Forced Termination Among Clergy:
A Study of Experiences, Processes and Effects & Their Connection to Stress & Well-
Being Outcomes

by

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I purposely waited until after I had defended to write this section of the dissertation. When I first entered the doctoral program here at Texas Tech, I thought of the dissertation as one of the hardest documents I would ever write. In reality this constrained, rarely read portion, at the beginning of this document is the most difficult to write.

There are so many people that had a part in my arriving at this point in life. Usually, one would acknowledge all of the positive reinforcement, the encouragement of others, the ability of certain professors to move a doctoral student along in the program, and a host of other prodding from other individuals. I will do that, however, I also must acknowledge the negative experiences I have had in "another life" so to speak. My research up to this point, my future research agenda, and a portion of my current professional work is largely due to experiences I had while working in the Church and for certain people. Not all my experiences were negative; I met and served some really great people over the last fifteen years. There is a verse of scripture in the Bible that reads in part, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done" (Genesis 50:20). I do not know that some of the people I came in contact with "intended" to harm me and my family but I can say that all we have experienced was meant for good and a Godly purpose; which we are attempting to accomplish now. It is important for people to recognize that even hurt can serve purpose and lead one to accomplish great things.

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ABSTRACT

Although forced termination has been a subject of interest to clergy for some time, social scientists have generally studied job loss as if it was the same phenomenon regardless of occupation. Ministry work has always been difficult and stressful, and termination from this occupation has been reported to be the result of a demeaning and systematic process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that includes psychological, socio-emotional, and spiritual abuse.

This dissertation is comprised of three separate studies: first a pilot project sampling 227 active ministers from the Assemblies of God denomination; second, an online study among 39 Christian denominations in the United States. Both of these studies revealed a high incidence of forced termination among clergy, 41% and 28%, respectively. Forced termination was correlated with high levels of depression, stress, and health problems. Forced termination was also associated with low levels of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and family well-being.

The third study, examined the mental health of those who had been forcibly terminated. In a convenience sample of 55 ministers who had been forcibly terminated, in general, participants scored above the accepted cut-off score for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and scored high on a measure of burnout and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This project provided an empirical link of PTSD and GAD to the forced termination of clergy. Issues surrounding forced termination significantly predicted the perceptions one would have which in turn predicted the levels of anxiety, burnout, and symptoms of PTSD.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Each month between 1,500 and 1,800 ministers leave the ministry (London & Wiseman, 2003). Many of them are believed to have experienced a forced termination. Forced termination happens when a pastor is fired or resigns in lieu of firing due to personal attacks, criticism, or psychological pressure (Greenfield, 2001). Forced termination, a traumatic and demeaning process, is an event that has plagued the church since its inception. Crowell (1995) showed that more than 25% of clergy experience a forced termination at least once during their ministry. LaRue's (1996a, 1996b, 1996c; 1997a, 1997b) sample revealed 23% of clergy had been forcibly terminated. Barfoot, Winston, and Wickham (2005) documented some of the extreme challenges clergy face when forced from a ministry position. One of the most notable challenges is that 75% of clergy lack the ability to financially survive for more than four months following a forced termination. The effects of a lack of financial resources have been documented (Rankin & Quane, 2002; Vohs, Mead, & Goode, 2006) and include stress, poor family well-being, anxiety, and depression (Tang & Gilbert, 1995).

Anecdotal stories of forced termination reveal the pain and torment experienced by clergy families. Yet, many people do not understand how detrimental forced termination is to the clergy family and to the church. Modern day forced terminations commonly employ a process of threatening and coercive tactics by a small group of church members (Greenfield, 2001). Hoge and Wenger (2005), along with London and Wiseman (2003), present issues that contribute to pastoral exits from local church ministry; however, their work does not focus on the extremely distressing nature of the experience.

Previous research of forced termination among clergy reveals that 25% of clergy experience at least one forced termination during their ministry (Crowell, 1995). Very little is known about forced termination from a scientific perspective. An exhaustive search of the specific literature on forced termination of clergy reveals surprisingly little, and no scholarly peer reviewed publications. There are, however, unpublished dissertations available that have examined the phenomenon. Also, there are several books published by Christian publishers on the subject of forced termination.

Forced terminations and resignations involving evangelical clergy are a subject of increasing concern among church leaders (Beebe, 2007; Croucher, 2002; Lehr, 2006; Sheffield, 2008, July). With more than 20,000 ministers leaving the ministry each year (London & Wiseman, 2003) coupled with the problem of forced termination, it is important that social scientists examine the forced termination of clergy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the phenomenon of forced termination. What literature does exist shows a serious problem with the forced termination of clergy, but lacks substantiation from a social scientific perspective. This project, comprised of three different studies, identifies distinguishing characteristics of clergy who have been forcibly terminated and describes the extremely distressing nature of forced termination. It is an early step toward building a scholarly literature on this social problem.

The first study is a quantitative exploration of clergy from a major Evangelical denomination. The exploratory investigation compares descriptive data of forcibly terminated clergy with those who have not experienced forced termination, and explores

the effects of forced termination. This study attempts to estimate among respondents the proportion of actively involved clergy who have experience forced termination. Further, it describes similarities and differences that exist between those who experience forced termination and those who do not. Finally, it identifies some effects of forced termination.

The second study is a quantitative exploration of Christian clergy from more than 39 major denominations in the United States. Although this study is similar to the first study, it expands the sampling to allow for generalizations beyond the scope of the first study, which only used one denomination. In this way, it replicates and adds validity to the findings of the first study. It also broadens the variables examined.

Clergy who have participated in the two previous studies comprise most of the sample of the third study, which focuses on the psychological abuses that clergy experience as a result of a forced termination.

Research Questions

To assess the purpose of the entire dissertation project concerning the phenomenon of forced termination of clergy, the following research questions are presented:

> *RQ1*: What is the forced termination experience like for clergy?
>
> *RQ2*: Are there any demographic characteristics that distinguish clergy who have experienced a forced termination from those who have not?

RQ3: Are there any differences in clergy who have experienced forced

termination and those who have not in terms of stress, general

health, family well-being, self-efficacy, anxiety, and depression?

RQ4: What mental health problems do clergy who have been forcibly

terminated exhibit?

It is important for the reader to know that minister and clergy are used

interchangeably throughout this document.

CHAPTER 2 – STUDY ONE

FORCED TO LEAVE: FORCED TERMINATION EXPERIENCES OF ASSEMBLIES

OF GOD CLERGY AND ITS CONNECTION TO STRESS AND WELL-BEING

OUTCOMES

Marcus N. Tanner and Anisa M. Zvonkovic

ABSTRACT

Although forced termination has been a subject of interest to clergy for some time, social scientists have generally studied job loss as if it was the same phenomenon regardless of occupation. Ministry work by itself has always been difficult and stressful, and termination from this occupation has been reported to be the result of a demeaning and systematic process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that includes psychological, socio-emotional, and spiritual abuse. This pilot project sampled 227 active ministers from the Assemblies of God denomination via an online survey and asked about their experiences with forced termination, as well as measures of their personal and family well-being. In general, ministers who had been forced from a ministry position had less family well-being and more health problems than those who had not been forced out.

Keywords: Forced termination, Clergy health, Family well-being

INTRODUCTION

Forced termination has been a subject of interest to clergy for some time, yet termination among this select group has garnered very little attention in scientific journals. Ministry work has always been difficult and stressful (Blizzard, 1958). Social science researchers have provided a plethora of research on the effects of stressful work, but have not attended to differences within particular occupations by and large. Though some attention has been paid to the special pressures of ministry work, there has been virtually no scholarly work on one of the most detrimental and psychologically traumatic experiences a minister may have—forced termination. Very little empirical work exists on forced termination of clergy. The following focuses on some of the challenges of ministry work when examined in light of challenges of paid work documented in the literature, and it introduces the concept of forced termination among clergy using job loss research as a backdrop.

MINISTRY WORK

Unique Characteristics

The church can be viewed as a controlling organization (Kanter, 1977) that makes demands in all aspects of the minister's life and many aspects in the lives of the entire ministry family (Lee & Balswick, 2006). As with all occupations that may exert strong control over workers, job stress is not easily coped with, mainly because the job environment usually cannot be modified by the individual worker (Iacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis, & Kaprinis, 2003). The clergy work environment is controlled by the people who call a particular church "home" (Monahan, 1999) as opposed to other vocational arenas that are controlled by stock holders, owners, etc. The unique workplace

configuration of the church allows unmediated stressors to infiltrate the lives of the clergy family at an individual level and at a systemic level. Researchers have identified and studied the effects of ministry demands on both clergy and their spouses.

Ministry Demands and Stress

Empirical research has demonstrated that intrusive demands of the job are detrimental to the attitude and well-being of ministers (Han & Lee, 2004; Lee, 1999; Lee & Balswick, 2006; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994b). Research has connected job demands to marital and family well-being. Four classifications of intrusive demands have been identified by Lee (1999) in a survey of 312 ministers from 5 Protestant dominations: personal criticism, presumptive expectations, boundary ambiguity, and family criticism. Ministers experienced higher levels of presumptive expectations and boundary ambiguity than criticisms in Lee's study. When both the frequency and the impact to the minister of each intrusive demand were taken into account by Lee, the frequency and impact of personal criticism, presumptive expectations, and boundary ambiguity were significantly correlated with measures of burnout.

The nature of pastoral stress typically stems from emotional stress (Mills & Koval, 1971), unrealistic and intrusive expectations (Lee & Balswick, 2006; Morris & Blanton, 1994a), and financial concerns (Morris & Blanton, 1994b). Pastoral stress, stemming from intrusive job demands, has been demonstrated to affect the quality of marital and family life as indicated by Morris and Blanton's (1994a) study of 272 clergy husbands and wives and their follow-up of 132 clergy couples (1998). In particular, boundary intrusiveness was associated with lower marital and parental satisfaction, an

issue with time demands was connected to lower parental satisfaction, and a lack of social support was negatively associated with life satisfaction. Disengagement with the marital partner occurred with increased stress, as did marital conflict, and a more permissive family atmosphere (Morris & Blanton, 1998). It is commonly known that religious conservatives tend to be more strict in regards to parenting and marriage relationships thus having a more permissive family atmosphere would be in opposition to the typical conservative family atmosphere of clergy (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001). Husbands—the clergy members in this sample—who had higher time demands perceived less family cohesion and perceived that their family atmosphere became more authoritarian. Wives' stress from increased time demands was positively correlated with their perception of enmeshment and authoritarian atmosphere. Bolstering Lee's (1999) conclusion of the impact of stress from work on personal life, Morris and Blanton (1998) concluded that perceptions of social context stressors negatively affect the family functioning capabilities of both clergy husbands and wives.

Chronic stress as a result of the constant barrage of demanding churchgoers has led many ministers to burnout. Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, a result of chronic stress from working with people (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). There are three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (an uncaring or dehumanized attitude), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Randall, 2004). Ministers experience a range of physical and psychological problems associated with burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001).

Serious health repercussions of the stress of ministry work have been identified when research studies have inquired. Duke Divinity School conducted a survey among

2,500 religious leaders and found that 10% reported being depressed, while 40% reported being depressed at times or "worn out" some or most of the time. Serious health problems also were uncovered in the study; for example, 76% of clergy were either overweight or obese (McMillan, 2003; Wells, 2002). Ministry demands and other unique characteristics lead to stress and burnout and sometimes result in clergy making the decision to change vocations, leaving the ministry altogether (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

JOB LOSS

While job loss can be considered a discrete event and a process, a relevant review of research on the consequences of forced job termination among ministers must focus primarily on the connection between job loss and psychological and physiological outcomes. Because the impact of job loss is generally detrimental to individuals by virtually any criteria a researcher chooses to examine, researchers have tried to understand the process of how people cope with job loss (Kinicki & Latack, 1990; Leana & Feldman, 1992). Researchers have linked involuntary job loss to diminished self-esteem (Gurney, 1981; Winefield, Tiggemann, & Smith, 1987), decreased life satisfaction (Fagin, 1981), depression (Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984), increased levels of stress (Baum, Fleming, & Reddy, 1986; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1989), and a general reduction in well-being (Kinicki, 1985; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1990).

Depression has emerged as the prominent mental health outcome of job loss (Dew, Bromet, & Penkower, 1992; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Kasl, Rodriguez, & Lasch, 1998). Financial strain and its consequences are critical mediators in the relationship between unemployment and depression (Vinokur & Schul, 1997). Kessler, House, and

Turner (1987) found that financial strain accounted for 90% of the explained variance in mental health problems.

Considering how job loss might affect a given individual and family, it is important to consider functioning prior to the job loss. Since clergy work is known to be associated with health challenges including stress and being overweight, the experience of job loss among this population may be especially challenging. Furthermore, the financial status of the family prior to the job loss has a role to play in their financial strain after the job loss. It has been widely reported that the occupation of clergy is associated with financial stress (Lavender, 1983; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Morris & Blanton, 1998). In fact, Lavender (1983) reported that 95% of all clergy are grossly underpaid, indicating that clergy are five times more likely than the rest of the labor force to hold two or more jobs. Lee and Balswick (1989) found that the clergy ranked inadequate finances as the second most pressing problem endemic to ministry. Job loss that occurs after chronic financial strain is likely to have even stronger effects on mental health and stress than other circumstances surrounding job loss.

FORCED TERMINATION AMONG CLERGY

Forced termination in the ministry has been studied anecdotally for many years, particularly in connection with pastor advocacy, support, and outreach programs. Primary, information concerning forced termination comes from five sources: Barfoot, Winston, and Wickman's (2005) descriptive information from the pastors-in-residence program they administer, a 1984 and 2000 study of the Southwestern Baptist Conference published by Willis (2001), a report by the LifeWay Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) on forced terminations, an unpublished empirical dissertation (Crowell, 1995), and a

convenience sample of magazine subscribers (J. C. LaRue, Jr., 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; LaRue, 1997a, 1997b). Barfoot et al. (2005) described forced termination as occurring when "a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry" (p. 2). Greenfield (2001) described forced termination as a process whereby "clergy killers" blame the minister and/or family for the church's problems in highly public attacks. The authors define forced termination as the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that includes psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual abuse. This definition does not account for those clergy who are terminated for cause. Some clergy decide to leave the ministry entirely and enter a different line of work after experiencing forced termination.

The prevalence of forced termination is a matter of interest in the literature. Crowell's (1995) survey of 386 ministers from 48 denominations found 25.3% of pastors had been forcibly terminated at some point in their career. LaRue's body of research (all involving a nonrandom sample of 593 respondents who were subscribers to a popular Christian periodical) identified 23% of respondents had been forcibly terminated (1996a, 1996b, 1996c; 1997a, 1997b). A 1984 study of the Southwestern Baptist Conference reported that 1,056 pastors were forcibly terminated; Willis (2001) noted that in the year 2000 study, the prevalence of forced termination among ministers had decreased to 750. However, including staff members brought the total up to 987. A later report by LifeWay Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) showed 1,302 ministers had been terminated in 2005, but there was no indication of what percentage of ministers is represented.

Origin of Forced Termination

The origin of forced termination appears to be different for ministers as compared to other professions (Winefield, Tiggemann, & Winefield, 1992). For ministers, forced termination often has nothing to do with organizational cutbacks, layoffs, or early retirement. Instead, forced termination often occurs via a much more stressful process, described by Barfoot et al. (2005) as a psychological attack. Greenfield (2001) identified a demeaning and systematic process in which an initial accuser enlists key people in the congregation to become "sympathizers" at a secret meeting, during which time information is gathered to blame the minister and/or family for the church's problems. Leymann (1996) and Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) described a process of *mobbing* in the work place where a "victim is subjected to a systematic, stigmatizing process and encroachment of his or her civil rights" (p. 165).

