

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COUNSELLING NEEDS OF RELIGIOUS PERSONS IN FULL TIME
MINISTRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, ASHANTI
REGION

CHRISTOPHER KWESI DADSON

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CHRISTOPHER KWESI DADSON

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Educational Foundation of the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Master of Arts degree in Guidance and Counselling.

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date

Name: Christopher Kwesi Dadson

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature Date

Name: Dr. Linda Dzama Forde

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to interview ministers of the gospel to ascertain their counselling needs as well as the coping mechanisms implemented to mediate the stressors in their personal and professional lives. There is limited academic research provided through the lens of seasoned clergy which reveals their counselling needs related to sustaining ministry.

The design for this study was a descriptive analytical survey. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study. The sample of the study consisted of fifty (50) Methodist ministers in the Ashanti Region of Ghana but much interest was on ordained ministers. Simple random sampling procedure was used in the selection of the respondents for the study.

It was established from the study that most children of the respondents had bad behaviour due to the lack of quality time with their parents. It was also discovered that most respondents were financially overburdened since they shoulder all the financial responsibilities in their households. Also most of the ministers lack support from their leaders thereby making it incumbent on them to solely ensure the progress of the church.

To address the problems of ministers, the researcher recommended the organization of leadership retreats and seminars for ministers and their leaders by Christian Council of Ghana and various denominations. Again, the establishment of counselling and placement centres for ministers and their families was recommended. Finally, ministers' spouses who are not in gainful employment need to be equipped with vocational skills and business activities by their spouses with the help of the church to keep them busy always.

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Mrs. Christina Ama Dadson and children, Charles, Chris, Aba, Justice, Irene and Elizabeth.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

There are many religious groupings worldwide with their respective beliefs and roles in history. They include the following: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Rastafari, Utilitarianism, Mormons, Judaism and Christianity.

Islam was founded by Mohammed and adherents are known as Muslims. They believe in Allah as the only God; in angels and the Day of Judgment and predestination decided by Allah. Sharia is a set of rules that guide Islamic life. It combines concepts taken from the Qur'an, the Hadith (teachings of Mohammed) and fatwas (ideas of Islamic Scholars). Muslims regard the Sharia as a source of guidance (Akbar, 1999). Muslims believe that Allah is the giver of life and oppose euthanasia. Islam accepts the concept of Jihad or holy war (Ameer, 1978).

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama when he attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha or awakened one. Buddhism is based on the teaching of the dharma or the truth about things in nature and universe (Rahula, 1974).

Levinson (1998) asserted that the origins of Hinduism are debated by modern scholars. It is believed to be a mixture of numerous traditions and faiths and can be traced to modern day Pakistan. Hindus believe that Karma

determines the cycle of life, or samara which is composed of birth, death and rebirth that the soul goes through repetitively.

Jainism is widely accepted as one of the oldest religious traditions of the world, dating back to at least 1000 BC (Thomas, 1877). Jainism believes that bliss can be achieved if one lives a harmless life. The religion does not depend on gods but on the self. It is therefore known as a self-help religion. The religion is interested in the wellbeing of the universe and mankind. According to Jainism, humans, animals and plants have souls that are equal and should be respected. Because of this, Jains are vegetarians and use natural resources as efficiently and cautiously as possible. They also support reincarnation (Thomas, 1877).

Rastafari is a relatively new religion based on African traditions. Followers are called Rastafarians, Rastas, Dreads, Dreadlocks, Sufferers or Locks men (Chevannes, 1998). It started as an entirely black religion but spread throughout the world because of the popularity of reggae music in the 1970s. The objective of the religion was to improve the condition of the black people. According to Rastafari teaching, Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia would save the blacks from the whites and return them to their home, Africa. Rastafarians do not believe in an afterlife, but instead look to Africa which they also call "Zion" as a heaven on earth. True Rastas are believed to be immortal, both physically and spiritually, a concept called "everliving". They draw from many Old Testament laws and Rastafarians consider themselves as the true Israelites (Chevannes, 1998).

Slick (2010) stated that Unitarianism is a personal approach to religion that promotes religion's freedom and is opened to various beliefs.

Unitarianism is the belief that God exists in one person, not three. It is a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity as well as the full divinity of Jesus. Therefore, it is not Christian. There are several groups that fall under this umbrella: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphianism, The Way International and others. Another term for this type of belief is called monarchianism. Unitarians support personal and rational thinking to reach one's own conclusions. They believe that humans have the potential to be good and that they are responsible for the evil in the world; therefore humans are responsible for correcting their wrongdoing.

The Church of Mormon was founded in the United States in the 19th century and also called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It was founded by Joseph Smith. According to Mormons, God created the world, He has a body, is married and is able to have children. They believe that people become like gods after their life on earth and that people are like gods before birth. They emphasize the importance of family life and moral values. They are against abortion, pre-marital sex, homosexuality, gambling, pornography, consumption of coffee and tea among others (Anderson, 1989).

According to Bowman (1995) Jehovah's Witnesses developed from a Bible student movement which was formed in the late 1800s in the United States by Charles Taze Russell. As time went on missionary work was emphasized, and door – to – door visits were encouraged and various texts were published. The name Jehovah's Witnesses was coined in 1931 during a Bible Student convention led by Joseph Franklin Rutherford. They believe in the literal meaning of the Bible and not on speculations and regard the Bible as

historically sound and accurate in every way. They deny the concept of Trinity, and believe that their purpose in life is to serve God.

They do not celebrate holidays like Christmas and Easter which they believe have pagan influences. Some of them separate themselves from other groups following the example of Christ who separated his Kingdom from the world. They dress modestly. The husband has final say but consult wife and children. Blood transfusion is not allowed. They shun military duty and do not vote (Ellis, 1857).

Judaism goes back to over 3500 years ago in the Middle East. Moses was the founder of Judaism but the Jewish people believe that the religion started developing from the time of Abraham. According to Judaism, God chose Abraham to act as a father of the chosen people.

Judaism believes that the Jews are the chosen people of God and must act as a good example for the rest of the world. Jewish people have a covenant relationship with God and they have to obey the laws set by God in order to receive the support and good deeds of God. In Judaism a spiritual leader is a rabbi and the place of worship is a synagogue. Judaism promotes community and family life (Abramov, 1976).

Christianity traces the life and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is Jesus Christ born of Virgin Mary realizing the prophesies of the Old Testament about the birth of a Messiah. He taught through parables and performed miracles. He had twelve disciples who helped him. He was persecuted and eventually crucified for being a heretic. He was buried in a tomb but was resurrected on the third day and after forty days went to heaven. Christians believe in God and Jesus Christ as the son of God and the Holy

Spirit. According to Christianity God is made up of three entities, God the father, Son and the Holy Spirit otherwise known as the Trinity or the Triune God.

Christianity spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa and then to Europe and some parts of India before growing worldwide. Following the ascension of Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles continued with His work and with time Christianity developed into two branches. In the Western Empire it became the Roman Catholic Church and in the Eastern Empire the Orthodox Church. Priests called Bishops had special authority in both the Eastern and Western Churches. In the West the Bishop of Rome became the top religious leader known as the Pope (Gustafson, 2007).

According to Wylie (1878) Martin Luther protested against the Pope and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church that the church had strayed from the teachings of Jesus in 1512. He said people needed only faith and the Bible to live Christian lives. The group that left the Roman Catholic Church to form their own churches are called Protestants. For instance, in England, King Henry VIII established the protestant church of England and made himself the head of it.

Wylie (1878) noted that there was also the movement to reform Christianity which led to the emergence of the Lutherans, Baptists, Methodist, Presbyterians and many others. In recent times, other Christian churches have emerged with their respective leaders who ran these churches. They include Pentecostal, Charismatic and Independent churches.

The leaders of these Churches who are given titles such as Bishop, Pastor, and Reverend Minister have done their part for their respective churches and the society at large. They perform several roles in their communities as well as in their congregations. According to the Apostle Paul, Jesus gave "some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-12, NKJV). Brian (2006) also argued that members of the clergy have three main functions: introducing others to the teachings of the Church; conducting ceremonies; and pastoral duties. Traditionally, religious officials have conducted ceremonies to mark the various stages of human life and other significant events. Pastoral duties apply to those with an active ministry. This includes visiting the sick and shut-ins, provision of counselling on a variety of issues including ethics, family matters, dealing with grief, and preparing the terminally ill to accept death.

Statement of the Problem

Pastoring a church is a challenging and often lonely place to be. While the pastor is required to consistently serve the needs of the congregation and the leadership, who is there to offer guidance and to replenish the pastor for what he or she is giving out on a daily basis?

The burden of clergy hearts is to shepherd their flock, sharing their joys; their hurts; easing their burdens; and helping them in their struggles. Ministers of religion serving as counsellors sit beside their flock or across the desk and listen to their stories of abuse, loneliness, stress, marital infidelity, financial trouble, or conflicts in the family or on the job (Steve, 2010).

Ministers deal with the distressed, the disillusioned, the dejected, and the depressed. Their goal is to open the Scriptures and help restore their faith, hope, and joy. Pastors know that life can be hard for human beings, including Christians. So when Christians need a counsellor to talk to they want to be there to provide a listening ear and pastoral care because they need it (Steve, 2010). But what about the times when the pastor needs pastoral care? What if the shepherd needs shepherding or the counsellor needs counsel?

Ministers were never infallible that they never experienced distress, disillusionment, dejection, or depression. They did not exist on a level above the human condition such as struggle with loneliness, stress, conflict, anger, or temptation. A survey of pastors conducted by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth (2007) indicated that 80% of the respondents believed that pastoral ministry was affecting their family negatively while 33% said that being in ministry was clearly a hazard to their family. The survey further indicated that 75% of the ministers have reported a significant crisis due to stress at least once every 5 years in their ministry while 50% felt unable to meet the needs of the job. Interestingly, 90% felt they were not adequately trained to cope with the ministry demands placed upon them while 40% reported having a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.

