p.13)

I came [to this parish] to a barrage of pot-shots and learned a whole lot about myself. The pot-shots came, by and large, from people that I think... lacked integrity. Interestingly enough they are then somehow under my pastoral care....I've been just randomly raked over the coals in a way that was crazy.... (Donna, p.16)

For Ann the attack centered in her being a woman in full-time ordained ministry.

We had a congregational meeting that was like a burning at the stake. People said, "What are you going to do now that you're leaving your children?" "Who's going to be the mother in your household?" "Who's going to care for your children?" And there
was a power struggle then within the congregation because working women were terribly offended by what these, and they were all men, were asking. And [my husband and I] were trying to be somewhere in between all that. We were offended too, but we couldn’t lash back and say, "That’s none of your business, constitutionally." And so I guess it was that that became the most difficult thing to get over, and I think we are still at that point of not being over it.

...The president of the church council came to me and said, "I want you to know that one of the people on the church council has come to me and said that he really questions your integrity as a person and as a pastor because your first calling is to be a mother and you can’t be a mother and a pastor."

...Had he come to me I could have responded, but he went to the church council president, who said back to this other fellow, "Well, can I tell (her) that you’re saying these things?" And he said, "Oh, no, this is completely confidential. I don’t want her to know about it." Well, the church council president felt like he had to let me know about it and he did, but there’s nothing I can do about it. And so this fellow still sits in church council and in his own way undercuts anything that I try to do because psychologically he can’t make me and this position mesh, because I’m not supposed to be doing it. (Ann, pp.12,13)

Bev found herself working to avoid criticism because she was a woman in ordained ministry.

I still think women have a lot to prove in order to be accepted. So I didn’t want anybody saying, "Oh, well, you’re a woman so of course you’re going to be taking time away from the church to be with the kid." So I over compensated when I was pregnant. I was doing car washes with the seventh and eighth grade when I was eight months pregnant and I could barely walk that night because my back was all screwed up. (p.30)

In addition to personal attacks, the clergy talk about the stress of other difficult relationships in the parish with parishioners and staff or between members.
I'm not so sure that it is limited to the pastoral ministry but [stress comes with] difficult relationships with individuals. People that for one reason or other you just can't seem to get along with and they can't seem to get along with you. I think that raises the stress level in anyone's life and sometimes they're fellow staff people and you have to relate to them. Sometimes they're parishioners and they're prominent parishioners and you have to relate to them a lot in the process of carrying on the ministry. (Frank, p.15)

I think one of the most stressful [pieces of ministry] for me is the person who does not deal with you totally honestly. Who says, maybe, "There's no spiritual life" but they've never attended a Bible study. They're just not dealing real honestly with where they are. That's very stressful for me because I keep wondering why they can't deal honestly.

Another [stress] for me is the person who comes into church who sees that everything should be their way, really hard and fast. There're not four or five ways, but there's just one way. They're not even open to being able to dialogue about other ways. Or saying things like, "Well, I'll never come if that's how it's going to be done." That kind of closed-mindedness is stressful for me. And I always tell people I think it's stressful for me because I think they're shutting out the work of the Holy Spirit, and that stresses me. I mean I just say it that way. And that's honest. (Hank, pp.13,14)

In the parishes I have been in...the stress is as a change agent.... The pain that that may bring to some of the people and I know there is a direction in which we have to go and I have to change some of the schemes of things and I see the hurt on their face when...what they have seen as very sacred, in their understanding of the Word, unchangeable, and I change it. I'm one of the change agents. (Ivan, p.28)

Ivan speaks of a congregational meeting called to vote on a building program, a congregational meeting continued from a prior day when a controversy arose.
At the next meeting I stood up and I took the stand and said, "These are the reasons why I support moving ahead. We can do nothing else." And it passed by 90% vote....I did have to do a lot of work with them in the next six months. Letters, both signed and unsigned, "How could you do this to us? This was a nice church until you came." Not so much that I can’t handle a crowd like that. I think each pastor has crud shoveled on him at one time or another--but that legitimate hurt in which they were overreacting and vindictive for the moment. I don’t like doing that even though I know it is necessary....I value the relationships and the friendships. They mean much to me. (p.27)

I would say another [point of stress] would be trying to deal with layers of conflict where people perhaps even enjoy the conflict but don’t want to get beyond the surface to really work at the conflict. So for me there is some frustration or anxiety in that when conflict in families or conflict in church has gone on between certain parties for maybe twenty years or more and I know little old me perhaps can’t mend twenty years but if they are so conflicted about it, they’re being fed by it or they would want to work at that. (Carol, p.23)

Other Threats to Well-Being

In addition to the broad areas of demands of the profession and difficulties in relationships, the clergy identified a host of points of stress.

As already mentioned Frank, Earl, and Ann find the expectations of parishioners to be sometimes unrealistic and overwhelming. Trying to live up to those expectations or live with the results of not meeting those expectations is anxiety-producing. "...The expectation level is incredible....I feel like the congregation's expectations of a pastor...continue to grow through the
years and nothing has been taken off. Everything just keeps getting added on. (Earl, p.11)

Ivan has referred earlier to the need to take a stand as a change agent even when that is hard to do.

The clergy talked about the intensity of being with persons as they die and while recognizing the ministry that was happening through them, also recognizing the sadness and helplessness they felt. Donna talked about a delayed reaction she experiences when someone dies and the need to make time for herself for coping with that.

Standing by somebody’s bedside and not being able to do anything for them except to comfort them and to pray with them [is painful.] Not that that isn’t something worthwhile and important, but I mean feeling so utterly helpless to do anything that that person really wants done which is to get well, and to watch them die. (Lou, p.18)

[It’s tough] standing by the bedside of somebody in ICU and watching them die. It is not tough for me to minister to the families, but I know afterward I’ve got to deal with it. I’ve got to deal with it before I go back to that family to deal with the funeral or whatever. (Carol, p.22)

Two of the clergy wrestle with the question of whether parish ministry is where they belong. For Ann, experiencing some other stresses in ministry brings her face to face with the question of whether she will continue in ordained ministry, a question she has asked "over and over and over again."

...It raises again the question of am I cut out for parish ministry? Is this where I belong? Is this what I want? Is this what I want my kids
to grow up knowing the church is? That's a question that plagues me. Am I going to do something else? (Ann, p.15)

[One stress] would be whether [ordained ministry] is really what I'm called to. I've no qualms that it's what some other people might be called to, but I think sometimes the battle for me becomes: is this really what I'm to do with my life, although I would say anyone who works for the church in a variety of ways does work that's worth doing and there's some well-being just in that... Am I simply deferring who I really am until some other life or some other time in my life or some other place in my life? (Donna, pp.14,15)

Eight of the twelve clergy mentioned points of tension and concern which, while they may be true for other clergy, were expressed only by that individual. The following list paraphrases those threats to well-being.

- I sometimes need to hold in my anger with a parishioner because of my position. (Ann, p.6)

- I sometimes take the anguish of others home and feel unable to separate it from myself. (Bev, p.16)

- It's stressful when someone sees me as a block to their own spiritual growth. (Earl, p.11)

- As pastor your words are constantly weighed by many people so you need to choose words carefully. (Frank, p.16)

- Sometimes a pastor is not taken seriously in the community but is somewhat helpless. (Hank, p.14)

- My "down's" are what my wife and children have had to put up with during twenty years of ministry. (Ivan, p.37)

- I feel "down" when someone is hurting and I can do nothing for them. (Ivan, p.36)
- I feel worst when I've agreed to do something for which I don't feel very competent, when creativity isn't happening for me, and during career-altering decisions. (Jim, p.28)

- I tend to equate myself with the problems of the parish, to blame myself for what's happening or not happening. (Karl, p.28)

The Relation of Stresses and Rewards

In discussing stress several clergy talked about how the peaks and valleys seemed to go together, how the stresses and rewards were related.

What are the pieces that are the most stressful? They're also the pieces that are the most rewarding. ...It is like my daughter's illness—it has the stress and it has the uplifting. I guess it just means how do you react to the stimuli of the environment? I've never been one to fight against whatever came. I was more accepting of them and then try to figure out what to do with them—to find it stressing or to find something good out of it. (Jim, p.16,17)

...It is often...a two-edged, sided issue. Two sides for sure. A person's death or the tragic death from meningitis a little six months old boy I buried not long ago. It can be heavy but at the same time when you are there with the family, you know that you are being a viable channel for healing. That is an uplifting, generating thing at the same time that you are feeling down for them. It's like living with dual feelings at that point. (Ivan, p.36)

Some spoke in somewhat embarrassed terms that some low points in life were also high points for them, especially when the low point included illness or trauma for someone else, a colleague, a parishioner. Ann speaks of several months when a colleague was hospitalized and
very ill. "It was really scary," she said. But the congregation rallied behind the staff with "a lot of support, a lot of encouragement, a lot of good feelings, and those were good days..." (p.10)

Bev speaks of a similar situation.

...There was a lot of stress because [my colleague] went into the hospital for all that time. It's terrible to confess this, but it was a real "up" for me because I had all this extra responsibility, and I was really working. It was a crisis situation and the feeling was that everyone was pulling together. (Bev, p.20)

Earl spoke of a crisis in a family in the parish, a situation which demanded much from him in time and energy.

I didn't have enough hours in the day. Or enough of me to go around. That was so frustrating to not be able to meet the needs. At the same time it was so gratifying to be needed so much...That experience was probably the most horrible thing I've ever had and yet in the way I've been able to deal with the aftermath [it is the] most gratifying experience I've ever had. (pp.17,18)

In summary, all pastors experience threats to their well-being. Especially among younger clergy, the demands of the profession--the schedule, the expectations of parishioners, and the never-ending nature of the work--are threats. For clergy of all ages the task of balancing job, family, and self, and conflicts within the congregation threaten well-being. In addition, individual clergy experience other stresses more unique to their own personalities and situations.
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CLERGY WELL-BEING

If ordained clergy experience such threats to their well-being, how do they remain healthy? Some responses are unique to the individual, but the field of relationships, the nature of ministry, and a variety of coping strategies contribute to clergy well-being.

Relationship to Spouse and Family

All twelve clergy talked about spouse or family in terms of contribution to well-being, source of strength, friendship, or meaningfulness of life. This relationship is the most consistently noted influence on well-being among the clergy.

How can a marriage relationship contribute to well-being? As Jim says,

[I have] a marriage that works, I think, as they are intended to work so I don't have the stress. On the other hand what I do have are the things that alleviate stress....What it provides is a sense of having worth, being loved and an opportunity to love with hardly any pre-conditions ....So a confidant. I'd say my father confessor is my wife. (p.30)

For Bev, the thoughts are similar,

...I really do feel that [my husband] loves me unconditionally and he must. He's seen me in the morning. He's seen me when I'm sick. He's seen me when I'm in labor.... He's been through the whole thing.

I just trust that [he] loves me for the way I am, and when I need him he's there for me. That's a real source of strength to know that at least there's some place I can go and they won't
throw me out. No matter how awful. I can go home when I’ve had a rough time, in some of these stress periods, and he’ll listen, he’ll be an ally, which is really helpful because he believes in me. So that’s really a source of strength. Also, he’s genuinely proud of what I do. He’s excited about what I do. And I’m excited about what he does. We can be a support for each other. That’s another great feeling...to be able to give to somebody else, make them feel better. That makes me feel good. That’s important to me. (pp.16,29)

Frank was able to express the satisfaction of an intimate sexual relationship with his wife.

I think my wife and I have a very close and intimate sexual relationship with each other and that has helped me, and it is really a gift from God to be able to turn to something so different from what you are dealing with and to be able to enjoy a breath of another kind of life for just a few minutes and the intimacy that comes in holding onto each other and being close to each other physically. (p.29)

The gifts that spouses brought varied, but for the clergy they were a firm foundation.

She has been that element of grace in my life that has smoothed off a lot of rough edges. She has provided me the feminine side that I needed in my life and taught me how to be feminine without feeling unmasculine. (Ivan, p.7)

[My wife] is a real solid support, companion. Very much in love, very much comfortable with each other. We worked the first two or three years of our marriage side-by-side, day-by-day. We were hardly every separated and I think that’s been a real asset....[She is] very honest with me and very supportive. Not every week but more times than not I’ll read over my sermon that I’ve written to her even though she is going to hear it again Sunday and she’ll give me feedback, how long it lasted, what was good and what was funny and what was significant and what maybe I should throw out. (Greg, pp.7,28)
For Frank the relationship is supportive not only in love but in a shared understanding of ministry. "I often think to myself...[what] if I had married someone who had not shared first of all a desire to see goals of ministry fulfilled, a respect for the ministry and what it is...?" (p.26)

The supportiveness of wife was felt by two clergy in terms of their readiness to give un-questioning support in order for the husband to do the work of the pastor.

The thing that I guess I've appreciated more than anything is the fact that while she listens she's not telling me....She hears what you're saying but she is not sitting there offering advice and saying "you ought to do this and you ought to do that," particularly when it has come to points when I have had to make decisions in the ministry....I wished that there had been times when she would have said "let's sit down and talk about this thing a little bit," but she never would. She somehow instinctively knew that that was my decision. That it was a call that had been given to me and it had to be my decision and not hers.... If somebody calls me out in the middle of the night and I go, I don't have to tell her where I'm going and when I get home, whatever hour, she never asks. She is never there to be the Grand Inquisitor and want to know what happened and who said what. She's simply, "You're home. Good." That's it. If I choose to share anything with her I do, but it would never be because she asks. I've appreciated that. (Lou, p.27)

For Earl the supportiveness of his wife is seen in similar terms.