Causes of Forced Termination

Little is known about the causes of forced termination. Greenfield (2001) suggested that while many commonalities exist among clergy who have experienced forced termination, there is no one set pattern or sequence of events. Barfoot et al. (2005) explicated factors that typically lead to forced termination, such as personality conflicts and conflicting vision for the church. Other causes may be centered around budget issues, poor planning or organization on the part of leadership, and certain groups feeling ignored by the pastoral staff. Greenfield (2001) wrote that, "It doesn't really matter what the problems are…In most cases the minister is blamed…[and] is responsible for whatever is wrong in the church and its ministry" (p. 24). Distinguishing between

different causal processes that result in termination is a complex endeavor that goes

beyond this scope of the literature and the current work.

Effects of Forced Termination

Financial effects have been well documented. In Barfoot et al.'s (2005) work,

financial instability was a challenge for 69% of the pastors, which is understandable since

50% received no severance package. In the Willis (2001) study, only 35.2% received any

severance, a frequency that seems more reliable than Barfoot's findings, which were

limited to a select group. Given that Barfoot et al. (2005) reported that 75% of the pastors

in residence could not survive financially longer than four months after being terminated,

the financial repercussions of forced termination are perhaps even more severe than those

in other vocations because clergy are not eligible for unemployment benefits (Gallagher,

2009 ; Hammar, 1998).

The body of work of LaRue (1996a, 1996b, 1996c; 1997a, 1997b) is suggestive of

many life changes for clergy who have been forcibly terminated and for their families.

Many changes occurred: 64% of clergy spouses had to change jobs, and 66% of children

were forced to change schools. Change in the clergy members' self-confidence has been

found: 58-59% of pastors had a drop in their self-confidence as a leader in LaRue's and

Barfoot's work (2005). Family problems have been suggested: in LaRue's work, 54% of

pastors reported a heavy emotional toll on their spouse, while Barfoot reported that

families experienced a diminished ability to trust people (71% and 67%). Health was a

concern: emotional health problems were identified by 59% of Barfoot's sample and 10%

of LaRue's sample reported a major illness within one year of forced termination.

Studying Forced Termination

Forced termination among clergy appears to be surprisingly prevalent. The systematic process of this particular type of job loss has been suggested to have a collateral effect on the entire clergy family. Given the financial problems, emotional difficulties, and interpersonal challenges documented in the job loss literature and already present in clergy workers prior to termination, it is logical that forced termination among clergy members should affect their stress, family well-being, and general health. Therefore the authors generated the following hypotheses:

> *Hypothesis one predicts significant group differences between ministers who have been terminated and those who have not in terms of marriage and family satisfaction and general health problems.*

> *Hypothesis two predicts that reduced marriage and family satisfaction and more general health problems are associated with higher stress levels for those who had been terminated.*

METHODS

Procedure

Four district offices of the Assemblies of God denomination (West Texas, North Texas, New Mexico, and Rocky Mountain) agreed to publicize a pilot study to the ministers in their respective districts via email, monthly newsletter, or both. This type of recruitment allowed for a sample of Assemblies of God ministers in the Southwestern United States. At the time of the study there were 252 credentialed ministers in New Mexico, 1,687 in North Texas, 534 in the Rocky Mountain districts, and 262 in West Texas, for a total of 2,735. We received 227 responses to the survey giving us a 12%

participation rate[1]. Several studies have found that response rates for internet surveys are lower than equivalent mail surveys (Couper, Blair, & Triplett, 1999; Medlin, Roy, & Ham Chai, 1999; Solomon, 2001). A study comparing response rates of mail and web surveys revealed a significant difference between mail-only survey response rates and email-only survey response rates (Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004). Their study showed a response rate of about 20% for email-only. It should further be stated that recruiting clergy for studies such as this can be problematic, as the experience of forced termination is often not validated by their professional network. Clergy who have experienced forced termination could be considered a hard to reach population because of the sensitive nature of the subject. Studies of sensitive subjects have used the social networks of participants to recruit other participants (Browne, 2005; Watters & Biernacki, 1989).

The survey was conducted online and was anonymous. Anonymity is important due to the sensitivity of issues around forced termination. Indeed, all the district offices voiced concern that respondents and congregations would be able to be identified. It is possible that the online administration created some bias because ministers without

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[1] The authors contacted the national or regional offices for the Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Conference, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Church of God, and Presbyterian denominations. Only one, the Assemblies of God, returned our phone calls and engaged in conversation about the research. The other denominations did not return our multiple attempts to engage with the research. Ultimately, all refused to participate on a national level. Although the Assemblies of God did not participate in the study at the national level, they seemed most receptive to the research. Five district offices for the Assemblies of God were contacted about participating in the study (West Texas, South Texas, North Texas, New Mexico, and Rocky Mountain). One of the authors spoke with district officials for all of the districts and answered questions about the study. This project was approved by the Human Subjects Board at Texas Tech University.

access to the internet would have been unable to respond; however, the value of anonymity was viewed as outweighing the sampling bias.

Ministers were invited to participate in the pilot study through email of listserves of the membership of the region and/or advertising in a monthly newsletter. Interested ministers went to the link presented in the recruitment information. There was no login required by the respondent, which maintained anonymity. A URL redirection made it easy for respondents to access the survey, e.g. instead of using the long "coded" link provided by the software provider, the authors used "http://survey.healingchoice.org".

The online survey had 86 questions and took participants about 15 minutes to complete. Each screen gave respondents instructions on the question set, i.e. for the General Health Question set, respondents were asked to identify selected health problems they had experienced over the past year. All respondents were asked questions to determine their views on ministry demands, stress, family satisfaction, marriage satisfaction, and general health. Near the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked whether they had experienced forced termination (*yes* or *no*) and were asked questions concerning their perception of termination (PTM). For those who had not experienced forced termination, the authors used skip-logic to omit the PTM questions. At the end of the survey, the respondents were redirected to a second survey which asked for personal contact information for a forthcoming follow-up study in which ministry couples would be invited to participate. If they agreed to do so, they were asked to enter their contact information, which could not be linked to the previous survey.

Participants

We received 227 responses for the survey, including 195 males and 32 females (Table 1). The respondents varied in age, with the largest group (84 respondents) representing the *55 and older* group. Two hundred sixteen were *married*, six were *single/never married*, three were *single/divorced*, and two were *single/widowed*. A little more than half of the respondents had children who were living at home. At the time of the survey over two-thirds (161 respondents) were working *full-time* in ministry, 34 were *part-time*, and 24 were *volunteer*. Of those working in ministry, 96 had been working in ministry between 25 and 50 years. About half of the respondents held the position of senior pastor while a third held a position described as *other (Missionary, Evangelist, etc)*. Forty-one percent of the respondents had experienced forced termination.

Table 1

Study One: Demographic Variables

Variables	M	SD	%	α	n
Minister Gender					221
Male			86		
Female			14		
Minister Age[a]	3.77	1.18			220
Minister's Marital Status[b]					220
Married			95		
All other Categories			5		
Ministry Position[c]	3.45	1.23			222
Terminated Ministers					217
Yes			41		
No			59		
Perceptions of Termination (PTM)	31.36	5.76		.75	87
Perceived Stress (PSS)	26.59	6.77		.90	203
Marriage Satisfaction (KMS)	16.96	4.45		.96	191
Family Satisfaction (FS)	15.83	3.62		.87	191
General Health	1.77	.79		.90	194

[a]Minister age: 1 = *18-25*, 2 = *26-35*, 3 = *36-45*, 4 = *46-55*, 5 = *55-Over*. [b]Minister's marital status: 1 = *Married*, 2 = *Single/Never*, 3 = *Single/Divorced*, 4 = *Single/Widowed*. [c]Minister's position: 1 = *Associate*, 2 = *Children's*, 3 = *Senior*, 4 = *Youth*, 5 = *Other*.

MEASURES

General Health

Participants' health was assessed using 17 items from a subscale of the National

Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Generic Job Stress Questionnaire.

The measure has several subscales and the authors endorse the use of the subscales

independently (Hurrell & McLaney, 1988). In this study, the authors focused on

assessing somatic complaints. A sample item from the "General Health" sub-scale is

"you were in ill health which affected your work." The respondents answered using a

Likert scale; 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A high score indicates poor

health. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .90. High scores on this measure indicate

poorer health.

Perceived Stress (PSS)

Participants were assessed using the perceived stress scale (PSS-10). The PSS-10

is a ten-item scale designed to measure general stress (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstien,

1983). A sample item is "In the last month, how often have you been upset because of

something that happened unexpectedly?" The five-point ratings range from zero (never)

to four (very often), indicating the frequency in which the participants experienced each

of the items; a high score indicates high stress. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .90.

Family Well-Being

Family well-being was assessed by combining the Kansas Marital Satisfaction

(KMS) scale (Schumm et al., 1986) with an adapted version of the KMS. The KMS is a

three-item scale with scores ranging from one (extremely dissatisfied) to seven

(extremely satisfied); a high score will indicate being extremely satisfied with family

well-being. The authors used the same three questions from the KMS but changed the

word "spouse" to "family". The adapted scale had six questions. A sample item is, "How

satisfied have you been with your spouse?" The adapted scale with all six items had a

Cronbach's Alpha of .91.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one predicted significant group differences between ministers who have been terminated compared and those who have not in terms of family well-being and general health problems. Data were screened in order to determine if the group of ministers who had experienced forcible termination differed in age, income, or ministry position from the group who had not experienced termination. There were no significant differences between the groups on this background information based on the means between groups: (t = -.91, -.05, -.96, respectively, p > .10). Therefore, subsequent analyses did not account for the potential covariation between background characteristics and well-being or health. Thus, a MANOVA was used to compare those who had been forced from a ministry position and those who had not on scores of family well-being, health, and stress. The multivariate result was significant (Pillai's Trace = .141, F = 8.573, df = (1,159), p < .001), indicating differences in levels of family well-being, stress, and health between those who have been forced from a ministry position and those who have not. The univariate F tests showed there was a significant difference between the forcibly terminated group and the never-terminated group on family well-being, F = 6.128, df = (1,160), p < .01, and health, F = 20.753, df = (1,159), p < .001. However, the F tests on the stress scale were not significant, F = 1.64, df = (1,159), p >.10. Thus, those who had been forced out were not significantly different in their stress level from those who had not been forced out.

The dependent variables that were significant via the multivariate analysis of variance strategy were then analyzed using a one-way ANOVA as a follow-up, and means comparisons were then employed. First, family well-being was significantly

different between the groups; F (1, 171) = 7.67, p < .01, eta^2 = .21. Ministers who had

been terminated (M = 31.31, SD = 7.68) were more dissatisfied with family well-being

than those who had not been terminated (M = 34.17, SD = 5.87).

Secondly, general health was significantly different between the groups; F (1,

184) = 25.95, p < .001, eta^2 = .35. Those who had been terminated (M = 21.77, SD =

8.73) had poorer health than those who had not been terminated (M = 16.70, SD = 4.77).

High scores on the health measure indicate poorer health. Because age seems to be a

natural indicator for poor health, an ANCOVA was utilized as a follow-up to control for

the age variable. Age was not a significant control variable for poor health among the two

clergy groups, those who have been forced out compared to those who had not, F (1, 185)

= 2.46, p > .11.

Associations Between Stress and Well-Being Among the Clergy who Had Been

Terminated

Hypothesis two turns attention specifically to the group of clergy who had been

forcibly terminated from clergy positions. In attempting to account for the outcomes of

family well-being and poor health, hypothesis two asserts that higher stress levels will

account for lower family well-being and poor health among clergy who were forcibly

terminated. At the zero-order level, stress (PSS) was significantly correlated with family

well-being, r = -.515, p < .001; such that the more satisfied clergy were with their family

well-being, the less stress they had. General health was also correlated with stress (r =

.499, p < .001), such that the more stress clergy experienced, the poorer the health (Table

2).

Table 2

Study One: *Correlations*

Variables	1	2	3
1. Family Well-Being	-		
2. General Health	-.288***	-	
3. Stress	-.515***	.499***	-

***$p < .001$. (two-tailed)

Utilizing a multivariate strategy, regression analysis was used to account for the experience of family well-being and health. Table 3 shows that among ministers who had been forcibly terminated, family well-being and health were significantly associated with stress, such that low family well-being and low health were associated with higher stress. The *n* for the regression analysis is lower than earlier reported because of missing data. There were a total of 89 ministers who reported being forcibly terminated, but only 63 of those completed the measures for this analysis. The regression model accounted for 48.5% of the variance in the stress experienced by clergy who had been terminated.

Table 3

Study One: *Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Stress Among Respondents Who Were Forcibly Terminated*

Predictor	B	SE B	β
General Health	.37	.07	.50*
Family Well-Being	-.28	.08	-3.5*
Constant	28.47	3.32	
$R2$		.485	
F for change in $R2$		28.19*	

*Note: *p < .001. n = 63*

DISCUSSION

Forced termination of clergy is a needed line of research inquiry. Literature, both systematic and anecdotal, reveals that such termination is quite prevalent among ministers, is distinct for that occupation, and has not been adequately investigated. While it has features in common with other types of job loss, elements of the clergy position and of the termination experience suggested that stress and well-being subsequent to termination would be worthy of scientific inquiry. Although scholarly research on the topic had not heretofore been conducted, what has been written concerning forced termination of clergy provided a strong rationale for the study.

This pilot study, with a narrow sample, demonstrated that almost half of the respondents had experienced forced termination. Non-scholarly work had offered that a quarter of clergy in all denominations have experienced forced termination. Among those who responded to this research, 41% had experienced forced termination. For such a

large problem, forced termination of clergy is sorely missing from the extant literature on ministry work.

Not only is forced termination an event that occurred for many clergy, it is also a process that apparently is associated with detrimental effects long after the termination event. Ministers who experienced forced termination had a lower sense of family well-being compared to those who had not been terminated. They were less satisfied with their marriages and families. Perhaps the added pressures of being forced out of a position strains the cohesiveness of the family unit. More research is needed to show how clergy couples experience and cope with forced termination. Given that this study was cross-sectional in design, it would be prudent for researchers to attempt to determine a baseline for family well-being before the event and after forced termination.

Ministers who experienced forced termination were found in this study to have poorer health compared to those who had not been terminated. While it is impossible to prove causation with the design of this study and without a controlled testing environment, the health levels of this population are cause for concern in any case. One might immediately assume that age would be associated with the health of ministers such that older ministers would have more health problems than younger ministers, but in this study age was not related to health nor to whether a minister had been terminated. More research is needed to determine how detrimental forced termination is to the health of those who experience it.

Ministers who have experienced forced termination have a low perspective of family well-being and poor health, which exhibits itself alongside high stress levels. Stress itself was not significantly predicted by forced termination but is a factor in

creating problems for the ministry family. This is not really a surprise, as researchers have shown that ministry is a stressful occupation. What we were able to show is that effects related to forced termination were also indicative of higher stress. Among ministers who have been forcibly terminated, how high their stress levels were at the time of data collection was strongly influenced by their perception of their families' well-being and their report of their general health. On the positive side, ministers who had been terminated with high levels of family well-being and personal health did not exhibit signs of stress. In this way, it might be that their family was a coping resource and that their health promotion behaviors equipped them to manage stress well.

Limitations

The sampling procedure and the narrow sample of one Christian denomination limit the generalizability of the research. However, it should be clear that two main issues prohibit more common sampling procedures. First, clergy who have experienced forced termination may not be willing to come forward. The idea of being forced out of a ministry position is stigmatizing and hurtful. It was important to garner support from groups that have contact with ministers, such as the district offices. Studies of sensitive subject have used the social networks of participants to recruit other participants (Browne, 2005; Watters & Biernacki, 1989). Watters and Biernacki (1989) describe the need for focused and targeted sampling when working with hidden populations. They posit that typical sampling procedures under represent hidden populations and that relying "on published lists or official records as the basis for selecting probability samples has already introduced…biases that may seriously compromise the results of research directed at hidden populations." (p. 419) Second, not only are ministers reluctant

to participate, but the majority of denominations do not keep track of forced terminations, making sampling difficult (Chandler, 2001). These issues force researchers to pursue targeted samples rather than random samples (Schutt, 2006).

