

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN IMPACT STUDY OF FORMATIONAL PRAYER IN THE LIVES OF AFRICAN
AMERICAN CLERGY SPOUSES

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To all the pastor's wives who are part of a special sisterhood that untiringly
sacrifice their time, talent, and treasure in service to God and others.

“Prayer changes things,” people say. It also changes us.

The latter goal is the more imperative. The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son.

This process of transformation is the sole focus of Formational Prayer.”

Richard J. Foster

APPROVAL PAGE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to impact the understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, Ohio, areas through a small group. The project was an impact study consisting of six weeks of self-reflection. There was a pre- and post-assessment to measure the impact of the small group experience.

The assessment findings indicated the highest percentage of growth was in the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness. A core discovery was the strength of the process to identify and address unforgiveness.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

Our inclination is to show our Lord only what we feel comfortable with. But the more we dare to reveal our whole trembling self to him, the more we will be able to sense that his love, which is perfect love, casts out all our fears. (Nouwen 2002, 13)

The core of this project centers around the capacity of Formational Prayer to impact the lives of pastors' wives, and include elements of truth and acceptance, emotional healing, transformation, and change. Wardle shares that there is power and healing available to deeply hurting people through inner healing prayer, and that it is a ministry of the Holy Spirit open to every responsible believer who learns to move in His presence and power (Wardle 2001, 130). It takes a level of transparency and honesty to expose areas of weakness relative to unaddressed emotional wounding, dysfunctional behavior, and false beliefs that compromise well-being. Formational Prayer produces peace that enables one to experience power in their life situations.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this project was to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland Ohio, areas through six weeks of self-reflection. The research question was: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland Ohio, areas through six weeks of self-reflection?

Overview

The purpose of the project was to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer using a small group setting. The participants consisted of eight African American pastors' wives of various ages, experiences, and denominations from the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Ohio areas. The group was a good mixture of veteran, seasoned, and experienced pastors' wives as well as those that were new to the ministry. All eight participated in the pre- and post-surveys and are included in the survey results. The participants attended six weeks of two-hour self-reflection small group sessions based on the goals of the project. The sessions introduced the various components of Formational Prayer which included dysfunctional behaviors, emotional upheaval, false beliefs, and deep wounds.

The group identified unforgiveness as an ongoing struggle and challenge for them. Some of the wounds were prior to ministry while others occurred throughout ministry. Ministry demands contributed to the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual challenges which magnified and manifested in more woundedness and brokenness. Rustenbach shares the law of cause and effect that states "for every effect in our lives, a cause exists--or a series of causes. In other words, the rupturing, fragmenting, or crushing of the heart began somewhere. An event or series of events caused us to experience hurt, disappointment, and loss that resulted in our heart breaking" (Rustenbach 2011, 33). Unaddressed wounds can create deep emotional pain that can give vent to unhealthy behaviors and thinking. Formational Prayer sets the stage for the

healing journey. As pastors' wives learn to shift their focus away from the places of their pain and brokenness, and toward the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, they can find the freedom, transformation, and inner healing to move freely in their lives.

Foundations

Historically, the pastor's wife's role held little significance outside of helping her husband to excel in his ministry and calling. Traditionally, the role expectations were seen as the pastor's wife being a gracious and loving wife and hostess who displayed limited talent and ability while providing a picture-perfect image of herself and family. The role of the 21st century pastor's wife has evolved over the years as she is now seen actively serving and partnering with her husband in ministry. For many, the role now requires a shift in their style of leadership. Expectations of the role can produce stress and pressure, causing emotional conflict and turmoil. The question is: How does a pastor's wife maintain her emotional, mental, and spiritual balance? The answer is found in nurturing the interior life.

Prayer is the vehicle in which we establish communication with the Father. "God waits for us in the inner sanctuary of the soul. He welcomes us there, where we can experience, in the words of Madame Guyon, a 'continuous inner abiding.' And here is the joy: the results are always in excess of the work put in" (Foster 1992, 128). We consider the fact that prayer was central in the life of Jesus, and it was how He consistently communicated with the Father. The power received from spending time in God's presence is what allows the pastor's wife to

do God's will on earth as it is in heaven. With the many expectations of the role, alone time with God is essential to the pastors' wife survival.

While we depend on prayer as the key component to nurturing our interior lives, there are times when pastors' wives can also benefit from the therapeutic value of counseling. McMinns shares that Christian counseling allows people to explore their pain, anger, and grief about their pain and hurt (McMinns 2011, 96). As a result, pastors' wives cannot be afraid to reach out for professional help when needed. In addition to counseling, Pastor's wives can also explore the value of Formational or Inner Healing Prayer which is a ministry of the Holy Spirit that promotes healing and transformation. Rustenbach says about God, "He's omniscient, so He knows absolutely everything about us. He's omnipresent, so He was there when we were wounded and is fully present as we go through the healing process. His omnipotence means He has the power to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves" (Rustenbach 2011, 37). To experience inner healing, there must be an acknowledgement of personal woundedness and a knowledge of God's power and presence in the areas of inner pain and bondage as He is allowed to be the Wonderful Counselor.

As pastors' wives are finding their passion and voice, and as they minister to their husbands, families, and the church, there is a constant need for them to take responsibility for their emotional, mental, and spiritual health. They must be cognizant of the possibility and potential for burnout from overextending their minds and bodies. London and Wiseman suggest that the temptation is to forego the development of the inner-self and get caught up in the doing rather than the

being (London and Wiseman 1995, 225). They must realize that any emotional baggage they carry can greatly reduce the effectiveness of their ministry. The project's goal was to reaffirm the power of prayer and create a level of awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.

The Foundations section includes a summary of my personal journey as an African American pastor's wife for almost 45 years as well as my personal prayer experience. Also included is the biblical significance of prayer, the theological value of Formational Prayer, and a historical perspective of the impact of the pastor's wife's role in the life of her husband and in service to the church. The historical section will also briefly explore the role African American women who through Formational Prayer and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit touched and changed lives. The Contemporary section will look at the progress of women, especially noting the growth and advancement of pastors' wives as they navigate the changes of the 21st century.

Personal Foundation

When storms of life are round me beating,
When rough the path that I have trod,
Within my closet door retreating,
I love to be alone with God.

Tis' there I find new strength for duty,
As o'er the sands of time I plod,
I see the King in all His beauty,
While resting there alone with God.

Alone with God, the world forbidden,
Alone with God, O blest retreat!
Alone with God, and in Him hidden,
To hold with Him, communion sweet. (Oatman 1904, 364)

The words above are from the Church of God heritage hymnal (Johnson Oatman 1904, 364). The song, *Alone with God*, reflects the cry of my heart. It speaks of a personal and sacred space where I can experience God's peace and presence. As I make an effort to draw nigh to God, He, in turn, draws nigh to me. I can commune with God on an intimate level, and I can develop a trusting, loving, and secure relationship with Him. It reminds me of the need to turn my attention and focus away from the everyday mundane things of this life and reflect on the comfort of a loving and caring God that invites me to be close to Him.

Alone time with God is an essential ingredient to my spiritual growth. As I make prayer a priority, I find that I am daily being conformed into the image and likeness of Christ. Because prayer is a dialogue and not a monologue, in His presence I can communicate my needs and concerns, and then listen attentively to hear God's voice speak to my heart regarding His will as it pertains to my life. "Prayer changes things," people say. It also changes us. The latter goal is the more imperative. The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. This process of transformation is the sole focus of Formational Prayer" (Foster 2011, 57). Formational Prayer has taught me the importance of drawing upon principles, resources, and techniques that provide emotional stability as I looked insightfully at my own places of pain and brokenness. Bringing the practice and presence of Jesus Christ into the place of

pain and brokenness in my life and the life of others was my motivation for this project.

Biblical Foundation

The two biblical texts, John 11:41-42 and John 17:21-23, were foundational to understand that communion and fellowship are essential components of our relationship with the Father. They also established the framework for the project, highlighting the confidence and assurance that comes from a consistent prayer life. Prayer was a priority in Jesus' life and through His example, it should be a priority in ours as well. Jesus makes it clear throughout His ministry that He could do nothing apart from the Father. As a result, in the Scriptures you find Jesus in constant communication with the Father as He carries out His ministry. Jesus developed the habit of prayer through the consistent role of discipline as He regularly spent time alone with the Father. Mark 1:35 tells us that Jesus got up early in the morning while it was yet dark, went off by Himself, and spent time in the presence of His Father.

Because of their intimate relationship, as Jesus stood at Lazarus' tomb, He showed His personal intimacy by addressing God as "Father" (*pater*) and not "our Father" (Burge 2000, 319). Throughout His ministry, Jesus referred to God as Father, denoting a close alliance and relationship. The power of intimacy was on full display as Jesus stood in confidence at the tomb of Lazarus and offered up a prayer of thanksgiving. Jesus was close to the heart of the Father, and as such, His love and respect for the Father was reflected in the way He approached the Father. Jesus' relationship with the Father was a clear example

of the power of intimacy and the quality of the personal and intimate bond that we also can form with the Father.

Prior to the stone being rolled back from Lazarus' tomb, Jesus offered a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father for the ensuing miracle. Gaebelin makes a point that Jesus is not requesting help with the miracle, but instead, is giving thanks that they are in agreement for the Father's will to be done, and for their shared power (Gaebelin 1981, 9:121). There was no suspense about the Father hearing Him. Jesus was firmly rooted in His relationship with the Father, and the power that resulted from their relationship was demonstrated in His prayer. The miracle was a visible affirmation and confirmation of the power of intimacy and the connection between the Father and Son.

Jesus knew His purpose for coming into the world. The intimacy that Jesus shared with the Father revealed that Jesus was not just a messenger of God, but He was God in the flesh (Burge 2000, 474). "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14 NIV) (Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the NIV-New International Version.) Jesus' purpose was established in His unique and abiding relationship with the Father, which was essential and necessary to His mission of giving His life to redeem man's relationship with God. One of the main themes that John 17:21-23 portrays is God's desire for relationship. Carson reveals that the prayer demonstrates the depth of Jesus' communion with the Father (Carson 1991, 564). The prayer disclosed Jesus' purpose and a clear representation of the personal relationship and unity between God and Jesus.

The priority of intimacy is seen as the love between the Father and Son is expressed and oneness is established. The prayer for unity in John 17:21-23 has an evangelistic purpose-- so that the world may believe that God the Father sent His divine Son (Hughes and Laney 1990, 481). Jesus knew the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world, indicating that unity was a priority in the Father and Son's relationship. Burge shares that Jesus' prayer connects the unity of believers to their interior spiritual life as Jesus desired that the oneness we experience with Him should likewise be experienced with one another (Burge 2000, 479). Jesus desired that He and the Father's display of unity would be a signal to the world that He was sent by the Father, and that unity is a priority.

Theological Foundation

Through the life of Jesus, we discover that there is transforming power that results from cultivating a disciplined prayer life. Through prayer we can also be continually changed and transformed into the image of Christ which allows us to conform to God's will. Foster shares that each day in a new and living way the brooding Spirit of God teaches us. As we begin to follow these nudgings of the Spirit, we are changed from the inside out (Foster 1992, 57). As the Spirit's work is manifested in us, we respond in cooperation to God's desires for us. This transformation or change becomes evident from the inside out.

This section will further explore the impact and power of prayer through another dimension known as Formational or Inner Healing Prayer. The relevant question is: "What is Formational Prayer?" Foster defines Formational Prayer by sharing:

Prayer changes things, people say. It also changes us. The latter goal is the more imperative. The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. This process of transformation is the focus of Formation Prayer. (Foster 1992, 57)

Formational prayer is a powerful ministry of the Lord's grace to the broken (Wardle 2001, 144). Formational Prayer or inner healing is about the whole person as it aims to make people who are hurting whole again (Kraft 2010, 23). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a level of intimacy is developed that allows the individual to have an encounter with Christ that changes and transforms their life. Another term that is used interchangeably with Formational Prayer is "Inner Healing Prayer," or as Kraft refers to it "deep-level healing." John and Paula Sanford see such a ministry as aimed at the transformation of the inner being of a person, a ministry to the inner person (Kraft 2010, 20). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a level of intimacy is developed that allows the individual to have an encounter with Christ that changes and transforms their life.

Foster notes that Formational Prayer is not about perfectionism, but about progress in the spiritual life (Foster, 1992, 58). According to Wardle, Formational Prayer is far more than a technique, and can be defined as: "A ministry of the Holy Spirit moving through the caregiver, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ, into the place of pain and brokenness" (Wardle 2001, 13). Formational Prayer is thoroughly dependent upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that initiates, directs, and empowers the entire process. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we become change agents. The priority of Formational Prayer is to position people for a transforming encounter with Christ.

Our part is to embrace the encounter through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Through Formational Prayer, we come to understand that God is presence in every moment and situation of our lives and can use brokenness in any form to bring about greater intimacy with Him to accomplish His purpose in our lives.

Formational Prayer has the power to change an individual's life. Crabb shares that as we understand the process of change, we must realize that deep change come about less because of what we try to do and how hard we try to do it, and more because of our willingness to face the realities of our own internal life (Crabb 1988, 175). Foster sees Formational or Healing Prayer as a part of the normal Christian life and believes that it should not be elevated above any other ministry in the community of faith, nor should it be undervalued; rather it should be kept in proper balance. This should not surprise us, for it is a clear recognition of the incarnational nature of our faith. (Foster 1992, 203). In other words, Formational Prayer should not be seen as a panacea or cure all for all pain and brokenness. In its proper place, Formational Prayer has the power and ability to change transform an individual life as they cooperate with the process. It is one only one approach and should never be seen as the only form and means of healing.

It takes a step of faith to experience the transforming power that comes through Formational Prayer. The way we think serves as a monitor for the results we receive. Sanford says that we must also gently and patiently teach ourselves a new thought-habit. We must re-educate the subconscious mind, replacing every thought of fear with a thought of faith, every thought of illness with a

thought of health, every thought of death with a thought of life. In other words, we must learn faith (Sanford 1972, 33). Sanford continues by sharing God has made ample provision for our every need. Our faith is the key to our discovery and the hidden things of God.

Through Formational Prayer, transformation takes place. Transformation is that process of death and rebirth whereby what was our weakness becomes our strength. It is preceded by brokenness (Sanford 2007, 18). That transformation allows us to know that nothing in our lives is ever wasted. God's grace is so complete that we understand that there is no event in our lives without which we would be better off. Formational Prayer is a powerful ministry tool that is used to promote healing and transformation and the Holy Spirit is always an active part of the healing and transformation ministry.

As I turn my focus to the historical context, I will begin by examining the Reformation Movement and acknowledging the impact of women, especially clergy wives who through prayer and sheer determination persevered through societal obstacles, impediments, and hinderances to emerge as women of power and influence. I will also highlight African American women who through their own struggles and pain relied on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to succor and sustain them. They highly valued Formational Prayer as they were spirit led and spirit directed to lead others through their pain and brokenness. I will focus on the various roles all these women played in the lives of their churches and society. I will also emphasize that although these women grappled

with gender limitations, they managed to rise above their challenges, and emerged as influential voices of their time.

Historical Foundation

The Historical section explores the 16th century Protestant Reformation movement and the impact women made during that period. It includes a review of the role of pastors' wives such as Katharina von Bora, Anna Bullinger, and Katharina Schultz who provided support to their spouses while making their own mark in history. As Formational Prayer is a ministry of the Holy Spirit that allows us to become instruments of the Lord's healing power, I will also briefly explore the lives of African American women such as Perpetua, Maria Stewart, and Sojourner Truth who during those centuries were mystics, visionaries, and prophets that were led by the Holy Spirit to utilize their gifts for the blessing and benefit of others.

The movement was a rediscovery of and its infiltration into a dark world. It also was described as a biblical indictment against the culture's bad answers (Hallahan 2012, 6). The impact of the Reformation extended well beyond the Reformation and ushered in a move of God that shaped and transformed early Protestantism. The posting of Luther's 95 Theses was the event that precipitated the change that caused Luther to be attacked from every area of the Empire (Hallahan 2012, 56). A positive and constructive renewal of the church came as a result of Luther's courage.

Libanius, the Greek rhetorician and philosopher from the fourth century, coined the phrase "What women these Christians have!" to describe women in

the early church who were married to Christian workers (London and Wiseman 1995, 17). London and Wiseman contend that the phrase can be applied to pastors' wives in every generation regardless of the role they serve in ministry. Historian Derek Wilson describes this period where women had limited choices and were not regarded as equals or partners with their husbands; however, there were still gifted women who played a vital, if not prominent role in the life of the church (Wilson 2016, 8). According to Stjerna, Protestant women took it upon themselves to envision new theologies, propose reforms, write, teach, and preach--none of which was expected from women (Stjerna 2009, 214). Some women understood their value and worth and summoned the courage to make their presence known during the initial years of the Reformation.

Stjerna explains that pastors' wives were expected to totally support their husbands, even though they were gifted and talented in their own rights (Stjerna 209, 219). As the Protestant theology rejected the Catholic concept of celibate priesthood, the Reformation leaders encouraged Christian ministers to marry, and as a result, a whole new social society came into being--the clergy helpmeet (Wilson 2016, 9). This new phenomenon allowed this special group of women to establish their own guidelines, with some placing themselves in positions of prominence as joint pastor with their husband. Others chose to remain in the background as silent supporters but were still influential as educators to theirs and others' children (Wilson 2016, 9). Pastors' wives finally had a voice. Wilson explains that during the years to follow, even though women retreated into the

background, their influence remained (Wilson 2016, 12). One clergy wife that made a lasting impact on the Protestant church was Katharina von Bora.

Katharina von Bora was the wife of Martin Luther, the Reformation reformer. Tucker sees her as a woman for all seasons. She believed that her life embodies all that is human and belongs to every culture and generation, such as struggles, sorrow, joy, second-guessing, difficult decisions, sleepless nights, hectic schedules, family illness, mental challenges, and death of children (Tucker 2017, 10). According to Wilson, she was lively, sharp-tongued, and held strong opinions which she shared freely. This caused her to attract just as many enemies as friends (Wilson 2016, 42). Katharina and Luther together elevated both marriage and motherhood as natural reflections of God's creation (Severance 2011, 140). While Katharina von Luther left no scholarly writings, her life was seen as an object lesson of her husband's theories. Smith states, "Had Katharina von Bora Luther been unequal to her role as the wife of Martin Luther, their marriage might have injured the Protestant cause, but she honored her position and is revered" (Smith 1999, 767). Her life serves as a model and example of a woman who understood the power of her position.

Katharina Schultze Zell was the wife of Matthew Zell, an early Protestant Reformer and Lutheran pastor of the St. Lawrence parish in Strasbourg. She regarded herself as a partner in ministry, and her husband endorsed her commitment (Wilson 2016, 34). While her gender presented limitations, she was seen as a powerful writer and voice in Strasbourg (Stjerna 2012, 1). She was involved in ways that were not well received. She broke unspoken and written

rules and codes and remained unapologetic in her determination to show love and compassion to all in need (Wilson 2016, 38). She developed a call for herself that other women could relate to, the call of a “church mother,” who without degrees or ordination could participate in the various aspect of church life (Stjema 2012, 1). Katharina existed in a male dominated society; yet her influence and status extended beyond the domestic realm.

Anna Adlischwyler Bullinger was the wife of Heinrich Bullinger, pastor of the Cathedral Church at Zurich. James Good explains that like several other Reformation wives, her house was not only a home to the homeless but became virtually a sort of hotel for refugees from every land (Good 2007, 39). She was known as “mother” and “Zurich mother” in surrounding regions (Good 2007, 43). She supported her husband while raising 11 children. The Bullinger marriage and family centered around their unshakeable faith in Christ as they demonstrated the Christian family ideals of the Reformation. They understood that a life of marriage and family were more in line with God’s created order than a life of enforced celibacy (Severance 2011, 144). Anna Bullinger’s influence not only impacted the lives of her family, but also those she sought to serve.

Katharina von Bora, Anna Bullinger, and Katharina Schultze Zell all served their husbands and ministered well. Their husbands valued their contributions. They were intelligent, educated, articulate women, and their work added value to the lives of others. They as well as Perpetua, Maria Stewart, and Sojourner Truth, through prayer and persistence, found their voices as they defied traditional roles and rules established for women during that period. They shook

off limitations imposed by the church and did not allow their gender to dictate their agenda.

Contemporary Foundation

The Contemporary review examined the many facets and dimensions of a woman's life. The key focus was on the role of the pastor's wife, understanding that apart from that role, first and foremost, we must acknowledge that a woman has God-given purpose and potential which may include her call to leadership. Munroe believes that God designed women as an essential part of His creation, not an afterthought, but with her spirit-being to worship Him (Munroe 2001, 82). Osaigbovo aligns with Munroe's views of a woman's role and agrees that God designed women with a purpose that was paramount to His plan and adds that God uses women, not to the exclusion of men, but beside them (Osaigbovo 1992, 180).

As I examined the role of a pastor's wife, this written work listened to the various voices speak from their own context and experiences. Further exploration allowed me to consider the concerns that pastors' wives often encounter. One is the glass house syndrome where your life is transparent. Gail MacDonald shares that only if you are in ministry, can you understand what it means to live your life as an open book (MacDonald 1998, 3). Seasoned pastors' wives such as Serita Jakes (Jakes 2003, 5) and Shauntae Brown White (White 2017, 9) understand the challenges of ministry life and have written books to help other pastors' wives navigate those challenges. These books detail their journey, share lessons

learned, and report findings that addresses the concerns, burdens, issues, and conflicts of pastors' wives.

The study revealed that as unique and complex as the role is, there are levels of unspoken expectations that exist, requiring various elements that include a pastor's wife's possibilities, partnership, and pain. Jakes shares that the pastor's wife stands as a role model and mentor for the congregation (Jakes 2003, ix). Expectations play a significant role in the life of a pastor's wife as they are looked to for their leadership qualities, speaking abilities, musical talents, style, fashion, and creative flair, in addition to their professional skills and their capacity to manage and maintain their home.

With the calling comes responsibility. White recognizes that in more recent years, especially in the Black church, pastors' wives have been elevated in status as well, and often share in the recognition their spouses receive (White 2017, 17). As a result, the evolution of the pastor's wife's title has presented multiple opportunities to serve the church and kingdom in unique and creative ways. The opportunity to influence the congregation through her creative abilities is a gift from God. As the evolution continues, according to Owens, team ministry is a trend in the 21st century pastoral ministry. "Many denominations are embracing the shared-leadership concept, which suggests that a husband-and-wife ministry partnership can add to the growth and development of the church" (Owens 2000,73). Jakes shares his wisdom on ministry couples by saying he believes that each should reflect an attitude and commitment of excellence that should be evident in their lives individually (Jakes 2002, 204). McKay agrees with both

Jakes and Owens, and adds it is crucial to stay focused on the fact that a husband and wife are workers together, and that whatever God intends to do through a ministry couple is inextricably woven together by their love and support of one another (McKay 2010, 40).

With all the new demands placed on the modern-day pastor's wife, how does she remain healthy spiritually and emotionally? Dobson shares that for a person involved with ministry, accepting responsibility for one's physical and mental health is just as essential as spiritual growth. Practicing the daily routine of taking care of one's body, mind, and spiritual life requires discipline (Dobson 1995, 94). Wilhite and Wilson also remind us that discipline is a requirement of ministry, and knowing when to take moments of refreshing, reflection, renewal, and rest is paramount to preserving your physical strength (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 161). The importance of self-care cannot be expressed enough in ministry. It is critical to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual survival. This need for self-care can come in many forms. As I considered the importance of self-care in the life of the pastor's wife, I explored the need for professional assistance and Formational Prayer as a ministry to address pain and brokenness.

As I looked at other aspects of the life of a pastor's wife, the project explored the role of submission and what healthy submission looked like in a relationship. Jakes sees a wife's willingness to submit and be obedient to her husband as complementary to his leadership and is generally in response to his sacrificial love. She understands that they are companions and not competitors (Jake 2003, 148). Dobson agrees with Jakes that submission has a lot to do with

trust. She adds that trust must be built and earned for a couple to practice mutual submission in marriage (Dobson 1995, 116). Munroe has a slightly different opinion about submission, and believes that there is no incidence of subjection, submission, or oppression of women in the first and second chapter of Genesis. He suggests that in God's will there is no such arrangement. Cunningham and Hamilton (Cunningham and Hamilton 2000, 173), as with Taylor-Smith (Taylor-Smith 2013, 66), share the same view as Munroe and contends that man and woman were equal partners in the original state.

In conclusion, even with all the past and current changes to ministry, the one thing that has remained consistent is the exceptional gifts, talents, and strength that each woman brings to the role of a pastor's wife. Johnson sees the role continuing to evolve as changes between religion, gender, and family shift (Johnson 2011, 40). Nordland echoes Johnson's views by adding that as pastors' wives continue to move to the forefront of ministry, they have great opportunities to use their influence and voice to connect with and impact the next generation (Nordland 1972, 44). As ministry continues to evolve, I looked at what the changes mean for the pastor's wife physical, mental and emotional health.

Context

Clergy spouses need support, encouragement, inspiration, and understanding as they attempt to minister and serve their congregations. It is during those times of private anguish that there is a need for a special connection, or for someone to come alongside them in the struggle. MacDonald shares that the tendency of 20th century evangelical Christianity has been to

emphasize “solo faith,” walking through life alone, the rugged individualist. What a lot of pastors’ wives are awakening to now is “community faith” (MacDonald 1998, 154). The question is: How do clergy spouses refresh, renew, and replenish their souls while gaining their perspective? MacDonald contends that friendships are an indispensable key to personal renewal in the ministry. Without them, we can expect dryness of life, loss of spiritual perspective, and almost certain discouragement (MacDonald 1998, 153). Without support, clergy spouses run the risk of experiencing emotional distress and despair.

The key focus of the project was African American clergy spouses because of their connection with my personal context. Experience has enlightened me to the power of prayer and the need for emotional healing. I have encountered clergy spouses that have suffered emotional wounds, perfidy, trust issues, and betrayal, and as a result, have decided to walk this journey alone because of their woundedness. Because all forms of brokenness are pervasive among us, the study allowed me to effectively research the relationship between the power of prayer and the awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness. It helped me to assess the effectiveness of prayer as it pertains to the participants’ emotional well-being. The project also strengthened the participants’ understanding of Formational Prayer while serving as a conduit through which help, healing, and hope converged and flowed.

Project Goals

It was the purpose of this project to understand the impact of Formational Prayer on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Ohio areas through six weeks of self-reflection. The research question was: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland Ohio areas through six weeks of self-reflection?

The project goals were:

1. To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.
2. To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.
3. To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.
4. To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.
5. To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

Design, Procedure, and Assessment

The purpose of the project was to impact the understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses. The research question was: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and

Cleveland, Ohio areas through six weeks of self-reflection? The design was an impact study group with eight African American clergy spouses from various ages, experiences, and denominations.

