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Pastoral care for clergy: The need, some program directions and desired outcomes among ministers of Churches of Christ in Western Australia

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PASTORAL CARE FOR CLERGY
THE NEED, SOME PROGRAM DIRECTIONS
AND DESIRED OUTCOMES AMONG
MINISTERS IN CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

BY


A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of

Master of Social Science (Human Services)
at the Faculty of Health & Human Sciences, Edith Cowan University

Date of Submission: January 1997
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to consider the pastoral care needs of Churches of Christ ministers working in parishes, propose some directions that a programmed approach to that pastoral care could take, and outline the kinds of desired outcomes to be looked for among them in Western Australia.

It was demonstrated that, as with other helping professionals within the Human Services domain, ministers experience stressors which impinge on their well-being and their effectiveness as care-givers. This study examined the different contexts within which ministers must function, examining the complexities of their duties, the hazards they face and the effects these have on their well-being and the performance of their duties within their professional and personal lives.

The study looked at how to respond to the needs of this workforce, proposing some directions in which the program of pastoral care could take at each of the three levels identified as significant, the structural level, the professional level and the personal level. These were proposed in the context of an articulation of the desired outcomes that should result from the establishment of those systems of care.

Finally, consideration was given to possible evaluators that would demonstrate the extent to which those desired outcomes had been achieved. While these were not the primary focus of the study, consideration of evaluators is a necessary adjunct to any programmatic approach to pastoral care.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My embarkation on this program of study was the direct result of my contact with Dr Hyung Shik Kim, who encouraged me to study at this level. I am most grateful to him for that.

I would also like to thank my student colleagues from the course work components of this program, who provided a peer group of encouragement as we all moved into the thesis component.

The gentle encouragement of my supervisor, Dr Cynthia Dixon, helped to prevent this work being abandoned a couple of times, and to her I owe a debt of thanks.

Finally, I thank my wife Eira, who believed in me as I worked on this study, who encouraged me during periods when I felt like giving up, and who inspired me as we talked about the issues raised by the study. Her gracious patience must also be acknowledged, as what was intended to be completed in two years dragged on into four.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature

Date: 31 January 1997
USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Jim had been working in a working class suburban church for just four years. It was his second placement since graduating from theological college, and while many had expressed doubts, while at college, about his ability to perform as a minister, Jim had proved them wrong. He had invigorated a small rural church and now was holding together a struggling suburban church.

Three weeks before Christmas, and about six weeks before his wife was due to deliver a child, the officers of the congregation sacked him. They asked him to vacate the church house as soon as possible. While there were some warning signs leading up to this event, previous difficulties had always been worked out. It was the summary and immediate nature of the dismissal that was most difficult for Jim and his wife to cope with.

The denominational committee set up to help and advise churches and ministers about placements and to assist in situations of conflict, stepped in and negotiated continued occupancy of the house for Jim’s family for three months. It also secured payment for him of salary in lieu of notice, which certainly helped ease some of the pressure.

The fact remained, however, that Jim was suddenly unemployed. To whom could this minister turn for pastoral care in this crisis? His parents and in-laws lived in other states of Australia, and he had a very limited peer network in this state. What structures of the Church were there to help him through this crisis? The denomination’s placement committee might be able to recommend him to churches, but with his immediate history, few churches would want to give Jim the benefit of the doubt over the rumour and innuendo. Indeed, Jim spent nearly two years on Unemployment Benefit before moving inter-state. Even after moving closer to family
supports, his initial job prospects were casual and temporary in positions other than local church ministry.

No-one was formally appointed by the denomination to step in to look after Jim and his family's need for pastoral care. It was noted by the placement committee that they were worshipping in a particular congregation, and that the ministers there would care for them.

Two questions arose from consideration of situations such as this, and which were germinal in the development of this study:

1. "Would the existence of appropriate systems of care have helped reduce the chances of Jim arriving in a situation where he faced the sack by the church?" and
2. "If such a situation was unable to be avoided, would the existence of appropriate systems of care have helped Jim and the church to arrive at a healthier and mutually agreeable outcome?"

In most incidents such as this, there are no winners. The ministers and their families are forced to go through a profoundly painful experience. The congregations that remain are often bitterly divided and hurt by the events. There has to be a better way. Indeed, there should be a way of ensuring the personal well-being of ministers and thereby assisting them to work at optimum capacity in whatever church setting they find themselves.

This incident illustrates the problem that is to be the focus of this study. Ministers are employed to offer pastoral care to members of congregations, and yet they, themselves, have pastoral care needs.
In this opening chapter, it will be made clear why this particular study is being done in this time and place. It will also outline the purpose and the desired outcomes of the study and the strategies intended to achieve those outcomes.

1.1 Background to Study

Three things need to be clarified in regard to the background of this study:

1. the place of churches within the domain of Human Services;
2. the nature of ministry in Churches of Christ;
3. the particular events which precipitated this study.

1.1.1 Churches and Human Services

The work of churches has not always been included in the domain of Human Services, and yet in many respects it seems to deserve a place there. The range of people-services provided at a local congregation level is surprisingly diverse and the minister or priest is often called on to be the primary service provider.

Such services as marriage guidance, pre-marriage, grief and general counselling, education, welfare assistance, recreation, family support and aged-care services, in addition to the spiritual dimensions of worship, spiritual guidance, weddings, funerals and the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism, are included in what is provided for people at the local church.

Historically, churches can take the credit for pioneering many of the widely accepted Human Service activities - schools, hospitals, residential services for the aged and disabled, even prisons. Many denominations of the church have welfare agencies of
some sort or another. Many have residential care programs for the disabled, the aged and the poor. Many provide alternatives for state-run schooling from pre-primary to tertiary, and many have involvement in private hospitals and health care. Indeed, it would be hard to find an area of service commonly regarded as being within the domain of Human Services that was not being provided at least somewhere by a local church or church agency.

Since Churches of Christ is the context from which this study is being conducted, it is worth noting here that the following services are provided under its auspices, in some instances as local congregations, in others as state agencies, and in others as national agencies:

- Lifeline - welfare, counselling, emergency relief, lone fathers support services.
- Churches of Christ Homes - residential services for seniors.
- Local parish schools in Busselton and Thornlie.
- Women’s Refuge associated with a local church.
- Warwick Leisure Centre - a joint venture with City of Wanneroo.
- Bethesda Private Hospital, Claremont.
- Federal Aborigines Board - development services for Aborigines.
- Federal Overseas Mission Board - development services in Developing Countries.

Two decades ago writers in the domain of Human Services began broadening their notion of the domain to encompass all services that are aimed at helping people cope with the problems arising from being human, (Alexander, 1977; Demone & Harshbarger, 1974) and thus proposed to include churches among the people-serving organisations.

Churches, therefore, stand firmly within the Human Services domain, not just because they provide many of the Human Services which secular government and non-government agencies provide, but because those specialised spiritual services that the
churches provide are increasingly recognised as helping people cope with the problems arising from being human.

An interesting consequence of this is that ministers and priests are now struggling with many of the same work-related problems as others in the "helping professions". These seem to centre on the growing complexity of the job. As with teaching, for example, ministry in a local church has become much more complex than it used to be. In the first half of this century a minister's role was simply to preach, teach and visit. Like teachers who no longer just teach, ministers and priests today have much wider role expectations than ever before.

