2018

Causes of Burnout Among Church Leaders: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Pastors

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Abstract

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MS, Nyack College, 2007

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

After 30 plus years of research, clergy burnout is an ongoing concern; as such, it is important to identify the causes of this phenomenon. Researchers have already demonstrated that internal factors such as personality types, personal mastery, or conflict management and external factors such as role conflict, excessive activities, or unrealistic expectations, can lead to burnout. The problem that led to this study was that more exploration is needed about clergy's perceptions on leadership and burnout within the church. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy within the Wesleyan Church in the Midwest to discover their perceptions about leadership and burnout within the church. The conceptual framework was shaped by the great man theory of leadership and Maslach's burnout theory. The central research question for this study focused on clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the church. Data were collected using face-to-face semistructured interviews with 23 pastors who are currently leading and experiencing burnout. Data collected included transcribed interviews, field notes, and observations. Data were hand-coded to find key concepts and themes. Two themes that emerged from the data were leadership is understood as hierarchical and leadership is understood as the work of solo actors, which were consistent with the great man theory of leadership. The results of this study may contribute to a better understanding of the factors that lead to clergy burnout. The results of this study will address a gap in literature and may result in positive social change for both the clergy and church congregants because the results can be used to come up with solutions for burnout. This study may also lead to new theories about clergy burnout.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Ellen, and my children Maricel, Grae, and Alex, who were great supporters in the process and extended grace through the long and arduous task.

Acknowledgments

As I have heard time and again from former doctoral students, the completion of the dissertation process cannot be done alone. I would therefore like to thank those who contributed significantly toward this achievement.

First and foremost, I would like to say thank you to my family, who bore my anxiety, stress, and diminished presence for the years it took to bring this to completion.

Thanks to my friend Brent Wilson, who has given timely critique on both my master's and doctorate.

I want to also acknowledge the Walden community, for breaking through the barriers of online education and providing significant support through the days of course work and the dissertation process.

I also want to acknowledge the Nyack College community, with whom I work on a weekly basis, for their encouragement and support through this process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Thirty plus years after the initial study of clergy burnout, pastors continue to struggle with burnout (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Clergy burnout remains an ongoing concern, making it important to identify the causes of this phenomenon. In 1974, the earliest studies on burnout included industries such as health, education, and social work, where burnout continues to affect the workforce both physically and psychologically (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), early research was conducted on occupations that involve caring for others, including nurses, educators, and social workers. Burnout research has not been limited to the work industry focused on caring, as scholars have shown burnout to involve many other occupations that include high workloads or involve managing others (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Velgel, 2014). The professional body of pastors, ministers, or clerics who lead local churches and congregations, also known as *clergy,* spend a significant amount of their time caring for the spiritual, physical, and psychological needs of their congregants (VaanderWaal, Hernandez, & Sandman, 2012). In the last decade, the study of clergy who have experienced burnout has grown. Descriptions of the causes for burnout are primarily organized into external or internal factors that promote burnout experience; however, Innstrand, Langballe, and Falkum (2011) argued that the problem is probably a combination of internal and external factors. Elkington (2013) viewed the problem as systemic, while Miner, Sterland, and Dowson (2010) stated that society's assumptions about clergy relevance influence clergy burnout. Miner et al. claimed that the change in society's mindset has stripped clergy of the status they once had held in society, forcing

clergy to work harder to effectively lead their congregations. The focus of the Miner et al. study is rare, however, as most scholars have focused on internal and external contributing factors of clergy burnout. Ward (2012) argued that church leadership was culturally influenced, but Ward did not examine this in relation to burnout. More study is needed to address assumptions about clergy leadership and burnout (Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

The topic of my study is clergy burnout and the underlying assumptions about leadership that may contribute to burnout. I focused on underlying assumptions about leadership in the context of the church and the great man theory. The great man theory, which stresses hierarchical structure and solo-heroic actors, could lead to burnout experience (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015). I examined underlying assumptions about leadership and how they may contribute to clergy burnout. The potential social implications are significant for addressing the ongoing issue of clergy burnout, which—despite over 30 years of research—continues to be a problem (Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

In this chapter, I will address the following sections: a summary of studies covering burnout theory including specific application to clergy, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions and conceptual foundation, nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

Background of the Study

The general study of burnout, as a management concern, surfaced in the 1970s when Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976) observed the phenomenon in separate

studies. General study of burnout has varied some in description but has largely followed the basic definition set out by Maslach and Jackson (1981) as a "syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment" (p. 1). Maslach and Jackson's definition accompanied the design and rationale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), which is the most commonly used inventory in burnout studies. According to Maslach and Jackson, emotional exhaustion is described as a feeling of having used up all emotional energy. Depersonalization refers to a negative, cynical, and detached approach to coworkers. Personal accomplishment addresses the feeling of competency toward work, which is negatively affected in burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). According to Tomic, Tomic, and Evers (2004), the MBI has been used in close to 90% of burnout studies, largely because it has received acceptable reliability scores. Burnout is a progressive development and, in most cases, a lasting development. Bakker et al. (2014) argued that burnout is a slow development in which individuals progressively lose energy and vitality. Bakker and Costa (2014) also showed that once an individual has reached burnout, that individual often continues in a state of burnout for lengthy periods of time.

General burnout researchers have shown that burnout is positively associated with job-related injury (Li, Jiang, Yao, & Li, 2013), increased absences, and long-term sickness (Clausen, Burr, & Borg, 2014), decreased safety on job sites (Li & Poon, 2013; Portoghese, Galletta, Coppola, Finco, & Campagna, 2014), hospital visits due to physical and mental disorders (Toppinen-Tanner, 2011), increased risk for cardio-vascular diseases (Toker, Melamed, Berliner, Zeltser, & Shapira, 2012), and increased levels of

depression (Bianchi, Schonfeld, & Laurent, 2015; Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012). Burnout continues to make its mark on organizations, affecting finances (Tomic et al., 2004) and productivity (Demerouti, Bakker, & Leiter, 2014). Substantial literature exists on the antecedent conditions, effects, and ways of mitigation that contribute to a growing knowledge and understanding of burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009).

Daniel and Rogers (1982) examined early research findings that demonstrated a connection between clergy and burnout. Daniel and Rodgers argued that too much of the literature was anecdotal, and the authors challenged clergy burnout scholars to follow more academic measures to show associations between clergy and burnout. Since then, clergy burnout has been studied as a phenomenon across most of the major denominations such as the Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist (Carter, 2013). Clergy burnout has also been studied as a worldwide phenomenon. Burnout experienced by religious leaders has been researched in England (Robbins & Francis, 2014) and other European countries such as the Netherlands (Tomic et al., 2004). On the North American continent, it has been studied in the United States (Carter, 2013) and also in Mexico (Lopez Herrera et al., 2014). On a global scale clergy burnout studies have reached as far south as Australia (Miner et al., 2010), and have begun to penetrate the Asian continent with studies in India (Joseph, Luyten, Corveleyn, & Witt, 2011) and even more in China (Ngo, Foley, & Loi, 2005; Abernethy et. al., 2016); however, clergy burnout is not limited to these countries.

In the last 20 years, scholars have recorded increased workload, unending conflict, and high levels of stress in clergy across a wide range of denominations, which

has resulted in high levels of burnout (Frenk, Mustillo, Hooten, & Meador, 2013; Jinkins, 2002; Joynt, 2012; Schaefer & Jacobsen, 2009). Krejcir (2016) found that 35% of the 8,000 pastors surveyed across America battled depression and 43% showed stress, fatigue, and other signs of burnout. Not only do clergy face higher levels of burnout, an increasing number of ministers leave the profession because of it (Elkington, 2013).

Burnout is as common with clergy as it was with other help professions (Tomic et al., 2004). Robbins and Francis (2010) showed that while clergy still feel a sense of satisfaction with their jobs, they also feel vulnerable to burnout. According to Robbins and Hancock (2015), clergy described significant levels of stress and exhaustion while maintaining a strong sense of gratification in the work they do. In general burnout research, studies have included examinations of a range of variables that are associated with burnout in the clergy, including external variables such as occupational or organizational demands and job-specific stressors such as role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2012; Joynt, 2012; Ngo, et. al., 2005). Researchers have also examined internal variables such as personality traits and personality dimensions (Brewster, Francis, Robbins, & Penny, 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). Cultural variables (cultural assumptions and paradigms) have also been considered (Elkington, 2013). With such a wide range of variables, it can be difficult to ascertain the priority among causal factors. Innstrand et al. (2011) suggested that studying personality (internal variables) without studying the working conditions (external variables) or looking into working conditions without considering personality is impossible. Elkington (2013) called for a more systematic approach to looking at clergy and burnout.

Understanding the entire work environment is critical to understanding how burnout affects clergy (Elkington, 2013). Ward (2012) argued that clergy take their understanding about leadership from the surrounding culture. Similar to variations in the context in which clergy burnout is studied, clergy understanding of leadership their respective roles within the local churches can vary as well. However, clergy burnout has not been examined in the context of specific church cultures or denominational environments.

Clergy burnout has also not been examined with regard to underlying assumptions about leadership. In my literature review of more than 300 articles, I found no study that examined clergy viewpoints, norms, or understandings of leadership and how those feelings, norms or understandings may or may not contribute to burnout. A critical review of leadership theory adopted within churches is sparse. Huizing (2011b) argued that development of a theological framework for church leadership needed to begin with the sacred text before viewing history or context when developing a theological framework for church leadership. Huizing distinguished church organizational leadership from the organizational leadership of other professions based on examination of the sacred text and found little comparisons between the two. He acknowledged, however, that most church structures follow a more traditional secular pattern of hierarchical leadership. Ward (2012) argued that clergy take their understanding about leadership from the surrounding culture; assumptions about leadership within church communities are no different from assumptions within local business communities.

My research had a unique focus on the underlying assumptions of leadership and leadership theory held among church communities and the resulting contribution to clergy burnout. If clergy believe that leadership is traditional or hierarchical, and if clergy view leadership as a position or station, clergy may also accept that all tasks and responsibilities ultimately fall to themselves alone as the leaders; this logic possibly generates greater stress. On the other hand, if clergy believe that leadership is nonhierarchical or flattened, and if they view leadership as a function that can be shared by many, then the responsibility for success or failure is distributed and possibly reduces stress for clergy (Headley, 2010).

I explored the hidden great man assumptions and structural frameworks of the leader as an individual within a hierarchical structure, both of which govern the thinking and application of leadership by clergy (Ward, 2012). This view of leadership is part of Western culture and subtly informs pastors' understanding of how and why leadership exists (Western, 2008). This view of leadership chiefly expresses itself in leadership contexts through the emphasis on the individual and the existence of hierarchical structures (Ward, 2012). Until now, there has been a lack of research and understanding about the extent to which church leadership is bound by this leadership culture and how this may or may not contribute to clergy burnout. I examined leadership styles or leadership theory in Wesleyan Churches to uncover how leadership assumptions and theory contribute to clergy burnout.

Problem Statement

In the past 20 years, researchers have focused on the issue of clergy burnout and clergy well-being, yet the problem and the frequency of clergy burnout remains the same (Buchanan, 2014; Jackson-Jordon, 2013). According to Francis, Wulff, and Robbins (2008), clergy reported feeling depressed most of the time (40%) and also had considered leaving the profession altogether (40%). According to Jackson-Jordon (2013), clergy continue to find themselves fatigued, depressed, and in some cases leave the ministry altogether.

The general problem addressed in my research was that clergy burnout is still a significant concern, and there is a need for more exploration of clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the churches (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). The specific problem that I addressed was the need for more research and understanding of the clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. Clergy burnout researchers have focused on the specific external and internal factors that contribute to burnout and have failed to take into account the paradigm-driven systemic issues that contribute to burnout (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). More research on clergy burnout is needed, as there has been a lack of inquiry into cultural assumptions about leadership and how those assumptions contributed to clergy burnout. In my search, no one addressed the issue of clergy as leaders, nor did any studies address clergy assumptions about leadership. As a result, there has been a lack of understanding of the phenomenon, which prompted this phenomenological exploration with clergy in Wesleyan Churches to investigate burnout in light of prevailing cultural assumptions about leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. The study was designed to identify the attitudes and perceptions of clergy regarding leadership and to obtain insight regarding how assumptions concerning leadership contributed to clergy burnout. The intent of this study was to explore the assumptions, practices, and culture of church leadership in Wesleyan Churches that created unrealistic expectations and weighty requirements for clergy. Previously, researchers on clergy burnout have focused on one of two aspects internal factors or external factors that lead to burnout. Internal factors such as personality types, coping mechanisms, personal mastery, or conflict management have been associated with leadership burnout (Brewster et al., 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). External factors such as role conflict, excessive activities, lack of personal time, or unrealistic expectations are outside forces that contribute to the burnout phenomenon (Joynt, 2012; Ngo et al., 2005). No researchers, however, have addressed how the clergy assumptions about leadership and the subsequent behavior stemming from those beliefs may offer a cause of clergy burnout. In this study, I describe how burnout in the clergy is affected beyond internal factors and external factors to obtain insight into the contribution that underlying assumptions about leadership might have on experienced burnout.

Research Question

Ward (2012) argued that clergy take their understanding about leadership from the surrounding culture. According to Ward, although clergy should have a view of

leadership more aligned with scripture, the cultural frameworks of the leadership that have focused on the individual, and are set within hierarchical structures, govern the thinking and application of leadership in our Western society and churches. Western (2008) likewise argued that this view of leadership is part of Western culture and subtly informs our understanding of how and why leadership exists.

The overarching research question was, "What are clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?" An additional question was, "How does the great man theory contribute to clergy perceptions about leadership?" Research related to the great man theory, leadership training, and experienced burnout helped me to discover how clergy assumptions concerning leadership may contribute to burnout.

Conceptual Framework

The primary theory for this study was Carlyle's great man theory of leadership. Maloş (2012) argued that the great man theory is basically the trait theory of leadership where leaders are born with, or gifted from God with certain abilities to lead; a person has it or does not have it. In great man theory, leadership is considered heroic—or even divine—in that great leaders emerge when the times or situation demand them to rescue the masses from trouble. Elm (2012) stated that a heroic and divine image of leadership has informed churches' assumptions about leadership since the fourth century. In my study, I used the great man theory as a basis upon which to frame interview questions regarding understandings about church leadership.

The second theory for this study was Maslach's (1976) burnout theory. Clergy experience significant burnout (Elkington, 2013). Maslach and Jackson (1981) identified

the critical components that create ongoing exhaustion and the loss of concern or interest in the job. The negative outcomes of burnout include depression or poor mental health, distancing from coworkers, and ineffectiveness. The MBI includes three general scales: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). According to Maslach and Jackson, emotional exhaustion is a feeling of having used up all emotional energy. Maslach and Jackson also described depersonalization as a negative, cynical, and detached approach to coworkers. Finally, Maslach and Jackson stated that personal accomplishment addresses the feeling of competency toward work, which is negatively affected in burnout. The degree to which an individual experiences all or some of these elements is the degree to which an individual experiences burnout.

Nature of the Study

The study was qualitative and exploratory, because qualitative studies can be used to address questions where discovery is the emphasis (Patton, 2002). I focused on clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church, a subject matter that needs further exploration. I explored how the clergy understand leadership, including the roles and structures that govern it, and how the underlying assumptions about leadership are associated with clergy burnout within Wesleyan Churches.

The specific research design for this study was phenomenological. The basic design of the phenomenological study is to discover the meaning of shared experience. A phenomenological study is used to examine the ways in which humans or groups make sense of the different phenomenon in their social surroundings. Phenomenology has an

assorted collection of strategies assigned to it that create some degree of confusion as to what phenomenology is (Patton, 2002). Nevertheless, Maxwell (2013) and Patton (2002) contended that it is instructive and beneficial when studying people's perceptions and understandings about the world around them since they know best how they feel and experience it. My aim was to identify those experiences and assign meaning to them. Maxwell argued that the phenomenological process has the potential of generating theory.

The rationale for using this research design lies in the focus on and examination of the shared experiences, knowledge, and understanding of leadership in Wesleyan Churches and clergy burnout. According to Ward (2012), there are shared experiences and shared understandings that are common to church leadership. Until now, little research has been available to explain if these shared understandings have any association to clergy burnout. I used phenomenological research methods to collect specific data through interviews on shared experiences of burnout and to discover underlying assumptions, experiences, and meanings.

Definitions

These terms are critical to the study of clergy burnout. Sources used in the compilation of the terms come from a variety of sources including journal articles, reference texts, and dictionaries.

Burnout: A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment that comes from a prolonged exposure to stress (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Calling: A strong sense within the pastor or minister that his or her life was uniquely set apart for the work of the church. It comes with a strong conviction that a divine action has set them apart for a specific purpose (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

Church: The gathering of worshippers in a local assembly. For the purposes of this study, the term refers to Protestant congregations in the Wesleyan Churches. While the church can be used to define the larger denominational collective, in this study it was specific to the description of the local Christian, and specifically Protestant, faith community (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

Clergy: The professional body of pastors, ministers, or cleric who leads local churches and congregations. The terms clergy, pastor, and minister have been used interchangeably through the course of this paper. They are not specific to gender and will refer to both male and female (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

Congregants: The group of individuals associated with a local assembly of the church (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

Ministry: The work performed, duties, or roles that clergy carry out in the context of local church leadership (Sparks & Livingstone, 2013).

Assumptions

In any qualitative work, the assumptions of the study are necessary to define a basic set of beliefs the researcher brings to the study (Janesick, 2011). According to Janesick (2011), it is the researcher's obligation to define their assumptions. The following explanation of assumptions will allow the reader to evaluate the quality of this study.

I assumed that participants were truthful in the description of their experienced burnout. Burnout is not regarded as a stigma; therefore, I assumed that participants would be honest in their interview responses to the best of their capabilities as there was no benefit to them to not tell the truth. Additionally, with the assurance of privacy and confidentiality, I also assumed that each of the clergy interviewed was willing and able to accurately describe their understanding of burnout and their burnout experiences. These conventions are similar in a qualitative approach that depends on self-reported accounts of the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2014). I also assumed that the interview protocol and interview instrument would be appropriate for gathering rich and reliable data.

The aim of this study was to explore experienced burnout in clergy and the possible root cause of burnout. Because clergy and their congregations understand how burnout has the potential to cause harm, I assumed that clergy would be willing to be involved in a study that could potentially benefit them. My assumption was that the subject of burnout was not too political or controversial and would not put the clergy or their congregations in a position of risk or harm.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of a study identifies the specific parameters under which a study operated (Simon & Goes, 2013). I examined pastors of Wesleyan Churches in the Midwest districts (Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana). I survey pastors in that district for experienced burnout. I also interviewed senior pastors of this demographic to ascertain their understanding and their congregations' understanding of leadership, and their experience of burnout. I interviewed senior pastors using an adapted tool designed

by Wielkiewicz (2000) and Iverson, Olekaln, and Erwin (1998). The pastors of these churches at the time of the interview were actively serving and employed. Education, ethnicity, gender, and age were not factors involved in this study and therefore not elements in the scope.

The delimitations identify the boundaries to the scope (Simon & Goes, 2013). According to Simon and Goes, delimitations are the deliberate exclusions and inclusions made by the researcher. In this study, I did not examine pastors of any churches outside of the Wesleyan denomination. I did not examine pastors outside of the Midwest districts of the Wesleyan denomination. I also did not examine pastors of churches larger than 250 members even if they experienced burnout. According to Chaves, Anderson, and Eagle (2014), 86% of churches in the United States are smaller than 250 congregants. In further research by Chaves and Anderson (2014), the average size of congregants throughout the America is 70. Most churches of this size have one pastor serving in leadership. If a church had more than one pastor, the senior pastor was the focus of the study.

Limitations

Limitations of a study are the specific issues that occur in a study which are out of the researchers control (Simon & Goes, 2013). According to Simon and Goes, every study has limitations that have the potential to cast doubt on the validity of the research findings. Several limitations existed in this study.

There were three limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the study was conducted in one denomination—the Wesleyan denomination. It is possible that one denomination may have a unique way of viewing leadership over and against another

denomination. Similar studies across different denominations are necessary to ascertain the breadth of cultural assumptions impact on clergy burnout. The second limitation was geographical regions. It is possible that different regions of the United States have specific understandings of leadership that are different and may disagree on matters regarding the church. This may be true in the other regions as well, as New England and the Bible Belt are distinct geographical regions with distinct views. It is possible that there may exist varying perspectives on leadership. To avoid introducing multiple geographical variables, the study was limited to the Midwest region. The final limitation involved the interview tool used. No interview tools existed that explored assumptions about leadership. Wielkiewicz's (2000) inventory tool is designed to ascertain the understandings and beliefs of students regarding leadership, which lined up well with the research questions of this study. Iverson et al. (1998) created a simplified inventory on burnout, which is appropriate for interviews. I adapted this interview tool to meet the church context and to my specific research question.

Significance of the Study

I explored clergy assumptions concerning leadership and the possible contribution they have on clergy burnout. Wesleyan Churches are entrenched in traditional forms of leadership that rely heavily on top-down heroic leadership. They do not take advantage of current leadership theories that encourage workforce empowerment and sharing of leadership (Ward, 2012). Through the lens of burnout theory and great man theory, I explored the experience of burnout as it relates to the role of leadership and the

assumptions regarding the leadership structures and the power structures that are entrenched in these churches.

Two underlying concerns motivated this study: (a) churches have failed to look critically at their assumptions about leadership in the church (Huizing, 2011a) and (b) high demands on ministers alone as solo actors often leads to burnout. Ward (2012) argued that little has changed in the last few decades in how churches are organized and operate as well as how pastors lead them. Church leadership is dominated by hierarchical structures (Ward, 2012). According to Ward, the division between clergy and laity is established through religious institutions and traditions and reinforced with higher degrees in religious education and pastoral practice. Ward and Maher (2013) also argued that with clergy and laity dichotomy sacred duties are then limited to religious professionals. According to Ward, failure to critically think about this is moving the church toward irrelevance. In this study, I provide some evidence regarding clergy failure to think critically about how and why they lead as they do and shed light on how clergy assumptions concerning leadership have resulted in high demands on clergy and in some ways prevent the lay people from getting more involved in direction and leadership roles.

A second concern is for the growing trend in clergy burnout. The overall average church size is 70 members (Chaves & Anderson, 2014). According to Ward (2012), most of these smaller churches rely on traditional, top-down leadership structures. The smaller church structures establish high demands on heroic leadership figures that often result in clergy burnout and organizational dissatisfaction (McMinn et al., 2005). In this study, I

also explored the patterns that lead to over-emphasis on one person in leadership and exact a heavy physical and emotional toll on those expected to lead.

Significance to Practice

This study was exploratory in nature, and the focus of that exploration was not toward specific professional applications to leadership but only understandings of leadership. No significance to practice will be made from this study. Follow-up researchers could provide the foundation for further studies that can be done with more specific contributions to an application.

Significance to Theory

I addressed the gap in the literature in two areas. First is the gap in the literature involving current leadership assumptions and experienced burnout. Clergy burnout researchers address specific causal variables (both internal and external), although little has been studied that addresses church culture, especially regarding leadership assumptions. The results of this study can add to the growing amount of literature regarding clergy burnout and are unique in the contribution to studying burnout from the perspective of leadership in a particular cultural context.

The second area of literature that this study contributed to involves the great man theory of leadership. Church cultural assumptions about leaders as individuals, and of leadership hierarchy (expressed in the clergy and laity dichotomy) had yet to be established with any academic rigor. Maher (2013) argued that current church structures serve to maintain power and privilege for clergy and keep the distance between clergy and laity. Ward (2012) claimed that current religious educational institutions are

somewhat archaic in their leadership approach and need to rethink the clergy and laity assumption regarding the division of responsibilities. Scholars within academic settings such as seminaries and Bible schools are reluctant to look at the issue of leadership questioningly as such a critical study could pose a threat to their very existence (Ward, 2012). Ward gave several alternatives for how seminaries can address the clergy/laity divide; however, Ward's study was somewhat anecdotal, as his conclusions come solely from the sacred texts. My study may contribute to the literature that has examined the understanding of leadership structures in small Wesleyan Churches and critically addressed the underlying power structures that influence leadership structures in the church.

Significance to Social Change

This study has the potential of increasing congregant engagement in these churches. Clergy as paid professionals can lead to congregational passivity, as congregants come to expect the clergy to be responsible for all church activity (Ward, 2012). Changing church power dynamics begins with a better understanding of the cultural assumptions around leadership. Gharajedaghi (2006) stated:

> Unless uncovered and dismantled, outmaneuver and outlive assaults aimed at uprooting them. The obstructions that prevent a system from facing its current reality are self-imposed. Hidden and out of reach, they reside at the core of our perceptions and find expression in mental models, assumptions, and image. These are responsible for preserving the system as it is and frustrate its efforts to become what it can be. (p. 131)

In this study, I uncovered assumptions about leadership. According to Gharajedaghi, exposure of assumptions can lead to their dismantling. By giving church organizations insight into the structures that prohibit the empowerment of the everyday churchgoer, it can give them power to make positive change.

Another implication is that a more rigorous examination of clergy burnout could encourage pastors to take on more facilitating roles rather than do so much of the ministry themselves. Elkington (2013) argued that the realities of clergy burnout should not be ignored. The expectations on church leadership are unhealthy—for instance, the heroic view of leadership that exists in the church (Ward, 2012). Moving away from more heroic views of leadership could result in less stress on clergy through the relinquishing of responsibilities in order to empower church members. Church leadership would serve as equippers and developers, carrying less day-to-day responsibilities. This would move leadership away from the heroic ideal toward leaders who encourage and leaders who facilitate.

Finally, this study has the potential to provide best practices for the church. Historically the church has been a place of aid, caregiving, and healing; however, more recently, the church has been seen as antiquated, irrelevant, and judgmental (Fitch, 2005). Current leadership structures foster the idea of professional holy men who are paid to carry out the work of the church. Top-down leadership structures reinforce antiquated ideas of power and position. Empowerment of the congregants, on the other hand, produces ownership, which causes people to care about the mission and success of the organization (Wilder, 2013).

Summary and Transition

Burnout theory is a recognized phenomenon in today's working world. It is seen as a significant area of concern in helping organizations (e.g., health care providers, social workers, educators, clergy). Scholars on clergy burnout have focused on two causes. First, burnout is caused by external factors, which includes occupational or organizational demands and job-specific stressors such as role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2012; Joynt, 2012; Ngo et al., 2005). Second, burnout is caused by internal variables, which focus on personality traits personality dimensions (Brewster et al., 2011; Parker & Martin, 2011). Some scholars have taken a more systematic view and acknowledged cultural variables as causes, which include looking at burnout as a systems problem or influenced by cultural assumptions and paradigms (Elkington, 2013; Miner et al., 2010). Having read over 150 scholarly articles on clergy and burnout, I found no scholars who have addressed this concern. Clergy burnout needs to be studied from a cultural perspective and should be explored in light of the organizational cultural assumptions about leadership in the context of the church.

In this introductory chapter, I provided background into the study of general burnout and specifically to burnout in clergy and theoretical rationale. The background on general burnout also gave a framework for the rest of the study to follow. A thorough review of the history and scope of burnout studies, especially as they have been applied to clergy, will be found in Chapter 2. I reviewed the great man theory as an ongoing influence on the way the Western culture views leadership. I also reviewed the literature

on leadership theory as it has been applied to church leadership, including any relation to the great man theory.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The general problem was that clergy burnout is still a significant concern and more exploration is needed about clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the church. The specific problem was the need for more research, knowledge, and understanding of clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. Studies on clergy burnout focus on the external or organizational causes, focus more on internal or individual factors for burnout, or focus on a combination of both the internal and external. However, no researchers have examined the effect of culture, or more specifically church culture, on clergy burnout.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature surrounding general burnout theory and burnout as it relates to the clergy. The literature review will follow the history and progression in the thought and study of the burnout theory. A significant portion of the literature review will address the application of burnout in the role of the clergy. Another portion of the literature review will address the lack of a comprehensive approach to burnout and clergy application in the scholarly literature. In addition, included in this literature review is a discussion of the great man theory as it relates to clergy and clergy understanding of leadership roles and expectations. This section closes with an examination of leadership theory in the church. Again, I show that there is a lack of literature that demonstrates any consistent intentional application of leadership theory in the context of the church.

Literature Search Strategy

The search strategy was focused on four areas: (a) general burnout theory, (b) clergy burnout, (c) great man theory, and (d) leadership theory and the church. I employed several databases for the general studies in burnout theory and great man theory: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM, Emerald Management Journal, ERIC, ProQuest Central, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, and Sage Premier. I used a fourth database for searches aimed at finding articles that addressed clergy and burnout, clergy and great man theory, and the church and leadership theory: ATLA Religion Database.