Those are alarming statistics. What makes these findings even more disturbing is that the survey, like most others, was probably conducted confidentially. That meant that the pastors who responded were very likely struggling in secret. The pastor's need for pastoral care must not be ignored or neglected. It should be respected by both the pastor and the congregation, and a plan should be in place to help them stay healthy and strong.

In Ghana, ministers of the religion face similar stressors ranging from marital problems to work demands which at the long run had detrimental effects on them. For instance, Pastor Nicholas Opoku-Agyeman of Agric Nzema Calvary Baptist church on 27th July, 2010 committed suicide due to problems best known to him (Daily Guide, July 28, 2010). It was against this background that this research sought to examine the challenges or concerns of Ministers of religion and for that matter counselling needs.

Purpose of the Study

The study is designed to investigate the counselling needs of ministers. From this overall purpose, the following specific objectives are derived.

1. To identify the challenges faced by Methodist ministers of religion with regard to their family.
2. To examine the nature of work-related challenges faced by Methodist ministers of religion.
3. To identify the nature of personal and social challenges of Methodist ministers of religion.
4. To identify how Methodist ministers of religion cope with all the challenges they face.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of family-related concerns of Methodist ministers of religion?
2. What is the nature of work-related concerns of Methodist ministers of religion?

3. What is the nature of personal and social concerns of Methodist ministers of religion?
4. How do Methodist ministers of religion cope with their concerns?

Significance of the Study

This study should help erase the notion that ministers had no problems or challenges and make the laity appreciate the fact that Ministers are humans with a lot of challenges. Again, it should help ministers to seek for help from other professionals such as counsellors, psychologists when confronted with problems beyond their control. Moreover, this study would serve as a reference document in identifying the nature of stress in the lives of ministers of religion in Ghana and their counselling needs. Finally, it would outline the need for the establishment of pastoral counselling services for ministers of religion in Ghana by the Christian Council of Ghana.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to men and women in the Methodist Ministry in the Ashanti Region. The area considered was their counseling needs with respect to education, work, conflicts within and without family and social relations. Ministers' health and coping responses were not the researcher's focus.

Limitations of the Study

There are, of course, limitations to this study, the foremost of which is the challenge of financial constraint. As a result of financial difficulty, the researcher limited his study to only Methodist ministers within the Ashanti region of Ghana. another challenge was that some of the respondents were

feeling reluctant to participate in the study but upon a thorough explanation of the purpose of the study to them they voluntarily participated in the study.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters in order to present a coherent work. Basically, chapter one deals with an introduction to the study which includes background to the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study. It also includes the research questions, significance of the study and delimitation.

Chapter two is concerned with the review of related literature and ideas of researchers who have written on related topics. Chapter three deals with methods used in this study. This comprises sample size, sampling techniques, the population, data collection method and procedure, data analysis procedure and techniques, and ethical consideration. Chapter four entails the result and discussion of data. Finally, chapter five deals with the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the related literature based on several sub-headings. First, definition and importance of counselling; followed by the meaning of the ministry and ministerial concerns; ministerial formation and responsibilities and finally, clergy stress. Since creation, religious leaders like all the others who serve as mouth-piece of God, that is prophets, apostles and disciples have faced some challenges. The Holy Bible records that as a result of the challenges faced by Elijah he felt it was better for him to have died (1 Kings 19:14). In the New Testament of the Bible, specifically Acts 12:1-2, James an apostle of Jesus Christ was killed with sword by King Herod. In the contemporary times Ministers are faced with a lot of challenges which they carry or harbour quietly.

Definition and Importance of Counselling

Unprecedented economic and social changes have, over the years, changed the ways in which we manage our lives. Consequently, not all the lessons of the past can effectively deal with the challenges of modern times. Effective counselling has now become important. Human beings both men and women, need to be guided in the relationships between health and the environment, earning skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead to success and failure in life.

The need for counselling has become paramount in order to promote the well-being of individuals in the society. Effective counselling should help to improve the self-image of people and facilitate achievement in life tasks. Counselling should empower individuals to participate fully in, and benefit from, the economic and social development of the nation (Patterson, 1967).

Counselling, in different forms and with different interpretations, has existed in societies for a long time. Counselling has now become institutionalized. Schools, for example, have to a large extent taken over the task of providing psychological support to boys and girls. Taylor and Buku (2006) noted that the differences and contradictions in present-day counselling have their origin in the social and historical forces that have shaped modern culture. People in all societies, and at all times, have experienced emotional or psychological distress and behavioural problems. In each culture, there have been well established ways and methods of helping individuals with their problems. For counselling to serve its purpose, it must be effective.

Patterson (1967) has indicated that there are certain behaviours which are not synonymous with the process of effective counselling. He indicated that “counselling is not giving information, though information giving may be present. It is not the giving of advice or the influencing of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours by persuading, admonishing, threatening or compelling without the use of physical force. He further noted that counselling is not the selection and assignment of individuals to job. Last but not the least, counselling is not interviewing though interviewing is involved.” However, Taylor and Buku (2006) have stated that counselling is used to denote a wide range of procedures to bring about positive change in ones behaviour. The procedures

include support in times of trouble, encouragement, information – giving, test interpretation and suggestion-giving. It is a relationship in which one person assists another to resolve a problem or conflict in one's life.

Makinde (1983) defined counselling as an integrative process between a client who is vulnerable and who needs assistance, and a counsellor who is trained and educated to give assistance. The goal of interaction is to help the client learn to deal more effectively with him/herself and the reality of his environment. Brammer and Shostrom (1952) saw counselling as a way of relating and responding to another person so that he or she is helped to explore his thoughts, feelings and behaviour to reach a clear self-understanding. Also the person is helped to find and use his or her strengths to be able to cope more effectively with making appropriate decisions or taking appropriate action.

Gibson and Mitchel (1995) noted that counselling is a one – to -one relationship that focuses on a person's growth and adjustment, problem-solving and decision making needs. It is a client – centered process that demands confidentiality. Thus counselling is offering the necessary support or help for people with soul and personal problems. Taylor and Buku (2006, p.3) said further that counselling is a “face – to – face relationship, concerned with helping the individual to a self-understanding of his strengths and weaknesses, decision-making and choice jeered towards positive personal adjustment and growth in the life of the individual's educational, vocational, social, psychological, emotional, health and moral consideration”. They further noted that counselling is a relationship between a concerned person and a person with a need. This relationship is usually person-to-person, although sometimes

it may involve more than two people. It is designed to help people to understand and clarify their views, and learn how to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices, and through the resolution of emotional or interpersonal problems. It can be seen from these definitions that counselling can have different meanings.

Brammer and Shostrom (1952) stated that counselling is provided under a variety of labels. For example, there are instances where counselling is offered when a relationship is primarily focused on other non-counselling concerns. A student may use a teacher as a person with whom it is safe to share worries. In such a situation, the teacher uses counselling skills, but does not engage in an actual counselling relationship. The teacher counsels but is not a counsellor.

The importance of counselling cannot be underestimated or overlooked. In other words counselling can be said to be a necessity for a fruitful and successful life for the individual. As long as one has life, counselling is necessary and of great importance to the individual. Counselling covers areas such as family, marriage, education, health, choices in the area of study, vocation; coping with crises and stress among others. Taylor and Buku (2006) have made the following observation which suggests the importance of counselling. Through counselling human beings will be free of anxieties, fear and emotional depressions in order to live a much happier life.

It also helps the individual to know and understand himself or herself. This is because the individual will appreciate his or her weaknesses and strengths and for that matter makes the right decisions that will ultimately determine his or her future. Again counselling prepares the individual to plan

his or her life, with the inevitability of aging in mind. In time of crisis, counselling comes to the aid of the individual to come to terms with situation and so make more informed decision.

Furthermore, counselling helps the individual to accept the realities of life. The individual is helped to come out of dream world and tackles issues as they really affect him or her. The individual is helped through counselling to come to terms with his or her environment and so accept it and establish the interpersonal relationship. Through counselling a family can be helped to be a healthy one by showing these qualities; commitment, appreciation and affection, positive communication, quality time together, and ability to cope with stress (Olson & Defrain, 2000).

Evans and Smith (1972) emphasized that marriage is easier to “match than to patch” and much can be said for idea that marriage failure result primarily from faulty choice of a marriage partner. Though counselling prospective marriage person can be helped to choose the right partner by considering sociological, physiological and psychological factors among others. Counselling is important because it can help to achieve a better match between skills, interest and qualifications on one hand and available job opportunities on the other.

Bakare (1983) to test interest level of an individual came up with an inventory, a standardized psychological test named Vocational Interest Inventory. This affords the psychologist to place the test in his interest area, and if an individual chooses a vocation which he is interested in, he becomes an efficient and effective worker in the workforce. In the area of vocational counselling the individual is helped to choose the right profession. Super and

Crites (1962) saw it as a process of helping the individual to ascertain, accept, understand and apply the relevant facts about the occupational and planned explanatory activities.

The Meaning of the Ministry and Ministerial Concerns

This section looked at the ministry with regards to meaning, ministerial concerns and the impact of technology on the ministry of the gospel. The term Ministry is literally translated “Service” (Asante, 2002). Asante further stated that ministry can be used both subjectively and objectively to describe a person functioning in an intermediary capacity or to describe an act itself (that is, “a servant” or “a service”). It is also used as a verb to express the act of ministering or serving.