Industrial pressures and professional common-sense have seen the secular helping professions build up around them mechanisms that enable workers to maintain an optimum level of operation as they cope with these pressures. Churches, however, have been significantly slower to respond to the insights gained by the secular professionals. One objective of this study is to encourage Churches of Christ in WA to begin to redress this deficiency.

1.1.2 Ministry in Churches of Christ

The context in which this study will be conducted is the Churches of Christ in Western Australia.

Some denominations of the Christian Church have built into their structures systems that are designed to ensure that their clergy are cared for pastorally. These have generally been the episcopal churches, such as the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches which have bishops. While bishops get involved in a great deal of
administrative work, essential to their calling is the pastoral care of the priests in their diocese.

The presbyterian churches, such as the Uniting Church, which are governed by Councils of Elders and structured in presbyteries, try to use the Presbyteries as collective forums for the pastoral care of their ministers. In this matter, these churches have had the advantage of clearly defined and legislated structures that enable the provision of formal care services.

Churches of Christ, however, are congregationally governed which means that there is no authority higher than the local congregation. Some "denominational" structures exist, but these are co-operative and voluntary. Consequently, the issue of providing formal care services for ministers has, until recently, been relegated to the "too hard" basket.

In order to understand the problems of ministry in Churches of Christ, it is necessary to examine the practice, expectations and fruits of the ministerial role within a local Church of Christ. Indeed, this subject is of such significance that it is the subject of a Masters thesis being completed by Peter Burnham through the Melbourne College of Divinity entitled "The development of the ordained ministry in Churches of Christ in Australia." (Jacobs, J., (Ed) 1992).

In the early years ministers were referred to as evangelists and were invariably honorary (Chapman, 1979). The leadership of lay people was dominant, and the morning worship, including the preaching, which they referred to as mutual edification, and the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, was completely in their hands. Evening worship services provided a pulpit for the evangelists, where their special task was to preach and lead people to conversion.
This dominance of lay people reflected a rejection of the traditional classes in the church, of clergy and lay people, in favour of a totally egalitarian model of church government and an avoidance of referring to ministers as "clergy" or conferring on them titles such as "Reverend" or "Father". This also meant a rejection of a sacerdotal view of ministry in which the sacraments were only able to be conducted with the minister officiating, and a rejection of priestly vestments, even the Geneva gown of the Reformation, and clerical collars.

For Churches of Christ in Australia, formal ministerial training began in 1907, with the establishment of a seminary in Melbourne, (Chapman, 1979). In these early years, however, there was a deep seated suspicion of theological training, as some thought it to be the beginnings of the re-emergence of clericalism. This has led to a common but not pervasive situation today in which the training that ministers do is somewhat devalued. Because members felt that any member of the church, gifted by the Holy Spirit and called by the congregation, could be a Minister, they felt that training was unnecessary, even undesirable.

The denomination's theological roots are grounded in the period of Enlightenment in the early 1800's, where the rational mind was thought supreme and capable of eventually solving all the ills of the world. Thus, the training that was provided was intellectually and rationally based. There was little room for the mystical, and the spiritual disciplines of the earlier church were largely ignored. As a result, today the model of ministry training as largely academic, rather than formational, leaving Churches of Christ with a very individualistic and self-reliant approach to ministry and spiritual growth.

This has led many ministers to feel that there is an inadequate spiritual infra-structure within the church that might enable them to keep a clear perspective on their calling. In a recent study of Victorian Churches of Christ ministers this was identified as a "key
area of concern" for ministers (Phelan, 1990). Such findings have been influential in the development of this study.

Evidence of this individualism and attitude of self-reliance in ministers was found in their initial response to the recent establishment of some networks of care and support for them in their ministry work. Some seemed reluctant to participate, others seeming to be too busy for such activity to be fitted in. In the time since the establishment of these groups, participation has widened and become more accepted.

Another special feature of how ministry functions in Churches of Christ is the fact that ministers are not placed in local churches by a denominational authority. Local churches initiate calls to ministers to work with them, inviting them to work in the congregation for periods of 3 to 5 years. Individual workplace agreements provide the basis of employment, and despite the specified period of employment in the invitation, all contracts provide for the church or minister to withdraw from the commitment upon giving notice of 3 to 6 months.

Two significant sources of stress arise from this aspect of ministry in Churches of Christ. Firstly, ministers often feel that they have little security of tenure, particularly as there is no assurance of placement beyond the current situation. In some other denominations ministers are able to continue on stipend if they have no placement following their current one, and some have bureaucracies large enough to ensure that if another placement cannot be found in a local parish, then at least there is room for them in the bureaucracy somewhere.

Secondly, ministers often feel that there is no clearly defined system of adjudication for them or churches, should difficulties arise. There is no "union rep" who can stand beside them and speak on their behalf, and there is no "bishop" with the authority to
act decisively in a dispute. These issues were also influential in the development of this study.

It is clear from this that the following issues are critical to the level of stress perceived or experienced by Churches of Christ ministers who find themselves in difficult situations in their personal or professional lives:
1. the lack of spiritual underpinning for those engaged in the tasks of ministry;
2. the generally poor network of peer support and care;
3. the lack of security of tenure; and
4. the absence of a suitable adjudication system for situations of dispute.

1.1.3 Incidents that Precipitated Perceived Need for Study

The events that caused leaders in Churches of Christ in Western Australia to begin to explore the need to care for ministers were those surrounding the dismissal of five ministers from metropolitan churches over an 18 month period during 1990 and 1991. In all cases there had been no impropriety, no immoral behaviour nor misappropriation of funds, and there was very little warning of the imminence of the dismissals. Indeed, no notice was given. The dismissals were summary and immediate.

In one instance the minister had been with the congregation for more than ten years, and in another the minister was in the first year of his first ministry after completion of training. In all cases the immediate nature of the dismissal was a cause of great personal pain and two of the five have been unable or unwilling to obtain another parish appointment.

These dramatic events sent shock-waves around the churches of this state, and further afield. Ministers were beginning to wonder if they were safe anywhere. The Advisory
Task Group of Churches of Christ in WA, the denominational committee with the role of helping churches and ministers reach agreements on appointments, recognised that there was a malaise in the churches that needed to be addressed quickly.

On a second front, the Ministers' Association recognised that there was a problem among its membership when the 1992 annual Ministers' Retreat/Camp had to be cancelled because of lack of support. Of over 75 ministers who could attend with their wives, only six registered an interest in attending. Previous retreats had been supported by between 40 and 60 attenders. The Association also had difficulty encouraging ministers to attend one-day seminars for professional development, and became concerned about the low level of collegiality and corporate identity among them.

A third significant factor arose with two new appointments to the Advisory Task Group. While not appointed for this reason, both these people had a concern for the welfare of the walking wounded among the ministers. They have sought to raise the awareness of the others on that committee of some of the things that need to be done to improve the health, well-being and functioning of the ministers.

Churches of Christ in other states of Australia had already begun to address this need in a variety of ways, so the Advisory Task Group together with the Executive Committee of the Association of Churches of Christ in WA and the Ministers' Association began to look at what could be done for ministers in WA with existing resources.

Those dramatic events of 1990-91 and the growing awareness within various denominational bodies that some action was needed, provided the climate in which this topic was chosen in 1992.
1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to focus attention on the issue of pastoral care for the ministers in Churches of Christ in WA. As is implicit in the title for the study, the objective of this attention was to examine the dimension and nature of the need for pastoral care among this group, to consider some of the options for service delivery to them and to determine the desired outcomes of such a service should be. The study was not commissioned or sponsored by Churches of Christ in WA, but its findings will be offered as a resource to aid the establishment of appropriate resources and services for the care of ministers.