For burnout theory, I used the key words *burnout* and *burnout theory*. The broad study of burnout generated 58,059 articles with 20,073 of those since 2012; the search also generated 414 specific articles related to burnout theory, 143 since 2012. These articles showed a significant interest in antecedent conditions, causal relationships, mitigation, and studies directed at specific industries. The industries that received the most attention included the health sector, social workers, education, and clergy; however, burnout studies were not limited to these fields of work. The initial literature search was filtered for the studies that had a greater bearing on the general direction of burnout study.

For clergy and burnout, I used the key words *burnout*, *clergy*, *pastor*, *minister*, and *church leadership*. A search on clergy burnout generated 14,379 articles (3,802 since 2012) for clergy, minister, pastor, and church leadership. Thoreau generated 325 articles related to clergy and burnout, 148 for minister and pastor and burnout, and nothing for

church leadership and burnout. The term *church leadership* failed to produce any results in all databases. Similar to general burnout studies, these studies included examinations on antecedent conditions, casual relationships, and mitigation.

For great man theory, I used the key words *great man theory*, *leadership*, *clergy*, *pastor*, and *minister*. These searches generated very little response related to specific research. A search on the general topic of great man theory resulted in 615 articles and books, with 154 since 2012. Most of these results, however, had references to the great man theory and no direct research on it. When paired with clergy, pastors, or ministers, the databases yielded no results at all. The roots of the great man theory are in the collective mindset of the American culture (Western, 2008), but current researchers have focused on the more current trait theory studies that emerged from the great man studies.

For leadership theory and the church, I used the key words *leadership theory*, *clergy*, *pastor*, *minister,* and *church*. The database search on leadership theory with the additional categories clergy, pastor, and minister yielded 2,396 articles and theses, 496 of which were published since 2012. Most of the articles noted the lack of leadership definition and consistency in leadership theory related to the church. The study of church leadership and leadership theory is therefore an understudied area.

Conceptual Framework

Schaufeli et al. (2009) defined burnout as a condition of wearing out, or becoming exhausted, especially from overwork or overuse. Schaufeli et al. used the flame as a metaphor to describe the extinguished life or energy in a person who experiences burnout in the work context. According to Schaufeli et al., the term *burnout* is used to define the

condition of the workforce experiencing a reduction in a person's physical and emotional energy, which also affects the psychological realm. In the end, the metaphor helps to describe the struggle for some employees to maintain quality engagement, participation, and contribution in the workplace,

The phenomenon of burnout appealed to the general workforce as it helped define individual's experiences at work (Schaufeli et al., 2009). It is a real-life social problem and a growing reality for those in the work place, and the concern from the public sector led to the emergence of the academic studies (Maslach, 2003). According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), interest grew with attention coming from not just practitioners in search of a cure but also in academic research. This joint recognition has inspired a large array of literature (including books, dissertations, and journal articles), numerous colloquia, and programs aimed at its remedy. Schaufeli et al. went on to say that a whole industry has emerged as a result of burnout theory, study, and application.

Burnout has not always been easily accepted as an academic focus. According to Schaufeli (2009), researchers have contended against the perceived conception of burnout as pop psychology in their analysis of research and development of the issue of burnout. Nevertheless, academic studies in burnout grew, and as interest grew, burnout studies began to show a global application. Schaufeli et al. described the recognition of burnout in countries outside its American origins, including countries like Sweden and the Netherlands. They stated that Sweden, the Netherlands, and other nations with socialistic leanings, have embraced the idea of burnout as a legitimate physical, social, and economic concern.

Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) discussed the latest trends in leadership development. Among the leadership theories addressed in their study were transformational leadership, shared leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership. Not all of these current theories and studies in leadership are finding their way into the context of the church. Church leadership is commonly seen through the lens of the great man theory. The great man theory and later trait theory are based on the assumption that leadership is an inherent quality, which is bestowed upon a special, rare few (Ball, 2012; Maloş, 2011). The concepts of burnout and great man theory are looked at in greater detail in the literature review that follows.

Review of the Literature

General Burnout

Definition of burnout. Early definitions largely used descriptive text to help understanding of the new concept. Freudenberger (1974) used dictionary definitions and descriptive behavior to answer his own question regarding his experience in burnout. Later, Freudenberger defined burnout as a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by devotion to a cause, a way of life, or a relationship that failed to produce the expected reward. Freudenberger's definitions largely come about as a result of early studies in burnout, which included idealistic respondents involved in human service. In 1981 Maslach and Jackson submitted their own definition: "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind" (p. 99). This definition reflected an assumption held by other scholars that only individuals working in human services or people-work were in danger of

experiencing burnout. The symptoms of burnout were ranging further than early studies showed, so the study of burnout broadened to include not only the human service population but also managers, mentors, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, creative thinkers, and was found in the workforce among both white and blue-collar workers. With the growing inclusion of subjects, the definition began to broaden (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Although researchers working with burnout studies largely agreed upon the core issue of fatigue and exhaustion, the peripheral issues were not always consistent (Perlman, 1982). Perlman (1982) attempted to summarize and synthesize the definitions of burnout that he argued were, for the most part, heading in the same direction. Perlman defined burnout as "a response to chronic emotional stress with three components: (a) emotional and/or physical exhaustion, (b) lowered job productivity, and (c) over depersonalization" (p. 5). Schaufelli et al. (2009) showed that later definitions continued to define burnout as a consistent, negative, work-related state of mind that is characterized by exhaustion, a sense of reduced effectiveness, and the development of dysfunctional work attitudes and behaviors, but also included the element of decreased motivation.

For this study, I used Maslach and Jackson's (1981) definition that accompanied the design and rationale of the MBI. Burnout is defined as a "syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment" (p. 1). Maslach's inventory or adaptations of it are most commonly used in burnout research. According to Tomic et al. (2004), the MBI has been used in close to 90% of burnout studies, largely because it has received acceptable reliability scores.

The history of burnout. Although the academic study of burnout can be traced to the early 1970s, the phenomenon was noted and acknowledged by practitioners and social observers in earlier literature (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Maslach (2003) argued that the phenomenon of burnout, though not called burnout, was described by literature and social commentators as a condition where workers experiencing "extreme fatigue and the loss of idealism and passion for one's job" (p. 189). As an academic study burnout began in the early 1970s with work by Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976). Burnout was recorded in separate, independent, and coinciding studies by Freudenberger and Maslach as they studied the condition of burnout in service workers. Freudenberger studied the regular volunteers and professional volunteers of a free clinic, while Maslach worked with human service workers. In both cases, the symptoms describing burnout were identified and the individuals in the study used the word itself. Freudenberger's work engendered special attention not only in his ability to write and convey new ideas about burnout but also in his own personal experience. By his own admission, Freudenberger experienced burnout on two separate occasions, and this made his story more meaningful and credible.

Early studies focused on workers involved in helping professions, but in time burnout has expanded to multiple fields of work (Bakker et al., 2014). It has also spanned from working class or blue collar to white collar professionals. According to Schaufeli et al. (2009) the opportunity for more research had increased as awareness had grown regarding the scope of workplace stressors, which are not confined to helping professionals. Adjustments were made in the definitions and inventories to reflect a

broadened scope. For instance, in the MBI depersonalization was changed to cynicism and personal accomplishment was change to professional efficacy (Bakker et al. 2014). Nevertheless, according to Tomic et al. (2004), most studies are still focused on industries where emotional demands are high and consistently involve those who engage or work for people in the service industries (health, education, social welfare, and religious).

Later studies began to contain a more positive vantage on burnout. Schuafeli et al. (2009) described later work as focusing in on the opposites of exhaustion or fatigue. According to Schuafeli et al., Maslach (2003) proposed engagement as the antithesis of burnout. Further study concluded that the opposite dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment needed to be energy, involvement, and efficacy. Maslach contended that focus on engagement would show better results in the long run than focus on reducing or preventing feelings of burnout. Mäkikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen, and Tolvanen (2012) described this new focus as a trend toward positive psychology by concentrating on work engagement. Luchterhand el al. (2015) described mindfulness as another positive study similar to engagement, which focuses in on a positive contrast to burnout. Bakker et al. (2014) described work engagement as a positive, rewarding, motivating state of work-related satisfaction, which is on the opposite side of the scale of burnout and views work from a negative and depressed state. Cole, Walter, Bedeian, and O'boyle (2012) claimed that there are fundamental dimensions that exist between burnout and engagement. In a study addressing ethical environments, Huhtala, Tolvanen, Mauno, and Feldt (2014) argued that a relationship

does exist between engagement and burn out, where stronger ethical environments were linked to greater engagement and less burnout. Nevertheless, the relationship between burnout and work engagement is still under examination as some studies argue that the relationship is complex and in need of more research (Leon, Halbesleben, & Paustian-Underdahl, 2015). According to Bakker et al. (2014), this positive angle to burnout studies was welcomed by psychology and business.

Symptoms of burnout. Early researchers of burnout described it as a condition of the individual who is tired or lacking energy, and according to Freudenberger (1974), becomes essentially incapable of functioning in the work environment. Freudenberger focused on the mental and physical effects that included on the physical side, "exhaustion and fatigue, being unable to shake a lingering cold suffering from frequent headaches and gastrointestinal disturbances, sleeplessness and shortness of breath" (1974, p. 160). On the emotional side, Freudenberger noted "quickness to anger and his instantaneous irritation and frustration responses are the signs" (1974, p. 160). According to Freudenberger, the burnout candidate has little control of feelings and inappropriately displays them in the work environment. Freudenberger described employees who burst out in tears, loud yelling, or screaming, and are openly suspicious or paranoid of others in the work environment. Freudenberger's symptomatic summation shows burnout as having a psychosomatic end, where emotional fatigue is evidenced in physical indicators.

Maslach (1976) included both the physical and emotional element of burnout as well, doing more to elevate the emotional effect of burnout. In subsequent studies, Maslach and Jackson (1981) argued that burnout had a multidimensional affect that

included the both physical and emotional ramifications for the individual. According to Maslach (2003), the importance of viewing burnout in a multidimensional model allows the study to go beyond the conventional focus on just the individual and the individual experience of stress. By looking at the social context in which burnout occurs, Maslach showed how burnout affects the social setting as well. Further studies by Maslach and others focused not only on the individual experience of burnout but also in how it affected relationships with others and the organization itself. Maslach (1976) demonstrated that not only had the subjects developed physical exhaustion, but on the emotional side, they also began to develop negative feelings towards those they were employed to help. Maslach and Jackson demonstrated that burnout can be understood through three basic manifestations: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) reduced personal accomplishment. According to Maslach and Jackson, emotional exhaustion is described as a feeling of having used up all emotional energy. Depersonalization refers to a negative, cynical and detached approach to coworkers. Personal accomplishment addresses the feeling of competency toward work, which is negatively affected in burnout.

Further studies reported by Schaufeli et al. (2009) described the symptoms as including a cognitive element as well. Similar to Maslach and Jackson, Schaufeli et al. showed that symptoms of burnout were evident in emotional retardation and behavioral distancing, but unlike Maslach and Jackson, they cited that poor cognitive functions were evident, especially in regard to low-quality decision-making. According to Deligkaris, Panagopouloua, Montgomery, and Masoura (2014), it is commonly accepted that burnout

has a negative effect on cognition, but little research has actually been conducted. In their study, Deligkaris et al. showed that burnout was associated with decline on three critical cognitive functions: (a) executive and decision-making functions, (b) attention and focus, (c) and an individual's ability to remember.

The experience of burnout is usually a progressive development and can be a lasting condition. Bakker et al. (2014) argued, "burnout is a slow process of progressive loss of energy and enthusiasm" (p. 390). According to Maslach (2003), burnout is not an overnight phenomenon, but instead develops gradually over a prolonged period of time. According to Tomic et al. (2004), burnout progresses in a downward spiraling progression where the individual grows depressed and even more exhausted over time. Tomic et al. contended that it is difficult to identify in the process, largely because it is happening within the individual. Tomic et al. argued that it is hard to detect until it is more fully developed and then manifested through exhaustion, withdrawal, and lack of productivity. Once it has progressed it can stay with the individual for a long time. Bakker and Costa (2014) have shown that once an individual has reached burnout that they often continue in a state of burnout. Bakker and Costa contended that too many studies look at burnout as an event and do not thoroughly investigate the progressive and lasting nature of it. Hakanen, Bakker, and Jokissari (2011) and Schaufeli, Maassen, Bakker, and Sixma (2011) showed that individuals can remain in a constant state of stable burnout, which can last for 5, 10, or even up to 15 years.

Antecedent conditions for burnout. Burnout is a disease defined by over commitment (Freudenberger, 1974). This might be considered a bit of an over

simplification of what brings about burnout, but it does shed light into antecedent conditions. In 2003, Maslach described burnout as “chronic strain that results from an incongruence, or misfit, between the worker and the job” (p. 189). In the literature, focus on antecedent conditions mostly focused on conditions of the worker or conditions in the job. While there is some consensus on certain conditions (job stressors), there is more debate about unique conditions that the worker contributes to burnout (individual personality factors).

To date, from the literature there are principally three focuses of antecedent conditions for burnout: (a) external (occupational conditions or job specific situational dynamics) factors, (b) Internal or personal factors, and (c) cultural factors. Maslach (2003) argued that as of 2003, much of the research was focused on the internal and external factors separately and that probably was not the best approach. Maslach contended that from the beginning, burnout was understood as a multidimensional phenomenon involving both the worker and those whom the worker cared for. Maslach claimed that it would probably be best for burnout to be studied in that context, where burnout is understood in its relationship between the worker and the environment.

Early burnout research by Freudenberger (1974) recognized the demanding and largely unrewarding environments in burnout cases; nevertheless, the primary focus of burnout was the worker and the personality of the individual. Freudenberger suggested that highly idealistic individuals were susceptible to burnout when in time; it became clear that the individual’s ideals had not matched the individual’s experience. Later, Schaufeli et al. (2009) described reports that show the personality factor of idealism

might be too specific to those in the human services and offered three more broad antecedent conditions for predisposition to burnout. Their first idea, which is similar to idealism, stated that individual's with strong initial motivation are susceptible to burnout. The individual sees the new job as idyllic and engages with enthusiasm and motivation, and as Freudenberger (1974) might argue, over-engage. The second condition is related to situational factors. In this case, Schaufeli et al. (2009) argued that burnout is associated with work environments that are highly unfavorable. As the individual understands the work atmosphere more clearly, he or she is exposed to and recognizes the limitations and negative implications.

Over 100 studies had been conducted by 1998 that looked into personality factors in relation to burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Nevertheless, Schaufeli et al. contended that too much focus remained on external factors and more focus on the individual, as a contributing factor was necessary. Armon, Shirom, and Melamed (2012) looked for an association between burnout and personality using the Big 5 personality dimensions. Armon et al. showed a clear association between neuroticism and burnout; however, they did not directly see the positive side of personality contributing to engagement, the opposite of burnout.

Research on personality and burnout, has focused on (a) the hardiness of the individual, (b) have examined the individual's personal-management or self-management capabilities, (c) type A behavior, (d) the level of the individual's self-esteem, or (e) the individual's motivation to achieve (Bakker et al., 2014). Armon et al. (2012) argued that personality factors could play a substantial role in burnout and that gender also plays a

significant role in the relationship between personality and burnout. According to Armon et al., more analysis on personality factors was needed as personality and experienced burnout studies were still in its infancy. Bakker et al. (2014) also argued that personality could play a significant role in the experience of burnout; however, they also contended that most studies showed the environment or situational factors play a larger role.

Schaufeli et al. (2009) looked more deeply into predisposing factors and theorized on the cultural context for burnout. Although these influences could be argued as external or situational factors, they are unique in their effect and history of burnout. In their study Schaufeli et al. discussed the broad cultural developments of the 1960s and 1970s that provided fertile ground for burnout to emerge. First, they identified a vision of public service, epitomized by John F. Kennedy's speech where he challenged American's to "ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country." According to Schaufeli et al., in this context many individuals engaged in service organizations with idealistic views that they could change the world for good. Schaufeli et al. argued that the desire to see positive change was not just a passing fad, but instead was rooted deeply in the values of individuals and that, "The experience of burnout was not merely and inconvenience or an occupational hazard, but a devastating attack on their professional identity" (p. 207). This is the highly idealistic individual that Freudenberger spoke of, that finds reality more difficult to swallow and loses hope. Both Freudenberger (1974) and Schaufeli et al. maintained that frustrated idealism leads to burnout.

According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), the world of human services has undergone a change of its own. They showed that growing awareness and increased participation from

the public moved the human service industry from a small and local affair to a professionalized and bureaucratized effort. Small-scale care organizations were being refitted into large-scale modern organizations. At the same time, the cultural revolution of the 1960s and 1970s also generated less prestige for those who were of professional authority (i.e., doctors, nurses, teachers, and others). Certain respect and status that was afforded those who engaged in human services was largely missing, and the efforts of those in the service industry went unrewarded. According to Schaufeli et al., a more businesslike and depreciating atmosphere replaced a once personal and rewarding experience for the individual, and these conditions fostered burnout.

While Schaufeli et al. (2009) described the conditions ripe for the emergence of burnout forty or fifty years ago, the workforce that is entering the working environment is not as idealistic nor is it vulnerable to idealizing the nature of work. According to Schaufeli et al. the young people entering the workforce are not as naïve as those entering in the 1960s and 1970s. Schaufeli et al. stated that the media and television programming have not communicated a soft view of work life and that the gritty and conflict-riddled work place is a common image. Professional training programs established by specific organizations seek to communicate a more realistic picture for employees in order to prepare them better for the work and working environment. Schaufeli et al. argued that the Internet is another source of reality for employees, with blogs, news stories, and social media providing real-time scenarios and information on the working world. According to Schaufeli et al., the realities of the work environment are not a secret and that people are generally aware of the difficulty of the work environment.

Nevertheless, Schaufeli et al. (2009) claimed that burnout is still as relevant as it was way back in the 1960s and 1970s. First, they contended that the Baby Boomers are still a significant part of the workforce and are equally vulnerable to burnout now as they were in 1960s or 1970s. Sparks (2011) argued similarly, showing that generational work values of the boomers and Generation X still make them at risk of decreases satisfaction and possible burnout. Secondly, Schaufeli et al. (2009) maintained that the younger workforce is still susceptible to burnout. Supporting that position, Johnson, Holdsworth, Hoel, and Zapf (2013) found that younger generations entering the workforce are still open to emotional exhaustion and burnout. However, Schaufeli et al. (2009) showed that the new workforce is open for different reasons. Younger generations of workers are experiencing burnout because (a) job overload is more real today than ever before, and (b) they experience value discrepancy affects their work understanding.

The first external or situational condition that exists, which contributes to a continued experience of burnout, is high job demand without the necessary job resources to meet the demand. Travis, Lizano, and Barak (2015) and Bakker et al. (2014) described the elements of job demand as role ambiguity, lack of control over the environment, conflicts associated with job role, stress associated with job role, stressful events, excessive workload, and work pressure. Bakker et al. reported that job overload in younger generations is having a physiological effect (which includes increased heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and increased hormonal activity). Bakker et al. also reported that job overload has psychological costs (which includes exhaustion and psychological need thwarting).

When job expectations exceeded the individual workers ability to provide or capability to perform, that dissatisfaction and job burnout resulted (Boyas, Wind, and Kang, 2012). Tomic et al. (2004) noted that this is especially true of the younger and new workforce, which is expected to keep pace with the more experienced and seasoned worker. According to Bakker et al. (2014), it is not just the condition of job overload, but also the condition of job resources that are deficient. Bakker et al. defined job recourses as the physical, organizational, psychological, or social tools or facets of the job that assist in achieving goals or assist in reducing job demands. Bakker et al. showed that when job demands exceeded the resources available job strain or job stress followed, which they later showed to have further physical effects on the workforce, including burnout. According to Bakker et al., prolonged experience with high job demands coupled with insufficient resources resulted in employees regularly suffering from exhaustion and detaching themselves psychologically from their coworkers and their work.

In most studies, the emphasis is on the issue of job stress that is created by high job demand, limited control, limited resources, limited space, time or tools, etc. In these conditions, the resulting job stress has been shown to have a significant association with burnout (Bakker et al., 2014; Lizano & Barak, 2012). According to Lizano and Barak (2012), a recent meta-analysis showed that environmental factors (job demand, lower resources, and less adaptive work environments) have had a greater impact on burnout than most previous studies showed.

The second condition for continued burnout is value-discrepancy. Tomic et al. (2004) stated that younger workforce with value discrepancies face difficult adjustments especially in the early stages of their careers. According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), this is more of a personal issue of motives rather than energy, capacity, or resources. They argued that in a postmodern world, individuals with their own particular narratives are trying to find some congruence with the larger narratives of the organization. When that does not happen, conflicts arise and create tension. Schaufeli et al. went on to say that this is compounded in a society in which the individual has become the point of focus. Traditional social structures like family, church, and neighborhood are eroding as the individual's identification with them diminishes. Schaufeli et al. claimed that this affects organizations as well; as fewer individuals are looking for their sense of worth in the companies they work for, which affects commitment, engagement, and long-term involvement. Schaufeli et al. described this new workforce generation as narcissistic and contend that employees are more and more finding their values at odds with the organization.

Burnout effect. The narrow focus of burnout among social service agencies has been widened as the impact of burnout has reached across the globe and has moved from the social service sector to the business world. Significant interest is coming from the business sector as corporate leadership feels the financial effect. According to Tomic et al. (2004) burnout has moved beyond the confines of the social service organizations, as the reach of burnout is felt keenly in businesses bottom line. Research shows that burnout is positively associated to higher absenteeism (Hallsten, Voss, & Josephson, 2011;

Olivares-Faúndez, Gil-Monte, Mena, Jélvez-Wilke, & Figueiredo-Ferraz, 2014), increased accidents and injuries at the worksite (Li et al., 2013), chronic work disability (Lahelma, et al., 2012), increased hospital admittances due to physical and mental disorders (Leiter, et al., 2012), turnover (Han, Kim, Joo, Choi, & Han, 2013), and poorer job performance (Demerouti et al., 2014; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014).

Although multiple studies have been conducted showing the impact of burnout on absenteeism, turnover and job performance, Demerouti et al. (2014) argued that the lasting effect of burnout is on business efficiency. Campbell et al. (2013) confirmed the general effect on absenteeism and turnover, and also cited an earlier study by Rosch that estimated burnout might cost U.S. businesses alone in excess of $300 billion yearly. The increase in workplace burnout beyond the helping professions is confronting businesses. Later research involving workplace engagement has been conducted and aimed at understanding this phenomenon and working toward its remedy (Bakker, 2014).

New studies have shown that burnout's effect is reaching society at large. Toker, et al. (2012) showed the physical effect of burnout concentrated on cardiovascular diseases for men and musculoskeletal diseases among women. Hakanen and Schaufel (2012) demonstrated that burnout is shown to have links with general depression and lower life satisfaction. Ahola et al. (2012) have also shown a positive association between burnout and high-risk behaviors such as heavy drinking, lower physical activity, and obesity. In a later study, Ahola, Salminen, Toppinen-Tanner, Koskinen, and Väänänen (2013) also showed a relationship between burnout and a higher risk of mortality. As its reach has extended beyond the workplace, so has the response from the health sector.

Schaufeli et al. (2009) argued that many nations have acknowledged the extended reach of burnout on the general society and have recognized it as a physical health issue, and have gone as far as to include it in physician's training.

Summary of general burnout. Burnout is an issue of concern in the workforce today. The last 40 years were marked by a change in generations from boomers to generation X, but conditions such as burnout continue. Schaufeli et al. (2009) have shown that burnout is as relevant as it was back in the 1970s when the concept emerged. Most research regarding burnout is focused on the individual; nevertheless, burnout has a greater implication for society than merely the individual factors just listed. According to Leiter et al. (2012) the reach of burnout is felt in businesses and corporations as well. The increase in workplace burnout is confronting the business world and in many European countries the health field is confronting it also. All the same, most research is still focused on the impact on the workforce and, in particular, the human service sector. Among the human services that have felt the effect, the church, in particular, has seen its affect and has stimulated considerable research. In the following section, I will review the literature regarding burnout and its effect on the clergy and the church.

Burnout and Clergy

History of burnout and clergy. As early as 1982, Daniel and Rogers began to see the connection between the newly established research of burnout and the clergy vocation. Daniel and Rogers, thorough examination of burnout, concluded with an argument that clergy were reporting similar symptoms. Soon other studies followed investigating the phenomenon of burnout and its implications for clergy (Malony, 1988;

Sanford, 1982). These early studies established that indeed clergy were susceptible to burnout and began to make specific connections between the particulars of the vocation and experienced burnout. This seems somewhat incongruent with a report by Sales and House (1971) only 10 years earlier that found that clergy were among the highest reporters of job satisfaction. The percent of clergy who still find their jobs deeply satisfying is still relatively high (60%), yet the same group of clergy surveyed also reported feeling depressed most of the time (40%) and also had considered leaving the profession (40%) according to Francis et al. (2009).

Much has changed in clergy workload and even clergy job description since Sales and House study in 1971. While many studies show that clergy still feel a sense of satisfaction with their jobs, they at the same time feel vulnerable to burnout, describing significant levels of stress and exhaustion (Bell, 2014; Francis et al., 2008; Frenk, Mustillo, Hooten, & Meador, 2013; Robbins & Francis, 2014). Specific testing inventories were created explicitly for clergy to ascertain the levels of burnout experienced by clergy. In 1991, Oswald developed the first described as the Oswald Clergy Burnout Inventory (OCBI), which measured burnout in relation to clergy-specific criteria. Later in 2008 Francis, Wulff, and Robbins designed a modified MBI (using the same framework from Maslach's inventory, but the wording adjusted to fit the context of clergy functions and job description) called the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI). The result was the development of more accurate reporting on clergy experience with burnout. Fichter (1984) challenged the idea of clergy suffering from burnout as myth, but substantial studies using the FBI found the phenomenon of burnout to be a real issue

among clergy. Literature since then has shown that although for many pastors and ministers the calling to ministry is rewarding; nevertheless, the demands, expectations, and stressors of the pastoral vocation are leading to burnout.

The role of clergy is described as highly demanding and has become increasingly difficult for pastors and ministers to succeed in. A study conducted by Duke University showed that 85% of seminary students leave their initial pastoral roles within 5 years and up to 90% will not stay in the ministry long enough to retire as ministers (Barton, 2015; Kanipe, 2007). Krejcir (2016) stated that up to 1,500 ministers and pastors leave the pastorate on a monthly basis, which averages to about five ministers leaving each day. While both studies indicated a broad variety of reasons for vacating clergy roles, the studies strongly indicate a discouraging trend in clergy longevity.

A study directed by Duke University and conducted by Hoge and Wagner (2003) differentiated the causes of clergy departure showing some departures were the result of dismissals, where clergy is removed by denominations or congregations while others departed due to external factors or personal factors that resulted in burnout or frustration. Randall (2013b) showed that clergy experiencing symptoms of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lower levels of personal accomplishment) were shown to also experience desires to leave ministry more frequently. According to Hoge and Wagner, of the clergy who had left the church, more than 25% had done so due to conflicts within the church or denomination, while over 20% had done so due to burnout. Those numbers would probably be higher if clergy felt they had reasonable opportunities outside of working in a church (Sherman, 2014).

The data collected that is specifically aimed at burnout showed a consistent average of 20% to 40% of clergy leaving because of burnout syndrome (Sherman, 2014). According to Sherman (2014), 33% of those who left due to burnout did so within the first 5 years of ministry. Sherman went on to say that only tells half the story, as his study showed that (a) 50% of clergy felt incapable of meeting the needs of their jobs; (b) 52% of pastors said that they felt that being in ministry was a hazard to the health of their families; (c) 70% stated that they do not have close friends; (d) 75% reported great stress from their occupation, which lead to feelings of distress, anxiety, confusion, anger, despair, fear, and isolation; and (e) 90% feel unqualified or poorly prepared for ministry.

Additional statistics from Buchanan (2014) showed (a) 90% of pastors stated they are regularly exhausted and worn out on a weekly and even daily basis (did not say the term *burned out*), (b) 80% of the clergy considered exiting the ministry at some time in their tenure, (c) 75% of the clergy felt they were ineffectual to lead their church or to give guidance others, and (d) 71% of pastors indicated that they stayed on as clergy in spite of their feelings of burnout and in spite of experiencing depression regularly. For some clergy, the feeling of burnout was on a weekly basis, while others felt it on a daily basis.