According to the All Nation English Dictionary (2008), Ministry is referred to as the profession or functions of a clergyman or church leader. The International Dictionary of the Bible (2005) observed that originally, a Minister is regarded as a servant, though distinguished from a slave who may work against his will and a hireling who works for wages. Asante (2002) has noted that the twentieth century has seen some momentous changes which have had serious effects on the Ministry. Asante quoting Tidball observed that the momentous changes of the twentieth century “have left many a pastor, who entered the Ministry with a clear vision and high ideals, battered confused and disoriented (p.1). In his book, *The Call to serve*, Asante quoted further from the book, *Clergy, Ministers and Priests* by Ranson, Bryman and Hinings (1977, p.19) thus, “the ordained Ministry is decidedly an occupation in a flux”(p.2). The Parish Priest, the incumbent or Circuit Minister occupies a frontline position in an organization whose secular relevance is questioned

from without and whose traditions are threatened from within. The prominence at the same time makes him valuable for he is a person who most acutely experiences the frustrations of the church's questionable relevance in the modern world". In sum, the various images which have guided ordained Ministers in the past, shaping their self-understanding and work, and have disintegrated with the consequent fragmentation of ministerial practice. (Asante, 2002)

The Holy Bible portrayed the ministry as being personal, interpersonal, hard work and with its content being communication, and also showed that ministry is personal. That is to say, ministry does not exist detached and independent of the person (or people) ministering and receiving the ministry. Luke describes how Jesus began his ministry at the age of thirty. Paul speaks of how he himself received a ministry from Christ (Acts 20:24). Beyond this, Ephesians 4:12 describes how all the members of the Body of Christ are equipped for service or ministry for the sake of the community. Thus, we cannot escape the fact that ministry is personal and, in some sense, conferred upon people by God.

Second, ministry is interpersonal in the sense that it did not flow uniformly from subject to object; Paul did not only minister to the churches of the New Testament, but received ministry from them as well (Romans 1:12). Scripture consistently related the notion that ministry involved interaction. This was emphasized by the simple fact that "ministry" and "service" were translations of the same Greek term. To minister was to serve another, as evidenced in Matthew 23:11: "but the greatest among you shall be your servant."

Third, while ministry involved people, the content or purpose of ministry was the communication (in word and deed) of the gospel (2 Corinthians 9:13, Colossians 1:23, 1 Peter 4:10). Just as Christ has reconciled human beings to himself, people also have the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18), where God used people to reconcile the world to himself through Christ. Naturally this may include a host of different ministries, but the point to emphasize, as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 12:5, was that “there were varieties of ministries, but the same Lord.” Therefore, amid the diversity of people ministering, the content of ministry centered upon the gospel of Jesus Christ and everything that message entailed (Asante, 2002).

Fourth, ministry is hard work so Christ’s ministry was not warmly received by everyone, and neither was Paul’s, for that matter (2 Corinthians 11:23). This was why Paul implored Timothy to fulfill his ministry even in the face of hardships (2 Timothy 4:5). If the ministries of Christ, Paul, and others were demanding, why should people expect anything different in their ministries? To be sure, ministry can be joyful, but men should not mistake this joy for the absence of hardship (2 Corinthians 4:1). Drawing these aspects together, a biblical definition of “ministry” might be defined as “a personal commission from God that labours toward the reconciliation of others to Christ through the gospel” (Asante, 2002).

Presley (2009) stated that the biblical notion of “ministry” is apparently disturbed by modern technology in every aspect. In the first place, modern technology altered the notions of “personal.” For example, on social networking sites people catalog their various interests or characteristics, thereby narrowing the notion of personhood to attributes. He further pointed

out that modern communication technologies had diminished the interpersonal nature of ministry. People listened to sermons while driving alone in their cars or attended church on the Internet while sitting alone at their computers. Thus, ministry was no longer fully interpersonal in the sense that it necessitated physical bodily presence.

Also, the rise of information technology produced a gospel that is information-based. The communication of the gospel became information that may be posted on a blog, website, or Wikipedia entry for unseen and anonymous visitors to stumble upon. Framing the gospel in propositions was right and good, but divorcing the communication of the gospel from the person of faith diluted the potency of the message and appeared contradictory to what Jesus established in his incarnation (Presley, 2009). Finally, Presley (2009) argued that in some ways, technology actually made the hard work of ministry more challenging. Email may be an “easier” form of communication, but face-to-face conversations can be deeper and more effective. He concluded that when technology replaces real, physical, personal relationships, the resulting ministry would be tainted.

Ministerial Formation and Responsibilities

As stated earlier, the term Ministry means service according to Nelson (1988). The term formation on the other hand literally means “bringing things together”, suggests an internal shaping of one’s approach to effective service. According to Nelson (1988) the combined expression ministerial formation becomes a technical term for the processes that are chosen as ones support system for the enrichment of personhood and to assist in the performance of tasks. Thus the enrichment of personhood is the formation and the

performance of tasks in the ministry. The exercise of ministerial formation takes place primarily through the process of self-reflection and theological reflection during the course of engaging in the practice of Ministry. Self-reflection is understood as one's capacity to learn from one's own experience. Theological reflection on the other hand broadens the scope of one's reflection because one's Christian calling traces its roots to the revelation of God in history through Israel, Jesus Christ and the ongoing Christian tradition (Nelson, 1988).

Requirements for the ministry differ depending on the denomination. All denominations require that the minister has a calling with regards to training, denominations vary in their requirements, from those that emphasize natural gifts to those that also require advanced tertiary education qualifications for example from a seminary, theological college or university. The requirements of candidates for the ministry in the Methodist Church Ghana and the training programmes are set out in the Church's constitution, Standing Order 54-60 (2000).

According to Methodist Church Standing Order (SO) 54-60 (2000), a candidate for the position of a minister in the church should be nominated by the quarterly meeting securing three-quarters of votes cast. This person should have been a fully accredited local preacher for at least a year before he or she appears before a Synod. A candidate requires three-quarters of votes cast before being admitted to the Seminary for a three-year Theological training. One is commissioned after the three years of training to begin a three-year probation leading to one's ordination. And when one is successful in all the examinations and all other requirements one is ordained and received into full

Connexion (Standing Order 60, 2000). At this point the individual becomes a fully fledged ordained minister who is given the right to perform certain duties such as officiating weddings, confirmation, Lords Supper and others as may be directed by his or her superior. The Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, United Methodist and Anglican churches have three orders of ordained clergy. Firstly, bishops who are the primary clergy, administer all sacraments and governing the church. Secondly, Priests administer the sacraments and lead local congregation. They can neither ordain other clergy nor consecrate buildings. Finally, Deacons play a non-sacramental and assisting role in the liturgy.

Ministers play a lot of roles in their congregations and the community as well. Contemporary ministers are responsible for religious education, leading worship, pastoral guidance, and ceremonial acts that commemorate spiritual achievement (Lemuel, 2006). Ministers may perform some or all of the following duties: First, they assist in coordinating volunteers and church community groups as well as encourage local church endeavors and establish new local churches. Also, ministers conduct marriage ceremonies, funerals and memorial services; participate in ordination of other clergy, and confirming young people as members of a local church. Engagement in welfare and community services activities is one of the duties a minister may perform in the community (Henson, 2008).

Brian (2006) asserted that pastors perform three key functions: Pastoral duties, Advocacy and conducting ceremonies. Their pastoral duties include introducing others to the teachings of the Jesus Christ, conducting ceremonies to mark the various stages of human life and other significant events. Provision of counselling on a variety of issues including ethics, family

matters, dealing with grief, and preparing the terminally ill to accept death had been one major duty of the clergy toward his flock. They provide personal support to people in crisis, such as illness, bereavement and family breakdown.

From the statement of the privileges and responsibilities of the Methodist church, the duties of the Methodist Minister are outlined as follows: The Minister's duty covers both his personal and public life; he has the common obligation of Christians, and also those which follow from his calling. He must know himself to be constantly in need of the grace of God and he will therefore live a life of discipline and prayer, strive to offer his whole life to God, to love him and serve him, and to walk after the example of Christ, forgetting himself, and caring only for God's glory and work (Standing Order 60, 2000).

The Minister's family and household can be a great help to his ministry in showing the graces of the Christian life, as also the offence is great if it is unruly. For a minister to succeed in his calling, his family must be a Christian family, in which the bond of union is that which holds Christ and the church together. The minister must always recall that his marriage had been blessed by God, and so he should accept pains and hardships gladly, as occasions for repentance and forbearance (Mace & Mace, 1980).

Although the list of resources for clergy families is fairly extensive, the majority focus on the "how-to" components, often providing bland spiritual encouragements to survive the challenges of the ministry. These and other resources are often anecdotal and are typically not published in traditional marriage and family journals (Norrel, 1989). Ministers as family men and

women have a duty in their family to bring up their children in the nature and admonition of the Lord so that they come to know Christ as their Savior. The minister must strive to live peacefully with men dealing with all as the beloved children of God. He must be a man of his word and be strictly honest with money.

The responsibilities of a minister with regards to his calling begin with his duty to preach the whole gospel to all men. To fit himself for this great task he needs to study the Bible thoroughly, study other books which deepen knowledge of spiritual faith, equip himself by prayerful study to speak the truth, to destroy heresy, and to guide men into a true understanding of the apostolic faith and a living knowledge of the Lord of the Scriptures. To this end, he studies theology and the history of doctrine and of the church, and other subjects which help towards applying the Word of God to the hearts of his hearers (Harbaugh, 1984).

Harbaugh (1984) further argued that it is the minister's solemn duty to follow the rules of his church as a matter of conscience. He should therefore study these rules, calmly enforce them, explaining the reasons for them and use them as means of grace, irrespective of person or consideration. He should take upon himself the burden of his people's sins, in order that they may be delivered by Christ's atoning work, at whatever cost to himself in time, trouble and anguish.

In his relation with other ministers, it is his duty to cultivate a spirit of unity amongst them. He should readily seek or give help in practical questions with others, but as part of the design of God and also be prepared to give and

receive spiritual help and counsel with personal problems or those of the work (Henson, 2008).

The priest alone cannot implement an effective stewardship program. Other than administering the sacraments of the Church and conducting Divine Liturgy, there are no aspects of parish life for which only the priest is responsible. The Bible contains numerous references to the role of the faithful as stewards of God's word. Implementation of an effective, ongoing stewardship program becomes, then, a joint clergy-laity responsibility (Ron, 1983).

The success of a parish's stewardship plan hinges on this issue of role definition. It takes the efforts of all segments of the parish community to make stewardship work. It also requires the awareness and acceptance of the fact that all church programs, involvements, and activities are scripturally based (Harbaugh, 1984). This point leads logically to the conclusion that all are responsible for assuring the Church's spiritual wellbeing.