[She] is a very supporting person to the extent that she gives me all the freedom that I need to do what I need to do, and if that means that I have to be out five nights a week I have that freedom to do that. If that means I put in fourteen hour days she
doesn’t complain about that. If I take a call in the middle of the night and leave, I’m not given the third degree on where I’ve gone or who I dealt with or what I did. She also has a very strong sense of what’s right and fair and helps me look at that, not only in terms of where I’m working but also at home.... There is a check and balance there between what my strengths are and how she knows when I’m using them in a way that is counter-productive. So she becomes in many respects my conscience. She also can help me see things that I’m not seeing and in the parish has shaped an awful lot of the parish things that I do without ever getting any credit for that or anyone else knowing where that has come from. So in that sense she is a great stabilizing factor for me and gives me the confidence to go ahead and do what I need to do without feeling like the rug is going to get pulled out from under me at any one time. (p.28)

In addition to the importance of the spouse, the relationship with the clergy’s family appeared central. Two clergywomen who were parents to the youngest children among the participants’ families expressed their joy in parenthood.

Just to see some little person turn into her own person is just so amazing. It’s like, we look at her and say, “Did we have this kid or did she get mailed here?” It’s unbelievable. That’s a lot of fun. I couldn’t tell you exactly what’s so strengthening about that because I don’t understand it. But maybe it’s just that I love someone that much and that’s strengthening to be able to love that much. It’s weird how much you love a kid. (Bev, p.30)

Eight of the twelve clergy spoke about relationships with persons and God in connection with what gives life meaning. For Bev, “there is a lot of meaning in having a loving relationship with other people, an intimate, loving relationship.” Relationships with husband and
child are a critical part of her life.

I always have this Joan of Arc streak in me....this idea that you give your life to a cause and keep plowing through no matter what the cost. Then I got married and had a kid and it takes the desire for martyrdom right out of you.... So I can understand when people are widowed why they feel like they have died....And doing things like raking the leaves with my husband. All of a sudden it isn't some task but there's a wholeness in that, and we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. (p.31)

Ann knits together her relationship with husband and sons as a source of strength and well-being.

...Having children has been one of the most wonderful things that's happened to us as a couple. Our kids are just real sources of joy which means that they add to our well-being in that they laugh and they sing and they squeal every time they see us....And [my husband] and I have this philosophy that our kids will grow up o.k. if we love each other and if we really invest our time in our relationship together. And we have found that over and over again that is true. The more love and affection we show for one another the more affection our kids show for the whole world, not just us but for each other and for their friends and everybody. I mean it's kind of a domino effect.

We also try very hard to consciously not let the difficulties of our children pull us apart or pull at us in different ways.... We have said to each other "let's not let this get to us, let's stay the united front that we have to be, let's get a baby-sitter even if he is sick and go out and be away from it for a while to regain the sanity that's needed to go back into that."

I think for the most part we have a very strong relationships that has endured an awful lot in six years of marriage. (Ann, pp.20,21)

The relationship between Frank and his wife and school-aged children also contributes to life's meaningfulness.
I think that if I didn't have my life to share with my family, with people who are close to me, my wife and my children, I would find a lot less [meaning...] To see some good things happening in the life of one's children. To have those little experiences where a son or a daughter has made a good choice, but not an easy choice, and to recognize that in some way you as a mother and a father have been a part of that.... My daughter is in the sixth grade but there is hardly a day after supper when she does not ask if she can sit in my lap after supper and puts her arm around my neck and just longs to be there and (my son) who says to me, "Well, Dad, there is a James Bond movie on tonight. We're going to watch, aren't we?" That's meaning to me. That our kids love me and want me. (pp. 31,32)

While most of the clergy found great significance in relationship with spouse and children, the single pastor also affirmed the centrality of family.

Family is incredibly important to me. I live all alone and I imagine most of the time when I talk about family people don't have a clue how, in very significant, important kinds of ways, my life is tied together with people who live five and six hundred miles away, who I see face to face maybe eight days a year, and talk to in little snatches on the telephone... but that's the bottom line what matters to me, what's meaningful... are those relationships. (Donna, p.33)

**Childhood Home and Upbringing**

Respondents were not asked to comment on their childhood other than "how extensive was your involvement in the church prior to seminary?" Nevertheless five clergy discussed the connection between their current well-being and their early childhood.

I think the way a person's put together, a person's background, a person's self-image, a person's relationship with God, that comes with you when you
were ordained....I had a stable home life growing up. I had two brothers and I was the only girl which had a lot of benefits. I had special protected status with my father because I was the only girl and that was special. But also my brothers, if I was going to play I was expected to hold my end up and I did, so I think I'm used to being with men....I think that not all women are used to that kind of competitiveness that occurs. And then you get into a man's world and it's a shock for some people....My parents instilled in us....a real sense that God was not just trivial or something you remembered before dinner, but was a being, a personal being, not just some abstraction and that was helpful even when I rejected the whole notion of God. (Bev, p.10)

I would take [my present well-being] back...to my family life. To parents who said, "You can be and you can do anything you wish" and supported me in that even though when I said "I want to be a pastor" they thought it was a little crazy until they met real life seminarians....I think I was blessed and I think God's hand was in it in terms of very incarnational in the people who were along the way. (Carol, p.5)

More and more I really, in all honesty, have to go back to my childhood and I have to say that I had, I think, a very stable, beautiful childhood....There was a stability of routine, of responsibility; we had a lot of fun together as a family....My parents took very seriously the Christian faith, and when I was troubled my parents spent time with me. They spent time with me at nighttime when we said our prayers and any time that I felt that I needed them, and my mother especially was someone who would take little Christian sayings and she would put them up as mottos in the house. Sometimes they would end up being pasted on the bathroom mirror, and there was some stability in that. (Frank, p.6)

The first [factor] would be a set of parents who gave me a way of handling life that I think is very helpful in terms of promoting well-being. A dad who was always a very positive person; who loved children. We always had a lot of other people around us who we were giving pony rides. He was a 4-H Club leader and he was always doing things for others, and I think that obviously rubbed off on me.
I suppose it is more environmental. It is probably not genetic at all, but there is something about a disposition that is a pleasant disposition that I think helps the well-being, so that is part of it. My mom and dad had a very wonderful marriage and a very strong faith, so those are other things that are very helpful....My father was a very strong influence in terms of what I think led to a style of ministry, a down-to-earth, looking-for-goodness, loving, looking-for-the-caring-thing-to-do. Very much "other" centered. Very much negotiating and peacemaking style. (Jim, p.5,19)

Ann also talked about her family, not as loving support and example, but as place where she learned in difficult early years to trust that God would be there if you "just get in there and do it." She responds to a question about what keeps her going when things get tough.

I guess it's inside. Something I learned as a little girl and not something I learned as an adult. But I lived through a pretty tough childhood and relied on myself and not my parents, not my brother, not other people in my family, because that's what made life difficult. I had a sense that everything would work out if I just kept going, and that was true. That has happened over and over again in my life. I can remember going home from college one time and my father was in one of his drinking binges and my brother had said, "Our dad is going off the deep end and you have to deal with this because I can't." And I was always the problem-solver. I was always the one that...it seemed like everytime I went home they presented me with another problem for me to take care of and I just did it. And I don't know why I did it other than "it's got to be done and you can do it" was what I was told and it was true....I feel like if you just get in there and do it, whatever it is, somehow God is going to be there, seeing you through it, telling you what to say. (Ann, pp.17,18)
The connection between childhood and well-being was not investigated in these interviews, and insufficient data were collected for further analysis. However, because the topic was introduced spontaneously by several clergy, it appears a fruitful area for further study.

**Other Significant Relationships**

At least eight of the clergy mentioned the importance of a variety of relationships with others in their well-being.

Frank and Carol talked in terms of mentors and models. Carol believes God's hand was present "in the people who were along the way."

The pastor who brought my family into the faith. [My campus pastor] at the right time even though [he] and I would not agree on many things today. But the timing of it. The encouraging. The supportive people....My internship supervisor who showed me a sense of real hard working, maybe to the limit. [A pastor] with whom I worked in my first parish. People who took risks perhaps to have me as a first [as a woman.]...So I think maybe the sense of well-being has me see those people differently, or maybe it is having been with them that has established and molded that sense of well-being in terms of maturity and understanding. (p.5)

I think the things that have helped me the most since entering the ministry have been examples of other, what I would call, well-rounded and healthy and whole people. I think I was very fortunate to have the experience in the first call that I had of working with somebody that I think to this day displays those qualities.... He was somebody who would read almost one book a week and they were heavy theological things. He kept up after he left the seminary. He was
always concerned about ongoing education and he was sure that he got in a half a day of golf every week. He enjoyed people immensely. He took the ministry seriously but not too seriously that he couldn't unwind, have a manhattan or two with his friends and he was personable and genuine. (Frank, pp.6,7)

Throughout his interviews Jim named persons in his life who had influenced and shaped him.

I have an uncle who is a minister and he had a close friend who was in the mission field in New Guinea for many, many years. He came to speak at our church and he stayed at our house, so I had an opportunity to talk with him, and that was quite influential. Plus friends of my uncle and watching those guys. There were about ten ministers who were all the same age. They were basically in Ohio and they all went to Lakeside during the summer and a lot of them would stop by our farm. Whenever they were together they were always telling stories and joking and laughing and pulling jokes on each other and I thought, "I don't think there is anybody who has more fun that those fellows" and I'm sure they had their stresses too. (p.7)

Many of the clergy find support and strength in the people around them. For Ann it is in the ministry team in which she works and close friends to whom she turns. (p.13) For Lou support has come from the colleagues whose counsel and perspective he has sought over the years. (p.5) Hank says,

I'm not afraid to make friends with people who are in far places who sometimes are very supportive of me. When I feel down I'll call them or write them and that's where my support comes from rather than Joe, down the street, who may have the same problems I have, so I would commiserate. (p.8)

When things are hard for Donna she may spend "a long time on the phone with folks who [know] me well...long-
distance phone calls. (p.30) Carol’s number one coping mechanism is "finding a good friend to talk it out with." (p.21) Earl finds that when he’s trying to cope with feelings of failure talking with a trusted friend is important. "It helps again to bounce it off of someone else that you feel is competent enough and capable enough to do it all, and they don’t do it all either." (p.25)

For Ann and Frank difficult times often find them deciding to do pastoral visitation with members.

Often I try and go visit people during those times because visits are some of the most meaningful things we do around here. They are one to one with people in need and those are always good experiences. (Ann, p.14)

There are different stresses in the pastoral ministry but sometimes I find stress in just being here and dealing with the paper work and having to get something else out on paper or prepare for another class, and I consciously discipline myself to get out and make a call because I like people. I like being with people. I like hospital visits. Not because I like people being sick but because I like to talk to people one-to-one. They generally seem to appreciate me being there, and I have to know that that can be a blessing to me as well, to get away from something that is stressing me. To find a pastoral relationship that is mutually rewarding. (Frank, p.30)

The Nature of the Ministry

Some of the contributions to well-being are directly related to the nature of the profession of ordained ministry. This included the sense of "call," the meaningfulness of the work especially in significant
involvement in peoples' lives, and the relationships that accompany parish ministry.

While Ivan and Lou talk about their sense of call to ministry Bev and Carol speak directly about the relation of that call to their well-being.

I like what I do. I like to work hard and I feel called to do this. And that's probably the one thing, the single most important factor contributing to well-being in ministry for me is that it is a sense of call. If it weren't, I think I would have said, "forget it" to a lot of stuff a lot earlier, but it's not just a job and it's not just a career, but it's a vocation. (Bev, p.11)

[Something about ministry that contributes to well-being is] the sense of call that would lead one into the ministry, the sense of that being real strengthening and that God's hand is in this even if we are in the midst of a real tough situation or whatever. And that something beyond me and that I'm not here totally on my own and I'm not self-made in that sense but that God's hand is there directing and guiding....I think that is perhaps why I don't sense as many stresses, is God's limits to the up's and down's. (Carol, p.11)

Donna speaks for Bev and Frank about the meaningfulness of ordained ministry.

...I would say that anyone who works for the church in a variety of ways does work that's worth doing, and there's some well-being just in that. A lot of folks...prepare for work that's going to be meaningless. It's going to be demeaning, it's going to be meaningless in the wider scope of things, and they know it...they know it's going in. That isn't my bag. (Donna, p.14)

Significant involvement in other peoples' lives is an important part of ministry that seems to add to its meaningfulness and, therefore, to the well-being of those
engaged in it.

...[A] lot of positive things...happen being a pastor. Being very intimately involved in people's lives. Being able to give in a way that almost no one else in society can give. Feeling very satisfied with helping people and sharing life's most intimate moments in people.

...Nobody else can go to that deathbed and say "there's hope." The doctor can't. The nurse can't. Nobody else can sit there with that teenager who feels unloved at home, who feels unloved at school, who's failing, who's got all kinds of things going against him and say, "But you're o.k. You really are o.k. Not because you are o.k. or because your grades are o.k. or because your family's o.k., but because God says you're o.k. And there's not greater gift than to know that." There's just something very unique about having that promise and hope to give people. (Ann, p.7)

I guess I'm a caring person. I see myself as a person who cares about other people. And to be able to relate to those people in a caring way makes me feel better, too. Whether it's preaching from the pulpit and having someone say afterward, "You know, I really needed to hear that today," and knowing that you've touched somebody. Or going to the hospital, seeing somebody....One day I went to the hospital [to visit a woman who had] had surgery. And as I went to leave she said, "I want you to know," she said, "I know God better because of you." Those are the rewards, and that's what makes you feel good about what you're doing. (Lou, p.14)

Ministry gives Lou the opportunity to care about other people. Hank expresses a similar perspective. "I think the parish ministry contributes to me in that it gives me an outlet to always express who I am, which I think my personality needs." (p.14)

...[Because] I am in Christian ministry there is a reason for my life, a reason why I am here. It's not just to work eight hours a day or however many hours people work and pay the rent and have kids and get old and die. There's more to it. There's a
reason for my life and that's a real plus. Being with people is fun, to play volleyball with the adults, work with the music staff or kids on a retreat, or talking to a prospective member. And I think there's also the "perks" that come when you really feel you've done something to help somebody. That's good. And related to that, is feeling needed. (Bev, pp.17,18)

Earl speaks forthrightly of his need to be needed and acknowledges that ordained ministry gives him opportunity for that need to be met. In speaking of a crisis situation into which he was called,

...It met my need which is primarily to be needed and I couldn't ask for a situation where I was needed more and where no one could make any decisions, no one would make any decisions, and I felt very clear in stepping in and doing what needed to be done, and it fed me in that way. (p.22)

Ann picks up the other thread in Bev's comments

...the fun in ministry, the enjoyableness of some of the work.