The phenomenon of burnout is a serious factor influencing pastors to leave the pastorate altogether, but these statistics show that it is an ongoing problem that clergy deal with sometimes on a day-to-day basis. According to Elkington (2013), the growing number of statistics regarding clergy and burnout, and the growing amount of literature regarding clergy burnout suggests that pastors are under pressure, and it appears that numbers of them are departing from the pastorate and church leadership in order to

relieve that pressure. From denomination to denomination, those figures differ only moderately, which indicates that this trend is not particular to one denomination, instead having manifested across the board for mainline churches (Carter, 2013; Elkington, 2013). Rossetti and Rhoades (2013) showed that Catholic priests were at a lower percentage than national average. Brewster (2015) argued similarly, saying that due to more liberal orientation Catholic, Anglican, and other liberal-oriented clergy were less likely to experience burnout compared to the more conservative evangelical clergy. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of burnout is a real issue for the religious sector. Not only is burnout an issue of concern from denomination to denomination, it has a grown into a global phenomenon as well (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Evidence of clergy burnout has been studied in Great Britain (Robbins & Francis, 2014), studied in Australia (Miner et al., 2010), studied in India (Joseph et al., 2011), studied in the Netherlands (Tomic et al., 2004), studied in Mexico (Lopez Herrera et al., 2014), studied in China (Williamson, 2011), and others countries as well.

External causes of clergy burnout. In the general burnout literature, three general factors were identified as instrumental in causing burnout. They were listed as (a) external factors (which included occupational or organizational demands and job-specific stressors), (b) internal factors (which focused on personality traits that were conducive to burnout), and (c) cultural factors (cultural assumptions and paradigms that encouraged idealism). The following literature review studies specific to external factors related to clergy burnout.

Most of the studies that concentrated on external factors and clergy burnout have reviewed the external stressors similar to those studied in broader studies of burnout. Early studies drew attention to the particulars of the clergy vocation as instrumental in clergy burnout experience (Malony, 1988; Sanford, 1982). Sanford (1982) examined the repetitious nature of clergy work and the absence of tangible results as cause for stress while Malony (1988) examined the role of stress in the clergy who experience role overload, role ambiguity, and significant responsibilities. Over time, researchers have examined the role of external factors along the same lines of secular work. Those studies have predominantly had focused on role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and work-family conflict. Nevertheless, some particular stressors unique to the vocation have continued to be studied, including personal conflict and secondary stress that have some bearing on clergy experience with burnout.

Role ambiguity. Role ambiguity happens when workers lack the necessary information that is required for understanding the specific role workers are expected to perform (Ghorpade, Lackritz, & Gangaram, 2011). According to Faucett, Corwyn, and Poling (2013) role ambiguity is the end result of vague process definitions, unclear job descriptions, or due to operating in situations that are unique. Faucett et al. also argued that role ambiguity is positively associated with lower job performance, clergy dissatisfaction, and clergy burnout. According to Ngo et al. (2005), role ambiguity is inherent in the fabric of clergy life due to the fact that there are no clear standards for defining effective or exceptional pastoral work. Schaefer and Jacobsen (2009) extended the argument to say that ambiguity even exists for clergy as they try to identify

themselves within society at large. They argued that as fewer people are familiar with the role of clergy, they are apt to ask, “What is it you do anyway?” (Schaefer & Jacobsen, 2009, p. 46). According to Ngo et al. (2005), because the role of clergy is often limitless and unclear, it is consequently beset with role ambiguity

For most pastors, the key area of ambiguity lies within the context of the church itself, as clergy try to gain clarity for what they were called to do. While the cornerstone activities of preaching, administration of the sacraments, and counseling may be understood by many entering the profession, many to not know what is expected in terms of overall church leadership, administration of office duties, or care of facilities (Jinkins, 2002). According to Jinkins (2002), most pastors do not feel like their seminary training and preparation, prepared them for how to lead or negotiate the variety of roles expected of them. Faucett et al. (2013) added that most pastors operate with unclear job descriptions and even more undefined performance expectations. Defining job performance expectations can be quite difficult when clergy graduate from seminary with the expectation that they are to seek to develop moral character (Jinkins, 2002). According to Jinkins, most churches now look to numbers as an indication of *growth*. Pastors are caught between tangible measures that don’t really indicate the internal development of the congregation (Schaefer & Jacobsen, 2009). Ngo et al. (2005) argued that role ambiguity has the potential of further complication when the clergy factor in the role of the laity. Tensions between clergy and laity are not uncommon, and with demands of leadership sometimes shared with laity (elders, deacons, program volunteers, etc.) the potential for clergy to be confused about their own role can increase.

Role conflict. Poorly-defined roles, processes, and measures for achievement are strongly connected to the stress associated with role ambiguity, and part of the problem with poor definition comes with the multiple hats that the clergy are expected to wear, which is related to role conflict (Ngo et al., 2005). According to Ngo et al. (2005), role conflict exists when the pastor has to address differing expectations that seem incompatible. According to Schaefer and Jacobsen (2009), the clergy is one of a few occupations that are known for having to perform a wide variety of services for the congregations they serve. Stewart (2003) summed up the complexity and conflict of the pastoral role:

> No other profession demands competency in such a variety of roles as the ordained ministry. Ministers are expected to be administrators, spiritual advisors, caregivers, healers, preachers, teachers, conflict negotiators, arbiters, lawyers, biblical scholars, church and denominational historians, visionaries, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, confidants, psychologists, sociologists, economists, fundraisers, prophets, priests, advocates for social justice, defenders of the poor and oppressed, evangelists, spiritual warriors, truth tellers, armor bearers, and leaders of workshops, worship services, Bible studies, and church retreats. (p. 79)

This list may fluctuate some depending on each minister's or pastor's specific situation; nevertheless, this description of services sufficiently expresses the sizable level of role conflict facing clergy today.

Clergy often feel as though they are expected to not just perform various tasks, but often expectations are that clergy be masters of multiple roles (Fairlie, 2014). Jinkins (2002) added that this is even more stressful when clergy have little direction as to how to negotiate or mediate the time and priority of each different demand. Schaefer and Jacobsen (2009) argued that role conflict extends beyond just the roles that clergy are expected to perform, but also in values that they communicate and demonstrate to the congregation. Schaefer and Jacobsen contended that it is not uncommon for clergy to advocate for the personal betterment of the congregation, and yet clergy are expected to live sacrificially, or to call the congregation to morality except, of course, if it might offend some congregants and cause them to leave or stop giving. According to Schaefer and Jacobsen, such role conflicts have negative internal ramifications that often lead to burnout. Jinkins (2002) stated that many of the pastors he interviewed "felt incompetent in determining priorities among the competing values and ideals that guide their ministries" (p. 3). Similar to role ambiguity, the stress of role conflict can have a negative affect on job performance through conflicting demands (Ngo et al., 2005).

Role overload. Role overload addressed the total quantity of work that is required for a job and the total quantity of time in which the work must be completed. It is described as a condition where the amount of time in a day or week is not sufficient to accomplish the demands of the job (Ngo et al., 2005) or as Joynt (2012) described it as just simply too much to do for one pastor or minister. Stewart (2003) argued that it is rare for pastors to get time away from all those responsibilities as the pastors are always expected to be on call. According to Stewart, clergy are expected and necessitated to

accomplish a load of responsibilities to congregants and the surrounding community that exact a heavy toll on their time and energy. Berry, Francis, Rolph, and Rolph (2012) showed that clergy experience of stress need not come as a result of major events or trauma, but instead can come as a result of constant pressure from ordinary, everyday work. Berry et al. went on to explain that for many pastors the stress from role-overload comes in the constant grind of work that never seems to find completion. The sheer capacity of the vocation is one reason that role overload is a factor for clergy, but also the always *on call* component plays a significant factor as well (Francis & Brewster, 2012; Hendron, Irving, & Taylor, 2012). According to Hendron et al. (2012), the common expectation is that clergy must be available to the congregation in times of personal crisis including mental or emotional trauma. Hendron et al. showed that during critically troubling times the clergy are most often seen as the first source of support. Even though mental health services are readily available to most congregants, the clergy are often seen as the initial go to person (Meek et al., 2003).

Role overload was for most clergy the weightier stressor that accounted for feelings of burnout (Jinkins, 2002). According to Jinkins (2002), 74% of the pastors they surveyed indicated that it was a significant factor. Gyntelberg, Hein, and Suadicani (2012) demonstrated a significant connection between the pace of work, the amount of work, and experienced burnout. Gyntelberg et al. argued that for some clergy, it is not only the lack of time that contributes to job overload, but also the lack of other resources, which included finances and supportive relationships. According to Gyntelberg et al., clergy often encounter large demands by their congregation but failed to see the resources

and support from the congregation to finish the job. Hoge and Wagner (2003) reported that close to 60 % of the pastors they surveyed felt "lonely and isolated" in their work (p. 21). Several scholars have raised the issue of isolation as a factor in burnout, especially as it relates to feeling alone to handle role overload (Jinkins, 2002; Pietkiewicz & Bachryj, 2014). Jinkins reported the feelings of loneliness (including the difficulty that clergy had in the simple endeavor of making friends) which came as a result of the nature of the job itself and the nature of leadership, where the pastor is often seen as a *messiah* of sorts, and expected to have the wherewithal to handle the complexities and demands of the vocation. Pietkiewicz and Bachryj reported the difficulty that clergy have in sharing their struggles with overload due to their own fear of creating a negative image of themselves in the eyes of the congregation. Jinkins and Wells (2013) both cited the growing desire among clergy for support mechanisms that could address the feelings of isolation. Wells listed clergy support groups, clergy prayer groups, and clergy retreats as specific services for clergy that can reduce the feelings of loneliness and isolation, especially in the younger clergy.

There is a tendency for congregations to expect clergy to be all things to all people and able to "satisfy all the needs of God's people" (Stewart, 2003, p. 79). According to both Joynt (2012) and Stewart (2003), the problem becomes real when both congregation and clergy subscribe to this way of thinking. Joynt (2012) also reported that many clergy facing burnout begin to disengage from the congregations that could serve as a potential source of help. Many pastors experience feelings of isolation as they attempt to complete the enormous workload with limited time and resources, and those

feelings of isolation and heavy workload also have connections to feelings of burnout among pastors (Miner et al., 2010).

Several reports included examinations of the effect of burnout on clergy in dual capacities. Francis, Robbins, and Wulff (2013) reported on a growing phenomenon of clergy that served as lead pastor of two or more congregations. Francis et al. reported that many denominations are experiencing a decline in membership and the result is single pastors asked to care for two or more congregations. Surprisingly, the Francis et al. study did not show a greater degree of burnout among the clergy in these roles. Clergy asked to minister in bi-vocation capacities did show higher levels of exhaustion, and consequently reported a higher chance of leaving ministry altogether (Robertson, 2013).

While there may be many occupations that are physically and emotionally demanding the clergy often find themselves in so many different roles, with an expectation to be always available. When reviewing the list of activities expected of ministers, as stated earlier by Stewart (2003), it is not difficult to see that role overload is also a significant stressor for clergy. With few exceptions, the literature on clergy and burnout acknowledges the significance of role overload in burnout development (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2014). Not all agree that role overload is a direct cause of burnout. Rossetti and Rhoades (2013) argued that internal satisfaction outweighed the burnout factor. Jinkins (2002) proposed that the lack of boundaries or time management skills might be a more critical issue at hand, not the load itself. Francis et al. (2008) said that personality played a more significant role in managing job stressors, then the

stressors themselves. Although not all agree that role overload is a causal attribute, all did agree that clergy experience role overload.

Work-family conflict. Work-family conflict occurs when the roles of the profession seem discordant or incongruent with the roles of family life. According to Ngo et al. (2005), work-family conflict surfaces when "the participation in one role is made more difficult by the participation in the other" (p. 2135). For some families, this conflict may be a very visible construct but for many others the greater conflict arises when there is an inability to truly isolate the issue (Wells, 2012). Wells reported that for many families this is a result of the blurring of boundaries. Wells, Probst, Mckeown, Mitchem, and Whiejong (2011) argued that the work-family conflict occurred from two types of stressors. First, conflict developed with stressors that arose from the heavy demands of work, which they called work-related stress. The high demands of the vocation often left little to no time or energy for family life. Second, stressors that stemmed from the way that work infringed on family life, or crossed family boundaries, which they called boundary-related stress. In some cases, burnout was shown to have a similar effect on the children, as they experienced burnout as well (Salmela-Aro, Tynkkynen, & Vuori, 2011). For many families of clergy, this amounted to increased scrutiny and expectation that clergy and their families endure. Wells et al. (2011) showed a strong association between the two conflicts and higher levels of stress in clergy.

With heavy role overloads, clergy often feel as if they have little to no time for themselves or their families. Robbins and Francis (2010) reported in a study of clergywomen that 75% of clergy shared that they did not have enough time to do things

of interest to them, while 72% reported that they simply did not have time for themselves. Wells et al. (2011) claimed that the high demands of clergy increased work-family conflict and had a direct association with clergy dissatisfaction. Wells et al. reported that nonstandard work hours, working evening, lack of privacy or ability to be vulnerable, and inability to separate church life from family life are just a few of the concerns that families raise. For some other clergy, however, the time with family may not be directly affected, but the emotional exhaustion does. The emotional toll on clergy leaves them with little energy for their spouses or children (Jinkins 2002; Wells et al., 2011). This can be especially true in regard to personal or congregational conflict that face clergy. The emotional stress of conflict often finds its way into the families relationships in the congregation, and not only affects the clergy but often have a negative side for families (McMinn et al., 2005). McMinn et al. (2005) stated that in many cases, clergy spouses experience the same feelings of burnout and even more so then the clergy themselves.

McMinn et al. (2005) described the term *fish bowl effect* for families of clergy. This refers to the scrutiny that clergy and their families endure from congregants. Clergy have a fairly prominent role in society and that often includes a certain public persona that does not allow clergy to be vulnerable or admit stress (Barnard & Curry, 2012; Schmidt, 2013). According to Schaefer and Jacobsen (2009), the extreme workloads of the clergy are made more difficult by expectations that clergy and their families serve as role models for their communities. In some cases, these expectations take on extreme qualities where clergy families are expected to be perfect examples for all (McMinn et al., 2005). McMinn et al. (2005) argued that most congregations do not believe that

clergy and their families can suffer from depression, burnout, or other work-related psychological health issues. The image of clergy that most congregants carry, of clergy as solid rocks, closely connected to an omnipotent God, leaves little room for weakness and vulnerability. Schaefer and Jacobsen contended that everything from how their children are raised to what they buy at the supermarket fall under the examining eyes of the congregation and fall target to the implicit congregational expectations. Such burdens make any sense of normal life disappear and add stress to a pastor's or a minister's already busy and stressful life. Schaefer and Jacobsen also claimed that this is compounded by work schedules that are at odds with the rhythms of the rest of society. Clergy are always working weekends, which makes family routines, rest, and recreation more difficult.

Personal conflict. Clergy can experience personal conflict for a variety of reasons and in a variety of areas. This is a significant issue for clergy, as Hoge and Wagner (2003) reported that 40% of pastors had faced a major conflict in their last 2 years of ministry. Hoge and Wagner also reported that there is no significant focus area of conflict; instead they compiled a list of over 15 different conflict issues listed by the pastors they survey. Many of the pastors cited that they were engaged in multiple conflicts at the same time. Nevertheless, the result of conflict is similar for clergy. Many clergy have expressed feelings of stress, burnout, and in many cases desire to leave the vocation altogether, due to interpersonal conflicts (Hoge & Wagner, 2003; Kanipe, 2007; Steward, 2003). From a review of the literature, most conflict fell into two main categories: (a) interpersonal conflict between the clergy and members of the congregation

(Kanipe, 2007), and (b) conflict between clergy and the demands from denominational leadership (Berry et al., 2012).

Interpersonal conflicts with congregational members were the most numerous in Hoge and Wagners study (2003). Miner et al. (2010) listed conflict with church members as a significant source of stress for clergy. The detrimental nature of these conflicts is detailed in Kanipe's (2007) study, where he described a trend in congregations of the Southern Baptist Denomination in which members of the congregation become belligerent and aggressive in their interactions with clergy. Kanipe described and attributed the term *clergy killers* to belligerent congregational members. Tanner and Zvonkovic (2011) described the church as a unique setting prime for interpersonal conflict. Tanner and Zvonkovic stated that the work environment for clergy is not necessarily in their control as the environment of the church is also controlled by the people "who call a particular church 'home'" (2011, p. 714), which for many pastors requires negotiating with multiple congregants over the goals and direction of that church home.

Jinkins (2002) reported on pastors' perspectives on how they regularly experience disagreements with church members over church rules, church procedure, church goals, and different and difficult personalities within their churches. According to Jinkins, these conflicts were seen as some of the more difficult elements of clergy leadership. Jinkins reported that these conflicts that had emerged as a result of betrayal of trust, lies and gossip, mean-spirited comments, or subversive behavior. In Jinkins's report, the pastors stated that the conflicts were not surprising to them, but the amount of energy required to

resolve them was. For many of the clergy, the conflicts with members of the congregation left them feeling tired, frustrated, trapped, lacking enthusiasm for their other work, and lacking love for the congregants. Mooney (2015) argued that for clergy, this often leads to feelings of loss and grief, which contributes to a greater experience of burnout. Hendron, Irving, and Taylor (2013) said that for clergy with low emotional intelligence, conflict provided even greater levels of stress and challenge for them.

Some clergy also experience conflict from denominational systems as well as from within the church setting. Hoge and Wagner (2003) reported that 10% of the pastors they surveyed indicated they had left the vocation due to conflicts with denominational structures, and 26% had considered leaving due to denomination conflict. That is compared to the 16% that had left because of conflicts with church members. Miner et al. (2010) explained that clergy have to deal with stress associated with irrelevant denominational structures and too much bureaucracy. Stewart (2003) also described pressures from denominational leaders to grow churches as a major source of conflict and stress. Other factors that denomination structures contribute to conflict and stress are the lack of communication and clarity from the denomination, changes that are instituted from the top down (Stewart, 2003), and pressure from the denomination to be more managerial than pastoral (Berry et al., 2012).

Secondary stress. Several researchers have identified secondary stress or compassion fatigue as external mitigating circumstances for burnout (Galek, Flannelly, Green, & Kudler, 2011; Hendron et al., 2012; Hendron, Irving, & Taylor, 2014; Jacobson, Rothschild, & Shapiro, 2013). According to VaanderWaal et al. (2012), clergy

are often the first line of help for many Americans seeking solace, assistance, and guidance with mental health issues. VaanderWaal et al. reported that one in four Americans seek clergy for assistance to mental health issues. According to Jacobson et al. (2013), church members seeking for initial help for more than just psychological issues often invoke clergy. Hendron et al. (2012) stated that clergy are "exposed to catalogues of human tragedy" (p. 222). The list of issues that clergy report having to deal with includes bereavement, eating disorders, abortions, addictions, illnesses, as well as psychotic problems. Hendron et al. (2014) described secondary trauma as a real issue for clergy who on a regular basis are called on to address crisis situations that involve members of their congregations. Hendron et al. (2014) maintained that pastors or ministers who witness the effect of human tragedy in others often are profoundly impacted as well and that impact can even reach the pastor's family and support network. Hendron et al. (2012) argued that the effects of secondary stress affect feelings of exhaustion and burnout. Jacobson et al. (2013) found that burnout was a risk for clergy dealing with compassion fatigue though their study showed lower levels of risk than Hendron et al. (2012).

Summary of external factors. The assumption that external factors are significant in the experience of clergy burnout is attested to by the substantial amount of research found for this literature review that examines this phenomenon. This assumption is also held by in the study of burnout across a range of industries; however, according to Schaufeli et al. (2009) most studies on external factors are not designed to find causal relationships. Hills et al. (2004) cited that most of the information related to external factors and clergy burnout was collected through surveys and simply report on

experienced feelings. Hills, Francis, and Rutledge (2004) argued that too many of the studies were exploratory in nature and show moderate connections at best. The studies by Jinkins (2002) and McMinn et al. (2005) were exploratory in nature and included interviews with clergy; however, studies by Faucett et al. (2013), Hendron et al. (2012), Hoge and Wagner (2003), and Ngo et al. (2005) demonstrated a more concrete connection between clergy experience of burnout. These scholars examined experienced burnout, the real feeling of wanting to leave the ministry, and the external factors that clergy link to those experiences.

Internal causes of clergy burnout. Hills et al. (2004) reported that too few studies showed causal relationship between the component parts of burnout and their covariates. According to Hills et al., internal or personal factors might have a greater impact on the experience of burnout over external stressors. As a result, the last decade has seen a significant increase in the number of studies aimed at internal factors that contribute to burnout. Most of those studies focus on the recognized Jungian personality profile, and which specific factors or processes are susceptible to burnout.

Personality profiles are not the only internal factor that is assessed for association with burnout. Other internal factors related toward work dispositions are also seen as contributing to experienced burnout. Jinkins (2002) described poor time management and all that entails (failure to take personal time to rejuvenate) as a significant factor, Stewart (2003) discussed clergy inability to disengage and keep work at work as a factor. Stewart (2009) also examined poor conflict resolution skills as an internal factor. Miner et al. (2010) tried to assess a pastor's or minister's level of spirituality as yet another internal

factor in predicting burnout. Barnard and Curry (2012) examined modifiable personality dimensions in relationship to experienced burnout. Although most of these studies are isolated, they contribute to a growing understanding of how personality may contribute to the experience of burnout.

Personality profiles. In Jung's (1971) work on personality types, he identified four bipolar preferences, which create 16 distinct psychological profiles. The personality types are organized around two orientations (introvert and extrovert), two perceiving processes (sensory and intuition), two judging processes (thinking and feeling), and two approaches toward the outer world (judging and perceiving). Jung's work was later developed into self-test inventories such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myer, McCaulley, & Most, 1985). Several investigators (Brewster et al., 2011; Francis et al., 2008; Tomic, Tomic, & Evers, 2004) have reported on the general personality profiles of clergy. The studies showed that for the most part clergy recorded similar personality types. Most pastors reported introversion over extroversion, sensing over intuition, feeling over thinking, and judging over perception (ISFJ profiles). The studies also showed that personality types that were inclined toward both introversion and thinking were associated with higher experiences of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, two significant indicators of burnout.

Other personality scales were used in studies on clergy burnout to determine if clergy were predisposed to burnout. First, Hills et al. (2004) used the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire to ascertain the connection between neuroticism, psychoticism, and extroversion and burnout. Hills et al. reported that neuroticism was a strong predictor of

exhaustion, and psychoticism a predictor of depersonalization. Secondly, follow-up studies substantiated Hills et al. also showing neuroticism as a significant predictor for burnout (Francis et al. 2008; Francis & Brewster, 2012; Francis et al. 2012; Randall, 2013a, Randall, 2013b). According to Randall (2103b), high levels of neuroticism was also associated with the frequency of thought about leaving ministry altogether. Randall (2015) also conducted a study to determine a connection between emotional intelligence and burnout, and reported that there was no significant connection between them.

In a study by Miner et al. (2010), the researchers used a psycho-spiritual construct (Orientation to Ministry Scale). In this study, Miner et al. sought to find an association between the ministry orientation and burnout. The basic orientations were internal (self-motivation) or external (motivation from the congregation), with three components identified as spiritual relation, ministry competence, and capacity to function as critical components of internal or external motivation. Miner et al. reported that external orientation in relation to competence scored higher on burnout measures than those with internal orientation, and that weak internal ministry orientation also scored higher on burnout measures. Both studies were significantly guided by the external construct they describe as growing secularization. Finally, Parker and Martin (2011) used the Quadripolar Need Achievement Scale to assess clergy's orientation toward ministry to predict burnout. In this scale, there are four orientations listed (success-oriented, over striving, self-protecting, and failure accepting). In their study, Parker and Martin reported that success-oriented clergy showed the least connection with burnout while the self-protecting clergy showed the highest connection to burnout.

Time management. In interviews with clergy, Jinkins (2002) was able to identify issues of poor time management as a critical factor in clergy experience of burnout. The clergy identified multiple stressors associated with the job, and the high level of demand as the most significant reason for feelings of burnout; according to Jinkins, however, many of those same pastors reported the inability to manage the tasks as a significant contributor to the feelings of stress. The pastors identified that they felt incompetence in determining priorities as the most important reason for poor time management. Jinkins reported that next to ineptitude in determining priorities, clergy reported an inability to set boundaries between work and personal life. Stewart (2003) voiced this same sentiment and claimed that often clergy fail to take personal time to rejuvenate, or to spend time with family. In some cases, Stewart argued, the clergy are simply not able to disengage (mentally or emotionally) from the issues in the congregation and fail to take the time to recreate and rest. Barnard and Curry (2012) reported that the inability to disengage could become even more tangled when clergy lose themselves in the job and lose perspective on where the job ends and the individual begins. According to Barnard and Curry, some clergy are unable to distinguish themselves as persons from their roles as pastors which added an even deeper dimension of indistinguishable boundaries. Meek et al. (2003) described this as a failure to maintain balance in life. In their interviews with clergy, Meek et al. reported balance in life as a significant deterrent to experienced burnout and included a high value on spiritual development as well. Maintaining balance in life is not that easily accomplished, however. According to Proeschold-Bell et al. (2011), maintaining balance is often ignored or dismissed in light of pending events and

congregational needs. Proeschold-Bell et al. argued that ministry orientation is so other focused, that clergy fail to develop the tendencies toward self-care, self-rejuvenation, or self-reflection.

Clergy age. Several researchers have paid attention to the contribution that age plays in clergy burnout (Francis et al., 2008; Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2011; Neal, 2015; Rhoads, 2015; Tomic et al., 2004). Although this is not necessarily an issue that is directly related to the internal personality of the clergy it does contribute to the mental disposition of clergy and their experience of burnout (Tomic et al., 2004). According to Rhoads (2015), younger ministers are more susceptible to burnout than their older colleagues. Personal familiarity with job stressors played a big factor in burnout experience. Tomic et al. (2004) maintained that seasoned clergy had learned to develop support systems, and coping mechanisms to deal with the stressors of ministry.

Younger ministers without mentors were most susceptible (Neal, 2015). According to Jacobson et al. (2013), some studies show chronological age, in particular, was critical to burnout. Jacobson et al. also reported that the length of time in ministry was a significant factor in the experience of burnout. These authors reported that the length of time in ministry was not necessarily a good predictor of burnout; instead the experience of life stressors and difficulties (that comes with age) was a better tool for clergy than specific experience in the clergy vocation. Tomic et al. (2004) also examined the role that gender played in the experience of burnout, but their study showed no significant relationship between gender and experienced burnout. These findings were supported by a more detailed study by Robbins and Francis (2014).

Spiritual formation. The connection between spiritual life and burnout was addressed by several studies (Bonney & Park, 2012; Büssing, Günther, Baumann, Frick, & Jacobs, 2013; Meek et al., 2003; McMinn et al., 2005). Meek et al. (2003) reported that "God is important" (p. 343), for pastors with high demands. According to Meek et al., the development of spiritual disciplines is one critical key to maintaining resiliency in clergy work. Büssing et al. (2013) reported that although many studies are inconsistent with each other still they show that the lack of development of a strong spirituality was a significant factor in predicting burnout. McMinn et al. (2005) supported those same findings and argued that the health of clergy was affected by the commitment to spiritual formation. The spiritual disciplines of prayer (Büssing, Frick, Jacobs, & Baumann, 2015), spiritual retreat (Muse, Love, & Christensen, 2015), and keeping the Sabbath (Carter, 2013) were among those listed by previous scholars as providing greater resiliency and both shown to have significant relationship to emotional exhaustion. Büssing et al. (2013) designed a Spiritual Dryness scale to show a significant relationship between feelings of spiritual dryness and feelings of emotional exhaustion and burnout.

Other personality factors. While the general understanding of personality is that it is a constant and does not change, Barnard and Curry (2012) investigated personality dimensions that can be modified. They identified (a) desire to please others, (b) proneness toward guilt or shame, (c) self-compassion, and (d) differentiation of self from role, as components of one's personality that clergy may have a tendency toward, are nonetheless open to modification. Barnard and Curry's findings showed significance in only one of the personality dimensions, self-compassion. While the other dimensions

showed some significance in relationship to exhaustion and self-compassion, the ability to be gracious towards oneself in the midst of difficulty, stress, and failure had the strongest connection to experienced burnout.

Summary of internal causes. Unlike the external factors, much of the research on personality and clergy burnout shows causal relationship. While many studies still report that the external factors are a valid concern and contribution to clergy experience of burnout, the growth of studies that show causal relationship between clergy disposition and personality is significant. According to Hills et al. (2003), most occupations encounter job-related stress and pressures, however, the internal factors probably play a more substantial role in predicting clergy burnout. Several researchers have described the external and internal factors as a two-edged sword, and any study of clergy burnout necessitates the inclusion of both (Innstrand, Langballe, & Falkum, 2011). Innstrand et al. argued that both components are important to the contribution of burnout, and the experience would likely not exist without the convergence of both factors.