Clergy Stress

Stress as a malady is common among Ghanaian society as a whole. Hart (2003) described stress as primarily a biological phenomenon resulting from too much adrenaline and too much pressure. It is an indicator of over-commitment. He further stressed that stress is the loss of fuel and energy that produced panic, phobic, and anxiety-type disorders. The nature, timing, and length of exposure to different stressors can have a negative effect upon those in the helping professions, especially clergy. A pastor must be able to shift at a moment's notice from administrative duties to the emotional and spiritual work of ministry. Since ministers are in the helping profession, many come to

them as a resource of first resort. As much as pastors entered the profession to minister to needy souls, excessive involvement in the help provider role has been shown to be a source of major occupational stress for clergy (Hall, 1997).

Quick, Nelson and Quick (1990) emphasized that the “occurrence of stressful events is a universal part of life, particularly in the working world”. There are a number of stressors that complicate the lives of professionals. For example, “although the process of relocation may favorably affect the attainment of career and financial goals, it is experienced as a stressful situation by many corporate families and may create trauma for individual family members” (Ammons, Nelson, & Wodarski, 1982). Stressors manifested from this include depression, marital discord, loss of support networks, interruption of personal growth and development. They further intimated that teenagers in the home may be negatively affected due to impaired social relationships.

A second category of stress for professionals is related to role expectations and time demands. Job demands serve as a source of stress for professionals including clergymen. Quick, Nelson, and Quick (1990) noted the “two major sources of stress for an executive are internal and external demands”. Internal demands represent the personality and the self-imposed pressures to achieve promotions or achieve specific social status. External demands include elements in the external environments such as customers, interpersonal demands in the workplace, informational demands, and personal demands.

Small and Riley (1990) explored a third variety of stress as the intrusion of work into the family. The effects of four major non-work role

contexts were seen as negatively influenced for married ministers of religion with children. These included the marital relationship, the parent-child relationship, involvement in leisure activities, and household responsibilities. The processes involved included the amount of time spent at work and away from home, the psychological absorption of the minister and the physical and psychological challenges of work which fatigue the individual.

The next source of stress is the lack of social support. Marshall and Cooper (1979) believed the two most important dimensions as far as the manager and his or her work are concerned appear to be those of time management and social support. The research of Quick, Nelson, and Quick (1990) indicated that of all the stress prevention techniques suggested by executives, “social support was the one strategy which they argued for vigorously and adamantly”.

Clergy not only experience these common stressors, but those endemic to their profession. The combination of pressures from unrealistic expectations, parish and family demands, member migration, professional comparisons, dysfunctional people, sexual temptation, loneliness, and financial pressures, along with the ordinary mandates of life, makes the ministry a high stress vocation. Just like the ministers secular counterparts, the trauma of transition due to the high rate of mobility for the profession can be tough on a pastor’s marriage, as well as the offspring. The spouse may have to resign a job he or she does to supplement the family income as a result of a new church assignment and relocation. In turn, the children have to adjust to new schools and make new friends. Since many live in church-provided housing as part of their financial package, they neither possess sufficient

wealth to purchase a home nor the benefit of home equity. The economic pressures to prepare for retirement, achieve home ownership, and provide a stable material environment for a family can be jeopardized by frequent moves.

Some comparisons of role expectations, interpersonal demands of the workplace, and organizational pressures faced by executives may be made to that of clergy. For the workplace, Frost (2003) indicated that the cumulative negative effects of these elements may lead to “organizational toxicity”. A “1991 Survey of Pastors” from Fuller Theological Seminary reported that forty percent of pastors report a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.

The subtle traps inherent within the milieu may sidetrack or destroy a pastor’s ministry. A pastor may have to forgive a board member for direct or indirect caustic remarks. In some cases, counselling has been a land mine for those in the profession when emotional attachments are formed, and they succumb to temptation. Added to this is the feeling of professional jealousy when a colleague is transferred to pastor a larger church. A negative vote from the congregation may result in leaving a large church with a good salary to a smaller church with less salary or even removed from the pulpit entirely and forced to look for secular work. Forced exits have become increasingly a source of stress for clergy especially given some of the innocuous reasons for parish conflict. Wood (2001) reported that more than 1300 pastors each month are forcibly terminated without just cause. In Crowell's (1992) survey, three pastors were fired because they were not friendly enough, another because of his wife's attitude, and one because he had children and pets in the parsonage.

Other reasons included the pastor stayed too long, congregational politics, sexual sin, doctrine, finances, pastoral staff conflict, and denominational politics. Along with their secular counterparts, pastors may hyper-focus on work to the neglect of paying attention to a spouse and children. There are the feelings of loneliness and isolation experienced not only by the secular executive, but pastors as well. Many times pastors do not feel they have anyone close to them in which they may confide. They have a lack of close friends due to the nature of their profession and, in many cases, an aversion to being vulnerable.

Quick, Nelson and Quick (1990) indicated that “organizations must be concerned about how the executive deals with stress because he/she sets the tone for the way in which individuals within the organization handle stress”. As a result of this study, perhaps ministers and those that train them may be apprised of the heavy price many in this profession are paying due to the stressors common to the vocation. If clergy could be educated about the nature of their particular vocational stressors, and are transparent enough to admit they experience stress in a divine calling, perhaps they could adopt improved coping practices and apply principles that would better enhance ministry so that he or she may enjoy a more fulfilling professional life. In turn, that may extend the influence of a church in a community and the culture. This importance cannot be understated because “the quality of life within churches may have more to do with their influence on society than what they teach or advocate” (Greenleaf, 1977, p.88)

Coping Strategies of Stress

Although clergy stress may be well-documented, the research on coping mechanisms utilized by those in the ministry is not as abundant. Quantitative studies (Gross, 1989; Rayburn, 1991) identified the need for coping devices. Gross (1989) distinguished between “burnout (disengagement)” and the “stress dimension (over-engagement)” in research with twenty-four Lutheran ministers. One conclusion was that there was a “relationship between the ability to cope with bottled-up feelings and the burnout dimension”. In a quantitative study of women religious leaders, Rayburn (1991) found that female rabbis experienced the most stress and the least number of coping devices. By contrast, nuns had the least amount of stress in relation to a greater number of coping mechanisms. The study, however, did not provide detail about specific coping measures.

A further review of the literature revealed a variety of specific coping strategies. Hulme (1985) recommended running, swimming, biking, and even brisk walking as aids to ameliorate stress. Karr (1992) echoed that sentiment iterating that “studies confirm that persons who engage in moderate exercise for thirty minutes daily, whether it be walking or gardening, receive most of the health benefits of those who engage in more rigorous pursuits”. Greenfield (2005) advised ministers, particularly those that had been wounded in professional practice, to “seek competent and spiritually sensitive professional counselling” (p.127). Whitlock (1968) believed counselling or “psychotherapy may be helpful to the individual in understanding himself in relation to whatever ministry he has to fulfill” (p.63).

Relationships both inside and outside the church were underscored (Miller, 1988; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991). Hulme (1985) posited the importance of discourse because “the more a stressful event is shared, the less each person appears to be stressed”. Greenfield (2005) recommended that, “no pastor should be without a peer support group”. Spouse and family were considered “leading encouragers” in one survey (Miller, 1988). When pastors experience conflict in the parish, Mickey and Ashmore (1991) felt it is imperative that pastors be “open to nurture” from family members when he or she has been involved in some sort of dispute.

Prayer and meditation were listed not just as spiritual disciplines but as means to survival for ministers of the Gospel. Millers’ (1988) survey of 500 pastors from a professional periodical subscription list indicated the necessity of prayer, journaling, or praying with someone. In their nationwide survey of more than 700 pastors from eleven Protestant denominations, Mickey and Ashmore (1991) concluded, “An erosion of spiritual vitality sets in when the spiritual leader does not take care of her/his own relationship with God” (p. 115). Hulme (1985) wrote, “To get our breath we need to hope, and prayer helps us envision that hope” (p.47). Vacation is an important component of stress reduction (Miller, 1988). Sixty-two percent of Protestant pastors admitted they set aside at least three weeks for vacation (Miller & Ashmore, 1991). “Routine time off is essential for inner healing and itself is a form of spiritual retreat” (Mickey & Ashmore, 1991). Hansel (1979) recommended “one Sabbath day per week” and a sabbatical “break from ministry that is longer than the standard vacation”.

To be sure, social scientists, counsellors, and experienced pastors have contributed to the body of knowledge about preachers and their stressors. However, much is yet to be gleaned from the critical reflections of pastors especially in relation to specific coping measures useful for self-sustaining in the ministry. This project seeks to understand the counselling needs of Ministers of religion.

Summary

Stress is part of everyday work life and the review of the literature revealed that clergy are no exception to the phenomenon. While the literature did not make a case for pastors to be excused from stressors, it did reveal that there are many they have in common with other professions, but the pressures are exacerbated because of their roles in the community and the church.

Whereas all professionals may face the prospect of having to relocate on a regular basis for career advancement or due to a company caveat, many may have benefits that may aid in a transition that are not ready options for ministers. For example, a company may pay for a professional service to pack and move an executive's belongings to a new home. Since the vast majority of churches in America average less than one hundred in worship attendance, the financial resources are not substantial enough to warrant this type of service, particularly if a church has a revolving door attached to the pulpit. The result is one less coping measure for the vast majority of clergy. In addition, an executive usually has the accumulated wealth to purchase a home of his or herself in the new location.

Breznitz and Goldberger (1982) investigated stress research and indicated that ministers of the gospel were mostly faced with stressors making

the ministry much unbearable. In contrast, studies released later in the decade found religious professionals experienced significantly less work-related stress than the general population (Fichter, 1984; Malony, 1988). Barna (1993) research reinforced those findings to a certain degree, discovering pressures faced by clergy but noted them in contrast to the benefits of being in the ministry. Miller (2001) reported 91 percent of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their ministry and 71 percent “definitely” wanted to stay in ministry. Carroll’s (2006) research indicated pastors exhibit a strong commitment to their call to be in ordained ministry generally and pastoral ministry in particular.