A lot of it's fun to me. It's fun to preach a sermon. It's fun to teach. It's fun to be with the kids and go roller skating or whatever the crazy things are that we do. A lot of what I do, although it is work by definition, it is also enjoyable. I enjoy the parties. I enjoy the group get-togethers. I hate meetings, but I like everything else that goes on. (p.7)

While parish ministry may include geographical moves, the congregation provides a ready-made community which the newly arrived pastor enters, a phenomenon perhaps unique to ministry.

...I think it's healthy that you always have around you somewhat of a support group....I already know when I get there on the first Sunday morning I
probably have three hundred people who are somewhat supportive. It's not like coming in and going to work at the Day's Inn. I think there's a real difference. And I guess there's something in me that says I kind of like that, too. I've built-in family wherever I go. And I know very clearly if I went to take a church-wide position I don't know how I'd feel about that, because I don't think I'd have that....I wouldn't have that community built in and I think I need that community built in for me.

(Hank, pp.14,15)

Relaxation and Coping Strategies

All twelve clergy have developed a variety of strategies they used when under pressure, strategies designed to help them cope with stressful periods. These are usually employed in the day to day difficulties, although also useful in major crisis times. They give the clergy distraction from the distress, perspective on the situation, or incentive to complete difficult tasks.

The coping strategies are often similar to or related to the relaxation activities in which the clergyperson engages. Although the two topics are not always identical they appear sufficiently related that they will be considered together.

The most frequently described strategy for relaxation or coping with difficult situations involved physical activity. Nine of the twelve clergy talked about the place of exercise or the lack of it in their lives.
I play racquetball twice a week, basketball once a week. I do this at noon. [My staff partner] and I play basketball together with other ministers and that is always very relaxing. That is probably the most relaxing thing that I do although I'm absolutely dead when I get done. (Jim, pp.9,10)

The regular playing of racquetball I enjoy. The exercise, the competition, and then there are times when I'm actually hitting the ball and the ball may be a calendar or some person who is giving me grief. I've done that very often. (Greg, pp.10,26)

Both Hank and Frank have a discipline of exercise related to illness.

One of the other things I really did [while recovering from cancer treatment] was that I had a rigorous walking program. And I walked and I still use that a lot. Our vet jokes a lot about our collie dog [having] lots of muscles and I say, "That's because he's walked to death." We just walk and walk and walk the dog, and that's good. And that's a real stress release for us if we can go for a good walk. Kind of rejuvenates me. (Hank, p.19)

I'm very fortunate because I'm a diet controlled diabetic, but as soon as I veer from the diet I'm in trouble. In retrospect that probably has been a real gift to me because I have changed a whole lot of things, my eating habits and my exercise habits, that have helped me to deal with tensions and stress and so forth. I exercise daily. I almost have to in order to be "up" for the day....I exercise [in the morning] and when the weather permits I jog for a mile or two, seldom over two miles. In the winter time I work out in the basement. I have an exercycle and I have some light weights. It is more aerobic exercise to burn up calories and keep my sugar level down. Sometimes I'll exercise in the evenings as well. (Frank, pp.10,11)

Ivan (p.35) mentioned his enjoyment of swimming, a better exercise for him than the basketball and softball of years ago. In recent years Karl has played less and
less golf, although that was once a good source of relaxation. (p.13) Lou lamented his decreasing attention to exercise through the years but since retirement consistently walks three or four miles daily. (p.11)

Bev likes to "be fit, so taking time to run or to lift weights gives me a chance, which is not always possible in a job like this, to do some physically active thing. I find it relaxing and just renewing, so I've always made sure I've done that. (p.11)

At a particularly stressful time in her ministry Donna studied kick-boxing for a year and a half.

And I learned to just knock the stuffing, unfortunately out of people, too. Finally I realized how bruised I was getting. I got good enough to actually be in some workouts with men who were about twice my size, and I was bruised. I was hurting. And that's when I gave it up. It was no longer worth it. It was fun for a while, but it began to hurt too much. It was a physical kind of thing. I also, at a lot of different points in my life, will run, do things that are physically demanding, and I'll work things out in that way. (pp.30,31)

For several, yard work and gardening are enjoyable distractions. Active projects which engage the hands and mind are often welcome diversions and sometimes provide a sense of accomplishment in work which seldom sees projects completed.

...I relax by working in my garden and in my yard. If I've had a full day of people and some real difficult situations, I can go out and get in the earth for one hour. I feel very strengthened and renewed to go back for the evening. This time of
year it would be more in terms of doing some reading, some needlework, or a lot of domestic things that I never imagined I would enjoy doing, but I do enjoy them and I’m sure it has come from my mother. (Carol, p.7)

Cutting the grass is to some a real chore. For me it is an enjoyable hobby. Working in the garden.... The flowers, mulching. Working on the house. (Ivan, p.34)

I try to schedule into my life that I have something always that I can see what I’ve done. If it’s nothing but latch-hooking a rug to painting a room, and I can say, “Gee, [I] painted that whole wall.” Because I don’t see progress here, and I knew that very early on in ministry. It’s just helpful to have something I can see I’ve done. So I’ve taken up projects that allow me that. I get personal satisfaction, it may sound corny, but to say, “I painted that wall” even if I don’t say it to anybody, just to myself. (Hank, p.20)

While physical activity whether in the form of exercise or projects like needlework or painting a room is the most frequently mentioned strategy for relaxing and stress reduction, other strategies were mentioned by the clergy, some highly individuated, several practiced by two or three.

Lou, Karl, Greg, and Hank referred to reading as relaxation, “and I’m not talking about reading theology,” Hank said, "I’m talking about reading just dime store novels, just stuff, junk." (p.10)

Karl is a sports enthusiast and uses that as an escape mechanism (p.27) Donna finds enjoyment in writing. Both Frank and Bev find ways to reward themselves as an incentive to finish a difficult task.
After meeting a self-imposed deadline for a series of visits including a particularly trying visit, Bev treats herself to a candy bar. (p.28)

...There are some days when I've got nothing but hospital visits to make and a lot of them and I'm pressed for time, and they become the stressers rather than the releasers and so I'm in this habit of...I treat myself. After I'm done making visits in the hospital I go down to the hospital cafeteria and I'll have a diet Coke and I'll sit down with a bag of popcorn and I will stop for just a few minutes and I will enjoy that diet Coke and that bag of popcorn. (Frank, p.30)

Frank and Ivan find they can "get away" through short naps and physical relaxation.

I get some relief through cat naps....That is a very effective way to deal with stress and I seem to be able to fall asleep even when I'm under stress. It is kind of crazy but I seem to be able to do that with rare exception....Sometimes if I know I've got a busy schedule and I'm going to be on in the morning and the afternoon and in the evening and that's going to come up day after day after day for me to catch some cat naps through the day is a way for me to deal with it. (Frank, p.29)

[When I encounter a particularly tough time] there's a part of me that says head home. Home is my sanctuary.

I go in and I get [our kitten] out of his cage and I feed him because he always eats....I take the newspaper and I sit down in a soft chair and I turn the music on and then I read long enough that my eyes get heavy and I relax for about 15-20 minutes and close my eyes. (Ivan, p.34)

Ivan also tries to help his ministry colleague take time to relax when under stress: "...if you feel like you are really whipped and washed out, go home and sleep for a couple of hours. There is nothing bad about that. You
don't have to work straight through and be exhausted in the evening." (p.18)

For at least three persons the "getting away" is more literal. Taking the time to physically get away helps to reduce stress.

Now and then I would go off to the country. We are only fifteen minutes one direction from the Amish community, Mennonite community about fifteen minutes the other way, so just going out and seeing the simple life, the plowing...just to see the agrarian life style is very pleasing.... (Carol, p.22)

Pastors frequently are present prior to and during death and Donna realizes that when someone dies she needs to get away.

I just need to be by myself. I have learned that that's one of the times that I need to clear off the space to be able to take even a half day to go do something, usually outdoors, by myself. Partly because of the sense of holiness in the presence of death. I need to make a sort of holy space for myself, and I've gotten better about that kind of coping. (p.31)

Earl and Greg plan their opportunities for getting away building several breaks into their yearly schedule. Anticipating those "vacations" helps them maintain perspective and the refreshment of the break rejuvenates them upon return.

I find I function much better in life if I know I've got something major coming up in three, four months. And something like a cruise you pretty much plan far ahead....If I've got something like that on the calendar, it gives me something to think about, plan about, fantasize about, and that makes a difference. (Greg, p.25)
Earl had a long weekend with his family in Florida. He used it to illustrate a coping strategy.

I would guess the best way to summarize the strategy that I use is a retreat and action kind of plan.... For me my retreat to Florida for five days, this changes the pace. It took me three of those days to unwind and not be so tense and know how to adjust to not doing anything or not having any deadlines or anything that I had to do, but it is almost that total in terms of retreat and I've got to get away. I've got to physically remove myself from whatever it is and when I come back I generally am able to go at it. (p.26)

Two clergy referred to the value of professional counseling in times of personal crisis.

While most clergy spoke of the usefulness of distraction and escape mechanisms to deal with stress, five clergy described strategies of focused engagement. This took two forms: first, a desire to face the problem and get it done, and, secondly, a desire to just work especially hard to finish the job.

When something goes awry you just have to get in there and do it, and trust that God is going to guide you and He will....If you avoid it it only gets bigger and bigger and bigger....Certainly there are those times when you say, Oh, what did I do?" but at least you can say, "I tried to do something, I didn't ignore it, I didn't act as though it didn't exist. (Ann, p.18)

...Whatever is really on me, that's what I start to work on right away. If this is going to cause me this much stress, or this much pain, let's get going on it. I'm a great list-maker. Lists are very soothing, very therapeutic for me. I make a list of all the stuff I have to do and that objectifies it. I can see what it is that's really bothering me or what really needs to be done, what really needs attention. Then I can
start going about it. Otherwise it's floating around out there and I can't get a handle on it. (Bev, p.27)

One [thing that gets me down] is sheer amount of stuff that needs to be done, at least I perceive, done by me. And my basic coping mechanism for that is to just work real hard for a lot of hours. What I'd like is just a lot of hours in which to work, and so it means, in part, for people who might not need to be part of my time frame right then, just to back off. My family is aware of that. Sometimes I'll say I can't do something because I need the time. (Donna, p.30)

If something is really bothering me, generally it will have to do with, I might be behind in getting something out, so my tendency will be to push harder and just get it done. Sometimes that will work. Generally I guess it will work. I don't think taking time off does much for me because I'll have the tendency not to sleep or to worry about it and that just prolongs what I have to get done. (Jim, p.28)

Lou describes one of his ways of coping with difficult times: "...just throwing myself into the work even more intensely in those moments. Just driving it out of my mind almost as much as I can for the moment." (p.24)

**Personal and Physical Characteristics**

Some clergy spoke of physical and personality characteristics that contribute to their well-being in times of stress. Donna believes her self-confidence is a help as is her "sturdy constitution."

It would be very rare for me to have anything that looks like a sick day, and I would probably work anyhow. But not just physically. Some kind of emotional sturdiness and some intellectual sturdiness, and out of my kind of life experiences knowing not only that I need to figure out how to
get by and think through solutions, but I've had enough experience doing that that I feel kind of sturdy in terms of a wider overview of my life. (p.5)

Bev describes herself as an overachiever and as competitive. "I like to do well. Sometimes this does not help my well-being because I'm my harshest critic. But it has motivated me to do more than maybe I would have done." (p.10) She credits some of her well-being to those characteristics.

Some clergy have adopted a mental attitude that helps them keep trouble in perspective. Bev keeps telling herself, "A month from now this will all be over." (p.27) Lou reminds himself that "this is not that important that the world is going to come to an end if this happens or that happens." (p.24) Greg credits some of his well-being to...

just sort of a personal mental attitude which is sometimes reflected in don't-let-the-turkeys-get-you-down kind of poster mentality. Sometimes I think that's perceived as maybe lack of involvement or emotional commitment or poker face. I've gotten that in groups sometimes but I also think it's, whether it's a healthy mental device or a protective device, I'm not sure, but kind of not letting much get to me or rattle me or upset me. (p.7)

Three clergy, Bev, Hank, and Jim, talked about the value of humor in staying sane in difficult times.

The Mayo Clinic doctors told me that what I use [to cope] is a good sense of humor. I guess that really does help me. I joked with them...and I think that is a coping mechanism, to say we'll laugh. I often remind my parishioners that a sense
of humor is a gift of the Holy Spirit. As Christians we sometimes don't pray enough for that. We take ourselves too seriously. (Hank, p.18)

I would have to say the other thing is humor that has been stress relieving. We have had a lot of humor in our house...as a family trait and a bit of teasing, but more than that, kind of generating humor together. (Jim, p.30)

Calm Parishes

Finally, three of the clergy attribute at least some of their well-being in ministry to the parishes to which they’ve been called. Jim spoke of "very fine calls" contributing to his health (p.6) and Hank reflects that "I’ve not been in parishes that have been, do I want to say, ‘difficult?’"