Cultural factors in clergy burnout. The least amount of study has been done regarding the effect that cultural factors have on the experience of burnout. To date, no explicit study exists to show causal relationship between cultural factors and clergy burnout; nevertheless, several authors include overarching ideas as a potential factor. In the literature, several authors and studies have acknowledged that there are overriding factors that can affect the experience of burnout amongst clergy. Elkington (2013) used the term *systems* to describe the overarching framework that shapes the function and understanding of what it means to be clergy. Others mentioned the seminaries and

institutions of training and preparation as a systemic problem in that they do not prepare ministers well for the experience of church leadership and, as a result, have a bearing on clergy burnout (Jinkins, 2002; Tomic et al., 2004). Still others reported that trends in society of secularization and postmodernism are influential factors in clergy burnout (Miner et al., 2010; Wrogemann, 2014).

Systems issues. Those who recognize clergy burnout as a systems issue have argued that burnout is not the cause of one single factor, but is instead a result of a system that has a tendency to encourage burnout. Robertson (2013) argued that clergy understanding of leadership demonstrated through leadership style was significant in the experience of burnout. Galek et al. (2011) reported that clergy experience systems of pressure as opposed to individual or specific stressors, which is critical piece in burnout experience. According to Galek et al., burnout is a result of the individual and the institution that together create a culture or system of burnout for clergy.

Elkington (2013) saw the systems differently as he claimed that churches are complex systems. Elkington contended that most churches operate under a more traditional model that is linear and hierarchical in mindset. He described this way of thinking as systems of pathologies that create unrealistic expectations upon entering the ministry. Elkington also argued that if the church leadership does not start to see itself as a complex adaptive system in both thought and practice that the church will find itself less and less relevant in society. Headley (2010) stated that when the leadership and church as a whole fail to recognize problems as systems problems, then everyone suffers. Headley contended that instead of congregants pointing fingers at clergy, or the clergy

pointing fingers at congregants that both sides needed to work together toward a more systematic solution.

Seminaries and training institutions. Incoming clergy who are entering the ministry for the first time may be seriously unaware of the leadership challenges and adversity that lay ahead of them (Elkington, 2013). These same sentiments were shared by Jinkins (2002), who reported pastors as saying that certain gaps existed in their training as it related to leading in a church. Nell (2014) reported this discrepancy as a source of concern. Nell's review of seminary curriculum for a Masters of Divinity (the most common and sought after degree) from six recognized seminaries showed the bulk of classes focused on Biblical studies (Old and New Testament), Apologetics, Theology, Spiritual Disciplines and Preaching. On average students only spent five percent of the core courses examining the concept of leadership and most of those studied leadership as a spiritual concept (spiritual leadership, servant leadership). Courses aimed at preparing clergy for the mundane and practical knowledge of leadership are for the most part missing. According to Nell, most new ministers arrive at their congregations with plenty of knowledge yet with little understanding of the practical skills to lead a congregation. Several seminaries offered more specific degrees in Christian Leadership. These programs offered core courses and elective courses in which specific topics of team building, administrative process, and contemporary issues in leadership (e.g., change management, leadership development, emotional intelligence in leadership), but the curriculums in these programs were still heavy in theology. Frank (2006) reported on seminary curriculum and argued that seminaries mostly absorb the ideas of leadership

into existing courses and fail to adequately address leadership or administration as specific disciplines or subject matter.

Jinkins (2002) studied pastors that had left ministry for various reasons, including burnout, showed that the one significant reason that clergy left was because of they felt unprepared to meet the tasks of leadership. Most of those leaders communicated that they felt competent to succeed in ministry, but they did not feel they had the specific skill training and nor were they given specific management tools to do so. According to Jinkins, the difference between what is taught and what is experienced is a serious factor affecting clergy decisions on leaving the ministry. Jinkins argued that more practical training is needed for clergy entering ministry. Tomic et al. (2004) contended that seminaries should include personality assessments and training on how specific personalities have certain tendencies on work conditions and attitudes. Fallon, Rice, and Howie (2012) claimed that skill formation and practical training needed to extend beyond the seminary. Fallon et al. maintained that for clergy to mitigate burnout, a regular practice of skills growth and personal understanding were necessary.

Secularization. Society's general move toward secularization is also included in factors that influence the experience of burnout among clergy. Wrogemann (2014) argued that Christianity's influence in the West was in decline. According to Wrogemann, church attendance and membership have been in a continual falling-off since the 1960s. Joynt (2012) claimed this move toward secularization is not being recognized by clergy and leaves the clergy with unrealistic expectations for the congregation, the vision of the church, and what constitutes success. Miner et al. (2010) further argued that this is the

result of the growth of secularization was creating greater stress for clergy. Both scholars contended that secularization was contributing to clergy feelings of burnout.

According to Wrogemann (2014), clergy, and the church are at risk of being marginalized. These same ideas were communicated by Rossetti and Rhoades (2013), who claimed that clergy would soon find themselves on the margins of society, and experiencing less relevance in the culture at large. Miner et al. (2010) added that in the Western context spirituality is reported on a rise; however, the authority of the church and its leadership is on the decline. Miner et al. (2010) contended that secularization's undermining of church leadership was having an adverse effect on clergy. Joynt (2012) and Miner et al. (2010) stated that with the lack of authority clergy also felt a lack of legitimization and begin to question the ability to act with confidence in ministry settings. According to Miner et al., these ultimately create more tension and stress for clergy.

According to Miner et al. (2010), secularization is associated with greater mobility and consumer mentality in the congregation. This increases clergy demand; as congregants who are waiting to have their specific needs met look them to. In Jinkins's (2002) study, the pastors likened this to a "dog at a whistler's convention" (p. 3). With so many needs coming from different directions, the pastor feels like he or she is always on the run. This is compounded by a greater sense of mobility in congregants. Commitment to a church is contingent on the church's ability to meet needs. Congregants do not stick around to see churches improve; instead, they go church shopping for a church that meets their needs. According to Halman and Ingen (2015), other visible indicators of growing secularization are declining membership, aging congregations, decaying church structures

from lack of use, and the need for clergy to serve more than one congregation or move into bi-vocational status. Miner et al. (2010) argued that these conditions add to the already stress packed conditions for full-time clergy, and can add to the experience of burnout. Miner et al. also claimed that secularization intensifies ministry stress and increases the chance of burnout not because it has a direct bearing on the clergy, but because it indicates that clergy are required to work in an environment that delegitimizes the institution of the church and delegitimized the role of clergy in society. And yet, according to Miner et al., they still work within the church context where the congregation continues to express high expectations for church life and church growth.

Summary of cultural factors. The literature recognizes cultural factors, but no study do date has been able to show causal relationship. Studies report that there are systemic issues in how church is done, or how clergy are prepared, and studies report that secularization is affecting clergy experience of burnout, but studies that include examinations of the relationship are missing. This may be in large part of the failure to clearly identify the cultural factors. Those things that are largely unseen or unrecognized. This may be one reason why to date no specific study has been performed on the cultural factors that have a bearing on clergy burnout.

Summary of clergy burnout. As a part of the general study of burnout, the issues of burnout and clergy are still current, relevant, and viable. A shift in studies has occurred, as research have begun to think more about a remedy for burnout and how to address the ways to mitigate clergy burnout (Bickerton, Miner, Dowson, & Griffin, 2014; Carter, 2013; Jackson-Jordon, 2013). The proof of clergy burnout is not so much

contested anymore in the Western context, although recent studies by Küçüksüleymanoğlu, (2013) and Lopez-Herrera et al., (2014) are investigating the affect of clergy outside the west. Nevertheless, investigation into the causes of clergy burnout is still current (Büssing et al., 2015; Elkington, 2013; Francis et al., 2013; Jacobsen et al., 2013; Jones & Francis, 2013; Randell, 2013; Rossetti & Rhodes, 2013). The literature on the causes of clergy burnout has focused on external occupational factors and internal personality factors as the primary causes of clergy burnout. Cultural issues are acknowledged, but no researchers have examined culture as an explanatory factor.

Great Man Theory

In the West, especially the United States, there is a fascination with leadership and leadership theory (Kellerman, 2012). Kellerman (2012) argued that volumes of research on leadership and leadership theory are evidence of the prominence it has in the understanding of organizations and how they function. Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) claimed that business schools are enamored with the image of the leader as a strong individual and with the ability to craft his or her own future. Petriglieri and Petriglieri went on to say that students leave such institutions with a worldview of the leader a heroic individual. Bligh, Kohles, and Pillai (2011) contended that leadership has romantic appeal in the American culture that for the most part obscures the ability to see the true affect that leadership has on the individual, organizations, and society at large. According to Kellerman, with thousands of definitions for leadership and multiple theories about leadership, America's interest with leadership has turned into a multi-million dollar industry; this is largely due to a deep-rooted belief in leadership that is heroic in nature.

Alvesson and Spicer (2012) argued that leadership is seen as a catch-all solution for the problems in all organizational contexts and that leadership's impact has reached a myth-like status. Bligh et al. (2011) claimed that romantic views of leadership are social constructions that have elevated leadership to lofty status and inflate leadership's significance. According to Bligh et al., the Western culture is obsessed and engrossed by what leaders do, by what leaders are able to achieve, see leaders as heroic, and tend to over-emphasize the effect they have on our lives. Leadership continues to be the first choice for explanation and meaning aimed at understanding outcomes in organizational endeavors, the political arena, military victories or blunder, religious decisions, economic growth and recession, and social action. Bligh et al. further argued that people have a tendency to see leadership as a causal category and glorify their role in organizational success, simply because people have a psychological need for the leadership construct to help make sense of the complexities of organizational life. According to Bligh et al., focus on leadership helps to not only make sense of organizational flow and process but also provides a sense of security and control. Security comes from familiarity and certainty with organizational systems designed around leadership structure. Feelings of control are associated with a connection to the human element, which manages the future and fate of the organization. Western (2008) stated that the leader serves as a boundary between the individual and the group (department, organization, city, state, or nation). According to Western, leaders receive such attention because they serve as the focal point for the individual's criticisms and praise as it pertains to their joys and pains in the context of groups.

History of great man theory. One of the ways that the American culture expresses a romantic view toward leadership is through the adoption of the great man theory. Historian Carlyle (1841) stated, "The history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men" (p. 1). Ball (2012) argued that the best way to view history was to look at the accomplishments of great men (e.g., military leaders, religious leaders, statesmen, scholars, scientists). According to Ball, effective historical figures were (a) male, (b) gifted with divine inspiration, and (c) possessing of specific qualities like astuteness, intellect, or charisma, which made them great. Great men who would be recalled as historical celebrities, whose names and accomplishments are remembered as legends from the past (Spector, 2015). Carlyle's (1841) great man view on historical leadership soon found its way into the understanding of leadership as it was applied to businesses and organizations, as leadership theorists gravitated toward the idea of great men who could and would shape the future of the organization (Maloş. 2011). In this view of leadership, the capacity for leadership is innate, as great leaders are born, not made. According to Maloş (2011), the romantic view of the great man theory is the convergence of historical contexts that produce a situation in need of a heroic figure, and the almost magical emergence of a leader who seizes control of the situation and leads a group, people, or nation to safety or victory.

The great man theory was popular during the 19th century. Through developments by William James in 1880, the great man theory led to the advance of early research on leadership traits (Brown, 2011). According to Brown, "In the early twentieth century, the great-man theory evolved as a formal leadership theory when social

scientists began to look closely at the character traits of great men" (2011, p. 538). Most of this research was focused on leadership that was largely aristocratic, further propelling the idea that leadership was a birthright (Maloş, 2011), although later in the 20th century, research methods improved and the emphasis was moved from great men to specific traits (Spector, 2015). The development of trait theory continued based on the assumption that great leadership was the result of inherent qualities. According to Maloş (2011), research on leadership trait theories continued on into the latter half of the 20th century but adapted to the changing societal views regarding race, wealth, and gender. Studies continue to focus on which traits (inherited or learned) are identified with leadership and make a leader different from the rest of society (Colbert, Judge, Choi, & Wang, 2012; Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015; Xu et al., 2014). The emergence of other leadership theories such as behavior studies, contingency studies, servant leadership theories, transformational theories, to name a few, has put trait theories into a broader perspective (Maloş, 2012).

Criticism for the great man theory initially came from Herbert Spencer, who argued that leadership could not be understood outside of the context in which it existed (Maloş. 2011). In other words, it was the times and the social environment that made the way for leaders to be great. More criticism has been leveled at the inability for researchers to find any common traits that are consistent and generalized among great leaders (Western, 2008). The more recent and broader view of leadership has continued to question the validity of trait theory. Greater attention is given to behaviors (transformational, servant, authentic) than to trait theory (Day, et al., 2014; Ghasabeh,

Soosay, & Reaiche, 2015; Stelmokiene & Endriulaitiene, 2015; Xu et al., 2014). Critical studies on leadership have questioned the validity of positional leadership and have begun to view leadership as a process and function (Western, 2008). Despite the growing research on leadership and leadership theories that is not focused on traits, research that questions the validity of trait theory, and critical studies that challenge the very nature of leadership, the great man theory still remains (Maloş, 2012; Spector, 2015). Western (2008) contended that although trait theory is in decline, the assumptions behind it are not, with great man theories surviving in the forms of other leadership theories such as charismatic leadership. Evidence of the persistence of the great man theory can be seen in two assumptions about the leader and the structure of leadership; a) the assumption that leadership is the domain of the individual, and b) the hierarchical nature of leadership.

The leader as an individual. The focus on the individual begins with Carlyle, whose focus on great men in history identified only individuals in his historical analysis (Ball, 2012). William James continued in this particular focus and in his studies, "put the individual at the center of the equation" (Brown, 2011, p. 538). This view has continued through to present day and is a prevailing notion that shapes societal understanding of leadership (DeRue & Myers, 2013; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015; Spector, 2015). According to DeRue and Myers (2013), leadership is an individual phenomenon, nurtured and reinforced by literature (daily media, business magazines or journals, including popular and academic literature). DeRue and Myers also argued that there is a disconnect in our organizational understanding as literature reports the benefits of teams and collaborative measures on one hand, and on the other continues to cling to the idea

that great things can be accomplished through a larger than life individual leader who takes the corporate reigns and guides the organization toward success. Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) argued that when leadership is viewed through the lens of the individual, leadership has an all-encompassing tendency. Petriglieri and Petriglieri also claimed that a focus on the leader as an individual is creating dysfunctional work environments.

In a similar way, Welbourn, Ghate, and Lewis (2013) and Western (2008) argued that the most common assumption about leadership that persists in the west is that the leader is a heroic individual. Western went on to say that our society's fascination with the great man theory and the individual actor is due to the desire to find simple solutions for complex problems. Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) contended that for the second half of the 20th century, researchers have wrongly focused on the individual leader and his traits. Western (2008) stated that the business culture looks for speedy and sexy solutions, which continue to center in on the one solo actor capable of enacting the simple and quick change. Spector (2015) also argued that the focus on a solo actor is an issue of convenience for the American public that looks for quick and easy answers. This results in a dumbing-down of leadership, where leadership is reduced to series of actions or initiatives that will save the day. Nevertheless, Western (2008) maintained that selling leaders as saviors is embraced by a "commercial and consumer society" (p. 26). Western and Bligh et al. (2011) contended that a biased inclination exists in society's psyche that prefers to give meaning and causality of organizational outcomes to leadership. Put plainly, society longs for—or chooses to believe in—leaders that are heroic in nature,

complete with virtue and efficacy, which will step in to save society from economic turmoil, organizational failure, and from itself (Kellerman, 2012).

The focus of leadership as an individual is evident in research as well. Bligh et al. (2011) contended that research largely remains focused on the individual leader and not the system or organization as a whole. DeRue and Myers (2013) argued that media shares a similar view on leadership by focusing in on the individual. Kellerman (2012) claimed that when organizations are doing well, the media rarely if ever focuses in on the institution, but instead singles out the CEO as the story behind the story. Western (2008), too, argued that research on leadership is most commonly seen as the "property of the individual actor" (p. 26), which misses the functional properties of leadership and the group context in which it acts.

> As a result . . . sooner or later discussions of successes and failures, rights and wrongs, and past, present, and future outcomes will inevitably focus on leaders: their strengths and their shortcomings, what they did or did not do, should or should not have done, who they are, and perhaps most importantly, who we need them to be. As students and scholars of leadership, we both embrace and exacerbate this directed attention, fanning the flames of leadership mania and providing renewed energy to sustain it. (Bligh et al., 2011, p. 1059)

Bligh et al. (2011) reported that when given the chance to attribute both credit to individuals or groups, that individuals were attributed blame or credit significantly more than groups.

Hierarchical structure. Another assumption that demonstrates the continued presence of the great man theory is the application of hierarchical structures in organizational management. Early theories by Carlyle and James focused on the leadership of great men, and had the tendency to see leadership as an attribute of men (and not women) who were white, Western, and upper-class (Brown, 2011). Brown (2011) argued that in the formal trait theory studies tended to see leadership as coming from the intellectual elite who stood above the rest based on scholarly aptitude. According to Spector (2015), leadership also came from a position in society, the military, or within an organization. Kellerman (2012) claimed that for the most part those who were not leadership simply did not matter, leading to the over-valuing of leaders and under appreciation of followers. According to Kellerman, the mindset exists that see leaders as different from their followers—and not just different, but better.

Brown (2011) argued that hierarchical leadership is mostly considered outdated, individualistic, and chauvinistic, and yet the Western culture is largely made up of individuals who are seeking to follow supposed great leaders. Hierarchy has not gone away. The remaining power of hierarchy lies in the deep-rooted collective psyche of the American people (Kellerman, 2012; Western, 2008). Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) claimed that the traditional top-down view of leadership is based on the ongoing myth that our culture has created about the triumphant individual. According to Western (2008), this myth is embedded deeply in American culture and assumptions. Western argued that historically literature has painted, reinforced, and exemplified a picture of leadership that is an exclusive activity for only those few who can positively use power

and are called for hierarchal structures. Nevertheless, a shift away from hierarchy and power structures is in full swing (DeRue & Myers, 2013). DeRue and Myers (2013) described this shift from command and control to a shared leadership approach (empowerment structures). Welbourn et al. (2013) similarly reported a growing trend in leadership theory and leadership models that are moving away from hierarchy and top-down power to a more bottom-up, distributive, and flat view of leadership. Western (2008) and Kellerman (2012) argued, however, that in spite of the historical trajectory of leadership toward more bottom-up model, that the leadership industry and organizational management schools have largely ignored this trend and continue to propose and encourage top-down models.

Hierarchy requires followership that tends to romanticize the significance of the leader and trivialize the actions of the followers (Bligh et al., 2011). Kellerman (2012) stated that top-down leadership required followers that she described using the terms *committed* or *diehards* and willing to sacrifice time, energy, and effort on behalf of leadership. According to Bligh et al. (2011), romantic views of leadership are dependent on followership that is subordinate, and even fearful of leadership.

Summary of great man theory. The great man theory, which later developed into traits theory, is based on the assumption that leadership is an inherent quality. It is something that one is born with and not the property of the common man. This view of leadership is a part of Western culture and subtly informs the understanding of how and why leadership exists. It chiefly expresses itself in leadership contexts through the emphasis on the individual and the existence of hierarchical structures. The contemporary

study of leadership has broadened the focus from traits to include leadership behaviors and context. These studies in some ways have dismissed traits as an effective leadership theory. Although these new studies continue to inform us of the effectiveness of new ideas on leadership, the essence of the great man theory continues to inform our understanding of leadership.

Leadership Theory and the Church

Using the search criteria for the great man theory and clergy established at the beginning of the literature review generated no scholarly results. I found no scholarly studies that link clergy with the great man theory. After broadening the search parameters from great man theory to simply leadership theory, the results still yielded little and most of the results pointed to anecdotal literature or opinion pieces (periodicals) that served simply to reinforce ideas about leadership held by individuals or denominations. In short, there is scant critical or scholarly work aimed at examining the leadership theory in the church (Huizing, 2011b).

Prior to 1950, it is nearly impossible to find literature addressing the singular subject of leadership in the context of the church (Fitch, 2005). According to Fitch (2005) and Kessler (2013), in the last 60 years, this has changed greatly; hundreds of conferences, books, and articles exist on leadership and its application to the church. Successful church or ministry leaders have much to say or advice to give to other pastors and leaders on how to lead in the context of the church. According to Kessler, the books and periodicals on leadership and the church look heavily to scripture for a guidance on leadership theory, usually through the identification of specific leaders from the bible,

then drawing up leadership constructs based on a description from that individual's life. Kessler maintained that in most cases the author would have a preconceived idea on leadership theory and use scripture to support their preconceived ideas. Frank (2006) stated, "They project their own mental frameworks . . . onto the faith communities to which scriptures are addressed" (p. 128). Fee and Stuart (2014) argued that this could be problematic in that the time and context of the scripture is not likely to match our own context. According to Fee and Stuart, the context and date of the scripture are so far removed from our own time and culture that much of our understanding on how to apply Biblical ideas or principles, including theories on leadership, are merely guess-work. Fee and Stuart stated that there is a tendency to read the ancient text through a contemporary lens and derive meanings based on current understandings that are not necessarily in the text.

Nonetheless, according to Fitch (2005), this has been a path that the modern church has been upon for at least the last twenty years. Fitch (2005) and Kessler (2013) argued that current theories on church leadership are deeply influenced by the ideas of leadership in the secular business context. Adu (2015) claimed that there is a lack of clearly defined organizational structures from the sacred texts. According to Adu, without explicitly defined ideas of leadership and leadership structure, the historical context of the church significantly influenced the structure of the church. Fitch reported that the church growth movement starting back in the 1960s has viewed the church as a form of a corporation where ideas from the corporate world (e.g., marketing, managing, efficiency) have been applied to the church and have shaped its mission, vision, and leadership.

A review of current leadership theories and the church. Kessler (2013) contended that there is a lack of understanding from mainline churches as to what current leadership theories exist, and how to apply them in the church context. In Jinkins's words, "leaders have little or no knowledge of the vast critical literature on the subject of leadership. Their knowledge is largely anecdotal or restricted to popular publications" (2002, p. 208). Frank (2006) argued that this might be in large part due to the lack of consistency among the training institutions. Frank cited that most religious academic institutions have varied approaches to leadership and share little consistency; however, from the plethora of popular literature, from seminary syllabi, and from a broader search of leadership theories in the church, two leadership theories have emerged: (a) servant leadership, and (b) transformational leadership.

Servant leadership. The research on servant leadership and clergy in peer-reviewed scholarly literature is scarce. Three dissertations included examinations of African pastors' levels of servant leadership (Bunch, 2013; Rigaud, 2012; Smith, 2013) that measured clergy using Greenleaf's criteria. A few other scholarly works discussed the need for servant leadership in clergy; however, they paid some lip service to Greenleaf but did not integrate his criteria for servant leadership (Tidball, 2012; Watt, 2014). These studies primarily viewed servant leadership from a biblical perspective, where Jesus is the chief focus. However, in all these studies (Bunch, 2013; Rigaud, 2012; Smith, 2013; Tidball, 2012; Watt, 2014), there was no methodological research conducted. Nevertheless, an abundance of subjective literature (books and periodicals)

exists on servant leadership. The popularity for this in non-scholarly writing comes from the portion of scripture where Jesus is purported to say:

> You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:26-28, The Holy Bible: NIV)

Popular pastors and Christian leaders have written books and articles; however, these resources advocate for servant leadership developed mostly by these pastors and predominantly come in the form of self-help books. I was unable to locate any findings to substantiate the effectiveness of servant leadership in the church context.

Transformational leadership. The research on transformational leadership and clergy fares a little better. Sass (2012) claimed that transformational leadership theory is rooted in the ancient texts of the church. Sass's argument is developed from his own understanding of scripture and its relationship to this current leadership theory. In other studies, Robertson (2013) and Western (2008) sought to establish a link between transformational leadership and clergy and mainly try to identify the effectiveness of transformational leadership in a church context. Meier (2014) examined the ethical considerations of transformational leadership in the context of the church. Robertson (2013) argued that most studies on transformational leadership in the church context are a reflection of the secular version of transformational leadership with Jesus as the primary

model of a transformational leader. He argued that with Jesus as a positive example, transformational leadership had more appeal and application to Christian settings. Again, as with servant leadership, there is a wealth of literature written from a non-academic approach declaring the benefits of transformational leadership in the church context. Little research outside of the three mentioned above exists can be found to truly substantiate those popular beliefs.

Leadership theory and the church summary. The lack of explicit leadership structures given in the sacred texts has left leadership theory open to contextual interpretation (Huizing, 2011b). According to Huizing, "Meta-theories specifying great individuals, specific traits, environmental contingencies, behavioral adjustments, management systems, and relational influences" (2011b, p. 333), have been viewed as possible leadership theories for the church to model in search of a relevant and practical model of leadership. According to Frank (2006), this has left leadership in the church as a disjointed discipline and does not receive adequate attention from denominations or seminaries. Frank (2006) and Scarborough (2010) contended that leadership theory in the church is lacking definition altogether.

Frank (2006) argued that a more thorough and probing investigation into leadership theory in the church is needed. According to Scarborough (2010), this is a problem as it prevents the ability to identify what clergy are using as a leadership theory, and prevents the ability to study and research the effectiveness of clergy in those specific leadership theories. Scarborough noted that such distinguished seminaries like Princeton, Fuller, and Moody Bible, as well as notable Christian institutions like Navigators and

World Vision all acknowledge and address servant and transformational leadership theories. Scarborough also claimed that there was a lack of consistency within these institutions as to how to define these two leadership theories. Nevertheless, these studies still described leadership as an action of the individual and describe leadership in hierarchical structures. Even with the focus on current leadership theories like servant leadership and transformation leadership, two critical components of the great man theory are understood as assumptions of leadership.

Clergy as an Individual

The view of leadership as a heroic individual runs through most literature on church leadership, both scholarly and otherwise. In the review of literature addressing general burnout, several studies exist that address burnout and teams, most of which shows positive connection between teams and lower burnout (Falgueras, et al. 2015; Willard-Grace, et al. 2014). However, no single study looked at clergy and burnout in the context of teams. Even with trends in current literature that study leadership more as a process than on leadership as an individual (Day et al., 2014), the predominant view of leadership in the church context is still focused on the solo actor (Veliquette, 2013). Veliquette's (2013) research of literature revealed that a more plural view of leadership was beginning to emerge, yet Veliquette cautiously stated that the shifting pattern in leadership was only embryonic. According to Veliquette, the traditional views of leadership were beginning to change from the typical individually oriented, top-down structures to more plural expressions and Veliquette theorized that this may have some impact in the church context. Veliquette reported that leadership in the church, in its

current state, is the operation of an individual. According to Veliquette, the typical and traditional models of ministry and leadership focus on one pastor, even within churches of multiple staff. In larger churches with multiple staff, the ultimate responsibility falls on the shoulders of one executive or senior pastor.

The predominant Western view of leadership has shifted from structural explanations of leadership that predominantly viewed leadership in the context of the system or structure to that where explanations of leadership are viewed through the qualities of the individual (Evers & Lakomski, 2013). A focus on a solo actor, according to Evers and Lakomski (2013), is a natural expression of leadership in the west. Heidebrecht (2014) echoed this, arguing that the churches theory of leadership can easily succumb to cultural constructs and elevate leadership to the role of one individual. According to Veliquette (2013), this is problematic to the larger idea of the church as a community of believers. Veliquette contended that well-being of the larger church is neglected when the focus of ministry is on one individual, no matter how gifted or talented he or she may be. Huizing (2011a) reported that this also becomes problematic when transferring the church to other cultures that are more community based. Fitch (2005) and Frank (2006) added that the Western view of leadership is primarily focused on performance and efficiency, borrowing these concepts from secular management. Frank contended that the focus on performance has defined our understanding of effective leadership belongs to the individual who is most productive. According to Frank, in the context of the church this “reduces what is called leadership to a list of

traits, attributes, or behaviors ascribed to accomplished or productive individuals" (2006, p. 126).

Western (2008) critiqued transformational leadership and its application in Western churches. Western claimed that in the context of the church leadership is viewed as heroic, bordering on the messianic. According to Western, messianic leadership is where one individual leader is imbued with the ability to do and be all things in all situations. Such a view of leadership focuses power, control, creativity and privilege in the hands of one specific leader. Western argued that instead of empowering followers that transformational leaders often create cultures that do the opposite and disempower, as direction, vision, and authority to act concentrates in the hand of the single transformational leader.