My plan was to conduct an impact study group for six weeks of self-reflection in sessions that included topics of deep wounds, dysfunctional behaviors, emotional upheaval, false beliefs, and the Holy Spirit. Each session included teaching, experiential exercises, and discussions that aligned with the goals. Fifteen quantitative and five qualitative questions were developed based on the project goals. I used a seven-point Likert scale to measure the degree of impact or effectiveness ranging from totally agree to totally disagree.

This impact project was conducted via Zoom, with six one and a half to two-hour sessions of self-reflection. There were eight participants that attended each session. A pre-assessment survey was administered prior to the sessions, and a post-assessment survey was conducted after the final session. I will briefly outline the distinctive points of each session in the corresponding areas. The accomplishment of the goals was analyzed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by comparing the pre- and post-test assessment questions, and by content analysis of the open-ended questions. One open-ended question was eliminated because of a mis-print.

Personal Goals

Prayer has always been a staple in my life. From my earlier years until now, I have witnessed the power of prayer as I have seen God work and move in my life in miraculous ways. From a spiritual standpoint, while I have grown in my

relationship with the Lord through spending time in His presence, I am also clear on the importance of being healthy mentally and emotionally. Therefore, I am aware that counseling has its place in supporting a healthy, balanced, and quality lifestyle. Incorporating the spiritual and clinical components in my life has made a difference in my reaction and response to the challenges and demands of life.

My personal goals included the following:

1. I will strive to maintain a consistent prayer life that will allow me to stay in tune with God's will and purpose for my life by making my devotional time a daily priority.
2. I will continually renew my mind by eliminating negative habits, attitudes, and behaviors that adversely impact and impede my spiritual growth and development by daily renewing my mind and applying the principles of God's Word to my life.
3. I will endeavor to live each day appreciative of God's love, grace, and mercy so that I can continually reflect an attitude of gratefulness by developing a gratitude journal to serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness.

Definition of Terms

Deep wounds: Deep wounds are emotional, physical, psychological, or spiritual events that could have occurred as far back as infancy and may have been self-inflicted or brought on by significant others (Wardle 2005, 16). These deep wounds are memories that are recorded and played over and over. They affect a person's thought patterns, the way they interact and respond to others, and how

they feel. Deep wounds affect the way a person views God, others, and themselves.

Dysfunctional behaviors: Dysfunctional behaviors are ways in which one behaves that is harmful to oneself and others. These dysfunctional behaviors are manifested because of the deep wounds the individual experiences in their lives.

Emotional upheaval: Emotional upheaval are the underlying distortions and wounds that drives emotional pain.

False beliefs: False beliefs are beliefs (lies) we tell ourselves that have a great deal to do with our mental and emotional struggles, our relationships with others, and our lack of spiritual growth.

Formational (Healing) prayer: A ministry of the Holy Spirit, moving through a Christian caregiver, counselor, or lay person, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness within a wounded person.

Plan of the Paper

The emphasis of this project was to explore the understanding and impact of Formational Prayer with a small group of seasoned, experienced, and recent to the ministry African American clergy spouses. I sought to understand how their perspective, brokenness, well-being, encounter of God's presence, and hope was impacted by Formational Prayer, and if inner healing occurred because of the project.

Chapter two includes biblical, historical, and theological foundations. Chapter three provides relevant, selected views, and perspectives found in contemporary literature. Chapter four outlines the assessment method,

procedures, and design of the project. Chapter five provides a detailed analysis and assessment of the results. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a summative evaluation of the project goals as it relates to the target group, application of the project into my ministry context and setting, potential options and possibilities for considerations for further study, and an assessment of my personal goals and insights from the process.

Core Team

Dr. Brenda Buckwell served as my Adviser for the project. She teaches for Ashland Theological Seminary in the spiritual formation classes. She is also Founder and Spiritual Director of Living Streams Flowing Water spiritual formation ministry.

Dr. Dawn Morton served as my Academic Research Consultant. She serves as the Director of the Advance Degree Programs and Assessment, as well as the Assistant Professor of Christian Formation and Leadership for Ashland Theological Seminary.

Dr. Cheryl Brown, Pastor of Believers' in Christ Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin served as my Field Consultant. Her strong background in intercessory prayer, coupled with her clinical expertise, uniquely qualifies her to serve in this role. Her impactful ministry to women of all backgrounds also is beneficial to the fabric and construction of my project.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

As an African American clergy spouse, I fully understand that ministry can sometimes be a lonely and isolating experience. Along with the role come many opportunities and blessings as well as challenges and burdens that can overwhelm the heart and spirit. Ministry life can be difficult and demanding at times, causing deep wounds that can compromise our well-being.

In the past several years, I've extended my hand and opened my heart to my sisters in the ministry by providing a safe place for them to take off their masks, be themselves, and enjoy the fellowship and connection of a special sisterhood. As I get to know the ladies better, I have come to realize that some pastors' wives carry deep-seated hurts and wounds from past experiences which requires an intense level of emotional and spiritual healing. I believe Formational Prayer is a pathway to helping them experience personal healing and wholeness that can impact not only their lives, but the lives of those around them. I also believe that cultivating a consistent prayer life is the key to maintaining a solid connection with the Father.

While we all handle challenges in various ways, I can attest that my almost 45 years in ministry has taught me how to draw on the internal strength that comes from nurturing the interior life as I stay in close fellowship and communion with the Father. Prayer is a foundational component of our connection with God, and an essential ingredient and conduit to experiencing the love and acceptance of God.

The primary intent of the foundations is to demonstrate the value and importance of prayer as a pathway and vocal expression to the Father. By maintaining a consistent and intimate relationship with God, we can find healing, help, and hope that nurtures the interior life. A disciplined prayer life has a powerful impact on our faith, and historical women of prayer and faith will serve as models and examples of the strength and courage that is gained through a committed life of prayer.

The Biblical Foundation section will reveal that prayer was a priority and a pinnacle for Jesus' life and ministry. These passages will demonstrate the importance of maintaining an intimate connection to the Father through prayer, while giving us a glimpse into the Father and Son's relationship and bond that Jesus consistently relied on throughout His ministry. The foundations will further establish the importance of living in God's presence, and the power that results from having an intimate relationship with the Father. Jesus maintained that He could do nothing apart from the Father and that He totally depended on Him. Jesus' prayer life serves as a model and example for the believer, as the heart of prayer is communion with God.

Biblical Foundation

Jesus understood the weight and value of His prayers, and was devoted to prayer, just as much as He was to serving and caring for people. The two passages, John 11:41- 42 and John 17:21- 23, will establish the framework for the project by highlighting the confidence and assurance that comes from developing a solid and consistent life of prayer. The two passages reveal the

bond and closeness shared by Jesus and the Father which kept them in constant dialogue and intimate conversation. The level of their relationship is demonstrated in the passages as we examine and explore the prayer life of Jesus and consider the perfect and intimate union between the Father and Son.

To capture the essence of the verses, there is a need to understand that Jesus lived His life with full confidence, clarity, and certainty as prayer was the fuel and foundation of His life and ministry. He developed the habit of prayer through the consistent role of discipline. Jesus' prayer life is a model and example of what a consistent devotional life looks like. Spending regular alone time with the Father reinforces our faith and empowers us to be able to do the will of the Father.

As we consider Jesus' extraordinary and exemplary prayer life, we will discover that through prayer, we can have an audience of one with the Father where we can express our heart's concerns. It is through our prayer life we can receive the love, peace, truth, and healing that transforms and changes our lives. Just like God heard and answered Jesus' prayers, we too can make petitions to the Father with the same kind of certainty and expectation, believing that God hears and answers our prayers.

Prayer and Intimacy

The Gospels are a great reflection of the deep, abiding connection that Jesus shared and experienced with the Father. Jesus developed a relationship with the Father early in His life and ministry. Throughout the Gospels, you will find Scriptures that validates Jesus' constant dialogue with the Father as He

sought to do His will. Jesus' relationship with the Father is a perfect example of the type of personal relationship and intimacy that we can develop and establish with the Father. Foster states that:

Ontologically, Jesus' relationship with God the Father is, of course, absolutely unique, but experientially we are invited into the same intimacy with Father God that he knew while here in the flesh. We are encouraged to crawl into the Father's lap and receive his love and comfort and healing and strength. (Foster 1992, 135)

It is through this level of intimacy that the Father affirms His love for us, and we can commune and fellowship with Him in a loving and personal way.

As Jesus prayed at the tomb of Lazarus, the reality of the intimacy the Father and Son shared was revealed as MacDonald notes that Jesus performed what is considered one of the last and greatest miracles in his public ministry (MacDonald 1995, 1529). This intimacy serves as the backdrop for John 11:41-42. The prayer Jesus prayed at the tomb of Lazarus was remarkable for several reasons. Burge notes that in verse 42, Jesus shows his personal intimacy by addressing God as "Father" (*pater*) and not "our Father," which spoke of the depth of their relationship, and defined the essential union that existed between them (Burge 2000, 319).

Culpepper and O'Day notes that this is the first time in John that Jesus has directly addressed God as "Father" (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 691). Culpepper and O'Day also suggests that verse 41b contains two elements that are characteristic of Jesus' prayer in John. First, Jesus lifts up his eyes, and then He addresses God as Father. Jesus' dependence on the Father produced a level of confidence and assurance that was expressed in His prayer to the Father.

Carson suggests that the public nature of Jesus' prayer seeks to give his hearers a view of intimacy of Jesus' own relationship with the Father and draws the hearers into the intimacy of Jesus' own relationship with the Father while demonstrating the truth that Jesus does nothing by himself but is totally dependent on and obedient to his Father's will (Carson 1991, 418).

MacDonald records that no previous prayer of the Lord Jesus is recorded in this chapter, but doubtless He had been speaking to His Father continually during this entire period and had prayed that God's Name might be glorified in the resurrection of Lazarus. Jesus' confidence in His relationship with the Father was on full display at the tomb of Lazarus when He offered up a prayer of thanksgiving. As a prayer of thanksgiving, this prayer is a powerful acknowledgment from Jesus to God of the relationship to which Jesus has repeatedly appealed throughout his ministry. He does not need to make individual prayer requests to God, because He lived in constant communion with God and in the certainty of his relationship with God. (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 691).

Here He thanked the Father in anticipation of the event (MacDonald 1995, 1534). Culpepper and O'Day also states that Wilcox has helpfully observed how Jesus' words in verse 41b echoes Ps. 118:21 ("I thank you that you have answered me...") (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 692). Gaebelein declares that Jesus' great faith and confidence in He and the Father's relationship empowered Him to thank the Father for already answering and allowed Him to make the declaration in His prayer that the transaction was already complete (Gaebelein

1981, 121). Some commentators view this prayer as a “show” prayer intended to solely influence the listener, when in fact it is a prayer of thanksgiving (Culpepper and O’Day 1995, 692). Jesus’ confidence in He and the Father’s relationship allowed Him to give thanks.

Jesus’ prayer in verses 41-42 is also an act of doxology. Jesus directed the eyes of those who gather at the tomb, like his own eyes, toward God, not toward himself, so that God’s glory would be seen in the miracle (Culpepper and Oday 1995, 692). Jesus wanted the crowd to know that everything He did was God’s action in and through Him. Jesus used the miracle to give concrete expression to his unity with the Father, to show what it means that Jesus and God are one. MacDonald says that Jesus prayed audible so that the people might believe the Father sent Him, the Father told Him what to do, and that He always acted in perfect dependence on God. McDonald says that here again we have the essential union of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ emphasized (MacDonald 1995, 1534). Jesus’ assurance was based on Him knowing and doing the will of the Father.

The Power of Intimacy

Jesus was found engaging in a customary Jewish practice as He stands offering thanks at the tomb of Lazarus and lifts His eyes upward. Sarcerius suggests that the lifting of the eyes is a kind of posture of praying whereby Christ makes known--and whereby we make known when we pray – by whom we wish to be heard and from whom we are asking something (Farmer 2014, 7). Sarcerius also maintains that we can take comfort in knowing that our advocate

and interceder is always heard by the Father (Farmer 2014, 7). Syllogism: The Father always hears Christ. Therefore, Christ can obtain all things for us from God the Father...A second syllogism: Christ is always heard by God the Father. Therefore, Christ alone is a true interceder and advocate before God the Father (Farmer 2014, 7). Heinrich Bullinger notes that the Son and the Father shared the same will and that as Jesus was looking heavenward, He is not asking anything of the Father, but He was giving thanks and rejoicing in Himself before the Father, because the Father heard Him and because of their perfect agreement. Bullinger adds that the Father hears the Son, that is, he has the same will and power in common with him. The Son does not want anything other than what the Father wants (Farmer 2014, 7). Throughout Jesus' mission, He often let it be known that He was one with the Father and that His main purpose and objective was to please the Father and to do His will. (Luke 11:2; John 4:34; John 5:30; and John 6:38).

John 11:42 records that prior to the stone being rolled back, Jesus prayed to the Father and thanked Him for the miracle that was about to take place. As with Bullinger, Gaebelein points out that Jesus was not petitioning the Father for assistance with the miracle, but rather, He gave thanks to the Father for their agreement for His will to be done, and for their shared power (Gaebelein 1981, 9:121). Jesus was secure in His relationship with the Father, and the power that resulted from their relationship was demonstrated in His prayer. Culpepper and O'Day suggests that Jesus did not need to make an individual prayer request of God, because he lived in constant communion with God and in the certainty of

his relationship with God (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 9:692). There was no suspense about the Father hearing Him. They further reveal that even though Jesus did not doubt that God would answer his prayer, because of their relationship, he spoke audibly and cried out for Lazarus to come forth, and he told them to unbind him and let him go (Culpepper and Oday 1995, 692). The miracle was a visible affirmation and confirmation of the power of intimacy and spoke volumes of the bond and connection that existed between them.

The power of intimacy was on full display and seen in the miracle that was performed before the crowd. Jesus prayed so that those gathered would recognize what He knows-- that He does nothing on His own. Culpepper and O'Day conclude that it does not matter if the crowd heard the words of Jesus' prayer, what was critical is he recognized that he put himself in a prayerful relationship with God (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 9:692). Though Jesus was competent and confident in His relationship with the Father, the miracle He performed at the tomb made a convincing statement to the crowd. It further validated Jesus' mission that the Father had sent Him.

The Purpose of Intimacy

The consistent bond, connection, and relationship between the Father and Son can also be found in John 17:21-22. Jesus' ministry of intercession was the pulse of His prayer life and a direct reflection of the intimacy He and the Father shared. Throughout His ministry, Jesus referred to God as Father denoting a close alliance and relationship, therefore, as stated earlier, Jesus' reference to God as Father is characteristic of His praying.

Jesus prays for those who will believe. Carson suggests that this extension to those who will believe through the witness of the original disciples assumes that their witness will in some measure prove effective. He contends that Jesus prays for these believers-to-be is that *all of them may be one (17:21)*. This is a petition that repeats what Jesus has prayer for his original disciples, a petition whose significance is further unpacked in the remaining clauses of the verse (Carson 1991, 568). Carson states this is not simply a “unity of love,” it is a unity predicated on adherence to the revelation the Father mediated to the first disciples through his Son, the revelation they accepted (John 17:6,8) and then passed on (those who will believe in me through their message, John 17: 20) (Carson 1991, 568). Carson contends that it is analogous to the oneness Jesus enjoys with his Father, here fleshed out in the words *just as you are in me, and I am in you*. The Father and the Son are distinguishable (the pre-incarnate Word is “with” God, 1:1; the Son prays to His Father; the Father commissions and sends, while the Son obeys), yet they are one. (Carson 1991, 568). Carson further states:

Although the unity envisaged in this chapter is not institutional, this purpose clause at the end of verse 21 sows beyond possibility of doubt that the unity is meant to be observable. The nature of the unity is further unpacked. Some measure of the unity in the disciples is assumed, but Jesus prays that they may be brought to complete unity, sharing richly in both the unity of purpose and the wealth of love that tie the Father and the Son together. The purpose, as in verse 21, is to let the world know that you sent me, to which now added the further goal, that you.... Have loved them even as you have loved me. (Carson 1991, 569)

Culpepper and O’Day contends that the final dependent clause in verse 21 points to the purpose of the community’s oneness. This oneness – the share

in and enactment of the unity that defines the relationship of God and Jesus – will offer a witness to the world about the revelation of God in Jesus. In this final clause, Jesus prays that through the community's unity, the world will come to believe what the community already believes, that Jesus is the one whom God has sent (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 794). Culpepper and O'Day also defines four dependent clauses for verse 21. The first dependent clause ("that they may all be one") is Jesus' core prayer for the unity of the faith community. The definition of this unity is supplied by the second dependent clause ("just as ..." [*kathos*].) The unity for which Jesus prays is not intrinsic to the community itself but derives from the primal unity of the Father and Son. For the community to be "one" means that they mirror the mutuality and reciprocity of the Father/Son relationship. (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 794).

The third dependent clause in verse 21 (*"that they may also be in us"*) shows that this unity will be more than a simple mirroring. The community will experience oneness because they share in the mutuality and reciprocity of the Father/Son relationship. Culpepper and O'Day suggests that Jesus' words about the community's oneness in this prayer never stand apart from his affirmation of the unity of the Father and Son (17:11, 21-23). The final dependent clause in verse 21 points to the purpose of the community's oneness. This oneness – the share in and enactment of the unity that defines the relationship of God and Jesus – will offer a witness to the world about the revelation of God in Jesus. Culpepper and O'Day concludes that in this final clause, Jesus prays that through the community's unity, the world will come to believe what the

community already believes, that Jesus is the one whom God has sent (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 795).

This prayer for unity had an evangelistic purpose – so that the world may believe that God the Father sent His divine Son (Hughes and Laney 1990, 481). The purpose of this unity is the maintenance of a convincing testimony before the world to the revelation of God in Christ and to His love for the disciples (Gaebelein 1981, 167). He was praying that Believer might be one in exhibiting the character of God and of Christ (MacDonald 1995, 1559).

The Priority of Intimacy

In John 17, verses 20-23, Jesus expands the circle for whom he prays. Culpepper and O'Day notes that in the prior verses he prayed for those who took on the work, and in verses 20-23, He prays for those who would come to believe through the work. In verses 20-23, Jesus turns his attention to the world, and expresses his desire that the world will come to share in the knowledge of God that marks the life of the faith community (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 794). Gaebelein says that at this point, the burden of prayer is for unity. Jesus had already stressed the need for mutual love that would bind them together for their common task. He further shares that He was not calling for uniformity, since He and the Father are distinct from each other and have different functions; nor was he calling for agreement in external opinion. He predicted that the unity would be one nature; for He and the Father, while distinguishable in person, are one being (Gaebelein 1981, 167).

The purpose of this unity is the maintenance of a convincing testimony before the world to the revelation of God in Christ and to His love for the disciples. Gaebelin (1981, 167). It was Jesus' desire that the disciples and the faith community emulate that same love and unity. This prayer for unity had an evangelistic purpose--so that the world may believe that God the Father sent his divine Son (Hughes and Laney 1990, 481). Jesus wanted the disciples to behold His glory as proof of His eternal oneness with the Father. Sloyan explains that this glory is proof that God loved Christ before the foundation of the world. Jesus knew the Father loved Him before the foundation of the world which denotes that unity was a priority in the Father and Son's relationship (Sloyan 1988, 196). Jesus prayed for His disciples and future believers that they too would be one as He and the Father were one. Jesus desired that this show of unity would send a signal to the world that the Father had sent Him.

This prayer was a plea for unity among believers and calls on God to establish a holy people of believers in God through Jesus (Sloyan 1988, 196). Burge shares that Jesus' prayer connects the unity of believers to their interior spiritual life as Jesus desired that the oneness, we experience with him should lead to a oneness that we should experience with one another (Burge 2000, 479). Jesus' plea for unity and oneness reflects the priority of intimacy.

Summary

The Scriptures allowed us to have a better understanding of the place and purpose of prayer in the life of the believer. Jesus' prayer life revealed that prayer should be a priority in our lives. As such, the priority He placed on prayer allowed Him to develop a level of intimacy that gave Him the confidence, assurance, and conviction that God would hear and answer His prayers. Jesus' steadfast and consistent prayer life further demonstrates the discipline it takes to develop a personal connection with the Father. John 11:42-43 and John 17:21-22 reveal and validate the authentic and intimate relationship that Jesus and the Father shared, as Jesus' relationship with the Father reflects the type of intimacy that it takes for us to know and develop a personal relationship with the Father.

Brown shares that the Son became man so that people can know the Father as He is reflected in His Son. The Semitic use of "know" implies intimacy and union; here it is union with the source of life, the Father who speaks through the Word (Brown 1988, 84). Burge further explains that the Hebrew notion of knowing encompasses experience and intimacy, and for Christians this means obedience to and love for God (Burge 2000, 463). This lets us know that we too can share in the remarkable intimacy and unity that is reflected in the relationship between the Father and Son as we come to know God and align our will with His.

John 11:42-43 and John 17:21-22 reveal the solid connection between the Father and Son, indicating that Jesus' prayer was one of thanksgiving (*eucharisteo*) for his relationship with God (Culpepper and O'Day 1995, 9:691). There was no wrestling in prayer, but simple words of thanksgiving. He simply

thanked God for the congruence and harmony between them. The Scriptures lay a foundation for the project as it demonstrates Jesus' steadfast and sincere commitment to the Father. It also validates that we must be committed to a foundation of prayer if we desire to experience a relationship of love, intimacy, and unity with the Father. Jesus' prayer life has provided us a marvelous example of a sacred, continual, intimate relationship with the Father that shows us the weight and value of prayer, as well as the power and confidence that comes because of a result of a life dedicated to prayer.

The Theological section will explore another aspect of prayer as I begin with the question: What is Formational Prayer? while also explaining what it is not. A follow up question that will be addressed is: Why Formational Prayer? The beliefs and opinions of the theologians will be explored regarding the purpose and power of Formational Prayer as we share in fellowship and communion with the Father. Consideration will be given to what it takes to build and grow confident faith through Formational Prayer, and the section will conclude by giving thought to the therapeutic value of Formational Prayer as we discover how we can nurture our interior life through Formational Prayer.

Theological Foundation

The central focus of the Christian life is growing closer to Jesus Christ and being transformed into His likeness. This is a life-long pilgrimage, measured not by how much knowledge a person has or how well he behaves. It prioritizes knowing and reflecting Jesus. (Wardle 2001, 28)

What is Formational Prayer?

As we study the life of Jesus, we discover the transforming power that comes from living a disciplined life of prayer and the faith it takes to experience that power as our faith connects us with God. R. C. Sproul, a Reformed theologian and pastor in the Presbyterian Church, expresses that we come to know God and to be known by Him, so prayer can be defined as varied and multidimensional (Kistler 2011, 3). As we explore the impact and power of prayer, we will also look at another dimension of prayer known as Formational or Inner Healing Prayer. We will also ask the relevant question: “What is Formational Prayer?” Foster defines Formational Prayer by sharing:

Prayer changes things, people say. It also changes us. The latter goal is the more imperative. The primary purpose of prayer is to bring us into such a life of communion with the Father that, by the power of the Spirit, we are increasingly conformed to the image of the Son. This process of transformation is the focus of Formation Prayer. (Foster 1992, 57)

Foster shares that each day in a new and living way the brooding Spirit of God teaches us. As we begin to follow these nudgings of the Spirit, we are changed from the inside out (Foster 1992, 57). The rule or vow of Benedictine life had a term for this dynamic of change – *conversation morum*. It is a hard phrase to translate. Negatively, it means death to the status quo, death to things as they have always been. Positively, it means constant change, constant conversion, constant openness to the movings of the Spirit (Foster 1992, 57). As the Spirit’s work is manifested in us, we respond in cooperation to God’s desires for us. This transformation or change becomes evident from the inside out.

Another term that is used interchangeably with Formational Prayer is “Inner Healing Prayer,” or as Kraft refers to it “deep-level healing.” It has been practiced as far back as the mid-sixties, and he credits Agnes Sanford as one of the first to start this type of ministry in 1966. Other early contributors are David Seamands, LeAnne Payne, John and Paula Sanford, and Matthew and Dennis Linn (Kraft 2010, 20). They along with other practitioners have given us various definitions for inner or deep healing.

Seamands defines inner healing as “a form of Christian counseling and prayer which focuses the healing power of the Spirit on certain types of emotional/spiritual problems.” He relates inner healing to traditional counseling by suggesting that this approach “is one and only one of such ministries; and should never be made the one and only form, for such overemphasis leads to exaggerations and misuse” (Seamands 1985, 54). John and Paula Sanford see such a ministry as aimed at the transformation of the inner being of a person, a ministry to the inner person (Kraft 2010, 20). Betty Tapscott definition which encompasses the healing of the spirit as well describes inner healing as: “The healing of the inner [person]: the mind, the emotions, the painful memories, the dreams. It is the process through prayer whereby we are set free from resentment, rejection, self-pity, depression, guilt, fear, sorrow, hatred, condemnation, or worthlessness, etc.” (Tapscott 1987, Pg. 13). Seamands expands on the definition of deep-level healing by adding several primary characteristics which are as follows:

Deep-level healing is a ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit aimed at bringing healing and freedom to the whole person, spirit, emotions and body. Since the majority of human ailments stem from damage in the emotional and spiritual areas, we focus there, seeking to bring the power of Christ to bear on the roots from which such damage springs. These roots are stored in the memories carried, largely unconsciously, by hurting people. Deep-level healing focuses, therefore, on healing the hurts held in those memories, often by helping people to experience Jesus' presence in the memories and to give him the hurts. Specific problems often encountered are unforgiveness, anger, depression, shame, guilt, low self-esteem, fear, worry, lust, rejection, deception and the like. (Kraft 2010, 21)

Formational prayer is a powerful ministry of the Lord's grace to the broken (Wardle 2001, 144). The Hebrew word for broken is *shabar*. It means "to have one's heart broken, maimed, cripple, wrecked, crushed, and/or shattered (Rustenbach 2011, 30). People are not simply a collection of various parts. Each part of a person is intricately connected to many other parts so that all function together. Formational Prayer or inner healing is about the whole person as it aims to make people who are hurting whole again (Kraft 2010, 23). Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a level of intimacy is developed that allows the individual to have an encounter with Christ that changes and transforms their life.

As I further explore the foundation of Formational or inner healing prayer, I also want to clarify what it is not. Foster notes that Formational Prayer is not about perfectionism, but about progress in the spiritual life (Foster, 1992, 58). According to Wardle, Formational Prayer is far more than a technique, and can be defined as: "A ministry of the Holy Spirit moving through the caregiver, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ, into the place of pain and brokenness" (Wardle 2001, 13). He further explains that Formational Prayer is more important than helping people solve problems and coping with the trials of

life. In addition, this ministry is far more than one of correct information, good advice, and a listening ear (Wardle 2001, 22). Formational Prayer is not a quick fix, but a process that requires effort on the part of the individual seeking help.