As hinted at above, this has been an issue of social policy within the church generally for little more than two decades, and for little more than a decade within Churches of Christ. In Victoria, such services were established in a very tentative way in about 1983. South Australia and New South Wales provided similar services a few years later, each, however, along different lines from those in Victoria. The services provided in each situation were developed on the basis of an awareness of the need to help ministers and a delicate balancing of constituency demands and the resources available.

The three models differed in the following ways:

- Churches of Christ in Victoria were the first to address this matter. There, a Minister to the ministers was appointed in a very part-time capacity. While this person was appointed by the Executive of the state body, there was no connection between this new position and the structures of power in the state, and the position was funded in large part by the Christian Women's Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Victoria. A second part-time person was added a little while later.
• In South Australia, a different approach was adopted. The chief executive employee of the State Committee in SA was called the State Minister. As well as having an administrative function that involved concern and involvement in ministry placements, the State Minister was specifically charged with responsibility for the pastoral care of the ministers in the state.

• In New South Wales, where the general ethos of the church favoured a decentralised approach to structures, a regionalised network approach to providing for the pastoral care of ministers was adopted. People with expertise, who were willing to make their services available to ministers, were identified and regional co-ordinators, themselves ministers, accepted responsibility to identify colleagues in need and refer them to those who might be able to help.

As these were examined in preparation for this study it became apparent that a significant weakness in what had been set up, was that at no stage had anyone tried to articulate what the outcome should be, nor how these should be evaluated. This was an issue of such importance that the church could not afford to address it in an ad hoc manner. The author of this study hoped and hopes that this study would provide the leaders of Churches of Christ in WA with sufficient encouragement and guidance to establish appropriate systems of care for its ministers, that could be effectively monitored and evaluated.

In more specific terms, the study examined the personal, professional and structural contexts in which ministers work. Consideration was given to some possible program directions in relation to each of those contexts and also to the factors that might be influential in determining them. This provided the basis for drawing conclusions about
the personal, professional and structural outcomes that were desirable from the establishment of pastoral care services for ministers

1.2.1 Research Questions

In order to clarify the unique dimensions of this study, the following research questions were proposed:

1. What is the nature of the pastoral care needs of Churches of Christ ministers?
2. What factors might influence the shape of services set up to meet those needs?
3. What should such a pastoral care service consist of and how would it be provided?
4. What behavioural outcomes would be desirable from the provision of such services?
5. What performance indicators would be sought to evaluate the effectiveness of such services?

Questions of this order have not been addressed before in any study of which the author is aware. Their importance lies in the fact that the answers to them will provide the framework out of which pastoral care services for ministers can be both provided and evaluated.

1.2.2 Profile of Relevant Literature

a. Research Question One

The focus of the first Research Question was the pastoral care needs of ministers and it was approached in a systematic way. Using van Laar's (1985) work as a
springboard, a continuum of factors, - personal, professional and structural - was developed to provide a framework for the consideration of each of the Research Questions. Each of these contexts involved different pastoral care issues for ministers and so were considered separately. However, before proceeding into that part of the study, a fundamental question was considered - What is pastoral care?

Three sources provided inspiration for the responses to this question. All were theoretical and arose out of a Christian theological context. In 1962, Thurneyson provided a seminal work for what was to become the contemporary theological approach to pastoral care. He wrote from a North American context and wrote very specifically out of a local church or parish setting in proposing his understanding of the meaning of pastoral care.

Taylor, (1983), writing from a British context, identified the dichotomy of pastoral care that exists in relation to the faith or non-faith context of its practitioner. Pattison, (1983), also a Briton, wrote from a much more reflective position, trying to review and critique recent developments in the study of pastoral care. He drew together many other studies concerned with pastoral care and provided this study with a rather broad view of pastoral care as a foundation to making its own proposition about pastoral care.

Phelan's (1990) work provided much of the data concerning the pastoral care needs of ministers within the personal context. This primarily focused on the needs of the family, and the struggle ministers often reported of balancing the needs of the family against the seemingly unending demands of the congregation. Brain (1994) provided some insights from an Anglican perspective, but much of the material here was original to the author.
Consideration of the pastoral care needs that arise for ministers from and in their professional context was guided by an exploration of the minister's job description and the professional hazards of ministry.

Schaller's (1987) work pointed to the extent of social change that has forced the shape and content of the minister's job description to change. While he wrote from a North American perspective, the social change that has occurred in Australia during the latter half of this century is of a similar order and magnitude and this issue was picked up by one of the respondents in the peer review process as very relevant from where they were looking at the church and society.

Bodycomb, (1989), reported on some research he did into the things that occupied ministers' working time. It was a small survey, in statistical terms, but relevant here in that it identified the kinds of activities that demanded minister's attention in "an average week". Respondents were from a number of denominations of the church, although the study did not report details about affiliation.

Jongeling, (1991), was commissioned by the WA Synod of the Uniting Church to conduct an evaluation of its inaugural Presbyteries' Chaplain position. This provided a very detailed examination of one Christian denomination's response to the need to care for its ministers and did so from a West Australian perspective. In this study he examined in some detail the nature and extent of the expectations of congregations about ministers' duties.

The work of Stirling, (no date), provided a more detailed exposition of the kinds of duty expectations that are found within a Churches of Christ context. His work, together with the specific studies of Phelan, (1990), and Phelan & Regan, (1991), gave considerable insight into the very particular context that is the concern of this study.
The subject of the **professional hazards facing ministers** has been addressed by many studies, both here and overseas. Blaikie's 1979 work was one of the first to alert the Australian church in its widest sense to this issue. Other studies and authors have followed since that time, and in the context of this study, close consideration was given to the works by Jongeling, (1991), van Laar, (1985), and Wilson, (1988). Phelan, (1990), and Phelan & Regan, (1991), provided some of the most significant findings for consideration in this matter. The short study by Farmer, (1989), and Pryor's two major works concerning the Uniting Church in Victoria, (1982 & 1986), provided valuable additional insights into this aspect of the study.

Fraser and Campolo, (1992), in their reflection on the work of Troeltsch, (1911) and Niebuhr, (1917), provided a valuable framework for considering the pastoral care issues that have **structural** perspectives for the church and ministers. Their purpose was to demonstrate that there are different understandings within the Christian Church of the nature of the relationship between Society and the Church. Consideration was also given to the nature of the structural relationship between the church and its ministers in the context of ministerial dysfunction. Van Laar (1985), writing out of a Churches of Christ context in Victoria, offered a Marxist critique of that relationship and demonstrated that there were at least two paradigms operative within the church as attempts to understand this relationship. His work set the scene for establishing the tri-partite structure of this study.

b. **Research Question Two**

Before considering what **factors which might influence the shape of services set up to meet the pastoral care needs of ministers**, a brief philosophical framework was developed in response to the question: Why should the church care for its ministers? This section is largely original to this study but pointers were gained from some of
Jongeling's (1991) work, and some conceptual references were made to ethicists, Fletcher (1966) and Greet (1970). Some of Farmer's (1989) research was also a springboard for propositions concerned with maximising the productivity of those who train for ministry. In the consideration of the personal, professional and structural factors that might influence or shape the actual pastoral care services that are provided for ministers, the study relied on largely denominational source material.

c. Research Question Three

In order to specify possible program directions and the establishment of appropriate pastoral care services, the personal, professional and structural dimensions were each explored. The findings of Phelan (1990) and Phelan and Regan (1991) provided the substance for the personal needs options.