Clergy in Hierarchical Structures

With the exception of the first 200 to 300 years of the church's existence, the church throughout history has largely been understood as a hierarchical structure. The earliest move toward hierarchy dates back to the second century, when Tertullian began to acknowledge exceptional leaders over the church and called for a church-wide recognition and setting apart of certain leadership to govern and oversee the growth and expansion of the church (Tertullian, 2015). This is also the point in which the divide in the church between clergy and laity originated. According to Dreyer (2012), this concept did not take off initially, but over the course of 200 years the idea of clergy became embedded in the mindset of the church and eventually became common practice, so much so that Constantine recognized clergy openly while emperor. According to Schragger and

Schwartzman (2012), religious hierarchy became enmeshed with political hierarchy and for hundreds of years it was impossible to distinguish the governing hierarchy between church and state. Veliquette (2013) reported that during the time of the reformation, Luther initially spoke out against the priesthood, but later recanted somewhat when the church faced a breakdown of order and discipline. More recently, this idea has been reinforced with the professionalization of the clergy. According to Maher (2013), the last century has seen increased specialization and professionalization through theological education. Maher and Ward (2012) argued that dichotomy between clergy and laity exists and continues to inform the church about clergy as people set apart from the rest of the church congregation. According to Maher, this has simply raised the level of leadership in the church to the place of a few elite individuals.

Maher (2013) claimed that elitism is a very real issue for leadership that can come from professionalism that comes from higher education. According to Maher, elitism has developed exaggerated levels of respect for church leadership. According to Maher, churches excessively focus on the clergy position that have raised leaders to positions of extreme power and control in their church context, so much so that they have in many instances become beyond reproach.

Ward (2012) argued even more intensely regarding the issue of clergy in hierarchical structures. According to Ward, “much of church today is essentially as hierarchical as any secular organization” (2012, p. 63). Ward reported that this runs true across most protestant churches. Schragger and Schwartzman (2012) contended that it extends to Catholic and Protestant alike. Veliquette (2013) and Ward (2012) saw the

history of hierarchy in the protestant churches as a result of the breakdown of Luther and other reformers to truly reform all of the church, especially leadership. Positions, titles, power, and rankings that filled the Catholic Church simply transferred into the reformed church under different labels and terms. Ward contended that the history of hierarchy in the church goes way back history of the church and that it continues to exist, going so far as to use the term *tyrants* in reference to some leaders in hierarchical church structures. According to Ward, the failure to understand the sacred texts is the reason for any evidence of hierarchy in the church.

The days of hierarchical leadership in the church could be numbered (Biezen & Poguntke, 2014; Schragger & Schwartzman, 2012). Schragger and Schwartzman (2012) argued that bastions of religious hierarchy are under scrutiny and attack from legislative reform armed to strip them of their autocratic power. Biezen and Poguntke (2014) contended that post-modernism is changing the way congregations understand leadership and this is in turn shaping the way leadership sees itself. According to Biezen and Poguntke, the traditional top-down, command and control styles of leadership are being replaced my leadership styles that persuade, motivate, and compete.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature on burnout theory is extensive and studies continue to show an interest in the antecedent conditions, causal relationships, mitigation, and application in specific organizational sectors. One of those sectors is the area of clergy and church leadership. While researchers have generally agreed that clergy are at risk for burnout (Buchanan, 2014; Robbins & Francis, 2010; Jackson-Jordon, 2013), they do not agree on

what is the cause. Many scholars have focused on the external factors (role ambiguity, role overload, role conflict, and other factors outside of the clergy control) as the key factor in the experience of burnout (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2012; Joynt, 2012; Ngo et al., 2005). Others have argued that it is the internal factors (personality type, tendencies, experience, age) that are the critical factors to experienced burnout (Brewster, Francis, Robbins, & Penny, 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). Still others have cited that it takes both internal and external factors together (Innstrand et al., 2011). Some have acknowledged the role of culture as a mitigating factor as well (Miner et al., 2010; Wrogemann, 2014); however, until this study, researchers have yet to study the causal relationship of culture or cultural assumptions and burnout. This study addressed the gap in literature in regard to the relationship of cultural assumptions about leadership and burnout.

A look at the literature about great man theory and other leadership theories in the church reveals that there are underlying ways of viewing leadership that may set up conditions conducive for burnout experience in clergy (Ward, 2012). No study to date has attempted to make that connection. In Chapter 3, I describe a qualitative phenomenological study to interview clergy and to explore the possible effect of cultural assumptions about leadership and their potential bearing on burnout.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. I explored and described lived experiences of the clergy to obtain insight regarding how assumptions concerning leadership can contribute to clergy burnout. There was a need to uncover the extent to which church leadership is bound by culture. Although culture gives structure and meaning to our understanding of leadership, the extent to which it limits organizations' views on leadership needed to be examined, especially as it relates to clergy burnout. Researchers on clergy burnout have addressed one of two aspects that lead to burnout: internal factors (Brewster, et al., 2015) or external factors (Ngo et al., 2005).

Internal factors such as personality types, coping mechanisms, personal mastery, or conflict management can show how clergy are predisposed to leadership burnout (Brewster et al., 2015; Parker & Martin, 2011). External factors including role conflict, excessive activities, lack of personal time, or unrealistic expectations are outside forces that contribute to the burnout phenomenon (Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2012; Joynt, 2012; Ngo et al., 2005). After reading several hundred studies on external factors, none had addressed the idea that assumptions about leadership seen through organizational structures or leadership theory as a cause. In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that there is a lack of literature that includes critical examinations of leadership styles or leadership theory in Wesleyan Churches. In this study, I explored how leadership

assumptions, practices, and how culture understandings about leadership contribute to burnout.

This chapter includes the methodological framework for this study to best explore the problem and address the research questions of this study. This chapter also includes an explanation of the nature of the study and the rationale for the research design chosen. I will describe the sample and provide a rationale for the sample selection. Included in the research design is an explanation of the data collection plan, which also includes a description of the data collection tool and researcher's role. Finally, I will provide a description of how the data were managed, analyzed, and interpreted.

Research Design and Rationale

The central research question for this study was, "What are clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?" An additional question was, "How does the great man theory contribute to clergy perceptions about leadership?" In order to best explore burnout and leadership assumptions in the context of the Wesleyan Church, I conducted a qualitative strategy using a phenomenological approach. I considered a quantitative design; however, the lack of research showing the relationship between burnout and leadership theories made this approach unsuitable. Similarly, I had considered a mixed methods approach but rejected it due to the greater emphasis on discovery in this study. Maxwell (2013) suggested that a key word to define qualitative approaches is *discovery*. Patton (2002) added that qualitative design does not have to be "constrained by predetermined categories of analysis" (p. 14). As the qualitative method is more inductive, it is used to discover truth through investigation or examination.

Qualitative studies have emergent qualities as collected data builds from details to general categories (Maxwell, 2013), meaning arguments are not tested but discovered through the research.

In this study, I addressed a lack of literature through qualitative research, which is best suited for studies where discovery is the emphasis. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), when the focus of the research is on a study group in relation to a phenomenon, the study is most suitable for phenomenological research. The rationale for the qualitative approach, such as a qualitative phenomenological approach, was the need to discover the relationship of the phenomenon of clergy burnout with clergy assumptions regarding leadership, which is a new or not yet studied factor of leadership theory.

Narrative studies involve the telling of a story through a reflective, autobiographical lens (Bernard, 2013). I addressed a large population of clergy; however, I did not follow an individual, nor did the study involve the stories of the participants, so a narrative design did not apply. In a case study, the researcher explores a phenomenon within the actual context through in-depth data collection (Yin, 2014). Most case studies are focused on one specific group or organization. My study required the input of several pastors with similar contexts; however, the specific organizational context itself was not the focus so case study did not apply. In grounded theory, the object is to discover theory (Walsh et al., 2015). I made no assumptions regarding the relationship between certain shared actions or processes regarding burnout and clergy, so the study did not fit the definition of grounded theory. Finally, researchers using the ethnography study people within specific culture from the people's point of view (Compton-Lilly et al., 2014). In

this study, I did not try to tackle larger cultural issues; it was therefore unsuitable for an ethnological study. The focus on a study group in relation to a phenomenon made this study most suitable for phenomenological research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

I had an active role in data collection for this study. The role of the researcher in qualitative studies is paramount, because the researcher possesses the ability to listen carefully to responses, can adjust questions to produce rich data, and has the ability to understand the specific data connected to the study (Yin, 2014). As the researcher, I set the criteria for the selection of participants, I was an instrument for the data collection process through semistructured interviews, and I was the principal agent for coding and analyzing data. Through video conferenced interviews and document analysis, I gathered data from different clergy regarding their understanding of their role in leadership. I looked for patterns and themes associated with leadership theory and burnout.

I selected the participants from a data list generated from within the Wesleyan denomination, and I had no direct knowledge of the respondents prior to the interviewing process. All participants were voluntary with the only incentive being their contribution to the greater study of clergy burnout. I selected the participants based on a brief burnout survey. With this knowledge, I collaborated with clergy to examine the assumptions and develop an understanding of their meaning of church leadership.

My experience with church leadership includes 30 years of serving as youth, associate, and assistant pastor in four churches and three different denominations. I have never worked within a Wesleyan church and had no previous relationships with the

denomination or any pastors. As such, no environmental, conflict of interest, or power differentials applied. Nonetheless, I have an understanding of the terminology, day-to-day workings, and cultural constructs unique to church subculture and church leadership.

My history in leadership roles and my experience with burnout lends a unique contribution to the study of leadership assumptions within the church. As such, I endeavored to be as impartial as possible in my assessment of leadership assumptions and the context of the church. Additionally, I engaged in a deliberate and personal evaluation of the leadership and burnout phenomena, an advantage in studies as acknowledged by Parry, Mumford, Bower, and Watts (2014). Parry et al. argued that the subjective and personalized nature of this approach could make for a richer and more credible understanding of the emerging theory. My own experiences could have influenced researcher bias. My own experiences and subjectivity could have introduced interpretive filters that affect how the data is initially entered (Yin, 2014).

To offset potential bias, I taped and transcribed all data using transcription software to avoid an early filtering process in the initial collection stage. I also employed member-checking to assist with accuracy. For member-checking, I sent the transcribed results via e-mail to the respondents. Each respondent reviewed the sessions and was asked for feedback and possible corrections. I also mitigated bias through reflexivity. I identified potential bias, brought needed corrections, and monitored the interviews to remove potential partiality that could shape data collection and interpretation. Through the course of the interviewing process, I kept field notes on my actions and participants'

reactions to my questions or posture. I adjusted questions and interviewing process as a result to remove any hint of my own slant or inclinations.

Methodology

In the methodology section, I will outline the qualitative phenomenological approach. This section includes how participants were selected and recruited. This section also includes plans for how data were collected and analyzed.

Participant Selection Logic

In this phenomenological study, I selected and interviewed clergy leaders from Wesleyan Churches in the Midwest region—including specific districts with churches in Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana—regarding their understanding of leadership. The Wesleyan denomination uses regional districts to divide the roles of the supervisors for clergy development. The Ohio, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana districts have a significant degree of uniformity among participants. The participants for this study were clergy who serve in roles of church leadership and have experienced burnout. The leaders for this study were selected from churches that have less than 250 congregants and adhere to the Protestant Evangelical theological framework.

Protestant Evangelicalism includes a large scope of denominations, the largest and best recognized being Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostals, Brethren, Wesleyan, and Reformed church. In the United States, this includes most Presbyterian and Lutheran churches. I did not explore liturgical churches (i.e., Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopal, Anglican, and some Presbyterian and Lutheran), because these denominations address leadership and leadership structure as a part of their theological framework, resulting in a

steady structure for hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. According to Brewster (2015), these leaders face their own distinct leadership issues such as hierarchal structures that trace back thousands of years and assumptions about apostolic succession.

Sampling. The sample for this study was selected using a purposeful sampling strategy. There are thousands of churches and clergy that fit the description of Protestant Evangelical. According to Grammich (2012), close to 200,000 congregations could be identified as Protestant Evangelical, which compose 15% of the population of the United States. For this study, this sizable population was narrowed to include only Wesleyan clergy who serve in churches that have less than 250 members and have burnout experience.

I worked with the director of clergy development within the Wesleyan denomination who was interested in developing pastor well-being that is based on academic research. The director was deeply concerned with pastoral well-being and was interested in any study that will help him better care for the pastors. All responses were, nonetheless, kept confidential and anonymous for the sake of the pastors. The clergy development director is currently involved in providing services to the clergy such as practical counseling, training programs, and networking opportunities for the clergy. The Wesleyan denomination also provides crisis counseling for pastors, especially those struggling with depression and burnout. As a part of my introduction to the study, I included the help-line information. Upon approval from Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I sent out 274 e-mails that included the introduction to the study (Appendix A), along with the consent form and a simplified burnout survey (Appendix B), to all

pastors fitting the description provided above. I generated this list from a larger database provided by the Wesleyan denomination. Of those 274 e-mail recipients, I received 53 responses. From those responses, 29 qualified to participate in the leadership study. In the end, 23 pastors participated in a follow-up interview.

Sampling technique. The population of potential respondents was quite high, thus the sampling needed to reflect the general experience of this group. For the purposes of this study, a purposeful sampling technique was selected. Purposeful sampling is used to identify specific units of analysis that will yield substantial knowledge and in-depth information about a certain phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Selection for purposeful sampling is targeted and specific and can provide depth and richness in the data (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling is a sound approach when looking for an abundance of data (Patton, 2002).

There are a number of approaches to purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). The approach for this study was maximum variation sampling. Patton defined maximum variation sampling as involving "capturing and describing the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation" (2002, p. 234). A maximum variation sample allowed the study of the central understanding of leadership assumptions and burnout experience across a wide scope of church denominations. Even though the different denominations have unique histories that describe their development, this type of sampling may show whether certain assumptions about leadership are consistent or not across denominations.

Sample size. The sample size is conditional to the overall focus and purpose of the study (Patton, 2002). The focus on finding respondents who can provide the essential,

beneficial, and trustworthy information is more important than the actual number (Patton, 2002). The application of a purposeful sample allowed me to petition participants who fit the precise characteristics for the study and who had experience with burnout. The rationale for purposeful sampling is that it permits the researcher to obtain a broad understanding of the phenomenon and how the participants experienced that phenomenon in their specific context, which contributes to the reliability of the study (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012).

When purposeful sampling is done on information-rich subjects, the amount of data gathered could be quite substantial; thus, researchers need to select a sample size sufficient to return a significant result (Patton, 2002). Although many qualitative scholars have used saturation as an indication that the sample chosen was large enough to satisfy validity, saturation is specific to grounded theory (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). According to Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2015), information power is a better aim than saturation and in this regard, sample adequacy, data quality, and variability of relevant events are often more important than the number of participants. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) contended that observing and analyzing similar studies was a better indicator for identifying appropriate sample size. Determining sample size is difficult when aiming at data saturation, but it is important to establish a minimum sample size and a stopping criterion—a specific number of additional interviews to be conducted without any new ideas or information appearing before declaring data saturation (Francis et al., 2010). For this study, I engaged with 23 participants. That

number is consistent with similar studies. The consistency of responses between participants gave me confidence that the sample size was adequate for this study.

Research site. The participants agreed to meet via GoToMeeting, a web-based conferencing tool. The interview was designed to take 30 minutes; however, most interviews went 5 to 10 minutes past that. In each case, I sought participant agreement to go beyond the 30 minutes. It was important that the participant felt comfortable and was in an undisturbed and conducive setting for rich dialogue. GoToMeeting worked well in this regard because it can work on any computer or mobile device. This flexibility allowed participants to select a location that they felt comfortable in. Most interviewees chose to connect from their church offices via their computers, while a few chose to login from home via computer or mobile phone. All interviews were set up during daytime hours when the pastors had flexibility in their schedules to participate.

Instrumentation

The instrument employed in this study was in-depth, semistructured interviews for data collection. I also conducted a document study. Although document study was included in the data collection, the primary focus of data collection and largest portion of information came from web-based conference interviews.

Interviews. I designed the interview instrument with general and opened-ended questions, which helped elicit the shared experience of leadership in the church context and clergy experience with burnout. Responses to the interview delivered satisfactory data to answer the central research question, “What are clergy’s perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?” The open-ended questions

provided an opportunity for the respondents to answer without restrictions (Yin, 2014). Each extended interview was in-depth and consisted of 9 questions. The first two were designed to obtain the context of leadership. These three questions asked participants to identify all leadership roles, define his or her specific role, and identify the basic leadership or governmental structure of the church. The next five questions were aimed at uncovering the hidden assumptions about leadership, which asked the participants to describe leadership effectiveness, success, purpose, theory, and church purpose. Finally, the last question assessed clergy's experience with burnout and if leadership assumptions have any bearing. I prepared secondary questions to dig deeper into a subject matter, based on answers to the original research questions. A copy of the full interview can be found in Appendix C.

The interview instrument is a modified version of Wielkiewicz's (2000) leadership attitude and belief's scale and the burnout inventory instrument from Iverson et al. (1998). Copies of both instruments can be found in Appendix D and Appendix E. Wielkiewicz's study was designed to explore attitudes and beliefs by students about leadership as it related to organizational context and is broad enough to be used in the context of the church. Iverson et al. (1998) conducted a study of the causal relationship between burnout and absenteeism. The Iverson et al. questions were simple enough to be incorporated with the clergy sample selected for this study. I made significant modifications to Wielkiewicz's (2002) questions to adapt them from a broad approach to general leadership to a clergy-specific setting. The original instrument was designed for college students and the wording was adapted from a broad view of all organizations to

fit the context of a Protestant evangelical clergy. I made only one modification to the Iverson et al. (1998) burnout inventory, changing the word *patients* to *congregants*. The interview instrument can be viewed in Appendix B. In the development stage, I asked five pastors to review the questions for clarity and understanding. The current form of the interview is based on those reviews. For content validity, documents will be gathered wherever written forms can be found describing leadership functions and roles.

The use of an interview protocol is important to guide the interview process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I adapted an interview protocol for this project. There were three basic steps in the protocol: (a) pre-interview activities, (b) activities to do during the interview, and (c) activities for interview follow-up (see Appendix F). Patton (2002) listed similar procedural steps for proper interviewing practice. Having a protocol helped guarantee that each participant had a similar experience, and ensured that they were well considered. It also helped to establish an interview process with a thoughtful, professional, and open atmosphere that encouraged participant engagement.

Pilot Study

Before the start of the study and with IRB approval (#02-07-17-0278681), I performed a pilot study. The pilot study used the same questions and protocol that were established for the main research study. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess whether the interview questions were well-defined and comprehensible. Through this pilot study, I also assessed the interview protocol and made sure the interview process and instructions were clear for all participants (see Appendix F).

The pilot study involved five participants who were not included in the participant pool of clergy from the Wesleyan denomination. I selected the five participants from a clergy network I am associated with and asked them to participate in a pilot study. The participants did not belong to the Wesleyan denomination but belonged to denominations that are similar to the Wesleyan denomination in doctrine and structure. Each had shared with me their own experience with burnout. As friends and fellow pastors, I trusted them to give honest and constructive feedback. The interview was the same that was intended for use in the study. Following the interview, I asked the five participants the following questions:

1. Are the interview instructions clear and understandable?
2. Are the interview questions clear and understandable?
3. What could be done to improve the interview process?
4. What questions from the interview could be changed, added, or deleted?
5. Were any questions leading or slanted toward a particular response?

The follow-up questions in the pilot interview questions helped me to clarify the interview questions and the interview process for the main study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Phenomenological studies engage numerous data collection exercises including interviews, observations, and a document or artifact studies (Janesick, 2011). In this study, I engaged in-depth, semistructured interviews for data collection and also included document study. The main focus of data collection was the interview, as it was expected

to generate the largest quantity and richest source of information. Only one document was collected as part of the document study.

Recruitment procedure. I received IRB approval (#02-07-17-0278681) on February 7, 2017. Immediately, following IRB approval, I contacted the Wesleyan district via e-mail to inform them of my intent to proceed. A week later, I received confirmation from the denomination to proceed in a return e-mail; the database for my selection region was attached. Following the first phase of the interview protocol, I double-checked my participant criteria, the interview instrument, and communications forms for the consent and introduction to the study. I also tested the recording procedures on GoToMeeting and ran those test audio files through TRINT.com to ensure the transcription capabilities. I was satisfied with both recording and transcription services. On March 29, I sent out the first e-mail to the 274 pastors informing them of the purpose of the study (Appendix A), which included the consent form, and invited them to respond to a short general burnout survey (see Appendix B). The pastors were directed to respond back via e-mail sending their result, which also served as a demonstration of their consent. Over the next three weeks, 53 of the 274 pastors responded with completed studies. Twenty-nine of the 53 burnout surveys reported a pastor as "somewhat" to "often" burned out. I followed-up with these 29 pastors with a second e-mail inviting them to continue in the study and asking for each qualified pastor to establish date and times for a follow-up interview. Over the span of two weeks, 23 of the 29 responded affirmatively to follow-up interviews. The six pastors who did not participate cited busyness of schedule as the reason for not continuing.

Interview procedure. The 23 pastors who responded affirmatively to engage in a follow-up interview received additional e-mails that included efforts to arrange times to meet that best suited the pastor's schedule. On May 2, 2017, I conducted my first survey; I conducted all 23 interviews over the next 3 weeks. Following the second phase of interview protocol, I started each interview with a short meet and greet, as this was the first time seeing and talking with the participants. I asked each pastor to reiterate that I had his or her consent to conduct and record the interview. When each pastor gave his or her consent, I began the recording. With each interview I noted ideas for improving questions for following interviews. I gave all participants time at the end of the interview to ask questions regarding the nature of the study that arose from the explanation of the study or the actual interview. At the conclusion of each interview, I thanked the participants and asked for permission to follow-up again if I had the need to do so. Again, all of the pastors gave me permission to do so. However, no follow-up interviews were required.

In face-to-face interviews a researcher is also capable of observing participant behavior and reactions to the questions which can also yield information (Janesick, 2011). The limitation of time and space required that I use a virtual device. The GoToMeeting format provided excellent audio and video quality. GoToMeeting also allowed me visual interaction with each participant and provided me the tool to record as well. I also used a pencil and pad for taking notes and impressions from the interview. I took notes regarding gestures, facial expressions, and bodily movement, and the notes allowed me to highlight special areas of interest with each participant. Janesick (2011)

also argued that it is important to work together with the participants to develop shared meaning. The participant and researcher together "exchange information and ideas through questions and responses, resulting in communication and joint construction of meaning" (Janesick, 2011, p. 100). It was critical that a report was created between researcher and participant. If I had needed a secondary interview, it was important that the respondents look forward to additional engagements. No secondary interviews were conducted.

Following the final phase of the interview protocol, I typed up notes and sent the audio files off for transcription. I checked and edited the returned transcripts and sent the transcripts to each participant and asked them to amend or confirm, then entered the data into NVivo. Finally, I sent thank-you e-mails to each participant.

Gathering documents and artifacts. According to Maxwell (2013), gathering information from more than one source helps to provide more robust data. When it became apparent after several interviews that rules and operation guides for leadership structure were documented in *The Discipline* (The Wesleyan Church, 2016), I downloaded that document and consulted it in the interviews that followed. *The Discipline* detailed denominational governing structure, church organizational structure, and expected roles for the pastors. This document provided some background and explanation of the nature and expectations of leadership for clergy and congregation. More importantly, it gave me a reference point in my interviews with the pastors regarding governance, leadership, and structure.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis and management were primarily handled through computer software NVivo (Version 11) and the use of TRINT.com, a Web-based transcription and editing tool. Using semistructured interviews and document studies, I discovered hidden or unspoken assumptions regarding leadership. Using data collected from interviews and documents, I explored the assumptions about leadership and their possible role in burnout theory. I entered the data collected (through taped interviews, interview notes, and physical documents) into NVivo. NVivo also served as the tool through which I managed, coded, and retrieved data. Physical summary sheets were managed in a folder kept in my office under lock and key. Precoding and coding updates occurred over the 3-week period. At the end of each week's interviews, I entered and pre-coded all data.

Data analysis occurred in two phases: (a) the coding process, and (b) word and theme analysis in NVivo. The first phase of coding was open, axial, and selective. Open coding involves reading through the data to find manageable groupings of data and assigning labels to preliminary concepts (Bowen, 2008). Axial coding identifies key concepts and relationships between the open codes and selective coding selects the central or core concepts that emerge after systematic analysis (Bowen, 2008). Open, axial, and selective coding occurred over the 3-week length of the interviewing and document study process. This phase primarily consisted of (a) pre-coding setup, (b) code adjustments, and (c) the labeling of the collected data according to established codes. The first phase occurred over the period of time as data was collected and entered into NVivo and assigned codes for both the interviews and my interview notes. Coding was

conducted along the lines of the research questions, determining what themes emerge around leadership assumptions and what, if any, a relationship can be discovered between leadership assumptions and burnout. This was a hand-coding process with printed material retrieved from the computer. There was a reflective and analytical process to examine how the pre-codes match up with collected data, then adjusted the codes or assigned new codes with the emergence of new themes. Negative case analysis was involved in both the first and second phases, and no data was intentionally omitted or circumvented, providing that the data spoke to the core research questions.

After I entered, coded, and assembled the data together, I then began a second round of analysis to discover what shared themes emerged with all the data present. I performed the second phase of analysis with the use of NVivo software. I analyzed the use of word frequency analysis and text searches, as well as the frequency and relationships between words and themes. I measured the computer-generated reports against my hand-coded results. I had hoped that digging down and associating during this stage would add significant meaning to the data, and would help with data interpretation. This level of analysis did not contribute much to coherent themes or common ideas generated in the first round of analysis.

In the end, the managing and analysis of the data lead finally to the interpretation of the data. According to Maxwell (2013), interpretation is making sense of the data. When data were entered and the two phases of analysis completed, I then approached the data to find meaning. I took several weeks to go over the interview reports, starting with an individual analysis of each interviewee and then reports generated in NVivo that

developed along the lines of specific questions and emergent themes. For discrepancy cases or cases that fall outside of the coding scheme, I made a qualification statement under each coding theme in the result section. Though discrepant cases may fall outside the coding framework, it is important to note them (Maxwell, 2013). Such information may contain assumptions of a smaller grouping of clergy, or the potential of shedding a light on a new or emerging assumption that could serve in future studies.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Although the trustworthiness of a study is not guaranteed, Maxwell (2013) argued that steps could be taken to avoid threats to the validity of a study. I addressed issues of trustworthiness throughout the description and design of this study. For the sake of clarity, specific issues of trustworthiness have been attended to here, including credibility, transferability, and dependability.

Credibility

Credibility is significant to the audience's ability to find the results of a study to be both believable and probable (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). I addressed reliability and validation for this study in specific ways. Maxwell (2013) listed a number of processes as a means for helping establish reliability and validity, including triangulation, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, respondent checks of verification and reflexivity, and rich description.

I addressed triangulation with the use of both interview and document study. I used denominational literature to compare with the answers given by the pastors regarding their understanding of their role as pastor within the Wesleyan denomination. I

also included respondent checks as a part of interview follow-up. Each participant received a written transcript of the interview, which they reviewed for accuracy and each participant was given the opportunity to giving feedback. Additionally, I included negative case analysis. In the analysis of the data, I did not dismiss responses that fell outside of the dominant coding themes but instead used discrepant data to double-check the initial themes for plausibility. Each of these processes enhanced the internal validity of the study.

Researcher bias was noted earlier in this chapter. One way to address and clarify research bias is through reflexive journaling. I recorded reflexive thoughts on the interview forms and a separate journal, both helped to monitor the range of thoughts and reactions I had throughout the data collection and analysis process. Not only did this add to the credibility of the study, but also it added to the study's transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Transferability

In my choice to follow the design of other phenomenological studies, this study itself is an example of transferability. My use of established interview instruments and protocols demonstrates the intent of this particular study to transferable. The approach to data collection through interview and document study is a proven procedure and described in sufficient detail to assure that recreation or follow-up studies can be performed. The sample selection was specific and purposeful, but the population from which the sampling was selected is substantial in size, allowing for similar studies to be executed without the risk of sample overlap.

Dependability

Following Walden University's standards, I designed and followed quality guidelines for qualitative studies. Data management, including data collection and data analysis, is critical to creating study dependability (Patton, 2002). Dependability began with a detailed description of the data collection process and the use of triangulation as a means of using more than one source to verify data. In this case, I determined if the stated documents of the church congruent with the spoken experience of the clergy. With a transparent description of the study process, I created an audit trail to ensure dependability. NVivo software assisted in this regard, as it was the collection point of all interviews, journal notes, and documents. All hard copy of interviews (tapes), journals, notes, summary sheets, and documents remained safely behind lock and key, and will remain nearby for access and confirmability until I destroy the data.