Despite the positive aspects of the ministry, a review of the literature revealed that stressors may impair the ability of ministers to provide spiritual and organizational leadership to their churches, increase the risk of problem behaviours by clergy, and for married clergy may erode the quality of family life (Henry, Chertok, Keys & Jegerski, 1991). Since pastors provide moral guidance and are often the first responders in a family crisis, not to mention their stature as leaders in a community, these outcomes alone are reasons for concern among those involved in the profession.

Beyond fellow clergy, very few persons understand the role of a pastor. That may explain why they have such a paucity of social support. A lack of transparency is one of the primary culprits. Many congregations assume their leader has no emotional needs, due in part to the minister’s fear of admitting his or her own vulnerability. The literature revealed that most pastors do not have someone they consider a close friend. With no close friends and a lack of

a social support network to aid in coping, it is no wonder that so many pastors have difficulty managing stress.

The literature demonstrated that clergy suffer significant stressors. Noticeably missing from the literature was the perspective of clergy and how they cope with these various adversities. One group of researchers observed that “clergy health and coping responses have rarely been the focus of psychological research” (Swanson, 2003, p 26).

Yet, what recourse is there for a pastor if his or her marital relationship has deteriorated? How does a preacher cope publicly with a rebellious child? To whom does a minister turn when a congregant or faction is determined to end his or her term in a church? What type of safety net do clergy rely upon if a serious illness or financial disaster cripples the household finances?

From personal experience and the literature review, it is apparent that these events have a significant impact upon individual pastors that is worth further investigation. For some ministers, despite the difficulties inherent with the profession, they seem to endure, overcome and minister from their own wounds. By contrast, other clergy may encounter a series of setbacks, but his or her coping skills and resources are inadequate or nonexistent. Nouwen (1972) encouraged ministers to reach beyond their respective roles as professionals and heal others from their own wounds.

From the literature reviewed it can be said that counselling is very important in almost every sphere of the minister’s life. The aims of counselling are broad. They may depend on the situation and the environment, and on training. The basic aims of counselling are to help individuals gain an insight into the origins and development of emotional difficulties, leading to

an increased capacity to take rational control over their feelings and actions. It also seeks to alter maladjusted behaviour and assist individuals to move in the direction of fulfilling their potential, or achieve an integration of conflicting elements within themselves. Finally, counselling seeks to provide individuals with the skills, awareness and knowledge, which will enable them to confront social inadequacy. Those in the ministry also need counselling to be able to cope with stressors in their lives. For them to be able to perform their ministerial work with less stressors there is the need to find out areas of needs and possible remedies recommended.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methods used in collecting the data on “the counseling needs of religious persons in full time ministry”. It also discusses the research design, population, the area of study, the sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and procedure used in the collection of the relevant data for the study; and data analysis.

Research Design

The design for this study was a descriptive analytical survey. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in this study. Quantitative method in research employs theoretical and methodological principles, techniques and statistics (Sarantakos, 1998) while the qualitative method is the scientific observation that is recorded in standardized coding format (Ellis, 1994).

The whole point of difference here, between the two methods is that “Qualitative research usually emphasizes words rather than qualifications in the collection and analysis of data’ (Bryman, 2001). The goal of using the two was to draw from the strengths of both approaches. This provided an in-depth knowledge and a better understanding of the research problem.

Population

The population is all the individuals about whom a research project or study is meant to generalize. It is the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specifications (Badu-Nyarko, 2009). The population for the study comprises all ministers of the Methodist church in the Ashanti Region of Ghana but much interest was on ordained ministers - auxiliary ministers, Superintendent Ministers and Bishops. The target population was 300 ordained ministers of the Methodist church in Ashanti Region (Stations, 2010).

This study was conducted in the Methodist church in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Methodist Church, Ghana came into existence as a result of the missionary activities of the Wesleyan Methodist Church which was inaugurated with the arrival of the Reverend Joseph Rhodes Dunwell in January, 1835 in the Gold Coast (Ghana). Like the mother Church, the Methodist Church in Ghana was established from a core of persons with Anglican background. Missionaries, notably Roman Catholics and Anglicans, had come to the Gold Coast from the 15th Century (Bartels, 1965). Their activities did not see much success. What was left was a school established in Cape Coast by the Anglicans during the time of Reverend Philip Quacoe, a Ghanaian priest. Those who came out of this school had scriptural knowledge. They also had scriptural materials, which were supplied by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. It was not surprising that one of the local Bible study groups was known by this name in addition to other names.

Bartels (1965) stated that it was a member of one of such Bible study groups, William De-Graft, who requested for Bibles through one Captain

Potter of the ship called 'Congo'. Through Captain Potter's instrumentality, not only were Bibles sent, but also a Methodist missionary. In the first eight years of the Church's life, 11 out of 21 Missionaries who worked in the Gold Coast died. Thomas Birch Freeman, who arrived at the Gold Coast in 1838 was a great pioneer of Missionary expansion. Between 1838 and 1857 he carried Methodism from the Coastal areas to Kumasi in the Asante hinterland of the Gold Coast. Kumasi District of the Methodist church was one of the premier districts in Ghana around 1965 when Methodist church, Ghana became autonomous. Currently, there are three Diocese in the Ashanti Region. They are the Kumasi, Obuasi and Effiduase dioceses. The church has six second cycle school and eighty-two Junior Secondary schools in the Ashanti Region (6th Biennial conference agenda, 2010). With respect to leadership, the Methodist church in Ashanti Region has 300 ministers (Almanac, 2011)

One of the reasons for selecting the area of study is its proximity to the researcher's place of residence and work. Also, the study area was a place where all the categories of Reverend ministers needed for the research were available.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample size of 50 out of 300 Methodist ministers were interviewed. The 50 respondents included 3 Bishops, 10 auxiliary ministers and 37 superintendent ministers. The sample of the ministers represented 16.67% of the target population of 300, a percentage which is greater than one-tenth (1/10) or 10% and which according to the rule of representativeness is enough to give a representative characteristic of the population. The rule of representativeness states that for a sample to be representative, it should be at

least one-tenth (1/10) or 10% of the total population under study (Badu-Nyarko, 2009). Again, for a study population of approximated 3,300, a sample size of a little above 341 and a little below 346 is appropriate (Kirk, 1995). One of the reasons for choosing this sample size was to permit the researcher to reduce cost. Again, this sample size was to reduce manpower requirements in the form of research assistants.

A simple random sampling procedure was used in the selection of the respondents for the study. Simple random sampling according to Loether and McTavish (1980) is a selection process that gives each element in the population an equal chance of appearing in the sample. A necessary condition for using this technique is the availability of a sampling frame which lists the entire population since all must have a chance of inclusion. This procedure gave every individual from each category- Bishops, auxiliary ministers and Superintendent Ministers - an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample.

In using the simple random sampling technique, the researcher assigned a number to each person in the population and put them in a hat, shuffled them and picked the numbers one after the other until the required sample was gotten. A number picked was not put back into the lot. Thus, 50 people out of 300 were selected to represent the target population. The simple random sampling procedure was used because it gave equal chance to the subjects to be selected as well as produced research data that can be generalized to the sampling universe with few errors.

Instruments

The researcher used both the primary and secondary sources of information to collect data for the study. The primary instruments comprised questionnaires and interview guide. Mayer (2000) saw questionnaires as efficient tools for data collection because of their effectiveness in securing information from respondents of a study. The interviews were administered in face-to-face encounters.

The questionnaire administered to the ministers comprised both closed and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions helped reduce the influence of the interviewer. The questions covered four areas - the demographic information of respondents, the impact of their work on their family relations, relationship that exist between ministers and their leaders, Ministers willingness to upgrade themselves and how they cope with challenges. The secondary method of data collection used by the researcher included lectures, books, journals, articles, movies, newspapers, television, and radio.

The questionnaires were administered in July, 2010. The administration of the questionnaires took two weeks. The first week involved the collection of data from within the Kumasi Diocese while the second week was used to collect data from those within both Obuasi Diocese and Effiduase Diocese and accessing all the documents of the Church relevant for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

The study effectively combined both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection to ensure complementary and credibility of the results. In simple terms, qualitative methods mean non-numerical data

collection methods. The strength of qualitative research was its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how ministers experience stress. Qualitative methods also helped in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in ministers' stress would not be readily apparent (Dewe, 1998).

The qualitative method used in this study was observation. Quantitative methods on the other hand are research techniques that are used to gather quantitative data — information dealing with numbers and anything that is measurable (Badu-Nyarko, 2009). The quantitative method of data collection used by the researcher was questionnaire.

Also, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were upheld in the study. Information such as names were not required in the questionnaires. This ensured that the identities of the respondents or participants were protected.

This research required a significant portion of the participants or subjects' time and energy. This study required also that the subjects reveal personal information about themselves. The participation in this research was voluntary. The respondents consented to participate in it. All participants were made aware of why such a study and its implications.

Data Analysis

It involves editing, coding, data processing and tabulation. Data collected from the field was already pre-coded. The researcher therefore went ahead to edit the data and this involved checking through the responses given by respondents to ensure consistency. The purpose of editing is to examine the data for consistency of responses. The researcher read through the materials in

order to determine if the replies were worthwhile and also if the questions were properly answered. The researcher checked how accurate, consistent and appropriate the responses were.

Data analysis was done electronically using the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software programme. The researcher summarized and classified the main qualitative information into statistical tables and graphs since they help readers to get a vivid picture from the result of the study. Brief explanations were provided to explain the statistical tables and graphs; this, the researcher hope would bring about clarity and precision as well as make the table and graphs understandable. These brief explanatory statements captured all the factors that could not be subjected to statistical treatment and the inferences made from the study of the sampled population's responses. Findings of the study were discussed to address the research objectives and answer the research questions stated in chapter one of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the raw data collected from the field per the research questions stated in chapter one of this study, their interpretation and the discussion of major findings.

Socio Demographic Background of Respondents

The analysis of the demographic data of respondents was aimed at looking at social and economic background of the respondents necessary.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 49 | 98 |
| Female | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 1 shows the gender distributions of the respondents sampled for this study, thus their frequency or number and their respective percentages. As observed from Table 1 above, a total of 50 respondents were sampled representing 100% out of this 50, majority of them were males thus a frequency of 49 representing 98%. There was only 1 female respondent who represented 2%. There was a huge disparity between male and female ministers because about 95% of the ministers within the region were males. It

is recently that women empowerment and sensitization exercises are making people conscious of the gender discriminatory aspects of the various religions thereby ensuring women incorporation into the ministry of Christ.