In exploring the professional needs options, various models of ministry were first examined in order to illustrate how ministers view their role. Nouwen's (1972) work, which was the subject of much reflection in Pryor's (1986) study, provided some profound insights into the philosophy that underpins what Christian Ministry is all about. Chapman (1982), writing from an Australian Churches of Christ context, offered some insights into five different styles or models of ministry that he perceived within Churches of Christ in Australia. This work, together with reference to three further models proposed by the author of this study, was referred to as an illustration of the diversity of approaches to ministry that exist within the context in which this study is being conducted.

Finally, the findings of Phelan's (1990) study provided much of the substance in exploring the structural needs options.
d. Research Question Four

The examination of issues pertinent to the next research question, concerning the **behavioural outcomes** that should be the object of the pastoral care program, focused largely on the findings of Phelan (1990) and Phelan & Regan (1991) in their studies of ministers in Churches of Christ in Victoria/Tasmania and New South Wales. These studies provided a valuable insight into the issues and concerns of those in ministry and a valid pointer to the kinds of issues that needed to be addressed by this study.

e. Research Question 5

Finally, in consideration of the **evaluation strategies** that might be appropriate to establish as a result of the findings of this study, some consideration was given to current evaluation theory and works by Newman (1987) and Rossi & Freeman (1989). These works provided the framework from which propositions were developed concerning the appropriate steps in the evaluation of the pastoral care program.

1.2.3 Development of the Study Design

The original title of this research proposal was:

*Models of pastoral care for clergy: A comparative study leading to a proposed model for Churches of Christ in Western Australia.*

The proposal was for a fairly large statistical study, combined with a comparative study of pastoral care projects that exist in other states of Australia, with the view to judging which model of pastoral care might be best suited to the situation here in WA among Churches of Christ ministers.
As a result of reflection upon the comments made at the Graduate Seminar component of the Thesis Proposal unit, in the Coursework components and during the course of the study itself, it seemed evident that the scope of such a project was too broad for the purposes of a Masters thesis, and it was gradually redefined to:

*Pastoral Care for Clergy: The need, some program directions and desired outcomes among ministers in Churches of Christ in Western Australia*

The revised title sought to make an appropriate change of focus while retaining the overall objective of the research, namely, to provide some guidance for the provision of pastoral care for Churches of Christ ministers in WA.

### 1.2.4 Study Design

The study was thus confined to the more descriptive work of identifying the needs of ministers and considering how they could best be addressed.

The study comprised secondary research focused on a Content Analysis of the relevant and available literature pertinent to the research questions. The study concluded with some propositions concerning an evaluation strategy that would enable a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of any services that might be set up to provide pastoral care for ministers.

The only additional step was a Peer Review conducted after the first two chapters had been written. It was important to determine whether the author of the study had correctly assessed the key features of the context in which the study is being conducted and the epistemological assumptions that undergirded the study. In order to assess the congruency between the author’s view of the subject, the second chapter of the study was offered to a group of ten Churches of Christ ministers for their assessment of the
content. These ten were chosen randomly from the alphabetical listing of approximately 100 ministers in the 1993 Churches of Christ Resource Handbook.

The purpose of this step was to ascertain whether the study had accurately identified the issues that were perceived to be important and relevant by those in the field. The feedback obtained by this step gave direction to some modification of the approach taken by the study.

1.2.5 Parameters of the Study

The first boundary that was defined in relation to this study was that while it was certain that the findings of this study would have a degree of generic application to pastoral care programs for clergy in various denominations of the Christian Church, it was recognised that the reference point for this study, the context from which and to which it spoke, was Churches of Christ, and many of the issues for ministers that were identified in this study would be reflected upon from that perspective.

The peculiarities of this context which may create limitations to the application of the findings of this study include:

- the lack of denominational structures of authority;
- the autonomy of local congregations;
- the lack of security of tenure for ministers; and
- the generally conservative, almost fundamentalist, environment which is rather legalistic and requires adherence to particular doctrinal positions, and places ministers in tenuous situations at times.

Some of the findings of this study, therefore, could not be applied, for example, in an Anglican or Uniting Church setting, because there are different authority and tenure
structures applicable. However, they may well be applicable in Baptist and other independent evangelical churches.

A second boundary that was placed on this study was to focus, so far as is possible, on Australian studies and writings for the substantive findings of the study. While there have been significant studies conducted overseas and indeed some references were made to American and European material, the religious and theological cultures of those places are very different from those in Australia, making direct applications into Australian settings somewhat questionable. It was also recognised that this study would make a significant contribution to the Australian Church scene and needed to speak from that Australian context.

1.2.6 Significance of the Study

A perusal of the *Union List of Higher Degree Theses in Australian Libraries* indicated that this could be the first study of its kind in Australia. Furthermore, a similar perusal of the *Directory of Graduate Studies and Research in Theology and Religion: Australian and New Zealand Institutions, 2nd Ed* led to the conclusion that this was an area of research that is not currently being investigated, even in the specialised schools of theology and religion that exist in Australia and New Zealand.

Brain (1994) conducted a study in Perth entitled "Care and Support for the Pastor in Ministry, with a Special Emphasis on the Pastor's Self-care", but his emphasis was on ministers taking steps themselves to care for their own well-being, and was thus concerned with just one of the three facets considered in this study. It is also worth noting that Brain was writing out of a different ministry context for his study, the Anglican Church in Western Australia.
Certainly, among Churches of Christ in the states of Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, where three different models of service delivery have been established over the past seven years, no such preliminary work has been done.

No attempt was made to articulate what would be desirable outcomes for such services, nor to define within what limits the continuation of services would be justified. In Victoria an informal evaluation of the Minister to the Ministers program was conducted by the Conference Secretary. It comprised little more than brief telephone interviews with many ministers, and the conclusions drawn from the enquiry were that the service was of marginal value to most, but of critical value to a few. While these findings might ultimately match the findings of more structured evaluations as proposed by this study, at this point in time they are of little value.

While other studies have tended to look at stress factors that ministers have to contend with, no attempt has yet been made to define what outcomes should have been sought in order to determine whether the program was effective.

This study has, for the first time, articulated the direction for pastoral care services for Churches of Christ ministers and the desired outcomes of such services. The articulation of these outcomes provides the basis for the effective evaluation of any services that are to be provided.

1.2.7 Possible Further Study

As mentioned above, at an earlier stage in the planning of this study consideration was given to a comparative study of the variety of forms that have been adopted by Churches of Christ in other states for providing pastoral care services to clergy. The
aim of such a study was to assess which model was the most effective in addressing the pastoral care needs of ministers in Churches of Christ.

As the different models exist in three different states on the other side of the continent, and because such an evaluation would require a significant amount of work to be credible, consideration could be given to making such a study an appropriate follow up to the present study. The present study could provide the basis for assessing the value of the outcomes of the services in each of the states.