Ethical Procedures

Confidentiality and anonymity are critical requirements for ethical research. Ethical considerations are required for all aspects of the study; from data collection, interview, presentation of the data, and accurateness of reporting. To ensure that this study addressed all ethical concerns, I obtained IRB approval (#02-07-17-0278681) with Walden University before beginning any interaction with the study participants. As a part of the IRB approval, I was required to obtain an up-to-date certification in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidelines for conduction research. I employed NIH guidelines for any data collection practices, the management of all data, and design of any

communication. I treated each participant with utmost respect and gratitude in accordance with Walden IRB and NIH standards.

I conducted the study with voluntary participants only; no special case respondents partook. The primary concern was for proper communication of the terms of involvement, the purpose of involvement, and the consent of involvement. I sent a cover letter to each potential interviewee, which included the introduction of the study and consent form and a simple survey. Participants indicated their consent through returning the survey. I requested subsequent consent for participation and recording of the interview before the interviews began. Participants also had the opportunity to check the transcripts of the interview for accuracy and meaning.

No adverse events occurred through the course of the data; therefore, I did not discontinue the study at any point, nor did I report to the Chair of my committee. I did not fill out or submit an adverse event notification form to the IRB. The data collection process went according to plan, so I did not seek additional guidance from my committee Chair. I made minor adjustments to the interview instrument; however, I followed the interview protocol as previously described. I had no need to submit a Request for Change in Procedures to Walden's IRB.

For many clergy, the issue of anonymity is also a concern since burnout often involves vulnerable and sensitive situations for clergy and their congregations. I addressed such concerns for anonymity in the cover letter sent to each participant. In the primary phase of the data collection and interview, I had access to the names of the participants. Once data collection was finished, all participants were assigned unique IDs

that were used when uploading to the data management software. Before loading the data in the data management software, the data were thoroughly scrubbed to remove all names, locations, or any other indicators that might tie the information to any specific participant. Throughout the coding process, I assigned the data to unique IDs only, which help keep me focused on the data only and assured no access to personal information.

All data remain confidential. The computer I used for data collection and data analysis was password-protected, including the backup storage device. To ensure that all information was securely managed, at the conclusion of the study, the NVivo data file was transferred to an external hard drive and stored along with the rest of the hard copy into a secured and locked device. In 5 years, I will destroy all data (hardcopy and softcopy) to ensure fidelity and confidentiality of the study participants.

Summary

As an exploratory examination of leadership assumptions in the church, I used a qualitative approach in this study. As this study was aimed at the phenomenon of burnout and its possible connection to leadership assumptions, the specific approach was a phenomenological qualitative study. With the helpful and rich dialogue of clergy who are experiencing or have experienced burnout, I explored if current assumptions regarding leadership, especially great man theory, shape the mindsets, definitions, and behaviors regarding how the pastor or minister should lead in the context of the church, and that these leadership behaviors and mindsets are burning out pastors and ministers.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. The central research question for this study was, "What are clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?" I also asked, "How does the great man theory contribute to clergy perceptions about leadership?" In this chapter, I present the context in which the study was conducted, participant demographics, the method used for data collection, the technique used for data analysis, evidence of the study's trustworthiness, and finally the results of the study.

Research Setting

The sampling strategy employed for this study was purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is used to recognize specific participants with in-depth knowledge, who can offer rich data regarding leadership assumptions and burnout (Patton, 2002). Each participant should come from a common context and have shared experience in common (Compton-Lilly et al., 2014). Each participant in this study met the following criteria: (a) a pastor in the Wesleyan denomination, (b) located in the Midwest, (c) a senior pastor of a congregation, (d) in a congregation of no more than 250 members, and (e) experiencing some level of burnout. The pilot study participants were an exception as they met only the criteria of senior pastor, congregation size, and experienced burnout.

I interviewed each participant via GoToMeeting.com, a web-based conferencing tool. This tool was used for both pilot and final study. The pilot study provided satisfactory support that web-based conferencing was an effective tool for use in data

collection. Because the participants lived in several different states (Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, etc.), the Internet provided an effective avenue for engagement. I offered the participants a choice of when and where the interview took place, and GoToMeeting allowed pastors to engage both visually and verbally and to choose a device that was most convenient to use, whether that was a smart-phone, tablet, or computer. Through mobile devices and with the freedom to choose time and location, I afforded the pastors the opportunity to be comfortable and relaxed. Most interviewees chose to meet in their church offices or homes, and all but one used a computer as opposed to using a mobile device.

Demographics

I explored the understanding of leadership with 23 pastors in the Midwest region of the Wesleyan denomination who were experiencing some degree of burnout. Each indicated that they were following the prescribed job description found in *The Discipline* (The Wesleyan Church, 2016) to the best of their knowledge and capability. Each was responsible for the specific congregation to which they had been assigned. Although each pastor had the help of additional leaders, most of whom were voluntary, each pastor interviewed was held accountable to and reported to the Wesleyan Denomination. Of the 23 pastors, 21 were men and two were women. All were Caucasian.

Table 1

Pastor Demographics

Participant ID	Gender	Ethnicity	Location	Age
02	Male	Caucasian	Michigan	NA
03	Male	Caucasian	Illinois	NA
05	Male	Caucasian	Iowa	NA
06	Male	Caucasian	Michigan	NA
08	Male	Caucasian	Michigan	NA
09	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
10	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
12	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
13	Male	Caucasian	Indiana	NA
14	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
17	Male	Caucasian	Indiana	NA
18	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
19	Male	Caucasian	Indiana	NA
20	Female	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
21	Male	Caucasian	Iowa	NA
22	Male	Caucasian	Iowa	NA
23	Male	Caucasian	Iowa	NA
24	Male	Caucasian	Michigan	NA
25	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
26	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
27	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
28	Male	Caucasian	Ohio	NA
29	Female	Caucasian	Iowa	NA

Burnout was manifested in each participant, regardless of age, education, or experience. None of these were factors in the study. Because age was not a factor in the study, I made no attempt at finding out the participants' ages. From the interviews, however, I learned that several pastors were in their 60s and nearing retirement. One participant indicated that he had just graduated from Bible College and was young in appearance. Most of the pastors fell in the middle of that range. Education was also not a factor, although when discussing leadership theory, most of the pastors indicated that they had had some exposure to leadership theory in higher education; two described having Doctorates of Ministry. Of those who indicated their level of education, most identified themselves as having a Masters of Divinity, and one shared that he was just out of Bible College. Most were seasoned pastors who described many years in the role as senior pastor. The bulk of the participants described having more than 10 years of experience; however, there were two younger pastors who were quick to admit their youth and the relative newness to their position.

Data Collection

I collected data from 23 Wesleyan pastors in the Midwest who fit all criteria for eligibility. I conducted 23 semistructured, in-depth interviews. The interviews provided substantial data and due to consistency in responses between participants, I chose to stop at that number. In the initial contact via e-mail, I invited pastors to take a short burnout survey. I contacted 29 pastors who returned the survey and whose answers indicated signs of burnout. Twenty-three pastors agreed to continue in the study through GoToMeeting.com, a web-based conference service. After gaining consent, I conducted

23 interviews that ranged from 30 minutes to 40 minutes over a period of 3 weeks. I conducted the first interview on May 2, 2017, and the final interview on May 16, 2017. I recorded each interview using GoToMeetings digital recording device, which is embedded in the web application. I transcribed each recording through the trint.com transcription service. Each participant received a copy of his or her interview transcription and validated the data collected.

I implemented the data collection plan as submitted to and approved by Walden's IRB. I made some minor wording changes for better understanding to the interview instrument and a change in the order of questions for better interview flow. Qualitative studies by nature are emergent and these minor changes occurred as a result of the first two interviews conducted; therefore, the modifications fell within the normal parameters of a qualitative study. No change form was submitted to the IRB. I did not encounter any unusual circumstances, except with one pastor who chose not to turn off his mobile phone, which interrupted our interview on two occasions. Nevertheless, the interview proceeded and was completed. Outside of that, all interviews were cordial, respectful, and free of interruption.

Data Analysis

The findings related in this chapter come from analysis and interpretation of the data collection. Data collected included the transcribed interviews, field notes, observations, and reports generated in NVivo (Version 11). The coding process occurred over a 5-week period. The first 3 weeks involved initial or precoding based on the questions in the interview and early answers provided by the participants. As the

participant described the understanding of leadership and burnout, which is the general research question of this study, I continued hand-coding following each interview based on the field notes and recordings and developed lists of statements, repeated words or phrases that emerged over the course of the interviews. I used these hand-codes as nodes in NVivo, which provided the basis for queries in NVivo. I developed these initial codes further during the next 2 weeks, in which I pored over the transcriptions, audio recordings, and reports generated in NVivo in length and in detail.

The hand-coding process continued with the development of themes (see Table 2). I collated the initial key concepts and codes into larger groups of ideas and themes that the pastors conveyed about leadership and burnout. The coding process was open, axial, and selective. In Table 2 the key concepts are listed on the left column that helped define the themes on the right column.

Table 2

Key Concepts and Themes

Key Concepts	**Themes**
• Denominational structure • Top role in church (direction, oversight) • Describing the church in levels • Ultimate responsibility	Leadership as hierarchical
• Purpose of leadership is to empower • Define their own role as equipper • Need to develop leaders • Seeking "buy-in" from congregation • Do not desire to do all the work	Leadership as empowering
• Leadership concepts derived alone • Pastor ultimately responsible • Feeling compelled to make sure work is done even if they had to do it themselves • "Buck stops with me" • Solely liable to keep church on mission	Leadership as a solo actor
• Sense of being "called" • Centrality of pastor's role in church mission • Driven by sacred texts • Pastor's job to hear from God for church • Be a tangible expression on Christ on earth • Bring "glory to God" • Build the kingdom of God	Leadership within a divine image
• Vision casting • Goal orientation • Goal attainment • Numbers orientation	Leadership and professional orientation
• Paid position over volunteer members • Need for follower "buy-in" • Tension between clergy / laity • Constant pressure to encourage engagement	Leadership and follower relationship
• Special call to be "role models" • Church members follow the pastor's lead	Leadership by example
• Seeing the connection between leadership understanding and burnout • Seeing external influences on burnout • Seeing internal influences on burnout	Leadership and burnout

In the end, I generated a cultural and organizational description of leadership based on the themes that emerged from the pastors' experience. A brief description of the theme is located in Table 1. A fuller description is provided later in the chapter on how each theme fit into their experience of burnout. Not all pastors understood leadership exactly the same way; therefore, not every pastor spoke regarding each theme. Discrepancies are noted later in the chapter in the discussion of each theme and interview question.

Table 3

Final Themes and Descriptions

Theme	Description
Leadership as hierarchical	The role of the pastor fits into a larger hierarchy within the Wesleyan denomination. Pastors see themselves as above the congregation, as guide and director.
Leadership as empowering	The role of the pastor is to equip and enable those in the congregation to do the work of the church.
Leadership as a solo actor	Pastors operate alone in much of the work and in bearing much of the responsibility
Leadership within a divine image	Pastors feel more compelled to work hard and more hours because they link their specific role as pastor and the activities with the church as divinely inspired.
Leadership and professional orientation	Pastors place a heavy emphasis on setting a vision, setting goals, and achievement of the goals. Goals also linked to business models and numbers orientation.
Leadership and follower relationship	Pastors see a definite link between their success and follower participation.
Leadership by example	Pastors place a high emphasis on leading by example or modeling.
Leadership and burnout	Pastors make a connection between their assumptions about leadership and experienced burnout.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

For the purpose of credibility, I secured IRB approval in February 2017 and followed the IRB guidelines throughout the data collection process. I also recorded the quality of the data collection and data analysis process. The collecting of both documents and interviews allowed for data triangulation and greater veracity of the data and through member-checking the validity of the data. I supported credibility by employing both hand-coding and computer software (NVivo) to data analysis.

Transferability

As outlined in Chapter 3, I used detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis process to ensure transferability. In-depth details of the purposeful sampling process, including specific criteria used for identifying participants, allows for potential recreations or follow-up studies. Thorough accounting of the recruitment process, research setting, and data collection process of this study also enhanced transferability.

Dependability

A dependable study requires accurateness and regularity (Hays et al., 2016). Through the provision of a data audit, I have demonstrated the extent to which I followed proper research practices and have given future researchers a prototype by which to do repeat studies. I have also demonstrated my own learning development through the adaptation in the collection process and in the multiple phases of coding and theme development.

Confirmability

Patton (2002) argued that true objectivity is not attainable, so fairness in reporting research should be the aim, which requires a reasonable account for research bias. To reduce the impact of bias, I communicated from the start my own leanings and ways to mitigate. In the actual data collection process, I engaged member-checking to allow participants to check the data for accuracy. I also employed bracketing through open-ended questions to encourage nonslanted responses from the participants and also used personal reflection in journaling to monitor my own involvement in the data collection process.

Study Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church. The central research question for this study was, "What are clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?" I also asked, "How does the great man theory contribute to clergy perceptions about leadership?" In this study, I explored how the clergy understand leadership in the church, including the roles and structures that govern it, and how the underlying assumptions about leadership are associated with clergy burnout within Wesleyan Churches.

From 23 interviews, I obtained just over 200 meaningful statements addressing leadership in the church and experienced burnout. Following Maxwell's (2013) simplified categorizing strategy, I grouped and compared meaningful units of data based on similarity and contiguity or based on differences and inconsistencies. I looked for how

ideas were connected and grouped these into themes. For the differences, I recorded the many different ideas conveyed by the pastor and set them side by side for comparison.

In this results section, I will first present the findings through simple tables that present the different responses shared by the pastors. There are 11 tables in total; in each table, I assembled the pastors' statements into basic groupings and included the frequency of those statements. Each table will follow with a brief description of the intent of the question and modest analysis. That will be followed by a more robust analysis that connects similar and meaningful data into synthesized ideas that emerged from the pastor's statements on leadership. These synthesized ideas will be presented as eight distinct themes (see Table 1).

Result Tables

Table 4

Question: Give a Basic Description of Your Role as Leader in Your Church

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Give direction to staff, board, trustees	21	02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Preach / Teach	12	02, 03, 05, 06, 09, 10, 13, 14, 18, 20, 26, 27
Cast vision	12	03, 08, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25, 28
Pastoral care / visitation	8	02, 12, 17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27
Develop leaders	8	05, 12, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
Plan and coordinate worship service	6	02, 06, 09, 18, 24, 26
Church office administration	6	13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20

In asking this question, I was interested in understanding what specific tasks the pastors assigned to leadership. When asking this question, I was careful to emphasize the word *leader.* Several were able to articulate the difference between pastoral functions and leadership and answered accordingly. Nonetheless, many immediately began to describe their pastoral role and administrative role together as one singular function. Some began to add value to those tasks by describing the need for the pastor to be a role model for the church in the execution of those tasks.

> I feel that my role as a leader centers around organizing my community in such a way that it fulfills its purpose. So that's constantly what I'm doing with my leadership hat as I measuring my effectiveness by the goals. And the parameters that our vision team has set with the goals the mission the values the focus statement. And if I see that something is inefficient then I address it. Now as a pastor I feel that I know there obviously hand in hand but I feel that that is caring for the people in my community. So I guess one is ordering the community the other is caring for my community. (Participant 17)

> I do just about every aspect of the church. I plan worship services, I preach, I teach youth Sunday school on occasion or fill in for Sunday school. The pastor in the Wesleyan church is the chair of the board of any board that they have. I have to chair the LBA, that is the local board of administration. So you do all of that stuff and the hospital visits. I do occasional home visits. I don't really do too many of those unless somebody specifically asked me to do. Funerals, weddings,

organized outreach events. Even if I delegate it I still have to oversee it. (Participant 26)

Table 5

Question: Who is Responsible for Defining Your Role as the Leader?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Self-determined	23	02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29
Local Church Board	11	05, 06, 08, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 24, 25, 26,
Wesleyan District	8	03, 06, 08, 09, 17, 21, 23, 27,
People in the congregation	3	08, 21, 27
Role emerged/developed over time	8	03, 08, 09, 18, 19, 25, 26, 28,

The purpose of this question was to understand how much of the pastors' role is dictated to them and how much is self-determined. I was interested in discerning the pastors' perception of how much control they had in defining their role, and to what extent the freedom they had to change it if it was contributing to burnout.

Every pastor declared that they had some role in determining their role. All but one pastor communicated that as pastor, they themselves had the most significant voice in the role definition.

> My role is in in large part defined in part and in set by the Wesleyan church and their guidebook called the Wesleyan discipline. But then more specifically it's a role that in large part I kind of shape and define and kind of tweak and shift as the church grows. (Participant 03)

A little bit of all three. A denomination does have that in the manual as to what are the responsibilities of a local church pastor. And then the board also gives me direction on what they hope to see me do and want me accomplishing. But I do have a lot of leeway myself as far as when I do. (Participant 06)

Really. I would say I do because it's basically up to me what kind of leadership role I take. (Participant 25)

Table 6

Question: Define Effective Leadership

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Communicates direction and is able to move the people in the same direction	10	03, 06, 08, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27,
Evidence of change in people or church/Able to get things done	9	02, 08, 09, 12, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26
Has Godly influence / Sets a Good example	7	03, 05, 13, 23, 25, 26, 27
Faithful with what God has given	7	09, 10, 13, 20, 21, 24, 27
Empowers people	6	02, 09, 10, 17, 23, 26

In Table 4, the intent of this question about leadership effectiveness was to understand what the pastors saw as ideal leadership. The question asked the pastors to add value statements to the role of leadership. Communicating direction was seen as critical components of leadership effectiveness, so was accomplishment. Several pastors elaborated on their statements about direction and accomplishments by adding the need to model for the people and empower the people.

> Well I would say that it has to do with their casting their vision and communicating that keeping in front of the people. In a way that, Inspires and influences people to help. Come alongside and accomplish that vision. (Participant 06)

> I've discovered that effectiveness is when you're able to empower others and get others to come on board and do their part. (Participant 18)

Table 7

Question: How do you Define Leadership Success?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Expands the Kingdom of God / sees conversions	11	02, 08, 10, 13, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29
Communicates the vision of the church clearly so that it is understood and people buy in.	10	05, 09, 12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28
Accomplishes or is working toward the accomplishment of goals	10	02, 03, 06, 09, 10, 17, 19, 20, 27, 28
Empowers people	6	05, 08, 10, 14, 23, 27
Understands that it is a process	4	03, 18, 24, 28
One who survives	1	18

The question in Table 5 is similar in intent to the question in Table 4. The question about leadership success was intended to discover what the pastors saw as ideal leadership and to add value statements to the role of leadership. Participation in the Kingdom of God was the primary response. However, as with effectiveness, the concepts of vision and accomplishment were seen as critical components of leadership. Several pastors elaborated on their statements about direction and accomplishments by describing

an attitude of *all in* from the people. Only participants 17 and 19 indicated that numbers (church attendance, conversions) were a sign of success, while participants 02, 25, 26, and 29 communicated that numbers were not a part of their mental map.

> The first thing would probably have to be there is a clear vision and strategy in place. Second thing would have to be that you are mobilizing additional people toward that goal. And the third thing would be that you are sending people out into new settings to expand not just the reach of your ministry but to multiply that. (Participant 05)

> I'm feeling that I'm being successful when I'm transferring, And that's probably stage a life thing here, But when I'm transferring Authority and power and skills to another generation to be able to carry on and continue to build the Kingdom. That's success. Having a large crowd is to me is not necessarily a success. But building the Kingdom and seeing that going forward to me is the thing I really want to accomplish. (Participant 08)

> I would define leadership success . . . at the end of the day we've got a mission to accomplish. (Participant 28)

Table 8

Question: What happens when you as a Leader are not Successful?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Effects mission of the church/purpose is not accomplished	7	03, 08, 10, 14, 19, 21, 25
Need to try harder, make changes and get back to work	5	05, 10, 24, 26, 28
Question self-worth/lower self-esteem	3	02, 08, 26
People question my ability	3	06, 08, 14
Depression	1	19

With 12 of the pastors, I asked a follow-up question about the consequences of failure. Answers varied greatly on this question, as the pastors identified failure differently. Nevertheless, there seemed to be two directions that the pastors took: (a) this was a church problem or (b) this was a personal problem.

> Well it's frustrating, you invest in people, and you pour your blood sweat and tears into people and, yeah it hurts. It's draining; In the course of the time people start questioning I am I doing any good at all. (Participant 08)

> I think if I didn't hit some of the targets a long way if we weren't moving in the right direction I think there would be two perspectives. From my perspective, the thing that typically would set in is sort of I wouldn't say depression but more of anxiousness or just an uneasiness. I think from the perspective of the congregation, if they felt like they weren't moving in the right direction or that the church as a whole wasn't moving in the right direction that they would be more apt to sort of point the finger in my direction. (Participant 19)

Table 9

Question: What is the Purpose of Leadership in the Church?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Influence toward Christlikeness (model, shepherd, disciple)	12	03, 05, 06, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 27
Keep the church on mission	12	02, 05, 06, 09, 10, 12, 13, 17, 19, 24, 25, 27
Equip people to do the work of the mission	10	02, 05, 06, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 25, 26
Leverage assets/steward resources	4	10, 17, 21, 24
Empowers people	6	05, 09, 10, 23, 25, 26

This is another question that searched for the meaning of leadership. Instead of adding values to the meaning of leadership, such as effective or successful, I wanted to understand the mindset of leadership strictly from a pragmatic stance. By asking the pastors about purpose, I hoped to discover what they believed regarding the foundational nature of leadership. For the most part, there was an impersonal viewpoint in their responses toward keeping the church and congregation on task or mission. All answers focused on people and mission.

> The main task of leadership is to be recruiting and developing new leaders and establishing vision and direction, strategy and that kind of stuff. Now once you get the vision and strategy established, then you've got to get them to actually doing it. So sure like at that point it becomes more of a lead by example. (Participant 05)

In the Church, leadership points people to Christ; gets people in the same boat rowing in the same direction. (Participant 10)

Well I think being a shepherd. I tend to think of myself as a shepherd. And sometimes the sheep can walk along with the gentle leading and thereby I go along with it. Sometimes you just might have to take your shepherd's staff and grab them by the neck and kind of pull them back a little bit. I guess being a shepherd is the main illustration in my mind, or the main picture that I have in my mind as being a leader. (Participant 14)

To move the people beyond themselves and become what God would have them be whatever that is. (Participant 21)

Table 10

Question: How did you Derive at that Purpose? Who Defines Purpose for you?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Word of God	12	02, 03, 05, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 27
Previous mentors/examples	11	05, 06, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24
Books on leadership	8	02, 03, 05, 10, 14, 17, 19, 27
Conferences/classes	6	02, 05, 14, 19, 21, 25
Came to it on my own	5	06, 09, 12, 13, 17

In Table 10, I was interested in discovering what influences shaped the pastors' understanding of leadership. For the most part, the Bible, books, and mentors played the most significant role in shaping pastors' understanding of leadership and its purpose. Several pastors stated that the way that they lead was influenced by multiple sources. When it came to books, one name in specific showed up: John Maxwell. One pastor explained to me that Maxwell has some history with the Wesleyan Church, which was why so many of the pastors had read his material.

> Yeah I believe they have given me the freedom to define that. So then the question becomes where am I getting that definition? And I think I'm hopefully getting that definition from scripture. (Participant 10)

> 21 years of ministry, there's no one source for that. Obviously as we study the scriptures I believe every bit of that comes out. I think a lot has been trial and error through the years. There has been seeing those that have gone before me and striving to learn from them so there's no one easy answer to that, it's just a mass of various sources. So Scripture obviously sets the foundation….But then godly people that have set an example and then of course self-study. And then just trial and error through the years. I don't know… that's a good question but it's a hard question. There's no easy way to answer that. It's just many sources congregate to arrive at that (Participant 13)

> I go to many conferences and some in the church the Wesleyan church, some outside the church. I glean from other leaders and people what it is. (Participant 21)

Table 11

Question: What Leadership Style or Theory do you Follow as Leader?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
None/Not aware of current theories	12	02, 06, 09, 10, 13, 17, 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29
Conglomerate of several theories	4	05, 10, 13, 17
Style proposed by John Maxwell	4	03, 05, 06, 25
Clearly identified specific theory or style (Shepherding, Team building, strategic)	3	08, 12, 19

Similar to Table 10, the Table 11 question asked what specific leadership theory or style influences the pastors' understanding of leadership. Three pastors were able to identify and describe specific leadership theories or styles they had adopted; however, 12 of the pastors could not identify any specific style and in most cases did not know any theories or styles that existed. Similar to the question in Table 10, several pastors stated that the way that they lead was influenced by multiple sources; one word that was mentioned several times was a conglomerate of theories.

> Well it's been a while since I've studied really any of those. I'm an old time student of John Maxwell from way back in the early 90s. I went to all his seminars and read a lot of his books. (Participant 06)

> I guess that question kind of makes me feel vulnerable because I don't have an immediate answer. Yeah I mean I could shoot the breeze about stuff that I do and things like that but at the end of the day it's a conglomeration of what I've picked up over the years. (Participant 17)

Table 12

Question: Define the Purpose of the Church

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Seek the lost	18	02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
Develop followers/disciples of Christ	14	02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 12, 14, 18, 19, 21, 23, 28, 29
Serve the community	12	02, 06, 10, 12, 17, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
Love God / Worship God	7	03, 08, 09, 10, 13, 19, 23
Build the kingdom of God	6	02, 09, 17, 21, 24, 25
Be a tangible expression of Christ on earth	5	10, 20, 24, 27, 28
Bring glory to God	4	08, 10, 13, 25
Equip the saints	4	08, 13, 27, 29

My main interest with this question was to have the pastors identify the context in which they lead. Instead of asking for the purpose of their specific church, I instead asked to them to describe a more general context by identifying the reason for the purpose of the church in a universal sense. Answers varied, but most answers fell into two categories. The first was an outside the church emphasis with answers that described church purpose as seeking the lost, serving the community, and worshipping God. The

second described church purpose with an inside the church focus with answers such as develop followers and equip the saints. In one case a participant argued that there was general purpose for all churches and specific and unique purpose for local congregations. No one else shared this orientation.

> I would see the purpose of the church as a Kingdom-building entity. So they're called to be on mission to help enlarge the kingdom of God in his various facets in this world, which would involve a number of things. But it would involve people coming to faith in Christ and becoming committed Christ's followers. It would involve serving in the community so that others might experience the love of Christ through believers. (Participant 02)

> The purpose is to carry out the great commission and making disciples. Baptizing teaching people helping them to grow deeper, constantly reaching out and doing so in the spirit of a great commandment loving the Lord and loving others. (Participant 19)

> I think Jesus made it clear that when Jesus walked the earth his physical body and who he embodied as a person was sort of the example that he came to heal, and to proclaim, and to teach, and to include people. I think those are the things that Jesus said, when the church is referred to is his body. And he said to his disciples go and make disciples of all nations and teaching them everything that I have taught you to obey baptizing them. And I think the mission of the church; the

purpose of the church is to do that. It's to create the kind of community that is the body of Christ that embodies all of the same the values of Jesus into this world. (Participant 28)

Table 13

Question: Who is Responsible for Seeing the Church Purpose Come to Fruition?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
"Buck stops with me"	20	02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29
The pastor (themselves)	20	03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28
The larger church	8	05, 08, 09, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21, 28
God	4	10, 13, 21, 28
Leadership team/church board	4	03, 09, 12, 26

After identifying the church purpose, I wanted to discover the leaders' role in that. Since the church is made up of many members, boards, and other leaders, it was important to understand how dispersed the responsibility would be. Twenty of the 23 pastors identified themselves as chiefly responsible. For clarification, I asked if the buck stopped with them. In each of those cases, the answer was yes, some emphatically so. Several pastors did not see themselves as solely responsible, however, and mentioned other parties involved like the congregation, other leaders, and even God Himself.

I would say the local church is. And does that mean the head pastor is you bet. Does that mean the board is you bet. Does that mean the lay leaders are

responsible for that you bet. From the from the top to the bottom and the bottom to the top. (Participant 03)

In my context it's the Holy Spirits leading. He's always got to be number one. But then with his choice to use me then I would say the buck stops with me. So many things rise and fall on my responsibility as a pastor. And again that's placing everything in the Lord's hands. But I've got free will that I can either do what he's called me to do to the best of my abilities or I can sit back on my hands and just magically want it to happen. So I think the senior pastor obviously has so much to say because he's casting a vision. No matter where you go, be it our country or the local church, you have people that are always looking to its leader where do we go now. (Participant 130

Ultimately the entire church but that's going to go back to that leader or the pastor. (Participant 18)

Table 14

Question: Do you see any Link Between your Understanding of Leadership and your Feelings of Burnout?

