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A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXAMINING HOW PASTORS LEARN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THEIR MINISTRY LEADERSHIP CONTEXT

By

MICHAEL V. PHILLIPS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Abstract

Research shows that pastors face difficult challenges in the course of leading congregations and often are not equipped to negotiate those challenges. While there may be numerous ways that pastors can prepare and learn to navigate these challenges, one essential skill, that the literature confirmed, is the development of emotional intelligence. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore how pastors learn emotional intelligence in their ministry leadership context.

The review of the literature on emotional intelligence and the analysis of the interviews were guided by the following questions: (1) What emotions do pastors experience as they lead in their ministry context? (2) What is the impact of these emotions on pastors? (3) How do pastors negotiate the impact of others' emotions as they lead? (4) What is the learning process whereby pastors grow in their emotional intelligence? The research methodology employed in this study followed a qualitative approach and used an inductive, constant comparative method to interview eight Presbyterian pastors.

There are two assumptions embedded in this study. First, by definition, this purpose statement suggests that pastors can, in fact, learn emotional intelligence. The literature reviewed and data analysis from the eight interviews confirmed that emotional intelligence can be learned. Second, pastors learn emotional intelligence best in the context of leading through ministry challenges.

The research confirmed the following observations. Most EQ learning takes place for pastors in the context of leading through ministry challenges. Some critical incidences could be avoided and the EQ learning gap closed if pre-professional training on

emotional intelligence was provided. The data revealed three factors influenced the way pastors learn emotional intelligence: critical reflection on incidences, mentoring, and the motivational impact of suffering/loss as a teacher in the development of EQ.

Pastors may avoid some ministry challenges if seminaries offered pre-professional opportunities to students on learning emotional intelligence. Once in ministry, pastors need access to EQ resources through denominational and regional meetings. The difficulty of ministry leadership challenges will often thrust pastors to seek out resources and discover the value of EQ through non-formal practices such as significant mentoring relationships, critical reflection, solid self-care, strong marriages and a robust desire to learn emotional intelligence.

To George, who is my Barnabas,
without whom this project would never have been completed

To Bob, who challenged me when needed
and inspired me to new and deeper learning

To Julie, who always believed it could happen and
is God's best ever gift to me

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Chapter One

Introduction

Pastors learn in their practice of ministry. At least, it seems reasonable to think ministry leaders would recognize the value of learning in their professional context, either from difficult circumstances or simply the desire to improve at their trade. And, it seems, this recognition would motivate pastors toward intentional avenues of learning. But that has not always been the case. Researchers have found that "personal barriers such as lack of interest, personal problems, thinking one is too old…as well as situational barriers such as lack of time and money"[1] are primary obstacles to learning. The unfortunate consequence is that many ministry leaders and church leadership have failed to grasp the necessity of continuing education through adult learning and thus, have struggled to adapt to the changing challenges of ministry.

The brokenness of many pastoral relationships have pointed researchers toward triggers that are causing pastors to leave the ministry or factor in the increasingly poor emotional and physical health of the clergy. These triggers may be loosely identified around five themes for pastoral resiliency outlined in Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie's work, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*.[2] For example, pastors struggle in ministry when they fail to care for their soul, ignore the

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[1] Sharan B. Merriam, Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood: A Comprehensive Guide*, 3rd ed., The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 77.

[2] Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove: IL InterVarsity Press, 2013).

value of self-care, neglect the family, fail to incorporate leadership best practices, or finally, the primary subject of this research, to negotiate ministry challenges with strong emotional intelligence skills.

Unfortunately, "Unlike other vocations, ministry work has no formal arrangement for ongoing learning and development and no requirements for continuing education."[3] However, this void is being recognized and addressed. For example, pastoral resiliency or sustainability has been studied with intensity over the past ten years in order to "strengthen the lives and families of people in vocational ministry."[4] The result of this increased attention is efforts by some denominations and ministry leaders to raise awareness, validate the research, and provide solutions.[5]

The narrative is becoming clearer; success in business, in ministry, or in life is significantly improved with strong emotional intelligence.[6] While the value of emotional health to any organization is becoming more and more important to its overall success and productivity, the significance for pastoral development is unmistakable. This research will explore how emotional intelligence might provide important support in navigating the leadership challenges of pastoral ministry. In fact, psychologist and author Allan Hedberg writes in *Living Life @ Its Best*, "Emotional intelligence and faith are vital

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[3] Ibid., 7.

[4] Ibid., 248.

[5] See Covenant Theological Seminary's *The Center for Ministry Leadership* and their work on *The Pastor's Summit*; Lily Endowment's initiative *Sustaining Pastoral Leadership* spanning several denominations; and the work of The Alban Institute which has recently joined forces with Duke Divinity School.

[6] Daniel Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," in *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Emotional Intelligence*, ed. Harvard Business Review Press (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2015), 7; Travis Bradberry, and Jean Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* (San Diego: TalentSmart, 2009), 13–22.

factors in our navigational efforts to process daily events and relate effectively…every day we are challenged to…apply our faith and our emotional intelligence to real life problems and events."[7]

In other words, if pastors are going to lead well during the challenges faced in ministry, it will likely hinge on their degree of emotional intelligence. Trusted and influential scholars on leadership Kouzes and Posner point out, "The mastery of the art of leadership comes from mastery of the self…your ability to excel as a leader depends on how well you know yourself."[8] Discussing self-awareness, the reformer John Calvin pointed out that true wisdom (leadership) consisted of a mutually connected knowledge of self and God.[9] Christians have at times looked with suspicion on the value of human emotions[10] and a God who expresses emotion.[11] And yet, Jesus expressed anger,[12] joy,[13]

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[7] Allan G. Hedberg, *Living Life @ Its Best Where Faith and Emotional Intelligence Intersect* (n.p.: Allan G. Hedberg, 2013), xiii.

[8] James M Kouzes, and Barry Posner, *The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 337.

[9] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 35-38.

[10] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 103, 304.

[11] Today there are evangelical authors and practitioners who recognize and write on the value of understanding emotions. For example, Peter Scazzero says, "God created human beings to feel a wide range of emotions...each with their variations, blends and hundreds of particular nuances. Researchers have classified them into eight main families: anger (fury, irritability, annoyance); sadness (grief, self-pity, despair, dejection, loneliness); fear (anxiety, edginess, nervousness, fright, terror, apprehension); enjoyment (joy, relief, contentment, delight, thrill, euphoria, ecstasy); love (acceptance, trust, devotion, adoration); surprise (shock, amazement, wonder); disgust (contempt, scorn, aversion, distaste, revulsion); shame (guilt, remorse, humiliation, embarrassment, chagrin)." Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash a Revolution in Your Life in Christ* (Nashville, TN: Integrity, 2006), 69.

[12] Mark 3:5.

[13] John 15:11.

sadness,[14] compassion,[15] and tremendous self-awareness.[16] In fact, according to theologian Wayne Gruden, "Jesus had a full range of human emotions."[17] Unlike humanity, Jesus expressed this full range of emotions perfectly. "He was," as pastor and author Steve Saccone declares in *Relational intelligence: How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence Through a New Way of Being Smart*, "the most relationally intelligent person who ever walked this Earth."[18]

Today, more and more theologians, professors, and pastors recognize the "role of emotions as a critical, God-given aspect of our personhood, which is made in the image of God."[19] Due to curriculum restraints and the lack of appreciating its value, seminaries have not engaged the field of emotional health in their classrooms to any large degree. The lack of attention to overall emotional health by training institutions and clergy are factors in leading pastors to leave the ministry[20] amid work–related psychological health, stress, and burnout. If they are not leaving the ministry, "Of great concern are the nearly

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[14] Luke 13:34.

[15] Matt. 20:29-34.

[16] Matt. 13:1-3, 53-58.

[17] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 533–534.

[18] Steve Saccone, *Relational Intelligence How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence through a New Way of Being Smart* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), Location 242, Kindle.

[19] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 103.

[20] Lovett H Weems, Jr., and Joseph E. Arnold, "Clergy Health: A Review of Literature," gbophb.org, January 2009, 9–20, accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.gbophb.org/; Steve Stutz, "Why Pastors Leave the Ministry," stevestutz.com, accessed July 3, 2015, http://www.stevestutz.com/why-pastors-leave-the-ministry.html.

one in six clergy who showed signs of serious distress with their high levels of isolation, loneliness, fear, abandonment, anger, and boredom."[21]

Developing high emotional intelligence helps pastors negotiate the challenges of ministry practice and thereby lead more effectively. While this study may touch on other disciplines of sustainability, the focus of this work will be the value and exercise of EQ for pastors in ministry.[22] In their seminal work, ordained Lutheran pastors and authors Roy Oswald and Arland Jacobson explain why emotional intelligence is so important for pastors.

> Pastoral ministry is all about relationships. You may be a brilliant theologian, excellent at biblical exegesis, an outstanding preacher, a great pastoral care provider, and even give your body to be burned (remember 1 Corinthians 13), but if you are not emotionally intelligent, your ministry as a parish pastor will be difficult.[23]

Pastoral leadership is challenging under the best circumstances. But when the skills of emotional intelligence have not been developed, the odds of failure are increased exponentially. Again, Oswald and Jacobson explain, "When sexual malfeasance was taken out of the scenarios, the lack of skill in managing interpersonal relationships was the number one reason clergy got fired."[24] Emotional intelligence, then, is a key for excellence in pastoral ministry.

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[21] Andrew J. Weaver, Kevin J. Flannelly, David B. Larson, Carolyn L. Stapleton, and Harold George Koenig, "Mental Health Issues among Clergy and Other Religious Professionals: A Review of Research," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 56, no. 4 (Winter, 2002): 398; Weems, and Arnold, "Clergy Health: A Review of Literature," 9–10.

[22] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 16–17.

[23] Roy M. Oswald, and Arland Jacobson, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus: Relational Smarts for Religious Leaders* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 119.

[24] Ibid., 120.

Are pastors born with it? The answer is both yes and no. However, where EQ is deficient, it can be learned, however. Over the last 30 years, researchers have acknowledged leadership can be learned[25] and so can emotional intelligence.[26] In fact, Goleman strikes this encouraging note, "The numbers are beginning to tell us a persuasive story about the link between a company's success and the emotional intelligence of its leaders. And just as important, research is also demonstrating that people can, if they take the right approach, develop their emotional intelligence."[27] However, for pastors, say authors Oswald and Jacobson, "Emotional intelligence involves a set of competencies that are not taught in seminary but that are central to pastoral effectiveness."[28]

Pastors who are able to negotiate the challenges of ministry practice have learned to "stay in the system yet do the right thing."[29] The literature emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence as a catalyst in providing this type of effective leadership in

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[25] Marcy Levy Shankman, Scott Allen, and Page Haber-Curren, *Emotionally Intelligent Leadership: A Guide for Students*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2015), 5–8; Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught: A Bold Approach for a Complex World*, 1st ed. (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2005), 231–256; Kouzes, *The Leadership Challenge*, 335.

[26] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 8–9; Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, 17–18; Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 105–106; Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee, and Richard Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), 245.

[27] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 7; Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, 18.

[28] Roy Oswald, and Arland Jacobson, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*, 119. The "competencies" mentioned by Owald and Jacobson are defined in the Literature Review of Chapter Two under Emotional Intelligence.

[29] Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 46.

ministry[30]. Pastors are part of a church system, and Ronald Richardson describes this connection remarking that

> Leaders need to be aware of the part they play in the emotional system and how they can become a more constructive force for improving emotional life of the church… there will always be times of imbalance in the churches emotional system, times when there are conflicts and problems in the church that challenge the leadership. That is normal and unavoidable. But how these situations turn out—and whether they're ultimately experienced positively or negatively… depends primarily on the actions and reactions of the church leadership—lay leaders and the clergy and other professional church staff.[31]

Pastors do not learn emotional intelligence in ministry through traditional methods of theological and continuing pastoral education.[32] Pastors have a full array of continuing education opportunities available to them but perhaps none as essential to their success as learning emotional intelligence. For example, the Uniform Curriculum for Theological Education of the Presbyterian Church in America outlines the areas of competence necessary for pastors in their demographic context to be ordained in the PCA. The emphasis is clearly theological and technical while providing little directive towards the emotional life of the candidate or the emotional dynamics of churches. This

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[30] Oswald, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*, 119–136; Goleman, McKee, and Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership*, 18, 29–31, 245–248; Ronald Heifetz, Marty Linsky, and Alexander Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 19, 22–23, 37–38, 46, 181–186; Whether the literature is from the disciplines of business, psychology or theology, the following works and countless others speak directly to the relationship between emotional intelligence and successful leaders with strong performance. More specifically to a pastor, Oswald, and Jacobson in *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus* state simply, "Pastoral Ministry is all about relationships. You may be a brilliant theologian, excellent at biblical exegesis, an outstanding preacher, a great care provider, and even give your body to be burned (remember 1 Corinthians 13), but if you are not emotionally intelligent, your ministry as a parish pastor will be difficult." Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 11–80.

[31] Ronald W. Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 29–30.

[32] Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 22.

is a glaring omission attested to in Richardson's *Becoming a Healthier Pastor*, "Experience teaches us, through some unfortunate but dramatic pastoral examples in recent years, that it is not just biblical or theological knowledge or level of piety or amount of prayer or depth of devotion or particular pastoral skills that lead to successful ministry. Success also has to do with the pastor's level of emotional maturity."[33] Seminaries must continue to provide pre-professional training for students, while the learning gap in areas such as emotional intelligence must be addressed in lifelong learning opportunities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe how pastors learn emotional intelligence (EQ) in their ministry leadership context. In order to examine this topic, the following research questions will guide eight interviews with pastors purposely sampled according to criteria set forth below.

Research Questions

1. What emotions do pastors face as they lead in their ministry context?
2. What is the impact of these emotions on pastors?
    a. How aware are pastors of their own emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their own emotions?
3. How do pastors negotiate the impact of others' emotions in their leadership context?
    a. How aware are pastors of others' emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage the emotions of others?

[33] Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 2.

4. What is the learning process whereby pastors grow in their emotional intelligence?

Significance of the Study

Many reasons prove the significance of emotional intelligence to success in ministry and therefore, why this study is needed. From a psychological and business perspective, the study of EQ has made important inroads over the past thirty years, yet very little has reached into the practice of ministry. This is not unexpected, since psychological and business principles are historically suspect in religious academia and continuing education opportunities. This study challenges such suspicion, arguing for the necessity for emotional intelligence in pastoral ministry, and addresses how pastors can learn emotional intelligence.

A second contribution of this study is the importance of professional learning for pastors outside the academic environment. The stress may come from church-related incidences or they may originate in the home. In either case, both arenas are affected. Learning emotional intelligence is vital to successful ministries and marriages. According to Weems and Arnold, Director and Research manager for Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary, "The need to balance the demands of work with home life is the issue most commonly raised in the literature…and of vital importance to the health and of the individual clergy and to the health of clergy families, as well."[34] For clergy who are married, the spouse becomes perhaps the greatest asset or liability for learning and evaluating clergy health, including emotional intelligence. So, growth in EQ will positively impact both a pastor's work and home life, and the

[34] Weems, and Arnold, "Clergy Health: A Review of Literature," 3.

application of new learning in emotional intelligence should be specifically directed to both. This dual 'application' is specifically emphasized in the learning process.

Despite an overall high rate of satisfaction in their jobs, pastors are struggling with stress, burnout and consequently, health issues such as obesity and high blood pressure. Too many are addressing the problem behaviorally when the root issue may be the lack of emotionally intelligent leadership, and training.[35] The current theological and continuing education models are not addressing this learning gap in any significant measure. This study provides recommendations to close this learning gap.

Definition of Key Terms

Clergy Health – A broad term embracing "traditional medical indices of physical and mental health but also self-care practices and access to health care resources; supportive personal and professional relationships; balance and coping skills; positive attitudes and outlook; and a passion for ministry grounded in a robust spiritual life."[36] Clergy health, as defined above, parallels the five themes of pastoral sustainability outlined in the literature review.[37]

Critical Incident Technique (CIT) – "The critical incident technique consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad

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[35] Benjamin R Doolittle, "The Impact of Behaviors upon Burnout among Parish-Based Clergy," *Journal of Religion and Health* 49, no. 1 (March 2010): 93–94; Weaver, "Mental Health Issues among Clergy and Other Religious Professionals," 401. The authors may not use the term "emotional intelligence," yet when they describe the need for greater "self-awareness and understanding," they are speaking the very language of EQ.

[36] Weems, and Arnold, "Clergy Health A Review of Literature," 2.

[37] As also discussed in Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 18–29.

psychological principles. The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having a special significance and meeting systematically defined criteria."[38]

Dance Floor – Where it all happens—the action and the emotions play out. Where the friction, noise, tension, and systemic activity are occurring. Ultimately, the place where the work gets done.[39]

Differentiation of Self – In the context of "systems theory," developed originally by Murray Bowen, differentiation "is the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people in our lives and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them…[to] understand himself or herself apart from others…to achieve distance from a situation and observe what is really going on, without letting personal reactivity or anxiety get in the way."[40] There is a correlation between differentiation of self and emotional maturity although there is some disagreement whether chronological age is a factor in maturity.[41]

Emotional Health – A broad sense of well-being, enabling people to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life. This wide-ranging field includes the more focused constituent, emotional intelligence (see definition below).

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[38] John Flanagan, "The Critical Incident Technique," *Psychological Bulletin* 51, no. 4 (1954): 327.

[39] Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 304.

[40] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 18.

[41] Roberta M Gilbert, *Extraordinary Leadership: Thinking Systems, Making a Difference* (Falls Church, VA: Leading Systems Press, 2006), 188–189; Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 8–9.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) – "The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships."[42]

Getting on the Balcony – A distanced view—people's ability to remove themselves from the "dance floor," to disengage from the swirling activity around in order to gain perspective on self and others and what systems might be in play as a whole (i.e. family systems, church systems, etc.). The more EQ one exhibits, the greater ability to disengage and process appropriately before re-engaging.[43]

Informal and Incidental Learning – An organic method of learning that rests outside of traditional formal learning techniques. Informal learning can occur with organizational purpose and intention but is not limited by the organization. Incidental learning, by nature, always occurs in the context of informal learning. In fact, incidental learning occurs even when people are unaware. Also, incidental learning is a byproduct of some activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction (Marsick and Watkins, 1990, p. 12).

Leadership – The ability to do the right thing, in the right situation, understanding the cost personally and to others. Mobilize and inspire others to accomplish great things.

Mentor – someone who imparts wisdom to a mentee. They are guides, formally or informally who embody our hopes and dreams. Mentor expert, Sharon Deloz Parks suggests "we trust them because they have been there before…cast light on the way

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[42] Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 317

[43] Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 305.

ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point our unexpected delights along the way."[44]

Reactivity – Synonymous with anxiety and describes the response one has to a perceived threat. It is not typically a reasoned response but rather an instinctual one that indicates a lack of self-awareness. See EQ definition.

Relational Capital – The collective trust, knowledge, and experience brought to a relationship producing credibility and forming the core of the relationship. When relational capital is built and recognized by the necessary partners, trust is developed and becomes the basis for cooperation toward a vision, goal, or decision.

Relational Intelligence – a term used by author Steve Saccone. He describes relational intelligence as the ability to learn, understand, and comprehend knowledge as it relates to interpersonal dynamics. It is similar to EQ with a specific application within a Judeo-Christian worldview.

Relational Wisdom – A term associated with Ken Sande and his work integrating emotional intelligence and what he calls *Relational Wisdom*. Where traditional EQ categories include EQ-Self and EQ-Others, Sande offers a third category EQ-God. The ability to discern emotions and interests in oneself and others, to interpret them in light of God's word, and to use these insights to manage responses and relationships constructively.[45]

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[44] Laurent A. Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 18.

[45] Ken Sande, "Discover- Relational Wisdom | Ken Sande," rw360.org, accessed August 17, 2015, http://rw360.org/discover-rw/.

Systems (thinking) – The emotional relationships between or among individuals developed primarily through spending significant time together.[46] Herrington explains, "The capacity to see the whole and the parts of a system simultaneously, noticing the contribution made by each person and the effect of each upon the other. This includes the ability to recognize the symptoms of increasing anxiety and to note the part one plays in the system's reactivity."[47]

[46] Gilbert, *Extraordinary Leadership*, 192.

[47] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 171.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to describe how pastors learn emotional intelligence (EQ) in their ministry leadership context. In order to understand the process whereby pastors learn emotional intelligence, the researcher surveyed four areas of literature. First, the literature, which explored the theory and practice of emotional intelligence, was examined, exploring the EQ themes of managing one's own emotions and equally critical, appropriately responding to other's emotions. Second, the literature on the theory of professional learning provided a framework to understand how pastors learn in general and specifically, how EQ is learned in the context of ministry leadership challenges. Third, the scriptures provided a host of stories and characters where emotional intelligence is either clearly seen or an evident deficiency. And finally, literature that considers some of the themes of pastoral sustainability provided a backstory for pastors who learn emotional intelligence in ministry.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional Intelligence can be described as the ability to manage ones own emotions[48] and to appropriately respond to the emotions of others.[49] It is trendy today to compare IQ with emotional intelligence pitting one against the other. However, they are both helpful as predictors of success and potential. IQ can sort people into the type of

[48] For a description of differing emotions, see Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 69.

[49] As defined in Shankman, *Emotionally Intelligent Leadership*.

careers where they can best function. Beyond that, it is not a helpful indicator of how one might function within that field.[50] The greater measure of success in that pool of qualified leaders is their level of emotional intelligence. "It was once thought," says Daniel Goleman, "that the components of emotional intelligence were 'nice to have' in business leaders. But now we know that, for the sake of performance, these are ingredients that leaders 'need to have.'"[51] The research is in, says Goleman, and it "clearly shows that emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won't make a great leader."[52] And as previously noted, it is encouraging that with determination and commitment, emotional intelligence can be learned.

Daniel Goleman has concluded that technical skills are insufficient for the challenges leaders face. He explains, "When I calculated the ratio of technical skills, IQ, and emotional intelligence as ingredients of excellent performance, emotional intelligence proved to be twice as important as the others for jobs at all levels."[53] In *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, authors Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky corroborate Goleman's conclusion, saying, "The most common cause of failure in leadership is produced by treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical problems…[These] challenges can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits, and loyalties."[54]

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[50] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," i.

[51] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 21.

[52] Ibid., 1.

[53] Ibid., 3.

[54] Heifetz, Linsky, and Grashow, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 19.

An introduction to the concept of emotional intelligence or EQ is helpful as a foundation for understanding EQ's genesis and growing significance. Oswald and Jacobson, in their seminal[55] EQ book for evangelicals, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus: Religious Smarts for Religious Leaders* writes:

> The term 'emotional intelligence' was first used by two psychologists, Peter Salovey and John Mayer, in an academic journal in 1990. Daniel Goleman later asked permission to use that term in his book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), which became a runaway bestseller…Salovey and Mayer defined emotional intelligence as the 'ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.[56]

Goleman expanded Salovey and Mayer's more narrow definition of EQ to include the following four quadrants or characteristics:

1. Emotionally intelligent leaders are good at understanding their own emotions (self-awareness).
2. Emotionally intelligent leaders are good at managing their own emotions (self-management or regulation).
3. Emotionally intelligent leaders are empathetic to the emotional drives of other people (social awareness).
4. Emotionally intelligent leaders are good handling other people's emotions (social skills).[57]

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[55] Seminal because there are so few books written for the Christian community on the subject of emotional intelligence.