Kraft contends that Formational or inner healing prayer is not a step-by-step, one size fits all formula to be followed each time. Even if a procedure is developed, Kraft cautions that the “Moses’ mistake” not be made – which is the tendency to simply do what was done before instead of listening for God’s voice in a particular situation (Kraft 2010, 241). Kraft concludes that it is our responsibility to minister, not to heal. It is God’s responsibility to heal and our privilege to help (Kraft 2010, 262). Formational Prayer is thoroughly dependent upon the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that initiates, directs, and empowers the entire process. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we become change agents.

Why Formational Prayer?

Willard contends that genuine transformation of the whole person into the goodness and power seen in Jesus and His Abba Father – the only transformation adequate to the human self – remains the necessary goal of human life (Willard 2002, 20). The Holy Spirit is key to the transformation process. *Pneuma* in Greek means not only “spirit” but also “wind,” “breath,” and “air.” For the Christian, the Father sends the *pneuma* to endow us with new life, to make us new creations (Linn 1984, 10). Prayer ministry endeavors to utilize the gifts of the Holy Spirit to their fullest (Kraft 2010, 32). MacNutt notes that what is not transformed through Christ’s redeeming our pain through the cross is

usually transmitted to the people we live with (MacNutt 2010, 81). Therefore, there must be a partnership with God in this reprogramming and renewal process.

Seamand lifts the question, What is our part in the healing of our damaged emotions? The Holy Spirit is, indeed, the divine counselor, the divine psychiatrist, who gets a hold of our problem on the other end (Seamand 1981, 23). This inrush of God's Holy Spirit heals us – naturally. But it does far more than that. Indeed, as we pursue the spiritual life, we lose sight of physical benefits in our increasing vision of God Himself. We find after a while that we desire God more for His own sake than for ours (Sanford 1972, 60). The priority of Formational Prayer is to position people for a transforming encounter with Christ. Our part in the healing of our damaged emotions is to embrace the encounter through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is there we find a newfound intimacy with the Lord.

Payne shares that those of us who minister to wounded souls realize the miracle that happens in the life of a sufferer once he or she gets a true vision of God the Father, and the affirming love of the Father starts streaming toward that person (Payne 1995, 135). Payne further shares that a disciple is one who has been unchained himself – he then unbinds others. That is what we do when we “carry the cross” (Payne 1991, 159). Liberation comes as we have a passion to help those in need and as we minister out of our own pain. God uses human brokenness as a launching pad to alert people to their need for ministry (Kraft 2010, 23). Kraft suggests that God is involved in every facet of human experience whether or not we recognize His presence. God is in everything that

truly helps people, even if the vehicle is medicine or people, and even if we can explain the part of the process scientifically (Kraft 2010, 23). Through Formational Prayer, we come to understand that God can use brokenness in any form to bring about a greater intimacy with Him and that He is presence in every moment and in every situation of our lives. He uses various methods and means to accomplish His purpose in our lives.

The Purpose of Formational Prayer

For people of prayer are, in the final analysis, people who are able to recognize in others the face of the Messiah. They are people who make visible what was hidden, who make touchable what was unreachable. People of prayer are leaders precisely because their articulation of God's work within themselves they can lead others away from confusion and towards clarification; through their compassion they can guide others out of the closed circuits of in-groups and towards the wider world of humanity; and through their critical contemplation they can convert convulsive destructiveness into creative work for the new world to come. (Nouwen 1972, 52)

Nouwen's analysis speaks to the caregiver's integrated participation in the lives of the broken. Formational Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit moving through the caregiver. Through the Holy Spirit, the caregiver becomes an instrument of the Lord's healing power. The purpose of Formational or Inner Healing Prayer is not to go into the person's past to dig up hidden and sordid details of a person's life. It is not recalling or recounting the details, garbage, and trash of a person's life that can be remembered, but it is discarding of all of the garbage that is there. It is allowing Jesus to shine the spotlight on those dark area where the enemy has hidden painful memories and hurts. It is allowing Jesus to walk you through it hand-in-hand, and being there with you in every situation and circumstance (Taspscott 1981, 15).

Formational Prayer is a gift of healing that God has entrusted to us as His people. It is God's Presence in our midst and not our own efforts (Payne 1995, 35). The caregiver's relationship with the Lord is paramount and key to the Formational Prayer experience and impacts the caregiver's ministry. Caregivers must themselves be mature and always maturing in Christ, and their full trust and dependence is upon Him.

Caregivers must acknowledge that they can do nothing apart from God, and caregivers must be open to the Holy Spirit who knows what is pertinent to the transformation process. As God uses caregivers, they must be mindful that we are frail, flawed, imperfect human beings. In order to hear God's voice, we must possess a spirit of humility which involves give-and-take, a willingness to lead but also follow, and a position to take initiative while being fully disposed to defer (Rustenbach 2011, 152). Payne contends that:

There is a need to be aware that the work is not ours, but God's, then the person's relief and healing does not hinge upon us. The hard thing for many Christians who pray with others to realize is that we cannot always (much less immediately) relieve or even appreciably diminish people's suffering. We cannot get in there and "fix things," not even with an instant powerful prayer (although sometimes we do in fact see God do it!) If we try taking the initiative out of God's hand, we will fail. (Payne 1995, 122)

Without hope, we will never be able to become personally involved in another individual's life or realize the value and meaning they possess. This hope is not anchored in the soul of an individual, and it has the capacity to stretch beyond the limitations of our own psychological boundaries. According to Nouwen, it is God's self-disclosure in history (Nouwen 1992, 82). That hope not

only humbles us, but also changes us and our perception of God's creation.

Formational Prayer infuses us with a genuine selfless interest in other people.

The Power of Formational Prayer

The Holy Spirit supplies us with the power we need as He did Jesus. Our power comes from our intimacy with the Father through Jesus which allows us the authority to use that power. The time that Jesus spent with the Father strengthened Him to do the Father's will. He depended on the Spirit for power and on the Father for guidance (Kraft 2010, 236). The Holy Spirit is the one that directs our healing power. As we listen for His voice, He will give us the discernment to know to who to pray for (Sanford 1972, 98). We equip ourselves to carry God's love and forgiveness into the hearts and minds of others. We are, as Henri Nouwen has said, wounded healers: "Those who proclaim liberation are called to make their wounds into a source of healing power" (Payne 1991, 159). That power touches the lives of the broken and restores hope.

As we make ourselves available to God, we become ministers of His healing love and power. We learn how to invite the Presence of the Lord into our midst as we become vessels through which He can use and minister through. This allows God to begin to love the world through us (Payne 1995, 36). Payne shares that the wonderful thing about Formational Prayer is that we are given the power to recognize and hate the delusion – and to walk away from it. And we are given the power to accept the true center and walk into it (Payne 1995, 84). Formational Prayer allows us to become a conduit through which God's healing power and grace flows.

Formational Prayer has the power to change an individual's life. Crabb shares that as we understand the process of change, we must realize that deep change come about less because of what we try to do and how hard we try to do it, and more because of our willingness to face the realities of our own internal life (Crabb 1988, 175). According to Wardle, Formational Prayer is transformational and has the power to position an individual for change. Wardle shares:

Ministry from a transformation paradigm moves beyond knowledge to change. Skill and understanding are important, but a deeper ongoing transformation must be taking place in the caregiver's life. This is a work of the Holy Spirit that happens when the caregiver asks God to take the information of faith beyond the mind and into the heart. Change is not a matter of behavior modification, but instead character transformation. That is a work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers the caregiver to live a new and holy life. (Wardle 2001, 30)

A renewed faith creates a shift to a transformational paradigm which moves us toward greater intimacy with the Lord. An individual's life will change and come into alignment with what the Lord's desires when there is a concentrated effort on knowing God (Wardle 2001, 28). As we continue to grow, we will begin to better know and understand God for who He really is.

Faith Through Formational Prayer

Foster sees Formational or Healing Prayer as a part of the normal Christian life and believes that it should not be elevated above any other ministry in the community of faith, nor should it be undervalued; rather it should be kept in proper balance. This should not surprise us, for it is a clear recognition of the incarnational nature of our faith. (Foster 1992, 203). In other words, Formational

Prayer should not be seen as a panacea or cure all for all pain and brokenness. In its proper place, Formational Prayer has the power and ability to change transform an individual life as they cooperate with the process. It is one only one approach and should never be seen as the only form and means of healing.

Foster shares the building blocks of faith by saying trust precede faith, and that trust is what propels your spiritual life forward. Trust is confidence in the character of God. It allows you to understand that God even when you are not sure of God's plan for your life, and even when you don't fully understand what God is doing in your life, you can fully trust that God is not out to harm you, but to do you good. This is trust (Foster 1992, 24). Linn points out that believing that we already possess God's healing power, we fight our tendency to doubt which limits our cooperation with God's desire to heal (Linn 1984, 47). Faith is a way that we affirm our healing. Faith anchors us during times and seasons of doubt and fear.

It takes a step of faith to experience the transforming power that comes through Formational Prayer. The way we think serves as a monitor for the results we receive. Sanford says that we must also gently and patiently teach ourselves a new thought-habit. We must re-educate the subconscious mind, replacing every thought of fear with a thought of faith, every thought of illness with a thought of health, every thought of death with a thought of life. In other words, we must learn faith (Sanford 1972, 33). Sanford continues by sharing God has made ample provision for our every need. He has supplied two specific remedies for almost every disease: one is inherent in the properties of nature and discoverable by science, and the other is hidden in the being of man and

discoverable by faith. Sanford suggests that man must make the effort to find them, harness them, and use them (Sanford 1972, 89). Our faith is the key to our discovery and the hidden things of God.

Nouwen notes that for a person with a deep-rooted faith in the value and meaning of life, every experience holds a new promise, every encounter carries a new insight, and every event brings a new message, but as Sanford pointed out, these promises, insights, and messages must be discovered and made visible (Nouwen 1972, 80). Nouwen contends that while personal concern is sustained by a continuously growing faith in the value and meaning of life, the deepest motivation for leading our fellow human beings to the future is hope. Our hope produces possibilities that help us to look beyond the fulfillment of our own wants and desires and offers a passion and vision for helping others to see beyond their suffering and pain (Nouwen 1982, 81). Payne shares a writing from Bro. Lawrence to a friend that was suffering. He writes:

God seems to have endless ways of drawing us to Himself. Perhaps His most unusual way is to hide Himself from you. What can we do when we can no longer find the Lord? The key is found in the word faith. Faith is the one thing, perhaps the only thing, which will not fail you in such a time. Let faith be your support. The very foundation of your confidence must be your faith. (Payne 1995, 31)

The Therapeutic Value of Formational Prayer

Kraft shares the relationship between deep healing and professional counseling. When asked to explain the difference, he says he sees the two approaches as being more complementary than radically different, especially if the counselor is a Christian (Kraft 2010, 27). He notes that like professional counseling, deep-level healing involves delving into the counselee's emotional

and spiritual problems and suggests that deep-level healing is more than counseling as known in secular practice because it involves prayer and experiencing the presence of Jesus as major components of the process (Kraft 2010, 27). Both goes hand-in-hand and enhances the Formational Counseling approach.

He admits that though we seek to empower the human techniques with prayer, professional counselors usually have more techniques at their disposal. Professionals have a wider and broader knowledge of the workings of the human psyche to draw from (Kraft 2020, 27). He views the idea psychologist/counselor as one who is trained in the field but also work in the power of Jesus. A counselee who has had the benefit of professional help and deep-level healing often develops a new level of wellness that then becomes the new level from which slower process of working with the professional counselor continues (Kraft 2010, 28). Kraft cites Seamand's conclusion by saying:

Because the prayer session is so important, it is essential that it be planned properly. The session requires unhurried time and an unpressured schedule. This means that it should not simply be an hour worked into a regular counseling schedule. It should not be subject to clock-watching by anyone. (Kraft 2010, 29)

Kraft suggests that this is a ministry involving spiritual power. The roots and cause of the damage are addressed spiritually, and the feelings change from hurt to healed. Most of the techniques we use have come from professional counseling but are combined with the presence and power of Jesus Christ (Kraft 2010, 21). Payne asserts that we cannot magically take away suffering. No matter how hard we try, we cannot take away feelings of abandonment. Before

healing can take place, their task, hard as it may be, is to face the inner loneliness. Thanks be to God, He knows and understands all this, and He is the righteous judge, too loving to remove the necessary task that precedes healing (Payne 1995, 122). While those lonely experiences may seem unnecessary, they are a part of the healing process and serve as an essential and key component to healing. We take comfort in knowing that we are never alone in those experiences because God's comfort and healing presence is with us.

Crabb notes as a counselor, he has worked with hundreds of people and feel that unless the church begins to encourage an inside look into hurting people lives, then professional counselors will need to continue to play a vital role in promoting deep change (Crabb 1990, 48). Crabb also suggests that more often than not, psychological efforts do not resolve the deepest issues, which are spiritual. Change through counseling often involves working through deep problems rather than repenting of deep sin. The message is that power comes through self-awareness and psychological maturity (Crabb 1990, 49). Both are necessary components for Formational Counseling as we consider embracing counseling and healing prayer as a channel of his embracing touch.

Summary

The scholars and theologians demonstrated the importance and essence of Formational Prayer, and why it is an essential element to our emotional healing and spiritual survival. The scholars reminded us that God's healing power is manifested through Formational Prayer, and faith is the springboard that catapults us into the realm of possibility, hope, and expectation. In addition, the

therapeutic benefit of Formational Prayer and the significant value offers renewal and restoration for the interior life.

MacNutt shares that not everything that happens to us is traumatic. Many times, it is just something that was missing in our relationships that need healing (MacNutt 2010, 87). Through Formational Prayer, transformation takes place. Transformation is that process of death and rebirth whereby what was our weakness becomes our strength. It is preceded by brokenness (Sanford 2007, 18). That transformation allows us to know that nothing in our lives is ever wasted. God's grace is so complete that we understand that there is no event in our lives without which we would be better off. The Holy Spirit is always an active part of the healing and transformation Ministry. Formational Prayer is a powerful ministry tool that is used to promote healing and transformation.

As I turn my focus to the historical context, I begin by examining the Reformation Movement and acknowledging the impact of women, especially clergy wives who through prayer and sheer determination persevered through societal obstacles, impediments, and hinderances to emerge as women of power and influence. I will also highlight African American women who through their own struggles and pain relied on their connection and relationship with God to succor and sustain them. They highly valued Formational Prayer as they were spirit led and spirit directed to lead others through their pain and brokenness. I will focus on the various roles all these women played in the lives of their churches, and society.

Historical Foundation

Long before feminists began to speak out about women's rights, sprouts of equality in the church pre-dated the women's liberation movement by several centuries (London and Wiseman 1995, 18). Going back as far as the late second and early third centuries, from an African American perspective, Formational Prayer pre-dates Christianity. As Formational Prayer is a ministry of the Holy Spirit that allows us to become an instrument of hope and healing, there were African American women during those centuries that were mystics, visionaries, and prophets who were so energized to utilize their gifts for the common good. One such woman was Perpetua, a visionary and woman of prayer who lived in Carthage, a North African City. Her faith, inner strength, and wisdom gave testimony and witness to the grace of God and encouraged and edified believers. Even though Perpetua was imprisoned for her faith, she continued to use it as an opportunity to help and bless others. Madigan shares Perpetua words:

After a few days the adjutant Pudens, who was in charge of the prison, sensed there was some great power within us and he began to show us great respect. He admitted others to see us so that both we and they could be mutually strengthened by our company. (Madigan 1998, 18)

Perpetua was eventually martyred for her faith, but even so, she believed in the power of her prayers and visions which allowed her to impart strength and hope into the lives of others.

"For generations, in out of the way places and without much fanfare, women of God have shared ministry posts, social prominence, and phenomenal spiritual influence alongside their pastor/husbands" (London and Wiseman 1995, 18). The Historical section will explore the 16th century Protestant Reformation

movement and the impact women made during that time period. It continues with a review of the role of clergy wives in that era by examining the lives of Katharina von Bora, Anna Bullinger, and Katharina Schultz Zell. Through boldness, devotion, and determination, these women provided exceptional support to their husbands and the movement, and in doing so, made their mark in history. We will look at how each woman, in her own way, navigated through the controls and constraints imposed on them by traditional societal roles, yet in various ways, found their voices and remained active and relevant.

The Genesis of the Protestant Reformation Movement

As we look at the lives of women, specifically the pastors' wives who served their husbands and churches, we begin by exploring the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century Reformation. Prior to this time, most clergy were Catholic, and as such, were celibate men. That was a turbulent time, and yet God's hand can be seen shaping and turning the events of this era (Hallahan 2012, 5). The Reformation was the birth of Protestantism and was considered by many to be the greatest move of God since the time of Pentecost. It dealt with how humans might be reconciled to God--how they can be saved (Hallahan 2012, 5). The Reformation, in short, was a rediscovery of the gospel and its infiltration into a dark world (Hallahan 2012, 6). Hallahan also describes the Reformation as the biblical indictment against the culture's bad answers (Hallahan 2012, 6). Hallahan advocates for studying the Reformation and sees it as a singular movement of God for the following reasons: first, it shows us who God is and who we are; secondly, it allows us to see God's sovereignty over

history; and third, it shows us how God uses flawed vessels to accomplish a significant victory over error (Hallahan 2012, 6). The impact of the Reformation extends well beyond the 16th century. It ushered in a move of God that shaped and transformed early Protestantism.

According to Alister McGrath, the event that is traditionally held to mark the beginning of the European Reformation, and hence the birth of Protestantism, took place at about midday on October 31, 1517, on the eve of All Soul's Day (McGrath 2007, 45). Martin Luther was seen as the one who touched the central core of the medieval faith as he supplanted papal authority with biblical authority (Hallahan 2007, 43). According to McGrath, in his 95 Theses, Luther set out a series of objections to the selling of indulgences that can be reduced to two broad principles (McGrath 2007, 48). First, they were financially exploitative of the German nation, and second, Luther argued that the Pope had no authority over purgatory (McGrath 2007, 48). The posting of Luther's 95 Theses was the event that precipitated the Protestant Reformation and ignited the fire of change that caused Luther to be attacked from every area of the Empire (Hallahan 2012, 56). Luther's courage withstood the controversy and contention and prevailed in a way that allowed for a positive and constructive renewal of the church.

The Impact of Women on the Movement

Libanius, the Greek rhetorician and philosopher from the fourth century, coined the phrase "What women these Christians have!" He used this phrase to describe women in the early centuries of church history who were married to

Christian workers (London and Wiseman 1995, 17). London and Wiseman share that the phrase “What women these Christians have!” can be applied to pastors’ wives in every generation regardless of the role they serve in ministry, be it sacrificer, supporter, or spiritual influencer. In nearly every century, pastors’ wives have exhibited incredible strength as they have partnered in ministry (London and Wiseman 1995, 18). Their contributions have impacted the lives of their families and churches.

Historian Derek Wilson describes this period as a time when women had limited choices. The church all but silenced women, as it was not appropriate for them to exercise authority or have a voice or say in matters of faith. That is not to say that none experienced a genuine call to the life of prayer. Society has always had a special regard for female visionaries, ecstasies, and prophets, but such holy women were rare (Wilson 2016, 8). Even though this was a period where women were not regarded as equals or partners with their husbands, there were still women who managed to utilize their God-given gifts and talents and played a vital, if not, prominent role in the life of the church (Wilson 2016, 8). Some of the women did not permit the confines and constraints of societal norms to prohibit them from expressing their faith and creative abilities.

Instead of merely passively accepting the confessions of men or the various teachings and practices imposed upon them “from above,” women had choices to make on their own, and they did (Stjerna 2009, 2015). The majority of Protestant women contributed significantly in the private domain as individuals accepting the new faith and (as was expected of them) as parents of new

Protestants (Stjerna 2009, 2015). Some women made significant contributions as explained by Stjerna:

A small minority of exceptionally educated and positioned, or exceptionally fired up, women interpreted the principles of *sola scriptura* and the “priesthood of all believers” as entailing women’s fuller inclusion in the Protestant mission: they took it upon themselves to envision new theologies, propose reforms, and write, teach, and preach--none of which was expected from women, of course. (Stjerna 2009, 214)

Wilson adds that some could grasp scholarly concepts, and others had political power and influence (Wilson 2016, 9). Some women understood their value and worth and summoned the courage to make their presence known during the initial years of the Reformation. Another special category of women that made an impact during this transitional time period is clergy wives.

According to London and Wiseman, the early church had capable women. They share that impressive and accurate historical evidence supports the idea that pastor’ wives served as VIPs in church life well before the fourth century (London and Wiseman 1995, 18).

The Impact of Clergy Wives During the Reformation Era

Stjerna shares a statement by Clark, Richardson, and Weiser that pastors’ wives were shone as examples of Protestant teachings on the holiness of homes and, therefore, taught Protestant spirituality beginning with the cradle. Stjerna further states that they submitted to the same rules as other women; however, humility and total support of their spouses was expected, even though they were gifted and talented in their own rights (Stjerna 2009, 219). Their God given talents were stymied by the expectations of a patriarchal society.

Wilson reports that as Protestant theology rejected the Catholic concept of celibate priesthood, the Reformation leaders encouraged Christian ministers to take wives. As a result, a whole new social category came into being--the clergy helpmeet (Wilson 2016, 9). This new phenomenon allowed this unique group of women to establish their own guidelines, and some even placed themselves in positions of prominence as joint pastor with their husband. Some chose to remain in the background as silent supporters but were still considered influential as educators to theirs and others' children (Wilson 2016, 9). Pastors' wives were finally being seen and heard.

As Wilson explains, the past always plants its footprints on the present. It was impossible for the realignment of gender roles during the first phase of the Reformation not to have an ongoing influence (Wilson 2016, 12). According to Wilson, during the years and decades that followed, women retreated into the background--or so the record suggests (Wilson 2016, 12). However, Wilson points out that except for a few, women no longer wrote, preached, or led congregations; however, their influence became clear once we look beneath the surface (Wilson 2016, 12). One clergy wife that made a lasting impact on the Protestant church was Katharina von Bora Luther.

Katharina von Bora Luther

Tucker and Wilson explored the life and ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther, (1499-1552) wife of Martin Luther. Prior to her marriage to Luther, Katharina Luther was one of the 11 nuns that Luther helped to escape from the convent. The Luther's marriage in 1525 produced criticism and controversy in

ecclesiastical circles all over Europe, but also had a long-term impact on the Protestant church. Their marriage was a prototype of the numerous clergy marriages that eventually became the norm (Wilson 2016, 31). According to Tucker, a church historian and author, Katharina, wife of Martin Luther, was by any measure the First Lady of the Reformation (Tucker 2017, 8). Tucker sees her as a woman for all seasons. She believed that her life embodies all that is human and belongs to every culture and generation, such as struggles, sorrow, joy, second-guessing, difficult decisions, sleepless nights, hectic schedules, family illness, mental health challenges, and death of children. Tucker states that these challenges are not gender related, but human problems (Tucker 2017, 10). In other words, these conditions are not unique to Katharina's position, but are life challenges experienced by the average person.

Mrs. Luther developed her domestic calling--that is, she did not include preaching, teaching, or writing in her myriad of responsibilities (Stjema 2012, 7). "Katie (which is one of the names Luther used to refer to Katharina) was well educated at Brehna and Marienthron, and in later years could participate in scholarly discussions in Latin in the Luther household" (Smith 1999, 747). Wilson states that Katharina Luther was lively, sharp-tongued, and held strong opinions, which she did not hesitate to share, which caused her to attract just as many enemies as she did friends (Wilson 2016, 42). Even so, Katharina Luther's support was paramount to her husband's continuing work of the Reformation.

Martin Luther often had bouts with depression. The story is told that one day when Luther had fallen into a deep black depression, his wife confronted

Luther by putting on a black dress. He asked her, “who died?” She responded, “God.” He preceded to tell her how foolish she was, to which she replied, “It is true, God must have died, or Dr. Luther would not be so mournful” (Tucker 2011, 161). Katharina understood how to keep Martin encouraged, and she did it well.

Diane Severance, whose work looks for feminist threads in the history of the church, states that together Katie and Martin elevated both marriage and motherhood as natural reflections of God’s creation (Severance 2011, 140). Katie and Martin were married 20 years, and their family life of mutual help and support for each other in the Lord became a model for Christian marriage as well as for pastoral marriage (Severance 2011, 140). Even though Katharina von Bora Luther left no scholarly writings, her life may be seen as an object lesson of her husband’s theories. “Had Katherine von Bora Luther been unequal to her role as the wife of Martin Luther...their marriage might have injured the Protestant cause, but she honored her position and is revered” (Smith 1999, 767). As such, Katharina Luther occupies a unique place in church history and a secure position in women’s history (Smith 1999, 768). Her life is a model and example of a women who understood the power of her position.

Katharina Schutz Zell

Another woman of the Reformation, Katharina Schutz Zell, (1497-1562) was married to Matthew Zell, an early Protestant Reformer and Lutheran pastor of the St. Lawrence parish in Strasbourg. Catherine regarded herself as a partner in ministry, and her husband endorsed her commitment (Wilson 2016, 34). Even though her gender presented limitations, she was still seen as a powerful writer

and voice in Strasbourg (Stjerna 2012, 1). She had a sharp tongue, courage, a keen wit, and extensive knowledge of Scripture (Severance 2011, 151). Her first writing was a defense of her own marriage against the Catholic Church's opposition to clergy marriages. She argued for the good of marriage in general and clergy in particular (Stjerna 2012, 1). She vigorously defended her right to speak on behalf of her charges. When she was encouraged by the bishop to heed Paul's instructions to be silent, she responded:

I would remind you of the word of this same apostle that in Christ there is no longer male nor female, and of the prophecy of Joel: "I will pour forth my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy." I do not pretend to be John the Baptist rebuking the Pharisees. I do not claim to be Nathan upbraiding David, I aspire only to be Balaam's ass, castigating his master. (Wilson 2016, 34)

Katharina Zell also composed several short works. She turned her works or letters into what she called a little book, which allowed her to pursue multiple intellectual projects. Her letters fulfilled the functions of sermons, public speech, personal communication, autobiography, theological treatise, and biblical exposition. "The only exception was personal communications in Epistolary otherwise; all of the genres were traditionally the domain of men, and were performed publicly" (Wiethaus 1993, 126). She was competent and confident in her abilities.

Severance states that Katharina Zell had a kind and caring heart, and worked hard for others' good (Severance 2011, 151). She defended and visited the outcast and provided Scripture interpretation to those needing consolation and pastoral care (Stjerna 2012, 1). For decades she served the church in Strasbourg with her charitable acts as well as her various pastoral writings, which

included a hymnbook for catechetical and lay proclamation purposes (Stjema 2012, 1). Katharina was notably gifted and compassionate, and those qualities compelled her to minister and serve the church as well as her community.