Table 2: Age of Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 25-45 | 13 | 26 |
| 45& Above | 37 | 74 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents were aged 45 and above thus a frequency of 37 representing 74%. The remaining 13 (26%) respondents were aged between 25-45 years.

Table 3: Marital Status of Respondents

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Single | 3 | 6 |
| Married | 47 | 94 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 3 shows the marital status of the respondents. From the table above majority of the respondents were married representing 47 (94%) of the total respondents while the remaining 3(6%) were single.

The respondents were asked about their highest educational level and their responses were presented in table 4.

Table 4: Educational Levels of Respondents

| Educational levels | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| JSS/ Elementary School | 1 | 2.0 |
| SSS/ Secondary school | 1 | 2.0 |
| Teacher Cert A/ Diploma/ Polytechnic | 23 | 46.0 |
| 1st Degree | 20 | 40.0 |
| Masters Degree | 5 | 10.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

From Table 4, it is evident that the educational level of the subjects for the study ranges from Diploma to postgraduate degrees. Cumulatively, 48 respondents (96%) had attained a Diploma, First degree and a Masters Degree. This can be attributed to the fact that in the Methodist church, acquisition of knowledge and literacy are much considered in addition to moral uprightness. Standing Orders 631 (2000) indicated that any literate full member who appears to have a call to preach and also gifts as a preacher shall be encouraged to seek to be a Local Preacher. Conventionally, ones educational level influences how people are being elected into higher offices in the Methodist church. For instance since 1985 the minimum educational level of Presiding Bishops of the Methodist church has been a Doctorate degree.

Respondents were asked about whether they had the intention to continue their education and 79.6% responded in the affirmative while 20.4% had no intention of continuing their education. All these information show the keen interest the church takes in education. This can be supported by the

number of schools established by the Methodist church in Ghana. According to the 6th Biennial/44th Conference Agenda (2010), the Methodist Church has 804 KGs, 1,062 primary schools, 590 Junior High Schools, 37 second cycle institutions and 1 university in Ghana. Table 5 shows the children and dependents of the respondents.

Table 5: Children/ Dependents of Respondents

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 49 | 98 |
| No | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Almost all of the respondents have either children or dependents. From Table 5 above majority of the subjects for the study representing 49 (98%) has either a dependent or a child.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the nature of family-related concerns of Methodist ministers of religion in the Ashanti region of Ghana?

Table 6: Family-Related Concerns of Respondents

| Stressors | Yes | | No | | No Response | |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|-------------|-----|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Able to spend quality time with children | 36 | 72.0 | 14 | 28.0 | 0 | 0 |
| Able to cater for children's educational needs | 46 | 92.0 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 2 | 4.0 |
| Good character of children | 44 | 88.0 | 4.0 | 8.0 | 2 | 4.0 |
| Spouses' ability to contribute financially | 28 | 56.0 | 19 | 38.0 | 3 | 6.0 |
| Spouses are able to satisfy respondents sexually | 44 | 88.0 | 3 | 6.0 | 3 | 6.0 |
| Able to spend quality time with Spouses | 44 | 93.6 | 3 | 6.4 | 3 | 6.0 |
| Remarry their spouses | 33 | 70.2 | 14 | 29.8 | 3 | 6.0 |
| Supportive family members | 28 | 58.3 | 20 | 41.7 | | |
| Absence of conflict with extended family | 11 | 22.0 | 39 | 78.0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

According to Table 6, 36 (72%) of the respondents asserted that they spent quality time with their children while the remaining 14 (28%) responded negatively. Lack of quality time with children by parent ministers mostly exposed their children to all kinds of immoral behaviours. This can explain why is mostly said in Ghana that children of the manse are the most immoral in society. Beaty (1995) noted that research literature overwhelmingly suggested that the absence of a father often resulted in psychological issues and difficulties forming interpersonal relationships. She believed that children who were lacking parental control were more prone to exhibiting narcissistic

behaviour, low self-esteem and depression. Most Ministers paid much attention to their ministerial work outside their homes neglecting that of their own home. A study conducted in the Netherlands and published in 2007 on substance use & misuse demonstrated that children who grew up without parental control were more likely than others to begin smoking (Henson, 2008). Children may also be more likely to engage in other risky behaviour, including alcohol and drug use, if they are lacking parental control in their lives, because such a lack usually means less supervision and a diminished likelihood of getting caught.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether they found it difficult meeting the social needs of their wards and 35 (79.5%) of the respondents stated bluntly that they did not find it difficult meeting the social needs of their children. The remaining 9 (20.5%) of the respondents revealed that they found some difficulties in meeting the social needs of their kids due to their ministerial work. 6 (12%) refused to answer this question.

Another stressor in the respondents' life was their inability to meet the educational needs of their children. Majority of the respondents were able to meet the educational needs of their children notwithstanding how meager their salaries were. From Table 6 above, it is clear that 46 (92.0%) of the respondents declared that they meet the educational needs of their wards which seemed very impressive but from experience it can be said that some ministers have no or little interest in their wards' education. Some ministers preach virtue but practice vice in the sense that they refuse to cater for their children let alone their dependents. 2 (4.0 %) on the other hand stated that they found it difficult to meet the needs of their children. 2 (4.0%) of the

respondents refused to answer this question. A BNet survey of literature on the topic of parental control pointed out that children whose parents were often missing tend to experience academic problems. Ferrari and Olivette (1993) looked not only at a lack of parental control due to parental absenteeism, but also due to a permissive parenting style. This may be partly due to the fact that children are less likely to do their homework and study without parental guidance.

Majority of the respondents were also approachable to their children as well as get on well with their children. From the study it was revealed that 48 (96.0%) of the respondents get on well with their children. With respect to the poor character of respondents' children, Table 6 indicated that 44 (88.0%) of the total respondents were satisfied with the upbringing of their children while 4 (8.0%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the upbringing of their children. It is also revealed 2 (4.0%) of the respondents who were mainly single did not respond to this question. All the married respondents lived with their spouses but it is quiet unfortunate that most of their spouses were not gainfully employed.

From Table 6, out of the 47 married respondents 28 (59.6%) had spouses who were gainfully employed while the spouses of the remaining 19 (40.4%) were not gainfully employed. Most of the respondents declared that lack of employable skills and gainful employment for their spouses deprive them of the financial support that a spouse is ought to give to the other partner thereby heightening their financial burden. It is evident that the 3 (6%) respondents who were single gave no response to this question.

In the traditional Ghanaian society the man has always been looked up to as the head of the household and the breadwinner for the family (Asante, 1979). There is no doubt that a spouse with as much as 7 dependents and children has a lot of financial commitments to make and as such requires mutual support from both partners. These financial commitments mostly create problems in many households in Ghana. Financial arrangement in the household was a veritable source of strain and conflicts in many families in Ghana.

Opinion is sharply divided as to who has been contributing what to the household budget and the maintenance of the welfare of household members. Asante (1979) asserted that financial responsibility is shared between husband and wife but the husband takes a greater share of the responsibility. Oduro (1992) on the other hand argued that even though there was a gender division of responsibilities in the household, women usually contribute significantly to and spend a larger share of their income on the upkeep of the household. He further recommended that wives be made more involved in income generating activities to earn more money for the use of the household.

In the homes of most of the ministers all the financial commitments are made by the ministers alone since most of their spouses were unemployed. Evidence showed that Ministers tend to shoulder all the financial burdens in their households thereby serving as a source of stress for them. From the study it was evident that 19 (40.4%) of the ministers' spouses were not gainfully employed.

The respondents were further asked about whether their spouses satisfy them sexually or not and from table 6, 44 (88.0%) responded affirmatively

while 3 (6.0%) responded negative. Also, 44 (93.6%) of the respondents also spend quality time with their spouses while 3 (97.9%) do not. Table 6 also indicates that 33 (70.2%) will marry their spouses again if they are given a second chance while 14(29.8%) will not. Majority of those who would choose a different person as partners when given a second chance attribute it to issues ranging from lack of emotional and financial support to incompatibility. To ensure that there is happiness in any marriage, spouses must exhibit love and emotional attachments to each other. The best way to exhibit this is to meet each other's most important emotional needs. The most important emotional needs of couples include admiration, affection, conversation, domestic support, family commitment, financial support, honesty and openness, physical attractiveness, recreational companionship and sexual fulfillment (Harley, 2005). Very few of the respondents have all these ingredients in their marriages.

The clergy today, as in the past, are expected by many people to be an example of perfection.

Corporately we look to them as representing the ideal standard or model of life in thought and deed. Therefore, their marriages exert disproportionate influence on other marriages in the community. In a study of 189 Presbyterian clergymen, their wives and laity, the ministers and their spouses experienced greater loneliness, more emotional exhaustion and lower marital adjustment than their lay counterparts (Warner and Carter, 1984). Jud, Mills and Burch (1970) supported this by stating that almost one in three pastors leaving ordained ministry had family difficulties. Rayburn, Rogers and Richmond

(1986) also indicated that clergy rank third in percentage among professionals who were divorced.

Notwithstanding the problems faced by ministers in their marriages a minister serves as a counsellor to many marriages and is in a position to challenge marriage partners to a larger vision of what marriage can and should be. In our society we are desperately in need of this larger vision of marriage.

Major problems are apparent in the marriages of the clergy today as mentioned earlier. Divorces and internal problems are prevalent, as they are elsewhere in our society. As perhaps in no other profession, marriages in the clergy have been at a tremendous disadvantage. In a real sense, the expectations put upon the traditional clergy had been put upon their marriages as well. Tension, fatigue and the pressure of excessive time demands drained resources of ministers for dealing with their normal responsibilities of family life. They are to be something more than human, with few or no personal problems, capable of leading exemplary lives. Similar or even greater demands have been put upon the minister's spouse. Both have felt the restrictive attitudes of the church toward the creative expression of their individuality, as well as their sexuality. All of the inhibitions and repressions that have been encouraged by the church rest heavily also upon the clergy couple. These problems have been neglected, ignored, glossed over, or denied and serve as stressors in the lives of ministers of religion.