[56] Oswald, and Jacobson, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*, 1–2.

[57] Practical Emotional Intelligence, "A Brief History of Emotional Intelligence," www.emotionalintelligencecourse.com, accessed May 9, 2016 http://www.emotionalintelligencecourse.com/eq-history. Daniel Goleman adds "motivation" as a component. The researcher considers motivation a matter of the heart rather than a skill. For that reason, it was not included in the list. One can certainly argue that motivation is a component but not argue as easily for motivation as a skill. The researcher agrees with Goleman when he answers the question, "Can emotional intelligence be learned," that EQ will not be learned without "sincere desire and concerted effort," i.e. motivation. Goleman, "What Makes a Leader," 9.

There is a science behind the theory of emotional intelligence that Goleman explains in detail in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* that is beyond the scope of this work and yet, profitable if the reader desires to learn more about neuroscience and emotions.[58] Goleman shares the value of this new understanding of the brain,

> [The] flood of neurobiological data lets us understand more clearly than ever how the brain's centers for emotion move us to rage or to tears, and how more ancient parts of the brain, which stir us to make war as well as love, are channeled for better or worse…these insights are so late in coming largely because the place of feeling in mental life has been surprisingly slighted by research over the years, leaving the emotions a largely unexplored continent for scientific psychology…now science is finally able to speak with authority to these urgent and perplexing questions.[59]

> By understanding the limbic section of the brain responsible for governing feelings, impulses and drives, we are beginning to realize the importance of motivation, practice and feedback for learning emotional intelligence.[60]

The four competencies in the emotional intelligence matrix are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.[61] Bradberry and Greaves, authors of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0: A Guide to Increasing Your EQ*, state that self-awareness is the ability for persons to notice, in the moment, what they perceive as beneficial and what they perceive as threatening. Self-management indicates one's ability to regulate behavior as a result of self-awareness.[62] Social awareness requires excellent listening skills and the ability to process others' emotions in the moment. Relationship

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[58] Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2005), 3–32.

[59] Ibid., xxi.

[60] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 8–9.

[61] Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence*, 43.

[62] Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0,* 24-27.

management is the practice of integrating the previous three skills in order to guide pastors, in this research, toward mutual understanding and problem solving, which is uniquely helpful in working through conflict.

Most of the work in the field of emotional intelligence has been in the corporate world including business, the social sciences, and the helping professions. Little work has been done in the spiritual realm, let alone specifically for evangelical Christians. Yet, there is a recognition by Goleman and others that spirituality is an important component in emotions generally and emotional intelligence in particular.[63]

The gap in recognizing and learning emotional intelligence in the evangelical community has been narrowed somewhat through the work of Ken Sande, Peter Scazzero, and Roy Oswald. Sande has developed a biblical model for emotional intelligence called *Relational Wisdom*. On the website, Sande defines what he means by relational wisdom.

> Relational wisdom, in essence, is the ability to live out Jesus in two great commandments, namely, to love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:37-39). Relational wisdom may also be defined as your ability to discern emotions, interest, and abilities in yourself and others, to interpret them in the light of God's word, and to use this insight to manage your responses and relationships successfully.[64]

Similar to the four components in Goleman's model of EI, Sande organizes his model "in terms of six core skills or disciplines that are grouped into three pairs. One pair focuses on how we relate to God, another on how we relate to ourselves, and the third on how we

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[63] Goleman, *What Makes a Leader Why Emotional Intelligence Matters*, 102; Cindy Wigglesworth, *SQ21: The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence* (New York: SelectBooks, 2012).

[64] Ken Sande, "Discover Relational Wisdom: RW Definition and Paradigm," www.rw360.org, accessed July 15, 2015, http://rw360.org/discover-rw/.

relate to others."[65] Like Goleman, Sande places emphasis on awareness and engagement in each of the three groups (God, self and other).

The key to understanding how Scazzero connects EQ with Christian spirituality is to understand that when he uses the term "emotional health," he is describing what Goleman and others describe as emotional intelligence.[66] In fact, Scazzero claims, "Emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable."[67] Scazzero had an awakening many years ago when his wife Geri informed him, "Pete, I'd be happier single than married to you…I love you but refuse to live this way anymore…I have tried taking to you. You aren't listening. I can't change you…oh, yes, by the way, the church you pastor? I quit. Your leadership isn't worth following."[68]

The pain and loss for Scazzero were instruments God used to set him on a journey towards emotional and spiritual health. In his latest book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Scazzero reflects, "Mature spiritual leadership is forged in the crucible of difficult conversations, the pressure of conflicted relationships, the pain of setbacks, and dark nights of the soul."[69]

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 45–47. Scazzero makes a distinction in his definition of emotional health that the researcher finds unhelpful. He concludes that "emotional health concerns itself primarily with loving others well." He then goes on to say that "self-awareness, knowing what is going on inside of us, is indispensible to emotional health and loving well."

[67] Ibid., 12.

[68] Ibid., 17.

[69] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 50. One could substitute "learned" for forged which connects this quote to the researcher's fourth RQ, how pastors learn emotional intelligence.

The authors of *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*, Oswald and Jacobson define EQ and apply its principles to church leaders and congregations using the life of Jesus.[70] Since the researcher is attempting to show how important EQ is to a pastor's leadership, a brief mention of loss would be instructive. Whether change is required of the leader, others, or the system, learning to recognize and negotiate loss is a critical component of emotionally intelligent leadership.[71] It is not simply change that creates anxiety within a person or system but rather the loss that is produced or felt through the change. A leader who demonstrates high EQ will consider how the changes affect others, what losses they will experience, and whether such losses are justified and defensible. "A key to leadership, then, is the diagnostic capacity to find out the kinds of losses at stake in a changing situation, from life, loved ones to jobs, wealth, status, relevance, community, loyalty, identity, and competence."[72]

Scazzero builds on Heifetz's taxonomy of loss.

> When we deny our pain, losses, and feelings year after year, we become less and less human. We transform slowly into empty shells with smiley faces painted on them…but when I began to allow myself to feel a wider range of emotions, including sadness, depression, fear, and anger, a revolution in my spirituality was unleashed. I soon realized that a failure to appreciate the biblical place of feelings within our larger Christian lives has done extensive damage, keeping free people and Christ in slavery.[73]

The literature verifies that mentoring is crucial to the development of emotional intelligence. For example, Goleman strongly states "cultivating special relationships [mentors], whose sole purpose is to help you along your path, is crucial to continuing

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[70] Oswald, and Jacobson, *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*, 1, 8.

[71] Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 22, 96–97, 152–153.

[72] Ibid., 22.

[73] Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 70.

development."[74] Goleman is making a direct correlation that an emotionally intelligent leader or pastor will incorporate a mentor into their life. He further makes the connection, "while the standard view of mentoring is that it's a way to foster career development, mentoring can also serve as a coaching forum for boosting emotional competence."[75] As the literature review moves to professional learning, it is instructive to note that the field of professional learning also places an extraordinarily high value on mentoring. In Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner's authoritative and comprehensive guide to adult learning, *Learning in Adulthood*, they conclude, "The mentor serves as guide, cheerleader, challenger, and supporter during the learning process."[76] The fact that mentoring crosses the disciplines of emotional intelligence and professional learning underscores its value to this research objective, namely, how do pastors learn emotional intelligence.

Professional Learning

There are a variety of theories and models on the subject of adult learning.[77] Of particular interest to the researcher is the "experience and learning" model of adult learning. The reasons for choosing this model are related to the subjects of this work, namely majority-culture male pastors. In most cases and in all eight of the researcher's interviewees, master's level education is required. However, as noted earlier, pastors are not generally taught leadership in general and emotional intelligence in particular at the

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[74] Goleman, McKee, and Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership*, 164.

[75] Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Trade Paperback Reissue Ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 273.

[76] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood*, 138.

[77] Ibid., 79–81; Sharan B. Merriam, and Laura L. Bierema, *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 24–41.

seminary level. Therefore, if they are to learn EQ, it will most likely occur at the intersection of experience and learning. In addition, this learning takes place in what Combs' describes as "informal learning."[78] Combs defines informal learning as

> the spontaneous, unstructured learning that goes on daily in the home and neighborhood, behind the school and the playing field, in the workplace, marketplace, library and museum, and through the various mass media.[79]

In other words, this learning occurs during life, work, or play. In considering the relationship between experience and learning, authors Merriam and Bierema in their work, *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*, suggest that this connection

> between experience and learning is particularly prominent in adulthood when we are engaged in a continual flow of activities in the private, public, and professional spheres of our daily life. At the heart of adult learning is engaging in, reflecting upon, and making meaning of our experiences, whether these experiences are primarily physical, emotional, cognitive, social, or spiritual. In much of our understanding of adult learning including the foundational work in andragogy, self-directed learning, and transformative learning, an adult's life experiences generate learning as well as act as resources for learning.[80]

The fact that emotional intelligence can be learned necessitates continuing education in effective leadership, and specifically for this study, for pastors. The field of professional learning has been gaining momentum for the past half-century, notably in the groundbreaking work of Donald Schön in 1983, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. Up until Schön, the dominant view drew a sharp distinction between research and practice. In other words, problem solving was limited to applying scientific theory and technique to a set of givens without the benefit of

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[78] Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, *Learning in Adulthood*, 35.

[79] P. H. Coombs, *The World Crisis in Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 92.

[80] Merriam, and Bierema, *Adult Learning*, 104.

reflecting on "complex and ill-defined situations in which geographic, topological, financial, economic, and political issues are all mixed up together."[81]

However, Schön called for a type of reflection, as one is experiencing problems firsthand.[82] There is nothing strange about a kind of knowing while doing, or purposively reflecting while in action, says Schön.[83] The awareness necessary in an emotionally intelligent pastor would require this kind of reflective or thinking-in-action.

This reflection-in-action is not to be confused with reflection-on-practice. They are both reflective practices but there is a distinction in their definition and value to adult learning. For example, a pastor may decide to change Easter to include a sunrise service, which has not previously been done. Reflection-on-practice means the pastor will evaluate the effect of the sunrise service at some point later. If the pastor is emotionally intelligent, he will have vetted that decision through his primary stakeholders before the decision was made and evaluate the decision with them later.

Reflection-in-action, says Merriam, "is different…because the reflection takes place as you are engaged in the experience – it is simultaneous with practice."[84] She continues, "Reflection-in-action is what distinguishes the more expert practitioner from the novice. It characterizes the practitioners who "think on their feet," who experiment, change direction, and immediately respond to a changing context of practice."[85]

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[81] Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 40.

[82] Ibid., 21, 26–28, 39–42.

[83] Ibid., 50–54.

[84] Merriam and Bierema, *Adult Learning*, 116.

[85] Ibid.

Reflection-in-action is similar to what Heifetz and Linsky call "getting on the balcony."[86] They use this metaphor to describe the process of getting above the dance floor so you can observe a greater perspective on the event, action, situation, or behavior. For example, a pastor decides to change the way mission funds are distributed and explains the new plan at the monthly board meeting. Several of the board members have missionary friends who will be affected by the changes, and they become agitated with the pastor and the decision. A reflection-in-action response from the pastor may be to listen, consider, slow down the process, and offer to form a commission to study to plan to see if it meets the values and vision of the church. Reflecting on and in our experience is critical toward adult learning.[87]

The practice of reflecting-in-action is helpful to the professional, but earlier proponents like Schön were less clear on how a practitioner learns this behavior. According to Ronald Cervero, author of *Effective Continuing Education for Professionals*, "…Practice itself and, even more importantly, reflection on that practice are the 'freshest and most fruitful sources[s]' (Houle, 1980, p. 45) for professional learning."[88] Schön and Cervero agree that two primary methods exist for learning. First, there is learning acquired through knowledge generated within the university setting (technical rationality). Both authors agree that the model of technical rationality is not sufficient to account for the uniqueness, uncertainty, and conflicting values in many

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[86] Ronald A. Heifetz, and Martin Linsky, *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002), 53.

[87] Merriam, and Bierema, *Adult Learning*, 117.

[88] Ronald M. Cervero, *Effective Continuing Education for Professionals*, The Jossey-Bass Higher Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988), 39.

important situations of professional practice. The second method, as noted above, is called "reflection-in-action."[89]

A key to this method of learning is to reflect in the midst of a situation. The professional brings to bear their past knowledge and experience on the current action. Schön proposes that "the practitioner has built up a repertoire of examples, images, understandings, and actions…[and] includes the whole of his experience insofar as it is accessible to him for understanding and action."[90] The net result for the practitioner is to learn first by acquiring technical knowledge; then, however, "A model of learning from practice should become the centerpiece of systems of continuing education for the professions."[91] Strategies for making this model of learning a reality for professionals is based on the view that their action is the most important element in the learning process. In other words, any model must allow the professional the opportunity to observe, engage in and discover…thinking in action.[92] This model of professional learning can be a strong tool for pastors negotiating the challenges of ministry. Managing one's own emotions and responding appropriately to other's emotions (emotional intelligence) is conditioned by an ability to reflect on experiences.

In his article, *How Pastors Learn The Politics of Ministry Practice*, Bob Burns explains that researchers are critical of pre-professional theological training of pastors as technical rationality. He highlights an increasing number of practitioners and educators

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[89] Ibid., 38–45.

[90] Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, 138.

[91] Ronald M. Cervero, "Professional Practice, Learning, and Continuing Education: An Integrated Perspective," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 11, no. 2 (April, 1992): 98.

[92] Ibid., 99.

who speak of the gap between formal training of theological seminaries and the demands of daily practice.[93] Even the current trend in continuing education for pastors most often focuses on technical learning rather than what is developed through reflective practice.

Biblical/Theological

There is a dynamic connection between emotional intelligence and the Bible. This connection is in the area of relationships. For the Christian, the Bible is the final authority on all matters of life, faith, and practice. The principle subject of the Bible is God as expressed in three persons in relationship with one another.[94] Creation itself was a relational act of God culminating in the covenantal relationship between humankind and their creator.[95]

Similarly, emotional intelligence is the "ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and *others*, and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and *relationships*"[96] (italics mine). In particular then, the narratives of the Bible become a laboratory for observing emotional intelligence in life settings.

Jesus

In the Bible, Jesus is presented as an example of a host of qualities that include self-denial, patience, love, gentleness, purity, faithfulness, and humility. Jesus demonstrates extraordinary emotional intelligence as he uses each of these attributes to guide diverse and contrary relationships toward gospel truth. Jesus also demonstrates the

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[93] Robert W. Burns, "How Pastors Learn the Politics of Ministry Practice," *Religious Education* 97, no. 4 (September 1, 2002): 306.

[94] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 226–238.

[95] Gen. 17:7-8; Ex. 6:7; Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13.

[96] Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, 17.

ability to differentiate himself in his many encounters. Differentiation and EQ produce a similar recognition of self and others. Richardson in *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* says, "Many of the stories about Jesus' encounters with the disciples, the crowds, and the Pharisees show us a man who did not let his emotionality take over and derail his ability to stay focused and to think clearly."[97] The EQ and differentiation work of Jesus can be seen, but not limited to, the following four illustrations.

The first illustration is the family of Jesus. This is appropriate since "Our hearts are shaped first of all in our families," and "Our experience within that emotional system is where we first begin to create a sense of self and to determine how we will and won't behave."[98] The episode where Mary and Joseph forget Jesus as they leave Jerusalem for Nazareth clearly demonstrates a degree of self-awareness that is extraordinary for anyone, let alone a twelve-year-old boy. And yet, his responses reveal a clear awareness of God's controlling influence, a teaching that would be central to his ministry, and also obedient submission to his parents.[99] We find similar family dynamics at play when his anxious mother pressures him at the wedding in Cana, or concerned over his safety, she uses his siblings in an attempt to convince him to come home.[100] Jesus experiences emotional pressure from his family, yet in love, he acts on principle rather than having his decisions determined by his family's intentions for him.[101]

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[97] Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor*, 57.

[98] Ibid., 60.

[99] Luke 2:41-52.

[100] John 2:1-11; Mark 3:21, 31-35.

[101] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 20.

The second illustration occurs as Jesus faces the enemy, Satan. As quickly as Jesus is confirmed for ministry at his baptism, he is directed into the wilderness where Satan tempted him with power, relevance, and the miraculous.[102] His anchored identity as God's Son and reliance on the Word (Hebrew Scriptures) positions Jesus in such a way as to manage his own emotions and "do the right thing."[103]

The third illustration displays the powerful influence friends can present to us. One of Jesus' closest friends is Peter. Richard Bauckham, in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses,* says that the Gospel of Mark paints a picture of Peter as "a man of initiative and self-confidence, the one who speaks out when others do not (8:29, 32; 10:28), sometimes with insight (8:29), sometimes altogether too impulsively (8:32; 9:5-6)."[104] Bauckham continues by describing how Peter's loyalty and fear affect his motivation first in his outright denials of Jesus and then later, as his loyalty and love rise in his emotional remorse.[105] The gospels, particularly Mark, suggest that Peter was learning from his mistakes and growing emotionally. Bauckham will go so far as to suggest that Peter is developing self-awareness as he grows. Bauckham describes it as follows:

> The implication here of a moment of self recognition, as his illusory self-confidence is destroyed. It is also important than showing up Peter is not a *static* character, but one who acquires fresh self-awareness in a life changing experience.[106]

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[102] Matt. 4:1-11.

[103] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 19.

[104] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2006), 175.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid.

This evidence of Peter's growing self-awareness supports Goleman and Bradberry's work stating that emotional intelligence can be a learned behavior.[107]

When the time was right, Jesus informed his friends that he would go to Jerusalem and eventually the cross, but Peter objected as if to protect Jesus' mission and avoid suffering. This prompted a rebuke from Jesus.[108] Jesus stands juxtaposed to Peter, who is uncertain how to negotiate his emotions. One minute Peter is affirming Jesus as the Christ, the next he is obstructing the mission of the Christ. He is chided by Jesus in the garden, and then denies he even knows Jesus for fear of his life. Jesus, on the other hand, understands the emotions of his friends and negotiates them in such a way that his mission remains on track.

The fourth story illustrates the way Jesus cared and loved without losing focus. There were multiple occasions where Jesus found himself moved emotionally by the overwhelming physical and spiritual needs he encountered. In emotional intelligence language, Jesus possessed what Goleman calls empathy, "thoughtfully considering others' feelings – along with other factors – in the process of making intelligent decisions."[109] For Christians, learning to act rather than react must be cultivated through the use of spiritual disciplines. In a very real sense the development of emotional intelligence is cultivated by addressing all of the five themes identified in the Resilient Ministry study.[110]

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[107] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 8–9; Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, 18.

[108] Mark 8:27-33.

[109] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 16.

[110] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 18–29.

A reason Jesus responded with such self-awareness, self-regulation and empathy was his identity with his Father. He drew strength, balance and purpose from his relationship with God.

David

David was, on the one hand, a man after God's own heart.[111] On the other hand, he was self-serving and a murderer. David's affair with Bathsheba[112] "unleashed a family dysfunction that plagued him the rest of his life."[113] It is "no wonder we find so much in David to admire and so much we wish we could ignore."[114]

The dichotomy in David's emotional life appears often in his encounters with conflict. Early in life David negotiated constant conflict with Saul and showed restraint in sparing Saul's life on several occasions.[115] Is it conceivable that David matured spiritually in his relationship with God but stayed somewhat immature in the above-mentioned themes of self-care and marriage/family?[116] David repented following the rebuke of Nathan[117] and Joab,[118] illustrating a desire in his heart to follow God.

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[111] 1 Sam. 13:13-14; Acts 13:22.

[112] 2 Sam. 11:1.

[113] Reggie McNeal, *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*, Updated ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 27.

[114] Ibid., 21.

[115] 1 Sam. 24; 1 Sam. 26.

[116] Biblical evidence supports both David's close relationship with God (Ps. 139:21; Ps. 34:2; Ps. 38:21-22) and his lack of self-awareness within his own family. For example, he played by a different set of rules when it came to his son Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam.18; 2 Sam. 19) and the resulting lack of leadership on the part of David undermined the morale of his troops.

[117] 2 Sam. 12; Ps. 51.

[118] 2 Sam. 19:1-15.

Nevertheless, the stories of First and Second Samuel make a case, however unpopular, that David failed to grow significantly as a father and husband.[119]

What we do know is that "even though Nathan's parabolic use of his story does lead David to repent, it does not result in the kind of 'self-revelation' that might have a lasting effect on his emotions and insight into reality."[120] This becomes clear in the subsequent stories of Amnon with Tamar[121] and David with Joab,[122] not to mention David's lack of social awareness towards his own men following the death of Absalom.[123] As Lasine points out,

> David's specific problems as king involve more than the misuse of power to satisfy illicit desires. The most serious political and judicial crises of his reign are brought about by his emotional vacillation and not-always-reliable "reality sense," together with his obliviousness concerning the implications of his actions.[124]

In contrast to David's periodic lack of leadership and emotional awareness, Nathan exhibited great leadership, wisdom, and emotional intelligence in his responses to King David. One particular example near the end of David's life occurs when, once again, a son of David. Adonijah , exalted himself as king.[125] Adonijah convened a great feast and didn't invite his father, Nathan, or any of David's mighty men, not even

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[119] McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 27–29.

[120] Stuart Lasine, "Melodrama as Parable: The Story of the Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb and the Unmasking of David's Topsy-Turvy Emotions," *Hebrew Annual Review* 8 (1984): 114.

[121] 2 Sam. 13.

[122] 1 Kings 2.

[123] 2 Sam. 18-19.

[124] Lasine, "Melodrama as Parable: The Story of the Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb and the Unmasking of David's Topsy-Turvy Emotions," 120.

[125] 1 Kings 1.

Solomon. According to Maurice Buford in his article, "The Nathan Factor: The Art of Speaking Truth To Power," Nathan's response to Adonijah's power play was "laced with emotional intelligence."[126] Buford continues,

> This lack of invitation not only of Nathan but others (i.e., King David, Solomon, others) may have invoked problematic emotions (i.e., anxiety or rejection) within the prophet…his response outlined in [1 Kings 1:] 11-14 highlights Nathan's interpersonal skills, his problem solving abilities, and how he effectively managed the stress of negative politics. First, he immediately found the key stakeholder (Bathsheba) and networked...second, Nathan demonstrated a keen sense of problem-solving ability when he advised Bathsheba on how to address the king (see verses 13-14). Finally, Nathan maintained an overall demeanor of optimism and projected a strong sense of stress tolerance…Due to Nathan's emotional intelligence the organization was able to defuse the agenda of a self-centered personality.[127]

God used Nathan's gift as a prophet and his emotional intelligence to influence circumstances so that the foreordained intention of God for Solomon to succeed his father would come to pass.

Psalm 51 describes a man who is contrite before the Lord while in Psalm 10; David questions the Lord's absence as the wicked wage injustice on the innocent. These contrasting Psalms bear witness to David's lack of emotional intelligence and maturity. In any event, it is clear from the Hebrew Scriptures[128] that David struggled to manage his emotions and to respond appropriately to others. In spite of these shortcomings, God's

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[126] Maurice A. Buford, "The Nathan Factor: The Art of Speaking Truth To Power," *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* Summer, no. 2 (2009): 109.