Katharina was involved in ways that were not always well received. She broke unspoken and written rules and codes that were established by decree, and she remained unapologetic in her determination to show love and compassion to all in need (Wilson 2016, 38). Wilson states that her assertiveness was a result of her passion and love for God and His people. Her heart for God came from her motherhood experience (Wilson 2016, 42). She developed a call for herself that other women could relate to, the call of a “church mother,” who without degrees or ordination could participate in the various aspects of church life (Stjema 2012, 1). Katharina was committed to ecumenical fellowship and, at times, hosted conversations between leading theologians of the time toward that purpose (Stjema 2012, 1). Unfortunately, she received no recognition or appreciation for her ministry and was often accused of promoting discord in the church. Even so, she reflected on her life with these words:

Since then, the Lord drew me from my mother’s womb and taught me from my youth, I have diligently busied myself with His church and its household affairs, working gladly and constantly. I have dealt faithfully according to the measure of my understanding and the grace given me, without deception...So, constantly, joyously, and strongly, with all good will have I given my body, strength, honor, and goods for you, dear Strasbourg; I have made them a footstool for you...My devout husband too was very heartily glad to allow this; and he also loved me very much for it...And I also have loved and served you, Strasbourg, from my youth, as I still also do in my old age and almost sixty years. (Stjema 2012, 1)

Although Katharina existed in a male-dominated society, her influence and status extended beyond the domestic realm. Her convictions often led her down

unconventional pathways of defiance, yet her love for God and servant's heart allowed her to minister compassionately to those in need.

Anna Adischwyler Bullinger

Finally, we will examine the life of Anna Adlischwyler Bullinger, (1504 - 1564) wife of Heinrich Bullinger, pastor of the Cathedral Church at Zurich. Like Katie Luther, Anna had been a nun before hearing the teachings of the Reformation. When she and other nuns heard the Scriptures clearly explained, they realized that covenant life was not something required in Scripture for a spiritual life (Severance 2011, 143). While others left, she remained at the convent to care for her mother who was a resident there (Severance 2011, 143). She was introduced to Bullinger by the chaplain at the convent and corresponded until he proposed to her. They married two years later after the death of her mother (Severance 2011, 143). Her devotion and compassionate defined her.

Writing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, James Isaac Good explains that like several other of the Reformation wives, her house was not only a home to the homeless, but became virtually a sort of hotel, for to it came the refugees of every land (Good 2007, 39). Anna Bullinger was considered a ministering angel to the refugees, foreign visitors, and the poor at home (Good 2007, 42). She was known at Zurich by the name, so descriptive of her character, of "mother" (Good 2007, 43). And in foreign lands, by English, Italians, Dutch, and Germans, she was known and addressed by the title of "Zurich-Mother" (Good 2007, 43). She fulfilled her calling as she ministered to the needs of others.

Also, the voices and relevancy did not stop with the Reformation movement, but because of how history has been recorded, much of the powerful prayers of African American women have been lost. Maria Stewart who was a part of the Second Great Awakening in North America had no doubt about the mission that Jesus Christ called her to (Madigan 1998, 307). She was a woman of prayer and was not fearful of her calling but responded with great conviction (Madigan 1998, 309). In excerpts from Maria's prayer in Boston, 1831, she prays:

Cause your face to shine upon us and we shall be saved. Visit us with your salvation. Raise up sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah, and grant that there might be a mighty shaking of dry bones among us, and a great gathering in of souls. Enliven your confessing children! Now Lord, be pleased to grant that Satan's kingdom be destroyed and that the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ may be built up. May all nations and tongues and peoples be brought to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. Then may we at last meet around your throne and join in celebrating your praises (Gates 1988, 11).

Maria Stewart was an example of an African American woman who was spirit led and spirit directed. She was committed to a life of prayer and was dedicated to serving God and people.

There were also other amazing African American women that have risen out of the early abolitionist years. One was Sojourner Truth who was born as Belle in Hurley, New York. Sojourner had a vision that helped her understand God's love for her. Through another vision Sojourner experienced the voice of the Lord and had a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ that changed her life forever (Madigan 1998, 294). As a freed slave, Sojourner eventually made her way to New York where she felt God calling her to go to do a great work. Her work as a preacher and abolitionist touched the lives of thousands of people by

her testimony of Jesus Christ (Madigan 1998, 308). Sojourner was a voice for her generation. Her work brought support, inspiration, and encouragement to all who embraced it.

Summary

Katharina von Bora Luther, Anna Bullinger, and Katharina Schultz Zell served their husbands and ministries well. They were instrumental in helping their husbands to achieve their God-given assignments, and their husbands valued their contributions to their lives, as well as the church and society at large. They were intelligent, educated, articulate women, and the work they did added value to the lives of others. These pastor's wives found their voices by defying the traditional established roles and rules. These women shook off the limitations imposed by the church and did not allow their gender to dictate their agenda. "The strength and emotional mettle of women married to pastors is amazing and incredible wherever they appear in the halls of history" (London and Wiseman 1995, 17).

In addition, we briefly examined the lives of three African American women who through Formational Prayer and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit became instruments of help, hope, and healing to others. Perpetua, Maria, and Sojourner had an inner strength and wisdom that caused them to take a stand for truth. Maria writes:

Yes, Lord, I am able! Yet amid these bright hopes, I was filled with fears, lest my hopes were false. I found that sin still lurked within me. It was hard for me to renounce all for Christ when I saw my earthly prospects blasted. It was a bitter cup but I drank it. It was hard for me to say, "Thy will be done," yet I bent my knee and accepted all for my Redeemer's sake. (Madigan 1998, 317)

As a result of their faith and courage, they remained committed to the cause of Jesus Christ even during the difficult, demanding and distressing seasons of their lives.

In the next chapter I will review the literature of contemporary voices such as Serita Jakes, Susie Owens, Taffi Dollar, and Joyce Meyers. I will explore in general the numerous and diverse roles of women in modern society, and specifically the role of clergy spouses and the challenges and complexities they face in ministry life. I will engage with the voices to call attention to the importance of continual maintenance of pastors wives' emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being. Because the role of a pastor's wife can be challenging and at best complicated, the findings will underscore the need for maintaining an intimate relationship and connection with the Father through a confident and Formational Prayer as a tool of transformation and a resource for spiritual healing from the pain and hurt of ministry.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trust her; so, he will have no lack of gain, she does him good and not evil all the days of her life. (Proverbs 31:10-12)

The pastor's wife's position is a unique yet complex role that requires a special grace and presence that includes internal strength, self-assurance, and spiritual maturity. Growing up in the church, I have observed pastors' wives as an appendage or extension of their spouse. They catered to the needs of their husbands while quietly serving the church in unassuming roles. They did not serve in a leadership capacity but were seen more as followers or supporters. From my observation as a pastor's wife for over four decades in ministry, I can acknowledge and affirm that a pastor's wife's role is significant and essential. I have witnessed my role (as well as that of other pastors' wives) evolve as many have begun to discover their passion and voice in ministry.

This chapter will focus on several categories that speak to the many facets and dimensions of a woman's life, in addition to considering ingredients and essentials that are a part of the characteristics and components of the life of a pastor's wife. I will also explore the ways in which Formational Prayer can be an asset and benefit in the lives of pastor's wives as they allow the Holy Spirit to transform and change them. I will begin by defining and understanding the purpose and potential of a women's role in the world. Next, we will look at the call of women to leadership in society and ministry, and then continue by examining the multi-faceted role of women as pastors' wives. I acknowledge that while I am

cognizant that there are male clergy spouses, for the sake of this project, our focal point is on the experiences of pastors' wives. Much of the context will center on the African American pastor's wife's experience, and some of the features will include elements of her possibilities, partnership, and pain. I will review new concepts in ministry that include co-pastoring and shared partnership, while also exploring the importance of mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being in ministry. A part of the research will also focus on submission in marriage and ministry. I will conclude with the evolution of women, and the diversity, impact, and influence they bring to the future of ministry.

Women with Purpose and Potential

A woman's place is, before anything else, in God. It is in the way He created her, in the tremendous value He gives her, and in the purposes He has for her. Only when we grasp the implications of this truth will we resolve the controversy and conflict that surround the role of the woman in the world. (Munroe 2001, 28)

Miles Munroe believes that God designed women as an essential part of His creation, not an afterthought, but with her spirit-being to worship Him (Munroe 2001, 82). He further describes the complexities of women living in the 21st century, at best, difficult, and maintains that as women are trying to discover their place in the world, the struggle for their identity remains an issue. The failure to recognize the value and worth that God has placed within women can sometimes result in a loss of confidence, competence, and courage (Munroe 2001, 9). Rebecca Florence Osaigbovo aligns with Munroe's views of a woman's role and agrees that God designed women with a purpose that was paramount to His plan and adds that God uses women, not to the exclusion of men, but beside

them (Osaigbovo 1992, 180). Their support of one another should complement, compensate, and complete each other.

Wanda Taylor-Smith agrees with Munroe that women are beings created as such by God, neither by mistake nor as an afterthought, but by intention. Taylor-Smith quotes Carolyn Curtis James, as saying that we focus too much on the role of women after the Fall or entrance of sin. She stated that we need to turn our attention to what it was like before the Fall, to the original plan revealed in Genesis, and use that as our standard or goal (Taylor-Smith 2013, 68).

Glassman and Mitchell emphasize that women are extremely loved of God, and they have tremendously important purposes to fulfill in our communities and this country. They have the potential to be powerful keys in the hand of God (Mitchell and Glassman 2004, 60). Rebuli and Smith goes further in explaining a woman's role by adding that when a woman understands the reason for her creation as a woman, she will be able to build upon it as a foundation to establish her purpose and realize fulfillment in life as she is placed in different roles and positions (Rebuli and Smith 2009, 102). Women can often dismiss their exclusive and unique God-given purpose, talents, and abilities while settling for a routine and ordinary existence.

As we turn our attention to women in leadership roles, there have been dramatic and evident changes in women's role. The changes represent a shift in women's attitudes, and a change in the mindset of the church and society as women have found their voices.

Women Called to Leadership

It is not your job to change everyone's mind. It is your job to obey the Lord and do whatever He is calling you to do. (Cunningham and Hamilton 2000, 56)

Co-pastor Susie Owens supports Cunningham and Hamilton's assessment by saying women who know that God has called them to ministry service must not look for validation from others. They cannot let the opinions of others sway them or be their primary focus (Owens 2000, 22). She emphasizes they must believe that the mandate given to them is God-ordained and that they are called to serve God through whatever means He deems necessary (Owens 2000, 22). She further states, "Knowing that God has called her and is directing her steps, gives a level of confidence and assurance that helps her to understand that she is worthy of the call God has placed on her life" (Owens 2000, 18). Barbara Peacock agrees, and shares a quote by Simon Chan that says, "Knowing what God wants heightens rather than diminishes our responsibility" (Peacock 2020, 10). There is nothing more rewarding and freeing to a woman than knowing her purpose and calling in life.

In answering the question, "Why not Women?" Cunningham and Hamilton also agree with Owen's assessment and suggest that when God calls a woman, He also prepares, equips, and supplies her with the special grace she needs to fulfill her calling (Cunningham and Hamilton 2000, 49). As a woman remains submitted and committed to God's call, He empowers her well beyond her natural gifts and talents and anoints her to minister to specific individuals, needs, and occasions (Cunningham and Hamilton 2000, 49). Marcia Riggs and Barbara

Holmes quote Julia Foote as saying, “When Paul said, ‘Help those women who labor with me in the Gospel,’ he certainly meant that they did more than pour out tea” (Riggs and Holmes 1997, 58). Women have always had a powerful impact and presence in ministry.

Riggs and Holmes believe “African American women in the past and today have a spirituality of prophetic presence, they say we therefore envision ourselves within the biblical story itself and we have vision of what we can become” (Riggs and Holmes, 1997, 196). They continue, “Above all, we embrace the conviction that we have authority that derives from a God who calls whom God pleases” (Riggs and Holmes, 1997, 196). According to Riggs and Holmes, at a point in history, African American women heard and acknowledged God’s call to be prophetic witnesses. Women like Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw, Sister Kelly, and Julia A. J. Foote were all women who believed in the power of prayer, and through Formational Prayer, they allowed God’s transforming power to change them into His image and likeness. They were empowered and led by the Spirit to share a gospel of healing and hope with others. At this point in history, African American women are still listening to those witnesses as well as hearing God’s call anew. Thus, our prophetic religious tradition lives on (Riggs and Holmes 1997, 196). Transforming truths continue to strengthen our faith, prayer remains the means of developing intimacy with the Father, and through the Holy Spirit, Formational Prayer can be introduced as a tool of transformation and a way of bringing the healing presence of Christ into the place of brokenness and pain.

Joan Chittister aligns with Riggs and Holmes by saying that in short, prophetic spirituality is about living out our faith on the streets of the world, rather than just talking about it. Faith is invalid unless you are living it. That is the basic message of the prophets, and it is as true today as it was thousands of years ago (Chittister 2019, 17). Lisa McKay concludes by saying that there is no higher charge than the invitation to participate in God's good intentions toward His creation" (McKay 2010, 39). Therefore, the invitation serves as a validation of our purpose.

In the next section, we will examine the role of a pastor's wife as we listen to the various voices speak out of their own context and experiences. We will closely consider the African American experience and style, and the impact and influence they have in ministry.

Women as Pastors' Wives

It's sobering to realize that many women all over the world have entered this fishbowl of life as leaders or as wives of men who are in Christian leadership. Each of us is unique, and it would be a mistake to assume that all of us should conform to one set "image." (MacDonald 1998, 11)

Gail MacDonald, the wife of Pastor Gordon MacDonald, shares about both the high calling and high privilege of being married to a pastor. MacDonald states that if you are in ministry, you understand what it means to live your life in a glass house; you know what it feels like to live your life as an open book. She further states:

You understand the pressure, anger, and criticism, as well as the gratification, delight, and pleasure. You know the elation of giving and receiving. You know how to abase and to abound. You are familiar with joy and laughter, as well as sorrow and pain. You have experienced the

jubilant of being in God's presence, and the barrenness of being in a dry and desolate place. You have encountered it all. (MacDonald 1998, 3)

Statistics from the 2017 Lifeway Research Study on Pastors' Spouses reveals that 50% of pastors' wives surveyed agree that their family lives in a fishbowl, while 79% agree that the congregation expects their family to be a model family. Joyce Williams also concurs with MacDonald's assessment and shares how being in ministry can leave you feeling lonely and isolated which can produce feelings of abandonment (Williams 2005, 82). Yolanda Butler expands on Joyce's assessment by adding that it is difficult to minister to others when your life has been wounded so deeply. Lingering hurts cripple you and develops into unresolved issues (Butler 2013, 33). As a result, unresolved issues can be lethal to marriage and ministry.

Seasoned pastors' wives such as Lori Wilhite and Brandi Wilson along with others would agree and have written books on different aspects of ministry life. These books detail their journey, share lessons learned, and report findings that address the concerns, burdens, issues, and conflicts of pastors' wives. In addition, a pastor's wife's experience can be diverse and is not defined by a cookie-cutter pattern. There are multiple facets of the role and ministry that are yet to be explored and discovered.

One of those areas that is often overlooked and require exploration, and perhaps attention, is the male clergy spouses' role. Sarah-Jane Page states that "The emergence of the male non-ordained spouse has only fleetingly been documented but can be framed within the traditional research preoccupation with clergy wives, and the somewhat competing construction of masculinity" (Page

2018, 31). This new role is still being defined as more and more women are accepting the call to ministry. Page emphasizes that because ministry has historically been a male-dominated field, pastors are men married to women in many denominations.

However, in this present age and culture, there are women ordained and serving as priests and pastors in ministry, and as a result, male clergy spouses have no tradition to follow; therefore, the pattern in place is scripted for gender-specific roles, leaving the male clergy spouse on their own to adapt to and shape the role (Page 2018, 32). Lenore Knight Johnson adds to Page's opinion by saying the male spouses of clergywomen are much less insistent on claiming a particular position perhaps because they feel they are already paving new roads as men (Johnson 2012, 38). Gail Murphy-Geiss in her survey on United Methodist clergy spouses concurs with the views of Page and Johnson and adds an observation by Kanter and Whip that says male spouses are different, and therefore not expected to participate in their wives' careers as unpaid assistants (Murphy-Geiss 2011, 934).

While expectations for male clergy spouses are not the same as they are for female clergy spouses, the shaping of the role is unique to the ministry couple and represents the changes in the field of ministry as women are continuing to acknowledge the call of God on their lives. Having considered the role of the male clergy spouse and understanding that the term clergy spouse is not exclusive to pastors' wives, we acknowledge the need to clarify the real intent and purpose of the project by using language reflective of the foundational

purposes; therefore, moving forward, we will use the term pastors' wives as it is the primary focus of the project.

In their in-depth look at nine pastors' wives, Luedtke and Sneed note that "Clergy spouses are an understudied and silenced population" (Luedtke and Sneed 2018, 63). Their findings also revealed that pastors' wives are often overlooked for their support and the weight they carry for their husbands, families, and churches. Further findings from the study reveal the pastor's wife's awareness and frustration as they deal with cumbersome expectations of the role (Luedtke and Sneed 2018, 65). Josiah Andor expands on the findings of Luedtke and Sneed and categorize the pastor's wife's role as domestic (home), spiritual (church), social (community), and occupational (work). He continues that while there are no formal rules or guidelines that define the role of a pastor's wife, there are unspoken expectations, and typically, roles are determined by denominational or congregational standards (Andor 2012, 28). Therefore, there is an acute unawareness of the challenges that pastors' wives face as they have one of the most challenging and stressful roles that can often produce physical and emotional exhaustion.

While some pastors' wives chose to remain in a traditional capacity to take care of their husbands and families, there are those contemporary pastors' wives who work in the marketplace or serve on staff at their church. In her 2007 *Washington Post* article, Adele Banks talks about the change experienced by pastors' wives and points out that the evolution of the pastor's wife can be seen as a decisive factor as many have not only found their passion but their voice as

well. Many pastors' wives are well educated and hold multiple degrees. Some are licensed and ordained ministers, others are television hosts, authors, founders of organizations, while others are on the conference and preaching circuit. Their titles range from ministry director, leader or coordinator to executive assistant or co-pastor. Banks expands further by saying that "This trend is seen more in independent churches that include Black, White, and Hispanic churches. It can also be seen in traditional denominations, too" (Banks 2007, 3). The ministry landscape has changed over the years, and so has the role of the pastor's wife.

While each church, be it traditional or independent, has its own origin and roots, the African American church experience is unique and different in that there are various levels of experiences from denomination to denomination. The context from which I speak is one which I am quite familiar--the African American church experience. Mitchell and Glass states the following:

Preaching in the Black church is an art form of stylized language that speaks, sings, dances, whoops, and rolls through the Old and New Testaments. It is drama that unfolds ancient stories with a relevant hermeneutic from a fertile, creative imagination. This hermeneutic is unique, different from other cultures or ethnic groups. (Mitchell and Glass 2004, 4)

Shauntae White emphasizes Mitchell and Glass' point by saying that the Black church has long been a staple in the lives of African Americans. As an autonomous institution, the Black church has served the Black community well, and has had a considerable impact spiritually, socially, and culturally. As a result, African American pastors have gained notoriety, recognition, honor, and respect in their churches and community. White recognizes that in more recent years,

pastors' wives have been elevated in status as well, and often share in the recognition their spouses receive (White 2017, 17). In the African American tradition, the importance of titles cannot be understated, for they show a level of honor and respect. However, with the titles, elevation, and recognition comes the vulnerability of encountering burn out and ministry hurt from the added pressure and responsibility of the role. It is imperative that pastor's wives maintain a lifestyle of prayer. Also, Formational Prayer can be of value and benefit to a pastor's wife as it has the power to position her for change, and the ability to move her towards a greater intimacy with the Lord.

Yolanda Butler adds that over the years, the pastor's wife's role and the title have evolved to include the Minister's Wife or the Reverend's wife. In recent years, the title of "Leading Lady" or "First Lady" has emerged as a term to indicate the pastor's wife's status as a role model and leading lady in the congregation (Butler 2013, 5). In her practical guide for the pastor's wife, Butler concurs with White as she explains this unspoken definition:

By definition, in an ecclesiastical context, the First Lady is the wife of the senior pastor of the church, and she is also called the Pastor's Wife. No, you will not find either term in the Bible, but her qualities are definitely defined. (Butler 2013, 5)

Co-Pastor Susie Owens establishes a correlation between the title of First Lady and FLOTUS as she explains that the genesis of the term "First Lady" of the church was borrowed from the First Lady of the United States (FLOTUS); therefore, it did not originate in the Black Church (Owens 2000, 45). As with FLOTUS, the First Lady holds an elevated and critical position in the church. While pastors' wives enjoy the blessings, benefits, honor, and esteem of the

titles, there are also the burdens, pressures, weight, and responsibilities of such a prestigious role.

In the African American tradition and from a historical standpoint, some expectations were a part of the role of a pastor's wife. Weptanomah Carter explains that first it was assumed that a Black pastor's wife accepted the fact that she would have to share her husband with the congregation and community. Secondly, she needed to have the skills and ability to instruct, teach, organize, and mentor. For those who did not have formal education, they needed to possess leadership qualities, as well as know how to conduct themselves publicly (Carter 1976, 34). Carter continues that it was not conceivable that the Black pastor's wife could have a life or career of her own, for her life was intertwined with her husband's ministry and calling. His ministry demanded her attention as well (Carter 1976, 29). In addition, Carter also notes that there are similar advantages and challenges that pastors' wives face that can impact the ministry and marriage. How the pastor's wife handles herself in response to her husband, church, and community are critiqued more often than not (Carter 1976, 93). The pastor's wife has the ability to make or break the marriage and ministry.

Andor agrees with Carter and states, "The role they play at home, in church, in the society, and at work impacts the ministry of the pastor" (Andor 2012, 23). Wanda Davis-Turner concurs with both Carter and Andor and adds that wives are a notable reflection of a husband's position, ability, love, and strength. Those qualities can be seen in the Proverbs 31 woman. The Scripture says her husband is recognized in the gates because of her behavior and what it

reveals about him (Turner 2003, 11). Based on the report of the scholars, we can also conclude that a wife's behavior also reveals a lot about her character, personality, and disposition.

In the African American church, the First Lady is considered a leader among leaders to the women of the congregation. It is important that as a leader she develops an intimate prayer life with the Father. By spending time in God's presence, she is changed by the Holy Spirit and conformed into the image of Christ which equips her to minister in the various roles that she is called upon to fulfill. White explains that other positions can be inclusive of ministry coordinator, biblical expositor, organizer, peacemaker, fashion icon, ideal wife, and mother. The leadership model centers around the expectations of a First Lady's' husband, congregation, and herself (White 2017, 135). Each congregation is different and represents a different set of expectations. Serita Jakes adds that pastors' wives also stand as a role model and mentor for the congregation (Jakes 2003, ix). The opportunity to influence the congregation through their creative abilities is a gift from God.

Women Evolving

Change is packaged in many different ways. We face change as we move from one season of life to the next. Sometimes we shift from one leadership position to another, and as excited as we are, it's still transitions. (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 178)

Wilhite and Wilson assert that it is important to redefine what ministry looks like for us during each new season of change and evolution. They note that each new season comes with a unique set of challenges, but it is also accompanied by its own set of strengths. They continue that the challenge is to

find the strength of the season you are in (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 185). In the *Washington Post* article on February 10, 2007, Adele Banks, as does Wilhite and Wilson, speaks of the seasons of change, and shares that the evolving roles and titles of Black pastors' wives come from social, cultural, and theological changes. Banks recognize it is also possible that some of the changes are due to the professionalization of the Black middle-class and cites that it is often seen in African American mega-churches. She further states that wives of pastors of mega-churches often are involved at the administrative level with a staff of their own, which helps them manage their calendars and promote their books (Banks 2007, 3). The evolution of the Black pastor's wife has made a powerful impact and statement on ministry.

David Eagle, in his article "Historicizing the Mega-church" echoes the assessment of Banks, and further expounds on the genesis of mega-churches by saying that while credit is being given to the modern-day mega-church, (which is defined as a church with 1,500 plus consistent members) mega-churches have a long history in America dating back to the 1600s (Eagle 2015, 593). Eagle adds that the modern mega-church concept that emerged again on the scene during the 1970s and 1980s brought with it new, creative, and innovative ideas for doing ministry. Ministries began to offer alternatives and options to the traditional Sunday at 11:00 a.m. one service format (Eagle 2015, 593). Early and late morning services, as well as Saturday evening services, became a trend that promoted growth and opened additional opportunities for ministry. Like Banks, Eagle asserts that this latest phenomenon also stretched and shifted the role of

the clergy spouse, causing some to have to contend with upward to 30,000 plus membership, and for some, the changes required a new level of insight and creativity for next-generation ministry.

One pastor's wife who has been successful in making the transition and adjustments to a mega ministry is Serita Jakes, the wife of Bishop T.D. Jakes, pastor of the Potter's House Ministry in Dallas, Texas. Jakes oversees various programs that the church offers to minister to women, teens, and children. She continues by saying even though it is typical for the wife to be in the nurturing, supportive, encouraging role, she finds that in different seasons of marriage and ministry, a woman may find herself in an elevated role or position that requires the support of the husband (Jakes 2003, 145). It is not only important for couples to share in each other's mutual goals, but it is also essential that the wife maintains a connection with the Father through prayer. Also, through the work of the Holy Spirit, Formational Prayer helps develop a level of intimacy that allows the wife to have an encounter with Christ that changes and transforms her life during those different seasons of marriage.

With the calling comes responsibility. As a result, the evolution of the clergy spouses' title has presented multiple opportunities to serve the church and Kingdom in unique and creative ways. It has also extended unlimited opportunities beyond the doors of the church. Kimberly Clay, Kelley Newlin, and Kimberly D. Leeks from the University of Alabama did a study that revealed how the church and clergy spouses also influence attitudes and behaviors related to health. Some pastor's spouses also serve the community through church-based

health programs. Pastors' wives have extended beyond the local church. The potential to influence hundreds of women has become a possibility in smaller and larger congregations. As Clay's research revealed, pastors' wives may contribute to reducing health disparities among African Americans (Clay 2005, 112).

Pastors' wives now have the opportunity to serve and venture out beyond the church walls. Their willingness to do so promotes good physical as well as spiritual health.

Next, we will discuss the trending of co-pastor and co-partnering in ministry, and what it represents for pastors' wives.