This pilot study only surveyed clergy from The Assemblies of God, which has a different polity and call system than other denominations. The Assemblies of God is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world, with nearly 3 million adherents in the United States and over 63 million adherents worldwide. In comparison, the Southern Baptist Conferences has over 16 million adherents in the United States; both denominations have a similar system for calling ministers. The Presbyterian Church USA has a little over 2 million adherents, and the United Methodist Church which has about 8 million members. Although these denominations differ in polity and call systems, preliminary analysis of data from a study being conducted by one of the authors reveals very few differences in experiences of forced termination among denominations.

A second limitation of the study is the limited and self-selected number of potential respondents who did choose to participate. In effect, sample self-selection allowed for the occurrence of potential biases in the ultimate sample. As described above, convenience samples are utilized in research on clergy in general, and they were required given the type of focus on the sensitive issue of forced termination among clergy. Dillman (2007) notes that the use of internet-based self-administered surveys are important with the rapid increase and acceptance of email and the internet. Nevertheless, the online nature of the survey precluded people who had no access to a computer or the internet from participating in the study and was a potential source of bias. As mentioned above, internet surveys generally have lower response rates, which may be due to some

lack of knowledge on how to achieve high response rates. Low response rates may reflect a lack of familiarity with media and a lack of convenient access to the internet (Solomon, 2001). It is possible that the potential respondents in the poorest mental, physical, and family health, as well as those most disillusioned with clergy work, would have been least likely to read the email from the church organization and would be least likely to respond.

Directions for Future Research

The authors have already demonstrated and bemoaned the general lack of scholarly research in the area. More research is needed on forced termination among clergy. With a lack of research in the area, there is much we do not know about forced termination. The unique workplace configuration makes losing a job in the ministry different than losing a job in many other vocations. For example, clergy tend to experience more losses associated with forced termination than others. Not only do the clergy lose their salary associated with the ministry position, but if they live in a parsonage (church-owned home) they lose their home. In addition, they lose many of their friends associated with the church and a significant part of their support system. Like in other professions clergy live and work far away from immediate and extended family thus relying on church members to be a pseudo-family providing similar social and emotional support to clergy family members. It is important that future research listen to the stories of ministers and families who have experienced forced termination. Gathering information over time about the process of termination would be an asset to the knowledge base. This study provided data suggesting a connection between family and stress, which could be pursued in qualitative and family-level studies.

Along with hearing from ministry families about their experience with forced termination, future research would allow for theory development in the area. As this theory is developed, future research could help us understand how ministry families cope with forced termination and could provide intervention. Theory development would also help researchers learn more about the predictors and processes of forced termination. It would be important for researchers to collect data from churches who have forced a pastor out, as they may have a very different perspective about the causes of forced termination. However, such a study would require a longitudinal, multi-informant, and multi-method design.

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CHAPTER 3 – STUDY TWO

THE FORCED TERMINATION OF AMERICAN CLERGY: ITS EFFECTS AND

CONNECTION TO NEGATIVE WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of forced termination among clergy has ranged from 25% among many denominations to 41% among Assemblies of God ministers. Forced termination and its effects are serious problems that have yet to be addressed by scholars in the social sciences. The lack of scholarly research in this area called for a large national study from a reputable research institution. This online study shows that 28% of ministers among 39 denominations experienced a forced termination. Forced termination was associated with high levels of depression, stress, and health problems. Forced termination was also associated with low levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Every year 20,000 ministers in America leave the ministry for good (London and Wiseman, 2009), some of them are believed to leave as a result of a forced termination. It is estimated that 25% of Christian clergy in the United States experience at least one forced termination during their career (Crowell, 1995). Although people lose their job in other professions, it is different in ministry because of the distressing process that precedes the last day of work. For ministers, forced termination often has nothing to do with organizational cut-backs, lay-offs, or early retirement (Barfoot et al., 2005; Crowell, 1995), as it might in other professions (Winefield et al., 1992). Rather, as documented by Greenfield (2001), the forced termination of clergy involves private and public criticism from a small group of people in the church, which is often demeaning to the emotional and physical well-being of clergy.

In addition, the church has a highly unusual workplace configuration; one employee (the pastor) with many employers (the church board/parishioners); as compared with a typical work place with one employer and many employees. Typical workers must meet the demands of their particular job function to the extent that evaluations from their supervisor "meets" or "exceeds standards." Clergy often have no such evaluation. There is typically no supervisor(s) evaluating the performance of clergy in relation to job performance. Clergy constantly make efforts to meet the demands of an entire congregation that could number between a few people in a small rural church to several thousand in a large "mega-church."

When an employee does not "meet" or "exceed standards" an employer makes recommendations for improvement with an additional evaluation set at a later time to

evaluate improvements. If the employee does not improve, perhaps other steps are taken to intervene, but the employer may also fire the employee for not meeting standards. The process is standard across most organizations. Not so with the church. There are often no set criteria for the job function of a minister; it varies both within and among churches and denominations. When the minister stops meeting the perceived demands of the congregation, a forced termination process begins that could last from a few months to a few years.

In a pilot project, Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) found 41% of a sample of Assemblies of God clergy had been forcibly terminated at least once during their ministry. Thirty-seven percent of those clergy had seriously considered leaving the ministry as a result of a forced termination. Ministers who experienced forced termination had a lower sense of family well-being compared to those who had not been terminated. They were less satisfied with their marriages and families, and had poorer health than those who had not been forcibly terminated. This study builds on the analysis of the Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) project, expanding the sample to include more than 39 Christian denominations in the United States and more potential health outcome variables.

<center>LITERATURE REVIEW</center>

Job Loss

Job loss is a negative life event and ranks in the upper quartile of unpleasant events that produce life stress (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). It is one of the top 10 traumatic life experiences (Spera, Buhrfeind, & Pennebaker, 1994), and is worse in terms of lost "utility" units than divorce or separation (Clark & Oswald, 1994). Research on job loss

has focused primarily on the relationship between involuntary job loss and various psychological and physiological outcomes. For example, Holmes and Rahe (1967) showed that job loss creates a variety of stressors; some of which are financial, social, physiological and psychological. Researchers have linked involuntary job loss to diminished self-esteem (Gurney, 1981; Winefield et al., 1987), decreased life satisfaction (Fagin, 1981), depression (Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984), increased levels of stress (Baum et al., 1986; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1989), and a general reduction in well-being (Kinicki, 1985; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1990). Depression has emerged as the prominent mental health outcome of job loss (Dew et al., 1992; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Kasl et al., 1998).

The research on job loss and stress misses some important elements that make clergy work, specifically, unique; primarily the workplace configuration that has already been mentioned. In addition the workplace demands are much more convoluted as each person in a congregation makes demands on the minister's time. In addition, much of a minister's social system is inherently tied to the local church body in which he or she serves as minister. A minister may move across the country or even the world to fulfill a higher calling, often leaving behind extended family who could serve as a support system in stressful times. A minister relies on the relationships within the local church body, community, and denomination for a support system. When that system is the cause of stress or even job loss, the minister loses not only a job, but also the very support system that would have comforted any other person not working in ministry.

Forced Termination in the Ministry

Research on forced termination among clergy originates from five sources: Barfoot et al.'s descriptive information from the pastors-in-residence program they administer (2005), a 1984 and 2000 study of the Southwestern Baptist Conference published by Willis (2001), a report by the LifeWay Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) on forced termination that took place in 2005, an unpublished empirical dissertation (Crowell, 1995), and a pilot project conducted by Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011).

Reasons for termination were reported in the Barfoot et al. (2005) study and the Willis (2001) study. Both studies identified conflict over leadership styles and vision for the church between the minister and the congregation (Willis, 2001). Crowell's (1995) study listed reasons why lay leaders wanted the pastor removed from the church; 21% said the pastor was unfit or was not called. Being "called" in the ministry has a two-fold definition; one is to receive a higher calling from God and be led to pursue a career in ministry. The other is to be given a job at a particular church (i.e., a minister is called to be the Senior Pastor or Youth Pastor at Third Church). Twenty percent of lay leaders in Crowell's (1995) study indicated congregational politics or powerful individuals were responsible for the pastor's forced exit.

A 1984 study by the Southwestern Baptist Conference reported 1,056 pastors were forcibly terminated. Willis (2001) noted that in 2000 the prevalence of forced termination among ministers had decreased to 750, but when data included ministerial staff members who were forcibly terminated, the total of terminated ministers rose to 987. A later report published by LifeWay Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) showed 1,302 ministers had been terminated in 2005. Crowell (1995) surveyed 386 ministers

from 48 denominations and found 25.3% of pastors had been forcibly terminated at some point in their career.

Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) reported 41% of Assemblies of God ministers in the Southwestern United States had experienced a forced termination at least once during their ministry. Those ministers who had been forcibly terminated had a more negative view of their family well-being and more general health problems; both of which contributed to more stress, compared to those who had never experienced a forced termination.

Given that forced termination is a prevalent phenomenon and job loss research in general shows health problems to be an outcome, the health of clergy who have experienced forced termination is an important variable. Little, Simmons, and Nelson (2007) studied the health of 117 pastors as it relates to positive and negative affect, engagement, burnout, forgiveness, and revenge. Their study revealed that revenge behavior emerged as significantly related to poor health. Further, the significant negative predictors of revenge behavior were engagement and work-family conflict. Perhaps, ministers who are forced out of their church for no legitimate reason, feel wronged by the church, which then negatively influences health and family satisfaction. Little et al. (2007) go on to suggest, "that when distress manifests itself in even a small degree of revenge behavior, it can be detrimental to a leader's health." (p. 254)

Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter suggested that working with people can cause chronic stress (as cited in Miner, 2007). Miner (2007) noted that chronic stress can lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a low sense of personal accomplishment. Chronic stress can cause physiological responses (Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chapin,

2005), one of which is to constantly think about a problem and forego sleep. The real effect, in fact, is to keep one chained to an undesirable past and a bleak future. According to physician Don Colbert (2003), "Psychiatric diseases that have been linked to long-term stress include generalized anxiety disorder, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder, as well as other more rare psychiatric diseases" (p. 23). Research on clergy health has not studied forced termination as an explanatory variable of variances in health.

Purpose of Study

Given that Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) found 41% of Assemblies of God clergy experience forced termination and Crowell (1995) shows 25% of clergy experience forced termination, this study's purpose is to extend and replicate those findings. This study surveys 39 denominations across the United States to explore the prevalence of forced termination. In addition, this study examines variables not yet researched in relation to forced termination of clergy, such as depression, burnout, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Researchers have shown that levels of depression and burnout are higher for people who have stressful jobs and those who have lost their jobs, but these variables have not been studied in relation to clergy who are forcibly terminated. Overall, this study examines the health outcomes of forced termination from a national sample of clergy that includes multiple Christian denominations in the United States.

METHODS

Procedures

Criteria for Inclusion in Study. In this study, participants were Christian clergy of Protestant denominations in the United States and currently in some type of ministry

work. It was important that the participants be in a current ministry position, so differences could be determined between clergy who have experienced a forced termination and those who have not been forcibly terminated.

Recruitment of Subjects. Respondents were recruited through the use of social media. A search on Facebook was conducted to find groups relating to Christian clergy. An electronic message was sent to the moderator of the group asking for the following message to be distributed among group members:

> *My name is _____, I am a student at Texas Tech University and am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on clergy health. I would appreciate you forwarding this invitation to participate in my study to group members. All clergy are invited to participate. The study has been approved by the Human Subjects Board at Texas Tech University. You can access the online survey by clicking or pasting the following link in your web browser;* http://survey2.healingchoice.org

A moderator is usually the group owner or someone else selected by the group owner to moderate incoming messages. A personal social network was also used to sample this hard to reach population. The network included non-profit organizations that help ministry families. Several of them agreed to send out email invitations to their contact lists, which helped increase the response to the survey. The survey was conducted online, was anonymous, and approved by the Human Subjects Board. Forced termination is known to be a sensitive subject among clergy, so anonymity was a primary factor in deciding to use an online survey. In addition, the online survey provided for quick turnaround for data collection and was cost efficient.

The respondents for this project included 410 males and 172 females for a total of 582 participants. The age ranges of the participants were mainly clustered in the 26 – 35 age range (24.5%), 36 – 45 age range (28.6%), and 46 – 55 age range (28%). Eighty-

eight percent of the participants selected Caucasian as their race/ethnicity (see Table 4).

Nearly half of the participants were well educated with at least a Masters degree (43.2%).

Overall, over 80% of the participants had at least an associates degree. Seventy-nine

percent of the participants were married at the time of the survey. Seventy-six percent of

the sample worked full-time in a ministry position while 18% worked in a part-time/bi-

vocational position. Others were in a volunteer or internship position. Over half of the

participants were Senior/Solo Pastors, while 14% were Associate Pastors, 9% were

Youth Pastors, and 3% were Children's Pastors. Over 39 different denominations were

represented in the survey. The respondents were primarily, Presbyterians (21.9%),

Assembly of God (15.2%), Baptist (15.3%), Non-Denominational (14.8%) and Church of

Christ (9%).

Table 4

Study Two: Demographic variables

Variables	M	SD	%	α	n
Minister Gender					582
Male			70		
Female			30		
Minister Age[a]	3.08	1.16			
Minister's Marital Status[b]					
Married			79		
All other Categories			21		
Ministry Position[c]	4.48	2.6			
Terminated Ministers					
Yes			28		
No			72		
Denomination					
Assemblies of God			15.2		
Baptist			15.3		
Church of Christ			9		
Lutheran			3.5		
Methodist			6.2		
Non-Denominational			14.8		
Presbyterian			21.9		
All other combined			14.1		
Perceptions of Termination (PTM)				.83	
Perceived Stress (PSS)				.87	
Family Well-Being				.90	
General Health				.89	
Self-Esteem				.88	
Self-Efficacy				.85	
Depression (CESD-10)				.87	
Ministry Burnout				.93	
Ministry Demands				.90	

[a]Minister age: 1 = *18-25*, 2 = *26-35*, 3 = *36-45*, 4 = *46-55*, 5 = *56-65, 6 = 66 – 75, 7 = 76 or Older*. [b]Minister's marital status: 1 = *Married*, 2 = Married but Seperated, 3 = *Single/Never*, 4 = *Single/Divorced*, 5 = *Single/Widowed*. [c]Minister's position: 1 = *Children's*, 2 = *Youth*, 3 = *Associate*, 4 = *Senior/Solo*, 5 = *Missionary*, 6 = *Evangelist*.

MEASURES

Forced Termination

A definition was provided for forced termination: "a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry." (Barfoot et al., 2005)

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

Perceived Stress (PSS) was assessed using the perceived stress scale (PSS-10). The PSS-10 is a ten-item scale designed to measure one's appraisal of stress (Cohen et al., 1983). A sample item is "In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly." The scale is measured from 0 (never) to 4 (very often) indicating the frequency in which the participants experienced each of the items; a high score indicates high stress. Alpha coefficients have ranged from .78 to .86 (Cohen et al., 1983; Cohen & Williamson, 1988) demonstrating adequate internal reliability. Cohen (1983) and Cohen and Williamson (1988) demonstrated construct validity for the measure by comparing PSS scores to scores on other stress measures (i.e., health, health service utilization, job responsibilities, life satisfaction, and help seeking). PSS scores were closely related to other measures that are designed to tap perceptions of stress within the previous month. Measures with a longer time reference were expected to be less closely related. Cohen and Williamson (1988) confirmed their expectations and provided evidence for construct validity, and the PSS does an adequate job of measuring appraised stress. Further, the PSS is a widely used and generally accepted measure of perceived stress as a construct. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .87.

Family Well Being

Family well-being was assessed by combining the Kansas Marital Satisfaction (KMS) scale (Schumm et al., 1986) with an adapted version of the KMS. The KMS is a 3-item scale with scores ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied); a high score indicates being extremely satisfied with family well-being. The adapted version of the KMS was the same three questions from the KMS, but the word "spouse" was changed to "family". The adapted scale had six questions. A sample item is "how satisfied have you been with your family?" Cronbach's alpha for this study was .90.

General Health

General Health was assessed using 14 items from a subscale of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Generic Job Stress Questionnaire The measure has several subscales, and the authors do permit the use of the subscales independently (Hurrell & McLaney, 1988). This study focused on assessing somatic complaints. A sample item from the "General Health" sub-scale is "You were in ill health which affected your work." Items are measured using a Likert scale; 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); a high score indicates poor health. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .89.