[127] Ibid., 110.

[128] In addition to works and passages identified see also, Paul Borgman, *David, Saul, and God: Rediscovering an Ancient Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Location 1767–1770, 1776–1779, 2264–2268, 4118–4121, Kindle; Jonathan Kirsch, *King David the Real Life of the Man Who Ruled Israel* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2009), Location 2477–2490, 2857–2863, Kindle.

people can be encouraged that, notwithstanding all of David's emotional struggles, God used him in the unfolding plan of redemption.

Paul

The scriptures primarily address a people, the Jews in the Old Testament and the Christians in the New Testament. The cultural context in which the Apostle Paul found himself in the first century positioned him through God's superintending as the first cross-cultural missionary in the history of the Christian Church. Tarsus, Paul's hometown, was a convergence of Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultures and further prepared him for the cross-cultural mission work he would later accomplish. In addition, Alexander the Great had established Greek has the international language of the world. McNeal adds, "This move did for the first-century what the Internet has done for the twenty-first century in terms of facilitating information exchange across national lines."[129]

The cultural context of Paul's family of origin also played a significant role in his emotional development and effectiveness as a leader and pioneer in the early church. Again McNeal reflects, "By far, the most significant cultural conditioning Saul received for his life calling occurred in his family of origin. God placed his future apostle into a Pharisee home."[130] Here Paul would learn a very narrow way of understanding the world that God would eventually have to break in order for the apostle to be useful beyond his local context Israel. Paul's reflecting-on-action is center stage in Philippians as he discloses a shift in his former spiritual and ethnic privileges:

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[129] McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 37.

[130] Ibid.

> Put no confidence in the flesh—**4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.**7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—**10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.[131]

Paul struggled at times with others who questioned his motives, leadership and authority.[132] Following his conversion,[133] Paul became a marked man, hunted down by his former compatriots who persecuted Christians.[134] He also faced the difficult role of confronting fellow apostles.[135] Some of Paul's challenges came from the churches he planted, for as McNeal describes,

> The Corinthian church has long stood as a symbol of the kind of grief that followers can dish out to their spiritual leaders. Some of the Corinthian congregation did not care for Paul's preaching, his personality, or his ministry program. In the Corinthian correspondence, we can feel the pain of someone who has to defend his authority and position even though he has paid a high price for it.[136]

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[131] Phil. 3:3b-11.

[132] Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor*, 57.

[133] Acts 9.

[134] Acts 9:23-25; Acts 23:6-22.

[135] Gal. 2:11-12.

[136] McNeal, *A Work of Heart*, 45. Timothy reported to Paul that the Corinthian church was in conflict which prompting what Paul called a "painful visit" and left without resolve. He later sent a tearful and strong letter (now lost) they received, and many repented. Then, Paul followed with 2 Cor. 2:1-4.

Paul was learning to respond emotionally out of his developing life in Christ. He no longer needed an earthly pedigree to substantiate his purpose for life. In fact, Paul renounced his ethnic and spiritual privileges for the sake of the gospel. The only credentials he needed were the "surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."[137] Paul learned, in the furnace of affliction, that the power of Christ was perfected through his weakness.[138] Strength rising out of weakness was an emotional platform Paul displayed in navigating the challenges of ministry.

Pastoral Sustainability

In the work of Burns et al, they propose five themes that are critical to sustaining pastoral excellence in ministry: spiritual formation, self-care, emotional/cultural intelligence, marriage/family, and leadership/management. These themes, according to Burns, should be considered as a whole since each builds on one another.[139] Yet, there does not appear to be a unique path to how one learns or practices the needed skills. Rather, "each is dependent on the others [and] they are like the strands of a tapestry woven into one piece."[140] In other words, there is an organic link between emotional intelligence and leadership. This is true for the remaining three themes and their connection to EQ.

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[137] Phil. 3:2-16

[138] 2 Cor. 12:9.

[139] See also Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation,* 29–30; Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 2–10; Roberta M Gilbert, *Extraordinary Leadership: Thinking Systems, Making a Difference*, 4–30.

[140] Ibid.

Therefore, a survey of the how the remaining four themes build on one another and how they bear on the development of emotional intelligence will provide a greater understanding why pastors should value learning emotional intelligence.

Spiritual Formation[141]

The idea that a pastor can minister without consistent soul care is fraught with danger. John Piper has said that you cannot commend to others what you do not cherish[142] in the context of worship fueling mission, and this is also true of the pastor's inner spiritual life. Ministry leaders who fail to cultivate their own personal devotional life will find it difficult to guide others to these life-giving and soul-refreshing places. The pressures and professionalization of ministry leave many clergy dissatisfied with their spiritual lives. And in many circumstances, pastors realize something needs to change in their spiritual lives, but the way forward is uncertain. This study will review spiritual formation literature from an analysis and prescriptive view. In other words, analysis considers the condition of the pastors' spiritual journey, while prescriptive study offers aid to develop spiritual maturity.

Pastors, like others, operate within what researchers call a living system.[143] The system functions under a set of behaviors and is often controlled by the level of anxiety

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[141] Wilhoit defines Christian spiritual formation as the intentional communal process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 23.

[142] John Piper, "Missions Exists Because Worship Doesn't: A Bethlehem Legacy, Inherited and Bequeathed," Desiring God Ministries Audio Recording (Minneapolis: Bethlehem Baptist Church, September, 27, 2009), accessed http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/missions-exists-because-worship-doesnt-a-bethlehem-legacy-inherited-and-bequeathed.

[143] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 29–30; Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor*, 2–20; Gilbert, *Extraordinary Leadership*, 3–30.

exerted on the system. The key to negotiating the behavior of the congregational system is the emotional maturity of the pastor. As Herrington, Creech and Taylor explain, "You must be able to see what is going on around you, observe the anxiety, note your part in it, and manage yourself amid the pressure."[144] Emotional intelligence, emotional maturity, and spiritual formation are knitted together as necessary partners as pastors negotiate ministry challenges. In fact, Scazzero bluntly says, "It is not possible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature."[145]

Spiritual formation becomes the fuel for the engine of change toward spiritual maturity. One way pastors grow spiritually is through hardships and suffering. It is in the crucible of suffering and hardship where pastors may learn the art of dependence on God and develop self-knowledge, compassion and empathy. Scazzero in *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* says it more pointedly, "Mature spiritual leadership is forged in the crucible of difficult conversations, the pressure of conflicted relationships, the pain of setbacks, and dark nights of the soul."[146] However, as Burns notes in *Resilient Ministry*, "hardship, affliction, and suffering are given little space in most spiritual formation books and discipleship courses."[147] And yet, there is evidence in spiritual classics, leadership articles and the Bible that reflect a strong belief that hardship does shape a leader (pastor) toward greater effectiveness. For example, James Wilhoit, professor of Christian Formation and Ministry at Wheaton College, explains, "suffering and pain are the needed

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[144] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 47.

[145] Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 17.

[146] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 50.

[147] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 45.

catalysts for the broken heartedness that opens us to leave behind our self-made idols and seek God and his grace."[148]

The Center for Creative Leadership studied how hardship "is different from other developmental experiences because it is not intentional, and the lessons are usually learned in retrospect, through reflection."[149] They concluded, "Christian leaders…believe that their effectiveness and success as leaders is due to the way they have processed and faced the hardships in their lives, [and] above all, they consider their faith in God the indispensable component in their ability to bounce back when hardship hits them with full force."[150] The Center for Creative Leadership's study on lessons learned through hardships identified "four lessons that came out of their research: self-knowledge, sensitivity, limits of control, and flexibility."[151] While not exactly the same components of emotional intelligence outlined by Goleman,[152] they are remarkably similar and speak to the natural affinity between EQ, professional learning and how they are influenced by hardships and suffering.

The faith component contains the element of remembering the hardships and the manner in which God was present in the midst of the storms. It also reminds us of

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[148] Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 53–54; Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 20–21. The Bible is replete with examples of lessons learned through suffering and hardship. For example, Jacob's conflict with Laban and Esau in Genesis 31 and 32; Paul also suffered as an apostle as seen in 2 Corinthians 11:16-33.

[149] Sylvia Gonzalez, "Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?" *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (September, 2010): 53.

[150] Ibid., 61.

[151] Ibid., 54.

[152] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 3–21.

"biblical passages that admonish us to remember past hardships and how God was able to lift us up from them."[153]

Spiritual formation among clergy is gaining popularity as a necessary component of ministry training, but all do not hold its rise in popularity. Pastor and adjunct faculty member of Duke Divinity School, William Willimon sharply quips, "My prejudice is that some things take care of themselves, in this case, the spiritual formation of the pastor."[154] Willimon is concerned that spiritual formation for pastors will result in clericalization of the church and an overemphasis on individual spirituality apart from the community.[155] This valid concern is a necessary balance to an over-inflated individualistic view of spiritual formation. However, historic classics, even the Desert Fathers, rarely separated the need for personal spiritual transformation from the community, even for clergy.[156]

Many exceptional works on the role of spiritual disciplines in forming Christian character are available.[157] Within the wide array of disciplines, two stand out as critical in

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[153] Gonzalez, "Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?" 60. See Ps. 77:11, 12; 78:7; 84:5-7; Is. 42:16; Rom. 5:2-5.

[154] William H Willimon, "The Spiritual Formation of the Pastor: Call and Community," *Quarterly Review* 3, no. 2 (1983): 31; Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 21–22.

[155] Willimon, "The Spiritual Formation of the Pastor: Call and Community," 39; Tito Colliander, *Way of the Ascetics: The Ancient Tradition of Discipline and Inner Growth* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), x.

[156] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 21–22; Colliander, *Way of the Ascetics*, x; Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 23.

[157] Resources across the Christian spectrum: Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1999); Donald S. Whitney, and J. I. Packer, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Updated and revised ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014); Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life: Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Publishing Group, 2002); John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015); Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998); Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, eds.,

the development of emotional intelligence – confession/repentance and reflection. The twin pillars of self-awareness and self-regulation in EQ parlance correspond with confession and repentance as necessary to the "hard work of integrating emotional health and spirituality."[158] Martin Luther, not the prototype for emotional intelligence, urged, "Go and confess, and use this means to health."[159] This confession may be directly to God,[160] but it often also means speaking to those on staff or parishioners who have been sinned against and asking for their forgiveness.

Repentance, for the pastor, carries an additional role in the congregation that Burns calls the "chief repenter."[161] Pastors are role models for the members of the congregation they lead and mature leadership by the pastor provides others an example by which to live. This notion of going first is succinctly stated by Kouzes and Posner, "You measure [leadership] by the actions people you know take that cause you to look to them for guidance along the important journeys in your life."[162]

Reflection is a discipline that incorporates rest, contemplation, silence, and meditation. The most visible sign of reflection provided in scripture is the sabbath.[163]

Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups, Rev. and expanded ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

[158] Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 18–19.

[159] Max Thurian, *Confession* (Norwich, United Kingdom: SCM Press, 1958), 29.

[160] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 92.

[161] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 55.

[162] James M. Kouzes, and Barry Z. Posner, *The Truth about Leadership: The No-Fads, Heart-of-the-Matter Facts You Need to Know* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 10. The authors further state this importance by naming "Model the Way" as the first of the The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership.

[163] Ex. 20:8-10.

God set aside a day and "gave it to people as a restorative and recuperative gift."[164] However, even in sabbath keeping, there is a tendency to compartmentalize each area of life into work, home, play, and even time with God. This is not helpful for our spiritual growth. In fact, "The spiritual disciplines work against this temptation to compartmentalize our life."[165] Reflection is so vital and necessary to personal transformation that Herrington et al cites it as the third leg in a trifold process, saying, "Personal transformation happens best when a grace-giving, truth-telling community of accountability supports us in developing a reflective lifestyle."[166]

The spiritual disciplines are similar to learning emotional intelligence in that there must be recognition of the need, desire on the part of pastors to engage, and commitment to join the journey towards emotional and spiritual maturity. Reflection and confession/repentance are but two of many spiritual disciplines,[167] and they can be a fitting place to begin.

Self-Care

While self-care may seem at odds with the call of Jesus to self-denial and traditionally esteemed Protestant work ethic, many consider it foundational to the success of professional practice.[168] Self-care is more than simply eating right and getting your sleep. Not less than these, "Self-care addresses those elements of life that allow one to be

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[164] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 41.

[165] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 138.

[166] Ibid., 12.

[167] Calhoun identifies at least 62 spiritual disciplines. Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook,* 11-13.

[168] Siang-Yang Tan and Malissa Castillo, "Self-Care and Beyond: A Brief Literature Review from a Christian Perspective," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 33, no. 1 (2014): 90.

well in a variety of ways spiritually, emotionally, physically and mentally—for the purpose of renewal and personal growth."[169]

Self-care is an essential component to the overall health of pastors. Today's clergy are experiencing new and unique burdens resulting in increasingly poor mental and physical health. They have greater requirements on their time than in earlier decades, their support system is often lacking or non-existent, and their jobs include both physical and emotional demands.

The current emotional, physical and spiritual state of many pastors indicates that self-care is a much neglected element of clergy resiliency. Denominational research supports the evidence that declining physical and emotional health among pastors is a serious concern. "We're overweight, we have high blood pressure, and we have stress levels and depression levels that are higher than the general population," concludes United Methodist HealthFlex plan manager Steve Weston.[170]

The high demand on clergy produces stress that becomes a flashpoint prompting more and more clergy to leave the ministry.[171] The effect on marriages has been documented,[172] and clergy rank third among professionals who are divorced.[173] Peter Brain, an Anglican Bishop in Australia and pastor for over forty years, describes the

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[169] Ann Sidney Charlescraft, Alexander Tartaglia, Diane Dodd-McCue, and Sandra B Barker, "When Caring Hurts: A Pilot Study Supporting Compassion-Fatigued Pediatric Critical Care Nurses," *Chaplaincy Today* 26, no. 2 (2010): 18.

[170] Bob Wells, "Which Way to Clergy Health," *Duke Divinity School Alumni Magazine* (Fall 2002): 98.

[171] Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Pastors in Transition: Why Clergy Leave Local Church Ministry*, Pulpit & Pew (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2005), 43.

[172] Weaver, et al., "Mental Health Issues among Clergy and Other Religious Professionals," 398.

[173] Ibid.

people he believes benefits most from healthy self-care, "the group of people in my life who benefit most from my own self-care, and who are the most hurt by my failure to carry out these strategies, are my family…here is probably the greatest tension for pastors."[174]

There is yet another consequence of stress among clergy that has become all too common – sexual misconduct. The isolation and heavy demands of the ministry create a perfect storm for some clergy, putting them at risk for an inappropriate sexual encounter. One study of Southern Baptist senior pastors in the southeast investigated contributing factors in sexual misconduct.[175] Researchers found that "high levels of stress and sexual misconduct were strongly associated."[176] The evidence points directly at pastors' inability to negotiate the challenges of ministry practice.

Parker Palmer, founder and Senior Partner of the Center for Courage & Renewal and world-renowned writer, speaker and activist who focuses on issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality and social change makes his case for the value of self-care:

> I have become clear about at least one thing: self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give it the care it requires, we do so not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch.[177]

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[174] Peter Brain and David Jackman, *Going the Distance: How to Stay Fit for a Lifetime of Ministry*, 2nd ed. (Kingsford, NSW, Australia: Matthias Media, 2006), 102.

[175] Weaver, et al., "Mental Health Issues among Clergy and Other Religious Professionals," 400.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 30–31.

Self-care comes to us in a variety of practices and Burns provides a helpful list,[178] while Palmer offers a strong case for the merits of healthy self-care.

Marriage and Family

There is an organic connection between marriage and the ministry and every clergy couple will face tension in their marriage resulting from challenges in ministry. Noted clinical psychologist and author Diane Landberg describes the difficulty of marriage in the ministry landscape,

> Pressure is inevitable in the ministry. There are difficulties and disappointments. There are the over-whelming needs of others, questions for which we have no answers. And there are failures as well—both in our families and among our church leaders. If we do not find the confidence that comes from knowing that it is *God* who has placed us where we are, we will be crushed by the demands and responsibilities of leadership. We will buckle under the pressure. If, however, we recognize that our confidence lies in the fact that God has placed us where he has, for the purpose of conforming us to his Son, then we can respond by walking in obedience to him on all fronts. The result is that we can serve as examples to the flock.[179]

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie "identified five challenges facing marriage and family for those in ministry: the 'normal' pressures of marriage and family life; the nature of ministry: always on the job; the conflicting loyalties of church and home; abandonment from always being on the job; and the unmet needs of ministry spouses for confidants."[180] Most families have to determine how the household will operate which means home duties, childcare, and recreational activities, not to mention financial stress.

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[178] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 60–100.

[179] Diane Langberg, *Counsel for Pastors' Wives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources Library, 1988), 19.

[180] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 170.

These pressures are difficult in themselves, but when one adds the unique ministry stressors, it may seem an overwhelming burden to couples.

Ministry is a job that can feel like it never ends or you are never off the clock. It can steal every inch of margin you have in your life at the expense of your spouse, your children, or even your own personal margin. Again, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, "This second stressor…is unique to ministry and threatens the longevity of ministry leaders. In response, pastors need better self-care practices and regular time off. Their spouses do not need to be emotional dumping grounds, [and] children need to be assured that they are not to blame for ministry stress."[181]

Pastors leave the office eventually and go home, but they often never leave work. The accessibility factor today with information technology increases the sense that the pastor is always on call. Proper boundaries are the realm of healthy clergy who understand when the smart phone should be silenced and computers should sleep. Couples who are passive in protecting their families will be swept downstream by congregational pressures. Once again, in *Resilient Ministry*, the authors encourage steps that include "understanding the strategic role of our spouses, forming ministry partnerships with them, working with them to manage the congregation's expectations (even by intentionally disappointing others), managing the unique ministry dynamics of dual relationships, and actively supporting the spiritual growth of our spouses."[182]

The next stressor is related to always being on the job, and it is abandonment. It stands to reason if the pastor is seldom home and enjoys no consistent or quality time at

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[181] Ibid., 177.

[182] Ibid., 186.

home, the spouse is likely to feel a sense of abandonment. A list of four connecting habits are recommended by Burns et al to build stronger bonds in the marriage. First, take days off and keep a regular date night. Second, pursue hobbies together. Third, turn off phones. Fourth, keep short accounts of wrongs.[183]

Ministers and their spouses often feel as though they live in a glass fish bowl. Consequently, they have no safe place to share the burdens and struggles they carry in life and ministry. This dilemma may be more acute for spouses than pastors. It is important for them to find friendships that provide the safety and confidentiality needed and a loving husband who will provide, as of first importance, support for these relationships. "It is imperative," says Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, "that pastoral couples talk about developing and pursuing friendships. When one assumes a role of leadership, it is often very lonely. And it can be just as lonely for the spouse as it is for the pastor."[184]

The relational stakes are high in ministry, and the pastor who is able to negotiate these stressors is more than likely someone with emotional intelligence. In other words, a pastor who is self-aware can better manage his own emotions while responding with love to his spouse's needs. Pete Scazzero in his latest book *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* clarifies the stakes: "If you want to lead out of your marriage, then you must make marriage – not leadership – your first ambition, your first passion, and your loudest gospel message."[185]

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[183] Ibid., 193–194.

[184] Ibid., 196.

[185] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 92.

Leadership

It may not be an exaggeration to claim that leadership is the least taught area in seminary and most needed subject to navigate the challenges of pastoral ministry. While there are leadership principles offered across the spectrum, for the purposes of this research, the focus will concentrate in the area of emotional health and leadership. This study will briefly examine the problem of leadership, systems thinking, and leadership solutions.

Edwin Friedman, in his book, *A Failure of Nerve*, paints a bull's eye on the problem of leadership. "Whenever a 'family' is driven by anxiety, what will also always be present is a failure of nerve among its leaders."[186] A congregation is a family and emotional system, and consequently, pastors must understand their own family system history and develop an awareness of their church's family system. The reality is that "leaders or not, everyone is involved in the emotional system, but some people are controlled by it more than others."[187]

The first and most important step in learning to lead well is to believe that you make a difference, and others believe it as well.[188] There is an ancient proverb that says if you are leading but no one is following, then you are only taking a walk. Kouzes and Posner make a helpful distinction, "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow."[189] If someone must follow because it is required

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[186] Edwin H Friedman, Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 2.

[187] Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church*, 30.

[188] Kouzes, and Posner, *The Truth about Leadership*, 1, 15.

[189] Ibid., 16.

of him or her by the leader or organization, then obedience through duty is the result. However, if they willingly follow their leader, credibility has been established and the relationship has been transformed into a partnership rather than merely an employee/employer understanding.

Another leadership solution is the art of reflection. Reflection has been mentioned previously as an important discipline in spiritual formation, but a different type of reflection is needed in pastoral leadership. "Reflection-in-action" is a term coined by the late Donald A. Schön to describe a particular kind of reflection in the midst of action.[190] It happens unannounced in all manner of situations and is most often a by-product of emotionally mature leaders. Once the event has occurred, leaders participate in what Schön called "reflection-*on*-action." They would review and reevaluate their conversations and actions of the reflection-in-action process.[191] While it is possible to evaluate individually, this reflection-on-action is most effective in community with "conversation partners."[192]

In this summative look at leadership solutions, one final observation is the importance of a leader's self-differentiation. Many authors cited in this research voice a common refrain; a system will become anxious at some point, and the ability for the system to move forward in healthy ways is largely determined by the non-anxious presence of a leader. How significant is a well-differentiated leader? Here again is Edwin Friedman.

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[190] Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, 54.

[191] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving*, 201.

[192] Ibid., 202.

> Without question the single variable that most distinguished the families that survived and flourished from those that disintegrated was the presence of what I shall refer to…as *a well-differentiated leader*…not an autocrat. Rather, I mean someone who has clarity about his or her own life goals, and, therefore, someone who is less likely to become lost in the anxious emotional processes swirling about. I mean someone who can be separate while still remaining connected, and therefore can maintain a modifying, non-anxious, and sometimes challenging presence. I mean someone who can manage his or her own reactivity to the automatic reactivity of others, and therefore be able to take stands at the risk of displeasing.[193]

Well-differentiated leadership is understood as an inside out process. This is precisely why reflection is foundational for becoming a better leader. Friedman describes above the kind of leader needed in an anxious system but how is that leader developed? How do they learn to be a non-anxious presence? As Goleman concludes on learning emotional intelligence,[194] the leader must recognize the essential value of the trait and then exercise a commitment to developing that trait. Authors Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor describe a less anxious leader, saying, "Ultimately you must develop and master your own ways to calm yourself. We have found these ideas helpful: increase your self-awareness, monitor your thinking patterns, manage your feelings, [and] slow the pace."[195]

We have considered self-awareness through the lens of emotional intelligence. The way leaders think is shaped by their experience and healthy leaders have the capacity to see shortfalls in their thinking patterns and adjust. They also identify feelings and learn to manage them in appropriate ways. The authors' final idea is to "slow the pace" which

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[193] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 14.

[194] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 9.