Women as Co-Partners in Ministry

In this new era of ministry, I believe God is calling for couples, whether it be pastor/co-pastor or pastor/co-partner, to work together in establishing God's kingdom on earth. (Owens 2000, 79)

Owens uses Amos 3:3 as a template for ministry couples. She said it is essential to maintain a balance between marriage and ministry and cites several essential principles of partnership ministry such as maintaining mutual respect, being each other's chief encourager and supporter, and communicating and sharing mutual goals and interests (Owens 2000, 42). T.D. Jakes, a leading African American preacher and teacher par excellence, concurs with Owens and shares his wisdom on ministry couples. He believes that each should reflect an attitude and commitment of excellence that should be evident in their lives individually. How couples perform in their marriage impacts and affects every area of their lives, inclusive of ministry (Jakes 2002, 204). So, as goes the ministry, so goes the marriage.

Owens, as with Jakes, recognizes team ministry must display leadership and harmony as it is not only representative of God, but also shows agreement and oneness of mind of the ministry team (Owens 2000, 64). McKay agrees with both Jakes and Owens that in team ministry, it is crucial to stay focused on the fact that a husband and wife are workers together, and that whatever God intends to do through a ministry couple is inextricably woven together by their love and support of one another (McKay 2010, 40). Serita Jakes understands the need to provide mutual support for the home and family as couples share in mutual goals, and also believes that so much of a marriage's success is based on the attitude of each partner in viewing his or her contribution to the union (Jakes 2003, 148). Owens concludes that as a ministry team or partnership, since both spouses share responsibilities, they both also share the accolades and honors. The focus is placed on the ministry and not the pastor. When one is recognized, it is reflective of the other (Owens 2000, 42). This gives the wife just as much accountability for the success of the church as it does the husband.

According to Owens, team ministry is a trend in the 21st century pastoral ministry. "Many denominations are embracing the shared-leadership concept, which suggests that a husband-and-wife ministry partnership can add to the growth and development of the church" (Owens 2000, 73). This is considered a breakthrough for women in ministry, considering that just a few years ago, in some denominations, women were not allowed to enter a pulpit, let alone serve in a leadership capacity (Owens 2000, 73). Owens is a modern-day example of a First Lady that serves alongside her husband in team ministry as a co-pastor.

Jeanne Porter expands on Owens' assessment by saying that although both the Partnership Model and Team Ministry concepts are considered newer denominational trends, neither just started in the 20th and 21st centuries. In her recent research, Porter looks back at a ministry couple from the New Testament that served as a model for collaboration and cohesiveness in ministry. Porter shares the account of Priscilla and Aquila's ministry that gives an understanding and appreciation for the intricacies of leadership partners. Porter further shares that it was rare that you would see a woman's name first in a documented form. Whatever the case, the constant coupling of their names was an indication that they were considered equal or co-partners in ministry (Porter 2005, 111).

Johnson agrees with Porter that the Partnership Model is also another term used to define co-partnerships and adds that "the Partnership spouses' involvement in ministry helps to cushion the expectation level. While this may be helpful, those expectations still have an effect on the spouse indirectly" (Johnson 2011, 33). Even so, the Partnership Model is popular.

Porter views Priscilla and Aquila's style of co-leading as effective, and believes it provides a model of ministry partnership (Porter 2005, 114). Bridget Hilliard who is First Lady, co-pastor, and along with her husband, founder of New Light Christian Center Church in the Houston, Texas area agrees with Porter and Johnson, and intimately understands the concept of team ministry as together, she and her husband oversee five church locations in the Houston area (Hilliard 2003, 57). She and her husband encompass the partnership and team ministry concept and have modeled it effectively for other couples.

Owens also notes another new concept in ministry that has surfaced in the Black church over the past 20 years is pastor/co-pastoring (denoting that both the husband and wife are preachers.) Owens emphasizes that by contrast, co-pastoring represents a shift in paradigm, a new design, or a new framework for doing ministry from the traditional role of the husband as a pastor and the wife as a helper. The word “co” used as a prefix to pastor or partnering indicates joint, mutual, or shared (Owens 2000, 75). The pastor/co-partner or partnership ministry alignment is where one or the other has received the pastoral mantle, and the other serves or assists the pastor in a lead or leadership role such as a musician or director of ministries. In each model, the couple’s mutual respect offers the congregation a vision of oneness (Owens 2000, 75). Ministry couples have begun to embrace load sharing and partnership in ministry.

As with Owens, Hillard fully embraces the basis of co-pastoring, and credits their mentor couple, Apostle Fredrick and Betty Price, as one of the first to model the concept of pastor and co-pastoring. They imitated the growth strategies and faith principles that were deposited into their lives by their mentor couple (Hilliard 2003, 57). They in turn have made deposits of those same principles into the lives of others.

Taffi Dollar, the wife of Creflo Dollar of World Changers Church International, in Atlanta, Georgia, is another First Lady that serves as co-pastor along with her husband. Dollar, like Owens, believes that God created her to be a helper to her husband, and in helping him, she provides the support and encouragement that he needs to live out and fulfill his God-given purpose for his

life. “You can also help your husband by motivating him to become the man God has called him to be” (Dollar 2000, 92). Dollar concurs with Owens that the role of helps is a holy calling, and it should not be taken lightly or casually but should be viewed as a sacred, significant, and valuable position (Dollar 2000, 89).

Women who function as co-pastors are making a significant impact in their congregation that will touch and transform future generations (Owens 2000, 47). Each partner has opportunity to serve God, the congregation, and each other. As Johnson recognizes, whether serving as a partnership spouse or a co-pastor, the support provided results in more considerable help meeting the many demands and rigors of ministry (Johnson 2012, 25). The extra support serves as a buffer against the adversities of ministry.

As we have seen so far, the role of a pastor’s wife can be viewed from various and vast perspectives, depending on the context from which you come. Expectations play a significant role in the life of a pastor’s wife as they are looked to for their leadership qualities, speaking abilities, musical talents, gifts and callings, organizational style, resourcefulness, creative flair, in addition to their professional skills and their capacity to manage and maintain their home or in a few cases, the parsonage. With all the new demands placed on the modern-day pastor’s wife, how does she remain healthy spiritually and emotionally? In the next section we will address the role of spiritual and mental well-being in the life of the pastor’s wife.

Women and Ministerial Well-Being

Often in ministry we are so consumed with the mechanics of the ministry and so tuned into others' needs that we strongly neglect our own needs, not even realizing that we have them. (Dobson 1995, 93)

Lorna Dobson shares that for the person who is involved with ministry, accepting the responsibility for one's physical and mental health is just as essential as spiritual growth. Practicing the daily routines of taking care of one's body, mind, and spiritual life requires discipline (Dobson 1995, 94). As a pastor's wife, it takes discipline to accept the responsibility of taking care of your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs. Mark McMinn, a clinical psychologist and professor at George Fox University, adds that having an accurate sense of self lends itself to good health. In contrast, a distorted sense of self is detrimental to your health (McMinn 1996, 54). McMinn continues that it is not popular in contemporary western society to admit that we need help, as this is an indication of a sign of weakness and vulnerability.

He explains that while some may argue that emotional health is an individual matter, the reality is that the only way to spiritual health is to recognize our need for God (McMinn 1996, 54). When we establish a healthy sense of self, we can avoid the pitfall of psychological and spiritual problems (McMinn 1996, 54). When we have depleted our physical, emotional, and mental resources and realize that we cannot do ministry in our own strength, then we are ready to receive the help we need to revive, restore, and renew the heart and spirit.

With the reality of the everyday routine and rigors of ministry, there is a need for pastors' wives to take care of themselves. As such, ministry can be

intimidating as the pressures, difficulties, and disappointments of it are inevitable. During her many years as a psychologist, Diane Langberg has seen various aspects of ministry that can become overwhelming to a pastor's wife (Langberg 1988, 19). As with Langberg, Carolyn Vinson, who has co-pastored the Highpoint Christian Tabernacle Church in Smyrna, Georgia for many years, says, "In fact, being a clergy spouse can be a place of great intimidation--it is certainly not a place for the faint of heart" (Vinson 2000, 3). Even though there are women who clamor for the role of a pastor's wife, they are not aware of the emotional stress that can result from such a position.

Joyce Williams agrees with Vinson and recognizes and adds that ministry can produce loneliness and isolation and can cause a pastor's wife to feel vulnerable and abandoned. If there are no measures in place to prevent or deal with these insecure feelings, then a pastor's wife can be left feeling unsettled and discontented (Williams 2005, 82). This level of isolation can produce symptoms of depression if not appropriately addressed.

Writing out of her experience as a pastor's wife, Yolanda Butler concurs with Williams and is also aware that church hurt can become lethal to a marriage and a ministry. If not adequately dealt with, it can produce dejection, despondency, and despair. Also, "hurt is nurtured through unfulfilled expectations, unhealed hurt, and unmet needs" (Butler 2017, 33). She believes that it is also a smart tool that the enemy uses to inflict emotional and mental pain and hurt on a pastor's wife. Although there are many scenarios in life that can cause us pain and hurt, for some reason, it seems to manifest itself to an

even significant extent in the body of Christ (Butler 2017, 32). If appropriate steps are not taken to recover and heal from the hurt and pain of ministry, the marriage and ministry can fail.

Owens aligns with Butler in her assessment of the rigors of ministry by saying that many pastors' wives have found themselves surrendering to the pressures that come as a part of being married to a pastor and the ministry. Some suffer from feelings of inferiority and insufficiency and mental, emotional, and spiritual burnout and abuse (Owens 2000, 2). Vinson adds, some have succumbed to alcohol, depression, drug addiction, and even suicidal tendencies. Others have looked for relief through extramarital affairs, while some chose to abandon their marriages completely (Vinson 2000, 3). When life spirals out of control, it is tempting to abandon your faith. Formational or Inner Healing Prayer offers renewal and restoration for the interior life as it transforms the inner being. It also encompasses the healing of brokenness and pain. A deep level of intimacy is developed, as we are increasingly transformed into the image of Christ.

Owens suggest that we can avoid the crushing demands and responsibilities of leadership when we understand that our confidence comes from knowing God. We can stand up to the pressure of ministry if we are confident that God has placed us where we are. We can respond to God in the obedience of our calling as we allow God to conform us in the image of His Son (Owens 2000, 18). Taffi Dollar adds that while being conformed in the image of the Son, as a pastor's wife, you can still experience the freedom of being honest

with a God that knows and cares about us (Dollar 2010, 109). The transparency is what allows you to be able to experience that freedom.

Pastors' wives do not intend to neglect or push aside their spiritual health or sense of well-being, but this can often happen as they move through everyday life and living. Lorna Dobson agrees with Owens, Butler, and Dollar, and adds that for the person who is involved with ministry, accepting responsibility for one's physical and mental health is as essential as spiritual growth. Practicing the daily routine of taking care of one's body, mind, and spiritual life requires discipline (Dobson 1995, 94). It is easy to ignore the signs of spiritual lethargy or dementia.

Considering the various roles and expectations, how does a pastor's wife maintain reasonable physical, emotional, and mental health? After pouring out and giving of herself endlessly, how does she ensure that her own spiritual needs are being met? Cecelia Williams Bryant, a long-time pastor's wife in the AME church as well as a pastor herself, contends that:

Passion and enthusiasm have to be tempered and bathed in prayer, and prayer happens when our hearts awaken to the presence of the Lord. Prayer happens when our knowing is infused with the mind of Christ, when God's passion becomes our passion; when we are transfigured by the light. (Bryant 2008, 138)

Dobson supports Bryant's statement and continues by sharing the wisdom of Henry McCloud and John Townsend by saying, "Taking care of oneself is not a sign of weakness or self-absorption; neither is it putting your needs before others, but it is a way of taking responsibility for yourself first, so that you will be better able to love and serve others effectively without moving into crisis yourselves" (Dobson 1995, 93). The importance of self-care cannot be expressed

enough in ministry. It is critical to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual survival. Formational and Inner Healing Prayer can aid in emotional and spiritual survival. It has the power to change an individual's life. According to Crabb, understanding the process of change helps us to realize that the change comes as a result of our willingness to examine the realities of our interior life, and not because of what we try to do or how hard we try to do it (Crabb 1988, 175).

The emotional and mental demands of ministry alone can cause physical exhaustion. The tendency is to ignore the needs of the body and soul to the point of weariness and fatigue. The temptation to neglect and over-extend in the name of ministry life is quite common. From her long-time experience of being married to a prominent pastor, Serita Jakes suggests taking an entire season of what she calls "Sabbath Rest." This requires taking a sabbatical from the day-to-day responsibilities of life. She also recommends a "Soul Spa," which provides spiritual rest for the soul in the form of stillness (Jakes 2003, 183). London and Wiseman support Jakes' assessment of sabbath rest by stating that spiritual self-care is just as important as physical. The temptation is to forego the development of the inner-self and get caught up in the doing rather than the being. Anything worth doing for Christ should come from a sense of who we are, and not what we do (London and Wiseman 1995, 225). The sense of who we are comes from knowing who we are in Christ.

As with London and Wiseman, Wilhite and Wilson explain, emotions are a part of the ministry's landscape that we cannot escape. "But when we talk about the emotional journey of ministry, it is important to stop and focus on winning the

inner battle of our hearts and spirits” (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 162). Both authors are married to pastors-husbands of mega-churches, and they know that “outer victories” mean nothing if we do not win the “inner battle” (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 162). This speaks of the need to nourish the interior life. Dobson agrees and adds that no single activity is more important than spending time in the Word of God, unless it is the prayer time in which you beseech God to activate His Word in your life (Dobson 1995, 94). London and Wiseman also emphasize Wilhite and Wilson’s point by saying we minimize our effectiveness when we neglect spiritual self-care, and we maximize our potential for kingdom achievement when we commit to nourishing our souls and keeping them in shape by providing nutritionally well-balanced spiritual meals (London and Wiseman 1995, 225). It is an important part of our emotional and spiritual self-care and well-being.

Lovingood and Landrith make a salient point of explaining that a pastor understands that his ministry is impacted by the level or degree of his wife’s spiritual well-being (Lovingood and Landrith 2018, 45). London and Wiseman go further by saying, “It is also worth noting that spouses cannot provide self-care for each other. The truth is that each spouse is responsible for their own self-care” (London and Wiseman 1995, 225). Bryant establishes a relationship between what Lovingood and Landrith, and London and Wiseman say and adds her wisdom. In her letters to the wives of pastors, Bryant explains that it is not a husband’s responsibility to meet every need in a wife’s life. All he can do is provide the best support that he can. She tells the wives of pastors that you have

to know yourself and know who you are in order to navigate the messy moments of marriage and ministry. “Knowing yourself gives you a peace of mind and confidence--knowing your own thoughts, your own sorrow, your own truth, your own weaknesses, your own strengths, and your self-worth does not require perfection, but compassion” (Bryant 2008, 3). Knowing yourself allows you to be honest and transparent about your own needs.

If as Bryant suggests, knowing yourself is key to self-care, then margins or balance are the anchor and order to maintaining good mental and emotional health. Wilhite and Wilson remind us that discipline is a requirement of ministry, and knowing when to take moments of refreshing, reflection, renewal, and rest is paramount to preserving your physical strength (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 161). Wilhite and Wilson also inform us that being in tune with ourselves and our limitations prevents burnout. Refueling is what keeps us moving. Pacing ourselves requires listening to our bodies and paying attention to the signs and cues it provides (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 161). Ignoring those signs can lead toward a path of self-destruction.

We have examined the importance of self-care in ministry which cannot be minimized or expressed enough. It is critical to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual survival. Healing of brokenness and pain through Formational Prayer is part of the ministry of self-care as we embrace the encounter of the Holy Spirit. As we look at other aspects of the life of a pastor’s wife, we want to explore a subject that has been one of contention and disagreement. The topic of submission has been misunderstood and at points misused, and yet it is a part of

God's plan for relationships. We will explore the topic and discover what healthy submission looks like in a relationship.

Women and Submission

Actually, submission means to humble or lower oneself--which goes against the grain of humans; and total submission to God and mutual submission to each other is essential for balance in a marriage. (Dobson 1995, 115)

What role does submission play in the marriage? Another question to consider is What role does submission play in Formational Prayer? Kraft suggests that through Formational Prayer, the Holy Spirit supplies us with the power we need, and our power comes from intimacy with the Father (Kraft 2010, 236). Submitting to the Holy Spirit gives us the ability and willingness to submit to one another. According to Eph. 5:21-33, we are to complete, complement, and submit to one another to fulfill our marriage vows. If a wife is in a leadership role as the pastor, priest, or prophetess, does this mean that she does not have to submit to her husband as the head of the marriage? Dobson believes that harmony in marriage is achieved by mutual consent, with the husband mirroring Christ's example of servanthood (Dobson 1995, 115). Taffi Dollar believes that for many years submission has been taught incorrectly, yet it is the key that releases the anointing in your life. Dollar explains that submission is not based on your feeling, but it is an act of faith (Dollar 2000, 64). Dollar agrees with Dobson that submitting to God first gives us the ability to submit to authority in every other area in our lives. Our submission pleases God, and God responds to our obedience (Dollar 2000, 64). According to the scholars, our attitude about submission also affects our obedience to it.

T.D. Jakes sees a wife's willingness to submit and be obedient to her husband as complementary to his leadership and is generally in response to his sacrificial love. She understands that they are companions and not competitors (Jakes 2003, 148). Jakes describes headship as a covering and not a curse and says that it is not meant for a man to dominate or rule over a woman. It is a position of trust and confidence. He gives Prov. 31 as a model for clergy spouses to follow and says trust is one of the virtues that is listed. When there is a level of trust between the couple, the marriage and the ministry will be successful (Jakes 2002, 218). By the same token when there is no trust, the marriage is doomed to fail. Dobson, as with Jakes, agrees that submission has a lot to do with trust. She adds that trust must be built and earned for a couple to practice mutual submission in marriage (Dobson 1995, 116).

Joyce Meyer cites Eph. 5:21 as an example for submission which says, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." While Meyer is on the frontline of ministry and her husband is in the background, she has no problem following the leadership of her husband and acknowledges him as the head of her family. As with Jakes, she understands that godly submission is vitally essential to the individual and the relationship as well (Meyer 2006, 89). Submission reveals the condition of our heart and our level of obedience to the Father and the relationship.

Myles Munroe has a slightly different opinion on submission. He believes that there is no incidence of subjection, submission, or oppression of women in the first and second chapters of Genesis. He believes that in God's perfect will,

there is no such arrangement, and that the woman and man were both equal, blessed, subduing, ruling, and having dominion, and God said “This is very good” (Munroe 2001, 184). He continues that any other arrangement than this was the result of the Fall and that anything God said about male-female relationship after Gen. 2 is a repair program.

In their book “Why Not Women?” Cunningham and Hamilton share a similar opinion by explaining Paul’s use of the Genesis account of Creation to remind men and women of their shared origins, and that they live in interdependence. Women can’t be independent from men because they were created from men, and men cannot adopt an attitude of prideful disdain for women, since women were created because of man’s need for them (Cunningham and Hamilton 2000, 173). Wanda Taylor-Smith also agrees with Munroe, Cunningham and Hamilton that women and men were created as equals. She contends that they were equal partners in the original state. She continues that even though they are different beings, they are beings of equal value. They were co-rulers over everything on earth, however, no mention is made of one ruling over the other! This was considered a picture of parity, of equality (Smith 2013, 66). The different and varied opinions about submission lets us know that it is an ongoing issue for marriages.

Summary

In conclusion, I attempted to outline the varied and different aspects of the role of a pastor’s wife, and the value and transforming power that Formational Prayer plays in those various roles. First and foremost, I have acknowledged that

a woman has God-given purpose and potential. I looked at the role of women from a leadership perspective, while also exploring women in the role of a pastor's wife, and their evolution to new places in their role which include co-pastoring in ministry. As a result of these evolving roles, there is a need for pastor's wives to maintain an intimate connection and relationship with the Father. Formational Prayer can serve as a conduit for spiritual transformation and growth. I have demonstrated that Formational Prayer and Inner Healing are also a part of ministerial well-being, as the ministerial demands and requirements can produce hurt and brokenness. In addition, I looked at submission as a component to be considered in ministry. Submitting to the Holy Spirit gives us the ability and willingness to submit to one another.

As we have seen from the historical to the contemporary context, the dynamics of the role of the pastor's wife has evolved in vast and various forms. Despite the past and current changes, the one thing that has remained consistent is the exceptional gifts, talents, and strength that each woman brings to the role of a pastor's wife. In her article on Models of Clergy Spouse Involvement in Protestant Christian Congregations, Lenore Knight Johnson expresses the following:

Seeing the diverse ways contemporary clergy spouses socially construct their individualized roles alongside the powerful influence of contextual factors, will allow churches and denominations to see the ways this unique place in the church has evolved, and identify new and innovative ways to support clergy families. (Johnson 2011, 41)

Johnson sees the role of a pastor's wife continuing to evolve as changes between religion, gender, and family shift. She contends that pastors' wives are a

uniquely distinct and varied group of individuals who have managed and blended the role to be all-encompassing of their personal experiences, established views, and principles and patterns of the churches they serve. She concludes that these women have uniquely and creatively crafted strategies within their particular social context that reinforce boundaries that impact both action and interaction (Johnson 2011, 40). Nordland echoes Johnson's views by adding that as pastors' wives continue to move to the forefront of ministry, they have great opportunities to use their influence and voice to connect with and impact the next generation.

The changing role invites them to bring comfort, hope, and healing to those they encounter, and to get involved in meaningful and transforming ways. Also, as pastor's wives are transformed through Formational Prayer and Inner Healing, they can be instruments used by the Holy Spirit to bring the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness of others. Nordland concludes this section by saying that being a pastor's wife is an honor as it speaks of the love and confidence that a husband has in his wife. She shares that they were chosen as a worthy and capable companion to participate in his ministry. She sees the work of ministry as a blessing because a spouse has the privilege to share in ministry in ways that others cannot (Nordland 1972, 44). Ann White establishes a relationship between obeying the Lord and the need for courage. She cites courage as an attribute that encourages us to venture outside of our comfort zone and embrace the possibilities so that we can conquer fear and despair and take on challenges to make changes (White 2018, 43).

In the following chapter, we will discuss the design and method used in the impact study of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses. The findings will provide a template for future research based on the methods and design utilized.

CHAPTER FOUR

DESIGN, PROCEDURE, AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this project was to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland Ohio areas, through six weeks of self-reflection. This impact project was conducted via Zoom, with six one and a half to two-hour sessions of self-reflection. A pre-assessment survey was administered prior to the sessions, and a post-assessment survey was conducted after the final session. A seven-point Likert scale was used to measure the degree of impact or effectiveness; that ranged from totally agree to totally disagree. I will briefly outline the distinctive points of each session in the corresponding areas.

Ministry can be intimidating as pressures, difficulties, and disappointments of it are inevitable. Pastors' wives have one of the most challenging and stressful roles that can often produce physical and emotional exhaustion. According to statistics from the 2017 Lifeway Research Study on Pastors' Spouses, the facts reveal that 50% of pastors' wives surveyed agree that their family lives in a fishbowl, while 79% agree that the congregation expects their family to be a model family.

Pastors' wives do not intend to neglect or push aside their spiritual health or sense of well-being, but this can often happen as they move through everyday life and living. It is easy to bury the pain and hurt of ministry and function to the best of their dysfunction. Pastors' wives can be unaware of just how deep the issues are and how they can affect their character. With all the added

responsibilities, passion, and zeal of ministry, burnout can be a realization for the 21st century pastor's wife. Therefore, nurturing the interior life is crucial in maintaining spiritual health and balance.

This project intended to impact the understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses, including elements of her position, partnership, and pain.

The project goals were:

1. To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.
2. To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.
3. To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.
4. To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.
5. To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

The project included a pre- and post-assessment consisting of 15 questions with three questions aligned to each of the five project goals. The quantitative questions were identical on the pre- and post-assessments. The post assessment included an additional five qualitative questions. There was one question associated with each project goal. The design of the sessions aligned with the goals.

Context

The impact study group consisted of eight African American clergy spouses of various ages, experiences, and denominations. These ladies were representative of African American clergy spouses who along with their husbands, minister and serve their congregations. The endeavor was to impact the ladies' understanding of how Formational Prayer impacted their lives as clergy spouses.

The group was a good mixture of veteran pastors' wives, having been in the ministry for 31 to 40 years, seasoned pastors' wives, representing those in ministry for 21 to 30 years, experienced pastors' wives having served in ministry for 10 to 20 years, and pastors' wives recent to the ministry, having served under five years.

The basis of the project was to introduce or expand the participants' knowledge and understanding of the value of Formational Prayer to impact brokenness, emotional well-being, and hope in the lives of African American clergy spouses. I have had the unique opportunity to minister to pastors' wives through special times of fellowship and connections. As I have developed relationships with the various groups, I have come to understand the disappointment, deep-seated hurts, and wounds that some pastors' wives carry from past experiences. Some of the situations required an intense level of emotional and spiritual healing. I discerned that Formational Prayer was not only a pathway, but a tool that could help them experience personal healing and wholeness.

Because most pastors' wives are closed and private about their personal lives, I prayed about the selection of the participants' believing that the ones chosen would be open and receptive to the information as well as benefit from the experience. I am grateful that all eight participants embraced the concept and idea of Formational Prayer, fully engaged in the process, and completed the sessions.

The project consisted of six weeks of self-reflection. The participants not only had a chance to learn about Formational Prayer, but also an opportunity to experience and apply the information and methods learned. The hope was to strengthen their understanding of the value of Formational Prayer, promote emotional healing, and deepen the connections of the group participants. Due to Covid-19 concerns and the fact that we were in the middle of a pandemic, all the sessions were held via Zoom.

Participants

Initially, the project was to include eight participants from the Columbus, Ohio area only. My desire was always to include others outside of the Columbus area, but because of the travel time and distance for the participants, it was not feasible to ask or expect the ladies to travel for six weeks for a couple of hours, participate for an hour or two in the sessions, and then travel back for two hours. However, I petitioned Dr. Dawn Morton to allow me to include three pastors' wives from outside of the Columbus area once we were able to utilize the Zoom format. The group included five pastors' wives from the Columbus area, one from the Cleveland area, and two from the Cincinnati area.

The participants were invited to participate in the impact study based on the criteria of being an African American clergy spouse, and their involvement in ministry. Prayerful consideration was given to the selection of the participants. It was important to the success of the project that the participants had an interest in the subject matter and was fully committed and open to participating and learning. The demographic data gathered was based on the participants' role in ministry, the participants' years in ministry, the participants' age, and if the participants' church offered Formational Prayer seminars.

The data revealed that the age range contained two participants in the 40-49 category; one in the 50-59 age range; three in the 60-69 age range, and two in the 70-79 category. Regarding years in ministry, two had less than three years in ministry as a pastor's wife; one had less than five years; one had six to ten years in ministry; one had 11 to 15 years in ministry; one had 16 to 20 years in ministry; one had 25 to 30 years in ministry, and one had 31 to 40 years in ministry. Out of the eight participants, one served in the capacity of executive pastor in addition to her role as a pastor's wife. None of the eight participants said they offered Formational Prayer seminars at their churches.