Apart from the attention respondents gave to their nuclear families, they also paid much attention to their extended family members. From the study it was revealed that 39 (77.6%) of the respondents spend quality time with their extended family members while 11 (22.4%) due to their work

schedule could not get ample time for their extended family members. Notwithstanding their relationship with the members of their extended families they do not create problems for majority of the ministers.

From Table 6 above, majority of the ministers did not find problems with their extended family members. Out of 50 respondents, 39 (78%) had no problems with their family members while the remaining 11 (22%) had problems with their family members. Despite the fact that most members of their families do not give them problems as asserted by many, they were not supportive in their missionary work. From the study 20 (41.7%) responded that their family members were not supportive while 28 (58.3%) indicated that their family members were supportive. Whethem and Whethem (2003) showed the pressing need for support for Christian leaders. They noted: ‘The high levels of stress and burnout experienced by church leaders, growing attrition rates, high levels of loneliness and lack of intimacy with those closest to them, a frequently impoverished relationship with God and, at times, an abusive relationship with those they have been called to serve, is consistent with international literature about clergy relationships.’

Support from family members is a key ingredient in overcoming stress in one’s life. Ministers of religion’s lack of support from family members is a source of stress and for them to overcome this they need to be aware of the level of stress in their lives. They must put appropriate boundaries in place to allow time for themselves and their family. When Jesus said, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while," he meant ministers, too! (Mark 6:31)

Research Question 2: What is the nature of work-related concerns of Methodist ministers of religion in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

Leaders of the church are the working partners of the minister in the execution of his duties. The Minister serves as the manager and the controller of the church with the support of his/ her leaders. The caliber of leaders a minister has determines whether he would be successful or fail in the execution of his duties in the church. Success and progress can be achieved with the assistance of goal-oriented, discerning, purpose driven, proactive, educated, intelligent, and above all supportive leaders. Morale and job satisfaction are also important factors determining how individuals perform their jobs and commit themselves to their work. Rayburn, Rogers & Richmond (1986) claimed that protestant clergy had the highest overall work-related stress and were next to the lowest in personal resources to cope with the occupational strain. They had no supportive community thus they receive little or no support from their church leaders.

Table 7: Work Related Concerns of Respondents

| Stressor | Yes | | No | |
|--|-------|------|-------|------|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Have Committed leaders | 31 | 62.0 | 19 | 38.0 |
| Good relationship with co-leaders | 3 | 6.0 | 47 | 94.0 |
| Difficulty working with leaders | 12 | 24.5 | 32 | 75.5 |
| Good interpersonal relationship between co-leaders | 40 | 80.0 | 10 | 20.0 |
| Satisfied with work as a minister | 47 | 94.0 | 3 | 6.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

From Table 7, out of 50 respondents, 31 (62%) responded that their leaders were committed while the remaining 19 (38%) indicated that their leaders were not committed to the progress of the church but were rather interested in what they would get for themselves from the church. Despite this the ministers stated that the committed leaders give them the needed support. Dewe (1998) placing premium on congregational commitment as one of the major issue in the work of ministers of religion asserted that among 59 possible stressors in the life of clergy, the top three were congregational conflict and church conservatism, difficulties involving parish commitment and the emotional and time demands of crisis counselling. Congregational conflict as a result of strain relationship between leaders and their ministers is a stressor in ministers' life. From table 7, 32 (75.5%) stated that they faced no difficulty in working with their leaders. Those who find difficulties working with their leaders were 12 (24.5%). Notwithstanding the fact that majority of the ministers faced little or no difficulties in working with their leaders, they were not really satisfied with the caliber of leaders they had. These leaders at times retrogress projects and also create divisions within the church thereby serving as a source of worry to them.

Also, from Table 7 above, out of the 50 subjects for the study, 47 (94%) claimed bluntly that there was no cordial and an understandable relationship between them and their leaders. This showed that majority of the ministers had strain relationship with their leaders. It had been observed that majority of ministers have strain relationship with their leaders and this had been the contributory factor for their regular and unusual transfers.

All of the participants of the study expressed concern over the claims placed upon them as clergy. Each described in some respect the responsibilities placed on a pastor's time such as hospital visitation, counselling, sermon preparation and attendance at both church and extra-church functions. Only five admitted to taking a regular day off and that should speak to both the expectations and the time pressures as the pastor of a congregation. Ellison and Matilla (1983) found that emotional well-being is negatively related to unrealistic expectations and time constraints.

In terms of the interpersonal relationship that existed among leaders of the respondents' various churches, from Table 7 above 40 (80%) of the respondents asserted that there was a cordial relationship between their leaders. The remaining 10 (20%) of the respondents argued that there was no cordial relationship between their leaders. Majority of the ministers also saw most of their leaders as being approachable and accommodating.

Table 7 further shows that majority of the ministers were satisfied with their work as ministers of the gospel. 47 (94%) of the respondents were satisfied with their work while 3 (6%) were not satisfied with their work. Most ministers are satisfied with their work as ministers of religion. This is supported by Orthner (2007) who argued that in spite of the pressures of job stress and extraordinary demands, most clergy continue to find their work satisfying. Due to the nature of work ministers do, they are expected to have certain leadership qualities to make them successful. From the study, 49 ministers representing 98% indicated that they are confident, self-determined, easy-going, approachable and accommodating.

Research Question 3: What is the nature of personal and social concerns of ministers of religion of the Methodist church in Ashanti Region of Ghana?

Below is table 8, it shows data of the nature of personal and social concerns of ministers of religion of the Methodist church in Ashanti Region of Ghana

Table 8: Personal and Social Concerns of Respondents

| Stressor | Yes | | No | |
|----------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Low self-concept | 3 | 6.0 | 47 | 94.0 |
| Having no personal friends | 33 | 66.0 | 17 | 34.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Hatcher and Underwood (1990) did a study of 103 Southern Baptist ministers comprising of ninety-five men and eight women. Data were gathered during regional ministers' conferences in early 1987. Ministers with lower self-concepts tended to have higher trait anxiety levels. A low self-concept could also be a source of stress itself. This might be seen in persons who constantly had to prove their worth. This study on the contrary showed that majority of the respondents has a high self-concept. Table 8 shows that 47 (94%) of the respondents have a high self-concept while the remaining 3 (6%) has a low self-concept.

Proving one's worth often leads to placing unrealistic demands on oneself. It would certainly be logical for ministers who did not feel they were following God's will to be dissatisfied and to have high anxiety levels. This could be a problem for ministers who have tendencies toward perfectionism. There may be future concerns as more women consider ministry as a career.

There is considerable stress for those women because of their nontraditional ordinations. For instance, the Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution opposing the ordination of women in 1984. Hatcher and Underwood (1990) believed that ministry settings that did not require ordination, such as campus ministry, foreign missions, music ministry, and so forth, women seemed to experience a level of stress similar to that experienced by men.

Westafer (2009) noted that as the leader of a congregation, pastors may often be considered in the context of a celebrity which complicates the formation of intimate relationships. Congregants may develop jealousies if a pastor forms close relationships with only a select few of the members in the church. This study revealed that most of the respondents have a lack of personal friends and experienced feelings of loneliness and isolation because formation of intimate relationship with a select few of the member may lead to the disintegration of the church. From table 8, it was revealed 33 (66%) of the respondents do not have personal friends among their members while 17 (34%) of the respondents have personal friends. The greater the number of supportive relationships in the congregation and the more satisfied the pastor is with these relationships, the more positive is his or her attitude. This is consistent with the situational leadership model of Hersey and Blanchard (1982). Leaders must understand that they have to behave differently one-on-one with members of their group from the way they do with the group as a whole. A leader or pastor lacking an inner circle of support is most likely destined for a turbulent and, perhaps, abbreviated tenure.

The minister contributes to this problem because he feels that any admission of vulnerability will threaten his control. Many congregations also

assume that their leader has no emotional needs. This is due in part to the minister's fear of admitting his own vulnerability. It may also be due to the congregation's focus on its own needs rather than the needs of its minister.

Eaton and Newlon (1990) in a study of Protestant clergywomen found that fifty-four percent indicated that loneliness was a problem for them. Only forty-four percent felt satisfied with their social life. Carroll (2006) revealed that feeling lonely and isolated had an effect on pastors doubting their call to ministry.

Research question 4: How do Methodist ministers of religion in the Ashanti Region of Ghana cope with their concerns?

The table below shows the frequencies of how Methodist ministers of religion in the Ashanti Region of Ghana devise strategies to cope with stress.

Table 9: Respondents' Coping Strategies of Stress

| Strategies | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| Pray | 34 | 68.0 |
| Share | 14 | 28.0 |
| Keep them to myself | 2 | 4.0 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Majority of the ministers prayed whenever they were faced with challenges. From Table 9 above, 34 (68%) of the respondents prayed when they had problems, 14 (28%) shared their problems with friends and colleagues while 2 (4%) kept their problems to themselves. Since ministers are human beings they face problem and challenges. From the study it was evident

that when most ministers face challenges, most of them resort to prayers. They at times become overwhelmed with the problem when answers to their prayers delay. This can be supported by the incident of suicide committed by Pastor Nicholas Opoku- Agyeman of the Agric Nzema Calvary Baptist church near Kumasi (Daily Guide, July 28, 2010).

Kaldor (2003) reported that ‘there is a range of different methods of coping that leaders commonly seek to employ: firstly, finding time for relaxation – stepping away from the pressures of work to get fresh air and, hopefully, to recharge the batteries. Again, dealing strategically with the pressures with which one is faced. Delegating tasks and responsibilities, reorganizing time and priorities and seeking additional training are all ways to seek to deal with the pressures in the workplace in the hope that the stress will be reduced as a result. Moreover, growing spiritually to combat pressures that are being faced. Seeking time alone in reflection or intentional times of prayer provide good examples of seeking to build up one’s spiritual backbone in order to be able to better deal with the challenges that exist. Finally, seeking support from others. Talking with someone about the issues one is facing is an important method of coping opened to clergy.