...I’ve always had very calm parishes. I’ve served [several] situations, and all of them were very calm, positive, let’s-get-the-work-done kind of ministry. Even when I went through the divorce the hassles there were kind of minimal, not extravagantly personal or anything, and it’s been even more true here..., and other clergy talk about the horrible council meetings and the behind the back bickering and the fighting and stuff like that. I have rarely experienced that in my parishes. That is something I’m kind of intrigued about. Whether it is something I do, whether it’s a dictatorial calmness that I convey, or if it is just something that I’ve been lucky with. (Greg, p.7)

In summary, relationships with spouse and family, other significant relationships, childhood upbringing, and the nature of the ministry are the primary contributing factors to clergy well-being. In addition, all have developed strategies for coping with stressful
times; including physical activity, distracting activities, and direct engagement of the stress-producing issue or situation.

WELL-BEING IN ACTION

Two questions were asked to help put the abstract concepts being discussed into concrete terms. Although the respondents gave examples and illustrations throughout the interviews, each was asked to respond to the same hypothetical situation and each was asked to describe a critical life event in terms of the effect it had on her or his ministry. A look at responses to these two questions provides opportunity to observe how these clergy's philosophies are applied in daily life and to observe consistency between who the clergy say they are and how they live out their lives.

Hypothetical Conflict Situation

All participants were presented the identical hypothetical situation and asked to discuss how they would respond in feelings, thoughts, and action. "Suppose an influential member of your congregation comes to you with negative criticism of something in which you have some emotional investment. How would you respond?"

Nine of the twelve clergy described some anxiety or difficulty they would have in this situation. For some
it was not a hypothetical situation at all, but something which had happened to them. In fact, some were most surprised that the situation described the member's face-to-face criticism because they had experienced more indirect, hostile criticism in which the clergy had felt unfairly treated. However, the action the clergy intend is to listen to the criticism, diffuse their own hurt or defensiveness, then either accept the criticism if it is warranted and ignore it or try to understand the wider picture if it is not true or warranted. Several expressed the desire to understand and empathize with the person offering criticism. There is the expectation that the exchange will be mutual and both parties will be willing to engage in dialogue and growth.

I wish it was that easy. I wish people came to me. They usually don't. They go to someone else and share their gripe, then it gets to me but I'm not able to do anything about it. I feel hurt and crushed and begin to doubt myself, and all those kinds of things I think are natural in that situation. But I also try to listen, and try to know that that's difficult for them to say. It takes me several days or maybe even weeks at times to live through sharp criticisms and through that process initially I'm just immobilized by it...But then I try to put it into perspective. Is what they're saying true? If it is true, then I can deal with it. If it's not true it's more difficult. If it's not true why are they saying it?...I try to say, "that hurts me to hear that" and let them see that side. I also try to let them know what I'm thinking, if I agree with them or disagree with them, and challenge them to maybe see another side if, indeed, there is one. (Ann, pp.8,9)
I guess the way I handle it, it is a sense of "Oh, gosh!" I do get defensive at first, but I don’t act out of my defensiveness. I am able to listen to what they have to say, and if they do have a good point I am able to accept that and make a change. If I disagree with them I’m able to say, "No, I can’t go along with that." (Bev, p. 19)

Carol’s initial internal question is "Is it me or is it them?" She tries to understand why the other person is so invested in the issue and to understand why she herself may be so invested. She also tries to determine just how serious the issue is. "Does it really make that much difference?" (pp. 11,12) But frustration and confusion result if the other person is unwilling to engage honestly in a process of understanding and growing.

I would be real keen on hearing most anything from a person who took me seriously enough to actually come talk to me, and I contrast that with pot-shots taken in unfair surroundings....

One [response] would be to be a real respecter of that person for coming and saying the critical words and the criticizing words. My sense, and it has been my experience, that if that happens in the church it would be one of the truer examples of actually being the church, to do anything that straight-forward....

Probably catch some defensiveness in how I was hearing the issue but trying to diffuse that in my own mind or at least get it in perspective. (Donna, pp.15, 18)

For Earl it is important "to sit back and do some more homework before I take a stab of trying to correct a thing or put it to rest or whatever. I’ll gather a little more data myself." (p. 14) However, the source of the criticism is an important consideration.
If it is from a person that I trust and respect, I'll listen to it and will take it in the spirit in which it is given. If it is a person I don't trust or respect, I generally will do one of two things. For my own self-preservation I will either ignore them and pay no attention to it at all, or I'll try to do something to discredit them.... I welcome a sparring partner but sparring partners never hit below the belt. You can always count on that. You don't take cheap shots. (Earl, p. 14)

Hank admits to becoming "a little bit up-tight while they're talking to me" but is intent on hearing them clearly and being heard in return. "Try to make certain that I'm hearing exactly what they're saying. I think sometimes I just have to test out that old hearing level. Trying then to get them to hear me." (p. 15) One of Hank's concerns is identifying the real issue. "...I've discovered a lot of people come to talk to me about peripheral things but there's another agenda running somewhere...." (p. 15)

I'd listen as long as they weren't attacking me and maybe even then if that was appropriate and I could absorb it for the moment.... I would try to understand why they are feeling the way they do and tell them even though I understand how they feel, given the information I have and what I think we should be doing, this is the way I think we need to be going.... If they give me half a chance to dialog with them I will but if it is a demand and they're not hearing me then I have to say, "I'm sorry, I guess there is no room for discussion here. You are demanding of me to do this, and I can't." (Ivan, pp. 44, 45)

Ivan also knows that criticism is most difficult if it surprises him, catches him off-guard. And he acknowledges that part of his hatred of conflict is his
own fear that the relationship in question will be damaged because of it. (p.45)

Jim admits that his first reaction to criticism is a feeling of hurt. He moves on from there.

I would always assume, unless it was obvious, that they didn't mean to hurt me, but that they meant to help me, and so then I would try to find out how we both might be helped out of it. I would try not to be defensive immediately, and I would try to put that as far off as I can. I would first try to get everything out of it I could, and listen, and I think some place along the line I would try to explain what I had done and what I had hoped to achieve. I would be a little too quick to own my culpability, even if I probably didn't think I was all that culpable. Which I think is something I still need to work on. And then I would try and work out some kind of a plan where how can [our two agendas can] be met if possible, and if not I would just have to say, "We're just going to be at odds on this." (p.17)

I guess my style is that I'm not one to use that as an opportunity for a confrontation and a shouting match. That's just not my way....Generally I will listen to those people. I may be grinding up inside, and I may be even angry inside. But I don't think I would ever show that to the person... Sometimes we have been able to come to an understanding and work it out, and sometimes we haven't. If I feel I'm right I continue to do what I think is right, and I don't let somebody like that back me off. (Lou, p.15)

Criticism is a reality with which clergy have some difficulty. It is most difficult when the criticism is unfair or indirect, yet that is their frequent experience. The clergy's response to criticism is often a feeling of hurt and then a desire for dialogue in which some resolution can be reached. When dialogue can occur
the clergy are able to respond to the criticism with explanation, agreement, or disagreement. However, when the pastors feel attacked or find that open dialogue cannot occur, they experience distress and sometimes anger.

Critical Life Incidents

In preparation for the second interview the participants were asked to consider peaks and valleys in their lives since ordination and then to select one about which to talk, especially as it affected later ministry. The descriptions of life events offered by the clergy destroyed any perception that these clergy have led sheltered, uneventful, or unstressful lives. They described joys and pain in personal life, family relationships, staff relationships, congregational activities: birth of children, marriages, children’s illnesses, fractured relationships, untimely death of relatives and friends, significant friendships, unfulfilled dreams, conflicts, completion of academic degrees, diagnoses of diseases, professional challenges, mid-life crisis, periods of depression. Some events were newsworthy and involved many people, others were personal and easily overlooked events that held significance only for the person speaking. Looking back over forty years of ministry Lou reflected on "the highs and the lows."
I can talk about a building program here and a building program there and congregations that are growing and celebrations that you have and so often those seem—they're great at the time and I suppose they are peaks in a sense, but I think some of the peaks and some of the valleys are the little things that happen along the way....The girl that says, "I know God better because of you. You taught me a lot, you know." Those are kinds of things. The same way when I have a conflict with somebody and it isn't resolved. That to me is just a low spot. I just get torn up inside because of that. (p. 18)

Three of the clergy identified themselves as "even-tempered" or "even-keeled" and admitted to difficulty in identifying points of particular elation or despair, but went on to name and describe them. Jim, who began the second interview by saying "the valleys are very difficult to find" (p. 18) later described a single year in which his father died on the day his daughter was undergoing major surgery, one month after the death of his father-in-law from lung cancer. During that year both of his wife's parents had lived with them so that his wife could care for her mother who lived with multiple sclerosis and care for her father as he died. (p. 26) Not all clergy had such dramatic situations but several indeed did have equally complex life situations. However, as with Jim, these events were not always interpreted as valleys in life. But it became obvious that the lives of these clergy could not be described as less stressful or less complicated than the lives of
Six of the twelve chose to talk about events surrounding illness and death: accidental death of a member and friend, attempted suicide of a colleague's child, murder of a parishioner, serious illness of a child, and diagnosis of a life-threatening disease. A seventh person chose to talk about the significance of an important friendship, friendship with someone who soon died.

Three of the clergy chose to discuss conflict situations: one was a conflict primarily among the staff, and two between themselves as clergy and the congregation.

Two clergy spoke of personal crises: one a mid-life crisis and the other a time of significant depression.

In each critical life event the clergy were able to identify some contributing factors to successfully living through the situation and to identify long-lasting effects, usually positive ones but sometimes negative ones as well.

Because these critical life events put flesh on the ideas and intentions already stated by the clergy, some significant element of each situation will be presented. The events and the responses of the clergy show how very human these clergy are and offer insights into how they
have remained healthy even in stressful lives.

Donna is the only person who chose not to talk about a crisis situation. Instead she described an extraordinary relationship with her friend and his wife, a woman who remains very close after his death from cancer.

...He was the first bright, culturally literate pastor I knew. The other people I knew who were bright and culturally literate did all kinds of things, they might occasionally go to church, but they certainly did not work for the church. ...

I think [he] was a great help to my self-image about what I was doing in ministry. It had always been sort of vague why I was there, and in some ways just set at peace that what I was doing might be an o.k. thing to do with one's life and, in particular, my own life....

[He] has been my main role model for parish ministry. The kinds of things that I took seriously appeared to be the kinds of things that he took seriously. We affirmed that in each other. Long after he died he's still been my main mentor. I will rail at the skies and ask him for advice and try to listen for message of what I should do in a particular situation. And when I get caught in what feels like a crossfire of a lot of demands and a lot of different models for ministry I often come back to, "Well, what would [he] and I have to say to each other?" It's a recalling that my way of being a pastor may not at all fit anybody else's model.

Also, in terms of some real depths of my well-being, here was a person who loved me, and said he loved me, and I loved him, in real unlikely kinds of ways. This is a person that I loved in the context of a very solid marriage; the woman he was married to was also a best friend. And remains so. (Donna, pp.23,24,25)  

Ivan chose and described his mid-life crisis.

...All of a sudden I found traveling around [the city] in my early 40's that a claustrophobic feeling suddenly came on me, unsure of whether I wanted to be a father and a husband. Unsure of whether I
wanted to be a pastor. It was one of the first times that I really came up against the question of my vocation, and I knew I was competent in what I did.

I think it really came to a head when we went to my 20th high school class reunion and I saw all the old gang....Two of the guys I had been closest to I found out were dead. Two others, a gal and a guy that we thought had it all together were divorced, a bitter divorce. I came back home thinking the permanency I assumed that was there was not there. (pp.30,31)

How did Ivan respond to this crisis?

I called [a seminary professor/mentor] and I went in and we sat and talked for about three hours and I cried like a baby, and I remember getting up, after I had done that I felt better, and I thanked [him] and he got up and put his arms around me and he hugged me for a long time and I cried again. I said, "I'm tired of the pain. I'm tired of the hurt that I see in people's lives" and he said "I think you have come to grips with that. I think you've learned how to survive in the midst of this, being" as I have read more since then, "the wounded healer now....You are as much in need of healing as those that you are helping, then they are going to be healed." (p.31)

Ivan sought the advice and guidance of a trusted colleague, found his wife ready to stand beside him through the pain, and shared it all with a few friends. He also credits his sense of call for helping him remain in ministry during this time.

Ivan identifies three long-lasting effects of this mid-life crisis. First, he has an aggressive, intentional ministry with men in whom I recognize the symptoms [of mid-life crisis.] Secondly, "I think it has taught me the importance of ministry in the stages in
which you find people." And, thirdly, "It did make my ministry more sensitive." (pp.33,34)

Bev also focused on a personal crisis, a time of depression which included vocational reassessment.

I had just been through how many weeks of teaching catechism, having meetings, and the building campaign was mounting up, so it would be fourteen nights in a row out every night, never at home, trying to get settled in a new house....And I ... was telling [my husband] I really didn't think I was cut out for parish ministry anymore because if I couldn't take this, and this was what my life was going to be, maybe I should think of something else. Just really down. I had a blanket wrapped around me because I was cold. I was sitting there and our new little puppy was sitting on my lap looking at me with these melting brown eyes, just staring at me. And I was telling [my husband] how down I was and how things were just bottoming out. And all of a sudden I felt this warm sensation. My own dog had just wet on me. So I think that was the bottom of the whole situation. You couldn't get much lower than that, it was pretty bad. (p.21)

This crisis was not precipitated by external factors such as conflict or emergency. Instead...