[195] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 71.

requires some further explanation because it can be instrumental in teaching leaders to "be present in the midst of an emotional system in turmoil and actively relate to key people in the system while calmly maintaining a sense of [their] own direction."[196]

There are moments in an anxious system when a leader must decide; will the situation squeeze one into its mold, or will the leader recognize the anxious landscape and make a decision to intentionally slow the pace? How do leaders learn to slow the pace? Pastoral leaders can slow the pace by building spiritual disciplines into their lives. The disciplines "put us in a place where we can begin to notice God and respond to his word to us."[197]

In addition to spiritual disciplines, Herrington, Creech, and Taylor provide four more suggestions on how to slow the pace: clarify before responding, breathe and count, wait to respond, and ask for a time-out.[198] The reason a non-anxious presence is so essential for pastors is clearly summarized by Richardson.

> The leader's main job, through his or her way of being in the congregation, is to create an emotional atmosphere in which a greater calmness exists—to be a less anxious presence… when a leader cannot contribute to this kind of atmosphere, the thinking processes in the group are short-circuited, and people become more anxious and more emotionally reactive and make poor decisions.[199]

Healthy leaders learn to manage their margins. In *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, author Calhoun suggests, "Slowing is a way we counter our culture's mandate to constantly be

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[196] Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church*, 174.

[197] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 19.

[198] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 81–82.

[199] Richardson, *Creating a Healthier Church*, 173.

on the go."[200] Slowing the pace is perhaps best learned in ordinary living and then developed in leadership.

In this chapter, four areas of literature have been reviewed. Emotional intelligence with its emphasis on managing one's own emotions and appropriately responding to other's emotions is the foundation for understanding EQ. The basic EQ components or skills are self-awareness and regulation along with social awareness. Next, since the purpose statement included how pastors learn emotional intelligence, it seemed necessary to include a section on the theory of professional learning and specifically, how do pastors learn EQ?

The third literature area was a brief survey of selected scripture characters and passages where emotional intelligence was a key ingredient shown or missing. Finally, the themes of pastoral sustainability such as self-care, spiritual formation, marriage/family, and leadership were discussed, as well as the principal theme of the research, emotional intelligence.

[200] Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 79.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to describe the process by which pastors learn emotional intelligence (EQ) in the their ministry leadership context. Four literature areas have been identified that are crucial to comprehend the value of emotional intelligence in negotiating the challenges of pastoral ministry: emotional intelligence, professional learning, biblical/theological, and pastoral sustainability. With these literature areas as a base, the following research questions will guide this research:

1. What emotions do pastors experience as they lead in their ministry context?
2. What is the impact of these emotions on pastors?
    a. How aware are pastors of their own emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their own emotions?
3. How do pastors negotiate the impact of others' emotions in their leadership context?
    a. How aware are pastors of others' emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their relationship as others express their emotions?
4. What is the learning process whereby pastors grow in their emotional intelligence?

The assumption of this study was that pastors can learn emotional intelligence and the result of that learning can often translate into a relationally successful ministry. Many pastors have learned emotional intelligence and are practicing that skill with marked effectiveness in their ministry context. A sampling of those pastors have been

purposively selected; therefore, a qualitative study will be used to demonstrate that pastors can learn emotional intelligence.

Design of the Study

Sharan Merriam, in her book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, declares, "Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world."[201] The purpose of this type of research is measured by studying the process people experience rather than particular results. The qualitative research method allows the researcher, through the interview process, to collect rich data on how pastors have negotiated ministry challenges using emotional intelligence and how they could have improved in situations where they did not exhibit emotional intelligence.

Today there are multiple tools designed to measure emotional intelligence;[202] however, in keeping with the inductive process of qualitative research, the researcher is interested in exploring the stories of how pastors used, or did not use, emotional intelligence in the practice of ministry. The stories themselves will provide the framework for study, because as Merriam states, "the framework is informed by what we inductively learn in the field."[203] In other words, the researcher seeks to understand how pastors make sense of the pastoral challenges they face, how they interpret those experiences, and how emotional intelligence benefitted them and the church. The

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[201] Sharan Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 13.

[202] Here are some examples: *Emotional Intelligence Appraisal®*, Reuven Bar-On's EQ-I, Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), Seligman Attributional Style Questionnaire (SASQ), Mayer-Salovey-Curuso EI Test (MSCEIT).

[203] Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 16.

researcher will look for patterns and recurring themes in the stories of pastors interviewed. Merriam, in *Qualitative Research*, categorizes this process as "basic qualitative research."[204]

It is noteworthy that the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting data and its analysis in qualitative research. In this case, the researcher is a pastor and is aware of the natural "shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study."[205] They will shape the way the data is collected and analyzed and the task of the researcher is to minimize any negative effects while providing a sense of understanding as the stories are told.

Participant Sample Selection

The key for sample selection is a participant who has experienced the crucible of conflict in their pastoral practice and navigated those experiences successfully. This most common strategy of sampling is called "purposeful sampling."[206] Due to limited resources for networking and the need to minimize participant variables that are not the focus of the study, the researcher will select participants from reformed, conservative Presbyterian denominations. Because wisdom and experience are often the best teachers, participants will have served as pastors of congregations for at least ten years and a minimum age of forty years old.

The researcher has considered his network of pastors but has also enlisted the wisdom of his Covenant Theological Seminary advisor for recommendations of possible

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[204] Ibid., 22–23.

[205] Ibid., 15.

[206] Ibid., 77.

candidates towards best practices. The list has been developed and eight were contacted by phone or email and invited to participate in the research project. The researcher provided the purpose of the study, the interview questions and a consent form was signed.

Research Subjects

Allan

Allan is married for the second time with grown children, a blended family and many grandchildren. He has planted and served congregations in the east and Midwest sections of the country for over 55 years. He is presently semi-retired and serving in a pastoral counseling role in a local Presbyterian Church in America congregation. The relationship between marriage and ministry has been a challenge and blessing for Allan. Emotional intelligence has not been in Allan's everyday vocabulary, yet he has grown experientially in this discipline without knowing how to technically define it.

Henry

Henry is married and has three children. He has served his congregation as Senior Pastor for approximately twenty-five years and pastored one other PCA church following seminary. Henry's congregation is centrally located in the Midwest and is multi-staffed with an associated counseling center. Henry has become familiar with the concept of emotional intelligence in the past few years.

Burt

Burt has been in ministry for over thirty years in various pastoral positions. Most of those experiences have been as an ordained PCA pastor in the East and Midwest. Burt is married with grown children and currently resides in the Southeast on the pastoral staff

of a relatively young church in a medium-sized town. Emotional intelligence is something he has pondered and taught, which is evident from his interview.

Gabe

Gabe is married and has four children. He is the senior pastor of a multi-staff church he planted in the Southwest over a decade ago. He worked in college ministry prior to church planting. Gabe has studied emotional intelligence and related disciplines, applying them to his leadership context as a church planter and senior pastor.

Chuck

Chuck is married and has three grown children. He has pastored for over thirty years from yoked congregations to a large multi-staff church today in the Southeast. Chuck has not only served as a pastor but as director of a denominational ministry. His experience and processing ability stand out in his interview even though he was not familiar with the language of emotional intelligence.

Frank

Frank is married with young children in his mid-forties and pastors a multi-staff church that he planted almost ten years ago. He has worked in denominational institution positions and was developed through a church-planting network. The church he now pastors is his first as a senior pastor.

Dan

Dan is married with four children and has been in ministry over twenty-five years. He has served two congregations as senior pastor during that span in the Midwest and Southeast. Dan has helped both congregations navigate church splits. While he wouldn't

necessarily use EQ language, he has learned and grown in it through these leadership challenges.

Ethan

Ethan is married with three grown children. His ministry spans three decades serving churches from the Mountain West to the Southeast as a staff pastor as well as the senior pastor. Ethan has also pastored in two denominations and was raised in a third. He has read widely in the area of pastoral sustainability and his working knowledge of emotional intelligence comes through clearly in his interview.

Data Collection

Interviews are the primary method of data collection, and the type of interview employed by the researcher will use less structure, with more open-ended questions. The researcher will have a set of interview questions from which to initiate the conversations, knowing he will change the order or tone of the questions, ask follow-up questions, and probe as the interview is taking place. This face-to-face interview structure follows what Merriam calls a semi-structured protocol.[207] Prior to the interview, participants will receive a document outlining the purpose of the study and the research and interview questions, along with a participant consent form.

The interview protocol will be tested in a pilot with pastors who match the purposeful sampling criteria outlined above. The following questions will serve as the interview guide with flexibility as warranted through the process:

1. Describe an event in your ministry when you felt emotionally compromised.

[207] Ibid., 90.

   a. In what ways were you prepared to act in an emotionally healthy way?

   b. To what extent did you process and reflect on the event either personally or with others?

2. Tell me, in detail, your discovery about the importance of emotional intelligence to your ministry. When did it begin to "click" for you that emotional intelligence was vital to your survival in ministry?

3. How did you learn to navigate through difficult emotional issues?

4. Tell me a time when you reacted in an emotionally healthy way.

5. Describe the impact that followed your responses.

6. Give me an example when you did not respond well.

7. What were you able to learn from that experience?

8. Tell me what avenues have been helpful in processing your emotional health post incidents. Who do you talk to? For example:

   a. Peer groups

   b. Spouse or close accountability partner

   c. Spiritual disciplines

   d. Coaches/mentors

   e. Continuing education

   f. EQ workshops

9. What are the challenges moving forward if you desire to grow in your emotional intelligence?

10. What would be your next step towards growing your EQ?

11. What else would you like to share about how EQ has and is shaping your ministry?

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed as soon after the interview as possible for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analyses in a qualitative research project "is the most difficult part of the entire process"[208], according to Merriam. There is a give and take between the researcher and the data that takes place during the interview and well after as the researcher continues to analyze, sort, and process the data.

In this project, the researcher used margins to write notes, comments and observations. Merriam notes that this exercise is also called coding.[209] The goal is to construct categories or patterns that arise from interviews, comparing these patterns across the data.[210]

The researcher will interpret the data using the constant comparative method of analysis. Merriam describes the method in the following manner:

> Basically, the constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. The dimension is tentatively given the name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data. These patterns are arranged in relationships to each other in the building of a grounded theory.[211]

The researcher is encouraged to analyze the data simultaneously with data collection.[212] Even though the researcher will have a transcript of the interview to analyze later, capturing emotions in the moment is critical to collecting accurate information from the interviewee. Again Merriam, "To wait until all data is collected is to lose the

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[208] Ibid., 175.

[209] Ibid., 178.

[210] Ibid., 181.

[211] Ibid., 30–31.

[212] Ibid., 171.

opportunity to gather more reliable and valid data; to wait until the end is also to court disaster, as many a qualitative researcher has been overwhelmed and rendered impotent by the sheer amount of data in a qualitative study."[213] Following transcription of the interviews, the data was coded into groups or categories for easy retrieval in the analyzing process. In short, Merriam states, "The practical goal of data analysis is to find answers to your research questions. These answers are also called categories or themes or findings."[214]

The Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique has been employed in a qualitative manner in this study. As it name implies, critical incident technique involves the study of critical incidents.[215] John Flanagan, its creator describes critical incident technique as

> A set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior in such away as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles. The critical incident technique outlines procedures for collecting observed incidents having special significance in meetings systematically defined criteria.[216]

There has been a move to Constructivist Critical Incident in recent years that "is still able to count behaviors and to detect patterns, but also to develop rich narratives that capture both context and meaning from the perspective of the respondents."[217] Andersson and

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[213] Ibid., 207.

[214] Ibid., 176.

[215] Hilary Hughes, Kirsty Williamson, and Annemaree Lloyd, "Critical Incident Technique," *Topics in Australasian Library and Information Studies* 28 (2007): 49.

[216] John C. Flanagan, "The Critical Incident Technique," *Psychological Bulletin* 51, no. 4 (1954): 327.

[217] A.D. Ellinger, and Karen E. Watkins, *Updating The Critical Incident Technique After Forty-Four Years* (Chicago: AHRD, March 4, 1998), 288.

Nilsson assessed the general reliability and validity of this technique and concluded "information collected by this method is both reliable and valid."[218]

Oaklief comments that the critical incident technique "is a flexible set of principles and procedures which have been modified in many ways to meet the specific needs and situations in a variety of settings."[219] Fivars, in a literature review on the critical incident technique, cited that CIT had been applied as a research method and compared with other methods in over 700 studies.[220]

Critical incidents will be an important tool for this study given that emotional intelligence does not occur in a vacuum. Pastors face difficult situations and relationships in their ministry practice and the results are often painful. The power of hearing and processing those stories with pastors will enrich this study and perhaps be an encouragement as they continue to process the outcome of those relationships.

Table 1

Summary of Critical Incidents

CRITICAL INCIDENTS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS	
Pastor	**Incident**
Allan	Successful ministry, unsuccessful first marriage
	Dealing with a family crises and Session meeting simultaneously

[218] Bengt-Erik Andersson, and Stig-Goran Nilsson, "Studies in the Reliability and Validity of the Critical Incident Technique," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 48, no. 6 (December, 1964): 402.

[219] Charles R. Oaklief, *The Critical Incident Technique: Research Applications in the Administration of Adult and Continuing Education* (Toronto: Adult Research Conference, 1976), 10.

[220] Ellinger, and Warkins, *Updating the Critical Incident Technique After Forty-Four Year*, 285.

Burt	Dealing with a dysfunctional staff
	Conflict with church Human Resource committee
	Ill-fated decision in hiring staff member
Chuck	Disagreement with elder over the installation of another elder
	Dealing with an addict whose father-in-law was an elder
Dan	Young pastor learning to deal with loss, shepherding through a church split
	Negotiated the family system impact of a parent on ministry & marriage
	Leading out of personal emotional brokenness
Ethan	Disagreement with Sr.Pastor over planting a church in same city
	Dealing with an antagonistic elder
	Poor decision in hiring worship leader/pastor
Frank	Struggle with competing personality types in his marriage
	Conflict with worship team member
Gabe	Disagreement with elders over vision, mission and direction of the church
	Learning to accept loss from members/elders leaving the church
Henry	Loss of mentor in first church
	Confronting an elder who turned on him and became an antagonist and questioned Henry's integrity
	Dealing with his lack of emotional availability to his spouse

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted two pilot study interviews. The data was briefly analyzed using the research questions, reflected on the quality of the data, and made changes to the process where needed.

Researcher Position

Qualitative research is by definition inductive with the researcher serving as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The result is that all information and observations are filtered through the researcher's orientations, biases, assumptions, and worldview. Merriam explains that the researchers "need to explain their biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research to be undertaken…such a clarification allows the reader to better understand how the individual researcher might have arrived at the particular interpretation of the data."[221]

The researcher is a male, evangelical minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. While not currently a senior pastor, the researcher has operated in that role in two separate churches and denominations. In the previous denomination, the researcher was exposed to Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and other disciplines that involved an understanding of emotional health and its importance to ministry practice.

Reflections by the researcher on his own lack of emotional intelligence in his ministry have been an incentive to study this topic. The researcher's present pastoral role includes mentoring and coaching pastoral interns providing additional motive for the researcher to address the area of emotional intelligence.

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[221] Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 219.

The researcher is presently ministering in the southeast portion of the United States of America with a predominantly conservative political, social, and religious culture.

Study Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. The literature on emotional health in general and clergy health in particular is vast. This study, while touching on broader areas of emotional health, is limited to the range of emotional intelligence and how pastors learn and use it in their ministry practice.

Generalizations of the specific findings in the study must be tested in the reader's context. The discoveries may have value beyond the limited context of eight majority culture male pastors but that determination is left to the reader. In other words, the person who reads the study must decide whether the findings can apply to his or her particular situation.[222]

[222] Ibid., 226.

Chapter Four

Findings

The purpose of this study is to describe how pastors learn emotional intelligence (EQ) in their ministry leadership context. Interviews were conducted with eight research subjects meeting the criteria outlined in chapter three. The interviews are compared and discussed in this chapter in order to address the following research questions:

1. What emotions do pastors experience as they lead in their ministry context?
2. What is the impact of these emotions on pastors?
    a. How aware are pastors of their own emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their own emotions as they lead?
3. How do pastors negotiate the impact of others' emotions in their leadership context?
    a. How aware are pastors of others' emotions in these challenges
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their relationships as others express their emotions?
4. What are the learning processes whereby pastors grow in their emotional intelligence?

The methodology as described in chapter three employs the examination of a critical experience or incident. Leading up to the interviews, each interviewee received an email outlining a description of the standard protocol that would be followed. They were

asked to identify several stories, positive or negative, that were etched in their memories as critical learning experiences, through either success or failure. While given the option to include successes, the interviewees articulated only struggles and failures. Chuck admits early in his interview, "The difficult ones were more of the ones that came to the surface than the encouraging ones."

Emotions Pastors Face As They Lead In Their Ministry Context

The first research question focuses on the particular emotions pastors experienced in the course of leading in their ministries or churches. These emotions surfaced as pastors vividly recalled challenging incidents in their ministry practice. Since, as Chuck admits above, the "Difficult ones came to the surface," the researcher found the categories of sadness, anger, fear, and shame as presented by Scazzero,[223] as the dominant emotions expressed by the interviewees.

Sadness

Sadness is the general emotional category that includes more specific emotions such as grief, despair, loneliness, isolation, identity crisis, and loss. Six of the eight interviewees experienced significant losses during their ministry. Ethan buried and denied loss in his life, and so in two separate church departures, he left without providing others in the congregation a way to process their own loss. He described it this way, "I chose to leave, offered my resignation, and the Session accepted it, to my surprise. They asked if I wanted to tell the congregation, and I said NO. Part of it was my embarrassment; part of it was fear, hurt and anger. I deeply regret that decision today." Ethan also described another episode where he left not only a church but also a

[223] Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 69–71.

denomination for theological reasons. Once again, his inability to negotiate emotions of loss created unnecessary grief for others. Ethan explains, "The truth is, I was not straightforward with them; too protective…I needed to control the process to manage my own sense of loss. I was not honest with the reasons why I left the church and denomination…I did not trust the process and in turn, short-changed people as I attempted to manage and control my own sense of grief."

Allan, Henry, Dan, and Burt also tackled the loss of significant people in their ministry and life. Allan lost a spouse to divorce; Henry grieved the loss of a trusted mentor; Dan experienced the physical death of a parishioner slightly his senior and, the emotional death of a parent; Burt left a position where he was "absolutely having a blast." In each case, these pastors had to navigate the fallout from these losses based, in part, on their emotional intelligence, which will be examined in the remaining research questions.

In the literature review, Scazzero and other authors explained that too often pastor/leaders' identity is linked closer to their ministry than relationships.[224] Chuck made the comment, "I really think that sometimes my goal is really to be the best in the history of the world." He was not speaking about his role as a husband or a father but rather as a pastor and in this case, missionary conference organizer. Allan struggled to place his spouse and first marriage in their proper priority, and this failure was a factor in his divorce. In reflecting back on his experience, he contemplated the impact:

> I really began to learn some things, that I really was preoccupied with the ministry and with myself in ministry and not alert to what that [pastoring, ministry] was doing to her...the only really important thing she ever asked me to do for her I was unwilling to do, and that was to get out of the ministry, to take a break for a year so we could focus on us, and I was never willing to do that.

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[224] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader,* 38–39.

He would go on to further reflect that he "didn't know how to be anything but a preacher. I didn't want to be anything else…truth is that I never really considered it [and] today I'm ashamed of that."

Henry, Burt, and Gabe spoke of the loneliness of pastoring. Henry was a young assistant pastor under the tutelage of the church's senior pastor. His mentor married a woman who became a "ministry rather than a partner," and that marriage strained Henry's mentoring relationship. The relationship between Henry and the senior pastor became so threatening to the senior pastor's spouse, "She cut me off from that relationship." This confusing separation ushered in significant loneliness for Henry.

Gabe reported that when criticism came more from members of the session than congregants, he felt "very alone and unprotected." After hearing from a mentor that it might take five years to overcome the challenges, he felt "disheartened" and pondered the question, "Can I survive five years?" On another occasion Gabe was absorbing the session's inability to handle the loss of members and felt "very alone." Even with his wife as a co-processor, Gabe admitted, "We didn't have anybody to talk about that stuff." Sadness and its accompanying emotions were clearly evident in these interviews.

Anger

Anger is evident in specific incidents involving fury, hostility, irritability, annoyance, betrayal, trust, rejection, conflict, confrontation, and frustration. Each of the eight interviewees expressed varying degrees of anger and its corollaries as they led in their ministry context. Ethan, Gabe, Frank, and Allan described anger and conflict in their marriages that was tied to their leadership role in ministry. For example, as Gabe's church experienced more and more anxiety due to loss, namely unhappy members and

elders leaving, he faced an increase of hostility with his wife. Gabe describes it this way. "At home, we were experiencing conflict [and] this was very difficult for Sarah." According to Gabe, she was struggling with a loss of members in this young church plant. The stress and arguing increased as they navigated those turbulent leadership waters together.

The situation Allan experienced was altogether different than Gabe's. At least for Gabe and Sarah, they were attempting to process ministry, albeit by arguing. Conversely, Allan married someone who did not share in his early success in ministry because of severe dysfunction in her family of origin, resulting in their inability to enjoy ministry as a couple. Allan was off doing ministry, and he commented, "She probably felt that I had a mistress – it was the ministry…the fact is, I was making most of my decisions based on what was good for the ministry, and I came to realize this later on." Allan and his wife eventually divorced.

Henry also indicated that leading in ministry had consumed so much of his time that while his spouse "just kept asking for more [investment], emotionally I wasn't that available…year after year I would say, 'I'll do better; I'll try,' but I couldn't do it, I couldn't be more present."

Frank has served as a pastor in only his present congregation, and as he described areas of conflict in his ministry, the church was noticeably absent. He explains, "To be honest with you, I think my marriage is the point of greatest tension. I haven't had the stress here at church but I had a lot of stress at home." Frank commented gratefully that God was protecting him by placing him in a church with less conflict, knowing that he could not likely handle both. However, Ethan's experience was somewhat different. He

and his wife Valerie chose to combine forces against hurtful elders and staffers. Rather than allowing the church conflict to divide them, Ethan and Valerie "were on the same page, and she was a great help to me in walking through that situation, so we were angry together."

Anger showed in other contexts with the interviewees. Chuck reflected on an elder who held particularly strong reformed values, creating "constant conflict" in their relationship. On another occasion, Chuck described a young addict he had tried to help whose father-in-law was an elder in Chuck's church. The young addict had stolen from Chuck, lied to him, and used him to support his addiction. As the situation escalated one night, Chuck reached his boiling point:

> There are times I believed him when he was lying straight through his teeth to me, and it culminated late one night when I had been called out to be with him, and he told me a story outside a motel I was paying for, and realizing everything he was telling me was a lie, I walked up to him in public view and cussed him out. I mean words I hadn't said in decades, screaming at him, and I felt so angry at myself that I could be fooled again.

Chuck was angry not only because this young man had betrayed him but also because in spite of his hopes for conflict resolution, he felt helpless in resolving this particular conflict. He says, "There is a part of me that is the rescuer, savior".

A common element several interviewees experienced was a sense of being "blindsided" as they were leading. Burt walked through a crisis event with a brother, and after considerable investment into this relationship; this brother rejected his advice and attacked Burt. He reflected, "It was very painful for me because I had spent a lot of time with him, and I was the center of his attack." Around the same time, Burt felt betrayed, hurt and angry when the human resource committee of this church charged him with negligence in handling a staffer. "We can't trust Burt's leadership" and "You're the

problem" is what he heard in their comments. Emotionally reeling from their attacks, he acknowledges, "I feel like I have just been hit with a truck that has come down and blindsided me." For Burt, the anger and frustration would often express itself through what he called "stern facial expressions," and though he is sometimes unaware of these expressions, he admits his spouse is his "best interpreter."