Procedure and Assessment

As mentioned, due to the concerns of the pandemic, the sessions were conducted via the Zoom forum. The sessions included six-weeks of self-reflection and lasted for a duration of one and a half to two hours. The sessions included various components of Formational Prayer, and the participants were invited to

take notes, participate in the exercises, journal their experiences, and share with the group at their comfort level.

Each session was designed to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer and align with the goals of the project. The sessions incorporated teachings on the different aspects of Formational Prayer that included the role of the caregiver, dysfunctional behaviors, emotional upheaval, false beliefs, deep wounds, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The weekly format for the six sessions began with a time of prayer that was led by the participants. The participants expressed specific needs that were included in the prayer time, and petition was made to the Lord to allow hearts and minds to be open and receptive to the leading of the Spirit. The weekly material was presented and upon conclusion the participants were given an opportunity to ask questions. The sessions concluded with a time of self-reflection that included a series of soul-searching questions presented by the facilitator; corresponding exercises or assignments; and a closing prayer led by the participants.

The group was made aware that other healing models existed and are in use today such as David Linn's *Healing of Memories*, Leanne Payne's *Overcoming Barriers through Healing Prayer*, and David Seamands' *Healing of Damaged Emotions*. The content chosen for the sessions included materials developed by Dr. Terry Wardle, as his Healing Care Model represents the cognitive, experiential, and spiritual aspects of inner healing. Also, having participated in the past in Dr. Wardle's training sessions, my familiarity with the Healing Care Model allowed me a comfort level in presenting the materials.

As mentioned, prior to the initial session, a written pre-assessment was given to each participant, and after the final session, a written post-assessment which included five qualitative questions was given to the participants. A compilation of the pre-and post-assessment results will follow in Chapter Five.

Session One

The initial session opened with formal introductions of the group members, allowing them to build a rapport and acquaint themselves with each other. As mentioned earlier, pastors' wives are mostly private; therefore, it was important to create an atmosphere of trust among the group. After about 15 minutes of everyone sharing a little about themselves, prayer concerns were shared, and prayer was offered by the participants to invite God's presence into our midst as the journey to learning about Formational Prayer commenced. It is interesting to note that out of the eight participants, only one was familiar or had heard about Formational Prayer enough to understand the significance of it. Otherwise, the concept was fresh and new to the other seven.

In order to align with goal one, which was to impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse, the session began with the definition of Formational Prayer to ensure everyone knew and understood the foundational concept, purpose, and intent. The material highlighted that Inner Healing/Formational Prayer is used for emotional healing which made the participants aware that the goal of inner healing prayer is to position people for a transformational encounter with Christ in the place of the individual's deepest pain and greatest dysfunction. Emphasis was placed on the

fact that while Formational Prayer is one of several tools, it is not the only tool used to help hurting people.

To further broaden the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer, consideration was given to the role of the caregiver as a wounded healer and empathic witness, and information was shared about self-care and the three journeys. The ladies were given an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about the content shared. The session concluded with self-reflection questions by the facilitator and a closing prayer led by the participants.

Session Two

Session two focused on the goal of impacting the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to impact brokenness. The session opened with a prayer time led by the participants. The emphasis was on dysfunctional behaviors that can manifest as a result of unfulfilled, unmet Core Longings and Needs (Anne Halley). The focus was on how the problem of isolation, disconnection, and co-dependency adds to dysfunctional behavior, and contributes to the person's brokenness and pain, which intensifies the need to embrace behaviors that numb the pain or meet needs in their lives.

The discussion brought about a level of awareness which allowed the participants to be reflective of some of the distorted beliefs that created emotional pain and brokenness in their lives. The Safe Place exercise was introduced which allowed the Holy Spirit to minister to the participants at their point of need. The participants chose to share their experience with the group and found the exercise to be a help and benefit to them. The participants were also given the

outline for Steps to Change, Comfort and Peace. Their assignment was to review the information, and they were encouraged to re-visit the Safe Place exercise as often as needed. Time was left for questions, and then the session ended with prayer led by the participants.

Session Three

The goal of the third session was to impact the participants' emotional well-being through Formational Prayer. The focus of the session was emotional upheaval, and how unexpressed feelings from deep wounds can lead to and produce symptoms of ill health in the body, mind, and spirit. It was also noted that feelings serve as a signal to a person's spiritual condition. Several Scriptures were shared that showed how Jesus expressed His emotions, and how throughout His ministry He did not hide, bury, deny, or dismiss His feelings.

The healing of emotions through the process of grief was shared, and the Path to Emotional Well-Being was explored by sharing the following process. The first step was instruction. The ladies were reminded that the Safe Place exercise was a good venue to express negative feelings. The next step in the process was permission, which allowed the participants to see that expressing emotions is not only permissible but is also a biblically correct response to life. The session concluded with the final step of prayer, which was instructions for the participants to write a prayer of lament. They were allowed to do so as an assignment, so that they could have an opportunity to reflectively think about and honestly write out an uncensored lament to the Lord that would express their pain. They were tasked with completing the assignment, and if

prompted by the Spirit, to share their experience with the group at the next session. Time and space were left for questions, and then the session ended with prayer by the participants.

Session Four

The goal of session four was to impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer. Session four opened with prayer by the participants, and insight was shared about the false beliefs and the truths to counteract those belief. The participants were introduced to the four dominant lies as noted by Robert McGee: performance and approval, (related to core belongings) and failure and defectiveness (related to image and identity) (McGee 2003, 29). The participants were made aware through the material shared that believing false lies result in emotional and spiritual chaos and confusion, and that freedom comes as the lies are identified, exposed, and then replaced by the truth.

The participants were given God's answer to the performance trap (justification, reconciliation, propitiation, and regeneration), in addition to the steps to freedom which included recognizing the lies, realizing what led to the lies, renouncing the lies, and announcing what God said in His Word. The ladies were encouraged to participate in the two sticks and the body exercise which helped them to identify the lies that had been spoken into and over their lives. After the ladies completed the exercise, we discussed their feelings and experiences about the exercise. It was interesting that over half of the

participants felt comfortable sharing some of the false lies they have believed throughout their lives. The participants experienced God's healing and transforming presence, as well as freedom from the bondage of those lies as they began to identify them. Prayer was offered by the participants, and the ladies were encouraged to allow God's presence to continue to minister peace to their lives. The goal of impacting the participants' encounter of God's presence was met.

Session Five

Session five focused on the final goal of impacting the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope. Material was shared about deep wounds and the steps to healing. Yolanda Butler in her book *The Heart of a First Lady*, shares, "It is difficult to minister to others when your life has been wounded so deeply. Lingering hurts cripple you and develops into unresolved issues" (Butler 2013, 33). She continues, "Even though there are many scenarios in life that can cause us pain and hurt, for some reason, it seems to manifest itself to an even significant extent in the body of Christ" (Butler 2017, 32). Through presentation and discussion, the participants were made aware of hidden pain that can reside behind layers of protection and pretense, and how wounds are instrumental in diminishing our hope and compromising our well-being.

Several participants expressed pain and hurt from past situations, and through the material, better understood how wounds can remain powerful and destructive. The participants were given steps to healing and encouraged to

launch the experience from a safe place. One of the steps to healing included shaping a blessing for the offender. A couple of the group members revealed how hard that step was for them. The remainder of the time was spent in a discussion about forgiveness. Several of the participants admitted the need for God's continual work in their lives in the area of forgiveness but felt hopeful and thankful for the healing process. The session culminated with questions from the participants and then we closed out in a time of prayer.

Session Six

All the goals were met in the prior sessions; therefore, the final session was a review of the materials in addition to an overview on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Formational Prayer. The participants were made aware through the material and discussion that Formational Prayer is only and always an activity of the Holy Spirit, and that the work of the Spirit draws, reveals, convicts, assures, indwells, and empowers. The participants were reminded that Formational Prayer is a ministry of the Holy Spirit into some of the most dark and troubling places of the human soul. The participants were also made aware through teaching and materials that the Holy Spirit moves within sanctification, and the tools used by the Holy Spirit include insight, wisdom, discernment, and the Word of Knowledge.

The session ended with a question-and-answer time and then we closed the session with prayer. The ladies expressed an interest in continuing the group on a monthly basis to further explore the topic of forgiveness.

Assessment

The assessment instrument consisted of demographic data and qualitative and quantitative questions. A seven-point Likert scale questionnaire was used which contained 15 quantitative questions on both the pre- and post-assessment, with three questions aligned to each project goal. The quantitative questions were Likert scale agreement questions set to measure the participants' extent of agreement or disagreement from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Five qualitative questions were included on the post-assessment with one open-ended randomized question per project goal. The pre- and post-assessment quantitative questionnaire contained the same information, thus measuring the impact of the project. The five additional qualitative questions were applied to the post-assessment only to glean specific insights from the program.

The pre-assessment tool was administered in writing before the beginning of the first session. The post-assessment tool was conducted after the last session. A total of eight participants completed the sessions, which provided responses for the pre- and post-assessment. After the completion of the post-assessment, the data was inserted into a spreadsheet by each goal. It was then sorted in descending order to organize the results and gain an understanding of what goals were impacted most and least by the project. From the data, I was able to determine that Formational Prayer impacted the participants' awareness of brokenness the most. Several of the goals were within tenths of each other, so Formational Prayer seemed to impact the participants in a significant way.

The participants' interest and participation were key to the outcomes and

provided insight into the overall process. The group bonded well, which made for a fruitful and productive experience. The group decided that they wanted to meet monthly beyond the six sessions to continue to engage and discuss other issues and concerns they have in their various roles and ministries.

In chapter five, the results of the qualitative Likert scale questions will be examined. The Likert scale agreement questions will measure the extent of agreement and disagreement as well as the impact of the project. A copy of the pre- and post-assessment instruments can be found in Appendix Three.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPORTING THE RESULTS

The purpose of this project was to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Ohio areas through six weeks of self-reflection. The research question was: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, Ohio areas through six weeks of self-reflection?

Overview

The survey was discussed in chapter four. The assessment was designed to measure the understanding of Formational Prayer, and the significance of the process to impact the perspective of African American clergy spouses. A pre-assessment was administered prior to the sessions, and a post-assessment was conducted after the completion of the sessions. The variation between the two assessments determined the level of the impact of the sessions.

A seven-point Likert agreement scale was used to measure the degree of effectiveness, ranging from 1- Strongly Disagree; 2 - Moderately Disagree; 3 – Slightly Disagree; 4 – Neutral; 5 – Slightly Agree; 6 – Moderately Agree; 7 – Strongly Agree. The goals are listed in order of prominence and each table contains the questions based on the level of changed reported.

Goal Two: Awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness

The goal that scored highest was, “To impact the participants’ awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness. Three quantitative statements and one qualitative statement addressed this goal (See Appendix Three). The pre-test average score for this goal was 3.29, between slightly disagree and neutral. The post-test average score was 6.79, moderate to strongly agree, with an average change in awareness of 3.5. The three quantitative statements in the order of prominence were as follows: I am aware that through Formational Prayer I can be open about the brokenness that I have experienced (#7). I am aware that Formational Prayer can address my brokenness (#2). I am aware that I can experience healing from my brokenness through Formational Prayer (#12). The correlated qualitative statement was: I am aware that Formational Prayer can address brokenness in my life. The results for goal #2 are given below in table 1.

Table 1. Goal #2: To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.

Question	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
7) I am aware that through Formational Prayer, I can be open about the brokenness that I have experienced.	3.25	6.87	3.62
2) I am aware that Formational Prayer can address brokenness in my life.	3.25	6.75	3.50
12) I am aware that I can experience healing from my brokenness through Formational Prayer.	3.37	6.75	3.38
Composite	3.29	6.79	3.50

NOTE: All quantitative statements were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The pre-test score of (3.25) was equal in value for statement #7 and #2. The post-test score for question #7 was 6.87, with a change score of 3.62, and a post-test score of 6.75 with an overall change of 3.50 for question #2. The pre-test score for question #12 (3.37) had a slightly wider margin and indicated awareness of the healing from brokenness that can be experienced through Formational Prayer. The post-test score for #12 was 3.38. The overall composite post-test data was 6.79 (close to strongly agree) with an overall growth score of

3.50 indicating that there was an awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.

Goal Four: Encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer

The goal that scored second in the level of prominence was goal number four, "To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer." The average score for the three quantitative statements was 3.20 for the pre-test (close to slightly disagree), 6.66 post-test (close to strongly agree), with a 3.45 margin of change. The three quantitative questions in order of prominence and impact are as follows: I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer by opening myself to the peace of God's presence (#14). I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer (#4). I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer as I allow God the opportunity to surround me with His presence (#9). The qualitative question that aligned to this goal was as follows: How does Formational Prayer position you to experience God's presence?

All eight participants showed growth on goal four. The assessment indicated that the participants felt they encountered God's presence and peace through Formational Prayer. The results for goal #4 are found in table 2.

Table 2. Goal #4: To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.

Question	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
14) I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer by opening myself to the peace of God's presence.	3.00	6.62	3.62
4) I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer.	3.25	6.75	3.50
9) I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer as I allow God the opportunity to surround me with His presence.	3.37	6.62	3.25
Composite	3.20	6.66	3.456

NOTE: All quantitative statements were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The question with the highest score was, "Can God's presence be encountered through Formational Prayer by opening themselves to the peace of God's presence?" (#14). The pre-test score was 3.0, with a post-test score of 6.62, and an overall growth of 3.62. The assessment evaluated how the participants encountered God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer (#4). This question had a 3.25 pre-test score, with a post-test score of 6.75 and a margin of change of 3.50. The assessment addressed how Formational Prayer allows God the opportunity to surround us with His presence (#9). This question showed a pre-test score of 3.37, with a post-test score of 6.62, which was the

same as question #14. The average composite score was 3.2, with a post score of 6.62, showing an overall growth of 3.456 indicating growth by all eight participants.

Goal Five: Experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope

The goal that scored the third highest was, “To impact the participants’ experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.” Three quantitative statements and one qualitative question addressed this goal (See Appendix Three). The pre-test average composite score for this goal was 3.16 (between moderately and slightly disagree), and the post-test average composite score was 6.62 (between slightly and moderately agree) with an average composite score change of 3.453, which is 3/10th of a percent in range to the overall change in goal number 4 which is 3.456. The three quantitative statements are as follows: I experience hope that my perspective on life changes when I practice Formational Prayer (#15). I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer (#5). I experience hope that God hears my prayers when I practice Formational Prayer (#10). The qualitative statement was: List two ways that Formational Prayer has impacted your hope in God.

Table 3. Goal # 5: To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

Question	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
15) I experience hope that my perspective on life changes when I practice Formational Prayer.	3.0	6.62	3.87
5) I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer.	3.25	6.62	3.75
10) I experience hope that God hears my prayers when I practice Formational Prayer.	3.25	6.62	3.50
Composite	3.16	6.62	3.453

NOTE: All quantitative statements were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The statement that scored the highest in prominence under this goal was, "I experience hope that my perspective on life changes when I practice Formational Prayer" (#15). The data indicated an average pre-test score of 3.0, and a post-test score of 6.62, which was equal in value to questions #5 and #10. Both statements # 5, I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer (#5) and statement #10, I experience hope that God hears my prayers when I practice Formational Prayer (#10) also showed equal value with pre-test scores of 3.25. The change score for #5 was 3.75, and 3.50 for #10. A composite change score of 3.453 was recorded. One participant indicated in the qualitative feedback that they experienced renewed confidence that their help comes from the Lord. The post-surveys indicated that there was an impact on experiencing

hope when Formational Prayer was practiced. There was consistency in the data, with each participant showing growth in this category.

Goal Three: Understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer

The goal that scored fourth in prominence was, “To impact the participants’ understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.” Three questions on the survey addressed this goal. The average pre-test composite score for this category was 3.16, (slightly disagree). The average post-test composite score was 6.58, between moderately agree and strongly agree, with an average change of 3.42. The three quantitative statements were as follows: I understand that Formational Prayer helps me maintain emotional balance (#8). I understand that currently my emotions are in a good place because I practice Formational Prayer (#13). I understand that my emotional well-being can be improved through Formational Prayer (#3). The qualitative question that informed this goal was as follows: How has your emotional well-being been impacted by Formational Prayer?

Table 4. Goal #3: To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.

Question	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
8) I understand that Formational Prayer helps me maintain emotional balance.	3.12	6.75	3.63
13) I understand that currently my emotions are in a good place because I practice Formational Prayer.	2.87	6.25	3.38
3) I understand that my emotional well-being can be improved through Formational Prayer.	3.50	6.75	3.25
Composite	3.16	6.58	3.42

NOTE: All quantitative statements were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The survey results for the second question, "I understand that Formational Prayer helps me maintain emotional balance" (#8), indicated growth. The pre-test average was 3.12 (slightly disagree and neutral) and the post-test average was 6.75, with all participants reporting between moderately and strongly agree. The statement: I understand that currently my emotions are in a good place because I practice Formational Prayer (#13), also indicated change. The pre-test score was 2.87 (moderately disagree), with the post-test score of 6.25 (moderately agree), indicating growth. The final survey statement indicated that there was growth in awareness of how Formational Prayer can improve emotional well-being (#3). There was a pre-test average of 3.50 (slightly disagree) and a post-test average

of 6.75 (between moderately and strongly agree), resulting in a change of 3.25. All participants showed overall growth.

Goal One: Perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse

The goal that scored lowest in the level of prominence was goal number one, “To impact the participants’ perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.” The average score for the three quantitative questions was 3.29 pre-test (between slightly disagree and neutral), with a 3.34 margin of change.

The three quantitative statements in order of prominence are as follows: Formational Prayer has brought me nearer to God as an African American clergy spouse (#11). Formational Prayer has sustained my faith as an African American clergy spouse (#6). Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse (#1). The qualitative question that informed this goal was: How can Formational Prayer assist you in your life as an African American clergy spouse?

Table 5. Goal # 1: To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.

Question	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
11) Formational Prayer has brought me nearer to God as an African American clergy spouse	3.25	6.62	3.42
6) Formational Prayer has sustained my faith as an African American clergy spouse.	3.25	6.62	3.37
1) Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse.	3.37	6.62	3.25
Composite	3.29	6.62	3.34

NOTE: All quantitative statements were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The pre-test composite score was 3.29 (slightly disagree), while the post-test score was 6.62 (between moderately and strongly agree), indicating an overall change of 3.34. Statement #11 scored the highest and indicated that Formational Prayer brought them nearer to God as African American clergy spouses with a change of 3.42. Statement #6, indicating that Formational Prayer has sustained their faith as African American clergy spouses, had a change of 3.37, while statement #1 indicated that the participants felt their lives were strengthened by Formational Prayer with a change score of 3.25. Statements #11 and #6 had an equal score of 3.25 in the pre-test average. Statements #1,

#6, and #11 all scored equal in value in the post-test average with a score of 6.62 and indicated that the participants felt their lives were sustained by Formational Prayer and that it brought them closer to God. Eight participants showed an impact in their perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.

Composite Scores for All Five Goals

Based on the quantitative analysis for the participants' responses to the pre- and post-surveys, the data indicates that Formational Prayer impacted the lives of the clergy spouses. The average difference between the pre- and post-assessments was 3.43 (Table 6). This average score lifts the pre-assessment score from a 3.22, slightly disagree to a post-assessment average of 6.65 (Table 6), indicating between a moderate to strong level of agreement on the Likert scale.

Table 6. Composite Scores for All Goals

Goal No.	Name	Average Pre-Test	Average Post-Test	Change
2	To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.	3.29	6.79	3.50
4	To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.	3.20	6.66	3.45
5	To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.	3.16	6.62	3.45
3	To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.	3.16	6.58	3.42
1	To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.	3.29	6.62	3.34
Average Composite Score		3.22	6.65	3.43

NOTE: All quantitative questions were measured on a Likert scale: 1-Strongly Disagree; 2-Moderately Disagree; 3-Slightly Disagree; 4-Neutral; 5-Slightly Agree; 6-Moderately Agree; 7-Strongly Agree. The scores are mean scores based on the answers given by a total of eight women for each of these above statements, after six weeks (n=8).

The composite score for the quantitative statements describes impact and growth in the lives of the participants. The five goals were designed to measure the impact of Formational Prayer in the following areas: (Goal 1) perspective;

(Goal 2) brokenness; (Goal 3) emotional well-being; (Goal 4) God's presence; and (Goal 5) hope. The quantitative responses showed strong results regarding the impact of Formational Prayer. The question is: Will the qualitative analysis confirm the results?

Qualitative Analysis

All eight of the participants responded to the survey. Each of the respondents received five open-ended questions at the end of the project as a part of the post-assessment. There was one survey question associated with each project goal. These questions were designed to elicit anecdotal data on the impact of the specific project goals.

The first qualitative question asked: Am I aware that Formational Prayer can address brokenness in my life? Seven out of the eight participants responded with an answer, however, this question had to be discarded because upon review, I realized that I had inadvertently placed the wrong question on the survey, and after consulting with Dr. Dawn Morton, she agreed that I couldn't use the question. Unfortunately, I did not catch this or recognize it until after the assessment was completed. The question should have been: How has Formational Prayer assisted you in your life as an African American clergy spouse? While the participants' responses were honest and sincere, it was determined that the responses could not be used as a part of the analysis since the question did not meet the criteria of an open-ended question.

The second open-ended question asked: How has Formational Prayer impacted your brokenness? Five out of eight of the participants expressed that

Formational Prayer impacted their brokenness by providing a level of healing from the hurt and pain they experienced in their lives. One participant commented that it has helped them learn how trust plays a major role in the healing process. For them, trusting God brought a level of peace. Another mentioned that it heightened their awareness and reminded them that they could continually bring any areas of brokenness in their life to God, citing that their failure to do so inhibits their ability to be spiritually whole and mature. Two mentioned that their attitudes and assumptions were impacted, and realized they needed to work on themselves before attempting to help others. Only one participant did not respond to the question.

The third qualitative question asked: In what ways does Formational Prayer provide emotional well-being for you? Two participants spoke of Formational Prayer allowing them a safe place to express and release their honest feelings and hurt to God. Two also mentioned that Formational Prayer promotes healing through the Holy Spirit. There were also two that spoke of the peace that is afforded them through practicing Formational Prayer. One said that Formational Prayer helped them to identify their brokenness. There was only one participant that did not respond to the question.

The fourth qualitative question asked: How does Formational Prayer position you to experience God's presence? Six out of the eight participants clearly stated that Formational Prayer was an invitation to come into God's presence and recognized that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, they can experience peace, forgiveness, and healing. Three out of the eight mentioned

that Formational Prayer positioned them to experience healing in God's presence. One person said they experience God's presence when they intentionally address and acknowledge their brokenness, and come into God's presence, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead them through the healing process.

The final open-ended question asked the participants to list two ways that Formational Prayer has impacted their hope in God. Three of the eight participants stated that their hope was strengthened by Formational Prayer. One mentioned that her faith was also strengthened. Three participants mentioned that their hope has been impacted knowing that as they spend time in the Word the Holy Spirit is present; they have the assurance that the Holy Spirit is always there to help them; and the Holy Spirit works through them as an agent of change to help others. Two participants stated that their hope has been impacted as they have learned to trust God to lead them and be involved with every aspect of their life. One participant mentioned that her hope was impacted by the peace and patience she finds in waiting on God to do what He said He would do.

Conclusion

Based on the quantitative analysis of the participants, it appears that the project did make an impact, especially in the area of brokenness, giving an overall change effect of 3.43 over the five goals. The qualitative responses support the quantitative data by providing observations in shifts of awareness and understanding of Formational Prayer, particularly the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Chapter Six will reflect on the findings of chapter five and discuss the implications. Additionally, the processes used during the project will be examined. There will be attention given to personal learning and experiences while conducting the project. Consideration of the potential of this process with other small groups of clergy spouses will be reviewed. Finally, there will be an explanation of revisions made to chapter two and reflections of my personal goals.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The interest for this project developed from my passion for helping pastors' wives who feel they must walk this journey alone because they cannot share their hearts or trust others. Sometimes this is a result of betrayal, marital infidelity, neglect, feelings of abandonment, and life experiences that leave deep wounds that can compromise their emotional and spiritual well-being. Survey findings conducted by Luedtke and Sneed revealed the awareness and frustration experienced by pastors' wives as they deal with cumbersome expectations of the role (Luedtke and Sneed 2018, 65). Also, along with the role come many opportunities and challenges, as well as blessings and burdens, that can be overwhelming to the heart and spirit.

In addition, amid such a great calling and assignment, the role of a pastor's wife is ever evolving and continues to do so at a rapid pace. The last two decades have reflected the variations of those changes as seen in the movement from companionship to shared partnership, to pastoral leadership, to co-pastor. As a result, about 15 years ago, I began reaching out through our Berean Fellowship, offering sessions to engage, encourage, and inspire pastors' wives. From that fellowship, connections were made, bonds were formed, and trust was developed. This helped to provide a segue into a sisterhood where the ladies found a safe place to be themselves and confidentially share their hearts with one another. Wilhite and Wilson shares that leadership, by its very nature is isolating, and the questions Who do you talk to? Who can you confide in? Who

can you lean on? can be scary (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 100). Wilhite and Wilson continues that we all need people in our lives to keep our spirit up, and it is vital to have encouragement, hope, and companionship of others to walk with us through difficulty, hardship, and hurt (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 104).

Therefore, community is an important component of the clergy spouse's life.

The impact study researched the relationship between the efficacy of Formational Prayer, and the significance of the process to impact the perspective of African American clergy spouses. Based on the results, the project goals were achieved. The sessions helped the participants understand spiritual insights that provide emotional stability as well as nurture the interior life. The participants demonstrated an understanding of the purpose of Formational Prayer as they applied the principles, resources, and techniques that helped them look insightfully at their brokenness. They experienced the benefit of Formational Prayer as it pertained to spiritual intervention in the emotional healing process through the sessions' contents and discussions.

The group bonded well and felt comfortable enough to share their experiences with the exercises which proved to be impactful to the process. The area that the participants were most impacted by is the area of brokenness. The sessions brought the participants to a level of awareness which allowed them to identify and acknowledge the need for help. It gave them courage to trust God to bring them to a place of peace and healing. The participants also felt that the sessions proved to be a good experience for them, and desired for the group to continue to meet on a regular basis. During one of the sessions, the participants

were given steps to healing which included shaping a blessing for the offender. Several of the participants discovered that part of their brokenness included unforgiveness, and while they realized that the Holy Spirit could release healing power to address this area of brokenness, they requested to further examine this area.

As a result, the group continues to meet monthly exploring the topic of forgiveness. The third Thursday in every month was designated as the established time to meet. The group chose the book *Forgiving What You Can't Forget* by Lysa TerKeurst. A group member is tasked each month to lead a chapter discussion. The target date for completion of the discussion group is November 2021. I was pleased with the way the group connected, and it was evident that the ladies enjoyed and needed the fellowship of one another. My overall observation is that the study allowed me to assess the effectiveness of Formational Prayer as it pertained to the participants' emotional well-being.