It was realizing that the way things were, it wasn't going to get any different. A lot of people hit this. When you're young you always think things are going to get better or different and [then] there is this realization that the way things are is the way they are going to be. You either make peace with that and find some good in that or you crash and burn, or get out of the situation, or do whatever. (pp.23,24)

Bev responded to that situation by praying and by talking with her partner in ministry, her bishop, and a seminary professor. She discovered, "It wasn't some weird thing and I wasn't somehow deficient. I was just
normal." (p.24) And, she began to determine how she could protect herself from burnout. She also reconsidered her role as pastor in that congregation and the focus for my energies as a pastor here... changed. I realized that I couldn't possibly do everything, and I ought to pick a few things that I was going to do instead of trying to do all these different things. (p. 25)

Three of the clergy discussed the death or attempted suicide of members of their congregations, situations which involved them with demands of emotion, time, and skill.

Carol talked about the attempted suicide of the child of a ministry partner, a gifted child to whom she felt particularly close. Because it happened during Holy Week she assumed responsibility for all parish worship and activity for one of the most intense weeks of the liturgical year, at a time when she herself had the flu. She credits the Word of God and some very close relationships with helping her respond to that situation.

...Certainly the Word of God and not only the tasks of preparing those sermons but I'm sure those sermons became more real in understanding what our Lord went through on Holy Week. The irony of it. I'm sure that was probably what got me through the week....I would say a couple of very close relationships, this lay assistant who assisted me....There was one other family that I was very close to. They helped to give me some perspective and a place to be heard and listened to at that point. (p.18)
Several learnings remain with Carol from that experience. First, she has become aware of the need for clergy giving some priority to their own families in the midst of a busy job. She describes other results.

What it taught me was the ministry must be incarnational. You must be there. A real ministry of presence. It taught me a lot about how I look at people. Those who seem to have it all together don’t necessarily have it all together. Very gifted can be very troubled. Pastors’ families can be very, very hurting. It taught me to read signals and to spend time with people. It was a unique opportunity to minister to a clergy family....It also gave me the sense that I was able to handle a congregation in some very difficult times. (p. 17)

Greg also described a critical event involving death. An out-of-state automobile accident involving close friends killed the husband and left the wife seriously injured. It was as close friend that Greg was telephoned with the news, and he had the responsibility of arranging for parents to be told, of informing children, colleagues, and friends. He was executor of the estate and part-time father figure in the family. As pastor he also had the responsibility for the funeral and for the grief of the congregation.

I think [one difficult part of the experience was] throwing myself into the milieu of this family that was totally different than mine. I’m talking about the extended family. The widowed mother and kids from two previous marriages who both had parents they lived with and visited here and the parents and the corporation world which I don’t know much about. All these three-piece suit guys, [he] was a vice president and a pretty hot-shot guy so...throwing myself into areas I was not that too familiar or
comfortable with. And then...could I pull off this funeral which I knew was going to be a monster. The church was packed for a young person like this. They had only lived in town for a year but they had pitched right in and gotten involved in all kind of community activities and then all of the [corporation] people. So this was going to be a big event and there was me in charge and I was grieving over my dead friend. (p.23)

Greg described this friend’s death as “the biggest personal loss I've ever had." (p.23) Relationship with wife and friends helped Greg through this experience as did the clergy support group with which he met each week. He was able to put aside other parish responsibilities and place priority on this crisis situation. Being physically healthy allowed him to survive sudden change in diet and sleep patterns. And Greg asked a clergy friend to be with him during the funeral "just to read my stuff [if] I couldn't get through." (p. 23)

What were the long-lasting effects of this experience? He believes he is "more aware of grief and grief counseling" because he has experienced it. (p.23) Greg also speculates about whether the loss of this first close friend in this congregation and the succeeding death of the wife of the council president made him less ready to establish close friendships. “We don’t have anybody like that anymore where we could just call at 6:00 p.m. on Friday and say let’s go get a pizza and a beer or play a game or something. We don’t do that much
Earl described a different death experience, the murder of a member by her husband. During the first year in this congregation he became aware of the bizarre and threatening behavior of the husband of a member and her three daughters. Attempts within community resources failed to help the situation, and one morning he was called to go to that home. He was the first on the scene of a brutal murder, provided extensive pastoral care to the daughters that day, conducted the funeral, and for several years has been engaged in the events and lives relating to this family.

I really feel led through that experience. I was in touch with, I knew it wasn't just me dealing with that situation. I knew that I was being led by the Holy Spirit. I also knew that I needed some help around me. I needed someone to bounce things around...[and a clergy friend] came right over knowing that I needed some help....I remember I just needed to be with someone who wasn't connected here at all and I called [a friend] and met him for lunch...and I conveyed to him what I had just experienced that morning. He listened with his mouth hanging open. I couldn't believe what I was saying myself. I guess mainly through [these two men], that kept me sane, I think. [My wife] was out of town. She was in California and I was at home alone, and I have to say the first night, anytime I would close my eyes I would see blood. (pp.21,22)

That death was one of three deaths that occurred on the same day related to Earl's congregation.

The third one was not a member but a member's spouse and I just had to say I'm unable to do the funeral. Not only was I unable to do the funeral, I forgot about that woman. I just totally forgot about her
and she wrote a few months later and reminded me about how I had forgotten her. (p.22)

Greg identified three learnings from that experience. Three years after this murder, on a youth group trip, one of the daughters talked extensively about her experiences that night.

That wasn’t what we planned to do (on that trip) but because of that trip she is probably a lot healthier person today and so am I because it gave me the chance to deal with the same thing with her on a different level. So one of the lasting effects I think could be never to underestimate what can happen even on a routine, traditional activity. That I need to be open to surprise and I can apply that to just about every aspect of what we do. (p.24)

Secondly,

In terms of me personally I’ve learned that I can respond to those situations that I would never dream that I could have before. I’ve learned to pick up and go. Just go. Something will happen and to trust that. I knew what I was going to find when I went in there but I didn’t want to believe that. I had no idea what I would do when I found it, but you just go. (p.24)

A third learning is that even when the pastor is being especially effective in one situation, it may result in being inefficient or ineffective in another situation that is happening at the same time. Earl continues to struggle with the tension between efficiency and effectiveness. "I don’t want to have to face trade-offs." (p.24)

Two of the clergy described their own fights with cancer.
I steadily felt worse through June and into August.... I was diagnosed as having lymphomacancer eventually. And that was a very low valley. They told me if I did not take chemo...I would not live to see Christmas. Those are hard words when you’re 39.

I don’t want to say there weren’t low valleys because that would be a lie. And probably the worst thing was my wife and I drove out of there thinking I’m going to die and she had just lost her job that same morning...We didn’t even know if we could pay for the motel bills at Mayo Clinic. It was just really bad. (Hank, p.17)

Upon learning that he could tolerate the chemotherapy well he "turned that whole cancer experience into what I felt was an avenue to do a lot of ministry," speaking openly and often to individuals and families about their illness. Hank feels this has deepened his ministry.

The supportiveness of his wife, the attitude of the professionals at the Mayo Clinic, and "some very caring nurses locally who spent a lot of time with me" helped him through those months.

The doctor was very good, skilled in helping somebody who’s professional, saying 'You have kind of a public life.' And his advice was to be public rather than to be quiet and private, because then people guess too much. And he and I really could affirm each other in that thinking. (p.17)

As he fought cancer, Lou found that he was sustained by his faith, and the people around him. In the congregation

...there was that underpinning of the prayer life of these people that to me was amazing and uplifting. We had in the congregation at that time
a little girl [who had been diagnosed with cancer]...That first day that I had chemotherapy in the hospital she knew that I was going to have that treatment and she arranged to have her treatment the same day at the same hour so she could sit there with me and help me through it. She had just been confirmed and that kind of amazing kind of part of that little child. She died after that but that courage...and I thought, "if she can be that way I can't be less than that." (p.20)

How has the fight with cancer changed Lou?

It has made me a much better pastor to people and particularly to cancer people. I know what they're going through. I can share with them how I feel and they relate to me much better because they know I've gone through it. (p.21)

Lou's decision to retire was also related to the cancer, but not because of diminishing health. Instead,

...it made me realize that I had been pouring myself into my job....I think finally I got to saying, "Hey, maybe there's more to life than just that. And maybe I ought to be thinking about retiring and enjoying some of the other things that I have not been doing."...I just think it made me realize I don't know how many years I've got left but I want to make the most of those years. Some people think that making the most of those years means working, continuing on in the ministry until you're seventy and until they crowd you out, but I just didn't see that for me. I wanted to do some other things in life. (pp.22,23)

Jim also faced a loss experience, the serious illness of his adolescent daughter, with difficult but successful diagnosis and treatment. How did he cope with that time?

I wish I could say I did it by a lot of prayer and internal being fortified. I don't think that is the way it came to me. I think it came to me as more of a theological premise that I found to be true. Which would be "I'm with you."
Upon reflection [that entire eventful year] turns out to be a kind of confirmation of it is true that God stays with you. So I would say that it turns out to be a high point. (pp.25,26)

There are two long-lasting results that Jim sees from the experience of his daughter’s illness. The first is gratitude as well as some "difficulty talking about it because it has turned out so well. I know that there are many people for whom illness of a child does not go away but gets worse." (p.28)

The second is a more casual attitude about money. [There is] not much thought about saving for the future. In our family we are pretty much eager to do the thing that is for us now. I think I can live with my kids. If my pension is not enough, that is going to be too bad, but I know I will not have regrets, that I will say I wish that I had done this with my kids. (pp. 26,27)

Frank, Ann, and Karl spoke about conflict situations that were especially difficult for them.

For Frank the conflict was with a staff colleague, a conflict which ultimately engaged the congregation. The stress during that time was great.

...To me those interpersonal stresses when you are working so hard to do it right with people, to be an example for people, to keep integrity with people so that you can proclaim the Word and not stand in the way of the message, I think that's the frustrating thing for me. To have somebody say to me,"...With everything else going on in this parish, you know it is your deeds and not just your words that speak. I can't even listen to you any more on Sunday morning." That really hurts because that is counter everything I want to do and at that point I say, "What the heck. I think I'll just chuck the whole thing. Maybe I'm in over my head or I'm in the
Frank was able to cope with that situation by focusing attention on other work as a distraction and by sharing his feelings and thoughts with a few close friends.

To hear those people sharing perspectives so that my own feelings, sense of guilt, sense of responsibility didn't burden me to the point of becoming unrealistic. But there were still tough times and I was depressed for a couple of weeks, really down. My wife is a great blessing to me. She has always had time to listen. She didn't have any magical answers. Sometimes she got angry along with me and then as both of us were angry we realized we couldn't go on being angry forever. The support of my wife [helped] probably more than anything else. (p.26)

And what were the long-term effects of this conflict situation for Frank?

...When there are tensions within the life of a congregation the longer something remains under the surface fermenting, the less helpful that is. Face-to-face with all of the Christian maturity that you can muster is the way to deal with it....I also am aware more than ever how vicious the tongue can be in terms of the grapevine....So you have to ride shotgun on your own stagecoach. It ends up being a call to discipline yourself even more, which is not refreshing in a way. ...One of the things I think I'm trying to learn is how to hold all things in balance better between the demands that are made on me here in the parish and the other calling that I have to live a life beyond what this parish is. Beyond the turmoils of the people in this congregation. If only to keep myself healthy enough so that when I re-engage in some of those things I have something to offer. (pp.27,28)

For Ann, conflict with the congregation emerged when after several years in a part-time call she became a
full-time pastor in this multi-clergy congregation.

It was o.k. to have a part-time associate. You could kind of push her off as the youth pastor or the one who did a few things around there just like any pastor's wife would do....I think the biggest down has been the feeling like I have the gifts for ministry, feeling like I do my job the way it should be done, but feeling like other people don't receive it well because I am a woman, because they want the real pastor to come and visit them. They want the real pastor to bring them communion. They question where my children are and who's taking care of them, and how's that going, and are they adjusting o.k....all of which I feel are very private questions, and no one needs to question those except me and my family, and yet I dare not answer them in that way. (pp.11,12)

What has contributed to surviving this conflict?

The continual support of the other clergy involved and the support of two nearby women clergy have been important.

And the other thing, I guess, which is the real kicker in all this is that all of this negative stuff happens but then there is also an incredible amount of support that also happens....[There are things] that tell me that I'm in the right place and that I'm doing the right thing....

...The negative and the positive are there together, and part of what I do is give myself a pep talk when the negative stuff starts to fly...that there is something positive out there and good things do happen. (p.14)

When feeling particularly oppressed by the situation Ann would go visit people in the congregation and found the one-to-one with people to be meaningful and good experiences.

What are the long-lasting results? Ann is beginning...
probably for the first time, to take the authority of the position as pastor much more seriously....  
[The members] are not experts in running the church. And that is what I am called to do, and I want them to hear my ideas and I want them to listen. And I will gladly listen to theirs, but I want them to listen to me, too. And so I'm claiming that authority a little bit more. (p.18)

But the experience also raises again for Ann the question of whether she is "cut out for parish ministry." But, for now, she stays. "I am a fighter. The older I get, the more I experience, the more I learn that I need to fight more and harder and more aggressively." (p.15)

A denominational and congregational controversy engaged Karl in serious conflict within his congregation and between himself and a portion of the congregation. Eventually he was fired from his position as pastor. Through it he learned about himself and about ministry.

I felt most uncomfortable and I suppose the harder they pushed the more I rejected and attempted to withstand the push. And then suddenly I began to realize that I wasn't exactly what I thought I was. And the ministry which I had cherished--I never thought of being voted out of a congregation. It never entered my mind. And yet through this...I believe I gained an understanding of people and what ministry really is all about in terms of the pastorate and the pastor listening to people, leading by listening, by working carefully with people....It was a process of maturing. (p.23)

A supportive wife and family became especially important for his survival, as did a group of professional colleagues.
We had a group of us who met socially once a month... We would hash over and laugh at some of this stuff that was going on. That helped.