Response	Frequency	Respondents
Yes	20	03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29
* Yes and other factors as well	7	03, 06, 14, 19, 23, 25, 27
No, burnout due to other personal reasons	3	02, 24, 26

With 20-25 minutes of discussion about their understanding of leadership as a reference point, it was my intent to see how many pastors would identify their understanding of leadership with burnout. Up to this point, I made no mention of burnout. With each interviewee, I would read back their specific responses regarding their understanding of leadership and then ask if they could connect feelings of burnout with their understanding and descriptions of leadership. In most cases, the interviewee paused for a few seconds before answering regardless of their answer.

> Yes, I think the expectations over time have grown higher and higher. So it's that's the constant battle I think.…Like I said before it's a continual back to me. I'm technically never off. Well you need to be available 24/7 and all that. (Participant 09)

> Definite. In fact the time the ministry has been the most joyful and the most rewarding are the times that others have come along and been a part of it. I could think that the idea of lone ranger, "buck stops here", is huge when it comes to the burnout not just because there aren't others with you but just because of the fact that the responsibility lies there as well. (Participant 18)

> Yes I think so. Definitely. Because I see the leader as the main energy person. And so if I'm not positive, even though I may not feel that. But if I'm not inspired about the vision and as I am I'm pretty hands on when it comes to the vision too because I'm passionate about what we do and I believe it matters. (Participant 20)

> I'm guessing no. And I know that's not what you're looking for. I'm a very driven personality and I put a lot of internal pressure on myself to succeed…. So I think most of the stuff that I battled just an internal conflict. I like to work. I could work 80 hours a week and never take a vacation. (Participant 26)

Theme 1: Leadership as Hierarchical

The governmental structure for the Wesleyan denomination is outlined in *The Discipline* (The Wesleyan Church, 2016). In the United States, the Wesleyan Denomination follows a fairly simple hierarchical structure. The General Conference is the governing body of the denomination. The General Superintendent heads the General Conference a team that supports him or her. Together they guide and direct the denomination and give support to the District Superintendents, the next layer of leadership. The District Superintendent is regionally based and gives direction and support to the pastors. The pastor oversees a local congregation.

This simple form of hierarchy is also demonstrated in the local church, where the pastor oversees and is part of a local board of administrators and sometimes leadership team that guides and directs the church toward accomplishing a general mission described in *The Discipline*. *The Discipline* also described 34 specific tasks that the pastor is expected to accomplish in the local church.

In the interviews, 23 of the 23 pastors described their place in the overall hierarchy of the denomination as well as their role as the top leader in the local church as a matter-of-fact. No pastors questioned the hierarchical structure, although most

recognized that it put them in a position of ultimate authority for the church decision-making and church success. In this regard, there were mixed responses of regret of being alone in this position, or passive acceptance of things that are not changeable, or feelings of honor in carrying meaningful responsibility. Three pastors expressed some regrets and even bitterness about how a particular situation was handled by their direct superiors. Those pastors who expressed dissatisfaction also regretted the lack of input they had in the decision-making process.

The Bible was a significant influence in defining the purpose of leadership, with 12 of the pastors (Participants 02, 03, 05, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, and 27) making general references to the Bible or specific references to a Biblical text. Of the 12 who did reference the Bible, I asked eight of them if they were aware that the Bible does not explicitly support hierarchical leadership. No pastor challenged that statement. All of those pastors acknowledged that as true, and they did not give explanation or justification for their use of that model. The following quotes help to summarize the hierarchical dimension of leadership:

> Everybody understands the hierarchy of the Wesleyan Church here. (Participant 10)

> It's like the situation I just was dealing with of solving a thing at the lowest possible level. You don't have to get the hierarchy of the leadership involved if it can be solved at the lowest level. There's no reason to go all the way up to the pastor to find out if I can buy a box of staples. (Participant 09)

> The Bible certainly doesn't support the kind of hierarchy that we're living with. As far as people being responsible for other people, I think the New Testament is full of that. Paul telling Timothy what it's going to take to be an overseer and what's required of that person there. Couple thousand years of church history. A lot of the things that I do as I mentioned it's partially self-define but a lot of it's from the denomination too. (Participant 27)

> I think our last job description was written while ago so it has much more what I'd call top-down type of leadership responsible for this supervising staff. (Participant 28)

Theme 2: Leadership as Empowering

Another understanding about leadership that pastors communicated comprehended the operation of leadership as equipping and empowering the congregants. Sixteen of the 23 pastors (Participants 02, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, and 29) used one of those words to describe leadership. Sixteen of 23 pastors (Participants 05, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28) described leadership success as empowering the congregation or getting buy-in from church members, and 12 of the pastors (Participants 02, 05, 06, 09, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, and 26) described equipping and empowering people in the church as the purpose of leadership.

> Well, my idea of the purpose of leadership is exactly what Scripture says to train and equip other people to do work in ministry and to lead them into that to be able to do that rather than having to do all the ministry myself. I know it's very tied in with the definition of what a pastor is. (Participant 25)

> If I knew I was being effective, I would desire my leadership to be really equipping the Saints to do ministry, really enabling them to serve in their gifting, encouraging them, empowering them, educating them, equipping them to do that. To discover what it is and then somehow, however we can resource them, to do it all for the glory of God. (Participant 10)

> I think we in the church leadership have perpetuated that institutional model so to speak . . . where the pastor sort of run everything and we sort of make yourself indispensable and everybody has to rely on us. But I think the biblical model that we're unfortunately slowly coming to is pastors are really there to equip others to go serve not to serve the people of the church but equip others to go and serve the community in the community of nonbelievers and in the whole the world around us. (Participant 28)

Pastors often described contexts in which church members were passive or in some cases resistant to get more engaged in church activities. Only one pastor (Participant 23) described a church setting or leadership structure that Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, and Bligh (2015) described as more conducive to empowering people,

such as participatory decision-making or shared leadership. The following are some quotes that reflect these ideas:

> I think part of that is the previous generation pastors have not done well at training people to do ministry. They've kind of created the idea that the pastor is the professional minister and that's my job and you don't need to do anything. And which I don't believe number one is Biblical. And number two is just a horrible model. And then you come into a church that has had that pushed on them for years and years. Our church has gone on a hundred years old. When that's what they've seen, that's what they expect. (Participant 25)

> Well, first of all, you're not a leader if no one is following you. So effective leadership in my mind would be setting the tone you're setting the vision casting the vision for the people and you encourage people to follow you and go along with your vision. And if they don't follow that doesn't necessarily in my mind it doesn't necessarily mean that you're not the leader. It just sometimes it means the sheep are stubborn. (Participant 14)

Theme 3: Leadership as a Solo Actor

Another significant understanding about leadership was expressed in the idea of the pastor as a solo actor. Either in an upfront role calling the shots, or self-determining their own job description and in some cases doing the work as well. In many settings, the pastor had developed a team of salaried or volunteer leaders to help accomplish the mission of the church. This did not always alleviate the sense of responsibility that the

pastors alone felt about needing to get the work of the church done. Pastors described workloads that fell directly on them, that they single-handedly were charged with completing. Twenty-two of the pastors described the responsibility for the church's mission and operating tasks that fell directly on them even if they themselves did not directly do the task. Participant 28 alone said that the responsibility fell to the entire congregation. Two pastors described feeling deserted and alone in the work. Here are some quotes that describe this idea.

> Now if they don't see it in me then nobody else is probably going to do it. So that's why I'm saying ultimately I have to be the person who talks about this the most who tries to visualize this the most. And partly because I'm the person who's most visible to the congregation on a regular basis. (Participant 12)

> But then with his choice to use me then I would say the buck stops with me. So many things rise and fall on my responsibility as a pastor. . . . So I think the senior pastor obviously has so much to say because he's casting a vision. No matter where you go, be it our country or the local church, you have people that are always looking to its leader where do we go now. (Participant 13)

In terms of role definition, eight pastors (Participants 02, 03, 05, 09, 13, 21, 24, and 25) who described their role as leader explained how in their church context, said that they were responsible for everything. Without any prompting from me, most pastors that answered that way felt the need to justify or explain that response. For the most part, that condition was self-induced. All 23 pastors stated that they had a certain degree of

freedom or autonomy when deciding which tasks he or she would spend time and energy on. Twenty-two of the 23 stated that they had the most significant share in determining their leadership role. Only one pastor (Participant 08) acknowledged that the district superintendent and local board of administrators played a more significant part in defining their role as a leader than themselves.

Still, several pastors (Participants 08, 21, and 27) pointed to church members and the congregant expectations as a significant factor in their role definition. Pastors also described how many congregants had expectations for the pastors to do all the work, or the unwillingness of congregants to step up. Pastors also cited the poor quality of work by the congregants as a reason for the pastor to pick up every task. Two pastors (Participants 03 and 20) admitted that they were fearful of the church failing, so they were willing to do more for the church. A few pastors were more reflective and described that they did not want to, but felt compelled to do extra work.

> Last year . . . one of my classmates, as we were talking said I'm kind of like a benevolent autocrat where everything stops on my desk. Not so much because I want to but because that's what the congregation expects. (Participant 02)

> By nature I'm a perfectionist I like to make sure everything gets done and gets done well and gets done right. (Participant 03)

> But if I'm going to be perfectly honest with you the criticism that we get routinely from our district superintendent is that we have a lot of very nice people but not a

> lot of true dynamic leaders. It's something that we've been working on for several years. But we're not there yet. So we're still in that area where we are forced to do everything. The buck stops with me simply because we don't have anybody who knows or any of that. (Participant 05)

> It's something I really struggled with almost in every church that I've been in because they've been small churches and there's been a lot who have really battled the philosophy that the pastor needs to do everything. And the laypeople have, so many have taken on the attitude, "Well I show up and other than that we pay the pastor to do the ministry." And it's really hard to get to convince people that that's not correct. (Participant 25)

> I mean there are things that I do that drain me. And I do get cynical on some things in the church because there are some things I do that really other people could do. But I get tired of them falling through the cracks. And I like to do everything and I'm trying to figure out what the best things are and I will always default to helping people (Participant 24)

Regarding pastors' feeling of ultimate responsibility for the church, 20 of the 23 pastors described themselves as having responsibility for seeing the purpose of the church come to fruition. (Only participants 02, 10, and 29 saw the main responsibility elsewhere.) Not one of the pastors felt the need to justify this position. Twenty of the 23 agreed that at the end of the day, the buck stopped with them. One pastor (Participant 10)

stated that on paper it does not look like that but in practice, the buck stops with him. Although the pastors agreed with the statement, some expressed some regret over that.

Not all the pastors shared those feeling. Three pastors (Participants 12, 26, and 28) responded that the responsibility did not ultimately fall on them. One of those pastors (Participant 28) also mentioned that is was a great temptation to think that way. When I asked why he thought it was a temptation to think that the pastor alone is ultimately responsible, he responded that his church and many others are pastor-centric, which he described as an orientation by both pastors and congregants to think of pastors as professionals who are paid to do the work. He also mentioned that he did not think that his church members would ever step up and take more responsibility while there existed paid staff to do the work:

> I would shoulder that. I would say I have a tendency to agree with that, probably too much…the danger in that is a shrugging of responsibility of leadership. And I think the good thing that is the responsibility of leadership right now is once you become a lead pastor or a senior pastor or whatever you do you agree to go first you agree to sacrifice as much as if not more than others. (Participant 03)

> 100 percent. Yeah. Yeah, that's our job, and by that I mean it's our job to bring along the church. So it's certainly it's not ours to just carry it out. I mean we certainly see for those who call this place their home that we're all responsible for fulfilling that mission and being a part of it together. But it is our job is as a staff to keep it in front of this congregation and to continually come up with creative

> ways to fine-tune and readdress the same thing and to assess ourselves and discover whether we're being successful or not. (Participant 22)

Theme 4: Leadership Shaped by Divine Image

With many of the pastors, the willingness to bear the workload and responsibility came down to a divine sense of obligation. Pastors saw their work as beyond a simple occupation or job. The work of the church is rooted in a divine mandate of Christ to go into the world and make disciples. For those who choose to follow that mandate as a full-time endeavor, it requires divine inspiration or divine calling. Furthermore, pastors often saw their role as leaders as special emissaries from God. Their role involved hearing from God and communicating to the congregation his specific desires and will.

Most of the pastors saw their involvement in church work as divinely ordained. Twelve of the pastors (Participants 02, 03, 06, 09, 10, 13, 17, 20, 22, 24, 26, and 29) referred to their personal *calling* by God to do this very work. One particular pastor (Participant 13) went into great detail to describe how they did not want to do church work but described how God pursued them until they finally relented. Many of the pastors described that the purpose of the church as the responsibility of the whole church, and yet many indicated that the pastor was central to its mission. The following statements sum up that sentiment:

> I think there's a couple of factors for that. One is I feel called to be a pastor and that call was very clear and very distinct. And so I know that I'm on the right bus to use the Jim Collins analogy, I know I'm on the right bus. I know I'm called to

> vocational ministry. I know that I'm to be working in the kingdom in some capacity. (Participant 03)

> I think ultimately we're all responsible individuals. But I think pastors have a special place there. We are responsible for the great commission in our local churches. (Participant 14)

> I think if the change doesn't come through pastors then I don't know. I don't know who else is going to do it. So the pastor is kind of the person that leads the vision of each congregation and I won't say it has been easy to get everyone on board with the vision. . . . But if it doesn't start with the pastor is not going to go anywhere. (Participant 20)

Pastors also saw the work itself as divine in nature. Pastors defined the purpose of the church as kingdom building. In Table 12, the nature of the church's purpose can be seen as an outward focus of the church toward the community. The pastors explained that the church is to serve the community and to seek the lost, and be a tangible expression of Christ on Earth. Each of these responses can be tied into either the great commission or the greatest commandments from scriptures. In the end, pastors described church work as more than just an occupation or a means to a paycheck, instead of seeing it as critical in nature.

> The local church is the hope of the world. And I think there's nothing like it. That's why I've given my life to it. . . . But my fears all along have been I never

> want to be the guy that's just the lazy pastor. And there's too much at stake and there's too much on the line. (Participant 03)

> If I'm not successful then the church doesn't grow. But more importantly people don't hear about Jesus, so failure is not an option I guess is the answer. (Participant 05)

Elm (2012) described a prevalent understanding of leadership in the church as bearing a divine image. According to Elm, a divine image of leadership has informed the church's assumptions about leadership since the fourth century. Of the 23 pastors interviewed, 19 pastors (Participants 02, 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29) described a divine nature to their role. They described this divine component in terms of their distinct charge to discern the will and purposes of God and then the requisite to communicate that to the larger church:

> Leadership, which isn't just about you hearing from the Lord and coming down and telling people this is what we're going to do, although you have to do that as a leader. (Participant 03)

> That's kind of my main role to really discern what direction God wants us to go and to cast the vision for the church. (Participant 20)

> Well God is working through me. Cooperating with God, and hopefully, the people cooperate with God. (Participant 21)

Theme 5: Leadership and a Professional Orientation

Another understanding about leadership is revealed in the professional or a business-like dimension of their job. Although not all of the pastors felt favorable toward this component, there was a general resignation to this facet of leadership. This aspect of leadership was defined as vision casting, goal-setting, and goal attainment. Twenty-two of the 23 pastors described leadership in reference to setting vision, setting goals, and accomplishing goals. (Only participant 18 excluded those terms in their description of leadership.) A total of 76 references were made in all. In Table 6 and Table 7, 16 pastors describe effective and successful leadership as leadership that accomplishes a goal. In Table 3, 21 of the 23 pastors identified their roles as setting vision and giving direction toward a goal. Not all the pastors spoke with the same level of confidence when it came to goal-setting and helping the congregation achieve them; nevertheless, 21 saw it as a significant part of their role:

> So I think we all feel best when we're winning when we have some wins. And that means to me is there's clear goals and there's clear ideas that support the mission. We believe that the mission is given by Jesus to make disciples. And now we believe that, so wins are important in that process I think. (Participant 28)

> I think it's about having a really clear-cut path of where the church is headed. And one that everybody can easily identify with and that we're all working towards these common goals of getting everybody on the same page and working towards the same goal. That's the primary thing. (Participant 19)

> I am probably Chief vision caster and leader in that sense although I do a lot of the hands-on stuff as well. But really setting the goals and setting the direction especially with the staff. (Participant 08)

Although some pastors were not as confident as others in this function, they ultimately understood that they were being measured in this regard. Pastors listed the district superintendent, the congregations, and even the pastors themselves as agents of evaluation. Assessing based on the pastors' ability to set, measure, and achieve goals; in short, on their ability to make things happen. The participants described:

> I think from the perspective of the congregation, if they felt like they weren't moving in the right direction or that the church as a whole wasn't moving in the right direction that they would be more apt to sort of point the finger in my direction that thing which would be rightly so. (Participant 19)

> So that's constantly what I'm doing with my leadership hat as I am measuring my effectiveness by the goals, and the parameters that our vision team has set with the goals the mission the values the focus statement. And if I see that something is inefficient then I address it. (Participant 17)

> So part of what I do on an annual basis is meet with the board in a retreat to look at the vision and ask them about it and if they feel like that's where we need to go

> as a church if we're still going in the right direction we need to focus or if we need to redefine it all. So they are a big part of that. (Participant 06)

Nine pastors (Participants 02, 10, 14, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, and 29) equated goal-setting with a business-like focus. In this regard, the pastors were asked to report annually on numbers in attendance, financial giving, and goal attainment. Pastors described that the expectation from the district superintendent was that each church would have a goal for the congregation to grow in numbers. For those pastors, this was not a positive connection. The move toward numbers was also linked with a move away from pastoral care and away from a more spiritual nature of church leadership. Three pastors were able to distinguish their role as leader, as separate from their role as nurturing pastor. The quotes below describe these ideas:

> To me, pastoral leadership is just totally different than business leadership. Even though in our culture, this is my own opinion, pastoral leadership and Church leadership have become business structured. I think that's a mistake. I must say of people running a church like a business. There is a business side of the church. But what I'm talking about is being totally driven by numbers being totally driven by finances being totally driven by a desire that your church is always got to be out there in a like public relations. And it's easier to administer effect…it's more than just numbers. Is there disciples being made? Are there people getting spiritual help? Are they growing in that way? (Participant 14)

> I like to free us up from that a little more so I'm trying to cut stuff and I'm trying to make things simpler here so that the people can go and live as Christians and interact with the community and then really make a difference through their relationships. I feel like maybe we're too programmatic too, in that sense and maybe that's a little bit of a business model like. (Participant 10)

> And I think all of the church planters have felt that at some degree when you hear of these other churches that launch and they start and they automatically have like 200 to 500 people in their first year. And that's kind of what you think is like that's success. That's normal and that's what you're striving for. And then when that doesn't happen you start asking those questions of like. 'Well, what am I doing wrong?' (Participant 29)

> From the very beginning, I had more of the pastor's than a leader's heart. And I can definitely tell that it has affected the church and through the years because I've been asked to shepherd the thing more than a visionary leader. (Participant 18)

Theme 6: Leadership and Follower Relationship

The leader and follower relationship significantly influenced the pastors' understanding of leadership. The fact that the church is a non-for-profit organization and that any involvement from the congregation was done so voluntary, had bearing on how they described the leader/follower relationship. Three ideas emerged about how the

pastor understood that relationship: (a) the need to get the congregation to *buy-in* to the vision and direction the leader was trying to establish, (b) the substantial tension many pastors felt between the expectations they had for the congregation and the expectations the congregation had for themselves and the pastor, and (c) the need to establish positive relations between the pastor and the congregation.

The most significant aspect of the leader/follower relationship centered on the need for follower "buy-in." Thirteen of the 23 pastors (Participants 02, 03, 06, 08, 09, 12, 13, 14, 20, 23, 24, 25, and 27) described their success or effectiveness based on the leader's ability to get the congregation to follow them. This was especially true as it related to the purpose, vision, and direction of the church. The idea of buy-in was used most often and occurred six times. Other ideas like ownership of the vision or getting on board with the vision were also used. The need for unity between pastor and congregation or congregation member with other congregation members was included in this aspect as well. The following quotes help express these ideas:

> If they don't own the vision then it's going to be really difficult to really work well. The biggest struggle with myself as a leader is getting people to buy into that vision and understand the importance and the urgency of the mission that God's given us within our body. Well, we're in the beginning phases of finally getting this church to a point where they can really understand that our church, in order for us to be effective we have to have all parts of the body working. We have a lot of young believers in our church. We have a lot of transfer growth from other churches where people didn't have to work, work, work, work. Not much

> was expected of people. And we have to get people to buy into: I have work to do in this church just like anybody else, instead of expecting everyone else to do it. (Participant 23)

> Well, again I think to some degree it's the old adage of you're only leading if somebody is following. So I think to some degree you're only successful if there are people who are buying into what you're talking about. So either what you're talking about isn't connecting with them, or how you're talking about it is it connecting with them, or there's some disconnect in some way if there's not someone following it. (Participant 12)

> But then the problem is if you don't get buy-in from your people and things start to go south and you begin to have struggles then it becomes a problem because you want to create ownership with them and you want those that are that are going forward with you to buy in and to feel like it's their vision too. And so that's why I love my word influence because it's not dictatorship. It's not a top-down kind of model as much as it is let's go together and achieve our agreed upon goals together. (Participant 03)

Ten of the 23 pastors (Participants 02, 08, 09, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28) described some tension between leadership and the congregation. Some pastors described the followers as incapable of performing certain tasks or of performing sub-par work, which required the pastors to step in and do the work correctly. Pastors also described

many congregants as unwilling to get involved in church work because they were not as skilled or qualified as the pastor. Many of the pastors expressed tension with the underperforming or reluctant participation from the congregants. This was a significant source of tension as the pastors desired for more people to get involved, but were met with sub-par work or resistance from the congregants. There was also tension regarding the expectations that the pastor had for the congregation and the congregation's expectations for the pastor. All the pastors described a church setting where congregants participated in the work of the church; however, some pastors felt that the congregation expected the pastor to do most of the work. The following quotes are just a sampling of pastors' comments in this regard:

> Well, first of all, you're not a leader if no one is following you. So effective leadership in my mind would be setting the tone; you're setting the vision; casting the vision for the people and you encourage people to follow you and go along with your vision. And if they don't follow in my mind it doesn't necessarily mean that you're not the leader. It just sometimes it means the sheep are stubborn. (Participant 14)

> Well, it's frustrating; you invest in people, you pour your blood sweat and tears into people and, yeah it hurts. It's draining; In the course of the time people start questioning I am I doing any good at all… And then, of course, you get nudges from people in the congregation every now and then telling what they think you ought to be doing. (Participant 08)

> So I was getting people saying that they would follow you wherever, whenever you want, at the same time they are trying to steer the ship back to where they like it. (Participant 09)

> I think anymore especially in the Western tradition people are looking for nice pastors to just go with the flow. (Participant 26)

Another aspect of leader/follower relationship communicated by the pastors is their need to have the congregation feel positively or favorably toward them. Seven of the pastors (Participants 06, 10, 13, 19, 25, 26, and 28) described a sense of dependence on the congregation and because of that, the pastors expressed a desire for a positive perspective from the congregants. Here are a few quotes to demonstrate that aspect:

> I think part of it is as pastors we want to please people. We know this sounds horrible, we are supposed to be ministers of the gospel, and we want them to like us and love us and support us. And part of it also is we're dependent on other people given for our income and our and our financial stability. And so we feel pressured. (Participant 25)

> It's with the other things that perhaps you either used to do or the things that people project onto you that you should be doing. That's where it comes in. I think that that's an issue of burnout. If there was a magic pill to take that you wouldn't accept it any longer and you wouldn't be bothered by it then. Then you

> and I wouldn't be having this conversation because it would all be taken care of. But the fact is that life is messy and ministry is messy and we still pay a lot of attention to what other people think because they're not necessarily evil people or bad people it's just playing a role. (Participant 13)

> When you're dealing with a volunteer organization, people vote with their feet and with their pocketbooks and you just have to build relationships with them and build that trust before you can convince them to go along with the vision. (Participant 06)

Theme 7: Leadership by Example

The next theme that the pastors communicated about their understanding of leadership was the importance of leading by example. Although pastors sometimes described the need for leaders to lead from the top down, 11 of the pastors (Participants 02, 03, 05, 09, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 25, and 27) made significant statements in regard to the need to lead by example. Some of this may tie into the divine image of leadership, where they see they have a special place before the congregants in regard to building the kingdom. The stronger idea shared by several pastors, however, had to do with their understanding of the leader and follower roles. Pastors communicated that in a volunteer organization it is hard to motivate people to join in the work if the one leading, or getting paid, is not willing to do that work as well, even if it means cleaning bathroom toilets:

> Now if they don't see it in me then nobody else is probably going to do it. So that's why I'm saying ultimately I have to be the person who talks about this the

most who tries to visualize this the most. And partly because I'm the person who's most visible to the congregation on a regular basis. (Participant 12)

In a small church like mine one example is huge. I noticed over the years that when people do come they tend to pattern themselves in what they see, so the leadership in a small church level is really a lot about example. If they see people devoted to studying the Word or devoted to prayer devoted to a particular thing then that's what they tend to become. That can be good and bad as well because if you've got leadership that is selfish self-centered or stubborn then that's what you end up with. (Participant 18)

One of the biggest things that I do is I attempt to lead by example. And I don't ask anybody to do anything that I'm not willing to do myself. So if I get up and I say we need to clean toilets I'd better make sure that I'm able to do it. This week I was telling people that we're going to do these teacher appreciation barbecues and part of that I need to be on the ground with them leading them. I am leading the charge to get involved with the neighborhood situation and get involved with the schools get involved with the all the community basically. And again leading by example. So I can't do everything obviously but I can't expect people to do more than I do, So I aim to be the one that's showing everybody else, hey we could do this. (Participant 05)

Theme 8: Leadership and Burnout

The final theme that emerged from the data analysis was how pastors' understanding of leadership was connected to burnout. For so many of the pastors, when I asked if they could see a connection between what they defined as leadership and their feelings of burnout, they paused before answering. Several pastors actually communicated some surprise with the question as they admitted that they were not prepared for that discovery.

Twenty of the 23 pastors (Participants 03, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, and 29) saw a connection between their feelings of burnout and their understanding of leadership. Seven of them (Participants 03, 06, 14, 19, 23, 25, and 27) were quick to add that other factors existed. Those pastors were able to identify specific internal and external factors discussed in Chapter 2. Pastors mentioned internal factors such as introversion, personality type, and family upbringing as contributing factors to feelings of burnout. Other pastors mentioned the external factors of role overload and of conflict with church members as contributing factors.

> Yeah definitely. The other part that plays into this too is my dad was a pastor and we have extremely different personalities. My dad is a more authoritative kind of leader and he was but he was gifted at that very good at that. And so it took me a long time. Also, I think that's probably a lot of what was in the back my mind of this is what a leader is. And so I was trying I know that I felt guilty to a certain degree or guilty may not be the right word inadequate maybe because I wasn't that kind of a leader until I finally realized that's not who I am. Now there's a lot

> of things that about the way things I saw in him that I can learn from and I need to embrace that. I think that there is definitely a connecting point. (Participant 12)

> Yeah, I would. I would definitely say that that there's a connection there to what degree or how much of a percentage. I wouldn't say it's 100 percent. The reason I would say the nature of ministry factors into that pie if you will. People factor into that and just the nature of people. And Rick Warren said it's no accident that Jesus always compared fishing with ministry. Both are messy and that's never a truer word has been spoken in. But yeah, a great deal of that hinges upon me. (Participant 03)

Most of the pastors were not only able to recognize the connection between their understanding of leadership and burnout, but also able to articulate specific understandings about leadership to which they adhere and contribute to the feelings of burnout. In some cases, the pastors argued that even though their understanding of leadership contributed to their feelings of burnout, they still would adhere to those understandings and did not see them as necessarily wrong.

> Oh absolutely. I am much more prone to being tired and burned out. When you feel like you are the only one doing, that you're trying to lead by example, that nobody else is following that example . . . so yeah it's I would say that that is definitely related. If you're going to lead by example then it's going to be moments when you feel like you're out there all by yourself, that no one is

> actually following. And that can very definitely lend itself to exhaustion.. (Participant 05)

> That's a good question. Probably a lot of it has to do with my generation's expectations. Not only are there my expectations but there's all those voices in your head saying what you ought to be doing and the direction you should be going and think you should be doing. So I think there's part of that but I don't think the idea of the buck stops here is necessarily a negative thing. I don't see it as I don't see it as oppressive. (Participant 08)

Twenty of the 23 pastors agreed that the way they understood and practiced leadership affected their feelings of burnout. Even though the majority of pastors made the connection between their understanding of leadership and burnout, not one pastor expressed the idea that their understanding of leadership was the single cause of burnout. Three pastors (Participants 02, 24, and 26) did not make a connection at all. One pastor (Participant 02) argued that his last year involved three significant conflicts in his congregation and the toll it took on him caused him to self-describe as burnout. Another pastor (Participant 24) commented that he has had a lifelong battle with depression and he has an inclination to regard his work as a constant struggle. Finally, the last pastor (Participant 26) seemed to forget that he self-identified as burned out and mostly argued as to why he is not.