The replication of Phelan's studies creates the possibility of gathering data Australia wide to draw conclusions about the nature, state and potential for ministry in Churches of Christ.
CHAPTER 2: THE NEED

One of the difficulties facing ministry placement committees, regardless of denominational structures, is judging how appropriate any particular person is going to be in a particular placement, before it is made. The art of successful placement is the complex matching of congregational needs, clergy skills and experiences and such intangible factors as personal style and personal history.

Sometimes, a placement, which looked appropriate when all relevant criteria were considered, can show signs of not working out, and it would be better for both the congregation and the minister if a new arrangement was made. In some such instances, it seems to the ministers that the sources of these difficulties are beyond their control and influence, but the impression they can get from those on ministry placement committees is that they are personally responsible for the difficulties they are having and that perhaps they should consider a different vocation.

Van Laar (1985) proposed that there were two paradigms at work here. On the one hand there were those who saw personal inadequacies as the source of most ministerial dysfunction and on the other hand there were those who saw the institutional structures as the source of most ministerial dysfunction.

Rather than this being evidence for a dichotomy, it is more likely that it is pointing us to a continuum and that as well as external, structural factors, and internal, personal factors, there are also what might be called professional factors that have an influence for good or ill on a minister’s sense of well-being and performance as a minister. These three factors provide the framework for the consideration of this and the other Research Questions.
In the consideration of each of these factors, an effort was made to describe each of these contexts with some exploration of the types of pastoral care issues that arise for ministers from each aspect of their working environment. Before this was considered, however, a fundamental question for this study had to be: What is pastoral care?

2.1 What is Pastoral Care?

In an earlier age pastoral care had an exclusively ecclesiastical context, but in the present day the terms "pastoral" and "pastoral care" are used more widely and loosely. Certainly the agricultural nuances of the image of the shepherd looking after the sheep still hold, but the ecclesiastical setting can no longer be assumed when pastoral care is being considered.

In educational circles the emphasis is on the personal well-being and adequate functioning of students, without any reference to their spiritual needs. It is common in state secondary schools for a Pastoral Care Team to exist. At the Churchlands Senior High School this team comprises the Year Co-ordinators (5), the school Psychologist, the Nurse, a Deputy Principal, the Youth Education Officer and the Chaplain. Community Policing Officers, if these are present in a school, are often also included.

The primary focus of meetings of the Pastoral Care Teams in such a school setting is the personal well-being of students. Their spiritual needs come within the domain of the Chaplain who, while certainly a valued member of the Pastoral Care Team, has a very clearly defined area of responsibility.

The same is true in church schools as well. At Hale School, a significant Anglican Grammar school, one of the senior administrative staff members holds the position of Director of Pastoral Care and Staff Development. His duty statement indicates that
the focus of his concern for students is their personal well-being, developing programs to help students through significant transitions and helping on a one-to-one basis when needed. However, should students raise a concern about a spiritual or religious matter, they are promptly referred to the Chaplain.

Best (1990) went further than most and suggested that in the school context, pastoral care was more about controlling children adequately in their educational setting, i.e. making the school work, than about caring for their personal well-being.

As in many disciplines, there is a wide range of views about what constitutes pastoral care, particularly in an ecclesiastical setting. Taylor (1983), for instance, provided perhaps the least complex dichotomy, distinguishing between pastoral care and Christian pastoral care simply on the basis of the faith position of the care giver.

Other propositions found in the course of this study were:

1. *Pastoral care is any act that is directly concerned with a person's religious life and development*; (Thornton, 1961, cited in Pattison, 1988, p.10)

2. *Pastoral care is that specific communication to the individual of the message proclaimed in the sermons to the congregation*; (Thurneysen, 1962, p.15).

3. *Pastoral care is something which happens in the context of pastoral ministry and which is carried out through the functions of pastoral counselling, pastoral visitation, preaching, teaching and organisation*; (Hulme, 1962, p.12)

4. *Pastoral care requires an awareness of a transcendent reality but this need not be as overt as Thornton's proposition*; (Wright, 1980, p.9)
5. *Pastoral care is the caring activities of clergy regardless of what they actually do;* (Pattison, 1988, p. 9)

6. *Pastoral care is caring according to a particular methodology by practitioners trained in that methodology, regardless of the formal ecclesiastical positions they hold;* (Pattison, 1988, p. 10)

In consideration of such diverse definitions of what pastoral care is about, Pattison (1988) proposes a definition which takes into account both the context and the content of the care:

*Pastoral care is that activity, undertaken especially by representative Christian persons, directed towards the elimination and relief of sin and sorrow and the presentation of all people perfect in Christ to God.* (p.13)

This definition is descriptive of pastoral care in the ecclesiastical and theological contexts within which this study was conducted, but is a clear statement of the purpose and goal of ministers' pastoral activities within the church. The object of that activity is the members of the congregations employing the ministers.

This study was particularly concerned with the pastoral care of those who, themselves, are care-pivers. The focus of such care is the personal and spiritual well-being of ministers. Its aims are twofold:

- to enable them to fully integrate their faith and calling;
- to address the different issues that ministers face in all areas of their lives;

As a synthesis of this wide view of pastoral care and an attempt to apply it in the particular context of this study the following definition was proposed:
The pastoral care of care-givers is an activity directed at their personal and spiritual well-being in all spheres of their lives and is aimed at facilitating as full an integration as possible of faith, calling and function in the work they do.

The first object of pastoral care in this context is the personal and spiritual well-being of ministers and the second object is the integration of their faith, calling and function as care-givers. Means to achieve this may be brought to bear at a personal level, a professional level and/or a structural level.

This definition gave some direction to what was considered later in the study concerning the desired outcomes of a program of pastoral care for ministers. Its focus, on personal, spiritual and professional well-being, provided a clear indication of what the church should aim to achieve by providing pastoral care for ministers.

2.2 Personal Context

In both of Phelan (1990) and Phelan and Regan (1991), significant comment was made about ministers' expressed desire for more personal space that they often feel they get. Because of the all-consuming nature of the job not only is there little time left for one's self, it becomes easy to justify not giving one's self permission to have some personal space.

In the latter study it was also clear that there were a number of personal factors which, if present in a ministers profile might pre-dispose them to experience higher than normal levels of stress.
Ministers experiencing significantly high stress scores displayed one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Aged between 36-45 years
2. Married with school-aged children
3. Have been with current congregation about three years
4. Work full-time in congregations of either 100-149 members or under 50 members
5. Are in their third ministry placement
6. Scored low on the “Trust of Other People” measure
7. Had been exposed to a high level of life changes in the previous twelve months

With the exception of items 3-5, these are personal factors which have been identified as being associated with ministers who are likely to be experiencing high levels of stress.

2.2.1 Family Needs and Expectations

It was mentioned by Phelan (1990) that a significant cause of concern for ministers was balancing the needs and expectations of family. The needs of the minister’s family often are given such a low priority that Croucher (1987) calls it “Stealing in the Lord’s name.”

Clinebell (1977) says that faulty values and choices in the past are what close off options for the present and future, and that it is a desire to get these right more than the threat of heart attack or suffering, that causes people to begin to reappraise their life-style and values. All too many ministers find themselves having made faulty choices in response to the competing expectations, and most often it is their families that have missed out.
White (no date) argues that ministers who think meet their family obligations by giving them “quality time” are really kidding themselves, because the only quality of time that really works is quantity time.