Antagonism doesn't always emerge from churches or marriages. For Dan, it was extended family. As noted earlier, Dan's dad "has been an anchor," but mother was a more difficult relationship for him. The reactive patterns Dan learned in his family of origin along with his mom's continued acting out made him "very angry…which inevitably spills out in marriage [and] dealing with kids."

Fear

Fear in all its various forms has been a part of the story of these interviewees. Seven of eight interviewees provided clear examples of fear and its related emotions: anxiety, edginess, nervousness, fright, terror, apprehension, paralysis, and insecurity. Frank and Ethan expressed significant dread of conflict. For Frank, fear pushed him to seek peace at any cost. If there was the slightest indication of relational discord in the church, he was attentive to it, seeking peace. He was able to manage conflict in the church but not as well at home. In fact, Frank commented, "I've lived much of my married life walking on egg shells…and sort of felt like there was hell to pay if I did it wrong." Full-blown fear and anxiety are expressed in this comment from Frank regarding his marriage:

> I feel sometimes like I am in a room, and the lights are off, and there are fifty mouse traps on the floor, and I sort of have to walk across the room without stepping on mouse traps.

Redemptively Frank and his wife have made significant progress in their marriage as they have addressed the onset of such anxiety and fear.

When ministry became more professional than personal for Ethan, fear of pleasing others compromised his own integrity. The drive to be a successful preacher was so strong he plagiarized in a number of sermons so that people would appreciate and praise him. Ethan said, "There was a tremendous amount of guilt, fear, and cover up that followed me most days. It caused me to be moody, unpredictable, and not much fun to live with, and for no apparent reason why."

During their interviews, Gabe and Dan were able to make the connection between fear and anxiety that produced physical manifestations, evidence of growing self-awareness. Gabe reported "trouble sleeping" as he was negotiating ministry challenges. He said, "Several times [I] woke up in the middle of the night with my heart racing [and] sweating [profusely]." In his first pastorate, Dan said:

> Some things happened…that I honestly couldn't remember…I was just so emotionally traumatized. Only thing I can remember is going home one afternoon and curling up in the bed in a fetal position – just overwhelmed with stress, pressure, [and] expectation…like I had been pushed off the gangplank, and I am hovering over the alligators beneath, and I don't know what to do.

The stress of leading through ministry challenges can be a trigger for emotional episodes such as panic attacks. Dan had experienced some depression as a young boy. Now he found himself in his mid-thirties watching a Christian movie and "There's just a little bit of tension between dad and prodigal son, and I just start –- I feel like I'm having a heart attack…and that was my first experience with being fragile." He would learn more of how fragile he was in the experience of several additional attacks over the years. The

culmination of anxiety, fear, and stress he experienced had a profound impact on Dan and has been instrumental in his learning and growing as a leader.

Hiding in the protection of his successful ministry, Allan was "afraid" to acknowledge his marital struggles. He said, "I was a coward because I never asked for help. I never went to anybody about this and said 'I'm in a real jam, I've got to have some guidance here' -- I never did that."

By reflecting on the impact of fear and anxiety on pastors' ability to lead well in their ministry challenges, the researcher found that having an anxious system with high reactivity was a strong determiner of leadership failure in ministry.[225] The following quote from *The Leader's Journey* sounds as if it could have been written by any one of the interviewees. "I was not aware of how much my behavior was being driven by my own fear and anxiety. Instead of being a calmer presence, I reacted emotionally."[226] Again from Friedman, "The most damaging effect of intense reactivity in any family is on its capacity to produce or support a leader."[227] Anxiety and anxious systems were present in each of the stories the interviewees shared.

Shame

The data reveals that shame can be paralyzing to pastors and, without self-awareness, they will often stay stuck in the same spot for years. This lack of change also occurs with shame's more specific emotions: guilt, remorse, humiliation, embarrassment, regret, and doubt. Five of the eight interviewees expressed emotions related to shame.

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[225] Edwin H Friedman, Margaret M Treadwell, and Edward W Beal, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (New York: Seabury Books, 2007), 64–65; Jim Herrington, *The Leader's Journey*, 52.

[226] Herrington, *The Leader's Journey*, 32.

[227] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 64.

Chuck faced an angry elder who objected to the reinstallation of a fellow elder. The objection was based on a comment made in a devotional by the elder to be installed. The offended elder had heard the devotion and was convinced the elected elder "held an Arminian view, and he had no business being an officer." This unhappy elder raised the issue with Chuck on Saturday evening before the installation service on Sunday. Chuck saw this elder just before the early Sunday service and felt he needed to let him know they were moving forward with the installation. This exchange caused emotions to flare, and since their dust-up occurred in public, shame resulted.

Both Allan and Chuck identified embarrassment in their inability to respond to anxious people. Allan, speaking about his wife, confessed he was "able to sympathize with people in their pain and guide them along, but her needs must have threatened me." Allan explained his regret, "There probably is some unfinished business between me and my first wife, but I don't know what I can do about it."

Chuck had a bully on the session ramrodding an officer election process. He expressed remorse saying, "I should have confronted him. but I was somewhat intimidated." Chuck previously described a story involving a young man struggling with drugs. This young man had duped him on numerous occasions, and Chuck admitted his "helplessness and embarrassment of being so stupid…public shame or embarrassment are fears of mine."

Remorse and regret were similar themes for Burt and Ethan over personnel hires. As pastor, Burt needed to bring several persons on staff and one in particular turned out to be what he called "a bad hire." In reflecting on the process, Burt admitted, "The one thing I didn't do was call the pastor of the church he was coming from, [and] it was a real

mistake not to call, a major, major flaw." Burt underestimated the emotional damage of this hire on others confessing, "I didn't realize how much he had alienated these other staff people." It was such an "anxious system"[228] that Burt's "bad hire" would be a lightning rod for all the perceived wrong in Burt's leadership.

Like Burt, Ethan was instrumental in hiring several staff positions. He was the principal party in relieving the former youth pastor of his job and now felt "added pressure to bring in the right guy." The process seemed to include shareholders across the spectrum but as Ethan reflected and freely admitted, "The process was mine, and I was going to hire whomever I chose." Similar to Burt's hire, this youth leader alienated many folks, students and parents alike. Ethan recalls, "That hiring was a disaster, and I felt a sense of embarrassment and shame."

Ethan experienced a second bad hire. He had worked diligently to convince the leadership to hire a worship leader/pastor instead of the traditional assistant/ associate pastor role. He remembered the critical timing of this hire and the relational capital he had to expend in order to achieve this move. So there was a great deal riding on this new person. Ethan made certain the hiring process was open and inclusive, but the result was disappointing. A disheartened Ethan described it this way:

> it was the worst hire of my life…it was a very painful time, not only for me, but it was painful for the church. He did not know how to interact with people so he alienated them; he had abuse issues early in life that had not been properly worked through, and he refused to see a counselor. He had issues with authority, and we were like oil and water. I felt like a failure.

Ethan survived a second bad hire for a short season, but eventually resigned. He met with the session and offered his resignation, which they received. As previously shared, when

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[228] Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 62–66.

asked by the Session if he would like to share the resignation news with the congregation he retorted, "'NO!' In retrospect, Ethan identified his hasty decision came partly from embarrassment; part of it was fear, hurt and anger. I deeply regret that decision today." He did learn from this experience and has been able to counsel several other pastors to reflect carefully as they process their own decision to leave and the manner of leaving.

As mentioned earlier, Dan suffered several panic attacks due to stress and anxiety. On one occasion his mentor asked him, "Whom have you told?" Dan replied, "Well, I haven't told anyone." The mentor responded, "Well you have to tell your wife' Dan quipped, "No, she's got four kids, and she doesn't need another dependent!" "Have you told your elders?" his mentor asked. "NO," Dan said, "it will shake their confidence in me." Again the mentor probed, "Have you told your congregation?" Dan shot back, "Are you crazy? I'm not going to have 750 people helping me you know." "Well that is stupid," uttered the mentor. Dan replied, "What's stupid?" His mentor said, "Not telling anyone. You have got to tell people." Eventually Dan told his closest confidants, including his wife, elders, and "even shared it in vagaries with the congregation, and that was a major breakthrough." When he was able to move beyond the shame associated with it, he discovered that he "had to have other people help [him] stay together [and] help take things off his plate and to confess it…because it helped break the devil's power over me.." It lent a new credibility to his ministry and the power of the gospel to heal broken people.

So far in this chapter, the question, what emotions do pastors face as they lead in their ministry context has been explored. Sadness, anger, fear, and shame have been

surveyed through the experiences of these eight pastors. Now, the emotional impact of the leadership challenges on pastors will be discussed.

The Emotional Impact on Pastors

The second research question focused on the specific ways pastors managed themselves and the skills and practices employed as they negotiated their leadership challenges. The study will examine practices that were successful, but, more importantly for this study, it will focus on practices developed when pastors failed and subsequently grew in emotional intelligence. In order to discover the emotional impact on the individual pastor, the EQ-Self, as defined by Daniel Goleman,[229] the research question was subdivided into two components; self-awareness and self-management (or self-regulation[230]).

1) How aware are pastors of their own emotions in these leadership challenges?
2) In what ways do pastors manage their own emotions as they lead?

Pastor's Self-Awareness

In *A Failure of Nerve* Edwin Friedman points out that "It is easier [for leaders] to focus on data and technique."[231] Or as Heifetz and Linsky say, "The single most common source of leadership failure…is that people, especially those in positions of authority, treat adaptive challenges like technical problems."[232]

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[229] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters,", 1–21.

[230] Ibid., 11.

[231] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 20.

[232] Heifetz, and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 14.

Chuck found himself in a pastoral relationship with a drug addict, and the more he tried to help this young man, the angrier he became at himself. Reflecting on the event, Chuck said, "I felt so angry at myself that I could be deceived again and that my heart and my head could be so at odds…the helplessness of it…there is a part of me that is the rescuer, savior." Chuck's fears of "public shame or embarrassment" collided with his need for "everything [to be] fine and [all] live happily ever after." Even today, years later, he struggles with making sense of his emotions. "I just do not understand me or him or all the things that went together in that conflict." Chuck has grown in awareness of his fear of failure, of being misunderstood, and his need to rescue. However, there still appears to be a gap between Chuck's awareness in these challenges and his ability to manage his emotions. Had Chuck been able to 'get on the balcony' and see his own needs were competing with the direction he needed to take with this drug addict, the outcome may have been different.

Henry, on the other hand, described an incident where he recognized an antagonist. This person told him, "I'll always have your back." When in fact, within three weeks of Henry's arrival at his church, this antagonist had "begun to write letters to other Session members…saying that my preaching was sub-par standard [and] that I was not a great powerful leader." Henry had heard others describe the church's personality. He had even told another pastor who advised him against going to the church, "I know what I am getting into but I sense God's calling [and] so I came in with eyes wide open."

Several interviewees were so focused on ministry they were unavailable emotionally to their wives and children. For example, Allan stated that he "succeeded at almost anything I tried: good student, good grades, a lot of accolades, gifts as a speaker,

musician [and] as a singer…It was kind of sweet everywhere I went." However, while he was finding significant success in ministry, his marriage was unraveling. Here's how Allan described it,

> I was getting opportunities to travel around the country and preach in other churches when I was still a pretty young guy. All of this had an effect on my wife—she didn't…share in the sense of excitement I had, [and] it had a somewhat negative effect on her. I had a mistress, [and] it was the ministry…the fact is that I was making most of my decisions based on what was good for the ministry, and I came to realize this later on.

Allan's needs were being met in the ministry which covered his sense of inadequacy at home. His reflection, "I wasn't paying attention to what was real."

One indicator of several interviewees' lack of self-awareness was their commitment to reformed thinking at the expense of feelings or emotions. When Henry came face-to-face with this type of thinking, he said, "The cognitive, theological framework [was] everything…my feelings were probably like a train that I wanted to cut off, drop out, or at least sanctify" through that framework. Similarly Allan revealed, "I am one of those reformed guys who didn't put a lot of stock into what people felt…what's important is what you believe — what you think and what you believe." Early in his ministry, Dan relied on an "academic" approach to ministry. He defined the approach as "sterile or clinical" but soon came to realize that he could not "engage in [pastoring people] without getting personally enmeshed in it." This is an example of Dan's beginning to understand the difference between technical, or academic, challenges versus adaptive, or existential, solutions.

Perhaps not unexpectedly, this lack of emotional awareness was also evident in their marriages. These pastors were expending so much emotional energy in ministry that their marriages suffered. Henry experienced a "brewing sense of anger in relationships"

that was evident in his marriage. He was aware that he was not present with his wife but could not determine a way to change the behavior. He explained it this way. “I couldn’t be more available, I couldn’t be more present, I couldn’t.” Allan was also unavailable. He commented, “I really was preoccupied with the ministry, [and] the only really important thing she ever asked me to do for her I was unwilling to do—and that was to get out of the ministry…to take a break so we could focus on us, and I was never willing to do that…today, I’m ashamed of that.”

Gabe acknowledged a rift had grown in his marriage as he and his wife both attempted to negotiate the challenges of several difficult elder couples. These families were unhappy with the current direction of the church, and Gabe’s wife, after reading a letter from these couples, was disappointed that Gabe was unable to make everyone happy. He explained it this way:

> The families kept pressing…I ended up getting a six-page letter from one of the families, 8-point font, single-spaced [with] three pages dubbed “the history of the case,” and another three pages that were dubbed “recommendations or concerns,” or you know…sort of like ultimatums; sent to all the elders. I did talk to my wife, [and] I think we had fallen under the spell of the idea that if you are a good enough pastor and believe the gospel enough, you can make everybody happy…I do remember one particular time my wife got this [same] letter and read it and said, ‘Well, they do have a point’ which crushed me…she wanted me to fix it. So that became a big, big point of contention in our marriage.

Gabe not only had to deal with the two elder families., He and his wife were not on the same page emotionally. This dissonance contributed to a “heightened chronic stress” for Gabe. He was “wary of emails and phone calls and concerned that disaster was just around the corner. And [he] became much more concerned with negotiating this crisis than [he] was with thinking about the mission and vision of the church. As a couple,

Gabe and his wife "argued over small things, [and] we didn't have really good tools to handle that."

These responses were also consistent with Ethan's experiences. The leadership challenges he had in ministry impacted his relationship with his wife. Ethan and his spouse were "arguing over insignificant things directly attributed to ministry stresses I was feeling." He described the pressure as,

> bringing a giant mesh bag of ministry problems home every night and not necessarily dumping the bag but feeling the weight of the burden and being extremely defensive at home if she ever challenged my leadership, character, or ability. I literally boxed her out, and you can only imagine what that did to our intimacy. I don't know how she lived with me, but I'm thankful we survived.

Ethan conceded that his lack of self-awareness of his own emotions in ministry challenges constituted a significant obstacle for his marriage. He said, "I was trying to survive the craziness in ministry and was really self-absorbed. I had no margin for my wife, and the result was a lot of moodiness and anger towards my biggest fan and supporter."

Regardless of the difficulty of negotiating ministry challenges, pastors who are married and have children are still husbands and fathers. Henry managed the ministry piece with some accomplishment, but there were times he did not feel successful at home. For example, one of his daughters had what he called a "Puritan conscience" and "felt anguish over any [little thing] and doubted her salvation." Henry admitted, "I'd talk, and I found myself not able to fix that…which was so humbling to me because I was a good teacher, a good preacher, a good communicator, and I helped people all the time with assurance problems, and I couldn't [help her]." In dealing with several of his children, he

was aware of what he called "helpless moment[s]," while the anxiety and worry Henry acknowledged, "had been sanctifying for me."

Is it possible for pastors to be both aware and unaware of their emotions in the middle of ministry challenge? Chuck narrates an occasion when this happened to him. One of his elders considered the re-election of another elder as inappropriate. He threatened, "Chuck, you cannot let this happen tomorrow morning at 8:30. You cannot let it happen…it must stop, you have to stop it! " At this point Chuck carefully pondered his options, getting on the balcony, differentiating and concluded, "The Session had examined this man and approved him to be installed, and it is not my call."

Chuck illustrated healthy emotional intelligence and self-awareness on that Saturday night by following the process outlined by the Session. He may not have shown great EQ that night when he decided to read the email in the first place. Chuck bumped into this angry elder the next morning, which was Sunday, at 8:29 AM. He attempted to "take [this elder] aside just a minute and tell [him] why [he] couldn't do what [he] asked [him] to do." The situation escalated in the hallway with members and staff walking by. Chuck, "quite shaken by it," still had to "lead the people of God in worship and speak the Word of God to them." He later reflected, "I should have never allowed the conversation to take place in the hallway of the church, not the most professional thing to do…I should have guarded that better, for his sake and for mine."

Pastors Managing Their Own Emotions

Pastors exhibited varying levels of emotional awareness in their ministry leadership challenges. In this section the interviewees reveal how they managed those emotions as they led through difficult ministry challenges.

For Gabe and Ethan, managing disappointment or loss was a theme. In Ethan's case, managing relational loss was difficult. Two incidences in particular explain Ethan's difficulty in leaving a church he was serving. The first one involved leaving a liberal denomination and arriving at that decision a year prior to his departure. He explains, "I never talked to members of the church about it or even any of the officers in the church." At the time, he considered his silence a protection of the congregation. But in retrospect, "it was a lack of trust in others." It has taken decades of reflection for Ethan to realize his "longstanding struggle with relational loss."

A second incidence of loss for Ethan involved his resignation from a church where he served as the Senior Pastor for nine years. He points out his mismanagement of this emotionally charged loss:

> I did an emotionally immature thing. Not that offering my resignation that night was immature, even though I should have talked more about it with my wife. They accepted my resignation, gave me a severance and asked me if I wanted to tell the congregation. And I said no. Part of it was embarrassment; part of it was fear, hurt, and anger. I deeply regret that decision today.

As discussed earlier, Gabe had to learn and manage the loss of members who could not accept his leadership and direction as pastor. When he realized that being a "good enough pastor and believ[ing] the gospel enough was not working," he learned how to expect and manage loss. Gabe eventually admitted that he "could never keep up with all the criticisms [nor] find enough third ways." He had to learn to manage his own loss before he could aid others in managing theirs.

The method Frank employed to manage his emotions was "a defense mechanism [that said] I will beat you to the punch." Eventually, instead of being "very calculated…weighing out the political cost of those things, I think now I have much more

of a tendency to be less fearful of losing peace." Frank was learning how to temper his own need for relational perfection.

Dan explained "I started to stand up to some elders, and when I think of every painful, difficult thing I went through in that church, it really only relates to seven people." As the Lord rooted "my identity in the gospel and less in my acceptance with others," confesses Dan, "I could stand up to them or rebuke them or ignore them."

One predominant way most of these interviewees managed their emotions in ministry leadership challenges was to seek out counselors and mentors. Henry and Frank floundered into counseling to manage their emotions as they encountered marital stress. Henry, on the way home one day after counseling, suggested to this wife, "I'm actually not as bad a husband…as the other guys at the church." She responded, "You know, if I was grading on a curve, you'd be doing fine. But I think God wants more for us." His wife was teaching him the benefits of learning how to manage his emotions.

While Frank has been spared from much of the pastoral conflict other interviewees have experienced, he said, "My marriage is the point where the greatest amount of tension lies…a lot of stress at home." After his wife forged ahead in counseling for five years, Frank concurred the best way to manage his emotional struggles at home would be to join her in counseling. The counselor, Frank contends, "has been helpful [giving us] tools to work through some things."

Mentors were lifelines to Dan, Gabe and Ethan. Dan admitted that without mentors, "I could not have made it. They carried me." Henry agrees, "I've always found mentors," and he described one in particular, calling him "the most fantastic guy." Gabe reached out to a mentor from another church that "came down and visited with me and

encouraged me and said, 'You are doing the right thing.'" Later on in another iteration of the same conflict, Gabe contacted a resource he had been given who coached him over the next several years.

For Ethan, the pain of ministry challenges and family conflict sent him in quest of a counselor. He conceded, "finding a good counselor was a lifeline to me." In fact, he admitted that counseling "has been a necessary part of my life for the last thirty years." While Ethan did not have traditional mentors like Dan and Gabe, his counselor became his mentor as they walked together through tough ministry and personal challenges. As for Allan, neither mentoring nor counseling was mentioned in the interview. This is not to conclude he never sought to incorporate either. But the absence of either mentors or counselors in Allan's interview may be telling.

The answer to the second research question, which probed the emotional impact of leadership challenges on pastors, is two-fold. First of all, the pastors in this study were often aware of their emotions as they lead. But this is by no means universal for all pastors. Rather, self-awareness is an indicator of a pastors' emotional intelligence. And the interviewees exhibited a wide range of EQ aptitude. Secondly, awareness was no predictor of consistent success in managing those emotions. In some cases, interviewees managed their emotions by enlisting mentors, counselors, or spouses. Others had life experiences that influenced their ability to manage emotions. They were all in process and were scattered along a continuum of what Goleman calls "impulsive urges to reflection and thoughtfulness."[233] These pastors would have benefited by taking a more deliberate and disciplined approach to reflection.

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[233] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 14.

The Emotional Impact on Pastors as Others Express Their Emotions

The third research question focused on the ability of pastors to respond appropriately as others express their emotions, in the context of ministry challenges. In order to clarify answers, question three was subdivided to focus on the pastor's awareness of other's emotions and his ability to manage his feelings as others express their emotions.

Awareness Other's Emotions

Two broad categories emerged through which one could evaluate pastor's awareness of others' emotions. They are spouse/family and elders/staff.

Spouse/Family

Six of the eight interviewees expressed some lack of emotional awareness with their spouse or family members. Gabe was feeling the negative emotion from several elder families but was unaware of his wife's struggle until this moment:

> I do remember one particular time my wife got the letter and read it and said, 'Well, they do have a point.' [This] crushed me because my wife was beginning to feel the same pressure. And she was having a hard time saying, 'Well, we are going to have to let go of these people.' She wanted me to fix it. So that became a big, big point of contention in our marriage.

Likewise, Ethan and Henry struggled to comprehend the emotional need their wives expressed. Henry was aware of his wife's need to connect on a deeper level but admitted he was incapable of rendering emotional capital to her. He confessed, "I could tell she was disappointed, and year after year…she kept asking for more and more; emotionally I wasn't that available." Like Henry, Ethan was aware that his wife was struggling emotionally, but he too was unavailable. "I was buried in my own fear and anger," Ethan

revealed, “so that I couldn’t be there for her. Today, I am so ashamed as I consider the pain she endured, and all the while, [she] was my biggest fan and support.”

The sensation of success in ministry provided an emotional outlet for Allan. But this did little for his wife. In fact, his success had what he called a “negative effect on her.” He was not attentive to the “volcano of hidden pain in her life.” In a transparent moment, Allan conceded, “I didn’t get it.” Some years later, he was involved in another ministry that provided a redemptive opportunity to share with folks whose marriage had ended. He reflected back on his own first marriage,

> I would be in a group with maybe one other man and three to four women. And I had a lot of compassion for these women. I would listen to them tell their stories. When they would describe the hard-headed, insensitive man that they had married, it was like hearing my wife all over again. So much of it was painful to listen to…realizing how much of my wife’s hurt I had missed or ignored – that I hadn’t been willing to hear it from her. I’m hearing these women say ‘my husband was a closed man,’ [and] of course that language struck me,. That was what my wife was trying to say to me.