Self- Esteem

Self-esteem was assessed using a nine-item subscale from the Generic Job Stress Questionnaire above. A sample item from the subscale is, "I am generally satisfied with myself." Items are measured using a Likert scale; 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree); a high score indicates low self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .88.

Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) which included nine items. High reliability, stability, and construct validity of the GSE scale were confirmed in earlier studies (Leganger, Kraft, & Roysamb, 2000). A sample item is "I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough." Items are measured on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true). Cronbach's alpha for this study was .85.

Center for Epidemiological Studies Short Depression Scale

Depression was assessed using the Center for Epidemiological Studies Short Depression Scale (CES-D 10) which includes 10 items. Reliability has been measured at .84. A sample item is "I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me." Items are measured on a Likert scale from 0 (rarely or none) to 3 (all of the time) (Radloff, 1977). Cronbach's alpha for this study was .87.

Ministry Burnout

Ministry Burnout was assessed using a revision of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) developed by Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin and Lewis (2004) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) developed by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005). The SEEM and the SIMS are each an 11-item Likert scale for a total of 22 items each measured 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). A sample item from the SEEM is, "Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experiences." A sample item from the SIMS is, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my ministry here". Cronbach's alpha for this study was .93.

Ministry Demands Scale (MDS)

Ministry Demands was assessed using 17 items from the Ministry Demands Scale developed by Cameron Lee (1996). Participants were presented with a series of statements about common ministry experiences and asked to select an answer that ranges from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). A sample statement is, "Your sleep was interrupted by a phone call from a church member." Cronbach's alpha for this study was .90.

Perceptions of Terminated Ministers (PTM)

Perceptions of Terminated Ministers (PTM) was assessed using an 10-item Likert Scale. The PTM was developed to measure the perceived emotional effects of forced termination events. The scale is an 10-item self-report measure concerned with an effective response to feelings of a termination experience (i.e., embarrassment, anger, & faith), responses of termination (i.e., difficulty facing responsible party, forgiving responsible party, & speaking with responsible party), and hurt (i.e., my family was deeply hurt), scored on a 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A sample statement is, "I often think about the day I was forced to resign or terminated from a ministry position." For more discussion and psychometric properties, see Appendix C. A mid-range score is 27.5. A score above 27.5 would indicate an increasingly negative perception of a forced termination. Cronbach's alpha for this study was .82.

Analytical Strategy

The hypotheses and analyses are presented below grouped by outcome. Hypothesis One examines well-being outcomes: marriage and family and health.

Hypothesis Two examines the relationship between well-being outcomes, stress, and

forced termination. Hypothesis Three examines mental health outcomes: self-esteem,

self-efficacy, and depression. Hypothesis Four examines a typical work outcome,

burnout, associated with chronic stress when working with people (Maslach, 1978;

Maslach et al., 2001). This study sought to reproduce and expand the results of the

Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) pilot project and Crowell (1995) research.

> ***Hypothesis One*** *predicts significant group differences of ministers who have been forcibly terminated compared to ministers who have not been forcibly terminated; the terminated group will be less satisfied with family well-being and have more general health problems.*
> ***Hypothesis Two*** *predicts that lowered marriage and family satisfaction and more general health problems are associated with higher stress levels, and that the experience of forced termination adds significantly to the understanding of stress levels among clergy.*
> ***Hypothesis Three*** *predicts ministers who have experienced a forced termination will have lower self-efficacy and self-esteem scores and higher depression scores than those who have not.*
> ***Hypothesis Four*** *predicts ministers who have experienced a forced termination will have higher burnout scores than those who have not.*

RESULTS

Twenty-eight percent of the total sample (582) had been forced from a ministry

position at least once during their career. In an attempt to distinguish between being fired

and being forcibly terminated, a definition of forced termination was provided, and each

of the respondents (28%) was asked if they had been fired or forcibly terminated; 81.3%

had experienced a forced termination as opposed to 18.8% being fired. Seventy-six

percent of those who had experienced a forced termination had only one forcible

termination at the time of the survey, 19.6% had two experiences, a little over 4% of the

sample had three or more forced termination experiences during their career. Thirty-four percent of the participants had been a senior/solo pastor at the time of their forced termination, while 20% were associate pastors, 24% were youth pastors, 4% were children's pastors, 4% were worship/music pastors, and 2.5% were Christian education pastors.

Hypothesis One predicted significant group differences between ministers who have been terminated compared to those who have not in terms of marriage and family satisfaction, and general health problems. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to analyze this hypothesis. The results indicate no significant group difference in terms of marriage and family satisfaction ($p > .10$), but a significant group difference in terms of general health $F(1, 497) = 3.57$, $p < .05$. Those who had experienced a forced termination had significantly more health problems than did those who had never experienced a forced termination. It is not clear whether the general health of ministers played a role in the forced termination or was the result of a forced termination experience. It is an interesting finding and is similar to earlier findings by Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011).

Hypothesis Two predicted that lowered marriage and family satisfaction and more general health problems are associated with higher stress levels for those who had been terminated. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test this hypothesis, with stress as the dependent variable and family well-being, general health, and forced termination as independent variables. Table five displays the standardized regression coefficients, the standard errors, the R^2, and the adjusted R^2. R for the regression was significantly different from zero, $F(3, 443) = 92.21$, $p < .001$, with R^2 at .38. The adjusted

R^2 value of .38 indicates more than a third of the variability of stress is predicted by

family well-being and general health. Forced termination was not a significant

independent variable in this analysis. While this analysis was only partially supported it is

important to note that the independent variables were all highly correlated. The extreme

collinearity of these variables makes it difficult to estimate their individual regression

coefficients. Altogether 38% if the variability of stress was predicted by knowing scores

on family well-being, general health, and whether a person had been forcibly terminated

from a ministry position.

Table 5

Study Two: *Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables
Predicting Stress Among Respondent Who Were Forcibly Terminated*

Predictor	B	SE B	β
General Health	.35	.03	.53*
Family Well-Being	.20	.04	5.7*
Forced Out	-.31	.54	-.02
Constant	13.7	.81	
*R*2		.38	
F for change in *R*2		92.2*	

Note: *p < .001. n = 446*

Hypothesis Three predicted ministers who have experienced forced termination

will have lower self-efficacy and self-esteem scores and higher depression scores than

those who have not. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to

analyze this hypothesis. Those who had been forcibly terminated had significantly lower

self-efficacy scores $F(1, 470) = 3.72$, $p < .05$, self-esteem scores $F(1, 470) = 8.09$, $p < .01$,

and higher depression scores $F(1, 470) = 7.15$, $p < .0$, 1than did those who had never

experienced a forced termination. The analysis shows that minister's self-esteem, self-efficacy, and mental health (depression) is significantly affected by the experience of forced termination. Less than half of those who had been forcibly terminated ever sought some sort of professional help.

Hypothesis Four predicted ministers who have experienced a forced termination will have higher burnout scores than those who have not. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. Clergy who have been forcibly terminated had significantly higher levels of burnout $F(1, 481) = 5.17$, $p < .05$ than those who had never been forcibly terminated. Those who had been terminated were also asked how often they considered leaving the ministry after experiencing a forced termination. Forty-two percent had seriously considered leaving after being forcibly terminated form a ministry position. Respondents were also asked whether they had sought professional help after been forcibly terminated or taken a sabbatical. Among the entire sample of clergy, a startling 81% had never taken a sabbatical. At the same time if there were resources available, 86% of clergy reported that they would take advantage of a sabbatical time.

DISCUSSION

This study replicated and expanded research by Crowell (1995) and Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011). Crowell's (1995) sample showed 25% of clergy had been forcibly terminated while this study showed 28.3% of clergy have been forcibly terminated. Additionally, the Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) study showed 41% of Assemblies of God clergy had been forcibly terminated while this study showed 34% of Assemblies of God clergy have been forcibly terminated. In fact, a within denomination frequency analysis

showed 28% of Baptist clergy had been forcibly terminated, while 24% of Church of Christ clergy, 25% of Lutheran clergy, 29% of Methodist clergy, 31% of Non-Denominational clergy, and 24% of Presbyterian clergy had been forced from a ministry position. Many denominations have different "call" systems that may account for the variation of forced termination among different denominations. A chi-square analysis showed no statistical difference in the number of forced terminations by denomination. Also, this study showed similar results to the Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) study; clergy who had been forcibly terminated experienced more stress and had more health problems. Interestingly, this study showed no significant struggle with marital and familial well being.

Currently, the national unemployment rate is 9.8% (Statistics, 2010). Studies on job loss in general (Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984) have shown the experience to be depressing and stressful. While it is no surprise that people find losing a job stressful and perhaps depressing, generally, people have many support systems to help them deal with such an experience. Research has shown people to financially cope effectively with job loss by taking advantage of government unemployment subsidies, family members, savings, etc. People have emotionally coped with job loss through the social support of community friends and family members. But for clergy this is often different. The forced termination rate of clergy nationally hovers at 28%, and clergy are considered self-employed by the Internal Revenue Service and therefore, are not eligible for unemployment benefits (Gallagher, 2009 ; Hammar, 1998). In addition, clergy rank in the bottom ten percent of most educated professionals in terms of salary. Savings and retirement benefits are often not an option for short-term financial support during a job

transition. Because clergy often rely on the local church body in which they serve for social support, losing their job means they also lose ties with the closest social network.

Forced termination is extremely detrimental to the overall well-being of clergy. The experience of forced termination significantly and negatively altered scores on depression, self-esteem, self-efficacy, burnout, and general health. That is to say, clergy who have been forcibly terminated at least once during their career are more depressed, have lower self-esteem, lower self-efficacy, more general health problems, and are more likely to burnout than those who have never been forced out of a ministry position.

Ministers who experienced forced termination were found in this study to have poorer health compared to those who had not been terminated. While it is impossible to prove causation with the cross-sectional design of this study and a controlled testing environment, the health levels of this population are cause for concern. Age was not related to health or whether a minister had been terminated. More research is needed to determine how detrimental forced termination is to the health of those who experience it.

Ministers who have experienced a forced termination have poor health, which operate alongside high stress levels. Stress itself was not significantly predicted by forced termination, but is a factor in creating problems for the ministry family. This is not a surprise, as researchers have shown that ministry is a stressful occupation (Blizzard, 1958). What this study shows is that effects related to forced termination (poor family well-being satisfaction and physical health) are indicative of higher stress. Among ministers who have been forcibly terminated, how high their stress levels were at the time of data collection was strongly influenced by their perception of their families' well-being and their report of their general health.

Ministers who had been forcibly terminated had lower self-esteem and self-efficacy than those who had never been forcibly terminated. This also was not surprising as previous literature on job loss in general shows the event to be psychologically detrimental (Leyman, 1996). What this finding does not reveal is which came first, forced termination or low self-esteem and low self-efficacy as a result of being forcibly terminated. It would be important for future research to determine baseline measures for these two variables and collect longitudinal data to show the effects of forced termination. This study did not reveal how much time had passed between being forcibly terminated and the survey. Not only did these ministers have lower scores on self-esteem and self-efficacy, but they also had high scores of depression.

Finally, ministers who had been forcibly terminated were more likely to experience burnout than those who have never been forcibly terminated. Perhaps the regular toll of being in ministry coupled with the distressing effects of forced termination lead one to be generally unhappy with their ministry altogether. In addition, almost half (42%) of ministers who had been forcibly terminated seriously considered leaving the ministry. A minister's calling and work is central to personal identity, so when a minister experiences a forced termination event or a rejection of their calling they have a difficult time coping with it emotionally and consider leaving the ministry. Perhaps their consideration of leaving the ministry is related to questioning their calling to ministry because of their rejection.

Limitations

The sampling procedure for this study limits its generalizability. However, it should be clear that two main issues prohibit more common sampling procedures. First,

clergy who have experienced forced termination may not be willing to come forward. The idea of being forced out of a ministry position is stigmatizing and hurtful. It was important to garner support from groups that have contact with ministers, such as the virtual groups on Facebook.

Studies of sensitive subject have used the social networks of participants to recruit other participants (Browne, 2005; Watters & Biernacki, 1989). Watters and Biernacki (1989) describe the need for focused and targeted sampling when working with hidden populations. They posit typical sampling procedures under-represent hidden populations and that relying "on published lists or official records as the basis for selecting probability samples has already introduced…biases that may seriously compromise the results of research directed at hidden populations." (p. 419)

Second, not only are ministers reluctant to participate, but the majority of denominations do not keep track of forced terminations, making sampling difficult (Chandler, 2001). Additionally, churches are unlikely to keep track and be forth coming about who and how a minister left their congregation. These issues force researchers to seek targeted convenience samples rather than random samples (Schutt, 2006). Using social media as the sampling method presents bias in the sample and provides no way to figure a response rate.

The sensitive nature of forced termination makes this group of potential participants a "hidden population" (Watters & Biernacki, 1989). Using social media biased the sample by excluding clergy who do not use social media as a way to interact with people. Further, because this entire project relied on the use of the internet, the sample was biased by excluding those who do not have access to the internet and email.

Directions for Future Research

This research demonstrated the lack of scholarly research on forced termination of clergy and the need for more research. The previous pilot project completed by Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) provided a glimpse of the prevalence of forced termination among one group of clergy and some of the effects of that experience. This study added to the body of research by including many more denominations and replicating the findings of the pilot project, but much more research is needed.

The results of this study give clear implications for future research. These results give obvious concern for the event of forced termination itself and or the events leading up to a forced termination. Information gathered in this project shows the negative effects of forced termination. Forced termination is a devastating event with both short-term and long-term effects. What is unknown is why a forced termination is so detrimental to the health and well-being of clergy. It is important that future research hear directly from those who have experienced it and document their stories about the events leading up to the day they were forced out and subsequent events.

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CHAPTER 4 – STUDY THREE

CLERGY WHO EXPERIENCE TRAUMA AS A RESULT OF FORCED

TERMINATION

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ABSTRACT

The forced termination of clergy is a demeaning and psychologically distressing experience. Clergy who experience a forced termination are subjected to mobbing (psychological harassment) and other activities meant to publicly or privately demean ministers in such a way that they resign their ministry position. The psychological harassment to which these ministers are subjected has a long-term impact on their mental health. In a convenience sample of 55 ministers who had been forcibly terminated, participants scored above the known cut-off score for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and scored high on a measure of burnout and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Forced termination has been anecdotally connected to PTSD and GAD; this project sought to empirically link PTSD and GAD to the forced termination of clergy. Issues surrounding forced termination significantly predicted the perceptions one would have, which in turn predicted the levels of anxiety, burnout, and PTSD. This study raises concern for the long-term mental health effects of ministers who have been forcibly terminated and provides implications for future clinical study on this group of clergy.

INTRODUCTION

Although forced termination has been a subject of interest to clergy for some time, social scientists largely have ignored this prevalent problem among Christian denominations. Social science researchers have examined the difficulties and stressful nature of ministry work dating back to Blizzard's (1958) study, but have failed to examine the phenomenon of forced termination, a psychologically distressing experience. The extant literature on forced termination of clergy is minimal at best (Barfoot et al., 2005; Crowell, 1995; Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011).

This study posits an empirical connection between the forced termination of clergy and what the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM − IV) (APA, 1994) describes as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and General Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This review of the literature first describes relevant studies on ministry demands, burnout, and forced termination; the concept of mobbing; and the association between mobbing, PTSD and GAD symptoms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kanter (1977), described the church as a "controlling organization" that requires work from members of the family other than the minister, who is the person paid for ministry work. The work of the ministry is a demanding profession constantly spilling over into the family domain. Ministry demands make it difficult to balance work and family. The chronic stress of working with demanding people takes its toll on ministers and may result in ministry burnout. Additionally, ministers who do not meet the demands of a church may face forced termination which has long-term implications for family well-being and physical health (Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011).