While these comments and others of social commentators of our time are generally both relevant and true, there is a sense in which they just add to the pressures that exist for ministers, especially those with young families. There are now even more expectations being placed on ministers, this time about how their family lives are to be lived. It was not surprising then, to see that Phelan identified the presence of school aged children in the minister’s household as a significant profile characteristic of those likely to experience higher than normal levels of stress.

2.3 Professional Context

In considering the pastoral care needs of ministers, this context provided the largest area of consideration. Indeed, a significant reason for this study was the observation that those working in parish ministry experienced significant levels of stress, some to the extent that their effectiveness in their work was diminished. It is in the professional context that many of the stresses and strains become most tangible, and these were considered here by firstly looking at the nature of the minister’s job description, and then by looking at what some have written about the professional hazards associated with being a minister.
2.3.1 The Minister's Job Description

During the first half of this century the answer to the question, "What does a minister do?" would have been short and sweet. He was called to the parish to preach, to teach and to visit. Today, however, "it's a different world!" (Schaller, 1987).

Today, life is busier, as more things compete for parishioners' time and allegiance. People are generally better educated and the professional expectations of parishioners have increased enormously. We are also living in a world in which social roles have changed significantly, and ministers are no longer regarded as significant leaders in the community.

A consequence of such rapidly changing patterns of social expectations, is that ministers are frequently in situations where there is a disparity between their expectations about the job, and the expectations of the members of the congregation. Sometimes this is because those who are teaching the practice of ministry in the seminaries today were taught and practised ministry from within a totally different world and paradigm. Some seminaries have consciously tried to reduce the disparity between the two, but problems can remain. Some congregations retain the expectations of old paradigms of ministry and don't cope well with ministers who try to overlay the new paradigms. This is certainly a difficult balancing act.

An old model of ministry likened the minister to a shepherd, where he visited and knew each member of the congregation. A more contemporary approach that younger ministers may be more attracted to likens the minister to a chief executive of a business in which he is the leader directing all the activities of the congregation that will ensure its success and continued growth. Similarly, some congregations may feel that the minister's function is to regularly restate the faith and encourage the faithful in it, while many younger ministers may see their role as challenging it and changing it.
In a slightly different area of expectations, some congregations have expected their minister's wife to be available as a volunteer, especially among the women's work. The minister's wife, these days is more likely to be active in the paid work-force and not be so available for voluntary work. Thankfully, anecdotal evidence suggests that this pressure is diminishing.

Such gaps between the way things are and the way they were are bound to create tensions and dilemmas for ministers, and this dissonance indicates that ministers today are not as well prepared for the realities of the workplace as they could be.

An issue raised in the Congruency Testing exercise described in Chapter Three, that could also be a source of dissonance for ministers today, is the perception that ministers' social roles are changing. In an earlier time, ministers were very much the centre of the community, a significant and respected person. Non-church members of the community shared the expectation of church members that the minister would be involved in many community activities, and was regarded as a significant community leader. These days, as Christianity has been increasingly marginalised in the community, and as the "clay feet" of clergy are frequently exposed in the media, ministers no longer command the respect of the community that they used to, and indeed, they are often treated today with outright suspicion.

Another significant factor that needs to be considered is that consumerism has infiltrated many more levels of our lives than just the commercial sphere. It seems today, that even inter-personal relationships are transacted on a consumer basis - "I will do this for you, if you will do that for me." In such a transactional environment people are forced to live with a certain amount of ambiguity about the counter-side of their actions. Ministers, therefore, are operating in a very different world today from that in which their parents grew up.
A further consequence of modernity for ministers is that their jobs have become much more diverse and complex. As noted (1.1.1) local churches can be involved in providing up to 15 different services with ministers often expected to be the primary provider of those services. In addition to those specific services, ministers are involved in administrative work. This includes clerical work if no typists are available, coordinating and motivating volunteer staff and the overall vision-setting for the local organisation. Very careful management of time and priorities and an astute reading of the key stakeholders' expectations are required in order to survive such diverse roles and expectations.

Croucher, (1992), makes an observation about this dilemma for ministers. A popular evangelical tract called *The Four Spiritual Laws* says "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life". For pastors, he says, it reads: "God loves you and everybody else has a wonderful plan for your life." The juggling of the expectations of others means that ministers are frequently attending to those things they believe other people would want them to be doing, rather than what they think needs to be done.

A minister's job is a very diverse one that requires a wide range of skills. Around the profession, ministers talk about other people expecting them to be "omni-competent" or skilled in all things. The range of services that people can get from their local church demonstrates that preparing a person for ministry should be regarded as the ultimate in "multi-skilling".

By way of a simple case study, the following details the kinds of regular routine tasks that one local Church of Christ minister is called upon to do each week, and those which may not be required each week but which are required reasonably frequently and which that minister is required to be reasonably competent at.

1. Preach a sermon each Sunday, generally of about 20 mins (some churches require 2 different sermons for morning and evening services each week).
2. Prepare and provide resources for those who lead worship each Sunday.

3. Prepare and teach 2 Religious Instruction classes in the local Primary School.

4. Feed clerical work to volunteer office worker and ensure that appropriate administrative tasks have been attended to.

5. Prepare and present Bible Study material for small home-group that meets each Wednesday evening.

6. Prepare short talk for senior citizens group that meets in church each week and ensure that all volunteer tasks are properly co-ordinated.

7. Co-ordinate voluntary workers in local community group that uses church.

8. Coach a junior basketball team.

9. Visit sick members of congregation.

10. Visit members for routine contact.

11. Attend or conduct meetings of a variety of committees of the church, the local community and the denominational structures.

12. Be the first point of call for church business mail and phone calls.

ALL THESE THINGS HAPPEN EVERY WEEK!

Other occasional but reasonably frequent tasks include:

1. Prepare and conduct Funerals, Weddings and Parent/Child Dedication services. This includes pre-marriage counselling.

2. Encourage members to attend training seminars/workshops on various aspects of church life.

3. Represent the church on local community and ecumenical bodies and state denominational bodies.

4. Spend time in spiritual and personal counselling with church members.

5. Provide access to buildings for community groups using church and ensure that it is locked up afterwards.
6. Spend time "dreaming" about new futures for the local church and then being an effective agent of change in the progress towards those new futures.

7. Reading and disseminating information about contemporary management and operational issues for churches.

8. Keeping abreast of local demographic changes to encourage and facilitate responsiveness on the part of church programming.

This is a description of the tasks that one local Church of Christ minister is expected to attend to, as well as be reasonably competent at, by the employing congregation and it illustrates well the diversity of tasks and competencies that are involved in the work of ministry.

In a study conducted in association with the inaugural issue of Australian Ministry magazine, Bodycomb, (1989), sought to ascertain the amount of time taken up by the various tasks of ministry. In terms of total time spent on task, he found that over a quarter of the respondents reported working in excess of 75 hours for the week, with the highest being 95 hours. The average reported hours of work was 63 and the median was 60. His observation about this was:

*Even if some of the figures are a trifle high, we are still left with the impression that a substantial proportion of the sample are exceedingly devoted ministers, or have something of the "workaholic" in them, or are simply trapped in very demanding contexts where they feel they MUST do many things or risk disapproval from people who expect this of them.*

(p.17)

In terms of average hours per week:

- preparation for and conduct of worship services -------- 13.5 hours
- formal and informal pastoral work --------------------- 13.5 hours
church group meetings and programs --------------- 12.5 hours
• weddings and funerals ----------------------------- 7.75 hours
• denominational and other church activities --------- 5 hours
• community activities -------------------------------- 5.75 hours
• other miscellaneous and administrative tasks -------- 10 hours.