Later in the interview, Allan concluded he was good at sympathizing and empathizing with others. “But [my wife’s] needs must have threatened me…and all I felt was a sense of having failed her.”

Emotional intelligence requires that pastors understand others’ emotions and learn relational management. Ethan and Gabe had to negotiate others’ struggle with loss. In Ethan’s case, his lack of self-awareness prevented him from being aware of his wife’s emotional pain. “I didn’t realize,” Ethan explained, “how my own struggle to absorb loss kept me from seeing how it was affecting my wife.” Gabe commented that he was treating losses as “incident[s] that needed to be solved.” His relationship at home was afflicted by these “incidents,” and “we didn’t have really good tools to handle that.”

Dan was unique in that he was the sole interviewee who described his difficulty with parental emotions. He called it his "greatest personal challenge...that inevitably spilled over into my pastoral ministry and family life." In particular, his mother's wide mood swings and "control [ling] expectations" created a crisis in every sphere of Dan's life. He said, "I couldn't figure it out at the time. But basically…my mother is resentful that I got married, and she took that out on my wife." Dan's example is a classic case of the power one's family of origin has on one's life.[234]

Elders/Staff

Perhaps it is not surprising, considering the responsibilities of pastors, that all eight interviewees acknowledged that elder and staff emotions were something each had to navigate in their ministry context.

When Henry arrived at his new church, he soon began to bump into control issues on the Session. He recalls a time when they were given $1,000 to buy a television for the youth. Then one elder "starts an hour-long discussion on 'Do we really want to take this gift?' We weren't sure whether or not to take $1,000." Henry thought, "You've got to be kidding me! [But] that [kind of thing] happened at every elders meeting." He quickly became aware of this elder's need to control, and it would be an ongoing dynamic that Henry would later address.

Elders are charged with protecting the peace and purity of the church. But what happens when that responsibility becomes the personal domain of an over- zealous elder? Chuck was charged by an elder to unilaterally remove an ordained elder from being installed. The elder complained that the nominee "had an Arminian view and he had no

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[234] Friedman, Treadwell, and Beal, *A Failure of Nerve*, 195–198; Herrington, Creech, and Taylor, *The Leader's Journey*, 84–102; Gilbert, *Extraordinary Leadership,* 3–17.

business being an officer." Chuck knew the emotional turbulence this demanding elder could exhibit, but he still attempted to reason with him five minutes before the worship service. Chuck meekly admitted that "relationship[s] matter to me…I do not live well when there is brokenness I can't fix in [a] relationship." In hindsight, he reflected, "I should have never allowed the conversation to take place in the hallway of the church." The high value he placed on relationships compromised his ability to get on the balcony and manage his response to this angry elder in a healthy way.

Ethan identified incidences with elders and an associate pastor in which he was aware of others' emotions but lacked skills to manage his own response. In one case, an elder initially emerged as an ally but after six months, "There were expectations in the relationship that I couldn't meet and actions that I didn't understand." He explains another instance,

> I will never forget a time in a Session meeting where we were trying to make some policy changes and had a small commission that was working on the draft, and this elder was on the commission. Keep your friends close and enemies closer, I'm thinking by this time, by getting in front of the situation with this guy. We brought the changes to the Session, and he voted against the changes he had previously voted for in the commission meeting…I thought to myself, you voted for it, and now you're voting against it.

Rather than attempting to understand why this elder had changed his position and discussing the change with the elder, Ethan allowed the incident to further confirm his doubts about this elders intentions to do him harm. This is an example of Ethan's emotional immaturity that contributed to further breakdowns in his leadership with the elders.

Sometimes pastors trust too much, an under-reaction instead of an overreaction, not paying attention to emotional implications for others, and glossing over problems.

Ethan was mindful that the church's new worship leader had "experienced some emotional trauma growing up that could impact this worship leader's ministry." However, Ethan failed to understand just how "sensitive and cold" this worship leader would be. This lack of empathy played out in the church in two ways. First, Ethan was caught totally off guard that this worship leader "had unresolved issues with mistrust that caused friction in our relationship early on." Secondly, "He simply did not have a pastor's heart, and so he quickly alienated folks and was a jerk to them."

Early on in his ministry, Gabe did not appreciate the difficulty his elders were having absorbing loss of members. "The way I look on it now," Gabe reflects, "is that they were unable to tolerate loss [of members]." Similarly, Henry's elders were not managing similar losses very well. He said, "They were angry with me."

As Gabe learned to manage his own disappointment with losing members, these experiences aided him in managing others' emotional struggle to accept loss. Gabe understood when a couple of his elders "had a very, very difficult time doing something that would upset somebody else, but they were willing to upset me, and they were not tuned into that at all."

While attending seminary, Dan began pastoring a small group of people left from a church split. He overlapped with the former senior pastor for a few months and quickly became "overwhelmed with stress, pressure, [and] expectations" resulting from his interaction with the senior pastor. Understandably, as a young new pastor, he was naïve to the church's conflict and how the senior pastor was orchestrating the split.

Burt arrived at an established church that had a historical culture of dysfunction in what Burt called "little fiefdoms" that provided a context of control to the leaders of

those ministry areas. Burt knew something of the issues. But he reasoned, "I don't think I went into [this church] with my eyes closed…with blinders." Yet, he was utterly unaware of the depth of unhealthy emotions for many of the staffers. Also very important to note was a misconception by Burt of this church's culture of leadership. Later, he described it this way,

> What I didn't understand was there was an attitude in the church that 'we don't trust our pastors', and 'we don't really believe that they are the leaders; the lay people are the church. We will hire pastors to do the work for us, but we, the elders, are the ones who are responsible'… The church was divided into committees headed up by elders, and the staff reported to those elders. And they didn't do anything that those elders in that division didn't sign off on.

Not only was Burt unaware of the emotional turmoil of the staff, but he was also operating in a broken church system. He overcorrected initially, focusing on "strategic planning" without a proper understanding of the dysfunctional system. Again Burt explained, "What I didn't understand [was what] Ron Heifetz and Marty Linski say in the *Practice of Adaptive Leadership*: "You don't mess around with the system until you understand it. Get an understanding of the system before you mess with it." By the time Burt figured this out, it was too late. He realized "The gig [was] up…I had no authority to lead."

Managing Their Relationships as Others Express Their Emotions

Responses to this question will again be analyzed using the categories of spouse/ family and elders/staff. These will be used to discuss if and how pastors managed ministry challenges as others expressed their emotions.

Spouse/families

Recalling his emotional unavailability for his wife, Henry attempted to manage the situation by "try[ing] to dance faster and faster." In other words, Henry thought things

would improve if he could simply try harder and do more, but his wife was asking for emotional availability not more tasks accomplished. And then there were the unhelpful comparisons like "I just kind of want you to know [that] I'm actually not that bad a husband" which simply validated her concern. His "grace awakening" and her "gracious way" would be keys to a growing marriage. Henry undeniably admits, "I'm going to need grace all the time the rest of my life to be available to my wife."

Frank, much the same way as Henry, initially reacted to his wife's emotions in less than helpful ways. For example, there was a period early in Frank's marriage when his wife lost her focus and became low functioning to normal tasks at home. His shares his response, "My tactic was to play the good guy" or to lay "guilt and shame" on her and "demonstrate…this is how you're supposed to do it." His attempt to manage his relationship failed. He comments,

> I think that created tons of tension in our marriage. And I think that rather than doing what I intended to do, which is to draw her back into the home to care for our children and our home, I had actually pushed her further away. The more I pushed, the more I tried to double down on serving…it just made matters worse.

Frank admits that "peace, health, and joy at home…[is] an idol," and his blind attempt to regulate that idol interfered with his ability to recognize, interpret, and navigate his wife's emotions.

The absorption of loss by spouses affected several of the interviewees. Gabe explained how his wife struggled to cope with unhappy church officers and members who were unwilling to accept the mission, vision, and values of the church. "We argued over small things, petty things, and that became a source of pain for me. He mentioned that they would communicate, "But it was very conflictual, [and] we did not seek any help at that time." Eventually, Gabe's wife opted for counseling, and later he joined her.

After a year of "working through our relationship," says Gabe, "[we] began to change the conflict cycle in our home."

Allan was not able to determine the right or best course for his wife because he was emotionally immature. He said, "I was preoccupied with the ministry and with myself and not alert to what that was doing to her." He describes a time one evening when he was involved in a Session meeting, and his wife overdosed on Valium. His eight-year-old son called him at the church,

> He called me and said he couldn't wake his mother up. He was in tears. So I left the meeting and went home, and I got her awake, [but] she was angry because I was…waking her up. Eventually, she felt better and said, 'You need to get back.' I said, 'I can't go back with you like this; I've got to stay here.' Well, she got angry about that and didn't want to be embarrassed about what was going on at home so she persuaded me to go back to the church. One of the elders who knew of our struggles was there, [and] I had him call her. I said, 'Call her and keep her on the phone; she's taken too many pills, and she's groggy.' He told me after the service that she wouldn't talk to him, [and] she just hung up. She convinced me to go back to church when I knew better. She told me later, after we were divorced, in a real fit of fury one night, that she could have died that night, and I went back to the church. And I just thought, 'But you were screaming at me to go back,' but I wasn't paying attention to what was real.

Allan confessed, "I didn't want to be anything else but the preacher," which is the place where he received the ultimate affirmation. Consequently, he felt inadequate in relation to his wife. "I was out of my depth emotionally and spiritually, and I would use the word courage. I didn't have the understanding or the courage to deal with that any other way but to wait and see what she would do next."

Dan found himself in the unenviable position of trying to navigate an unhealthy parent who was causing major disruption in his family and particularly his marriage. According to Dan, "I couldn't figure it out at the time, but basically my mother is resentful that I got married ,[and] she took that out on [my wife]." Initially Dan's

response was to “try to be a good son, keep my mama happy…trying to be a good husband to keep my wife happy…and it ‘weren’t workin’.” Dan finally listened to his wife who said, “You become a different person when your mom’s here, and I’m on the outside.” He seized the opportunity to stand up to his mother, and with the support of his elders, he announced, “You are not going to treat my wife that way, and you are not coming to visit if you treat her that way…it was ugly.”

While the conflict with his mother was a long and painful process, Dan ultimately broke free of much of the hold she had on him and recommitted to his wife and family. Even today, he is encouraged and guarded by his leadership team who have said to him, “You may not talk to your parents past Wednesday because when you do, if there is a zinger, you are ruined for Sunday.”

Elders/Staff

Burt identified several incidences he had with staff and elders as examples of trying to manage relationships while others are expressing emotions, starting with his first staff meeting. The staff had a conversation about a having a combined program to demonstrate the unity of all segments in the church. Burt said one staff member, who led a church ministry, “blew a cork! [and] yelled, ‘What do you mean united? We are not united; there is nothing united about this place at all. That’s a farce! We are just putting on a show. I’m not going to stand for this; I’ll not participate in something like this.’ And he got up and walked out.” Now, “The leadership’s response was, ‘We’re not going to talk about this.’” It was at this critical juncture in which Burt realized he had to try and steer this anxious system toward healing and peace. His mission was to learn how to “dance” with an alienated staff.

> The church was struggling with personnel issues in almost every area. Burt said,
>
> I'm sitting here thinking our job is to get this church back on track to do strategic thinking and to do planning about vision, mission and values. And the way I had always done that was in the context of the staff leadership. But we also have to resolve this other thing.

The "other thing" in this case was conflict between staff members. So Burt wanted to move forward, yet he was caught in between factions, or what he called "fiefdoms." Later, one of his staff hires turned out to be a disaster, and this thrust Burt in the crosshairs of the Session's Human Resources Committee. They concluded, "Burt, you're the problem" and concluded, "We can't trust Burt's leadership." He was willing to "acknowledge [his] problems and failures" to the Human Resources Committee, the Session, and the staff. But the lack of trust in the system was far too ingrained for them to receive Burt's response. The reactivity in the church's system was so strong that no matter how Burt managed these relationships, he was unlikely to move the system to a healthy place.

In the case where Chuck was confronted by one elder who determined the installation of a fellow elder would be illegitimate, Chuck sought the counsel of a staff member the night prior to the installation service. The associate pastor had heard the questionable comments. And he said these criticisms did not rise to the level of prohibiting his installation. While an unintended confrontation happened the following morning prior to the worship service, Chuck handled this elder's anger and frustration in appropriate ways. For example, Chuck laid out a process for this elder, saying, "If you disagree with my decision, go the Session, and I welcome you to do that…. But I am not going to stop the installation service." In addition, Chuck showed high emotional

intelligence and differentiation when he explained to this elder, “There are processes to do this, [but] I would not do that until you and this other man had talked.”

Ethan reflected on his lack of honest conversations with his former senior pastor. “Because of my own emotions, I was unable to appreciate what he was feeling. The senior pastor was protecting his turf from a split and fearful of losing many of his best members and financial support base. So I made it personal without having the kind of crucial conversation that would have helped him, as well as me, navigate a difficult situation.”

Ethan also reflected on his hire of a worship leader he later referred to as “the worst hire of my life.” This fellow had “difficulty interacting with people, he had some abuse issues early in life and refused to see a counselor. The two of us were like oil and water.” Ethan stayed engaged with this worship leader relationally but eventually reached the inevitable conclusion that “There was no way for me to reach him emotionally.”

Gabe “had fallen under the spell that if you were a good enough pastor…you can make everybody happy, and I was good at making people happy.”. However, there was a problem. “That skill [of making everyone happy] was reaching its limit.” When others became disappointed in him, Gabe said, “I wanted to resolve that.” It became apparent to Gabe that his goal of making everyone happy was not working, and so he began learning how to manage others’ disappointment through “preparing the leaders to see what unity looks like…a shared commitment to whatever path we choose.”

A significant way Gabe governed these disaffected leaders was to no longer react to their unhealthy emotions but instead “take steps to preserve the vision of the church.” The Session, under Gabe’s leadership adopted “officer rotation [and] a statement on the

role of the senior minister and the job of the Session to oversee, govern, and shepherd but not do the day-to-day." He instituted an officer rotation system and gave each one a choice to be in whatever class they wanted. This wise move helped diffuse the impression of a dominant, overbearing pastor.

Comparable to Gabe, Henry applied an officer rotation system to manage difficult elders. He commented that he "recognized [he] had to begin to do a lot of things around the Session as well as through it, but then the whole issue became clear, we've got to change the Session." Not only did he procure a rotation to lead those personalities, Henry began training the officers "right from the Scripture [these] categories -- relational, spiritual, theological, emotional -- and I started applying the schematic. So in a sense the officers slowly became self-selecting in and out of the office."

Instituting these changes, and facing the results of implementing them was not easy for Henry. For example, one elder who disagreed "basically attacked me vociferously…tried to get a little conspiracy started, attacked my wife, and there was constant tension." The moment of truth with this situation came the next year when Henry informed this elder, "We're not going to put you up for a recommendation for elder next year, and here's why. [But] he closed up his notebook and walked out and did not even listen." When the antagonist was removed, peace came to the Session. And according to Henry, "That really was a breakthrough, the Session became fun; it totally change[d]."

As a young inexperienced pastor, Dan experienced similar challenges with his Session. Several guys were big supporters and leaders, but there were a couple that were "just mean." Like Gabe, Henry and others, Dan said:

> [We] need elders who are shepherds and are grace-based so I've got to start recruiting those kinds of elders and shaping the teaching of the officer training and get my influencers to help me select those officers…and over the course of ten years, we completely turned the Session so that every man on there was a shepherd first and grace-oriented.

As he reflected on this time, Dan declared, "I'm going to stand on my identity in Christ. If I make a mistake, I am going to acknowledge it and ask for forgiveness. [But] they are not going to keep punishing me with it." Dan shared that he told one particular elder he needed to "step off the Session," and "He never forgave me for that." They met for a while, but finally, Dan had enough and said, "I'm sorry you feel this way, but that is your problem." These were hard but crucial conversations Dan determined were necessary. And he contended "That is the fruit of the Spirit for making me a different man."

The interviewees have demonstrated that there are many ways pastors can take charge of their own emotions as they respond to the emotions of others. As each grew in emotional intelligence, crucial conversations became the catalyst of tangible proof that they were growing in emotional intelligence. At times, they leaned upon mentors and confidants who helped them navigate turbulent waters. It was informative that in the overwhelming majority of challenges pastors faced with others, emotional struggles were either with spouse and family or with officers and staff. The absence of emotional challenges with church members was noticeable.

Emotional Intelligence Learning Processes

The final research question focused on the learning processes pastors experience as they grow in emotional intelligence. The factors that the interviewees identified as contributing to their learning emotional intelligence during their ministry challenges are consistent with the model of *Informal and Incidental Learning* described by Watkins and

Marsick and other experts in the field of adult learning.[235] In order to include relevant elements of informal and incidental adult learning, this research question was further subdivided into four distinct questions based on the learning theory of Watkins and Marsick:[236]

1) What were the unanticipated triggers or troubling incidences and did they lead to intentional reflection on those experiences?

2) In what ways did the present incident affect leadership within the key relationships and with your family of origin context? Namely, describe how the environment, presently and in childhood, helped or hindered leading through critical incidents.

3) What background elements were learned as you negotiated ministry challenges? In other words, when you encountered unexpected experiences, not governed by known rules, how did this background learning shape your action?

4) To what extent were you able to critically reflect and identify norms, values and assumptions from others and respond with emotional intelligence?

Learning From Experience

All eight interviewees learned from their experience. They learned at different levels, and the success each had at making sense of their experiences varied widely.

Ethan and Gabe experienced occasions when they thought they had allies but were surprised to learn they had been misled. For Ethan, it was an elder who shared a role

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[235] Victoria J. Marsick, and Karen E. Watkins, "Informal and Incidental Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 89 (February 2001): 25–34; Ronald M. Cervero, "Continuing Professional Education in Transition, 1981-2000," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 20, no. 1–2 (January 2001): 16–30; Sharan B. Merriam, and Laura L. Bierema, *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*, The Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,2014), 16-21; Barbara J. Daley, "Learning in Professional Practice," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 86 (2000): 33–42; Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 54; Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 8th ed. (New York:,Routledge, 2015), 221-223.

[236] Karen E. Watkins, and Victoria J. Marsick, "Towards a Theory of Informal and Incidental Learning in Organizations," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 11, no. 4 (October 1, 1992): 293–297.

on a commission and voted with him on the commission but then "turned around and voted against what he had previously voted for." Ethan learned that trust is something earned, and "It was difficult for me to trust this elder moving forward." For Gabe, it was a time when his Session had a split vote on an important issue. One of the elders who had voted with Gabe on the issue suddenly became distant. So Gabe took him out to lunch to gauge if all was well. Gabe says, "He proceeded to tell me that he didn't think I should be the pastor of the church anymore." Gabe was learning how to lead the Session through relational struggles. He experienced failures in this story that led to future health on the Session, but it was not stress-free. Out of this story officer rotation and clarifying the role of the senior pastor would emerge.

In Burt's first staff meeting, a young pastor exploded during a discussion on unity and "The leader's response was, 'We're not going to talk about this.'" The gap for Burt was learning to lead from the middle as a newly installed, senior position pastor. There was dysfunction above Burt and below him and across most ministry platforms at the church, which isolated him. He thought if he could try and "develop vision, values and mission" for the church and manage a divisive personnel issue, he could move forward. Burt stepped into a cauldron of what he called "little fiefdoms, and they would conflict with each other." With limited allies on the staff and Session, and because of the pressure to manage conflict in a system lacking EQ, Burt couldn't muster any sustained momentum towards system health.

The experience of loss and dealing with its effects was common among these pastors. Dan, a young pastor at the time, started his ministry "with the first really tragic unexpected death in the congregation." More deaths were to come quickly and Dan

thought, “I don’t know what to say…I’m not sure that the gospel provides comfort for this—it really rocked me.” Dan was asking the question, “Is the gospel sufficient for this?” Through the help of older mentors and a self-described movement from a “less academic [to] more existential” approach to ministry, Dan began to learn his own limitations and a reliance on these older men for support and guidance. Reflecting back, he commented, “There is no way I would be as healthy as I am today if it hadn’t been for them teeing me up and supporting me.”

Henry, Gabe, Dan, and Allan had similar experiences of loss. In each case they not only managed others’ losses, but faced those same or similar losses themselves. Gabe was defensive about losses his elders and his wife were experiencing even though he felt the loss himself. Henry faced the loss of his senior pastor as a mentor and the accompanying effect on the Session. Allan lost his first ministry because, in part, his ministry was a “mistress.” His was emotionally incapable of connecting with his wife, and eventually she left him. Consequently, their divorce forced him temporarily to leave the ministry.

Dan painfully learned how stress in ministry could trigger devastating emotional responses. He described his first of three major panic attacks saying, “feel[s] like I’m having a heart attack. I don’t know what in the world is wrong with me.” While he may not have been able to understand the experience completely at the time, he later said, “That was my first experience with being fragile.” There would be two additional attacks and as Dan was encouraged to share his experience, he discovered,

> I had to 1) have other people help me stay together—help me take things off my plate and 2) I had to confess it, not as sin, [but rather], I had to confess it because it helped break the devil’s power over me for one. I needed to confess it so that other people could believe the gospel…I cannot allow a day when they think I am

> Ironman…it really was a relief that the mask was off. And not just with other people, but the mask was off from me…I could go over the edge at any moment, and now everybody knows it.

Dan recalled studying the prophets and remembering that every one of those prophets "got the stew beat out of them…and it is a good chance that I am going to suffer." Dan was learning that God would use this "fragile" man much more than simply an "Ironman."

Chuck had to learn boundaries with others leading up to a worship service after experiencing the effects of failing to set them. Humorously reflecting back on a painful discourse with an elder, he said, "Don't open emails on a Saturday night." More seriously Chuck explained, one needs to "guard, protect that time before I go do what I consider to be my highest and most holy responsibility…to be in the pulpit and speak the Word of God. Guard that time." For many, just prior to the service is the only time they see the pastor, and so they jump at the opportunity. Chuck admits, "They don't understand…so I'm the one [who] has to protect it." Chuck began to put in place "fences" to protect his Saturday evening and Sunday morning beyond not "opening emails on Saturday night."

Henry and Gabe "began to realize [they] were dealing with things they didn't fully understand or feel equipped to handle. For all of the interviewees, experiences in these difficult situations provided tacit understanding that more was happening than simple problems that could be solved with technical solutions. As Watkins and Marsick explain, "Learning takes place from experience, under non-routine conditions, [and]…when people learn continuously from their experience, they frame and reframe

the situations…to name what they see."[237] It should also be noted that it is difficult to learn apart from the reflection others can provide on those experiences.