A group of us in the summertime would play golf together every Friday afternoon and that was helpful. On the golf course you can get out and do and say things that takes your mind off of, I have always maintained that you can't really play golf if you've got the problems of the parish out there on the golf course with you. (p.24)

In summary, these clergy have all experienced crises in their lives. Their life events do not appear to be less complex or less stressful than those of other persons. The critical life situations chosen by most of these clergy for discussion had as a common focus the issue of loss: death, attempted suicide, or illness of oneself or someone about whom they cared, and conflict situations. The events often called forth intense emotion and demanded resources perhaps unknown by the clergy to be within or around them. In each situation the clergy responded to the crisis immediately and ultimately grew as a result of it. The overwhelming sustaining factors in surviving these crises were the relationships upon which the person could draw for insight, support, and comfort. That is consistent with the statements of the clergy that relationships were the major contributing factor in their well-being. Every person could identify positive changes or learning that occurred as a result of these difficult situations. Some later reflect that a crisis was both a peak and a valley in their lives.
THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF HEALTHY CLERGY

The participants were asked specifically about the area of continuing education, and invited to define that as broadly or narrowly as they wished. They were asked to describe their preferences and practices, to talk about how continuing education related to their well-being, and to make any suggestions they wished for the improvement of continuing education events.

The Value of Continuing Education

Six of the clergy spoke about the value of continuing education for themselves. Those values include the enrichment and stimulation that comes with learning and the broadened perspective that comes with getting away from the local situation.

It gives you something to look forward to, something to prepare. It gives me a sense that I’m learning and growing and not just getting stuck in a rut, but really learning about what I need to know to do this job even better. Or what I need to know just because I’m interested in it.

...It gets to be like working out, too, like aerobics of the mind. I love to be able to do that kind of stuff. (Bev, p.33)

[Continuing education] feeds my desire for learning. As a late bloomer, as I characterize myself, when I finally began to see that I could and apply what I was learning and which subsequently brought me to all of the points where I’m at now, I go into a learning experience saying what am I going to learn and how exciting it will be. And painful sometimes. But if I’m not involved sometime in either personal or organized learning experience, then I really feel empty.
I need to have continuing education to keep me alive, keep me fresh, and that benefits the people because they need to be fed just like I need to be fed, and I can't feed them if I feel like I'm starving. My sense is that there tends to be a good quantity of clergy who are starving. (Ivan, p. 41, 43)

Karl says, "I need the stimulation, mental, emotional, spiritual stimulation of continuing education." (p. 31)

That is also true for Jim.

...In an overall sense, [there is] a real sense of strength and nourishing, even a distancing at times from a particular, what could become a very narrow perspective of a certain place and parish style of ministry to open the vision. A simple example would be to be able to come back and say to the folks I've experienced this. This works some place and maybe it will work here....So continuing education that can also share those kind of stories and help people's vision as well as our vision stay bigger. (Carol, pp. 27, 28)

Frank agrees that "there is value in just getting away from any ministry situation for a time...." (p. 33)

Frank also speaks about the sense of well-being that comes with feeling confident that he had something of value of share with others.

...I need to feel that I really do have something worth sharing. I have so many opportunities to speak to people....What needs to be done for me to feel good about myself is that somebody has to stretch me somehow so that I have an "ahh" experience, "I never thought about it that way before." That is really neat. That helps me to understand some aspect of the ministry or something about life and then for me to have the chance to share that with other people. Then I have no reason to be ashamed for what I'm doing. I have something to share and I think I could probably always schwaffle my way through most anything, but there are] many schwafflers around that I get angry at schwafflers. I've sat at the feet of schwafflers a
lot, and I think I know the difference when somebody has done his homework and is really sharing something with me that makes a difference. That is the kind of person I like to be and when I feel like I am that kind of person, that gives me a good sense of well-being. (Frank, p.34)

Karl and Carol were most adamant about the value of and need for continuing education. Karl says, "If it is important for a doctor, dentist to seek continuing education in their professions and I know that they must, it surely is important for us of the clergy to do so." (p.31)

I think continuing education in some shape or form should be required. Just like lawyers are required so many hours a year. I think clergy should be required. You hear horror stories of a pastor who hasn't bought a book or read a book in so many years and that knocks my socks so I think there should be some kind of guidelines from day one.... [They need continuing education] to keep the sense of the church growing instead of a sense of me as pastor and I've been here 28 years and the church doesn't have any vision anymore because the pastor doesn't have any vision anymore because the pastor quit reading a long time ago. (Carol, p.28)

Earl, however, found that continuing education had nothing significant to contribute to well-being, especially when defining continuing education as structured events available to clergy. Greg describes his continuing education in the last five years as minimal. As will be noted later, some other clergy do not find the "continuing education events" to be particularly useful. At issue, for some, is how continuing education is defined.
What are the continuing education practices and preferences of these twelve clergy?

Four of these clergy have completed degree programs since their ordination: Carol a Master of Sacred Theology and Jim, Hank, and Ivan Doctor of Ministry degrees. Although they have not pursued formal degrees both Donna and Bev prefer an academically challenging and long-term learning opportunity with a lot of reading, more than is provided in the events usually described as continuing education. "I don’t think I can learn that much in one day that it’s going to be worth anything. It’s only a start maybe is what folks think. I like it to be in-depth." (Bev, p. 32) Donna, also, has searched for "something of much more challenging substance."

A lot of continuing education, my bias would be that you don’t have to work hard enough at it. You come and then play golf in the afternoon. If I’m going to read something I want to read something very difficult and use that deliberate context of continuing ed as an incentive to do work that’s hard to do. In particular I felt the need to be reading some much more in-depth theology than I was ever disciplined enough to do. Also I needed people to talk to about theological ideas. (Donna, p. 34)

The discipline of structured learning events is identified as a need or preference for at least six of these clergy. As Karl notes, structured events are "not the only type, but I think that most of us need some structure else we don’t get it done very well." (p. 32)
Although most choose structured learning events provided by others, some, like Donna who organized her own theology reading group, have preferred to develop their own learning programs. Jim and Greg find highly experiential learning to be the most satisfying. "I don't know whether it's just a personal preference or lack of educational interest but I have no desire to go sit in a classroom." (Greg, p. 32) Greg is more likely to combine continuing education with travel and pleasure and had not sought out many structured events through the years. Although Jim completed a Doctor of Ministry degree and participates in many formal learning events, he prefers to generate his own continuing education.

I've always done continuing ed.--it's hard to tell whether it was vacation or was it education. I do a lot by going and seeing something. This summer I was going to Yugoslavia, so I decided while I'm there I'll meet with some Lutheran congregations. So I called Lutheran World Federation and said give me addresses and I started writing to people and I took my whole tour group and we spent an evening in a Yugoslav church talking to a German Yugoslav pastor. I did the translating and they learned something. I learned an awful lot. That was continuing ed. but it was kind of by my own design. [This self-directed learning] makes me scramble a little bit. I have more invested in it and it is more to what I need at that moment. (Jim, p. 32)

Five of the clergy spoke directly about the place of reading in their continued growth and learning. Ivan finds stimulation in "reading periodicals like crazy" (p. 41) and reading has been a regular part of Lou's entire
ministry. Carol, now in a situation where attending programs is less convenient, plans to spend her continuing education funds purchasing books. (p. 26) Earl does not claim reading as a form of continuing education, in fact, he admits hating to read, but finds himself reading a lot because it is necessary in ministry. (p. 31) Among these clergy it is for Donna that reading is the most vital.

...I think I do a lot of continuing ed. in other kinds of reading, and I am nominally in some circles of writers, that probably has been as helpful to my preaching, to how I see the world and how I get by day by day...I’d say that’s the more sustaining education, among more literary circles and that kind of reading. (Donna, pp.34,35)

There are other forms of continuing education identified by these clergy in addition to the more traditional events. Three have found synodical responsibilities to be important forms of learning. For Earl, supervising seminary interns was continuing education.

I feel that for the first few years of my ministry my continuing education was working with interns. That’s really where I kept in touch with what was going on in the seminary, and I constantly had challenged everything that I did as to why I did it and why I didn’t do this and so forth. To me that was probably the healthiest continuing education I could have had. And by all means that did shape the way I did the ministry and affected how I went about things. (p.30)

Jim is sometimes asked to teach or lead workshops for others, and "that’s continuing ed. because I’ll learn an
awful lot in doing it." (p. 32)

While Hank attends many structured events and has completed a Doctor of Ministry degree he also finds value in scheduling time to withdraw to a retreat center "and just being there for a day by myself, maybe doing some reading. That's something that's hard to do in your own parish 'cause if you're in your desk you just constantly get interrupted." (p. 21)

Regardless of the form of continuing education a primary criteria for selection is its practicality. Eight of the twelve interviewed feel, like Carol, that they "often choose [continuing education] according to how I can use it in the parish." (p. 27)

What I want in continuing ed. and what I look for and what I go to are things that I can go to and bring home and do. I don't want to necessarily go and hear Old Testament lectures all morning, which are fine in their own right, but if I can't take them home and use them, whether it's in teaching a class or preaching or whatever it is, if I can't take it home and use it I don't want it. Because there are a lot of things pulling at my time and whatever it is that I do I want to be able to put it into action. And I want to be able to say, "Evangelism Committee, I went to this Lyle Schaller workshop and here are three things I think we ought to be doing, and here are three things we do well and three things we do not so well, and what are we going to do about these?" That kind of thing is the most renewing to me. (Ann, p.23)

[I look] for things that relate to the parish ministry. That is where I have hung my hat and that's where I see my energies flowing and that's where I have a lot of opportunity to give and I like to feel full; [so I prefer things that relate to parish ministry] whether it's a course in preaching
that's going to address a season of the year or a course that has to do with the general times in which we live which can be applied in so many different ways. (Frank, p.33)

Suggestions for the Future

There were a few suggestions for future direction in continuing education. Carol and Karl appreciate and desire events offered away from the seminary campus and closer to their parishes. Bev hopes for structured, long-term courses in addition to short events. Ivan sees a need for "that which benefit the whole family, parsonage family." (p. 42) Jim has begun to focus on opportunities which allow "international partnering" for his congregation. (p. 33) And Frank hopes the church will become more pluralistic in its education.

I feel more and more the need to gather together with people of different persuasions because we live in such a pluralistic society. I think so often continuing education tends to take place among those that we are used to pursuing continuing education with. I think we need to broaden our own understanding of what we can learn and what we have to contribute to people that are not Lutherans. Maybe even not Christians....We have an individual in the congregation here who was talking to me about Zen meditation and he wants me to join him in a Zen meditation class. He is a graduate of Chicago University. He has a degree in theology although he is in finance right now. He is interested in theology and he has a commentary on the resurrection of Jesus Christ written by a Zen Buddhist and we were talking about it and sharing the other day, and I said to myself, "My gosh, the Zen Buddhist sounds a lot like Martin Luther." He was talking about the daily need to die to oneself and rise to a new life and how this is the message that we see in Christian doctrine of the resurrection. (pp. 34,35)
In summary, most of the clergy interviewed see continuing education as a needed and valuable part of their lives. While they are about equally divided between a preference for long-term, in-depth educational opportunities and events of short-duration there is general agreement that the content be recognized for its usefulness in parish ministry. In addition to the more traditional events offered under the name of continuing education the majority engage in continuing education in other forms such as reading and synodical responsibilities or the combination of travel/pleasure and education.

ADVICE TO NEW CLERGY

These clergy were invited to share their wisdom with seminarians anticipating their first call and ordination... advice on how to be healthy in parish ministry in ten or twenty or thirty years. Several, like Carol and Donna would prefer to speak one-to-one or to only a very few in such a conversation, and Jim found it impossible to give any advice. He said, "I'd be scared to death to [give advice] ....I think I've been very fortunate in my life and therefore it is not just luck and it is a blessing, and blessings aren't exactly transferrable." (p.34) But most of them were able to
reflect on what they would like to say to new clergy about well-being.

1. Develop and maintain a network of relationships:

The first thing I would say to anybody is don't do it by yourself. Get somebody. If you're in a parish by yourself, find a colleague. It doesn't matter if they are Lutheran or Methodist or whatever they are...find a friend. Find somebody who's doing it, too, and keep in touch with them. And don't let your busy schedule or theirs or the stress or whatever tear that relationship apart....(Ann, p.25)

Donna (p. 37) hopes that they will "have some colleagues and friends somewhere across the country who they can touch base with, and Bev says to "make sure you find people, wherever you are, to whom you can turn when you really need to talk. That's really important." (p.34)

Frank agrees and suggests these new pastors "enjoy friendships with other people. Healthy people" he says, "are people who have friends that they can talk with, that they can share their lives with in words and in other ways." (p.36)

Hank takes his own advice to "maintain some of the relationships [they have] built in seminary." (p.22) And Karl, looking back over almost 38 years of ministry advises,

...somehow develop a good network of supporting colleagues. To me this is important for my well-being. I just do not understand, very well, "loners." I know "loners" but I think that somewhere along the line they have lost a good deal by being "loners." (p. 33)
Six clergy talked about the value of maintaining these collegial relationships. In addition, Greg and Karl talked about the value of relationship with wife or family. As Karl says, "I would tell them to have a good relationship, those who are married, with their wives and families. Do something with your wives, and I would say that from the standpoint that I didn't always do it."

(p.33)

2. Strive for balance.

There is need to balance the physical and mental. There is need to balance attention to family, self, and work. There is need to balance the variety of responsibilities within ministry. Five of the clergy talked about elements of balance as a clue to well-being.

Greg wants other clergy to enjoy the variety of challenges in the work.