Ministry Demands

Intrusive demands of ministry work have detrimental affect on the attitude and well-being of ministers (Han & Lee, 2004; Lee, 1999; Lee & Balswick, 2006; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994a). Lee (1999) surveyed 312 ministers from five Protestant denominations and identified four classifications of intrusive demands: personal criticism, presumptive expectations, boundary ambiguity, and family criticism. Respondents reported experiencing more presumptive expectations from church members and the boundaries separating work and family were ambiguous. In addition, boundary ambiguity type demands occurred more often than presumptive expectations. Lee's (1999) ministry demands were significantly associated with measures of burnout. He concluded that the consequences of ministry work are different than other careers in the way work-related stress for ministers is not confined to the domain of the workplace, but is more globally impacting and affects other relational areas (i.e., other church members, family members, other church staff, and other clergy members).

Pastoral stress characteristically arises from emotional stress (Mills & Koval, 1971), unrealistic and intrusive expectations (Lee & Balswick, 2006; Morris & Blanton, 1994a), and financial concerns (Morris & Blanton, 1994b). Pastoral stress affects the quality of family life as revealed by Morris and Blanton's (1994b) study of 272 clergy husbands and wives. Their study indicated that intrusions of family boundaries were related negatively to marital satisfaction.

Morris and Blanton (1998) later conducted a study on predictors of family functioning among 132 clergy couples. Their study revealed intrusiveness, lack of social support, mobility, and time demands negatively impacted family functioning. Husbands

and wives reported increased difficulty with external locus of control and disengagement as intrusiveness into the family domain increased. Clergy (primarily male) and spouses (primarily female) found ministry demands affecting their ability to control events in their life and began separating themselves from relationships in the church and with each other. Husbands and wives reported greater conflict and a permissive family atmosphere as ministry demands increased. Lee's (1999) conclusion of the inclusive impact of stress (work-related stress is not confined to the workplace, but extends to other relational areas) was supported when Morris and Blanton (1998) concluded that contextual stressors negatively affect family functioning in the ministry household.

Burnout

Burnout is a common problem for those working in caring professions. It is defined as emotional exhaustion as a result of chronic stress from working with people (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout is characterized by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (an uncaring or dehumanized attitude), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Randall, 2004). As Lee (1999) demonstrated, ministers who experience a high level of ministry demands are likely to experience burnout. A range of physical and psychological problems associated with burnout and the ministry profession (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001).

Duke Divinity School conducted a survey among 2,500 religious leaders and revealed 10% described being depressed, while 40% were depressed at times or "worn out" some or most of the time. Depression and the feeling of exhaustion are symptomatic of burnout. Serious health problems also were exposed in the study; for example, 76% of clergy were either overweight or obese compared with 61% of the U.S. population

(McMillan, 2003; Wells, 2002). Further, a 2002 study conducted by Pulpit and Pew researchers at Duke University School of Divinity found that ministers were indeed at risk for emotional burnout due to multiple roles and pressure. Twelve percent of their sample left the ministry due to burnout or discouragement. According to the researchers, ministry is a high risk occupation (Hoge & Wenger, 2005). Not only do clergy struggle with the effects of high ministry demands, they also face a phenomenon that has long-term physical and mental health implications; forced termination.

FORCED TERMINATION

Forced termination should be considered a new area of study. The extant literature on forced termination comes from three empirical studies; Crowell's (1995) dissertation which focused primarily on the lack of church discipline as a precursor for a forced termination, but provided no definition of forced termination. Church discipline is the method churches use to regulate or control problem members or potential conflict. One extreme form of church discipline is that churches ex-communicate members. Barfoot et al.'s (2005) exploratory study on forced termination provided a working definition

> *Forced pastoral exit is a process by which a congregation, a personnel committee, or individual leader within a church terminates or forces the resignation of a minister from a position of ministry (LaRue, 1996). Furthermore a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry (Goodwin, 1997).*

The lack of definition in Crowell's (1995) dissertation is an unaddressed major limitation and Barfoot et al.'s (2005) working definition was a confluence of two other non-scholarly works. Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) defined forced termination as "the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that

includes psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual abuse." This project provides

some rationale for a definition of forced termination that includes essential components

of the process; as findings may show forced termination to be much more detrimental to

clergy's mental health than empirical research shows. In addition, it should be noted that

forced termination of clergy should be distinguished from leaving the ministry and is

different than job loss in a non-clergy work environment (Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011).

Causes of Forced Termination

Barfoot et al. (2005) identified personality conflicts and conflicting vision for the

church as factors that typically lead to forced termination. Differences between the pastor

and the congregation in music and worship style were reported in Barfoot's work.

Conflict over leadership styles and vision for the church (Willis, 2001) were identified as

other potential causes of forced termination. Crowell's (1995) study involved a sampling

of church leaders and found that 21% said the pastor was unfit or was not "called," and

20% said congregational politics or powerful individuals were responsible for the

pastor's forced termination.

Effects of Forced Termination

Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) showed forced termination to be detrimental to

clergy's sense of family well-being and physical health. Barfoot et al. (2005) revealed

clergy (71%) and their family (67%) had a diminished ability to trust people. Sixty-nine

percent faced long-term financial instability and had lower self-confidence (59%). LaRue

(1996) gives few indications of the effects forced termination has on clergy except to say

that two-thirds of children impacted by their parent's forced termination were forced to

change schools, and spouses of clergy were forced to change jobs. Further, 10%

experienced a major illness within 12 months of being forced out.

Studying Forced Termination

Extant literature shows that forced termination among clergy is a problem;

between 23% and 41% of pastors experience a forced termination at least once during

their ministry (Crowell, 1995; Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011). Larue (1997a) reported 91%

of clergy know a minister who has been forced out, 23% of clergy having a personal

experience with forced termination, and 34% reported their predecessor as being forced

out. Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) reported 41% of Assemblies of God clergy experience

forced termination. The demeaning and systematic process has a long-term effect on the

clergy who experience it.

Leymann's (1996) work on mobbing is closely related to work on forced

termination among clergy. Greenfield (2001) discussed the systematic way in which a

few individuals in the church were responsible for harassing ministers in such a way that

they were forced to leave.

Mobbing

Leymann (1996) and Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) described a process of

mobbing in the work place where a "victim is subjected to a systematic, stigmatizing

process and encroachment of his or her civil rights" (p. 165). Their work primarily

focused on a number of work environments in Sweden, Finland, and Norway. The

research on mobbing does not include the ministry as a work environment. However,

Leymann's entire body of work on mobbing is very similar to the concept and existing

information on the forced termination of clergy.

Operationalized, mobbing "involves hostile and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenseless position, being held there by means of continuing mobbing activities" (Leymann, 1996, p. 168). These activities happen on an almost daily basis and occur for months. Leymann (1996) posits that individuals who are victims of mobbing may experience psychological and physical stress. The result of mobbing is a type of forced termination from the job and may lead to total expulsion from the labor market, in this case leaving the ministry altogether.

Leymann (1996) revealed some of the following mobbing activities that people may experience: (a) the victim is silenced by those in charge and left with the inability to speak out for fear, (b) verbal threats, and other verbal activities which become part of keeping a person from doing their job effectively, (c) being isolated from other people in the organization, (d) ridicule, (e) gossiping or rumors, (f) being given meaningless tasks, and (g) being harassed in a threatening way. These types of activities are very similar to clergy forced termination activities (Greenfield, 2001). Leymann discusses some of the effects that mobbing may have on an individual, including development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and expulsion from the labor market. Leymann's (1996) work reveals that 10 – 20% of mobbing victims develop a serious illness or commit suicide as a result of being mobbed.

Zapf, Knorz, and Kulla (1996) in their study of 149 mobbing victims showed that "mobbing leads to severe health consequences" (p. 233). Their sample is not described in terms of the professional work environment. The participants were recruited through local media and self help groups designed for mobbing victims. More than half of their

sample received medical treatment as a result of mobbing activities, and more than half had three or more periods of sick leave during the previous 12 months.

This study posits that the process of forced termination involves what Leymann (1996) describes as mobbing inasmuch as it occurs over a period of time and results in the expulsion of the minister from the church. Further, because mobbing and forced termination are conceptually linked, the rationale exists that serious mental health problems may occur as a result of forced termination.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and General Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

PTSD is described by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fourth Edition* (APA, 1994) as:

> *the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure*
> *to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal*
> *experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or*
> *serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or*
> *witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the*
> *physical integrity of another person or learning about unexpected*
> *or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury*
> *experienced by a family member or other close associate. (p.*
> *424)*

GAD is described by the DSM-IV (1994) as "excessive anxiety and worry, occurring more days than not for a period of at least 6 months" (p. 472). A person will find it difficult to control the worry, the anxiety will be accompanied by at least three additional symptoms, and the individual will report subjective distress because of the constant worry.

The research on mobbing illustrates a connection between the occurrence of mobbing and PTSD and GAD. Anecdotally, both PTSD and GAD are commonly attributed as effects of forced termination among clergy. However, no empirical research

has connected these disorders to forced termination of clergy. This study argues that perhaps clergy do indeed experience acute PTSD (because symptoms may usually last fewer than 3 months) or at the very least experience GAD. It should be noted that forced termination does not fit the definition of a traumatic event (criterion A of PTSD) according to the DSM-IV (1994). Work on mobbing (Groeblinghoff & Becker, 1996; Leymann, 1996; Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Niedl, 1996; Resch & Schubinski, 1996; Zapf et al., 1996), bullying in the workplace (Einarsen & Hoel, May, 2001; Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Jiménez, Muñoz, Gamarra, & Herrer, 2007; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002; Vartia, 1996), and work on forced termination among clergy (Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011) would indicate PTSD or GAD would be a deleterious outcome to be expected for those experiencing the phenomenon of forced termination.

Purpose of the Study

The review of literature on the forced termination of clergy clearly shows it to be a problem that has received little attention. A pilot project by Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) on forced termination of clergy showed 41% of Assemblies of God ministers experienced forced termination. Although Barfoot et al. (2005) discussed several tangible effects of forced termination and Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) discussed physical health outcomes, very little is known about the mental health effects of forced termination. The purpose of this study is to examine the mental health effects of forced termination. With that in mind, the following hypotheses are presented:

> *Hypothesis one predicts that clergy's perception of termination is*
> *predicted by the issues surrounding the termination.*
>
> *Hypothesis two predicts mobbing and psychological harassment*
> *will be positively related to post traumatic stress disorder,*

anxiety, burnout, and historic loss among clergy who have been terminated.

Hypothesis three predicts mental health problems (PTSD, Anxiety, Burnout, and Historic Loss) would be significantly increased by termination issues, levels of negative acts and mobbing, and perceptions of termination.

METHODS

Procedure

This project made use of a convenience sample and used subjects from two previous studies by the authors who were willing to participate in future studies on forced termination. An email was sent to those individuals inviting them to participate in a study on forced termination. A link was provided in an email to an online study. Qualtrics was used as the survey software, specifically because it allows for skip logic and piping. These are two techniques that allow participants to skip questions that are not pertinent to them based on answers provided on previous questions. Further, because this particular sample is difficult to identify, snowball sampling was utilized by asking online survey participants to forward the survey to others they may know who have experienced forced termination. Demographic information for participants can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Study Three: Minister's Demographic Variables: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	%	n
Minister Gender		55
Male	67.3	
Female	32.7	
Minister Age		
15 to 24 years	1.8	
25 to 34 years	10.9	
35 to 44 years	29.1	
45 to 54 years	47.3	
55 to 64 years	7.3	
65 to 74 years	1.8	
75 to 84 years	1.8	
Minister's Marital Status		
Married	81.8	
All other Categories	18.2	
Ministry Position at Forced Termination		
Children's Pastor	1.8	
Youth Pastor	7.3	
Associate Pastor	16.4	
Senior/Solo Pastor	36.4	
Worship/Music Pastor	1.8	
Other	9.1	

MEASURES

The literature suggests that forced termination is a psychologically demeaning process. The measures used in this survey were designed to measure trauma, psychological abuse, burnout, and anxiety.

Perceptions of Terminated Ministers (PTM)

First, scores were computed for each participant that completed the *Perceptions of Terminated Ministers (*PTM) scale. *The PTM scale* was designed by the authors for use in determining the perceptions clergy have of forced termination and uses an 11-item Likert Scale. Participants were presented with a series of statements and asked to select an answer that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample statement is, "I often think about the day I was forced to resign or terminated from a ministry position." A total possible score was calculated by multiplying the number of questions by five. A mid-range score is 27.5. Scores above 27.5 would indicate an increasingly negative perception of forced termination on the original scale. Reliability yielded an alpha score of .84.

Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Revised (PTM-R)

Second, because forced termination could be considered a distressing event, five questions related to symptoms of PTSD were added to the PTM scale. Those questions were developed from the description of PTSD in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fourth Edition* (1994). A sample item reads, "Reminders of the event are stressful." The rationale for the included items derives from previous unpublished research by the author and non-empirical writings on the subject of forced termination (Faulkner, 1986; Onley, 1994; Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011). A total possible score was

calculated by multiplying the number of questions by five. A mid-range score is 40. A score above 40 would indicate an increasingly negative perception of forced termination and symptoms of PTSD. Frequencies in SPSS were used to determine the percentage of participants that scored above the mid-range; forty-eight percent of the sample scored above 40 on the revised measure. The frequency scores indicate that these ministers have a negative perception of their termination and self-select related symptoms of PTSD. The scale with the additional items yielded an alpha score of .90.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder was measured using the Impact of Event Scale: Revised (IES-R) (Weiss, 1996). The IES-R consists of 22 self-report items, measured on a 5-point scale 1(not at all) to 5 (extremely), that assess the degree of PTSD symptoms experienced in relation to a particular event. The IES-R assesses trauma-related intrusion, avoidance symptoms, and hyperarousal symptoms of PTSD. Weiss, Marmar, Metzler, and Ronfeldt (1995) reported high internal reliability for the subscales of intrusion ($\alpha =$ .85), avoidance ($\alpha = .85$) and hyperarousal ($\alpha = .77$). Reliability for the full scale score in this study was .96. The mean score for PTSD as measured by the IES-R was 49 (SD = 21.35), cut-off scores for the IES-R have been reported at 33 (Creamer, Bell, & Failla, 2003).

Mobbing

Mobbing was assessed using the *Negative Acts Questionnaire* (NAQ) (Gemzoe-Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). The NAQ includes 14 items, measured on a 5-point Likert scale (never to daily). A sample item reads, "Someone withheld necessary information affecting your performance." Participants were asked to respond to mobbing activities

that occurred during the six months leading up to their forced termination. A score above 35 would indicate mid to high levels of mobbing activities; 56% of the sample scored above the mid-range. Reliability for this study was .95.

In addition, participants were asked to respond to a single question on the frequency of psychological harassment. In the survey psychological harassment was defined as "consisting of continued hostile attitudes, directed in a systematic way by one or more individuals against another one, with the purpose of discrediting, to humiliate, to isolate and to cause the abandonment of the job." Frequency of psychological harassment was measured on a 6-point Likert type scale 0 (none) to 6 (yes, daily). Twenty-four percent of respondents experienced psychological harassment several times a month.

Historical Loss

Participants also were assessed using the *Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale* (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). The concepts of "intergenerational trauma" and "historical trauma" began forming toward the end of the 20th century as manifestations affecting the offspring of Holocaust survivors (e.g., Alexandrowicz, 1973; Rakoff et al., 1965). Lee and Balswick (2006) showed children of clergy are affected by the experiences of their clergy parents. Although they may follow in their parent's footsteps their subsequent ministry may be negatively affected by intergenerational trauma. Other children of clergy often leave the church altogether. Many of the respondents in this study were children of clergy. Contemporary symptoms of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and grief have been attributed to clergy who experience a forced termination. The scale was modified to be relevant for clergy; the original scale was intended to measure associated symptoms of loss by American Indians.

For this project, "white people" was changed to "church members." The scale includes 12 items associating potential symptoms with loss. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert scale (never to always). A sample item reads, "Please indicate how often you felt any of these symptoms as it relates to your forced termination experience: anxiety or nervousness." Reliability for this study was .92. Seventy three percent scored above the mid range.