Learning From the Environment: Then and Now

In their model for *Informal and Incidental Learning*, Watkins and Marsick explain why the environmental context is so important to self-directed learning in general and for ministry in particular:

> The learner's environment is a major determinant in organizing a learning project. Growing up with an alcoholic parent, for example, is an environment that triggers considerable accidental and tacit learning and is yet also an environment that a child is hardly likely to choose intentionally…Unlike the artificial environment in institutionally sponsored learning, self-directed learning takes place in natural, everyday settings, and it is the individual's perceptions of, and interactions with, that environment which give meaning to that experience…context influences the way in which people define the situation, select options for actions, and interact with others with whom they work and learn.[238]

In other words, the environment is crucial as pastors negotiate challenges in ministry. The current environment is always a present reality. But one will also currently be affected by one's previous experiences. For example, Burt processed current issues surrounding a recovery ministry with his wife for whom the subject was not simply academic. Burt explained, "My wife had grown up in a home rife with the problems addressed in this ministry." Her later teenager years were very difficult. So the intersection of ministry and these memories produced "these aha moments" for Burt's wife. Burt also learned to navigate his complex ministry system by processing "with a couple of guys on staff."

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[237] Ibid., 298.

[238] Ibid., 294.

Like Burt, Frank and Allan had to maneuver through ministry challenges that were significantly impacted by family of origin complications with their spouses. Frank's wife had also come from a broken home, and he explained, "… part of the way I have handled conflict in our home…has been unhealthy." Frank married someone who was opposite in so many areas. Frank explains:

> My wife is an INTJ, I'm an ENFP; she's from the North, I'm from the South; she comes from a broken home, I come from an intact home; her home was an unbelieving home, mine was a Christian home; she has an idolatry of freedom, I probably have an idolatry of family. So I think those things clashed very frequently.

He is learning to differentiate, and the result according to Frank, "I think I'm learning to be much more direct with her, [and] I'm learning to embrace her differences rather than try to eradicate them." They started counseling, and Frank admitted that "Part of what I learned through this whole thing is there is something vey different about hearing someone and then truly entering into their pain with them." Finally, it is instructive to hear how healing in their marriage has produced empathy in his preaching:

> I think over the last three years…entering counseling with [Kaitlyn] and pursuing this thing together has absolutely and drastically changed the way I preach…I think it has changed application for me. All of a sudden, I'm acutely aware of the brokenness of people, [and] I wouldn't have been before…I think it's very much changed the way I interact with the leadership of the church, [from being] very calculated to more of a tendency to be less fearful of losing peace…it has balanced my sort of desire for relationship and my desire for peace and…brought it into a healthier balance with a desire for truth.

Allan married the child of two alcoholics who "had tremendous amounts of pent up anger and frustration about life…she was very unhappy," explains Allan. His ministry successes collided with her family of origin struggles; the recipient of the damage was their marriage. Allan pointed out, "I really was preoccupied with the ministry and with myself and not alert to what that was doing to her… Today I'm ashamed of that." God

has used Allan's failures as he has had opportunities to speak into the lives of others. He has counseled several pastors and told them, "[You] can't do ministry if your marriage is not in good shape…they got out of ministry and rescued their marriages. So good has come from this…what I couldn't understand, I have helped some younger men understand."

Gabe had created a church system that not only resisted loss but also would not tolerate loss. His wife and the elders "were unable to tolerate loss." This unwritten code created tension in his marriage and became a wedge in his Session. Gabe admitted, "I became the person that they [Session] were willing to put the screws to…because they couldn't say to these families, 'Stop.'" He concludes, "The whole system was low EQ self – that was what we were dealing with, and so in some sense my elders and my wife were reflecting what I had led us to be."

It is one thing to read in a book, like Friedman's *Failure of Nerve* or *Generation to Generation,* concerning systems theory, but it is not the same as experiencing it in life or ministry. As Burt began to process the unhealthy system he was in, he came to realize two things,

> Ron Heifetz and Marty Lynski say in the Practice of Adaptive leadership, don't mess around with the system until you understand it…I had all this stuff that was being thrown at me, but one of the things [is] that I didn't take enough time to really get to know the system the way I needed to. The second thing that I really learned is that I'm a lot better at EQ of self than I am EQ of others.

This was the same system in which Burt earlier described an incident where the young pastor "blew a cork." As he has reflected on it, Burt says, "When you have an anxious system, one solution can be to repress…You don't talk about things – you don't act like there's any problems…and there were major problems." The reality is that Burt may not

have been able to change such an unhealthy environment in significant ways. However, he did learn that had he taken the time to understand the system better, his responses and reactions to the system might have been more effective.

How Background Learning Shapes Pastors' Actions

Learning the back-story in a situation or critical incident shapes how a pastor responds. It is what Heifetz and Linsky call "listening to the song beneath the words."[239] The examples below describe incidences when EQ would have aided these pastors in understanding the back-story, getting on the balcony and positively influencing their actions in these incidences.

Ethan hoped to plant a church in a medium-sized town that had only one PCA church. He had joined the staff as an assistant pastor, and the possibility of siphoning off a core group to start a new work seemed a possibility. However, there were underlying assumptions from the senior pastor that Ethan did not know. Reflecting back, Ethan conceded "that [Sam] saw the plant as a threat to his ministry because the majority of the financial resources and congregational energy would be leaving with this new work." The senior pastor "was very resistant but not openly resistant…he was saying yes but meaning no." Unfortunately for Ethan, through his experiences as a child, "Conflict was a factor, and it seemed I made every decision, every move, every conversation a referendum on whether people liked and accepted me." He later reflected that "His lack of EQ self and others meant he couldn't ask what was really going on with Sam in his heart. I was unwilling to have the kind of crucial conversations with Sam and others that

[239] Heifetz, and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 64–65.

might be hard but necessary." Ethan immediately began seeking another call and several months later, relocated to pastor a church.

Henry and Gabe experienced marital conflict in part, because they lacked what Daniel Goleman calls *empathy* in the EQ matrix.[240] Henry's wife desired the intimacy of a committed spouse and not to be treated simply as a ministry partner. Case in point, they were in their car returning from a "great week" on vacation and she said to Henry, "Well, how do you think we can keep this alive." They had experienced a partnership and emotional intimacy while on vacation that had lacked in their everyday married life. Henry's "sensitive" response was to focus on applying their experience to ministry. He said, "I wonder if we should do marriage seminars…I'd read every book…and we had a good marriage…we should do a marriage thing for the church." In a tender, honest moment, she responded, saying, "What would we say?" He "looked at her and realized, 'Oh my goodness.' It was just a convicting moment, [and] I was anxious because I didn't know the way forward."

In that moment, it struck Henry that they could share principles from a book with others, but they lacked the credibility to speak out of their own marriage. It is interesting that earlier in his ministry, Henry had made the comment about the senior pastor with whom he was working that "He married the wrong woman, I mean, he married someone to whom he had to minister rather than a partner." It appears that perhaps Henry saw his wife as a ministry partner rather than first and foremost a marriage partner with whom to share life. His attitude towards his wife did begin to change through what he called a "grace awakening." He discovered a new humility and need of God's daily salvation to

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[240] Goleman, "What Makes a Leader? Why Emotional Intelligence Matters," 1–21.

be the kind of husband he desired. He says it best, "I'm going to need grace all the time the rest of my life to be [emotionally] available to my wife."

As mentioned previously, Gabe's wife was feeling the same loss as the elders over losing members. She had read this six-page letter of complaints and recommendations presented to Gabe, and she "was beginning to feel the same pressure." But until she shared her conviction that he should "fix it," Gabe was unaware how his wife was feeling., and when she did, her response "crushed me," explained Gabe. The relationship where he hoped to find strength "became a source of pain for me." It was not until they received some counseling and Gabe started "processing the political realities in the Session that the conflict cycle in our home began to change." The counseling helped them "work through how [their] relationship had gotten fused together" in unhealthy ways of identity and need. And Gabe had begun to engage his church system strategically with the help of mentors and peers and develop processes toward a healthier Session. Gabe began to practice what he was learning. He says:

> We began to change government structures [like] an officer rotation, changed the form of the Session meeting, we stated what my role was; we changed our training material for elders so that we talked about emotional intelligence and systems dynamics so we created an entire system that now reflected what we were learning.

Mentors were significant contributors in helping pastors to navigate and respond to ministry challenges, particularly when those challenges came from the unseen assumptions held by others. Again, as a young pastor Dan had "a core of guys…they carried me and they were great men. They had all been elders longer than I'd been alive." How important were these men to Dan? He admits, "I could not have made it—humanly

speaking—I don't see how I could have made it without that much support." These men were elders from Dan's church and other churches as well as educators and businessmen.

Burt reinforced the importance of mentors through his experience in his first church as a young staff pastor. He had already mentioned his wife was a partner with whom he could process ministry. But he also said, "I did have a couple of guys on staff that I talked to. But there was one gentleman [who] became an elder and a process partner in talking through things." At another time a peer pastor "became a regular and constant communication partner…we were learning together…which has been a great blessing."

Learning through Critical Reflection

In this study, the definition of reflection more closely aligns with the idea of critical reflection given by Watkins and Marsick, who explain,

> When people are critically reflective, they identify and make explicit norms, values, and assumptions that are hidden from conscious awareness. In organizations, this means people pay attention to, and inquire into, the organization's culture, or as it is often put, "the way things are done around here."[241]

Watkins and Marsick describe the fundamental core of this model for adult learning as "continuous learning for continuous improvement [which] is at the heart of this concept." And the learning is always about the organization and the individual and the manner in which they interact upon one another.

In reflecting on the subject of loss, Gabe realized that it was not only his wife and Session who struggled with losing members. Gabe himself was affected by their sense of loss. In his words, "I would say looking back, it was very hard for me to handle the

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[241] Watkins, and Marsick, "Towards a Theory of Informal and Incidental Learning in Organizations," 294.

disappointment his wife and Session had when people left the church." Through reading books like Scazzero's *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Gabe explained, "I was coming to terms with the fact that we couldn't satisfy these families." He said Scazzero's book was like water to his soul. He shared, "I couldn't believe that somebody was writing this stuff…I was like, this is important stuff…so that book became very important and I began to get some categories" to understand what he was feeling and experiencing.

One way Gabe implemented his new understanding was to develop a membership class to prepare people "that there will be things in the church that may disappoint you or that you may not like or may not fit you, and that this is not the place for you to launch your agenda."

Burt, over a year removed from a difficult ministry experience, explained that the experience and time since then have been some of the most fruitful times of my reflecting. I have been doing it through reading a number of books …I had a number of confidents that I processed with...I would say that during my first year in my new position, I was waking up every day processing, reprocessing the grieving process and working through things."

Burt also spent time traveling back to his former church and city to meet with people with one single question, "I'm here to learn; [and] would you help me to understand what I should learn through this experience and what I should learn about my leadership."

Allan had lost his first marriage, in part, because of his commitment to ministry over his marriage. As God opened avenues for Allan to share his story, he said it "opened

up the flood gates in me; suddenly the most painful thing in my life became valuable…[it] was so instrumental in my own recovery."

Henry had his own sort of recovery from legalism, learning there was more to ministry and life than having the right answers. "The theological stuff," said Henry, "is important, but there's a whole other thing about being a leader." As a case in point, Henry identified a new norm for the leadership in his church. He described it this way: "We're weak enough to grow." Similar to Gabe, he began to communicate that "not everyone may be happy here." Henry was working on changing the values for his Session. He was getting push back on these changes, but he believed you don't "see every disagreement as a disagreeable person, and over time that has been helpful."

At a very young age Dan became the pastor of a church which had gone through a painful split. The lessons he learned in that context strengthened his resolve when, in his next pastorate, he was again called to a congregation which had encountered a church split. He acknowledged "a failure on my part of not pursuing reconciliation" between persons involved in splitting his former church. He would not make the same mistake again. In fact, Dan realized that "It was that mistake that made me so zealous to pursue reconciliation with [the other] church when I got here, the group that came out of this church." Dan had learned the value of forgiveness, the need for mentors and a willingness to be weak in the crucible of ministry. Those lessons contributed to his ability to lead his current church through healing and reconciliation.

More than a year after Ethan had resigned from his church, he reflected on his nine years as its pastor. He began to realize certain beachhead moments that tested his ability to lead. He said,

> There were three or four specific events in my ministry that were indicators or, looking back, I would say, were defining moments as I attempted to lead the Session. A stronger emotional intelligence self and others may have made a difference in the outcome. Or, as it seems to me, I would have recognized my credibility and effectiveness were gone with the leadership and that would have influenced my decisions for the path forward.

Ethan recalled a meeting of pastors hosted by a well-known pastor where this pastor suggested, "If you, as a pastor, have a direction and the leadership can't go there with you, then you've lost your power to lead, your place to lead." Ethan conceded, "At some point, I became a caretaker, a chaplain, doing ceremonies, performing services but not leading very much." Ethan also admitted that his support system was weak. He explained, "I did see my counselor, and we processed a lot of church dynamics. But beyond him, not so much. I needed unencumbered brothers to walk with me through those dark nights and help me see with new eyes. It wasn't there."

Summary

This chapter has explored ways pastors have learned emotional intelligence in the context of their ministry challenges. The findings were organized around general categories of adult learning as described by Watkins and Marsick in their work on *Informal and Incidental Learning*.[242] They included intentional reflection on experience, the past and present environment, navigating one's position and actions when confronted by unknown assumptions from others, and critically reflecting on the challenges towards the development of greater emotional intelligence.

Burt, Ethan, Henry, and Gabe each had a working knowledge of emotional intelligence that helped them frame their experiences with more clarity. However, the remaining four pastors, while not using EQ language, provided rich experiences that

[242] Ibid., 287–300.

provided important data from their experience. While Dan, Chuck, Frank, and Allan may not have been conversant with EQ language, they clearly understood the importance of emotions -- their own and others -- in their ministry and leadership.

Each pastor had served in a multi-staff church, but only Henry, Ethan, Burt, and Frank provided incidents that involved their staff. All eight pastors included challenges with their Session or elders. A common thread for five of the eight interviewees was the decision of their spouses to seek out professional counseling due to stresses they were experiencing from the ministry challenges their husband's were facing. In each instance these pastors followed their wives into counseling, which advanced the health of their marriages and their ability to navigate ministry challenges.

Finally, most of the pastors cited mentors and peers as a life-giving gift in their struggles. Even Ethan, who had not availed himself of this resource, recognized his loss in not having such relationships, and has since made having them a priority.

In the next chapter, conclusions and recommendations from the research will be shared, and the question of how pastors can learn emotional intelligence will be explored. Not only has the literature built a case and strategy for growing EQ, but the research data from the interviewees has confirmed that pastors can grow in their emotional intelligence.

Chapter Five

Discussion And Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to describe how pastors learn emotional intelligence (EQ) in their ministry leadership context. There are two assumptions in this study. First, by definition, this purpose statement is suggesting that pastors can, in fact, learn or develop emotional intelligence. The literature reviewed and data analysis from the eight interviews confirmed that emotional intelligence can be learned. Second, pastors learn emotional intelligence best in the context of leading through ministry challenges.

The research methodology employed in this study follows a qualitative approach as outlined in Sharan B. Merriam's seminal work, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. She describes the goal of qualitative researchers as, "interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.[243] In other words, qualitative research is seeking to understand the experience of pastors as they lead through ministry challenges.

In order to meet the researcher's goal of understanding how pastors learn emotional intelligence through the leadership challenges of ministry, the following research questions were used:

[243] Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 5.

1. What emotions do pastors experience as they lead in their ministry context?
2. What is the impact of these emotions on pastors?
    a. How aware are pastors of their own emotions in these challenges?
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their own emotions as they lead?
3. How do pastors negotiate the impact of others' emotions in their leadership context?
    a. How aware are pastors of others' emotions in these challenges
    b. In what ways do pastors manage their relationships as others express their emotions?
4. What is the learning process whereby pastors grow in their emotional intelligence?

Therefore, in this study, the qualitative method provided the primary goal of "understanding how people make sense of their lives…the process…and how people interpret what they experience."[244] The analysis followed the "inductive, constant comparative method"[245] by the researcher and those findings were weighed against an in-depth assessment of relevant literature. The following summary and recommendations constitute the intersection of the literature with the interview analysis.

Summary Observations

This chapter presents the observations and conclusions reached from the literature and interviews on the process of pastors learning EQ in the context of ministry leadership challenges. The research confirmed the following observations: identifying perceptions of pastoral ministry that may or may not be true is basic to preemptively addressing the EQ

[244] Ibid., 14.

[245] Ibid., 18.

learning gap, critical incidences are where most pastors learn EQ, specific emotions encountered in those incidences, the importance of reflection, mentoring was highly valued where utilized, the impact of suffering/loss in development of EQ and the consequent influence of all on the learning process.

Learning Emotional Intelligence Through Ministry Challenges

All eight interviewees learned from their experience. They learned at different levels, and the success each had at making sense of their experiences varied widely. The variances described may be attributed to a number of factors including: unrealistic perceptions of ministry, unhealthy family/church systems and leadership, marital struggles and a limited working knowledge of emotional intelligence. While pastors may learn EQ through other methods, this research found that they learned EQ best through ministry challenges as outlined in the following ways.

Perceptions of Pastoral Ministry

Many, if not most candidates, entering seminary and pastoral ministry have perceived ideas of how ministry will look that are often unrealistic. For example, Dan "dreamed of being a minister since he was fourteen." It seemed simple enough to Dan, he could preach, pray with others and counsel but when a contemporary dies unexpectedly, Dan was traumatized. He "didn't know what to say" and it "rocked him" because, all of a sudden, he was uncertain if the gospel was sufficient for something like a sudden death? He had a perception that ministry was "academic" and abruptly for Dan, it became very "existential" and he felt ill equipped as a pastor.

There were times when pastors were influenced by their family system or their spouse's family system. Frank had not experienced significant conflict at church but says,

"I have had a lot of stress at home". His wife's family system included a broken home with unbelieving parents. Meanwhile, Frank had developed an "idolatry of relationship" which was at odds with his wife. Considering family systems theory, Richardson suggests, "Our family of origin affects the way we go about our work in the church as well as the kind of family we create in our marriage and the relationship we have with our children."[246] This is equally true for the spouses' family of origin. Frank perceived that ministry could be bifurcated between ministry and family but as Peter Scazzero found out, ministry and marriage are intimately linked. As Scazzero recalled, "on January 2, 1996, Geri [his wife] told me she was quitting the church."[247] He realized the impact his family of origin was having on his life, his marriage and his ministry.[248] This realization began a journey for Scazzero toward emotionally healthy leadership.

The value of formal education such as seminary is unmistakable. However, education without experience, as Dan pointed out, creates a perception that ministry is abstract or task oriented rather than incarnational. Ethan explained that a pastor is rarely asked to leave a congregation for theological reasons but rather the cause is typically a breakdown in interpersonal relationships. This follows a perception that theology is sufficient for ministry success and leadership when the reality is a combination of orthodoxy with orthopraxis is required.

Naïve professional ideals about ministry may thwart pastors learning emotional intelligence. Allan was a gifted communicator and preaching was all he ever wanted do

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[246] Ronald W. Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 4.

[247] Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 15.

[248] Ibid., 16.

in life. Allan perceived that preaching and communication gifts were the ministry and his identity was embedded with that role. In the meantime, his first responsibility to his wife and family suffered and the marriage eventually ended in divorce. As is often the case in divorce, the marriage suffered from other complications as well.

Allan's identity in his pastoral role rather than in Christ first completely changed the trajectory of his future ministry. He has since had a fulfilling ministry but it has been accompanied by the collateral sadness of a broken family. Allan's story parallels Israel's king David in that both loved the Lord and very gifted but failures in their personal lives impacted their leadership.[249]

Chuck entered ministry thinking every relational difficulty had to be rescued. His ideal was "that there should be no brokenness in relationships." Chuck has come to realize that there will always be brokenness and "so my EQ is learning to be okay with that as far as it rest with me." He had a perception that every relationship should be whole. Chuck had a hopeful perspective but not a realistic one. Chuck therefore assumed he had the ability to mend these relationships. He has learned that role belongs to the Holy Spirit who uses Chuck.

There are times when the perceptions emerge from the congregation and leadership rather than the pastor. Nevertheless, pastors must negotiate unrealistic expectations. For example, some churches desire a hero leader or as Dan commented, "they want an ironman not a fragile man". Emotionally intelligent pastors will redirect these idealistic perceptions through leading and teaching EQ principles. While unrealistic

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[249] Stuart Lasine, "Melodrama as Parable: The Story of the Poor Man's Ewe-Lamb and the Unmasking of David's Topsy-Turvy Emotions," *Hebrew Annual Review* 8 (1984): 120. Also, see 1 Kings 1 and 2.

perceptions can thwart learning, critical incidents provide the soil through which learning emotional intelligence is cultivated.

Critical Incidences

Pastors face difficult situations and relationships in their ministry practice. The results are often painful. The power and pain of processing those stories has been the starting point for most of the pastors interviewed in the process of learning emotional intelligence. The qualitative research method allowed the researcher, through the interview process, to collect rich data on how pastors have negotiated ministry challenges using emotional intelligence. Also, how pastors could have improved in situations where they did not exhibit EQ. The primary tool for obtaining this rich data was the interview process using the critical incident technique.

Every interviewee conveyed the reality that challenging or critical incidences were a primary context for learning. As Chuck pondered the researcher's preliminary instructions to consider incidents that were particularly encouraging or difficult, he concluded, "The difficult ones were more of the stories that came to the surface than the encouraging ones." The anecdotal evidence from the researcher's experience and many biblical characters[250] corroborate Chuck's experience.

A significant instrument for learning EQ rising out of the critical incidences was suffering, loss or hardships. The incidences were critical because they were important and they were painful. Each of the interviewees unanimously shared stories where they had learned leadership principles and the value of emotional intelligence through the crucible

[250] Examples such as Jacob's deception with his father Isaac, Joseph's brothers' betrayal, Peter's denial, and Paul's passive murder of Christians show both the consequences of those challenges and the platform through reflection for God to redeem them. Learning emotional intelligence is the intersection of these challenges with openness for God to use them in his sanctifying work.

of suffering. The repeated refrain from the pastors over and over again was an experience of anxiety, loneliness and conflict.

The range of negative emotions spanned ministry and life experiences: Chuck losing his brother in high school; the unexpected death of a young man in Dan's first church; Allan and Frank's struggle at home with their wives; and Ethan and Burt's frustration with a staff member. As one author has commented, "Hardship [is] the Great Life Equalizer."[251] Suffering and loss is no respecter of persons and every single human being will experience hardships, loss and suffering in their life. In this case, the crucial question is not 'will pastors face adversity?' but 'is there a developmental connection between hardship and leadership (i.e. EQ)?' The Center for Creative Leadership was "surprised that the men and women they interviewed mentioned "hardships" more than any other life experience as being crucial for their development as leaders."[252] The interviewees painted a picture where God wasted little, if any, hardships these pastors faced.

In one critical incidence story after another, the interviewees described hardships. Their ability to navigate those difficult circumstances can be closely linked to their level of emotional intelligence. Gabe experienced frustration after being betrayed by founding elders over the vision of the church,

> I got blindsided by two of my founding elders who had always been my allies, my closest friends…they told me that we were missional and they were concerned that we were losing touch with the gospel. They had spun this narrative and wanted to fix me so they scheduled this meeting and just started going off. I was

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[251] Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 64–65.

[252] Ellen Van Velsor, Cynthia D. McCauley, Marian N. Ruderman, and Center for Creative Leadership, eds., *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 79.

> just shaking my head [and] began to weep. I said, 'Look I can't do it, I can't keep all the balls in the air.'