It becomes clear, then, that Ministry is very diverse in the range of skills needed and tasks that have to be done. It is also very demanding, time wise.

It is apparent in the foregoing that there is no reference among these tasks to personal prayer and spiritual formation or direction. Our Protestant work ethic has exerted its influence very profoundly here in such a way that time spent in prayer and other such intangible endeavours are not considered to be work. For many, the implication of this is that since ministers are paid to work, such activities should be confined to their personal life and time. Another lighter and hopefully not too widespread dimension to this is illustrated by a genuine comment by an Anglican clergyman to a young Churches of Christ minister just embarking on his first ministry placement. He said “Don’t expect them to pray. They pay people to do everything else for them. They’ll expect you to pray for them.”

Croucher, (1992), comments that the rich Reformnation doctrine that we are saved by faith is not practiced by many clergy. At an operational level, most clergy behave as if they are saved by the amount or, less often, the kind of work they do.

The Minister’s Job Description, then, is a vast and demanding thing for ministers today, and it is evident that the extent and diversity of the job create all sorts of internal pressures for them. Arriving at this point provided a natural progression in the study for the consideration of the hazards that arise for those in the profession.
2.3.2 The Professional Hazards of Ministry

It was identified by Blaikie (1979), that churches across the denominations were losing their ministers and priests at a rate higher than for any other equivalent group of professionals.

Twelve years later, Croucher (1991), of John Mark Ministries, asserted that if a corporation was losing trained professionals at the rate the church was losing its ministers, a serious and major inquiry would have been launched. "The attrition rate from the ministry," he said, "is among the highest of all professions."

This high attrition rate would suggest that there are significant work-related and structural factors causing ministers of religion to leave the work for which they have a strong sense of vocation or calling. It also suggests that some formal structures are needed to care for these care-givers, just as there are structures provided for the staff of other, secular helping professions.

At this point in the study, consideration was given to the results of six studies that sought to identify the various stressors that ministers experience and which contribute to the problem of attrition as identified by Blaikie and Croucher.

Each of the studies mentioned below had a particular focus, but the limitation that has been common to them all was an absence of any attempt to prescribe a solution to the problem and what the solution should look like in terms of performance of duties by clergy. This study attempts to make up for that short-coming.

These studies make it almost self-evident that ministers face sufficient pressures and professional hazards to place their general health and well-being at risk. Consequently, it is clear that the need to care for care-givers is a fundamental one.
a. The Church Cares about Me

Jongeling's 1991 study of Uniting Church clergy in Western Australia identified ambiguity and competing demands of the ministerial job as a significant cause of dysfunction and distress. He listed nine special difficulties that ministers faced in their work that were identified in an American study by Sanford (1984). They were:

1. The job of the minister is never finished.
2. The minister cannot always see tangible results.
3. The work is repetitive.
4. The minister works with the same people all the time.
5. The minister is constantly juggling people's competing expectations.
6. Working with people in need is particularly draining.
7. Ministers often feel more like "paid" friends than Spiritual Guides.
8. The minister functions behind a "persona" for a great deal of time.
9. The minister may become exhausted by failure or perceived failure.

It was not uncommon for clergy to feel overwhelmed by the diversity of the job, the lack of tangible rewards from the job, and the conflicting expectations from parishioners, peers and themselves in the job. In this respect, and relying on a study done by the United Reformed Church (1987) in the UK, a body which incorporates about 75 formerly Churches of Christ congregations, Jongeling explored five aspects of expectations that were sources of stress and conflict for ministers.

1. Ministers often have unrealistic expectations of their task.

This related to the issue discussed above about ministers needing to be "omni-competent". Many ministers felt that they had to be able to meet all the needs of all the people in their congregation, ALL THE TIME! They might acknowledge at a cognitive level that this was an utterly unrealistic expectation, but at an operational level such an assumption directed their behaviours.
Along with this often went the notion that the minister must be able to please everyone. This frequently created dilemmas. Ministers may have tried to perform in areas in which they had no competence. Sometimes they seemed to be indecisive when they frequently re-approached matters that had generated opposition, wanting to keep everyone happy.

2. There is a sense in which ministers often have unrealistic expectations of themselves.

Because ministry was often referred to as a "calling" and because there was an element of the job that involved being "on call" 24 hours a day, many in ministry did not allow themselves to relax or have "time off". The workload described by Bodycomb (1989), above, clearly demonstrated that many ministers were working excessively long hours. This often also led to ministers not spending sufficient time in prayer, meditation and study. Because they were perhaps working at some time each day with their Bibles in their hands, or uttering a prayer for somebody, they often felt that they had attended to these spiritual matters of life. They also often spent insufficient time in relaxation, recreation or with their families.

Yet, from the heart of these unrealistic expectations about themselves arose an internal dissonance that was the source of stress. Ministers knew they should spend time "off the job", but there was so much to do. “They really need me" was an often touted excuse for never relaxing. Ministers knew they should take seriously the issue of their own spiritual nurture, but there was so little time, and besides, "the Lord will provide for me".

3. Ministers also have to contend with unrealistic expectations of them by their congregations.

Members of congregations often seemed to place expectations on ministers that they would never place on employees in any other workplace.
Jongeling (1991) illustrated the dilemma facing ministers in trying to deal with such expectations with the following by Robert Saunders and Ann Bird.

*If his address is a few minutes longer than usual: "He sends us to sleep."*  
*If it's short: "He hasn't bothered."*

*If he raises his voice: "He's shouting."*  
*If he speaks normally: "You can't understand a thing."*

*If he's away: "He's always on the road."*  
*If he stays at home: "He's a stick in the mud."*

*If he's out visiting: "He's never at home."*  
*If he's in the manse: "He never visits the members."*

*If he talks of finance: "He's too fond of money."*  
*If he doesn't: "Nobody knows what he's up to."*

*If he organises a bazaar: "He wears everybody out."*  
*If he doesn't: "The circuit is dead."*

*If he takes time with people: "He goes on and on."*  
*If he is brief: "He never listens."*

*If he redecorates the church: "He's spending too much money."*  
*If he doesn't: "He lets everything go."*

*If he is young: "He lacks experience."*  
*If he is old: "He ought to retire."*

*And if he dies? ...*  
*Well, of course: "Nobody could ever take his place."* (p. 6)

Having noted this, it was also recognised that often the expectations of different members of the congregation are at odds with each other. Many ministers recognised this dilemma and were torn by it. To adjust one aspect of the way they did their work to please some small pressure group ended up alienating another group. This was hardly a recipe for "win-win" co-existence between ministers and their parishioners.

Some members may expect the minister to give teaching and preaching his highest priority time, while others may expect the minister to spend much of his time in the community, making good connections with other community groups and broadcasting
the "good name" of the congregation. This is graphically illustrated in the cartoon below inspired by an original in Australian Ministry (1990) magazine.

Figure 1. Competing Expectations

4. Stress and conflict for ministers often arises from the expectations of the wider community.

Some members of the wider community looked on the church as little more than a shop or service centre. They therefore believed that if they wanted some service or another and were willing to pay, the Church, in the person of the minister, ought to be not just willing, but eager to provide it.