Ministry Burnout

Ministry Burnout was assessed using a revision of the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) developed by Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin and Lewis (2004) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS) developed by Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, and Castle (2005). The SEEM and the SIMS are each an 11-item Likert scale for a total of 22 items, each measured 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item from the SEEM is, "fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experiences." A sample item from the SIMS is, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my ministry here". Reliability for this study was .94.

Termination Issues

Participants also were asked to self select from 24 items described as issues relating to forced termination. Crowell (1995) used these items as part of a dissertation. A sample item reads, "The following were factors in my forced termination: lingering loyalty to previous pastor." Crowell did not report Cronbach's alpha of these items as a scale, however, for this study reliability was measured at .79. Additionally, a Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine items that provided a cohesive association with one another. Those items were used to determine a construct labeled "termination

issues" and included for example, unresolved church trauma, unrealistic expectations for pastoral performance, and lingering loyalty to previous pastor.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)

Finally, participants were assessed on symptoms of anxiety using the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) (Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988). There are 21 symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. Participants are asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale (not at all to severe). Sample symptoms include "feeling hot" and "unable to relax." Participants reported severe symptoms as "numbness or tingling" (17%), "unable to relax" (36%), "fear of worst happening" (41%), "heart pounding or racing" (17%), "nervous" (24%), and "fear of losing control" (15%). The mean score for generalized anxiety disorder as measured by the BAI was 24 (SD = 18.7), cut-off scores for the BAI have been reported at greater than 26 (Cochrane-Brink, Lofchy, & Sakinofsky, 2000). Reliability for this study was .94.

<div align="center">RESULTS</div>

Hypothesis one predicted that clergy's perception of termination would be predicted by the issues surrounding their termination. A linear regression was used to analyze this hypothesis. Perceptions of termination (PTM-R) were significantly predicted by termination issues; $R^2 = .23 \ p < .01$. The construct of termination issues accounted for 23% of the variance as it related to minister's perception of their forced termination. The direction of the relationship was positive B = 6.81 such that as termination issues increased, so did the negative perception of the termination.

Hypothesis two predicted the mobbing and psychological harassment would be significantly and positively associated with mental health issues, Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Burnout, and Historical Loss. A Pearson

correlation was used to analyze this hypothesis. Mobbing was significantly and positively

related to Generalized Anxiety Disorder $r = .35$, $p < .05$ and psychological harassment

was positively and significantly related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder $r = .51$, $p < .01$

(see Table 7). Criterion A in the DSM-IV (1994) shows that an individual that exhibits

excessive anxiety or worry for more than six months about a number of events or

activities may be diagnosed with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). These results

indicate that GAD is significantly and positively correlated with the number of mobbing

events clergy experienced which were associated with their forced termination. In

addition, the frequency of mobbing (psychological harassment) was associated with Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a more severe diagnosis than GAD in part

because Criterion A requires a person to have experienced, witnessed, or been confronted

with a traumatic event and the person's response to that trauma involved intense fear,

helplessness, or horror. Clergy scored above known clinical cut-off scores for PTSD as it

relates to forced termination. However, forced termination cannot be defined as a

traumatic event according to the DSM-IV (1994). Mobbing and psychological

harassment were significantly correlated $p < .05$; that clergy experience both a number of

events and with high frequency may contribute to the explanation of high scores on

PTSD.

Table 7

Study Three: Correlations Table

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Anxiety (BAS)	-					
Burnout (MBS)	.30	-				
HLS	.31	.58**	-			
PTSD	.31	.38*	.59**	-		
Psychological Harassment	-.04	.01	.33	.51**	-	
Mobbing	.35*	.01	.25	.18	.41*	-

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$

The empirical link between forced termination and mental health issues like PTSD and GAD was a key factor in this study. The results already have shown respondents score high on measures of PTSD and GAD. Clergy also scored high on measures of mobbing and psychological harassment.

Hypothesis three predicted mental health problems (PTSD, Anxiety, Burnout, and Historic Loss) would be predicted by perceptions of termination, mobbing, and psychological harassment. A series of multiple regression analyses were conducted on each of the dependent variables. Scores on historic loss were significantly predicted by all three independent variables (PTM-R, Mobbing, and Psychological Harassment) in the model $p < .001$, $R^2 = .54$. Scores on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder were significantly predicted by all three independent variables (PTM-R, Mobbing, and Psychological Harassment) in the model $p < .001$, $R^2 = .46$. Scores on Generalized Anxiety Disorder were significantly predicted by all three independent variables (PTM-R, Mobbing, and Psychological Harassment) in the model $p < .01$, $R^2 = .34$ (see Table 8). The multiple

regression analysis on Ministry Burnout was not significant. However, because the other mental health issues were predicted at such a high level, a hierarchical regression analysis was performed using Ministry Burnout as the dependent variable and each of the independent variables were entered hierarchically into the model. Perceptions of termination (PTM-R) was entered as the first independent variable to predict ministry burnout and it was the only significant predictor of burnout, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .15$. Entering the other independent variables into the model significantly deterred the model and subsequently rejected as predictors of burnout.

Table 8

Study Three: Multiple Regression Analysis on Each of the Dependent Variables

Dependent	B	SE B	β	R^2
PTSD				.46***
PTM-R	-.83	.25	-.49**	
Mobbing	-.13	.19	-.10	
Psychological Harassment	5.8	2.3	.38	
HLS				.54***
PTM-R	-.51	.10	-.69***	
Mobbing	.02	.08	.03	
Psychological Harassment	.54	.92	.08	
GAD				.34**
PTM-R	-.66	.24	-.46**	
Mobbing	.41	.19	.37*	
Psychological Harassment	-4.21	2.2	-.33	
Ministry Burnout				.18*
PTM-R	-.63	.26	-.46*	
Mobbing	-.03	.20	-.03	
Psychological Harassment	-1.31	2.4	-.11	

** p < .01 * p < .05

DISCUSSION

This study's purpose was to examine the mental health effects of forced termination. Although the number of respondents was small, the sample was very focused on clergy who have experienced a forced termination. The measures used in this study were focused on mental health. Overall, this study shows a clear connection between the mental health of clergy and forced termination. Mobbing and psychological harassment of clergy have serious implications concerning PTSD and GAD. This study made a significant addition to the literature on forced termination of clergy, primarily in its empirical link between forced termination and scores on measures of PTSD and GAD.

The issues surrounding forced termination were a significant predictor of the perceptions ministers had of the event. Issues of termination were focused on unresolved conflict and lingering loyalty to the previous pastor. These issues, among others, accounted for 23% of the variance on perceptions of terminated ministers (PTM-R). Obviously, other unaccounted for variables have an impact on the perceptions of termination, but conflict and loyalty to the previous pastor explained near one quarter of the variation.

Clergy who participated in this study had seriously high levels of anxiety as it related to their forced termination -- in many of the cases more than a year had passed between forced termination and participating in the study. This finding implies that forced termination has long-term negative mental health effects. Thirty-six percent of the sample scored above the mean score and known cut-off score for symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. In addition, 46% of the sample scored above the mean score and well above the clinical cut-off score for symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. It

is important to note that this study was not performed by a clinician nor in a clinical setting; rather all of the items related to PTSD and Anxiety were reported by the participant. It is also important to note that measured by the instruments in this survey alone, the participants do not meet the DSM-IV diagnostic criterion for PTSD, but may for GAD. At the same time, these are important findings. The type and frequency with which participants experienced mobbing and psychological harassment was significantly associated with measures on PTSD and GAD.

The perception ministers had of their forced termination was the most significant predictor of mental health issues. Each regression analysis performed included mobbing and psychological harassment as independent variables, but the larger percent of variance was explained by scores on the PTM-R for each mental health variable (i.e., PTSD, GAD, HLS, and Burnout). Not only did clergy have a very negative perception of their forced termination, but perception predicted negative mental health. The empirical connection to PTSD and GAD provides a rationale for a more inclusive definition of forced termination: Forced termination is the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that results from traumatic and demeaning psychological and emotional abuse. This definition is more parsimonious than the working definition of Barfoot et al. (2005) by including the concept of mobbing. It already has been noted that forced termination is different than job loss in general and perhaps because of the issues surrounding forced termination, the psychological harassment and negative acts that clergy experience, and their perceptions of those events, make forced termination not just a job loss, but a traumatic or at least very distressing event, that has long lasting effects.

Limitations

One limitation of the study has been noted--data were not collected in a clinical

setting for the variables of PTSD and GAD. This study allowed for a partial assessment

of symptoms related to PTSD and GAD that related literature shows would be relevant to

forced termination among clergy. Although the assessments were not clinically assessed,

the study showed that clergy experience symptoms of PTSD and GAD as it relates to

their forced termination experience. In addition, the length of time between the event and

the survey was lengthy; some of the participants were remembering an event that

happened, in some cases 5 years before the time of the survey.

Sample size was another limitation to this study. The study made use of a small

purposive convenience sample of clergy who had been forcibly terminated from a

ministry position. The small sample size does not allow for generalization among larger

populations of clergy. However, the results of this small sample size are consistent with

other studies of clergy who have experienced forced termination (Barfoot et al., 2005;

Crowell, 1995; Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011). This study also was unable to make use of

data from a population of former ministers who may have quit before termination or left

the ministry altogether because of a forced termination experience.

Implications

Previous studies show that 25 - 41% of Christian ministers experience forced

termination at least once during their career (Barfoot et al., 2005; Crowell, 1995; Tanner

& Zvonkovic, 2011). Forced termination of clergy is a problem that may be more serious

than some are willing to admit. Jackson Carroll (October, 2000) stated that numbers of

new people entering the ministry are relatively flat and indicated that those numbers may

fall in coming years. As previously stated, little is known about forced termination among clergy; few empirical research projects exist on the subject, and many Christian churches and organizations find the subject taboo. Perhaps the prevalence rates of forced termination are much higher, but Christian organizations are unwilling to admit there is a problem and work with researchers to understand it. Perhaps the number of new ministers entering seminary is declining because they are unwilling to risk the health of themselves and their family to fulfill God's call on their life.

The effects of forced termination were at least very distressing, for the participants. That is, the results indicated clergy experienced symptoms of trauma and anxiety. It would be important for future researchers to study this issue in a clinical setting to more accurately determine the mental health effects of forced termination. Job loss and forced termination do not meet the DSM-IV diagnostic criterion for being traumatic and are generally not thought of as traumatic events. However, participants in this study scored quite high on reliable measures of both PTSD and GAD. Future research should work to properly identify how distressing forced termination is to those who experience it. In addition, it is vital that denominations take a close look at the issue of forced termination and its far reaching implications.

The church that forcibly terminates a member of the clergy is likely affected. Church members who are upset over the firing of the pastor may choose to leave and go somewhere else, others may choose to stay, but punish those responsible by not paying their tithes. Forced termination also has implication for the church that brings on a clergy person who has been forcibly terminated, especially if that individual has not sought professional help in dealing with the negative effects of forced termination.

Forced termination is an issue that must be addressed by ministers, churches, seminaries and denominational organizations. This study shows that forced termination is an issue and a cruel one that has very distressing effects on those who experience it. It is important that Christian organizations recognize the problem and implement steps to increase awareness and solutions. Local churches should implement training for all those in leadership. Training should include how to recognize and appropriately deal with psychological abuse. It is important that seminaries include a course in degree plans for ministers that offer training in coping with psychological abuse. Perhaps the most important implication for this research is that governing bodies that oversee many Christian ministers in the United States admit this is an issue and take appropriate steps to protect those that are called to serve the Church.

Directions for Future Research

It is recommended that items be added to the Perceptions of Terminated Minister's Scale (PTM) that would measure symptoms of trauma as a result of forced termination. These items would contribute to understanding how devastating the process of termination is. The following items are suggested: (a) "I have painful memories of my termination experience," (b) "Reminders of the event are physically distressing," (c) I have distressing dreams about my forced termination," (d) "Negative thought about the event often reoccur," and (e) Reminders of the event are stressful." Future research focused on clergy who have experienced forced termination should employ the use of the Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale with the addition of the new construct of trauma. In addition, it is likely that users of this measure will want to draw on the

implications of the added PTSD items rather than provide a clinical diagnosis. For clinical diagnoses, it would be recommended that participants be referred to a clinician.

Further, future researchers interested in forced termination of clergy should make strong attempts to locate those who have left the ministry because of a forced termination. It is in that population that perhaps the most severely distressed ministers exist. The population of severely distressed ministers could allow researchers to learn the most about forced termination and its long-term effects. It is also recommended that a more complete assessment of PTSD and GAD be performed on ministers who experience forced termination, in a clinical setting.

With as little information known about ministers who experience forced termination, even less is known about the effects on the family members of clergy who experience forced termination and the immediate and long-term effects in churches who force a minister out. Future research should attempt to sample from other members of the clergy family as well members from churches who have forced out a minister.

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CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the phenomenon of forced termination of clergy. Three studies comprised this project. These three studies, collectively, advanced the scholarly field of understanding this type of job loss in the following ways: (1) researchers and those involved in church ministry now have empirical evidence that forced termination is a problem among many denominations in the United States, primarily autonomous churches; (2) forced termination of clergy has a strong connection to health problems and poor satisfaction with marriage and family; (3) the forced termination of clergy has been empirically connected with the concept of mobbing; (4) forced termination also now has an empirical connection to mental health problems. This chapter sets out the conclusions drawn from this project and establishes an agenda for future research and outreach.

The first study, a pilot, built on the work of Barfoot et al. (2005) and Crowell (1995). Methodologically it is a more rigorous project than what had existed in the literature. The sampling was more systematic and the study included the construction of a survey including the Perception of Termination scale. The second study built on the first by testing some of the same hypotheses of the first but with a more diverse and expanded sample of clergy in America, allowing for a more generalizable and richer description of clergy who have been forcibly terminated. Further, this study analyzed the physical and mental health effects of forced termination. The third study built on the previous two by focusing on a small sample of clergy who had experienced a forced termination in order to empirically connect symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder with this type of job loss. This study examined how traumatic clergy who were forcibly terminated viewed the experience. These three studies together added

to the field of clergy health, and more importantly, the scientific study of forced

termination among clergy in America.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The forced termination of American clergy is an extremely distressing event. The

findings from all three studies provided a rationale for defining forced termination

differently: Forced termination is the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid

and non-paid clergy-persons that results from traumatic and demeaning psychological

and emotional abuse. This definition connects the concept of mobbing to forced

termination and implies problems with adjustment after experiencing such an event. The

forced termination of clergy had a long-term and significant impact on major areas of the

individual's physical health, family well-being, and mental health.

Prevalence of Forced Termination

Forced termination was revealed to be very prevalent; study 1 showed 41% of

Assemblies of God ministers experienced a forced termination; study 2 showed 28%

across thirty nine denominations experienced forced termination. These are similar rates

as those from Crowell's (1995) dissertation, where 25% of ministers among forty-eight

denominations had experienced a forced termination.

In addition, forced termination seemed to be more of a problem in local

autonomous churches than those churches closely guarded by denominational leaders.

Study two showed the frequency of forced termination within some of the larger

denominations. The Assemblies of God topped the list with 34% of responding clergy

having been forcibly terminated. The Assemblies of God has a hierarchical structure but

each local church is autonomous in how it exists in the local community. One example is

that each church has the ability to "call" (hire) and fire a minister without any

involvement from denominational leaders. The other denominations in study two that had

high levels of forced termination have similar structures; 28% of Baptist clergy and 31%

of Non-Denominational clergy had been forcibly terminated. Churches that have more

involvement from denominational leaders generally had slightly lower levels of forced

termination among clergy, 25% of Lutheran clergy and 24% of Presbyterian clergy had

been forced from a ministry position. There was no significant difference in termination

rate by denomination. However these rates clearly show forced termination as a problem

in many denominations. It is important to note that the dynamics are different in

autonomous churches than those that have more denominational control. Those dynamics

may have a significant impact on the rates of forced termination.

Forced Termination and Its Connection to Physical Health and Family Well-Being

      This study documented that forced termination is a significant indicator of poor

clergy health and dissatisfaction with family well-being. Stress was predicted by the

health of ministers who had been forcibly terminated. In study one and again in study

two, ministers who had experienced a forced termination not only had more health

problems, but had higher stress levels than those who had not been forcibly terminated.