One of the two elders at the center of this conflict began to recognize "something was going on here." Coupled with Gabe's leadership and their reading books like *The Leader's Journey* and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, their relationship was restored. The conflict dynamic in their began to change as Gabe and his wife processed with a counselor. Peace at home and in the marriage afforded Gabe more strength and resolve to navigate the Session's dysfunction. As Gabe became healthier emotionally, the Session followed his lead and the lone outlier elder eventually left the church.

Emotions Encountered by Pastors From Critical Incidences

The particular emotions pastors experienced most as they vividly recalled challenging incidents in their ministry practice were sadness, anger, fear and shame. This is not surprising since, as Chuck explained, the difficult incidences are the ones that stood out and produced the negative emotions cited above.

Sadness

Pastors acknowledged that some of their sadness resulted from losses. There were ambiguous losses of position, relationship and physical cost. All of the pastors interviewed faced seasons of loneliness that were exacerbated by critical incidences. For example, Gabe's Session and spouse struggled to accept members leaving the church and he was caught in the middle, squeezed and alone. As the criticism grew, Gabe felt "very alone and unprotected."

Anger

Conflict, a corollary emotion to anger, is a theme pastors expressed in ministry and marriage. It is important to note the interviews revealed a link between the conflict experienced in ministry, as well as, conflict in the marriage. Ethan, Gabe, Frank, and Allan described hurt arising from marital conflict that was tied to their leadership role in ministry. In one illustration, Allan's spouse did not share his penchant for ministry and her anger was evidence. He moved forward with pastoral success while she felt marginalized. And while there were additional struggles, Allan conceded, "the ministry was a mistress" and the marriage suffered and eventually failed in the end.

Chuck faced an angry elder who "caused constant conflict in their relationship." In a twist of irony from another incidence, Chuck had labored to reach a young addict who betrayed him over and over until Chuck's patience had reached a "boiling point" and he became angry. An element of Chuck's anger and frustration was the result of his inability to be the "rescuer or savior." He needed to "fix it" and he was angry with himself and the young addict because he could not.

A church committee informed Burt that he was the problem and they could not trust his leadership. When a pastor is blindsided, as Burt was, anger and hurt are normal responses. His ability to lead the staff was marginalized and marked a realization for Burt that his ministry in that place might soon be over. For Dan, the conflict came from an unlikely source, an extended family member who hurt Dan so deeply that it affected his Sunday ministry. These emotions might come from within the church or a pastor's family. Either way, both are impactful. The value of building healthy marriages and ministries are necessary if pastors are able to meet the challenges they face in ministry.

Fear

Fear is a barrier to healthy ministry and relationships. For both Frank and Ethan, the fear of conflict established established a pattern of avoidance. Frank admitted his fear of conflict drove him to "seek peace at any cost." Ethan had difficulty confronting elders and others in authority and the consequence was often passive aggressive behavior.

Gabe and Dan were able to make the connection between their fear and anxiety that produced physical manifestations such as sleepless nights, heart palpitations, and depression. Allan was afraid to acknowledge his marital struggles and later conceded, "I think I was afraid to admit, I was a coward."

Shame

Remorse and regret were similar themes for Burt and Ethan over unsuccessful staff hires. Dan resisted informing others about his depression surmising it would undermine his leadership. Finally, the suffering drove Dan to confide in others, such as mentors, which made his leadership stronger.

Shame, like fear, anger and sadness can undermine pastors' leadership capabilities. Developing emotional intelligence will assist pastors towards self-awareness and consequently, an ability to manage those emptions. Many of these critical incidences became a moment of truth for these pastors. Would they allow these negative emotions to dominate and control their leadership or would they commit to leading differently? An emotionally intelligent pastor will trust more and more while depending less on negative emotions to influence their ministry.

The Importance of Critical Reflection

Whether pastors were reflecting on their experience in the moment or after the fact, or both, the literature and interviews revealed the importance of reflection as an aid in developing emotional intelligence. When Gabe was struggling to handle others disappointment, he read Scazzero's *The Emotionally Healthy Church* and realized he "couldn't satisfy these families" in his church. The book provided categories that made sense of his experiences and eye-opening examples from his ministry. Reflecting on his experience and reading, Gabe charted a course to lead new members toward becoming a healthy church. These new principles were woven into the fabric of new member classes.

Dan's reflective instincts were evident at the outset of the interview. He began by processing the protocol questions and the explanation provided to each interviewee. He ordered his thoughts around three movements of ministry: "from an academic approach to existential; from nice guy to prophet, and from iron man to fragile." His reflection mirrored Scazzero's "spiritual journey with four conversions."[253]

It may be observed that the pastors' experience of recalling critical incidents seemed helpful as they reflected on their ministry practice in the interview. In fact, both Dan and Burt specifically mentioned that the interview and preparation for it was helpful as they continued to process through their critical incidences. Here is Burt's comment over a year removed, "I've been reflecting a lot about what to share and…I'm still processing." Critical reflection can be enhanced with the addition of other trusted voices such as mentors.

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[253] Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 12–21.

The Value Added of Mentoring

Pastors understand from their biblical studies of wisdom that mentoring is essentially someone transmitting wisdom to another. Typically, it is an older person but not in every instance. Laurent Daloz in his work *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners* states that mentors, "embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret arcane signs, warn us of lurking dangers, and point out unexpected delights along the way."[254]

Dan realized early in his ministry that mentors were key not only for his ministry success but also for his personal survival. He recalls,

> I had great mentors [and] they carried me, they had been through it and had been elders longer than I'd been alive, they would let me try things and were there to kind of pick up the pieces behind me…I could not have made it humanly speaking without [their] support. There is no way I would be as healthy as I am today if it hadn't been for them teeing me up and supporting me.

Dan was making reference to what Sharon Deloz Parks; author of *Leadership Can Be Taught* calls "modeling the behavior."[255] She observes, "One of the aspects of thinking politically is the importance of modeling the behavior that you want to encourage in others."[256] The elders and leaders in Dan's context were exemplary in modeling a healthy behavior to him. His leadership today is reflective of watching and learning from these mentors.

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[254] Laurent A. Daloz, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass,,2012), 18.

[255] Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught*, 113–114.

[256] Ibid., 113.

Daniel Goleman observes that the DNA of a successful mentor relationship is one of "candor, trust, and support."[257] The value was evident in each of the pastors interviewed. For example, Ethan admitted that he had "rarely experienced mentoring as a young man in business or as a pastor." He has witnessed its value and now has made "mentoring younger pastors part of his life's work." Again, Goleman extols the value of mentoring and confirms why Ethan now desires to mentor:

> The executives we interviewed felt that the most pivotal experiences in their development had been jobs where they felt the challenges were over their heads [and] it took a sponsoring mentor who…protected them from meddling by 'helpful hands"…the mentors made it safe for these fledgling leaders to spread their wings, trying out new styles and strengths.[258]

Goleman's description is exactly what Dan experienced with his mentors. He conveys that mentors were "very courageous because they would let me try things, even though they had seen them fail a million times and they were there to pick up the pieces behind me."

There are occasions when elders are also able to fill the role of mentors. As in Dan's situation, elders became great supporters and guides and provided a wonderful platform in which Dan could learn ministry with a safety net beneath him. Conversely, there are times, such as Gabe's experience, when elders were the primary antagonists, therefore his support would have to come from other sources. Gabe acknowledged that he "reached out to mentors from a church that helped plant us…they came down and encouraged me." On another occasion, as difficulties mounted, Gabe was encouraged to

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[257] Goleman, McKee, and Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership,*164.

[258] Ibid., 164–165. Dan's quote above is a classic example of what Goleman is describing here.

call a national church leader and professor, resulting in a fruitful mentor relationship that still exists today.

While Henry's wife was a strong support, he recognized early in ministry the need for mentors. He concluded, "I've also always found mentors and friends." One of the reasons Henry left a medium-sized city for a larger one was due to the lack of mentors and peers. "I felt very alone," he admitted, and "I would love to be a part of a place where there was mentoring." He did relocate and discovered the mentor relationships he had longed for. Henry's discovery sounded similar to the role mentors had served for Dan. Henry explained that the reason he survived was several people inside the church and several outside that he connect with monthly. He confided that he "just needed it that often."

One surprising research observation was a lack of acknowledgement of mentors in the life and work of Pete Scazzero. The researcher found Scazzero's work invaluable in defining categories of emotional health and developing spiritual maturity. However, Scazzero seemed to undervalue the role of mentors in his work. It would be fair to say he claims Jesus as a mentor in his books,[259] yet even Jesus appears as a tacit mentor. This observation, if accurate, runs counter to the interview data and professional learning models[260] of this research.

Suffering and Loss as Teacher

It is essential for a pastor's home to be a safe place to process the interpersonal stresses of leading a congregation, staff or board. However, for Frank, the hardships were

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[259] Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 80–81; Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, 33.

[260] Merriam and Bierema, *Adult Learning*, 144.

within his home. He admitted, “to be honest with you, my marriage is the point of greatest tension [and] we have been blessedly free of a lot of conflict [in the church]. Frank described his relationship with his wife as “walking on egg shells” or “like I am in a room and the lights are off and there are fifty mouse traps on the floor and I have to walk across the room without stepping on them.” Through self-awareness, and empathy aided by counseling, Frank’s strengthened marriage is now an encouragement when he faces ministry hardships.

Similar to Frank’s story, the conflictual relationship between Allan and his wife weighed heavily upon his early successful church ministry. He explains, “my former wife walked out on me so that brought ministry to a halt – I resigned and moved on.” The pain of divorce and his subsequent reflection prompted Allan’s recognition that he, in fact, did not know himself well. He commented that he was “getting by with what amounts to giftedness without a lot of self-reflection.” This research indicated that when suffering produces self-reflection, pastors grow in emotional intelligence. This suffering of a broken home thrust Allan toward a journey in managing himself in a healthy way, declaring decades later, “I’m a little more emotionally intelligent than I once was.”

Influence of Critical Incidences on the Learning Process

The research and interviews show there is often a gap between perceptions and reality in ministry. The data also reveals that critical incidences are often the vehicle through which the gap is narrowed. In other words, as these pastors experienced critical incidences in their ministry (or in their home or marriage), they sought in varying ways explanations and solutions that included: critically reflecting on their experience, finding

mentors to guide them, educating themselves on EQ and other leadership resources, and finally pursuing spousal support. These will be explored under recommendations.

Recommendations for Practice

Inexperienced pastors sometime enter ministry with faulty perceptions of ministry. The reality of ministry practice often invalidates and many times crushes these perceptions through a series of critical incidences. These ministry challenges provide an opportunity for inexperienced pastors to learn emotional intelligence, a critical component to healthy practice. If pre-professional work could be considered in seminary training, it is likely that some faulty perceptions could be avoided. However, learning through suffering seems the most common avenue for learning emotional intelligence. Recommendations for both are offered now.

Pre-professional EQ preparation is as equally a significant strategy toward pastors learning emotional intelligence is continuing education practices are those already in ministry. If seminaries, presbyteries and churches are able and willing to introduce EQ concepts to seminarians through formal and informal structures, these young or inexperienced pastors will be better able to negotiate the ministry challenges they will surely encounter. Pastors will be more equipped and expectant when critical incidences arise.

Pre-professional EQ Preparation

Denominations such as the Presbyterian Church in America often develop a blueprint that provide direction to ordaining bodies on the areas of proficiency for those seeking ordination. In the PCA, this document is the Uniform Curriculum. This document and similar ones tend to be weighted on the academic side of theological education. The

researcher suggests a provision in the Uniform Curriculum offering proficiency in the five themes of *Resilient Ministry* by Burns et al as part of the Practical Theology requirements.

Another recommendation is to encourage seminaries in cooperation with presbyteries to require seminarians to participate in formal internships or fellowships. As a cooperative measure, the seminary along with the presbytery would commend seminarians to participate in internships with healthy churches in their respective areas. There is currently such an internship program being developed at First Presbyterian Church Augusta with students from Erskine Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary and Columbia International University. These students are being exposed to the value of emotional intelligence by reading works on EQ and engagement in cohort discussions. Internships could also include EQ diagnostic tools[261] to provide an EQ baseline in the learning process for seminarians in the same or similar way Myers-Briggs might be utilized for understanding behavior tendencies.

Another recommendation is for students to gain pre-professional experience through participation in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), a program of supervised encounters with crises designed to provide feedback from peers and teachers. The goal is increased self-awareness of their own needs in and during the crises and those to whom they are ministering. This experience would be a prodigious precursor to learning EQ for themselves and others in crises situations.

Based on research presented, the value of including a Practical Theology course on emotional intelligence and other Resilient Ministry themes is undeniable. However, if

[261] Bradberry, and Greaves, *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, 2009.

seminaries are not able to devote a course on EQ, it is recommended that seminaries incorporate these themes in current classes. For example, at Covenant Theological Seminary, these themes could be introduced in the *Politics of Ministry Practice* class or *Spiritual Formation* or one of the counseling classes. There is a seminary level course on leadership at Erskine Theological Seminary that could be a host for introducing or studying these EQ themes. The researcher's Doctor of Ministry degree and professional association with Erskine could prove beneficial in introducing EQ into formal seminary education through teaching and seminary relationships.

Procuring trusted mentors as guides is an invaluable asset to seminarians or young pastors. The researcher will expand on the role of mentors under the heading of personal work.

Continuing Education Practices

The first recommendation for pastors who are presently in ministry is to aggressively seek continuing education opportunities in emotional intelligence. The following propositions toward a clear path in the direction of learning EQ include: Learning the language of emotional intelligence through developmental opportunities, structures where EQ can be integrated, and personal work of the pastor.

Learning the Language of EQ Through Developmental Opportunities

The value of reading toward learning is always a profitable step in the process of discovery. Reading emotional intelligence resources will benefit any pastor who desires to lead from a healthier position. The researcher's bibliography provides a useful place to begin the practice. However, the following are must reads: *The Leader's Journey*, *Leadership Agility*, *The Emotionally Healthy leader*, *Mentor: Guiding the Journey of*

Adult Learners, *Resilient Ministry*, *A Failure of Nerve*, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, *Primal Leadership*, *Emotional Intelligence*, and *The Emotional Intelligence of Jesus*. In addition, a review of Ken Sande's *Relational360* will provide a particular evangelical template over the concepts of emotional intelligence.

While mentors are mentioned in several sections, it is instructive to note that mentors may be able to share EQ language and principles with pastors. The researcher recalls an instance where Gabe was embroiled in a critical incident and he was encouraged to reach out to someone who had extensive experience with EQ and leadership. Gabe began reading the recommended books on emotional intelligence and he gained a new mentor.

Structures Where EQ Can Be Integrated

Emotional intelligence can be learned and therefore, it should be shared with the larger church as well as the local expression. There are built-in occasions during the General Assembly of the PCA and the Synod of Evangelical Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Presbyterian Churches. They offer seminars on a host of ministry topics and a seminar educating pastors and ruling elders on the value and substance of emotional intelligence, or in conjunction with the four remaining themes of *Resilient Ministry*, would encourage pastors and officers. Similar modules could be offered on a presbytery level during quarterly meetings or at other times.

First Presbyterian Church Augusta in concert with Erskine Theological Seminary is providing practical theology courses to Central Savannah River Area churches. Teaching EQ and other related themes to local pastors has been a great encouragement

and assists the church in fulfilling its mission to minister to the diverse culture of its urban context.

A common theme among the eight interviewees was the significance of officer training. Significant because officer training is a primary vehicle for teaching officers the values of the church's ministry, one of which was the five themes of *Resilient Ministry*, and particularly for this study, emotional intelligence. Teaching the principles of EQ to officers and officer candidates is a necessity for healthy church leadership teams. The researcher is developing a setting to educate officers at First Presbyterian Church Augusta, most likely a Friday/Saturday retreat. It would be a pilot program whose success, if obtained, could be shared with other churches.

Another significant structure whereby EQ could be introduced would be through well-designed Sunday school teaching materials and small group curriculum. Once pastors begin to grasp and value emotional intelligence, they might introduce these opportunities to the congregation by providing officer training to leaders and mentoring as a form of discipleship for members.

Personal Work

Professional learning is divided into three categories: formal, informal and non-formal. This study has reviewed recommendations through traditional formal means such as seminary. Also, critical incidences have been examined through the lens of an incidental and informal learning model. Lastly, the third category of professional learning, non-formal learning, will be examined using an applied expression, personal work.

Critically Reflecting

The art of critically reflecting in ministry practice cannot be overstated and has been treated accordingly in this study. If critical reflection is an indispensible skill to interpreting leadership challenges in which pastors face, what tangible ways might assist pastors to critically reflect? First, as stated in chapter two, pastors must recognize the value of this form of reflection and seek it out. Second, if the PCA's Discipleship Ministries and like-minded agencies would develop training programs on critical reflection for the church, pastors must take advantage of those opportunities. Third, every pastor needs a mentor to assist in reflection. A differing perspective such as is offered in mentoring remains central to emotional intelligence and the critical reflection that results from it. Indeed, it constitutes its own category, which is now addressed.

Mentoring

Ministry is a shared experience. Simply stated, a mentor is a guide who shares the journey with another. More often than not, mentors are older or at least, have more experience than the student or protégé. The mentoring arrives like advice from a wise and sage elder. The mentor observes and commends life lessons but more importantly, they challenge the protégé when needed and inspire them to new and deeper learning. Over and over again in the interviews, pastors spoke of the life-giving force of mentors in their lives. In an occupation that tends to isolate its pastors, mentors promote sustainability in ministry where survival alone is improbable. Also, for those in marriage, ministry is too much of a burden for the spouse to shoulder exclusively.

Where might a pastor find a mentor? Initially, survey the obvious candidates. It is likely that a mentor is within most pastors' circle of friends. Take caution against looking

for the perfect mentor, they do not exist. Rather a mentor is a guide in the protégé's journey offering insight, challenge and inspiration along the way. Mentors are a gift, which is why they cannot be hired. They freely give themselves to this role. It is essential for pastors to find and sustain mentoring relationships.

Another source for locating a mentor is talking to others who have successful mentor relationships. Ask them their process for finding a mentor and how to cultivate the relationship once it is established. Pray should never a last resort so pray for God to provide the mentor needed. Finally, persevere because it may take several attempts before finding the right mentor. It is worth the investment.

Five Themes of Resilient Ministry

The value of spiritual formation, self-care, emotional and cultural intelligence, marriage/family, and leadership themes has been clearly affirmed by the literature and interview data. If pastors are to endure and flourish in pastoral ministry, an important reason will be the attention these themes occupy in their ministry and lives. The researcher commends the work of Burns et al in *Resilient Ministry* as an excellent resource for an introduction to these themes.

Other Recommendations

A decision to enter into a counseling relationship can be a valuable tool toward learning EQ. Several pastors followed the lead of their spouses into counseling and in every case; their marriage and ministries were strengthened. The adversities of ministry and pain of family dysfunction drove Ethan to seek counseling on his own. Ethan declared that his counseling relationship was a "lifeline" that helped him navigate hard-

hitting issues with several elders as well as struggles he encountered in relationships with his adult children.

Some churches have appointed an advisory team between the session and senior pastor that provides accountability for the senior pastor. It is typically a smaller group than the session, who knows him well enough to and is able to speak into his life. This smaller group includes representative session elders, pastoral staff and other appointed leaders such as operations director, deacon chairman and perhaps churches' legal counsel. For example, Dan's church presently has this component in place and they have spoken into his life on two particular instances. First, they aided Dan in processing outside negative extended family voices that negatively influenced his effectiveness in preaching on Sundays. Second, this smaller group advises Dan on all speaking engagements enabling him to protect his ministry and family. In love, they protect, exhort and guide Dan as a pastor, husband and father and he openly receives this counsel. Dan and this advisory team are examples of emotional intelligence leading to organizational, professional and personal health.

Pastor's desire to learn emotional intelligence is a crucial commitment in order to grow one's EQ. In other words, they must vow to lead differently. This means learning to lead from the balcony occasionally rather than the dance floor.[262] This is how a pastor leads differently with an EQ commitment. A pledge to, as the old Anglican collect encourages, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the principles of emotional intelligence and the themes of *Resilient Ministry*.

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[262] The language of getting on the balcony and off the dance floor originated in the book *Leadership on the Line.*

A final recommendation is to encourage pastors to join or create pastoral peer groups or cohorts. Finding pastors who have a similar desire to grow and learn healthy ministry principles will deeply benefit one another. Again mentors and cohorts are so valuable because the reflective process is not an solo act. Rather, as Cervero points out, "learning advances through collaborative social interaction…[and] it is important in these methods to involve groups of practitioners, for it is only within groups that social interaction and conversation can take place."[263] Anecdotally, the researcher and interviewee Gabe attest that their common cohort was life-sustaining for them as they faced ministry leadership challenges.

Conclusion

This dissertation has affirmed that emotional intelligence can be learned and a skill worthy of the investment for pastors. Since it is a relatively unknown language to most clergy, developing platforms for teaching the basics of EQ is crucial to closing the learning gap and recommendations are offered. The need is heightened by the fact that very little EQ training occurs in pre-professional training.

The interviews revealed that ministry challenges are most often the context in which pastors learn and grow in their emotional intelligence. Yet there is minimal formal training to develop the EQ skills to navigate those ministry challenges. Therefore, as a result, the pastors interviewed felt unprepared for the challenges they faced. The research revealed that pastors who now lead with emotional intelligence are building healthy ministry, marriages and churches. Emotional intelligence is that significant to leader success especially when united with other leadership disciplines. The importance of

[263] Cervero, "Professional Practice, Learning, and Continuing Education: An Integrated Perspective," 99.

mentors cannot be overstated. They are indispensable for anyone, including pastors, to learn and develop emotional intelligence. through critical reflection and thereby, negotiate the leadership challenges of ministry. Again Daloz helps us:

> Mentors hang around through transitions, a foot on either side of the gulf; they offer a hand to help us swing across. By their very existence, mentors provide that the journey can be made, the leap taken…always this is done in the service of…self-reflection. That is, unless we are able at some level to name a change, to see it explicitly in a new way, the transformation is not complete…mentors help us do that.[264]

All eight of the interviewees were married and in each case, their spouse had an important influence on their ministry and their capacity to grow in emotional intelligence. The research indicated that ministry challenges provided a barometer for marital healthiness and as marriages were strengthened, pastors ability to navigate ministry challenges improved. Marriage and the ministry are "intimately connected."[265] Developing a healthy balance between ministry and marriage is difficult and necessary.

In conclusion, the researcher hopes pastors will glean from this research that emotional intelligence is critical to success in any leadership context and particularly as they lead through ministry challenges. Pastors can be encouraged and heartened that EQ can be learned and that the most important ingredient in learning EQ is a desire for discovery. Finally, pastoral ministry is not for the weak of heart nor is it accomplished alone. Pastors need others; mentors, spouses and peers, who warn of impending dangers lurking just beneath the surface that are not easily seen by a lone perspective. They are nearby during seasons of suffering and often point out the sunrise of opportunities that are about to break.

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[264] Daloz Parks, *Mentor*, 207.

[265] Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 171.

And perhaps most importantly, the pastors' ministry, marriage and the church they serve belong to the Lord,

> Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.[266]

> But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.[267]

[266] Ps. 115:1.

[267] 2 Cor. 4:7.

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