Summary

In response to the central research question for this study, I interviewed 23 pastors in the Wesleyan Churches to determine their understanding of leadership in the context of the church. The open-ended interview procedure provided rich data for analysis and interpretation. In this chapter, I presented a qualitative phenomenological study analysis of the data collected through the interview and document study.

The central research question for this study was, "What are clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church?" Pastors perceptions about leadership could be grouped into the following themes: (a) leadership as a hierarchy, (b) leadership as solo actors, (c) leadership as a divine image, (d) leadership as empowerment, (e) leadership as an example, (f) leadership with professional orientation, and (g) the leader/follower relationship. The pastors could see a link between their understanding of leadership and their feelings of burnout. I provided detailed results for each question used in the interview, and I presented eight dominant themes that emerged from the data. The themes reflect a modern view of leadership. These themes are consistent with my own experience working in the context of the church and are consistent with Carlyle's Great Man theory discussed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 5, I will provide a summary of why I performed this research. I will provide interpretation of the results. I will also include recommendations for change, implications for social change, and proposed recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this final chapter, I will provide a summary of why I performed this research. Burnout continues to draw the attention of leaders and pastors in the church (Jackson-Jordan, 2013) and needs to be looked at from a different perspective than the internal and external factors associated with clergy burnout (Elkington, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore clergy's perceptions about leadership and burnout within the Wesleyan Church in the Midwest. By addressing the central research question, I attempted to explore and discover how pastors understood their role of leadership within the church and if the pastors could identify a link between their perception of leadership and their feelings of burnout.

I conducted this phenomenological study to discover what Wesleyan pastors in the Midwest understood about leadership in the church and how that may contribute to pastor burnout. In Chapter 4, I analyzed the collected data from 23 interviews and discovered the essential understandings the pastors had regarding leadership. I provided detailed results for each question used in the interview, and I presented eight dominant themes that emerged from the data. Seven of them addressed specific understandings of leadership: (a) leadership as a hierarchy, (b) leadership as solo actors, (c) leadership as a divine image, (d) leadership as empowerment, (e) leadership as an example, (f) leadership with professional orientation, and (g) the leader/follower relationship. In the eighth theme that emerged, I showed how the pastors were able to connect their understanding of leadership with their feeling of burnout.

The themes reflected a modern view of leadership and showed how vulnerable pastors are to burnout. Pastors shared feelings of being alone in the work of the church and that much is expected of them due to their positions on top. The pastors expressed their desire to empower church members but also shared the difficulties of motivating and encouraging church members to get active. The modern view of leadership and the sentiments shared by the pastors are consistent with my own experience working in the context of the church. The modern view of leadership is also consistent with Carlyle's great man theory discussed in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I will present the interpretations of the data collected from the pastors. I will show how several of the themes regarding leadership lined up with the great man theory and how the great man theory can contribute to burnout. I will also include the limitations of this study and recommendations for further research. Finally, I will describe the potential of positive social change.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study are consistent with some of the literature describing burnout and clergy. However, new findings emerged showing leadership understandings—the great man theory of leadership—as a new factor for clergy burnout. The findings of this study are also consistent with literature describing the great man theory of leadership. In this study, three themes emerged as pastors described their perceptions of leadership in the church that correlate with the great man theory: leadership as a hierarchy, leadership as a solo actor, and leadership as a divine image. Two other themes, leadership and follower relationship and leadership as an example, are

not directly related to the great man theory; nevertheless, they add a deeper understanding of how the first three themes apply.

Connection to Great Man Theory

Ball (2012) stated that the great man theory is largely seen in the West as a lens through which history can be interpreted. Maloş (2011) described three concepts critical to the understanding of the great man theory: (a) the assumption that leadership is the domain of the individual, (b) the hierarchical nature of leadership, and (c) the assumption that leadership was a divine birthright. The pastors' responses to the questions about leadership demonstrated that the great man theory has significant bearing on their understanding of leadership.

Great man theory and hierarchy. Hierarchy in leadership is embedded in the psyche of the American people (Kellerman, 2012; Western, 2008). According to Kellerman (2012), leadership is still largely understood as position and title, and most workers understand their role and significance based on their relationship to the person with the position or title. Brown (2011) contended that this view of leadership is consistent with the great man theory as it developed over time. This was true with the pastors as well. The pastors were consistent in presenting this viewpoint of leadership as they described their own position in regard to their district superintendents to whom they are under and in regard to their staff and the congregation who they are over. Each pastor affirmed the hierarchy as described in detail in *The Discipline* (The Wesleyan Church, 2016), which outlines a structured hierarchy beginning with the general superintendent. The general superintendent directly oversees district superintendents, who directly

oversee the lead pastors in each church.

According to Bligh et al. (2011), hierarchy requires leadership and followership that has a tendency to romanticize the role of the leadership. It also requires the leaders and followers to underestimate the actions and capacity of the follower. Both of these attitudes were communicated by some of the pastors. Several pastors communicated that the work of the church would languish or be subpar if they were not present. The tone used by the pastors was neither judging nor arrogant. Nevertheless, the mission of the church would falter without the pastor, and the responsibility for church success fell squarely on their shoulders:

> By nature I'm a perfectionist I like to make sure everything gets done and gets done well and gets done right. (Participant 003)

> I mean there are things that I do that drain me. And I do get cynical on some things in the church because there are some things I do that really other people could do. But I get tired of them falling through the cracks. And I like to do everything and I'm trying to figure out what the best things are and I will always default to helping people (Participant 024)

Although no pastors questioned the hierarchical structure of the church and denomination, many could see the vulnerable spot they were in. Along with feeling the weight of responsibility for the church, pastors also communicated feelings of being alone in the ministry, feelings of uncertainty in regard to decision-making, and concerns

regarding their own success. Some pastors also expressed tension with church members as they felt responsible for the direction of the church and tried to navigate that only to meet resistance from people in the congregation. Each of these feelings was expressed in regard to their leadership position and leadership order in the church structure. From the literature and from my own experience as a church consultant, this framework for leadership often leaves pastors discouraged from work overload, frustrated with congregation passivity, and weary of church conflict.

Great man theory and the individual. The second way in which the pastors' understanding of leadership identified with the great man theory was expressed in the idea of the pastor as a solo actor (Ball, 2012). Ball (2012) argued that the great man theory is centered on the individual. Most of the pastors communicated their leadership role as primarily an upfront role wherein the pastor provides guidance and direction to the staff and congregation. They also communicated a high level of autonomy through self-determining their own job descriptions. In some cases, the pastors described themselves as tired and dejected from being the only person doing work in the church. As solo actors, the pastor may receive credit when the church is successful and grows, but they are also blamed when the church does not grow. Several pastors expressed discouragement from the feeling of being alone in leadership. In my experience with church consulting, I find this to be consistent with smaller churches. Even though larger churches tend to have more leaders and leadership teams that help to share the tasks and responsibilities, the senior pastor still tends to be the focus for most of the congregation and rides the highs of success and lows of failure. However, in smaller churches, the solo pastor bears the full

load.

In Ball's (2012) explanation of the great man theory, the individual is at the center of the leadership equation. Even though the success of an organization is seen as a cooperative work between leaders and followers, the leader usually receives the credit, the attention, and the financial benefits (DeRue & Myers, 2013). According to DeRue and Myers (2013), American society embraces and reinforces the idea of individual leadership, although though organizations continue to praise teams and teamwork. I found this disconnect to be consistent in the pictures the pastors communicated of their experiences of leading their churches.

Great man theory and the divine image of leadership. The third way in which the pastors' perception of leadership lined up with the great man theory was in divine nature of leadership. Ball (2012) described one aspect of Carlyle's great man theory of leadership as leadership that is divinely inspired. Western (2008) argued that leadership is often seen as a position taken as a go between the individual and the greater purpose or organization. Elm (2012) added that the leadership carries a divine image, where leaders are often seen as agents of God. Many of the pastors communicated similar ideas when describing their understanding of leadership. Several pastors explained that their role is to hear from God for the sake of the people and then communicate that message to the people. Also, many pastors also referred to a specific calling they had received from God to become a pastor. In this regard, most pastors took courage, as they would remember the divine nature of their own calling, especially in difficult times of leading in the church.

The most significant way that the pastors communicated the divine image of leadership is in how the pastors see themselves as having a special place in the work of the church. The pastors understood the purpose of the church as critical and they bear a great sense of responsibility in making that come to fruition. This was further developed in the pastors' articulations of the importance of being an example to the congregants on how the life and work of the church should be lived out. Some pastors (Participants 09, 14, and 25) conveyed that the eyes of the congregants were on them and that setting the right example was paramount. Setting a proper example carried a certain degree of obligation, however, this was not necessarily seen as a bad thing but was seen as part of the role of leadership. Many pastors referred to scripture where the Apostle Paul says, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:11, NIV).

Summary of connection to great man theory. The three components of the great man theory that emerged in the data were consistent in my own experience as a seminary instructor and church consultant. As a seminary professor, I have regular encounters with students who subscribe to the great man theory of leadership. When discussing the role of the pastor in the church hierarchy, solo actor and divine image routinely emerge in discourse. As budding pastors, most of the students are not aware of the burdens and difficulties that come with leadership. Even with preparation and instruction on the topic of burnout, they tend to see their own future in church leadership with a positive outlook. These ways of viewing leadership are already deeply embedded in the mental framework before coming to seminary. I design my courses for developing pastors around dialogue and insist that the students use my first name when addressing

me. However, they find it difficult to not give me the esteem that they believe is due my position.

In my practice of church consulting, I frequently run across leadership structures that are hierarchical in nature, highly dependent on exceptional solo actors, and described using the divine image. I encounter pastors eager to see the church grow and see members develop spiritually, yet bemoan the lack of congregational engagement. When I advocate for a flatter view of leadership I mostly receive pushback. Many of the pastors I work with are persistently tired and accept it as a part of the calling. Even when church leadership is intentional about moving away from these romantic ideals, they continuously battle the prevailing church culture that is still entrenched within their own thinking and in the minds of their congregants as well. The great man theory of leadership is largely part of church culture and pastors find it hard to break free of its grip. The result is often tired, lonely, and overworked pastors.

According to Boers (2015), leadership is the solution for church problems. I believe this is in large part due to the fact that the church continues to hold steadfastly to positions of leadership outlined in the great man theory. After analyzing the pastors' responses regarding leadership, the views expressed by the pastors lined up significantly with the great man theory, which left the pastors susceptible to job overload and job conflict. When questioned about some of these positions, it caused a moment of pause for the pastors. None were fully able to communicate how or why the church had come to those positions. One pastor said that he just did not know enough about church history to be able to answer why his view of leadership lined up with the great man theory.

Disconnection with the Great Man Theory

Not all the themes that emerged from the data connected with the great man theory. Two themes are not aspects of the great man theory: (a) leadership as empowering and (b) leadership and a professional orientation as established by Maloş (2011). These themes do, however, provide insight into the pastors' perceptions of leadership and add perspective to the connection the great man theory.

The pastors who cited a professional orientation perceived it negatively. Most pastors talked about goal orientation and measured success by how well goals were accomplished in a matter of fact tone. Pastors had very little positive or negative feelings or thoughts in reference to goals and the church's mission. When it came to goals and success measured by numbers of congregants attending or amount of financial giving, pastors perceived it negatively. Those pastors that talked regarding a numbers orientation described it as a necessary evil. Three pastors were able to identify a trend in the church to model leadership according to current business practices. Again, this was perceived negatively. The adoption of business models makes some sense, as the church has largely bought into the same values of business that defines success by effectiveness and efficiency (Fitch, 2005). According to Fitch (2005), this also includes leadership styles and trends. The adoption of the great man theory is just another element of current business practices that the church has bought into.

Leadership as empowering is the most puzzling of the themes that emerged. Sixteen of the pastors used the words "empower" and "equip" to define leadership in the church. This idea seems to be at odds with the themes of leadership as a solo actor and

the divine image of leadership. Leaders that see themselves as set apart for the special work of the church will find it hard to relinquish those special tasks; however, the frequent reference to Ephesians 4:11 where the Apostle Paul describes the role of those with certain gifts to equip the church body to do the work of ministry, demonstrated a clear understanding of the early church's practice of leadership as a function and gift rather than leadership as position. Leadership as a function would more easily follow Christ's command to not seek positions of power or honor, and would not line up with the great man theory. Nevertheless, the leadership structure practiced in the Wesleyan Churches supports leadership as a position as detail in *The Discipline* (The Wesleyan Church, 2016). It is possible that the frustration the pastors communicated can find its roots in a system that is designed to elevate leaders and at the same time desires to empower and unleash the potential of the people in the church.

Great Man Theory and Burnout

In Chapter 2, my review of burnout studies looked primarily at external factors and internal factors that operate as causal factors for burnout. The focus on external and internal factors may not go deep enough to uncover underlying assumptions about leadership as great men or great women that allow clergy to accept role descriptions that are overbearing or allow for job descriptions that drive pastors to work outside of their strengths or abilities.

When churches subscribe to the great man theory and an understanding of leadership as a hierarchy, leadership as a solo actor, and leadership shaped by a divine image, they may ultimately find themselves looking for extraordinary individuals to

guide their congregations toward accomplishing the goals and purposes of the church. O'Toole and Pasternack (2000) argued that "no one individual can save a company from mediocre performance—and no one individual, no matter how gifted a leader, can be 'right' all the time" (p. 7). The pastors in my study communicated that the responsibility for church success lay squarely on their shoulders alone. Pastors were feeling the burden of that responsibility and loneliness as the one individual leader in their church and connected the feelings of burning out under its weight with the ideas of leadership that they had subscribed to, especially as they related to the great man theory.

The findings of this study expand and extend knowledge on clergy burnout, especially regarding the potential for a more comprehensive understanding of causal factors. The findings of this study reveal a significant link between perceptions of leadership, specifically the great man theory and burnout. This study bridged the gap in literature identified by Elkington (2013) that identified the need for a more systemic approach to burnout studies in the clergy. In particular, this study uncovered underlying cultural assumptions about leadership and system structures that influence pastors' perceptions about their roles that contribute to the experience of burnout. This study also added to the knowledge of current applications of the great man theory.

Limitations of the Study

In this study, I explored pastors' perceptions of leadership and their experiences of burnout. This limited the study to the subjective understandings and experiences of the participants. The subjective perspective of the individual participants is critical to understanding the human experience of a specific phenomenon (Parry et al., 2014);

however, the experiences explored were specific to a particular context. More study is needed in regard to the larger expression of church leadership.

My own particular interests and experiences also limited this study. Parry et al. (2014) argued that a subjective and personalized approach could make for a richer and more credible understanding of the emerging theory. My own experiences and subjectivity could have introduced interpretive filters that affect how the data is initially entered and understood (Yin, 2014). I openly admit to my interest in the subject of church leadership and the experience of burnout that many pastors have; however, my openness regarding this bias was recorded earlier and mitigated throughout the study.

There were also several limitations in regard to context. The first limitation is that the study was conducted within the Wesleyan denomination only. Other denominations may have different expressed views of leadership; however, this study was limited to one denomination. A second contextual limitation involves the geographical region. Again, different physical regions may have differing views on leadership, but this study was limited to churches located in the Midwest region.

The final limitation involves the interview tool used. The application of Wielkiewicz's (2000) interview tool to clergy was the first time doing so, and adaptations to the questions to the research questions for this study made this tool distinct. Also, this tool used in conjunction with Iverson et al. (1998) created a unique combination and unique study environment. These distinct circumstances and untested tools limit the integrity of the study and limit the study results.

Recommendations

Significant openings for future research exist as a result of this study. A similar study for the entire Wesleyan denomination, across multiple regions, could further extend this study's results on leadership perceptions and see how consistent these leadership assumptions are. If the results are not consistent across denominations and regions, this could prompt the development of a more accurate assessment tool to be created to ascertain clergy perceptions on leadership in the church. Similar studies across different denominations are necessary to ascertain the breadth of cultural assumptions about church leadership and discover how that might impact clergy burnout.

Studies that use the traditional MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) coupled with questions related to church structure and leadership styles, which could further investigate the relationship between leadership perception and burnout could be useful. Additionally, case studies on church bodies with less emphasis on hierarchical structures such as shared leadership, servant leadership, or transformation could prove to be informative as to how other leadership theories and assumptions may have bearing on clergy burnout.

Implications

My research uncovered the core assumptions clergy have regarding leadership. The research showed a connection between the assumptions and the experience of burnout. The implications of this discovery are significant.

The implications for positive social change apply on a pastoral leadership level and a congregational level. This research may provide pastors with the understanding that

certain assumptions about leadership can lead to burnout. The realities of clergy burnout should not be ignored (Elkington, 2013). My research shows that expectations on church leadership, based on assumptions about leadership, are unhealthy. In the current leadership structures of the Wesleyan churches, pastors are seen more as paid professionals, which can lead to congregational passivity. Congregants have come to expect the pastors to be responsible for most, if not every part of church activity (Ward, 2012), which is not in the best interest of the pastors nor the congregation.

For the Wesleyan pastors who are struggling with burnout, this study may help them to understand the origins of the leadership assumptions that are contributing to that experience. This could move pastors away from the heroic leadership models and practices, toward leadership that encourages, leadership that equips, and leadership that facilitates. This may be challenging for pastors to navigate as their superiors evaluate them on effectiveness and efficiency. To relinquish control of church work to congregants could lead to sub-par work, which could reflect poorly on the pastors.

For the congregation, this study may provide an opportunity for church members to understand the assumptions regarding leadership that prevent greater involvement and greater ownership. Top-down leadership structures reinforce antiquated ideas of power and position. The days of seeing clergy as professional holy men need to end. Changing church power dynamics begins with a better understanding of the cultural assumptions around leadership. Equipped with a better understanding of leadership, congregants can begin to work together with the pastors to see the ministry of the church fulfilled.

Empowerment of congregants could produce the buy-in that pastors desire and could cause them to care more about the mission and success of the church (Wilder, 2013).

Implications for theory are specific to the gaps in the literature. First is the gap in the literature regarding leadership assumptions and experienced burnout. Clergy burnout research has focused primarily on causal variables (both internal and external). Little has been studied that addresses leadership assumptions in the church. The results of this study may add to the growing amount of literature regarding clergy burnout and may uniquely contribute to the study of burnout from the perspective of leadership in a particular cultural context.

Second is the gap in the literature regarding modern applications of the great man theory of leadership. The church's adoption of three key tenants of the great man theory (leaders as individuals, leadership hierarchy, leadership as divinely inspired) had yet to be established with any academic thoroughness. This research adds to the literature that has examined current applications of the great man theory in organizations, more specifically in small Wesleyan Churches, and critically addresses the underlying power structures that influence leadership structures in the church.

Implications for professional practice are limited. As an exploratory research, I was not investigating specific professional applications to leadership assumptions and burnout. Nonetheless, with knowledge regarding their assumptions about leadership, pastors will be better equipped to establish role descriptions that do not include them doing all or most of the work. Pastors can draw up role descriptions that are more in-line with Biblical principles instead of modern principles. With less emphasis on church

leadership, pastors could serve more as equippers and developers, carrying less day-to-day responsibilities. Follow-up research on specific applications could provide a more detailed contribution to professional application.

Conclusion

The American churches' adoption of modernism is well documented (Fitch, 2005; Kessler, 2013; Ward, 2012; Wilder, 2013). According to Fitch (2005), perceptions of leadership are also affected as the church has begun to measure leadership success through the lens of effectiveness and efficiency. Modern assumptions about leadership, like the great man theory, drive the churches' and church leaders' understanding of the role of the leader. The quest of individual churches is to find a heroic leader who will guide them toward growth and success. The great man theory of leadership is deeply embedded in the collective psyche of the Wesleyan church culture, and the great man theory has contributed to unhealthy expectations for pastors who often find themselves exhausted, isolated, and burned out.

Church denominations and local congregations face the real possibility of losing their pastors to burnout. According to Krejcir (2016), 35% of the 8,000 pastors surveyed across America struggle with depression and 43% showed stress, fatigue, and other signs of burnout. Clergy face high levels of burnout, and the number of ministers who leave the profession because of it is increasing (Elkington, 2013). The future for clergy and their experience of burnout remains dim in spite of the wealth of research on clergy burnout. It is time to look at burnout from a different perspective, to look more deeply into the assumptions about leadership that contribute to burnout. It is time to look at the

underlying assumptions that urge pastors to take on heavy loads, work extra hours, work alone, and believe that they alone are capable of managing the work of the church.

For pastors to escape burnout, they must begin to demonstrate that the mission and purposes of the church cannot be accomplished by solo actors and paid professionals. The work of the church is plural, and for the sake of the pastors and the sake of their congregants, it is time to look at the influence of the great man theory on leadership perceptions and make some conscious decisions to lead differently. To avoid burnout, pastors need to lead in ways that are not top-down and do not promote the work of solo actors or professionals. Pastors need to lead in new ways that do not present leadership as so extraordinary or so divine that it sets itself apart from the rest of the congregation. Pastors need to downplay the idea that leadership is a title, position, or ability. Instead, pastors need to begin to communicate and demonstrate leadership as a function of the church, which can be exercised by the many.

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Appendix A: Introduction to the Study

Introduction to the study:

Dear Pastor in the Wesleyan Church,

My name is Craig Fee, and as a part of a Doctoral program in leadership I am looking to study leadership and the experience of burnout in pastors. I have no connection with the Wesleyan Denomination; however, I have asked the denomination and received permission to conduct a study that might be beneficial to pastors' well-being. I would like you to consider this opportunity to explore causal factors involved with burnout. Accompanying this e-mail is a quick survey that assesses your relation to burnout. If you could take one or two minutes to fill out the survey and return that to me via e-mail I would be very grateful. Based on your responses, I may contact you and invite you to conduct further inquiry. The follow-up will consist of an interview that would last about 30 minutes.

Of course, none of this is mandatory. Nonetheless, as an ongoing effort to serve you in your role as pastor and leader, I am interested in addressing significant issues that challenge the health and well-being of pastors. My desire is to more accurately assess the causes of burnout. Any contribution you can make toward this effort would be greatly appreciated.

A consent form is provided below that outlines more details for the project and directs you where to go if you have any questions.

Thanks for your attention in this matter,

Appendix B: Burnout Survey

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.			
2. I've become more callous towards people since taking this job.			
3. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.			
4. I feel used up at the end of the workday.			
5. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.			
6. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.			
7. I really don't care what happens to some members in the church.			
8. I feel burned out from my work.			
9. I feel good after working closely with my church members.			

Note. This interview structure was adapted from Iverson, Olekalns, & Erwin (1998). Burnout Inventory [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: 10.1037/t11584-000

Appendix C: Interview Instrument

General Opening questions about leadership:

1. What leadership roles exist in your context?
    a. Is this documented?
2. How would you describe the leadership structure of this church?
    a. Are you following the church structure from Wesleyan Discipline?
    b. If not could you diagram the organizational structure?
3. Give a basic description of your role as leader.
    a. What are the main tasks of leadership?
    b. Who defines that role?

What is the nature (assumptions, style, behavior, purpose, etc.) of leadership that exists in the Wesleyan Church contexts?

1. What is the purpose for leadership in the church?
    a. Who defines leadership purpose?
2. Define effective leadership?
3. How do you define leadership success?
    a. What happens when you are not successful?
4. What leadership style or leadership theory do you follow as a leader?
    a. How did you determine to follow that style?
    b. How did you learn about this style?
    c. What training did you receive in leading?
5. What is the purpose of the church?
    a. Who is responsible to see the purpose come to fruition?
    b. Would you agree with the statement "the buck stops with you"? Explain?

How do leadership assumptions lead to burnout?

1. How does being a leader contribute to your feelings of exhaustion or callousness?
    a. Do you see a link between your understanding of leadership and burnout?
    b. Why do you accept your current parameters for leadership?

This interview structure was adapted from Wielkiewicz (2000). Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi:10.1037/t00406-000

Appendix D: Burnout Inventory

PsycTESTS®

Leadership Interview--Introductory Questions
Version Attached: Full Test

Note: Test name created by PsycTESTS

PsycTESTS Citation:
Faris, N., & Parry, K. (2011). Leadership Interview--Introductory Questions [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t11699-000

Instrument Type:
Interview Schedule/Guide

Test Format:
Leadership Interview--Introductory Questions are presented in a formal interview format.

Source:
Faris, Nezar, & Parry, Ken. (2011). Islamic organizational leadership within a Western society: The problematic role of external context. The Leadership Quarterly, Vol 22(1), 132-151. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.12.012, © 2011 by Elsevier. Reproduced by Permission of Elsevier.

PsycTESTS®

doi: 10.1037/t11699-000

Leadership Interview—Introductory Questions

Items

Questions relating to leadership.

- What are leadership challenges?

- What are change issues?

- Who has power to make things happen?

- Who has power to stop things?

- Who do people follow?

- Can you think of examples where leadership is obviously lacking?

- How and why is it lacking?

Questions relating to transformational leadership.

Drawn from MLQ research version (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

Examples of questions relating to transformational organizational culture.

- To what extent do people search for ways to improve?

- Are new ideas greeted with enthusiasm?

Examples of questions relating to transactional organizational culture.

- How often are decisions based on precedent?

- To what extent do rules and procedures limit discretionary action?

Intervening and supplementary questions.

Expanding and giving detail on the leadership roles taken by individuals, the nature of the organizational culture of the organization, and the impact of these issues on organizational effectiveness. Issues relating to individual and group transformational leadership were teased out in these supplementary questions.

Appendix E: Burnout Inventory

PsycTESTS®

Burnout Inventory
Version Attached: Full Test

Note: Test name created by PsycTESTS

PsycTESTS Citation:
Iverson, R. D., Olekalns, M., & Erwin, P. J. (1998). Burnout Inventory [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t11584-000

Instrument Type:
Inventory/Questionnaire

Test Format:
A 5-point Likert-type scale format is used to measure employees' perceptions of burnout.

Source:
Iverson, Roderick D., Olekalns, Mara, & Erwin, Peter J. (1998). Affectivity, organizational stressors, and absenteeism: A causal model of burnout and its consequences. Journal of Vocational Behavior, Vol 52(1), 1-23. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1996.1556, © 1998 by Elsevier. Reproduced by Permission of Elsevier.

PsycTESTS®

doi: 10.1037/t11584-000

Burnout Inventory

Items

Emotional Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.
3. I feel burned out from my work.

Depersonalization

1. I've become more callous towards people since taking this job.
2. I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.
3. I really don't care what happens to some patients.

Personal Accomplishment

1. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.
2. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.
3. I feel good after working closely with my patients.

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

Practical Procedures for Interviewing

Prior to Interview

1. Identify interviewee and essential background information about them.
2. Design a set of interview questions tailored to the interviewee, choosing from among the questions listed in this protocol.
3. Arrange date and time of interview, explain aims of project
4. Send interview questions ahead of interview with covering letter asking for any documents, data and resources that may be helpful to be identified where possible prior to interview
5. Send website address and short blurb and contact details of interviewer
6. Request permission for taping interview
7. Inform interviewee that a transcript will be provided for clarification and amendment
8. Check tape recorder, spare batteries and tapes.

During Interview

1. At interview, provide background information to the project
2. Re-confirm permission to record, confidentiality and transcript to be provided.
3. Check tape recorder and conduct voice test.
4. Throughout interview take notes.
5. At end of interview ask for consent form to be signed.
6. Request permissions to follow up issues by telephone/face to face/e-mail

After Interview

1. Write up Contextual interview notes.
2. Complete face sheet information and enter into database.
3. Identify action points
4. Send tapes to be transcribed
5. Write letter of thanks to interviewee and ask for confirmation of promised materials+ any extra information needed.
6. Check and edit transcript
7. Send transcript to interviewee and ask to confirm/amend accordingly. Request any additional information at this point.
8. Arrange to follow up with telephone/face to face meeting where necessary
9. Enter factual content information from interview into database (key people. Moments, dates and events)
10. Save transcript and notes on-line in one WORD file ready to enter into NVivo

(Taken from *Practical Procedures*. Retrieved July 10, 2012, from http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fss/projects/edres/changingfaces/protocol/practical.htm)