This indicates that the distressing nature of forced termination and the issues surrounding

it may be at least partially responsible for high chronic stress and health problems

associated with it. Ministers may gain or lose weight; they may be irritable, showing

outwards signs of stress. They may also have other signs of chronic stress, i.e., insomnia,

high blood pressure, and colitis. The design of this study prohibited making causal

inferences about the levels of stress and health problems of ministers who had been

forcibly terminated. It would be important for future researchers to examine the levels of stress and health problems of ministers longitudinally.

Ministers who experience a forced termination have serious health issues associated with the event. Near a quarter of the respondents reported having high blood pressure, depressive moods, anxious moods and insomnia. These are serious health issues for any individual however, for someone who has been through a process of forced termination; these types of health issues along with mental health issues have serious implications for the overall health of clergy.

In study one and study two, ministers who had been forcibly terminated were more dissatisfied with their family well-being than those who had never been forcibly terminated. Both Barfoot et al. (2005) and Greenfield (2001) discussed the collateral effects of a forced termination. The overall notion was that the relationships between clergy and spouse and clergy and children would be strained as a result of a forced termination. Because family well-being was related to health problems and stress levels in study one and two, it is likely that these three variables are inter-related. More dissatisfaction with family well-being associated with a forced termination can create stress which can lead to more health problems.

Forced Termination and Its Connection to Mobbing

Mobbing is a new construct and variable to the study of ministry work. Clergy often have little control over the work they do; congregations dictate what the minister does, how long they will work for a church, etc. A congregation is typically controlled by a small group of people, the board, a committee, perhaps charter members, the wealthy, or politically connected. In Leymann's (1996) research, when a small group of people or

faction was unhappy with a fellow worker, they would demean their work in public and psychologically harass them until the worker felt they could no longer work in that particular area or company. The effects of the psychological harassment were so distressful many workers were permanently unemployable and a small percentage committed suicide as a result.

Similarly, when small groups of church members are unhappy with the ministers, they demean their work in private, gossip about their work to other church members, and psychologically harass them (Greenfield, 2001). This type of mobbing activity leads to forced termination and has a direct effect on symptoms of PTSD. Study three showed the more psychological harassment a minister received as part of their forced termination the more likely they were to self select symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Forced Termination and Its Connection to Mental Health

Although the other studies addressed mental health, study three added precision and focused on connecting symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) to forced termination. The mental health of ministers who have been forcibly terminated is cause for concern. Study three showed that ministers who have experienced a forced termination had negative perceptions of the event that was highly correlated with self reported symptoms of GAD, PTSD, and burnout. While study three was not conducted by a clinician or in a clinical setting, the high levels of anxiety, PTSD symptoms, and burnout among this group of ministers is alarming and has implications for future research. In the other studies, the mental health of ministers who have been forcibly terminated were associated with levels of stress, depression, and burnout and low levels of physical health, self esteem, self-efficacy, and

family well-being. In study three these variables are inter-related, creating havoc in the life of a forcibly terminated minister years after the event had taken place.

Clearly when a forced termination occurs, it can be perceived in a variety of ways. The Perceptions of Terminated Ministers – Revised (PTM-R) scale showed ministers overwhelmingly perceived the event as negative, hurtful, distressing, and responded negatively to the event. Even though forced termination is so detrimental to the mental and physical health of clergy, a surprising finding was that many clergy do not get professional help after having such a devastating experience. Without professional care, clergy are negatively affected perhaps for longer periods of time than would otherwise be the case, perhaps in their paid work and their family lives. For many of the respondents to these surveys, years had passed since they had been forcibly terminated, yet scores on mental health measures were significantly negative, marital and family satisfaction scores were low, and they had more physical health problems. The implication is that they carry emotional baggage associated with a forced termination that affects their next church assignment, their overall ministry to people, and their health, and their family well-being.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND OUTREACH

Limitations

Although this project revealed much about forced termination of clergy and its effects, there is still much researchers do not know. The design of the three studies made it impossible to hear from the church members responsible for the forcible terminations, spouses, and children of clergy. This is a serious limitation as their perspective is likely to be completely different than that of the minister's.

Certainly the limitations of this project provide some direction for future research. The cross-sectional design of the three studies does not allow for causal inferences to be drawn, however the correlation and inter-relatedness of the variables imply that causation could be determined if a longitudinal study were performed with base-line levels on variables of interest, i.e., burnout, depression, self-efficacy, stress, etc. Another advantage to a longitudinal design is that researchers could better determine the impact of forced termination on subsequent employment. One of the main issues with a longitudinal design is finding participants that would be willing to stay in the study. Further, the sampling procedures limit the generalizability of this project. Future researchers should make attempts at random sampling procedures. The socially stigmatizing nature of forced termination makes this group hard to find, and even when they are found, some are unwilling to participate in the study. In addition, future researchers should attempt to study the mental health of ministers who experience a forced termination in a clinical setting. Study three clearly showed ministers who have been forcibly terminated self-select symptoms of PTSD and anxiety well above the known clinical cut-off scores.

Implications

The findings of these three studies give clear implications for future research. Ministers who have been forcibly terminated experience high levels of stress, health problems, depression, PTSD, and anxiety. They also experience low levels of family well-being, low self-esteem, and low self-efficacy. It is important for future researchers to determine base-line levels for these variables and, perhaps through a longitudinal design, look at how those levels change according to ministry demands, experiences with psychological harassment, and forced termination. Researchers should look specifically

at psychological harassment and forced termination as causal determinants for

depression, PTSD, anxiety, burnout, and other mental health issues. It is likely that the

process of forced termination and not the event itself is what is so traumatic for clergy.

More research is needed to determine what that process looks like and involves. That

process of psychological harassment, over time, coupled with the event of losing a job,

implies a greater negative effect for clergy than someone who is laid off or fired.

In addition, it would be important for future researchers to incorporate coping and

coping styles into survey measures. The PTM-R showed variation in how ministers

viewed their forced termination experience. This project was unable to show the source

of that variation. It is possible that those who had a less negative perception of their

termination received help from a counselor, psychologist, or other professional. It is also

possible that ministers who had less negative perceptions of their termination also have

variation in their coping styles. It is possible that clergy have other resources that proved

successful in coping with a forced termination. Future researchers could focus on

potential coping resources as an effective means of dealing with a forced termination.

Future researchers should also look into forced termination of clergy from the

perspective of church leaders who are responsible. This project has clearly shown that

clergy find the event disturbing and the long-term negative effects that are a result of

forced termination. This project was limited by only having one point of view. Church

leaders may have an entirely different perspective of the events surrounding a forced

termination. This additional view could be vital to helping clergy who experience being

forcibly terminated.

Finally, it is important that programs be developed to help ministry families who experience forced termination and those who are responsible for this demeaning behavior. Programs could be set up to help ministry families financially, psychologically, spiritually, and with employment. Barfoot et al. (2005) showed the devastating financial effects that forced termination can have on a family. This project showed that a majority of ministers are not offered severance packages. Severance packages are usually offered to individuals when leaving a church and may include salary and benefits for a pre-determined amount of time, typically three months. Not only were ministers not offered severance packages when leaving a church, the mean yearly income for ministers was $41,000 to $50,000. Morris and Blanton (1994b) demonstrated that compensation is a chronic stressor for clergy families as they rank in the bottom 7.5% in terms of salary among 432 other occupations. Programs that could help ministry families financially for a period of three to six months would be beneficial. In addition, it is the position of this project that professional counseling would help not only the clergy who are forcibly terminated, but the family of clergy as well. Programs that could provide free or reduced cost counseling could help clergy families recover from the distressing events of a forced termination.

It is also important to note that these clergy families may need some spiritual guidance as well. It is not easy to answer the question of 'why' in regards to spiritual matters. A program that helps clergy and their family rationally and spiritually frame their forced termination experience would provide hope for a future in ministry. Because forced termination, for whatever reason, is a stigmatizing event, programs that help clergy find employment in another ministry position would be beneficial. These programs

could help ease the hardship on clergy families and expedite difficult transitions to new ministry positions.

Education for churches and church leaders is also essential. Forced termination has been shown to be a seriously disturbing event with long-term negative effects on ministers who experience it. Churches and church leaders should be educated on the negative effects of forced termination. Also, this project posits that church leaders may be unwilling or uneducated as to the process of firing an unsatisfactory employee. Perhaps church leaders in an effort to shield their church from hurt, 'hint' for the pastor to leave not realizing the psychological damage these 'hints' cause. Perhaps it is easier for these church leaders to trump up charges so they themselves do not appear as poor leaders. There should be a proper process in place for church leaders to follow when a minister is unsatisfactorily filling a ministry position. That process should be restorative rather than punitive. It should help educate the ministry to the traditions and desire of a particular church, allowing the minister to conform while at the same time pastoring the people. Only when church leaders have followed a particular procedure should they then fire the minister. The firing should be objective, outlining specific grievances and action taken at each step which has brought all parties to the point of termination. There are also implications for this type of education on other similar types of organizations where a small group of people employee one individual.

Overall this project added a significant amount of knowledge to the study of the forced termination of clergy. Forced termination is a problem among many denominations in the United States and has devastating effects on the physical and mental health of clergy. The problem has yet to be effectively addressed by denominations.

Perhaps this study can help denominations and churches desiring to address the problem have a better understanding of what the needs of clergy are.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

MINISTRY WORK

Unique Characteristics

The church can be viewed as a controlling organization that makes demands in all aspects of the minister's life and in many aspects of the lives of the ministry family (Lee, 1999; Lee & Balswick, 2006). As with all occupations that may exert strong control over workers, job stress results in coping challenges primarily because the job environment usually cannot be modified by the individual worker (Iacovides et al., 2003). The clergy work environment is controlled by people who call a particular church "home" (Monahan, 1999) as opposed to other vocational arenas that are controlled by stock holders, owners, etc. The unique workplace configuration of the church allows for unmediated stressors to infiltrate the lives of the clergy family at an individual level and a systemic level. That is to say that each individual of the clergy family is affected, which creates a dynamic that affects the whole family system. Researchers have identified and studied the effects of ministry demands on both clergy and their spouses (Lee, 1992, 1999, 2007; Lee & Balswick, 2006; Morris & Blanton, 1994b, 1998).

Ministry Demands and Stress

London and Wiseman (2003) journal the various obstacles and pressures of twenty-first century ministry, "[it] takes a terrible toll, as pastors wrestle with crammed calendars, hectic homes, splintered dreams, starved intimacy and shriveled purpose . . . some quit in utter hopelessness" (p. 14). Empirical research has demonstrated that intrusive demands of the ministry are detrimental to the attitude and well-being of clergy families (Han & Lee, 2004; Lee, 1999, 2007; Lee & Balswick, 2006; Lee & Iverson-

Gilbert, 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994b). Research has connected intrusive ministry demands to low marital and family well-being scores. Four classifications of intrusive ministry demands have been identified by Lee (1999) in a survey of 312 ministers from five Protestant denominations: *personal criticism*, *presumptive expectations*, *boundary ambiguity*, and *family criticism*. Ministers experienced higher levels of presumptive expectations and boundary ambiguity than criticisms in Lee's study. When both the frequency and the impact to the minister of each intrusive demand was taken into account by Lee (1999), the frequency and impact of personal criticism, presumptive expectations, and boundary ambiguity were significantly correlated with measures of burnout.

The nature of pastoral stress typically stems from emotional stress (Mills & Koval, 1971), unrealistic and intrusive expectations (Lee & Balswick, 2006; Morris & Blanton, 1994b), and financial concerns (Morris & Blanton, 1994a). Pastoral stress, stemming from intrusive job demands, has been demonstrated to affect the quality of marital and family life as indicated by Morris and Blanton's (1994a) study of 272 clergy husbands and wives and their follow up of 132 clergy couples (1998). In particular, boundary intrusiveness was associated with lower marital and parental satisfaction, time demands were connected to lower parental satisfaction, and a lack of social support was negatively associated with life satisfaction. It appears that disengagement with the marital partner occurred with increased stress, as did marital conflict, a more permissive family atmosphere, and lack of social support (Morris & Blanton, 1998). Husbands, the clergy members in this sample, who had higher time demands perceived less family cohesion and perceived that their family atmosphere became more authoritarian. Wives' stress from increased time demands was associated with their perception of enmeshment and

authoritarian atmosphere. Bolstering Lee's (1999) conclusion of the impact of stress from work on personal life, Morris and Blanton (1998) concluded that perceptions of social context stressors negatively affect the family functioning capabilities of both clergy husbands and wives. Chronic stress as a result of the constant barrage of demanding church-goers leads many ministers to burnout.

Burnout is defined as emotional exhaustion, a result of chronic stress from working with people (Maslach et al., 2001). There are three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (an uncaring or dehumanized attitude), and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Randall, 2004). Ministers experience a range of physical and psychological problems associated with burnout and stress (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001).

Duke Divinity School conducted a survey among 2,500 religious leaders and found 10% reported being depressed, while 40% reported being depressed at times or "worn out" some or most of the time. Serious health problems also were uncovered in the study; for example, 76% of clergy were either overweight or obese (McMillan, 2003; Wells, 2002). Ministry demands and other unique characteristics lead to stress and burnout and result in clergy forced terminations, changing vocations, or leaving the ministry altogether (Hoge & Wenger, 2005).

JOB LOSS

While job loss can be considered a distinct event and at the same time a process, a relevant review of research on the consequences of forced termination among ministers must focus primarily on the connection between job loss in general and psychological and physiological outcomes. The impact of job loss is generally known to be detrimental

to individuals by virtually any criteria a researcher chooses to examine (Kinicki &

Latack, 1990; Leana & Feldman, 1992). Researchers have linked involuntary job loss to

diminished self-esteem (Gurney, 1981; Winefield et al., 1987), decreased life satisfaction

(Fagin, 1981), depression (Tiggemann & Winefield, 1984), increased levels of stress

(Baum et al., 1986; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1989), and a

general reduction in well-being (Kinicki, 1985; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1990).

Depression has emerged as the prominent mental health outcome of prolonged job

loss (Dew et al., 1992; Dooley & Catalano, 1988; Kasl et al., 1998). Financial strain and

its consequences are critical mediators in the relationship between unemployment and

depression (Vinokur & Schul, 1997). Kessler, House, and Turner (1987) found that

financial strain accounted for 90% of the explained variance in mental health problems.

Since clergy work is known to be associated with health challenges including

stress and being overweight (Wells, 2002); the experience of forced termination among

this population may be especially challenging. Furthermore, the financial status of the

clergy family prior to forced termination plays a role in their financial strain after the

forced termination. It has been widely reported that the occupation of clergy is associated

with financial stress (Lavender, 1986; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Morris & Blanton, 1998).

In fact, Lavender (1986) reported that 95% of all clergy are grossly underpaid, indicating

that clergy are five times more likely than the rest of the labor force to hold two or more

jobs. Lee and Balswick (1989) found clergy ranked inadequate finances as the second

most pressing problem endemic to ministry. A forced termination that occurs after

chronic financial strain is likely to have even stronger effects on mental health and stress

than other circumstances surrounding the event.

FORCED TERMINATION OF CLERGY

Forced termination in the ministry has been studied anecdotally for many years, particularly in connection with pastor advocacy, support, and outreach programs. Primary information concerning forced termination comes from five sources: Barfoot, Winston, and Wickman's descriptive information from the pastors-in-residence program they administer (2005), a 1984 and 2000 study of the Southwestern Baptist Conference published by Willis (2001), a report by the LifeWay Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) on forced terminations, an unpublished empirical dissertation (Crowell, 1995), and a convenience sample of magazine subscribers (J. C. LaRue, Jr., 1996a, 1996b, 1996c; LaRue, 1997a, 1997b). Barfoot et al. (2005) defined forced termination as: "a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry" (p. 2). Greenfield (2001) described forced termination as a process where "clergy killers" blame the minister and/or family for the church's problems in highly public attacks. The authors define forced termination as the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that results from traumatic and demeaning psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual abuse. Some clergy decide to leave the ministry entirely and go into a different line of work after a forced termination experience.