Unless my calendar is solidly booked, if I've got an afternoon free I've got a multitude of choices. I can sit at a desk and do some paper work or I can write something or I can go visit some old ladies or I can go visit some prospective members or I can go hang out at the restaurant or library. I've got a lot of choices and freedom and responsibilities. Because ultimately I have to do all of these things somewhere along the line. You have to get the sermon written, you have to visit the shut-ins, so they all have to be done, but they don't all have to be done necessarily at two on Tuesday. So I think a person that goes into the ministry with any kind of narrow-mindedness, specified area, it won't be easy for them. I would say enjoy that variety and certainly be able to deal with it.
Take care of your body, have a good wife. All of that kind of involves a sense of balance, balance in all these jobs in the ministry and also balance in the family and balance in personal time. (p. 34)

Frank talks about balance of the physical and mental and the balance of theology and other areas of interest.

Keep your eyes open to the full spectrum of life. To what you are physically. Don't ever deny that. ...We talk about the incarnation but I think very often we forget that we ourselves are flesh and blood and rejoice that you are flesh and blood and as best as you can, live with the flesh and blood that's yours and take care of it and don't see that always a burden, see that as opportunity that God provides a varied life which is not only cerebral....Find out what you like to do and what you like to pursue and don't grind yourself into having to achieve so much competency in a particular area, but if there is a subject you like, something that interests you, pick it up as a second subject of interest next to theology, whatever that happens to be and go with it.... A good balance between mental and physical activities. If you can work with your hands, do it and don't put it down.... Sometimes you are not going to be able to do as much as you want to but don't give it up either. The pressure will be there to give it up. There is always going to be something that is going to say you don't have time for this. (pp. 36,37)

Part of that balance includes taking care of yourself, physically and emotionally.

Do something physical.... I played golf, which was a frustrating game because I was never that good at it, but it was a stimulating thing. I had a lot of fun at it and I used to bowl a lot. Do something physical that also engages the mind. I don't believe that I could go out on the golf course and carry my pastoral problems with me for that day. If I tried it I really played a terrible game of golf because I had no concentration.... But do what engages your response the best. (Karl, p.33)
Greg emphasized the need to take vacation and recreation time because it helps the pastor return to the work relaxed. And Earl would tell new clergy, "...it boils down to taking some time for yourself and whether you do that in days off or vacation days or continuing education or however you do it, whatever you agree to in a call make sure you follow through and use. (p. 33)

3. Don't take yourself too seriously.

...I would want to say don't take yourself too seriously. I know we hear that in many different forms today. But I don't think a parish is going to rise or fall based upon what one pastor does or does not do. I think [the pastor's] faithfulness will be an enriching quality. The first two parishes I served, I went and then I left. And they were still strong. Before I came that had distinctive problems and maybe I helped them with that. (Ivan, p. 47)

...If [they] are able to have a sense of humor about themselves, this is, I think, a healthy thing for themselves. That stands you in good stead when there is conflict, when there is stress. When things don't go well in the congregation or even when they do go well. The ebb and flow of a congregation is such that I have experienced a great bit of well-being when I least expected it in the parish. I thought things are going to pot here, falling apart, and then all of a sudden we came upon smooth waters and likewise sometimes when I thought things were going well, suddenly we came on rough waters. (Karl, p.34)

4. Be mindful of your relationship with God.

Anyone who aspires to the ministry obviously has to be controlled by, directed by God in some way. I cannot think of anyone who would be effective disconnected from the source of power. (Karl, p.34)
First of all make sure you are called to do this and this is not just something you're interested in or you feel a neat job opportunity or it would be nice to be a pioneer and blaze a trail or some social action agenda. All of those things which make it seem exciting now will go away as the years go by. Those people change and the parish is nothing like anybody thinks it is when they are still in seminary....If you don't really feel a sense of call when all the excitement wears off in the first rush of being in this new position it's only a sense that this is really, truly what you are called by God to do that gets you through some of those times....

And, of course, going with the sense of call, make sure you talk to God every once in a while. Just keep that open all the time. (Bev, pp.33,34)

I would want them to know that the Lord loves them very much and that the reality of parish ministry can tend to diminish that at least in their own thinking, and that doesn't happen as far as the Lord is concerned. His power is there and his love for them is real. (Ivan, p.47)

5. Be patient and persevere.

Two of the clergy spoke of the value of patience and perseverance in a congregation.

Don't try to do it all at once and make sure you have got people on board with you when you go....That just takes time to build that kind of trust and patience. It is not going to happen in your time frame but when it does finally happen you are going to feel damn good about it because it is going to be solid. (Earl, p.34)

...go slow with people and [don't] expect everybody else to have just completed four years at seminary. That you will sit in many Bible studies and say "What are the two Lutheran sacraments?" and have people look at you like you've just blown in from Mars. And that's o.k. That is no fault of any pastor who's gone before or any that are coming. It is just a reality. And that you're not going to change everybody, and if you don't that's o.k., too. But you're going to change a few people, and that's exciting and that's well-worth whatever happens in
the stretch of things. So go slow and let people be who they are.

On the day that you want to walk out, don't. Stay there and don't walk out until you walk out saying, "I love that place, and it really may not have been time to go, but there's another call now." I see too many people saying, "I want to leave now because I just can't handle it here." Well, if you can't handle it here, what are you going to do the next time around? (Ann, p.25)

8. Continue to grow and learn.

Karl encourages new clergy to "be regular in their study habits" (p.33) and Ivan emphasizes continuing education because he wants them to "be willing to change and grow." (p.47) Earl knows the need "to be open to the changes" but recognizes that this often is learned only through experience. (p. 33)

7. Other advice

Other comments do not fall into any category of advice but contain a richness that should not be lost.

I'd ask them in what way they're healthy right now. If...there's not...well-being right now, I doubt the parish ministry will add to it....I would ask them what makes them tick right now. Some of what I would want to say would be: they will like parish ministry, they will like it in extraordinary ways. And also hate it more than they ever imagined. That's part of the truth that nobody ever says; that there's some things about it that are so right and so wonderful and so worth doing and very, very satisfying, and also some things that are just wretched...and they're both part of what's out there.

...The tasks are relatively simple, and what I see in the generation coming now is a real nervousness about things that are actually fairly simple for human beings to do in the presence of
each other....Somebody will probably come and take them away if they are really incompetent. But pay more attention to questions like in what way they are growing, in what way they are faithful to what God might really be about. No place like the church to be tugged in every direction except the faithful one. In a sense they will need to be their own guide. At a lot of points there’s no committee to tell them they are on track. There’s not going to be synodical structure...it’s going to have to be an interior sense. That doesn’t mean primitivist. Hopefully they will have some colleagues and friends somewhere across the country who they can touch base with. But I think a lot of it will need to be interior. (Donna, pp. 36,37)

[Another thing] I’d say is enjoy yourself. Have a good time. This is what you prepared to do and you want to do this. It’s fun. If it’s not fun most of the time then you are in big trouble or there’s something wrong. (Bev, p.34)

...Somehow you’ve got to learn to live with a sense of incompletedness because the job is never done and you can put in one hell of a day and make umteen calls and handle who knows how many correspondence, work on a sermon, deal with your bulletin and go home and still know that there were ten other things you should have done that day. It is always that way. The job is never done and you’ve got to learn how to live with that. (Earl, p. 33)

I’d probably tell them really very careful to continue a healthy attitude and a good attitude toward the church at large, that’s larger than who they are.

I think one of the things I’ve worked real hard at as pastor is to not let my scope be the church is only here. (Hank, p.22)

[In an article in our seminary newspaper my senior year a professor] was getting at pastors and how they should evaluate themselves, and I think he said three things about pastors and the parish. You are there. That’s important. Before you can think about being a good pastor, shepherding the flock, preacher, teacher, whatever, you are even called to be there, no matter what happens, whether they think you are worthwhile or not. I suppose he was trying to talk about ego reinforcement, but you are there.
You believe. You know you believe. They know you believe. That's important. You believe in the Lord God. You think probably far more deeply than most of your parishioners. I know that can be challenged. The quality of your pastoral ministry is dependent not always upon a workaholic tendency or eighty hours a work week. The quality of your ministry is that you are there, you believe, and you think. You probably as a pastor read far more deeply on most subjects than your people do. When he wrote that that senior year I read that article and I've never forgotten because when I went out into the parish I was saying to myself, "Ivan, you are there; you believe; and you think." Those are basic criteria for your ministry. (Ivan p.46)

...If I had to give any advice to a senior seminarian I would say above all love your people. And put people ahead of your program....I had a sense that [the students] feel like if they sit in their study and work the program they're going to be a success as a pastor, whatever success means. And I'm convinced that's not what people are asking for. After forty years I'm still convinced that people want somebody to come up and give them a hug and say, "hey, you're loved." And it isn't to say--you can't run a church without a program. You've got to have some program, but the church isn't going to run well with just a program. You've got to have somebody who cares about people. I guess that's what they told us directly when we were in the seminary because they sure didn't tell us much about program because there wasn't much. They just told you to go out there and take care of those people. That's your flock. (Lou, p. 32)

To some extent the advice of these clergy to new clergy summarizes important patterns in this entire study. The role of relationships was a constant as both source of strength and source of stress, so it is no surprise that advice should begin with a word about relationships. The tension between work, family, and self posed a major threat to well-being, therefore
"strive for balance" is not unexpected advice. Other advice, offered by few clergy, represent familiar refrains from the earlier words of the pastors and represent wisdom gained through over two hundred years of ordained ministry.
CHAPTER V

THE WELL-BEING OF CLERGY:
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The ordained ministry is a stressful helping profession. Pastors experience the pressures endemic to all who serve as helping professionals and experience demands unique to the ministry. Some clergy remain energetic, self-confident, and enthusiastic while others become depressed, discouraged, and overwhelmed.

The question explored in this study was this: how do clergy maintain a sense of general well-being within this stressful helping profession? Well-being was identified as a state of general health including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions and characterized by positive self-concept, a sense of the meaningfulness of life, a sense of mastery and pleasure, personality hardiness and appropriate attention to the developmental tasks and concerns of life.

A review of the literature revealed that well-being is not considered in research as frequently as burnout.
and distress. However, the concept of well-being was investigated in the literature through five perspectives: studies taking a positive approach to health, developmental stage theories, personality theories, life-purpose activities, and personality hardiness.

The clergy interviewed were pastors serving in congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America within the state of Ohio. Nine church leaders, three judicatory chief administrators and six seminary faculty, were asked to submit names of clergy who they perceived to exhibit signs of well-being. The names of clergy in each predecessor church body which were mentioned most frequently were selected for interview. Additional names were selected through a blind draw from persons mentioned by at least two church leaders. These interviewees provided equal representation from the Lutheran Church in America and American Lutheran Church, predecessors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The twelve clergy interviewed represent a balance of gender, geography, age, and previous denominational affiliation.

Data were gathered through two interviews with each participant. Interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify patterns and themes present among the twelve clergy. The interviews were centered
around a pre-determined set of questions developed after review of the literature and a pilot study. The interviews attempted to probe the factors that threatened and contributed to the pastors' well-being and addressed those factors in a variety of ways: self-description, hypothetical situation, critical life incidents, advice to others.

The results of the interviews are presented in Chapter IV in which the comments are organized to give the reader a greater understanding of the convergence and divergence of the clergy responses. Patterns as well as exceptions are identified. Further examination may reveal additional or different patterns; however, the patterns identified in Chapter IV and the primary themes discussed in this chapter are the current result of this researcher's work.

RELATION OF THEMES TO CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Several significant patterns or themes identified in Chapter IV can now be assembled and examined briefly in relation to the conceptual framework of Chapter II.

1. Relationships are a critical factor in the well-being of clergy. These clergy give credit to their significant relationships with family and friends as contributors to their well-being, as sources of strength.
and insight in times of stress, and as a source of meaningfulness in their lives. Imbalance, conflict, or stress within those relationships is a major threat to their well-being. Significant relationships are integrally connected to satisfaction and stress and therefore to well-being.

Vaillant, Farrell and Rosenberg, and Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers found in their studies that successful, close relationships with others were an important element in well-being. Developmentalists Erikson and Levinson identify the establishment of interpersonal relationships to be part of the expected work of adulthood. Maslow's description of the self-actualizing person includes intense relationships with a relatively small circle of peers. Allport describes the healthy personality to include intimate and compassionate relationships with others and a movement from focusing exclusively on self to including a focus on others. Among the activities that Yalom identified as providing people with a sense of purpose in life are offering love and care to others and moving beyond self-concern toward a concern for others. There is consistency between the work of these theorists and the lives of these clergy.

2. A personality that is cut-going and energized by interaction with other people describes these healthy
clergy although they appreciate time to themselves or with family. "People-people" are among the most healthy clergy. Whether people-oriented by nature or by development these clergy find enjoyment, nurture, stimulation, and satisfaction in their interactions with others.

As indicated in the preceding discussion on relationships, the ability to relate to and care for others has been found by Vaillant, Farrell and Rosenberg, Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers, Erikson, Levinson, Maslow and Allport to be a mark of well-being.

3. Faith is an important part of the lives of these clergy but it is not expressed in traditional, spiritual discipline, meditative forms. They do not claim to practice a structured devotional life; however, they experience a meaningful and important relationship with God. It was this relationship with God that often gave meaning and direction to life.

This finding is not consistent with Maslow's "moments of transcendence" characteristic of self-actualizers, but it is consistent with the work of Fowler. While marks of the synthetic-conventional stage are still expressed, there is evidence that these persons have struggled with the more conventional understandings of faith and have a relationship with God that includes
an appreciation for the symbolic and an intentional life style shaped by a desire for faithfulness. To express relationship with God as a source of life's meaningfulness and purpose is best described as the category of "dedication to a cause" in Yalom's grouping of activities that give meaning to life.

4. These healthy clergy work long and hard, enjoy their work, and feel competent in their pastoral role; however, the demanding schedule of parish ministry is a threat to the well-being of younger clergy. This is often expressed as the struggle to balance energy and time among attention to work, family, and self.

Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers, found that work was the major contributor to the sense of mastery—one of the two component of well-being among women. Farrell and Rosenberg also confirmed the importance of work in the development of men. Among developmentalists it is acknowledged that the establishment of an occupation and a sense of productivity is a part of adulthood. Positive feelings about one's work contributes to the self-esteem that Rogers and Maslow find necessary in well-being. These clergy desire to be good pastors and work hard to fulfill ministry's roles. This is consistent with Allport's understanding that persons are motivated to increase mastery and competence and that healthy persons
are able to give themselves to some form of work. The clergy's interest in and commitment to their work is one tendency of hardiness identified by Maddi and Kobasa.

The struggle to balance work, family, and self may be an important developmental task of a person in the first years of their career, a task that may have a healthy or unhealthy resolution which will continue to have influence throughout the career.

5. Well-being does not imply the absence of a stressful life, but the ability to cope with, grow from, and sometimes appreciate critical life events. The significant events most often chosen by these clergy to discuss in terms of impact on their ministry were experiences of loss: death, illness, conflict, personal crisis. Each found resources for dealing with the difficult time and identified learnings which resulted.

The responses to crisis by these clergy illustrate one of the tendencies of personality hardiness identified by Maddi and Kobasa: taking action to influence the situation and its outcome rather than remaining the passive victim.

The clergy also demonstrated the adaptive mechanisms which Vaillant states are necessary to resolve conflicts and heal the persons involved so that health may be maintained.
In some instances the crisis identified is consistent with developmental theory: a mid-life crisis, a vocational reassessment. The difficulty of conflict situations may have illustrated a developmental task of adjusting to the realities of this profession. The most difficult situations were those confrontations with untimely death, an event that was not happening in an anticipated time frame. This supports the contention of Bernice Neugarten that "off-time" events are the most disruptive.

6. Healthy clergy also claim unhealthy habits and practices. Although each participant was perceived by others and self to be a person of well-being, each was also able to acknowledge ways in which they did not meet that description fully. These healthy clergy appear to have a realistic understanding of themselves as strong, gifted, and capable people who sometimes hurt others or themselves through their actions and who sometimes fail to meet the expectations of others or themselves. The clergy spoke of their short-comings with some regret but not with self-degradation. They would indeed like to be perfect, but they recognize that they are not.

This ability to recognize strengths and weaknesses is a characteristic used by both Maslow and Allport to describe persons of health. Maslow speaks of self-
actualizing persons accepting themselves as less-than-perfect people. Insight regarding self is a mark of the healthy adult personality as described by Allport.

7. Healthy clergy disagree among themselves in several areas, including their perceptions of relaxation, of good work habits, and of continuing education. There is not unanimity about what activities can be called continuing education. What is relaxing for some is work for others. There is variety among practices and among perceptions, but most have come to self-understanding and practices that are appropriate for themselves. This individuality is evidenced in relaxation and continuing education activities but appears to be true in other areas as well. These clergy do not need to be "marching in lock-step" with everyone else. Although they may at times feel "out of sync" with those around them they have come to some conclusions about what is appropriate for them.

This individuality may be a sign of increasing inner-directedness of the self-actualizing person described by Rogers. This person feels a freedom to move in directions that are appropriate for him or herself without undue defensiveness. This characteristic is also described by Maslow and appears to be shared by many of these healthy clergy.
8. A person's childhood has long-lasting effects upon well-being. The discussion of childhood as a source of well-being is striking in this study because it was not invited through any questions in the interviews. The stability of childhood home and the security of feeling loved provided a foundation for well-being for several. Life skills and self-confidence learned through a difficult childhood served as source of well-being for another. The effect of childhood is not to be underestimated as an influence on life-long health.

Developmentalists would not be surprised by this critical link between childhood and adulthood. While adulthood has its own distinct patterns and tasks, adult years cannot be separated from the years that preceded them.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

What insights can be gleaned from this study which can give guidance to those planning professional continuing education for clergy? The following suggestions begin to draw implications about how such adult education might enhance the well-being of clergy.

1. Continuing education should address the field of relationships. Because relationships are pivotal for
well-being, clergy would benefit from opportunities to develop skills and insights regarding the whole field of relationships: marriage, family, friendship, and congregation. Opportunities to strengthen any of those relationships are to be encouraged. Assistance in dealing with conflict and criticism are of particular importance.

2. Attention to the pastor's relationship to self in terms of solitude and care of self would be an appropriate way in which continuing education might strengthen an often underdeveloped area of clergy life. The development of the person's internal resources would provide an additional source of affirmation, strength, and insight for persons who are more often other-oriented.

3. Because spirituality is often discussed in terms of spiritual disciplines, care might be given to identify and affirm more corporate or non-traditional expressions of spirituality. Persons whose faith does not have a strong devotional element can be encouraged to explore and articulate their own expression of spirituality as well as enrich their faith by developing other aspects of their faith.
4. Continuing education which acknowledges and addresses the struggle to balance work, family, and self-care is particularly appropriate for younger clergy. While this balance may continue to be a problem for experienced clergy it has often found some resolution. In the earlier years of their careers clergy need help in understanding and responding to the complex dynamics involved in this balance.

5. Providing models and resources which would help the pastor learn to cope with and grow through crises would enhance their well-being. Clergy are not exempt from difficult life events, and an understanding of crisis and alternative responses to crisis might provide a foundation from which clergy could grow in times of potential distress.

6. Continuing education for clergy must retain and even increase its great variety of style, location, content, timing. Although there is general agreement that continuing education is valuable, clergy have different preferences which guide them in selecting educational opportunities. To respond to the needs and preferences of clergy, continuing education opportunities must reflect that variety. Self-directed clergy will often move outside institutionally-structured educational
opportunities to provide for their own growth. Attempts to standardize continuing education within such variety of preferences and practices will be frustrating, if not impossible.

7. Two additional themes to be addressed by the content and style of continuing education are suggested by this study: childhood and self-esteem. Because childhood appears to have significant effect on well-being throughout life, encouraging review of childhood and integrating childhood and adulthood could be of great value. In addition, these clergy often expressed their self-esteem in terms of their competence in work and in familial roles. Although this is not uncommon in this work-ethic society, a more theologically grounded source of self-esteem might be appropriate for these clergy.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this, as in every study, questions arose which would be appropriate for further investigation.

1. Are out-going or extraverted people more healthy in ministry than more introverted or introspective people? There may be several explanations for why the overwhelming majority of clergy in this study were people-people. For instance, the church leaders who
suggested their names may simply have quicker recall of out-going persons who were more likely to interact with those church leaders than less extraverted people may have done.

2. Would healthy, more introverted clergy identify different threats and contributors to well-being? Do more introverted clergy describe themselves differently in terms of friendships, work and relaxation habits, faith, leadership style?

3. How do single clergy maintain well-being? Only one of the twelve participants in this study was single. This did not allow adequate attention to be given to any differences between married and single people. Another population which might be addressed is clergy couples. Although three participants were married to other ordained persons, there were no clergy couples interviewed.

4. What is the connection between staffing configurations and well-being? Eight of the twelve clergy were from multi-clergy congregations and the others had some form of staff assistance. Does staff ministry contribute to well-being?
5. To what extent are persons perceived by church leaders to exhibit well-being actually healthy? No assessment of well-being was conducted in this study. The population was perceived by others to be healthy and perceived themselves to be healthy. Future investigation might further define study the consistency between perception and reality.

6. Do more extraverted persons and more introverted persons experience and express their spirituality differently? If so, how can each be affirmed and enriched?

7. How strong is the connection between childhood and life-long well-being? A study which intentionally probes this connection might add insight to a theme revealed here.

8. In what ways might physical activity enhance well-being beyond its use for relaxation? This was the most frequently cited source of relaxation for clergy. How can clergy be encouraged to develop and use various physical activities as a source of well-being in such areas as the development of friendships, spirituality, and marriage enrichment?
9. What affect will dual career marriages have upon the well-being of clergy? Although most spouses of clergymen were employed, most had not established careers of their own. The spouses of clergywomen were professionals. Is the number of dual-career marriages increasing as more women are ordained and as societal patterns change? If so, what are the implications for the well-being of clergy?

10. How can theological education which prepares clergy for ministry use the wisdom of experienced clergy of well-being to enhance the future well-being of prospective clergy?

IN CONCLUSION

Within the stressful helping profession of ordained ministry, there are clergy who exhibit well-being. They include both genders and all ages. This study has attempted to discern common characteristics of these persons, common threats to their well-being, and common contributors to their well-being. It is hoped that the study may be useful in helping clergy move from health to greater health.
APPENDIX

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR
AUDITOR'S REPORT
ON THE DISSERTATION
MAINTAINING THE WELL-BEING OF CLERGY
BY
MARY E. HUGHES

INTRODUCTION

Substantiation of naturalistic inquiry is valuable
to promote acceptance of such inquiry, and to attest to
the rigor and integrity of the researcher. Lincoln and
Guba (1982) outline a methodology for substantiation that
provides documentable evidence for the trustworthiness
and reasonableness of the researcher's conclusions and
the thoroughness of the research procedures in ways that
are consistent with the assumptions of the naturalistic
paradigm. They recommend an audit to assess the process
of inquiry for reliability (dependability audit) and the
products of inquiry for absence of bias (confirmability
audit.) "Because of the blurring of process and product
in naturalistic inquiry the public inspection of the data
or the raw materials entering the argument and the
logical processes by which they were compressed and
rearranged to make the conclusion credible must be
available for public inspection" (Lincoln and Guba,
In an audit the research processes are examined to determine if the researcher's reports are a fair reflection of the data gathered, and if they fall within the bounds of good professional practice; the products are examined to ascertain that every entry can be authenticated by documentation or by confirming statements, and that the interpretations made are reasonable or appropriate for the data available.

As Lincoln and Guba (1982) state, "Replicability is not a criterion, but rather rationality is. In this context, 'reasonable' and 'rationality' are taken to mean that the methods chosen for data collection are appropriate to the problem to be studied; that the techniques of analysis utilized are those consonant with the form in which data are collected and assembled; that reports of the data are coherent, credible, and exhibit structural corroboration; and that all assertions about the context (save for the inquirer interpretations) may be traced to authentic data units or categories."

The recommended steps in the audit are:

1. Obtain all portions of the audit trail.
2. Determine that the audit trail is sufficiently complete to perform an audit.
3. Compare the procedures to the problems/questions
addressed.

4. Compare the raw data to the final product; check analysis systems.

5. Describe the results of comparisons in 3 & 4.

6. Note any shifts or changes in procedures or judgments.

7. Note whether inferences flow logically from data.

8. Certify in the final report what is found.

The recommended audit trail includes all raw data including interviews, a log of activities, a record of all analyses activity, clear information on respondents, a reflexive journal and a log of professional contacts.

MATERIALS PRESENTED FOR THIS AUDIT

The researcher, Mary Hughes, presented to me the following materials for study and examination: a list of the population (140 names) and the sample (12); correspondence related to identification of the population and sample; the research proposal approved by the doctoral committee; drafts of chapter 4, the presentation of the data collected; the interview guide; full transcripts of all the interviews, two each for twelve clergy; audiotapes of all the recorded interviews, except for one interview during which the tape recorder failed to record (A reconstructed transcript was prepared
and approved by the interviewee); the final dissertation draft presented to the committee; data analysis work sheets; a limited journal of interview reflections by the researcher; OSU Graduate School Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Theses, Dissertations, and D.M.A. Documents; and receipts for research and dissertation related expenses.

EXAMINATION OF THE MATERIALS

To examine the materials I did the following:

1. Read the proposal, before agreeing to do the audit.
2. Read chapter five of the dissertation.
3. Reviewed the population list, sample list, and process for sample selection.
4. Reviewed the interview guide.
5. Read three complete sets of interviews (6), and samples of all the rest.
6. Studies all data analysis sheets.
7. Scanned receipt and correspondence files.
8. Read the researcher's journal.
9. Called Mary Hughes with a few minor questions.
10. Read the entire dissertation.
11. Spot checked the audio tapes against the transcripts.
12. Called one of the interviewees to ascertain that she indeed was a subject and that her reconstructed interview accurately reflected her feelings and opinions. She was not in, but her secretary verified her participation in the study.

13. Checked the summary discussions in the well-being section of the dissertation against the data in the interview transcripts.

14. Reflected on the conclusions and suggestions in Chapter V with the data in mind.

RESULTS OF THE AUDIT

The intent is not to determine that the conclusions of the researcher are the only conclusions to be drawn, nor that the auditor would necessarily arrive at the same conclusions. Rather, the intent is to be able to state that the researcher's conclusions are reasonable in light of the information gathered, and that the data were gathered in a thorough and professional manner. My reflections follow.

Hughes' selection of the twelve interviewees was logically arranged based on the desired criteria of well-being. There is fair representation of each of the three denominational groups which make up the new Lutheran
Association.

The interviews elicited deep reflection from each of the twelve clergy. The length and spacing of the two interviews for each allowed for additions, clarifications, and modifications. The audiotapes and transcribed interviews match exactly. Although the reflexive journal is limited the data from the selection process and the interviews are rich and abundant. The logical and clear data analysis checks with the interview protocols and summarized findings.

The researcher's findings are strongly supported by the data. With rich use of quotes, Hughes builds a full basis for her conclusions and the quotes reflect accurate representation of the interview content. The interviewer allowed for the free expression of the clergy and she presented an accepting open attitude in eliciting their responses. Unexpected outcomes, for example the importance of a stable childhood for adult well-being, are incorporated.

While the results are strongly supported by the data Hughes points out that additional reflections may be forthcoming. The implications she draws for adult education are stimulating, clear and based on the data she gathered.

Hughes' research has followed high standards of
professionalism in thoroughness, lack of bias, clarity of an audit trail and documentability. She has built a commendable body of knowledge to further the study of well-being.

Ellen D. Beck, Ph.D.
May 20, 1988
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