Project Goals

The assessment results revealed that African American clergy spouses' perspectives were impacted by Formational Prayer. The project goals were as follows:

1. To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.
2. To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.

3. To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.
4. To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.
5. To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

All five goals indicated an average growth of over 3.0 points from the pre- to the post-assessment. Goals were measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Goal two had the greatest impact indicating the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness. The change was 3.5 percent and showed that the participants gained a level of awareness which allowed them to identify and acknowledge the need for help, which resulted in that significant change. The participants' responses were reflective of some of the distorted beliefs that created the emotional pain and brokenness in their lives. Question #7 scored the highest for goal two. The question was, I am aware that through Formational Prayer, I can be opened about my brokenness. Responses revealed a connection between Formational Prayer and a willingness for the participants to be opened to the Holy Spirit ministering to areas of brokenness.

The remaining four goals also indicated change between 3.3 and 3.4 percent. The change level between goals four and five were within a tenth of each other. While the objective of goal four was to impact the participants' encounter of God's presence, and goal five was to impact the participant's experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope, the very slight change

indicated that both goals equally impacted the participants and suggests that the participants' hope was impacted by God's presence. Growth and change were observed through the dynamics of the group. Through the project, the participants indicated a need to further engage in dialogue that resulted from discussions in the sessions. The goals along with their associated quantitative and qualitative findings will be examined from the highest to lowest score.

Goal Two: Awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness

The goal showing the highest level of change was, "To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness." Three quantitative questions related specifically to the addressing of, openness to, and healing of brokenness addressed this goal (See Appendix 2). The average pre-test score was 3.29 (slightly disagree to neutral) and the average post-test score for the three statements was 6.79, (between moderate to strongly agree) indicating that the participants' experienced enlightenment and awareness of Formational Prayer to address their brokenness. The correlated qualitative question was: How has Formational Prayer impacted your brokenness? The participants were asked to explain their response.

The qualitative responses reflected the participants' recognition of the effectiveness of Formational Prayer to make a significant impact in brokenness. The participants came to the realization that their healing was directly connected to them relinquishing control of their situations, trusting God, and experiencing God's peace. They better understood the necessity of continually bringing areas

of brokenness before the Lord, and how their failure to do so inhibited their ability to be spiritually whole and mature.

To begin the healing process there must be a recognition and a level of honesty that pain exists, and then an invitation to allow the Holy Spirit to minister to the place of pain and brokenness. Wardle shares that once the healing has begun, a person experiences an entirely new cause and effect relationship relative to their wounds (Wardle 2001, 192). Wardle continues:

The changes are easily identifiable, and the wounds touched by Christ enables people to believe the truth of who they are in Him which creates peace and comfort even in the midst of life's storms and opens the way for them to experience Spirit-empowered living in the specific life situation. (Wardle 2001, 192)

The participants' willingness to be transparent about their pain provided an opportunity and pathway to growth and change. Yancy says that prayer invites me to bring my whole life into God's presence for cleansing and restoration. Self-exposure is never easy, but when I do it, I learn that underneath the layers of grime lies a damaged work of art that God longs to repair (Yancy 2006, 42). Formational Prayer allowed the participants to discover and rediscover some areas of brokenness that needed to be addressed as they continue to strive for spiritual growth and development. Will the participants experience God's presence in a greater way because of addressing their brokenness? Goal four may provide some insight.

Goal Four: Encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer

The goal that scored second in the level of prominence was goal #4, "To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational

Prayer.” Three assessment statements related specifically to encountering God’s presence addressed this goal (See Appendix Two). The average pre-test score for the three quantitative questions was 3.20 (close to slightly disagree), and 6.66 for a post-average score (between agree and strongly agree). The extent of the participants’ agreement that the practice of, surrounding of, and the opening of oneself to God’s peace positively affected the participants, indicating an enlightenment and awareness of Formational Prayer to encounter God’s presence. The qualitative question was: How does Formational Prayer position you to experience God’s presence?

Responses to the qualitative question reflected the participants’ understanding of the importance of God’s presence in the Formational Prayer process. Responses suggested that an invitation into God’s presence could be experienced through forgiveness, healing, and peace through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. MacArthur shares that when we pray, we are going to a God who is our loving heavenly Father. We can go with a sense of intimacy (Kistler 2011, 21). The joy experienced in God’s presence was expressed by the participants as they opened themselves to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Murray reminds us that if we yield ourselves entirely to the will of the Spirit and let Him have His way with us, He will manifest the life of Christ within us. He will do this with a divine power, maintaining the life of Christ in us in uninterrupted continuity (Murray 1998, 345). The participants experienced an overwhelming sense of God’s peace and presence as the Holy Spirit guided them to and through the healing process.

Despite Formational Prayer being a new concept for the participants, the survey seems to suggest the respondents' willingness to confront painful areas of their lives by intentionally acknowledging, addressing, and giving their brokenness over to God. There is a level of confidence and hope that comes from releasing bundled up burdens and weighted pressure. MacArthur shares that we can come to God and call him "Father," or "Abba," and in doing so, we are saying, "God, I recognize that I'm your child. I know you love me and have given me intimate access to You" (Kistler 2011, 21). They also expressed a feeling of safety in God's presence.

Spending time in God's presence was a transforming experience for the participants. They found that through this level of intimacy the Father affirmed His love for them. They discovered that living in God's presence produced a level of power and confidence that was essential for their spiritual growth. As we are consumed by God's presence, we are changed into His image and His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18). The relevant question is: How can they continually practice the presence of God? Brother Lawrence tells us:

I know that for the right practice of the presence of God, the heart must be empty of all other things. This is so God will possess the heart alone. As He cannot possess it alone without emptying it of all besides, so, neither can He act there and do in it what He please unless it be let open for Him. (Nelson 2016, 56)

Based on the participant's responses, the participants came to a place of recognition that being in God's presence brings the healing that is needed and desired as they surrender their pain and walk into the confidence and freedom that comes from abiding in God's presence.

Goal Five: Experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

The goal that scored the third highest was, “To impact the participants’ experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.” Three quantitative questions and one qualitative question specially related to Formational Prayer impacting the practice, prayer, and perspective addressed this goal (See Appendix Two). The average pre-test score for the three quantitative statements was 3.16 (slightly disagree), and the average post-test score was 6.62, (between agree and strongly agree). The qualitative question was: List two ways that Formational Prayer has impacted your hope in God.

Responses to the qualitative question consisted of several themes. As with goal #4, the Holy Spirit greatly impacted the participants’ hope. Spurgeon shares that because of the visitation by the Holy Spirit, our hope becomes clear and assured, and we are led to give full and bold testimony concerning our hope and the blessed One who is the substance of it (Spurgeon 1998, 370). Based on the participants’ responses, their hope was impacted by the peace they experienced as they began to understand how they could move from a place of brokenness to a place of peace. Through the sessions they positioned themselves to experience the God kind of peace that surpasses all understanding and can keep the heart and mind through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7).

The overall implication is that the participants’ hope was impacted as they recognized a need to trust God in every area and aspect of their lives. This trust comes from the renewing of the mind and a change in perspective. How can this kind of trust be developed? Agnes Sanford shares that a growing faith changes

us. We can rest in God's care, no matter how God responds to a particular request; we do not need God to give us our way. With a heart full of trust, we can also relax and see where God really does answer (Hansen 2012, 179). This kind of trust strengthens hope.

Pastors' wives can sometimes find themselves in depressing situations, causing them to experience a sense of hopelessness, so it was good to hear the women being transparent and sharing moments in their past and lives that caused them pain. It was also good to hear how through the sessions they found a deeper sense of confidence and hope as they allowed the Spirit to minister to them at their point of need. Paul in Romans 5:3-5 says:

“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

The respondents acknowledged that their faith was strengthened as they gained a new and expanded perspective on hope.

Goal Three: Understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer

The goal that scored fourth in prominence was, “To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.” Three quantitative questions and one qualitative question specially related to Formational Prayer impacting emotional well-being through emotional improvement, balance, and status addressed this goal (See Appendix Two). The average pre-test score for the three quantitative statements was 3.16 (slightly

disagree), and the average post-test score was 6.62, (between agree and strongly agree). The qualitative question was, list two ways that Formational Prayer has impacted your hope in God. The qualitative question that informed this goal is as follows: How has your emotional well-being been impacted by Formational Prayer?

As with goals four and five, the Holy Spirit was a major impact in the lives of the participants as they expressed that their emotional well-being comes from knowing that healing is released through the Holy Spirit. The sessions allowed the participants to identify broken areas, sit with their pain, remain still before God, and listen to what the Spirit was saying while they waited in God's presence. Serita Jakes shares that we need to allow ourselves to be still before our Creator and simply lean on Him. We need to find ways to revive our soul in order to maintain what matters most to us: our relationship with Him and our identify as His child (Jakes 2003, 183). Qualitative responses suggested that emotional well-being comes from knowing that God is in control, His knowledge of our needs, and His willingness to provide. The Word reminds us that God know what we have need of before we ask (Matt. 5:8). Qualitative responses indicated that through the lament exercise participants found renewed strength that allowed them to release issues that have long held them back. Rustenbach affirms that the inability to tune in to emotion can be a significant obstacle to the healing process. As someone has said, "If we won't feel it, God can't heal it" (Rustenbach 2011, 109). The exercise allowed the participants to experience

freedom as they became aware of their feelings and was able to express their silent truth.

Goal One: Perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse

The goal that scored lowest in the level of prominence was goal #1, “To impact the participants’ perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.” Three quantitative questions and one qualitative question specially related to Formational Prayer strengthening, sustaining, and nearness addressed this goal (See Appendix Three) The average score for the three quantitative question was 3.29 pre-test (between slightly disagree and neutral), and a post-test score of 6.62 (between moderate to strongly agree), with a 3.34 margin of change. The qualitative question was: How has Formational Prayer assisted you in your life as an African American clergy spouse? However, the question was inadvertently worded wrong on the survey.

While this goal scored the lowest in level of prominence, by all indications, Formational Prayer did impact the participants’ perspective. Seven out of the eight participants were not aware of Formational Prayer. This could be due to other factors including a low level of exposure to resources. My exposure to Formational Prayer came because of my coursework at Ashland. I must admit that prior to my attendance I was not aware of the resource. It interested me enough that I wanted to pursue additional information. Pettit asserts that with very few exceptions, God’s functional calling come through other people speaking truth into our lives (Pettit 2008, 209). Therefore, what I learned not only benefited me, but it gave me a desire to speak those truths into the lives of

others in my sphere of influence. The one participant that had participated in a Formational Prayer seminar through a church in another state several years ago found the sessions to be enlightening and beneficial. The questions to be explored are: What will each participant do with the information they received? Was there enough interest generated for them to share it with their congregation? Or will the information be another feel good session that results in inaction?

While the qualitative responses were honest and sincere, they did not qualify or meet the criteria to be a part of the analysis. Even with discarding the question inadvertently worded, I still believe the participants' perspective as an African American clergy spouse was impacted based on the responses from the other questions. In addition to their perspective on Formational Prayer being enlightened, I believe there was also an increase in knowledge about the value of community. McKay quotes C.S. Lewis as saying, "Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, 'What! You too? I thought I was the only one.'" There is an instant bonding when we know we are not alone in our passion and pains (McKay 2010, 108). Having a sense of community, connection, sisterhood, and fellowship are all helpful ways that clergy spouses can address and respond to their brokenness. Connections were made as the participants realized that others had gone through similar pain.

The summary of the five goals highlighted the benefit of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses. Ninety percent of the group came to the process without any prior knowledge of Formational Prayer;

therefore, they had no point of view or outlook about the process. With each session, their knowledge expanded, causing them to formulate a positive view and opinion about the benefit of Formational Prayer. Pastors' wives are good at covering and concealing their pain. Vinson shares that some handle their pain quite well, thank you; but on the other hand, there are those who are simply devastated by it (Vinson 2000, 20). Often their position prohibits them from freely expressing their honest feelings, so the greatest impact was seen in the group's discovery and awareness of the concealed pain and brokenness that they chose to surrender to God for His peace. Colbert shares:

When we pretend that all is well when all is not well, when we tell ourselves and others that nothing bad has happened when something very bad has happened, when we act as if we have suffered no loss or pain when we have suffered great loss or pain, it is then that we are stuffing what we should express. When a person begins to pack powerful and devastating emotions into the closet of his soul, he is setting himself up for trouble. (Colbert 2003, 53)

Through the process, the group understood the importance of preserving their emotional well-being. They realized there was no need to hide or deny their emotions of hurt and pain because God already knew everything about them. The group learned that they could position and experience God's presence as they intentionally addressed, acknowledged, and gave their brokenness over to Him. They realized that there was value in inviting God's presence into the place of their pain. In doing so, the Holy Spirit guided them through the healing process. Ministry can be a blessing and a burden, and at times pastors' wives find themselves in situations that render them helpless and hopeless. The group

shared that through the process, their hope was impacted, renewed, and strengthened.

Application

The spoken and unspoken expectations of the role of the pastor's wife are ones that can produce physical and emotional stress and exhaustion. As a result, there is an acute unawareness of the challenges that a pastor's wife faces. In the African American church, the pastor's wife is considered a leader to the women of the congregation as she is called upon to be a mentor, role model, teacher, and in some cases a preacher. According to White, the position can be inclusive of ministry coordinator, biblical expositor, organizer, peacemaker, fashion icon, ideal wife, and mother (White 2017, 135). Along with the advantages and blessings comes the burdens and challenges of the role, and amid it all, there is also the pain, disappointment, hurt, and discouragement that can be experienced in ministry. I believe that Formational Prayer can be a pathway to healing the pain and brokenness that results from ministry woes.

My role as a pastor's wife, Director of our Women's and Counseling Ministry, and Coordinator for our Berean Fellowship pastors' wives group allows me to interact with women in general and pastors' wives specially. I've witnessed the hurt and pain that these women have lived through, while continuing to minister to and serve their congregations and families. I've seen the bitterness and resentment that can hinder and impede their relationship with God and others, as well as the deep-seated pain and agony of concealing those hurts and scars. I feel I am in a unique position to work with and help pastors' wives identify

and heal through their pain. Osaigbovo suggests that the greatest gift at the end of our journey is to have the presence of God on our lives in tangible ways (Osaigbovo 1992, 134). God's presence makes a difference.

First, my intentions are to introduce the concept and promote the value of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses through the forums that I have been blessed to lead. I believe the context of this project is reflective of my ministry to pastors' wives. Brokenness can be a hinderance to spiritual growth and development. Osaigbovo shares that the purpose of spiritual maturity is to love beyond our capacity. In this way, the Lord exchanges our strength for His strength. If we don't respond God's way, we prolong the trials and increase their severity (Osaigbovo 1992, 135). The process will help pastor's wives to address their brokenness.

My goal is to incorporate my work on Formational Prayer into the various group settings that are presently established through our fellowship and connections. Based on the response of the impact study group, I believe other groups would be open to the process and it would be well received. At one point I would have thought it would be a challenge to assemble a group for six sessions, but we learned through the pandemic that there are multitude opportunities to reach out beyond the confines of our four walls. The Zoom format has allowed us to expand our base to be inclusive of those who live beyond our regions.

Second, I believe that there is the potential to develop a resource network for pastors' wives. That network can be developed electronically and provide additional information that can be utilized for the benefit of spiritual, mental, and

emotional health. In addition, online support groups can be established. Dobson explains that pastors' wives' support groups should not be about comparing numbers, budgets, buildings, or anything else related to ecclesiastical status (Dobson 2003, 162). Support groups can provide a forum to share experiences, ideas, and resources.

As a trained clinician, it is important to know when there is a need for intervention beyond the spiritual realm. There are times and seasons that require professional help. As I mentioned earlier, there are pastors' wives that struggle with damaged emotions far beyond what Formational Prayer can offer. The sessions will allow me to identify those situations that require a more in-depth evaluation and will help me direct the person in need toward the appropriate counseling resources.

Third, other clergy spouses can be trained in Formational Prayer so that they can present it to their congregations. Although some pastors' wives may feel uncomfortable in a teaching role, the challenge can activate their faith to move beyond their place of comfort. Munroe defines faith as active belief combined with expectation and action (Munroe 2002, 94). In addition, there is also the possibility that based on needs that arise from the sessions, additional forums can be developed that will speak to certain topics and issues that may hold an interest for the participants. Professionals from various disciplines can be utilized to disseminate information in a question-and-answer format.

Further Study

The impact study has proven to be fruitful and productive as it has allowed insight into the private and personal pain of clergy spouses. However, there are still questions that need to be addressed. How is brokenness and forgiveness connected and how does unforgiveness impair their ability to heal emotionally? While understanding that the impact of brokenness can provide greater insight into the silent pain clergy spouses experience, understanding forgiveness may give even greater clarity. These questions are an amplification of goal two and would allow for a closer look at the effect of brokenness and the ability of forgiveness to impact the process. As we worked through the sessions, it became apparent that forgiveness was an issue for the participants. Several of them realized that a part of their brokenness included their unwillingness to release past hurts.

Further study will identify the impact forgiveness has on the emotional and spiritual state of an individual, and the emotional damage that can emerge from unresolved childhood issues, marital challenges, and church hurt that is allowed to fester. Butler says that lingering hurt cripples and develops into unresolved issues. Unresolved issues testify that there are some root aspects of your life that are vague and unsettled (Butler 2013, 33). The ability to forgive impacts the emotional and spiritual state of an individual. Sometimes you must make a conscious effort to forgive. Wilhite and Wilson shares that sometimes you have to choose to forgive and forget, and forget again, and distinctly choose to forget over and over again (Wilhite and Wilson 2013, 155). The willingness to release

past offenses and extend forgiveness is paramount to healing. Forgiveness does not mean that you forget, but it is allowing the Holy Spirit to help you remember in a forgiving way.

Further study would examine the clinical and spiritual aspects of forgiveness. According to Kendall, in 1998 the John Templeton Foundation awarded research grants for the study of forgiveness to 29 scholars. One of the primary discoveries of these studies is that the person who gains the most from forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving (Kendall 2002, xxxii). Kendall directs us to the passage found in Matt. 6:14 which says: "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Jesus makes this statement directly after teaching on the Lord's Prayer. Kendall shares the importance of forgiveness by saying when we pray, "Forgive us our debts," or "Forgive us our trespasses," you are asking God to let you off the hook (Kendall 2002, 69). So, in essence we are saying, "Lord, forgive us our debts and trespasses in the same way we forgive those who are indebted to or have trespassed against us." This brings us to another question: Does forgiveness and unforgiveness have an impact beyond the emotional and spiritual state?

One area for further study would involve the physical ramification and impact of forgiveness and unforgiveness. While we know that some physical challenges are a result of aging, genetics, and a lack of proper physical diet and care, we also know that there is a mind/body connection and that emotions can affect our health. Additionally, social scientists have determined that forgiveness may lead victims to emotional and physical healing. Colbert shares that

forgiveness enables a person to release buried anger, resentment, bitterness, shame, grief, regret, guilt, hate, and other toxic emotions that hide deep in the soul and make a person ill--both emotionally and physically (Colbert 3002, 163). There are health advantages to forgiveness, and I believe clergy spouses can benefit from learning healthy ways to release forgiveness in their lives.

Also, upon completion of my dissertation, it became evident that the Theological section did not reflect the true basis and intent of my project. Even though the focus of my project was on Formational Prayer, when I initially wrote my proposal, the Theological section was geared more towards the impact and power of prayer in the life of the believer, and how prayer was an essential component of our spiritual growth. Through instruction, I was encouraged to revise the section so that it would be reflective of the title, purpose statement, and research of my project. I was also encouraged to develop this area so that the reader would understand what Formational Prayer is beyond my basic definition in Chapter One.

I made the revisions to the section and included new authors that are experts in the field of Formational/Healing Prayer. The section now describes as well as gives an overall view of the foundation and process of Formational Prayer. Doing so allowed my focus to center around what Formational Prayer is, what it is not, the purpose and power of Formational Prayer, the faith it takes to embrace it, and the therapeutic value of it. There were also revisions made to the Proposal in the Biblical and Historical sections as well.

Personal Goals

When I began my journey with Ashland Theological Seminary in January 2016, I was excited about a fresh, new opportunity to learn and to grow spiritually. Little did I imagine the twists and turns that would produce that growth. I began in the Pre-DMin. Program, and then transitioned to the DMin. program in January 2017. The first year proved to be exciting and resourceful. I thought, *how great of an adventure this is!* Then life happened.

At the beginning of 2018, an uncle to whom I was caregiver died suddenly the day I was leaving for my on-campus intensive. I also discovered that same summer that my only brother was struggling with severe health issues, then in the fall, I learned of several health issues my father had which at a point required hospitalization. On January 2, 2019, my 40-year-old daughter passed, leaving a five-year-old daughter and I devastated. I did not have the mindset to do much of anything, let alone write a dissertation. In 2020, after pressing through my grief, I resumed writing, but of course, there was the pandemic which altered my life again. I had to homeschool my granddaughter and grandson. On top of it all, I encountered my own health challenges.

I mention all of this not for sympathy, but to highlight the point that through all the challenges, I learned something important: God was with me! It is the only way I made it. Dr. Brenda Buckwell, my advisor, helped me to understand that the project was my healing. As I wrote about prayer, and as I walked with the participants through the project, I was also able to discover and uncover places in my life that I was struggling with because of the challenges I experienced

during my educational journey. I learned something amazing about God and myself that I could not have learned any other way. The growth came as I began to trust God at a different level. The healing continued as I gave God my hurt, pain, grief, and disappointment. While I still have a way to go, I can attest to the fact that I am on my way!

When I set my personal goals, I did not factor in all that life would present to me, yet I knew I wanted them to be obtainable and measurable. I wanted them to be reflective of my desire to be more like Christ, and I wanted them to challenge me to grow beyond my present state at that time. A quote by Rick Warren aptly sums up my goals: "Spiritual maturity is neither instant nor automatic; it is gradual, progressive development that will take the rest of your life" (Warren 2002, 176).

My personal goals were:

1. I will strive to maintain a consistent prayer life that will allow me to stay in tune with God's will and purpose for my life by making my devotional time a daily priority.
2. I will continually renew my mind by eliminating negative habits, attitudes, and behaviors that adversely impact and impede my spiritual growth and development by daily renewing my mind and applying the principles of God's Word to my life.
3. I will endeavor to live each day appreciative of God's love, grace, and mercy, so that I can continually reflect an attitude of gratefulness by developing a gratitude journal to serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness in my life.

Goal One: Strive for Consistency in My Prayer Life

I have always viewed prayer as important and fundamental to the stability of my relationship with God. There were places and periods in my life that I intentionally made it a priority to study the Word and spend time in prayer. There were also places where my time became crowded with family needs, my professional life, educational goals, and church work, until at times, I found myself neglecting to tune into God's voice on a consistent basis. As I prayed about my next educational endeavor, I believe that through prayer, God directed me to the Ashland program. What I perhaps did not pray about was how my new educational endeavor would fit into my already chock-full lifestyle.

What I did not factor into my plans were the tragedies of life, and a strategy to better manage my time to ensure that my spiritual health remained intact. Even with my best intentions, there were still many times that I struggled to maintain a regular devotional schedule, and found it challenging to be consistent, especially when my daughter passed. It was hard to stay focused or engaged although I knew I needed to be in God's presence the most at that time. I limped through that season of my life and over the past two years, have slowly fought my way back to a daily devotional routine. During my most difficult, demanding, and draining times, I still somehow managed to fall on my face before the Lord and cry out to Him as I wrestled with my emotional pain and brokenness. What helped and sustained me during those trying times was the knowledge that when I could not pray as I wanted or needed to, there were others standing in the gap for me. That knowledge strengthened and succored

me enough until such time I could get back on track. It took time, but over the last year I found my spiritual equilibrium being restored, and I have been able to find the balance I need to pursue a more consistent devotional life once again.

I found and still am finding a need to reevaluate my priorities as I sift through, identify, and recognize where I need margins. Swenson warns about overload and the negative effect it has on our spiritual lives. He shares that we must learn not to overdraw on our account of emotional energy and suggests that margins can teach us and restore us (Swenson 2004, 64). I continue to find a need to reevaluate my priorities as I continue to define those limits.

Over the years, I have used various devotional aides that helped me to encounter God's guidance and presence. One recent helpful devotional aide was *Discerning the Voice of God: How to Recognize When God Speaks* by Priscilla Shirer. She shares that the more Scripture that is hidden in your heart, the more you are offering God an opportunity to utilize it in your life. She continues, this is one of the reasons why we should prioritize our time with Him (Shirer 2017, 90). I understand that we give priority to what is important to us. As important as it is for me to complete the program, through this process I found that it was more important for me to stay tuned in and connected to my power source. As I tune into my source, my daily prayer is "Search me God, and know my heart, test me, and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive ways in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23).

Goal Two: Renew My Mind Daily

When I set this goal, I honestly felt it was one that I could handle, however, I found that the challenge of renewing my mind came as my focus often shifted to my pain and predicament, instead of God's peace and harmony. Pettit shares the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:2 as he indicates that spiritual transformation is a matter of "renewing the mind." Old fleshy habits of living are to be exchanged for new patterns of thinking in accordance with God's grace (Pettit 2008, 249). Renewing my mind was a process that required applying God's Word to my thought life. Sometimes I was successful, and other times it was all I could do not to allow my thoughts to spiral out of control as I found myself being victimized by my own toxic thoughts.

Reading the Word and having a consistent prayer life is directly related to renewing the mind. You can't do one without the other. In both cases, consistency is the key to victorious living. Mark McMinn said that Scripture is an essential tool for spiritual formation, as it provides resources for spiritual contemplation and boundaries that helps us remain tethered to the truth (McMinn 2011, 130). Pulling in the reins on my mind proved to be a full-time job. During certain seasons it became evident that my mind, my mouth, and my heart were out of sync. In my heart I wanted to believe in God's goodness, but my mind would tell my mouth to say something different or other than what God's Word said. In stressful times, I used Phil. 4:8 as a go-to verse to help me refocus. It helped to think on the things that were good, lovely, just, honest, pure, and of good report. Romans 12:2 was another verse that helped me to remember not to

conform but transform by daily renewing or changing my mind through the truth of God's Word. I can report that by God's grace I have made progress in this area. One thing I discovered is that the renewal process is a daily one which requires an intentional strategy.