Crowell's (1995) survey of 386 ministers from 48 denominations found 25.3% of clergy had been forcibly terminated at some point in their career. LaRue's body of research (all involving a nonrandom sample of 593 respondents who were subscribers to a popular Christian periodical) identified 23% of respondents had been forcibly

terminated (1996a, 1996b, 1996c; 1997a, 1997b). A 1984 study of the Southwestern

Baptist Conference reported 1,056 pastors were forcibly terminated; Willis (2001) noted

that in the year 2000 study the prevalence of forced termination among clergy and

"clergy" staff remained largely stable at 987. A later report published by LifeWay

Christian Resources (Turner, 2007) showed 1,302 ministers had been terminated in 2005.

Origin of Forced Termination

Although the antecedents that contribute to forced termination relate to many

typical issues faced by professionals in other industries, there remains a unique blend of

circumstances that affect those who serve in the clergy (Barfoot et al., 2005; Beebe,

2004; Hall, 2004; Palser, 2005). The origin of forced termination appears to be different

for ministers as compared to other professions (Winefield et al., 1992). For ministers,

forced termination often has nothing to do with organizational cut-backs, lay-offs, or

early retirement. Instead forced termination often occurs via a much more stressful

process, described by Barfoot et al. (2005) as a psychological attack. Greenfield (2001)

identified a demeaning and systematic process in which there is an initial accuser who

enlists key people in the congregation to become "sympathizers" at a secret meeting,

during which time information is gathered that blames the minister and/or family for the

church's problems. Leymann (1996) and Leymann and Gustafsson (1996) described a

process of *mobbing* in the work place where a "victim is subjected to a systematic,

stigmatizing process and encroachment of his or her civil rights" (p. 165).

Causes of Forced Termination

Not much is known about the causes of forced termination. Greenfield (2001)

suggested that while many commonalities exist among clergy who have experienced

forced termination, there is no one set pattern or sequence of events. Barfoot et al. (2005) indicated factors that typically lead to forced termination included personality conflicts and conflicting vision for the church. Other causes may be centered around budget issues, poor planning or organization on the part of leadership, and certain groups feeling ignored by the pastoral staff. Greenfield (2001) wrote that, "It doesn't really matter what the problems are…In most cases the minister is blamed…[and] is responsible for whatever is wrong in the church and its ministry" (p. 24).

Effects of Forced Termination

Financial effects of forced termination are well documented. In Barfoot's (2005) work, financial instability was a challenge for 69% of the pastors, understandable since 50% received no severance package. In the Willis (2001) study, only 35.2% of those who had been terminated received any severance. Given that Barfoot et al. (2005) reported that 75% of the pastors in residence could not survive financially longer than four months after being forced out, the financial repercussions of forced termination are often severe and more so than those in other vocations because clergy are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

LaRue's (1996a, 1996b, 1996c; 1997a, 1997b) body of work is suggestive of many life changes for clergy who have been forcibly terminated and for their families; for example: 64% of clergy spouses had to change jobs, and 66% of children were forced to change schools. Change in the clergy members' self-confidence has been found: 59% of pastors had a drop in their self-confidence as a leader. Family problems have been suggested: in LaRue's work, 54% of pastors reported a heavy emotional toll on their spouse, while Barfoot reported that clergy and their spouses experienced a diminished

Texas Tech University, *Marcus N. Tanner, May 2011*

ability to trust people; 71% and 67% respectively. Health was a concern, emotional

health problems were identified by 59% of Barfoot's sample and 10% of LaRue's

reported a major illness within one year of the forced termination.

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY

Betrayal - when a trusted member of the congregation uses trusted information against the pastor in a concerted effort to end his or her ministry.

Boundary Ambiguity – are the unclear social boundaries present in ministry work when it comes to managing ministry demands and can lead to indecision and/or inconsistencies when allowing or not allowing outside interference in the clergy familiy (Lee, 1999).

Burnout - is emotional exhaustion, and is a result of chronic stress from working with people (Maslach et al., 2001).

Clergy Family – any immediate family member of the clergy person, i.e., spouse and/or children.

Forced Termination – the result of a process of involuntary removal of paid and non-paid clergy-persons that includes from traumatic and demeaning psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual abuse.

Forced Termination – "A forced pastoral exit is a process by which a congregation, a personnel committee, or individual leader within a church terminates or forces the resignation of a minister from a position of ministry (LaRue, 1996). Furthermore a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry (Goodwin, 1997)." (Barfoot et al., 2005 p 3)

Ministry Demands – are the day to day activities and social interactions of a minster that encroach on his/her family life. Lee (1999) categoized **Intrusive Demands** as

personal ctiricism of the minister, presumtive expectations of the ministers

flexibility and avaiablbility, boundary ambiguity, and criticism of the minister's

family.

Personal Attacks - when a minister is personally confronted by a participating faction

member and is publicly or privately demeaned.

Presumptive Expectations – are the demands placed on a minister concerning flxibility

and availability of time. For example a minister may be called at the last minute

to perform a ministry task with no consideration of his/her flexibility or

availability to perform the task (Lee, 1999).

Psychological Pressure - subtle messages sent by congregational members that reflect

their desire for the minister to step down, i.e. quit paying tithe, stop attending

church, step down from leadership positions.

Social Context Stressors – are the stressors that exist in the clergy family as a result of

ministry work, i.e., having to perform the funeral of a disgruntled family who has

left the church.

Unresolved Conflict - when the minister is unable to resolve the conflict between

him/herself and the source of conflict, i.e., influential member, worship style,

church finances, etc.

APPENDIX C: PERCEPTIONS OF TERMINATED MINISTERS SCALE – REVISED

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ABSTRACT

The Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale – Revised (PTM-R), a 15-item measure of perceptions of termination appropriate to members of clergy, was developed for use among researchers studying the how clergy-persons perceive the effects of forced termination events. To examine the reliability and validity of the measure, three samples of clergy were assessed using the PTM and PTM-R. Data analysis among all three samples supports the reliability and validity of the scale and commends it for further use among clergy who have experienced forced termination.

PERCEPTIONS OF TERMINATED MINISTERS SCALE

The ministry work environment is different and unique from other working environments. There are assumptions that are made by clergy about the people in which they serve that seem to influence their perceptions about the ministry work environment. One of those assumptions is that because clergy are interacting mainly with those who profess to be Christians, that they would be treated with love and respect.

A phenomenon that exists among clergy but has received little attention by researchers is that of forced termination. Forced termination occurs in other professions but is dissimilar in the effects on clergy and family. One main difference of concern is the often, near complete loss of resources when a minister has been forcibly terminated. For ministers, forced termination often comes by a personal psychological attack from the members of the church (Barfoot et al., 2005). Barfoot et al. give a working definition of forced pastoral exits, "a pastor may abdicate his post due to the constant negativity found in personal attacks and criticism from a small faction within the congregation from whom the minister feels psychologically pressured to step down from his or her service of ministry" (p. 2). Guy Greenfield (2001) identified descriptions of how the process of forced termination typically occurs for ministers and labels the attackers as "clergy killers". Currently no measure exists to determine the perceptions of the minister when attacked and forced to leave a ministry position. The development of the PTM scale is intended to meet this need.

The Perceptions of Terminated Ministers Scale (PTM) was developed for to aid researchers concerned with how clergy-persons perceive the effects of forced termination events. The original scale was an 11-item self-report measure concerned with an effective

response to *feelings of termination experience* (i.e. embarrassment, anger, and faith),

responses of termination (i.e. difficulty facing responsible party, forgiving responsible

party, and speaking with responsible party), *trauma* (i.e. reminders of the event are

stressful) and *hurt* (i.e. my family was deeply hurt), scored on a 5-point Likert type scale,

ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Scores can range from 11 to 55, with

higher scores indicating a more negative perception of termination.

The PTM was revised in a third study to consider how distressing clergy found

the event. Five questions related to symptoms of PTSD were added to create the PTM-R

scale for a total of 16 items. Those questions were developed from the description of

PTSD by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fourth Edition*

(1994). A sample item reads, "Reminders of the event are stressful." The rationale for

the included items derives from previous unpublished research by the author and non-

empirical writings on the subject of forced termination (Campbell, 1998; Faulkner, 1986;

Onley, 1994; Tanner & Zvonkovic, 2011). A total possible score was calculated by

multiplying the number of items by five. A mid-range score is 40. A score above 40

would indicate increasingly negative perceptions of forced termination and symptoms of

PTSD.

Three studies have employed the PTM. First, Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) report

data from 227 ministers. The first principal factor of an unrotated solution estimated by

principal component analysis accounted for 55% of the variance, with individual loadings

ranging from .41 to .72. Further the alpha coefficient was .70, with individual corrected

correlation items ranging between .09 and .62. In the second study clergy from thirty nine

denominations were asked about forced termination. Those who had been forcibly

terminated were asked to complete the PTM. The first principal factor of an unrotated

solution estimated by principal component analysis accounted for 61% of the variance,

with individual loadings ranging between .40 and .87. Further, the alpha coefficient was

.83, with individual corrected correlation items ranging between .45 and .77. In the third

study clergy were asked to complete the PTM-R. The first principal factor of an unrotated

solution estimated by principal component analysis accounted for 70% of the variance,

with individual loadings ranging between .52 and .81. Further, the alpha coefficient was

.90, with individual corrected correlation items ranging between .45 and .77. The aim of

the present study is to examine the reliability and validity of Perceptions of Terminated

Ministers Scale – Revised.

<div align="center">METHOD</div>

Participants

Sample one consisted of 227 Assemblies of God ministers, 86% were male while

14% female. Of these, 60% were age 46 or over, 95% married, 51% held the position of

senior or solo pastor, 89 (41%) experienced a forced termination. Sample two consisted

of 582 Protestant ministers from more than thirty nine denominations in the United

States, 70% were male and 30% were female. The age range of the participants were

mainly clustered in the 26 – 35 age range (24.5%), 36 – 45 age range (28.6%), and 46 –

55 age range (28%). Over half of the participants were Senior/Solo Pastors while 14%

were Associate Pastors, 9% were Youth Pastors, and 3% were Children's Pastors. Over

thirty nine different denominations were represented in the survey. The respondents were

primarily, Presbyterians (21.9%), Assembly of God (15.2%), Baptist (15.3%), Non-

Denominational (14.8%) and Church of Christ (9%). Twenty-eight percent of the sample

had been forcibly terminated at least once during their ministry.

There were 55 participants in the third sample, all of which had been forced out of

a ministry position; 67% males and 33% females. The respondents varied in age, with the

largest group (47%) representing the 4*5 to 54* age group. Eighty-two percent were

married. Eighty-seven percent of the sample identified their race as white or Caucasian

while 11% identified themselves as African American. Forty-seven percent of the sample

held a Master's degree and 26% had at least a 4-year college degree. Assemblies of God

made up 21% of the sample, 17% were Baptist, 15% were non-denominational, 21%

identified as other, 9% were Methodist, and 8% were Lutheran. Thirty-six percent of the

respondents were senior or solo pastors at the time of their forced termination, 16% were

associate pastors, 7% were youth pastors and 2% were children's or worship pastors,

respectively, and another 9% fell in the category of other.

Scale Construction

Several statements representing perceptions of terminated ministers were culled

from the empirical and anecdotal literature and the researcher's knowledge of clergy

termination (Barfoot et al., 2005; Barna, 1993; Blanton & Morris, 1999; Campbell, 1998;

Greenfield, 2001; Hoge & Wenger, 2005; Lehr, 2006; London & Wiseman, 2003;

Schmidt, no date). The PTM was administered as part of a larger survey. In all of the

samples, one item was dropped (*There was something I could have done different to stop*

my resignation or termination) because it was not significantly correlated with any other

item in the scale and its inclusion lowered the coefficient alpha. Dropping the item

resulted in a 9-item scale. In sample one, questions 3 and 6 were stated as a positive and

reverse coded (*my family was not deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position*) in sample two, the questions were stated as a negative (*my family was deeply hurt...*). The change in the statement positively affected both the correlation and the coefficient alpha in sample two. Therefore we recommend leaving the statements as negative and not reverse coding them.

In sample two, a question was added to the scale, "*I have been embarrassed to talk about my termination experience with anyone*", adding this question to sample two resulted in a 10-item scale with a coefficient alpha of .85 with individual corrected correlation items ranging between .44 and .72. The first principal factor of an unrotated solution estimated by principal component analysis accounted for 56% of the variance, with individual loadings ranging between .32 and .88.

In sample three, five questions were added to the scale resulting in the revised 15-item scale with a coefficient alpha of .92 with individual corrected correlation items ranging between .45 and .80. The first principal factor of an unrotated solution estimated by principal component analysis accounted for 66% of the variance, with individual loadings ranging between .45 and .79.

RESULTS

The PTM and PTM-R was subjected to principal components analysis and varimax rotation, to determine how, if at all, the perceptions of termination might be classified into categories. Four interpretable factors did emerge from the procedure, as shown by the factor loadings for the revised 15-item scale reported in Table 9. These factors can be identified as feelings of termination (FT), responses to termination (RT), trauma (TR) and hurt (HT).

Table 9

Factor Loadings for Revised PTM Items

Item #	Item	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
1	I have feelings of anger towards people at a church I was forced from.	.743			
3	I have had trouble forgiving the people I believe to be directly responsible for my resignation/termination.	.804			
4	I rarely think positively about the day I was forced to resign or terminated from a ministry position.	.649			
8	If I had the opportunity to say how I really felt about the people responsible for my family's sudden move, it would not be pleasant.	.804			
2	I have found it difficult to speak with anyone at a church I was forced from.		.826		
5	I could never face the people responsible for my resignation or termination from a ministry position in a positive way.		.626		
9	I have felt a decrease in my faith.		.765		
10	I have been embarrassed to talk about my termination experience with anyone.		.793		
6	I was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.			.903	
7	My family was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.			.911	
11	I have painful memories of my termination				.669
12	Reminders of the event are physically distressing				.813
13	I have disturbing dreams about my forced termination				.543
14	Negative thoughts about the event occur				.683
15	Reminders of the event are stressful				.839

NOTE: Only loadings of .40 or higher allowed.

CONCLUSION

The PTM-R scale was developed to be used as a tool to determine the perceptions clergy had of their forced termination. Forced termination of clergy is unique and different from job loss. The assumption that ministers are serving Christians who ought to love one another can influence the perceptions of the terminated and perhaps future employment. The scale measures the minister's responses to forced termination, feelings of termination, trauma, and felt hurt. The immediate effects of termination may also have an effect on the perception of termination. It would be important for future revisions of the scale to include some measure of the influence on immediate effects of forced termination.

The aim of the present study was to examine the reliability and validity of the PTM scale. The reliability and validity data reported from three samples are generally consistent with one another. One item was found to have the lowest item-total correlations and factor loadings in all three samples and was deleted from the scale, five items related to PTSD were added to the scale resulting in the revised 15-item PTM-R. It would be important for future research to establish normative means and standard deviations for this instrument and find use among other professional human service organizations. On the basis of these findings, the PTM-R can be recommended for use among clergy.

APPENDIX D: PERCEPTIONS OF TERMINATED MINISTERS SCALE – REVISED;

SCALE ITEMS

Each Item is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale from strongly agree to strongly

disagree.

1) I have feelings of anger towards people at a church I was forced from.

2) I have had trouble forgiving the people I believe to be directly responsible for my resignation/termination.

3) I rarely think positively about the day I was forced to resign or terminated from a ministry position.

4) I have felt a decrease in my faith.

5) I could never face the people responsible for my resignation or termination from a ministry position in a positive way.

6) I was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.

7) My family was deeply hurt by the circumstances of my resignation or termination from a ministry position.

8) If I had the opportunity to say how I really felt about the people responsible for my family's sudden move, it would not be pleasant.

9) I have found it difficult to speak with anyone at a church I was forced from.

10) I have been embarrassed to talk about my termination experience with anyone.

11) I have painful memories of my termination.

12) Reminders of the event are physically distressing.

13) I have distressing dreams about my forced termination.

14) Negative thoughts about the event occur.

15) Reminders of the event are stressful.

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