The clergy’s relationships with both God and others play a pivotal role in strategies they employ in coping with stress. Increasingly, those who take their Christian discipleship and service seriously are seeing the value of having a friend and adviser with whom they can share openly and to whom they can be accountable. As the wise old sage said, ‘Two are better than one’ (Ecclesiastes 4:9). The New Testament is full of ‘one another’, ‘each other’ and ‘together’ passages pointing to Christianity as relational, about

community, and the power of togetherness. Rugged individualism and do-it-yourself spirituality are contrary to New Testament spirituality.

Greenfield (2005) advised ministers, particularly those that had been wounded in professional practice, to “seek competent and spiritually sensitive professional counselling” (p. 82). Whitlock (1968) believed counselling or “psychotherapy may be helpful to the individual in understanding himself in relation to whatever ministry he has to fulfill”

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Since creation men and women who served as mouth-piece of God, that is prophets, apostles and disciples were faced with some challenges. As a result of the challenges faced by Elijah for instance, he felt it was better for him to have died. (1 Kings 19:14). In the contemporary times ministers are faced with a lot of challenges which they carry or harbour quietly.

It is against this background that the study sought to examine the counselling needs of persons in full time ministry in the Methodist church in the Ashanti Region. The objectives of the study were to assess the challenges faced by ministers of religion with regard to their family, to find out the challenges faced by ministers of religion in the administration of their congregations, and to identify the nature of personal and social challenges of ministers of religion.

Four research questions were formulated to help ascertain the counselling needs of ministers of the gospel. Data was collected from field survey using questionnaire and analyzed with the aid of Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data collected was analyzed, interpreted and presented in frequency tables.

Summary

Evidence from the study showed that most of the respondents faced challenges in the upbringing of their children, with their leaders and in their marriages. It was established from the study that most children of the respondents had bad behaviour due to the lack of quality time they had with their parents. Ministers spend all their time on the ministerial work ignoring their children which consequently exposes them to immoral behaviour.

It was also evident from the study that majority of the respondents faced marital problems. The study showed that most spouses of ministers did not sexually satisfy them. It was also discovered that most respondents were financially overburdened since they shoulder all the financial responsibilities in their households. This is supported by the fact that majority of the spouses of ministers of religion were not gainfully employed and did not provide any financial support for the respondents.

Another source of stress in the lives of Ministers as revealed by the study was related to their work. The study showed that although some of the respondents had committed leaders majority of their leaders sought their selfish interest thereby retrogressing the development of the church. Also most of the ministers' lack supports from their leaders thereby making it incumbent on them to solely ensure the progress of the church.

Finally, these work-related, family-related and personal concerns of ministers make it necessary for the establishment of pastoral counselling services to help ministers cope with these stressors. From the study it was revealed that ministers mostly refused to report or share their problems. The major coping strategy that ministers resorted to was prayers. The spiritual

aspect of problems is very important but may not help if the physical aspects are not taking into consideration because a problem shared is half solved.

Conclusions

With reference to the objectives spelt out for this study and the findings made thereof, the following are put forward as the main conclusions: The general and specific objectives for the study were achieved. The findings of this study are opened to confutation or confirmation by subsequent research until then their tentative nature should be borne in mind.

Ministers were often erroneously considered by society as super-humans with little or no problems because of their position and the roles they play (Asante, 2002). They serve as shepherds of their church members, offer counselling services to those who are in distress, face marital or financial problems and restore their hope. Notwithstanding the roles they play, they are faced with problems. They face marital, family, work, financial, psychological and emotional problems which they try to keep to themselves and only pray to God about them. This attitude of not sharing their problems with others at times affects them to a large extent. It was against this background that the researcher sought to find out the counselling needs of persons in full time ministry of the Methodist church in Ashanti Region.

In sum, findings of this study revealed that in the homes of most of the ministers all the financial commitments are made by the ministers alone since most of their spouses were unemployed. Evidence showed that Ministers tend to shoulder all the financial burdens in their households. Again, most ministers find it difficult spending ample time with their families due to their busy schedules there increasing the moral decadence rate of children of the manse.

It was also revealed that some of the ministers would not marry their spouses if they are given a second chance due to incompatibility and sexual dissatisfaction. With respect to the church leaders, most of them were not committed to the progress of the church thereby increasing the burden of ministers. Finally it was evidently clear that when most ministers are faced with challenges they keep them to themselves. There is no doubt that Ministers play an important role in the country through their active participation in family, group and individual counselling of church members. In spite of their contribution, they are faced with several challenges with regard to their family life, work and their relationship with others which requires counselling. I therefore ask “who is the counsellor’s counsellor?”

Recommendations

The foregoing clearly reveals that Ministers of the gospel really have a lot of concerns ranging from their family life to their work. To address these concerns in order to give credence to mutual support in the homes of ministers, affordable family size, stabilize their families and progress in their work, the following recommendations have been suggested to guide policy decisions.

Firstly, Christian Council of Ghana and various denominations should organize leadership retreats and seminars for leaders and ministers of the gospel to help broaden their minds on stress coping strategies as well as to keep them abreast with the changing trend of issues. Again, leadership retreats should be frequently organized for various church leaders to enlighten them on the need to partner ministers in their work. Good partnership will go a long way to

release ministers from the kind of stress they go through when they lack the complement of their leaders.

Again, the church should establish counselling and placement centers at the fifteen (15) Dioceses in the country. These should aim at counselling Ministers and their families as well as training ministers' spouses in various skills and providing avenues for employment.

Furthermore, ministers' remunerations should be increased by various denominations to help them meet their basic needs. Their service benefits should be attractive.

Also, ministers' spouses who are not in gainful employment must be equipped with vocational skills and business activities by their spouses with the help of the church to keep them busy always. This will help them offer the ministers financial support in the upkeep of their households.

Areas for Further Research

Little research has been conducted on the secular roles played by the clergy. The limited evidence to date suggests that the clergy play three main roles. First, ministers play an advocacy role (Brian, 2006). Secondly, they engage in welfare and finally, community services activities (Henson, 2008). The general point however, is that researches on secular functions of the clergy would help people to appreciate the services they render to the society at large.

Further research could also be conducted to determine the role of church leaders in reducing stress among ministers of religion. Future research could also be conducted to assess the family satisfaction of clergymen.

Additional research in the field of pastoral counselling specifically on the impact of pastoral counselling on clergymen will add to the understanding about the counselling needs of the clergy and provide a feedback mechanism that will allow future efforts in this area to more fully meet its intended goals and objectives.

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Appendix A

**TITLE: COUNSELLING NEEDS OF PERSONS IN FULL TIME
MINISTRY: A CASE STUDY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN
THE ASHANTI REGION.**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MINISTERS

The study is intended to ascertain the counseling needs of ministers of religion. Every information given will be strictly treated confidential. Please do not write your name on any part of the paper. Kindly respond to the questions as sincerely as possible. Your responses will go a long way to help make recommendations to address the concerns of Ministers in full time service. I appreciate your views and time spent in filling this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Gender: (i) Male () (ii) Female ()

Age: (i) 25 – 45 years () (ii) 45 – above ()

Marital Status (i) Single ()

(ii) Married ()

(iii) Divorced ()

(iv) Separated ()

(v) Other:

5. Highest Level of education attained

(i) J S S / Elementary School ()

(ii) S S S / Secondary School ()

- (iii) Teacher cert A / Diploma / Poly ()
- (iv) 1st Degree ()
- (v) Master Degree ()
- (vi) Doctorate Degree ()
- (vii) Other

6. Occupation: if any apart from minister of religion.

7. Do you have children/dependants? Yes () No ()

8. Number of children.....

Number of Dependant.....

PART B: FAMILY CONCERNS

| | YES | NO |
|--|-----|-----|
| 9. I spend quality time with my children | () | () |
| 10. I am able to meet the educational needs of my children. | () | () |
| 11. I find it difficult meeting the social needs of my children. | () | () |
| 12. I get on well with my children. | () | () |
| 13. I am approachable to my children. | () | () |
| 14. I am satisfied with the up-bringing of my children. | () | () |
| 15. I live with my spouse. | () | () |
| 16. My spouse is gainfully employed. | () | () |
| 17. My spouse satisfies me sexually | () | () |
| 18. I spend quality time with my spouse. | () | () |
| 19. I involve my spouse in decision making. | () | () |
| 20. I will marry him/her again if given a second chance. | () | () |
| 21. I spend quality time with other members of my family. | () | () |

22. My extended family members give me problems. () ()
23. My spouse relates well with my family members. () ()
24. My family members are supportive. () ()

PART C: WORK- RELATED CONCERNS

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----|-----|
| 25. My leaders are committed. | () | () |
| 26. I find it difficult working with my leaders. | () | () |
| 27. I am satisfied with the caliber of leaders I have. | () | () |
| 28. I always involve my leaders in decision making. | () | () |
| 29. I always initiate projects in the church. | () | () |
| 30. I get on well with my leaders. | () | () |
| 31. My leaders give me the necessary support. | () | () |
| 32. My leaders feel free to make suggestions. | () | () |
| 33. My leaders relate well with each other. | () | () |
| 34. My leaders are approachable or accommodating. | () | () |
| 35. Most of my leaders are literate. | () | () |
| 36. Most of my leaders are unemployed. | () | () |
| 37. My leaders are people of a high social class. | () | () |
| 38. My leaders are heads of institutions/businesses/ organizations. | () | () |

PART D: PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----|-----|
| 40. I have the intention to further my education. | () | () |
| 41. I am satisfied with my work as a minister. | () | () |

42. I am confident and self-determined. () ()
43. I am naturally approachable and accommodating. . () ()
44. I find it difficult relating with people. () ()
45. People feel comfortable to come around me. () ()
46. I am an easy going person. . () ()
47. I have personal friends in my congregation () ()

PART E: COPING STRATEGIES

48. When I am faced with challenges, I a) Pray ()
- b) Share with others ()
- c) Keep them to myself ()