Goal Three: Endeavor to Express Gratitude Daily

I have a plaque that sits on my home office desk that reads, "gratitude turns what we have into enough." How true that statement is! I keep it there as a constant reminder of just how blessed I am. My heart is full of gratitude for the many ways God has shown and showered His grace and mercy on me. Even amid loss, I have learned to be grateful for what remains. Several years ago, I began keeping a joy journal where I would record something I was grateful for every day. From time to time, I have had to go back and revisit that journal to remind myself of God's goodness and faithfulness in my life. Dollar said, "Be thankful to God. I'm suggesting that you thank Him for a bad situation or a difficult experience but thank Him in the midst of it, God is your heavenly Father" (Dollar 2010, 42). Lam. 3:22-23 is a good reminder for me of God's steadfast love and great faithfulness.

I found that the key to developing a heart of gratitude is in 1 Thess. 5:16-18 which admonishes us to rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances. As simple as that may sound, it can be a difficult task when life turns on you. Yet Paul through the word tell us that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5). Jennie Allen in her book, *Get Out of Your Head*, says that endurance and character and Spirit-enabled hope are marks of ones who choose gratitude (Allen 2020, 183). I've re-enlisted the help of my joy journal. So, every day I try to wake up and go to bed with a spirit of gratitude. I am not sure where life goes from here, but I am grateful to have made it this far.

Conclusion

Women have the capacity to impact and improve the fabric of the lives they touch in our communities and our world. As women continue to discover their purpose, they also have an opportunity to uncover untapped potential that resides within them. Miles Munroe explains that the nature of a woman must be understood considering her purpose, and her needs must be understood in light of her nature. Otherwise, she will be unable to fulfill the purpose for which she was created (Munroe 2001, 29). In addition, women who serve in the role of a pastor's wife must understand that she did not marry into a purpose but was created with a purpose. That knowledge allows her to function freely in her role with value and validity.

The challenge for the 21st century pastor's wife comes as ministry continues to evolve and change. In order to maintain her mental, emotional, and spiritual equilibrium and balance, it is important for a pastor's wife to understand her limits and know her boundaries. Williams shares that many ministry wives feel they need to be all things to all people in the church (Williams 2005, 85). Finding balance is the key to maintaining a fruitful and productive spiritual life.

That comes as we learn the art of saying no to the unneeded and unnecessary disruptions in life, and yes to margins that help evaluate priorities that create balance.

Pastors' wives cannot be afraid to acknowledge, ask for, and accept the help they need. There is a certain level of vulnerability and risk that is required to access and address the brokenness and pain they may experience as a result of ministry. Prayer is a spiritual lifeline to the Father and is key to maintaining a healthy and intimate relationship with Him. Prayer has a powerful impact on our faith and is vital and key to our spiritual survival and existence.

I have been blessed to minister to pastors' wives on a personal and intimate level. This has allowed me to let them know that through our sisterhood connection, I see them. Knowing that someone knows and understand where you are can have a tremendous impact on your emotional health. Bryant shares that clergy spouses force themselves to suffer in silence, they struggle to survive without the benefit of healthy intervention (Bryant 2008, xv). This connection has opened up an avenue for me to speak words of encouragement and inspiration into their lives. There have also been opportunities to stretch them beyond their present capacities. They have been able to step out of their comfort zones into new places of ministry. The emphasis and focus have been on providing a no judgment zone where they can connect in a safe place and be themselves. The introduction of Formational Prayer to the Impact Study Group has proven to be a benefit and blessing to the-African American clergy spouses that participated.

Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the group discovered healing, renewed hope, and life changing transformation that elevated their faith.

APPENDIX ONE

ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE IMPACT OF FORMATIONAL PRAYER IN THE LIVES OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN CLERGY SPOUSES

A PROJECT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
ASHLAND THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CLYTEMNESTRA L. CLARKE

ASHLAND, OHIO

MAY 14, 2019

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Ohio area through six weeks of self-reflection. The research question is: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Ohio area through six weeks of self-reflection?

Overview

The participants will be led in six weeks of self-reflection that will assess the importance and impact of Formational Prayer. Clergy spouses were chosen because they are in a unique role that at times can be both rewarding and challenging. Because life experiences can leave deep wounds that can compromise our well-being, the study will research the relationship between the efficacy of Formational Prayer, and the significance of the process to impact the perspective of African American clergy spouses. It will also assess the benefit of Formational Prayer as it pertains to spiritual intervention in the emotional healing process.

Foundations

The role of a clergy spouse can be viewed from various and vast perspectives, depending on the context from which you come. Expectations are often placed on clergy spouses as they are looked to for their leadership qualities, speaking abilities, musical talents, gifts and callings, organizational

style, resourcefulness, creative flair, in addition to their professional skills and the capacity to manage and maintain their home or in some cases the parsonage.

Along with the role come many opportunities and challenges as well as blessings and burdens that can be overwhelming to the heart and spirit. Amid such a great calling and assignment, how does a clergy spouse maintain balance while fulfilling the needs of her husband, family, and the church? The answer is found in the nurturing of the interior life. “When Jesus tells us that apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5), He is extending an invitation for us to tap into His lifestyle of assistance and dependent living on His heavenly Father” (Miller 2017, 33). A lifestyle of prayer and worship are essential to the survival of not only a clergy spouse, but also as a woman. “When you know that you (like Jesus) can’t do life on your own, then prayer makes complete sense” (Miller 2017, 33).

Because the human experience can sometimes be complex and complicated, our minds can require specific attention that occurs within the realm of counseling. While we depend on prayer as a key component to the nurturing of the interior life, we also recognize the therapeutic value of counseling which can produce and restore hope, purpose, courage, and direction. Therefore, clergy spouses cannot be ashamed to ask for and seek out professional help when needed.

Historically, the clergy spouses’ role was viewed as a helpmeet--one that was there to encourage and serve her husband. She was expected to serve in traditional roles such as Sunday school teacher, musician, choir member or hat

wearer and trendsetter for the congregation. While the clergy spouse is still the one that is looked to for fashion and style, the 21st century clergy spouse is now seen as an asset to the ministry. As the role of the clergy spouse has evolved over the years (especially in the African American church), based on the needs of the congregation, she may be seen actively serving as a leader with or alongside her husband.

The Foundations will include a summary of my personal journey and prayer experience as an African American clergy spouse, which will lend credibility, credence, and understanding of the study. The Foundations will also include: 1) a biblical and theological summary of the importance and significance of prayer, as well as the therapeutic benefit of counseling as a spiritual and clinical resource for clergy spouses; 2) a historical context of clergy spouses and the value of their role in the life of their husband and the church, and 3) a contemporary view of the evolution of women, (specifically clergy spouses) and their role in the world and the 21st century church.

Personal Foundation

From the ends of the earth, I call to You, I call as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For You have been my refuge, a
strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take
refuge in the shelter of your wings. (Psm. 61:2-4)

When my journey started as a clergy spouse almost 45 years ago, I would have never imagined the path and purpose God had designed for my life. I am indeed grateful that God counted me worthy to serve in such a capacity, for it was through that role that I learned a lot about God, myself, and life.

Many were the days that I wondered if my life was making an impact on those that I sought to minister to and to serve. There were days filled with doubt and anxiety as I also pondered if my life was making a difference to those who looked to me for leadership. In my lonely, dark, and discouraging days, I experienced much uncertainty while trying to find my place in God's plan.

While my journey has been filled with much joy and excitement, it also has been peppered with disappointment and pain. In both those seasons, I learned that I could not count on my emotions to measure my success or my shortcomings. I also learned that God was with me and that I could depend on Him to be ever faithful. I believe the most important lesson I learned was that I could not only turn to God, but I could talk to Him from my heart, believing and knowing that He would hear and answer my prayers.

I thank God that I realized early on in life and ministry the importance of prayer. Communing with God produces intimacy and closeness that provides a sense of security and assurance. I appreciate the privilege of prayer and the fact that I can go directly to the Father. The simplicity of prayer has taught me that while prayer is communing or talking to God, I can also experience God's presence and find healing for my brokenness while doing so.

Another component of my life includes mental health counseling. Helping people has always been a passion of mine, whether it was through listening or simply praying for them. Many years ago, I started my educational journey in the midst of raising a family, working, and being involved in ministry. Over the years,

that interest prompted me to focus on the similarities of the therapeutic value of counseling and formational prayer.

I will explore the practice of formational prayer with the purpose of drawing upon the guiding principles, resources, and techniques of spiritual direction within the Christian tradition. I will research the effectiveness and power of healing prayer that will help the participants look insightfully at their brokenness. The emphasis will be on bringing the practice and presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness. The goal is to help the participants understand the spiritual insights that can provide emotional stability as well as nurturing to the interior life.

Biblical Foundation

The Biblical foundation will be explored following two Scripture passages: John 11:41-42 and John 17:21-23. Both passages will reveal that prayer was a priority in the life and ministry of Jesus who makes it clear through His active and vocal prayer life that prayer has a place and purpose in our lives; prayer should be a priority in our lives, and prayer is the way to connect with the Father. Throughout the Gospels, you will find Jesus in constant dialogue with the Father as He sought to do His will.

Biblical scholars say there are two elements that are characteristic of Jesus' prayer in John 11:41-42. First, Jesus lifts His eyes toward heaven, and secondly, He addresses God as "Father." Jesus also uses the vocative of "father" in His prayers in the synoptic Gospels. Because of Jesus' abiding and steadfast relationship with the Father, there was no need for an individual petition. Jesus

simply offers a prayer of thanksgiving for His relationship with God, which was a powerful indication of the bond between them. This was the connection Jesus consistently relied on throughout His ministry. This prayer also symbolizes what Jesus already knew-- that he did nothing on His own, and that everything He did was God's action in and through Him. This prayer demonstrates that (The New Interpreter's Bible 1995, 9:691).

Scholars conclude that verses 41-42 direct the attention of those gathered at the tomb toward God. Jesus wanted the glory of God to be seen in the miracle. Scholars further highlight that Jesus prayed audibly so that the people would know and believe that He was sent by God, and that everything He did was in accordance to God's will. The essential union of the Father and Son's relationship is further emphasized (MacDonald 1995, 1533-1534).

John 17 is the most extended prayer recorded by Jesus, and it gives us a glimpse into His intercessory style. It is His farewell prayer, and as He did in John 11:41-42, Jesus looks up toward heaven and addresses His Father. Scholars note that He prayed for Himself (17:1-5), He reviews His mission, and then ask His Father to restore Him to His original place of honor and authority. He prayed for His disciples (7:6-19) that they would be sanctified and set apart for God and His purposes; He commissioned His disciples as representatives of Himself. He prayed for future believers (17:20-24), for unity in fellowship, unity in witness-bearing and unity in glory--that the world would believe that God sent His Son (Hughes and Laney 1990, 480-481).

Biblical scholars point out that the prayer of John 17:21-23 reveals the personal relationship and the unity between Jesus and the Father, and in this prayer, you get a glimpse of the intimacy that marks the union of God and Jesus. He prayed for those that God had given him--that they would be one, even as He and the Father was one (Keener 1993, 304-306).

Jesus led an extraordinary and exemplary prayer life that serves as a pattern for us to follow. Jesus understood the weight and value of His prayers and was devoted to prayer, just as much as He was to serving, and caring for people. As He prepared to complete His earthly ministry; He let His disciples know that they could go to the Father in His name and that God would answer them based on He and the Father's relationship.

Through prayer, we can have an audience of one with the Father where we can express our heart's concerns. Through prayer, we can discover how an infinite God is personally and intimately involved in our lives. Just as God heard and answered Jesus' prayer, we too can make petitions to the Father with the same kind of confidence and assurance believing that God will hear and answer our prayers.

Theological Foundation

The central theological themes will explore the impact and power of prayer in the life of the believer, and the faith that it takes to believe in prayer. God has always desired a relationship with His people, and prayer is the vehicle through which the connection between Creator and creature is formed. Sproul shares that "Prayer is not simply soliloquy, a mere exercise in therapeutic self-analysis, or a

religious recitation. Prayer is discourse with the personal God Himself” (Kistler 2011, 3).

Prayer is an essential component of our spiritual growth. We are commanded to pray, and the very act of prayer teaches us of our unworthiness and our need and dependence on a great God. The power and impact of prayer can gird human weakness with God’s strength, turn human failure into divine wisdom, and give the struggling Christian peace of heart and mind. Prayer is a benefit to the believer as with it comes certain mercies and special favors (Spurgeon 1998, 461).

Jesus in Matt. 6 gave us a pattern or model prayer as a means to which we can come to the Father. He used this prayer as a teaching tool that enhances our ability to petition the Father on multiple levels.

The Lord’s Prayer or the *Paternoster* is really a total prayer. Its concerns embrace the whole world, from the coming of the kingdom to daily bread. Large things and small things, spiritual things and material things, inward things and outward things--nothing is beyond the purview of this prayer. (Foster 1992, 184)

Piper shares that when Jesus invites us to pray Matt. 6:9, He is making us aware that the God who hears and answers our prayers is a God who is high and exalted, yet He is holy and humble; His ways are above our ways; but He still bids us to come to Him; He has plans for the universe and plans for our lives. He wants us to pray about His name being hallowed, His will being done, and His kingdom coming (Kistler 2011, 32).

Through our faith, we find the power that resides in prayer. “Prayer is meant to be one of the most exciting aspects of a life of faith” (Munroe 2002, 22).

Faith is vital to our Christian walk. Hebrews 11:6 say, "Without faith, it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God, must first believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him" (Heb. 11:6). Even as we approach God in prayer, we must come to him in faith, understanding and believing that our prayers have the ability and capacity to affect change in a complicated life and a chaotic world.

Commitment to the real God in real faith for the living of the real Christian life, and within that frame to the disciplines of brooding and praising and being searched, is the launching place of real prayer, and will continue to be so every day of our lives. (Packer and Nystrom 2006, 149)

Also, as we look in another direction, a question to consider is: Does prayer matter to the counseling profession? Counseling as a discipline has something of value to offer God's people. The merging of both the clinical and the spiritual has the potential to provide an understanding of how to renew the inner person through prayer, by accessing the riches of God and His kingdom through the interior life.

Historical Foundation

Within this foundation, I will explore the historical context of clergy spouses and the value of their role in the lives of their husband, families and the church. Despite limitations placed on this unsung helpmeet, the clergy spouse over the centuries has managed to secure her place and voice in ministry.

From a historical perspective, the central role of clergy spouses was that of a support and help to their husband. For the most part, women did not serve in the forefront of ministry, but quietly and humbly served behind the scenes assisting and supporting their husbands. They had to dwell with the

understanding that they were not only married to the man but the ministry as well. They were to be accepting of their husband's weaknesses as well as strengths and was tasked with the responsibility of being chaste keepers and hostesses of the home (Douglas 1965, 8).

A popular 19th century Presbyterian preacher and writer by the name of Theodore L. Cuyler viewed a wife's place and duties as being exclusive to her husband, and not the ministry. "Reminiscing about a long pastorate, he saw his wife's value not in managing a dozen benevolent societies but in making his home happy, relieving him of needless worldly cares, and being an inspiration to him in his work" (Boyd 1981, 6).

Fortunately, women such as Katharina von Bora Luther, (who was married to Martin Luther, a 16th century reformer) did not allow the impediments of the day to prohibit her from being instrumental in catapulting her husband's ministry to a place of prominence. She along with Sarah Edwards, the wife of John Edwards, (another reformer) carved out a niche in their husband's ministry by serving as advisors and confidants, but note, they were the exceptions (Wilson 2016, 10).

"The image of the post-reformation Anglican clergy wife that emerges is therefore restricted to the most conventional female roles and certainly did not provide an adequate model for later women who struggled against patriarchal values in order to express their spirituality" (Barstow 1983, 14).

The role of the clergy spouse is ever evolving and continues to do so at a rapid pace. The last two decades has reflected the variations of those changes

as seen in the movement from caring companion to ministry partner, to executive pastor to co-pastor. “But whatever direction the minister’s wife’s role tilts at any moment of human history, it’s always in a position of trusted support for the work of ministry. And it is always an invaluable asset in the service of the kingdom” (London and Wiseman 1995, 22).

Contemporary Foundation

This section will explore how the role of the clergy spouse has evolved over the years, and how some have not only found their passion in ministry but their voice as well. While there are still those that remain in a more traditional role of taking care of their husband and family needs, many 21st century clergy spouses can be found working outside of the home or functioning as a part of the church staff.

Many are educated and hold multiple degrees. Some are licensed and ordained ministers. Some are television hosts, have authored books, and are founders of organizations, while others are on the conference and preaching circuit. Their titles range from ministry director, leader or coordinator to executive assistant or co-pastor. Adele Banks in her February 2007 *Washington Post* article states “This trend is seen more in independent churches that include Black, White and Hispanic churches. It can also be seen in traditional denominations, too.”

As we look at the importance of the Black church in the lives of African American people, we must also consider the impact of its role in the community.

The black church has played a pivotal role in shaping the history and experiences of African Americans in the United States. The church has been the primary spiritual, social, cultural, as well as the most autonomous institution in the African American community. (White 2017, 17)

As a result, African American pastors are often given a place of prominence and position in the church and the community. Their spouses often share this level of notoriety and respect as well.

In the African American tradition, the title of clergy spouse has evolved. In more recent years, the title of First Lady has been assigned to the pastor's wife, which is a term that serves to indicate the clergy spouses' status as a role model or leading lady in the congregation. "By definition in an ecclesiastical context, the First Lady is the wife of the Senior Pastor of the church. She is also called the Pastor's Wife. No, you will not find either term in the Bible, but her qualities are definitely defined" (Butler 2013, 5).

The possibilities and potential for clergy spouses to serve the church, community, and the Kingdom have evolved and are unlimited. Though once tethered and confined to a position and title of clergy spouse, that title has become all-inclusive and has expanded to include role model, mentor, counselor, and confidants.

With all the various responsibilities, passion, and zeal of ministry, burnout can be a realization for the 21st century clergy spouse. The temptation to neglect and over-extend the mind and body in the name of ministry life can be stressful, and at best overwhelming. Passion and enthusiasm have to be tempered and bathed in prayer. "Prayer happens when our hearts awaken to the presence of the Lord. Prayer happens when our knowing is infused with the mind of Christ;

when God's passion becomes our passion; when we are transfigured by the light (Bryant 2008, 138). Bryant further states that as a clergy spouse, knowing yourself will give you peace of mind and confidence. Knowing your own thoughts, your sorrow, your weaknesses, strength, and self-worth do not require perfection, but compassion.

As clergy spouses continue to move to the forefront of ministry, they have a unique opportunity to use their voice to influence and impact the next generation. The changing role is an open door that invites them to get involved in meaningful and transforming ways.

Context

The participants will be African American clergy spouses of various ages, backgrounds, and denominations. They will come from various ministerial experience levels with the minimum being two years, and the most experienced being 30 years or more. The project will assess the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer serving as a conduit through which help, healing, and hope can converge and flow.

The key focus will be African American clergy spouses because of their connection with my personal context. Experience has taught me the power of prayer and the need for emotional healing. I understand that there are those clergy spouses that walk this journey alone because they feel they cannot share their hearts or trust others. This may be a result of betrayal from the past that left hurts and wounds. Because all forms of brokenness are pervasive among us, the study will allow me to effectively research the relationship between the power of

prayer and the awareness of healing prayer to address brokenness. It will also help me to assess the effectiveness of prayer as it pertains to the participants' emotional well-being.

Definition of Terms

Deep wounds: Deep wounds are emotional, physical, psychological, or spiritual events that could have occurred as far back as infancy. They can affect a person's thought patterns and views about God, themselves and others, as well as the way they feel, respond, and interact with others.

Dysfunctional Behaviors: Dysfunctional behaviors are ways in which one behaves that is harmful to oneself and others. These dysfunctional behaviors are manifested because of the deep wounds the individual experiences in their lives.

Emotional Upheaval: Underlying distortion and wounds that drives emotional pain.

False beliefs: False beliefs are beliefs (lies) we tell ourselves that have a great deal to do with our mental and emotional struggles, our relationships with others, and our lack of Spiritual growth.

Formational (Healing) Prayer: A ministry of the Holy Spirit, moving through a Christian caregiver, counselor, or lay person, bringing the healing presence of Jesus Christ into the place of pain and brokenness within a wounded person.

Project Goals

The purpose of this project is to impact the participants' understanding of Formational Prayer in the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Ohio area through six weeks of self-reflection. The research question

is: What impact does the understanding of Formational Prayer have on the lives of African American clergy spouses in the Columbus, Ohio area through six weeks of self-reflection?

This section will include the following:

- 1) To impact the participants' perspective of Formational Prayer as an African American clergy spouse.
- 2) To impact the participants' awareness of Formational Prayer to address brokenness.
- 3) To impact the participants' understanding of emotional well-being through Formational Prayer.
- 4) To impact the participants' encounter of God's presence through Formational Prayer.
- 5) To impact the participants' experience of how Formational Prayer impacts hope.

Design, Procedure, and Assessment

This design of the project will be an impact study group that will consist of eight to ten African American clergy spouses from various ages, experiences, and denominations.

The procedure will impact the understanding of Formational Prayer through six weeks of self-reflection and will include topics of healing, dysfunction, trust, and forgiveness. The project will determine the impact through the pre-test and post-test assessments.

The assessment will consist of both quantitative and qualitative questions that will be based on the project goals. Two to three questions will be formulated to measure each goal. A seven-point Likert scale will be used to measure the degree of impact or effectiveness; ranging from totally agree to totally disagree. The accomplishment of the goals will be calculated by comparing the pre- and post-test assessment questions, and by content analysis of the open-ended questions.

The project will proceed as follows:

1. Dates and times for the sessions will be determined.
2. Participants will be selected, and a consent form will be obtained from each participant before the beginning of the session.
3. Participants will take a pre-test to verify their understanding of Formational Prayer before the session begins.
4. Participants will attend six sessions that will introduce the Formational Prayer materials.
5. Participants will take a post-test to determine the impact of the sessions.

Personal Goals

I have always believed in the power of prayer. Throughout my life, I have seen God work and move in miraculous ways. I also understand the importance of being healthy mentally and emotionally; therefore, I believe that counseling has its place in helping to promote a balanced and quality lifestyle. Integrating these two components in my life has made a difference in how I react and respond to life.

My personal goals will include the following:

1. I will strive to maintain a consistent prayer life that will allow me to stay in tune with God's will and purpose for my life by making my devotional time a daily priority.
2. I will continually renew my mind by eliminating negative habits, attitudes, and behaviors that adversely impact and impede my spiritual growth and development by daily renewing my mind, and applying the principles of God's Word to my life.
3. I will endeavor to live each day appreciative of God's love, grace, and mercy, so that I can continually reflect an attitude of gratefulness by developing a gratitude journal to serve as a reminder of God's faithfulness in my life.

Field Consultant

Dr. Cheryl Brown, Pastor of Believers in Christ Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin will serve as my field consultant. Her strong background in intercessory prayer, coupled with her clinical expertise uniquely qualifies her to serve in this role. Her impactful ministry to women of all backgrounds also is beneficial to the fabric and construction of my project.

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APPENDIX TWO
PARTICIPANTS INVITATION LETTER

Dear ,

Grace and Peace be unto you! I am a Doctor of Ministry candidate at the Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, OH. I am also a Leading Lady serving the First Church of God congregation in Columbus, OH. My area of focus is Formational Counseling, and as a part of my dissertation research, I am conducting a six-week self-reflection group for African American clergy spouses that will determine the impact of their understanding of Formational Prayer.

You have been selected to participate in this group because of your unique position as a Leading Lady of your congregation. Prior to and after the sessions, you will be asked to participate in a brief questionnaire that will help to assess the impact and benefit of the sessions. It includes a Likert Scale rating of 1-7, as well as a few open-ended questions. Your honest response to the questions and group experience will be of great value to the project.

If you are willing to be a part of this endeavor, please reply to me no later than December 5th. At that time, you will be given further instructions. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Clytemnestra L. Clarke,
Ashland Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry Candidate

APPENDIX THREE
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL PRAYER IMPACT IN THE
LIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CLERGY SPOUSES
Pre-Assessment Survey

Please provide the following personal information.

What role(s) do you participate in? (check all that apply)

Pastor's Spouse_____ Executive Pastor_____ Associate Minister_____

Other_____

Years in ministry?

____ Less than 3
____ 3-5
____ 6-10
____ 11-15
____ 16-20
____ 21-30
____ 31-40
____ 41+

Does your church offer Formational/Healing Prayer seminars?

____ Yes ____ No

Present Age:

____ 18-19
____ 20-29
____ 30-39
____ 40-49
____ 50-59
____ 60-69
____ 70-79
____ 80+

Directions and Scale: Please circle the number that pertains to your level of agreement with each statement below. (See scale).

7- Strongly Agree 6- Moderately Agree 5-Slightly Agree 4-Neutral
 3-Slightly Disagree 2-Moderately Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

1. Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I understand that my emotional well-being can be improved through Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Formational Prayer has sustained my faith as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I am aware that through Formational Prayer, I can be open about the brokenness that I have experienced.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I understand that Formational Prayer helps me maintain emotional balance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Formational Prayer has brought me nearer to God as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I am aware that I can experience healing from my brokenness through Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I understand that currently my emotions are in a good place because I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer as I allow God the opportunity to surround me with His presence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I experience hope that God hears my prayers when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX FOUR
ASSESSMENT OF FORMATIONAL PRAYER IMPACT IN THE
LIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CLERGY SPOUSES
Post-Assessment Survey

Please provide the following personal information.

What role(s) do you participate in? (check all that apply)

Pastor's Spouse _____ Executive Pastor _____ Associate Minister _____

Other _____

Years in ministry?

____ Less than 3
____ 3-5
____ 6-10
____ 11-15
____ 16-20
____ 21-30
____ 31-40
____ 41+

Does your church offer Formational/Healing Prayer seminars?

____ Yes ____ No

Present Age:

____ 18-19
____ 20-29
____ 30-39
____ 40-49
____ 50-59
____ 60-69
____ 70-79
____ 80+

Directions and Scale: Please circle the number that pertains to your level of agreement with each statement below. (See scale).

7- Strongly Agree 6- Moderately Agree 5-Slightly Agree 4-Neutral
 3-Slightly Disagree 2-Moderately Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

1. Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Formational Prayer has strengthened my life as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I understand that my emotional well-being can be improved through Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Formational Prayer has sustained my faith as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I am aware that through Formational Prayer, I can be open about the brokenness that I have experienced.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I understand that Formational Prayer helps me maintain emotional balance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I encounter God's presence by practicing Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I experience hope for my life when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Formational Prayer has brought me nearer to God as an African American clergy spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I am aware that I can experience healing from my brokenness through Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I understand that currently my emotions are in a good place because I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I encounter God's presence through Formational Prayer as I allow God the opportunity to surround me with His presence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I experience hope that God hears my prayers when I practice Formational Prayer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. How has Formational Prayer assists you in your life as an African American clergy spouse?
2. How has Formational Prayer impacted your brokenness?
3. In what ways does Formational Prayer provide emotional well-being for you? Explain.
4. How does Formational Prayer position you to experience God's presence? Explain.
5. List two ways that Formational Prayer has impacted your hope in God?

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