But ministers very often sought to stress the importance of the church community as the place where such activities took place. When people from outside the community sought services which belong in the community, ministers were often torn, especially if they were "evangelical". This latter qualification elicited such questions as "Would this
funeral be an opportunity to confront these people with what Christianity is about?” or “Why should I baptise their child if they have never come to church?” The dilemma arises out of a recognition that refusal to provide the service often meant that those people would never make themselves open to the church in the future. But to provide the service with the expectation that people did come to church created a further dilemma, appearing “to preach the Gospel” with strings attached.

5. Finally, a significant source of stress and conflict is the expectations of the minister’s family.

Occasionally minister’s families had unrealistic expectations or made unreasonable demands of them. More commonly, ministers had unrealistic expectations about how much time they needed to give to their families - most often giving far less than was reasonable, and being absent from the family at important times, because "they will understand". These things led to tension, stress and, sometimes ultimately, to marital breakdown.

Croucher (1987), a former Baptist parish minister, recounted a personal experience arising from participating in a study group looking at the story of the Good Samaritan. The group had been asked to get inside the minds of the different characters of the story - the injured traveller, the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan. It dawned on him a day or so later that they had overlooked the robbers, and as he reflected on them in a similar way he “came under deep conviction concerning the many people whom (he) had robbed of ... time and love over the years” (p. 192). He called this “stealing in the Lord’s name” and identified his wife and family as the greatest victims of his plundering.

Some Ministers justified or rationalised the poverty of involvement with their wife and family by suggesting that they spend “quality time” with them. “It may not be much time, but we do such good things in that time that it makes up for it,” is a sentiment
commonly expressed. However it has been suggested in the popular press that the most significant quality of "quality time" is its copious quantity.

Given all these observations, it is not surprising that ministers might opt out of the vocation.

b. Burn-Out of Churches of Christ Clergy

Van Laar (1985), a former Churches of Christ minister, used a Marxist analytical framework to examine the phenomenon of Burn-out among ministers in Victoria. He argued that this problem was related more to structural problems within the church than to personal inadequacy on the part of the ministers.

Van Laar sought first to demonstrate that there was significant recognition of this notion in Human Services and Social Work research writings. He then picked up Blaikie's (1979) conclusion that the high resignation rate from Churches of Christ ministry was a "denominational aberration" arising out of the particularities of its polity and theology.

From this springboard, and looking through his Marxist paradigm, van Laar drew two conclusions about burn-out. Firstly, he saw burn-out as a product of alienation, (p.12), and secondly he saw burn-out as a reflection of privatism (p.17).

With respect to alienation he commented that at the foundation of Churches of Christ theology of ministry was the notion of "the priesthood of all believers". Consequently, these churches have emphasised that there was no distinction between people such as "clergy" and "laity". This emphasised the proposition that the whole church was engaged in ministry and mission.
While this had its positive dimensions, there was a down side. Other denominations of the church, which believe just as strongly in the "priesthood of all believers", affirmed the unique dimensions of the minister's training that equipped him or her to be a leader in the congregation. In Churches of Christ, those who are employed as ministers often felt as though they are merely functionaries, who could spend more of their time in the work of ministry because they are paid.

This, he says, devalued the worker and, in Marxist terms, "his skills of human interaction become a market commodity." This objectification of the minister's work was similar to what had happened in the industrialisation of Western society, and was most clearly manifested in the administrative and organisational models of corporate capitalism. These models of administration and organisation were clearly evident and highly valued within Churches of Christ in Victoria, he asserted.

Burn-out was also a reflection of privatism. By this he meant that as individualism had become a pervasive value within our culture, it had become a source of dissonance for those in ministry. As products of an individualistic society they were encouraged to be self-sufficient and independent. Self-determination and self-responsibility "form a foundational framework for (a) parish minister's conception of self and their work." (p.20) However, when they sought to reflect on their Scriptures and the teaching of Jesus, they found a call to corporate living, communal support and inter-dependence. This created inner tensions as well as tension between the minister and members of the congregation, who were also products of an individualistic society.

As a counter to this, van Laar suggested that "Churches of Christ ministers must recognise the advantages of collective determination and accountability." (p. 20) This would become a means of empowering ministers to not only achieve the organisation's management and corporate goals but also their own prophetic goals.
Quite clearly, in van Laar's view, ministers in Churches of Christ were at grave risk of suffering burn-out because of various structural features of Churches of Christ. The alleviation of this risk was therefore more in the hands of the structural leadership of the church than in the hands of the ministers.

c. Why do Clergy Leave the Pastoral Ministry?
Wilson (1988), in his dissertation entitled "Why do Clergy leave the Pastoral Parish Ministry of Churches of Christ in Australia?", asserted that there were three main causes, and these, too, could be regarded largely as structural issues.

1. Secularisation
Firstly, he identified the pervasive consequences of secularisation which had increasingly marginalised the church. Whereas the church was once at the centre of our social, political and cultural order, society had become more secular and pluralistic, pushing the church to its edges and reducing its influence within society.

This could lead, increasingly, to three outcomes for ministers which might increase the likelihood of them leaving the profession. Firstly, they may themselves be so influenced by secularisation that they lose the faith that was the foundation of their calling and vocation. Secularisation may also manifest itself in declining numbers of people at church, leading to fewer viable congregations and a demoralised ministry that feels unable to stem the flow of people away from the church. It was also noted that the marginalisation of the church has meant a loss of social status for ministers. Where once they were seen as significant community leaders, and would often be called on in times of need, this was now less frequently the case.
2. Conflict Issues
Secondly, he contended that conflict issues at both personal and institutional levels led ministers to resign; i.e. conflicts of role expectations between minister and church members, and situations of conflict in the church in which the ministers were inextricably embroiled became so debilitating that they felt they had no option but to leave.

3. Church Polity
Thirdly, the particularities of ministry in Churches of Christ were seen as significant causes of resignations. Three aspects were particularly noted, self-governing congregations, the lack of denominational hierarchy and the theological emphasis on mutual ministry and the priesthood of all believers. While the arguments were not altogether clear, the basic contentions seemed to be:

- Self-governing congregations left ministers feeling very much at the mercy of the leadership of the congregation. As the church had the sole right to hire and fire, job-security was bound up in the ability to keep the congregation happy. Another source of tension in this respect lay in the fact that the leaders of the congregation had no formal training in personnel management and often, wittingly or unwittingly, ended up creating an exploitative work-relationship.

- The non-hierarchical nature of the denominational structure had two consequences. Firstly, ministers were employed by congregations, not by the denomination, so they had no "transfer system" that could give a sense of security of tenure. Secondly, when it came to general meetings of the denomination, ministers were accorded no special or ex-officio status. Their right to speak and contribute to such meetings was dependent on them being chosen by the congregation as delegates. For some ministers this was an overt devaluation of the contribution they could make to
denominational matters. If their training and leadership experience in the
church gave them no more "expertise" than their congregational members,
some felt devalued.

• The emphasis on the mutual ministry had more particular outworkings at
the local congregational level. In some senses, ministers functioned in
congregations much like the locally-elected elders. Whereas the elders
might be elected annually, ministers, in some senses were elected for three
to five years, and because they were paid, had more time than the elders to
devote to the congregational work.

All these factors were hazards with which those in ministry in Churches of Christ must
contend. Wilson's contention was that for far too many, these factors led to them
resigning from their positions, denying their calling, and depriving the church of their
energy, commitment and even prophetic voice.

d. Issues and Stress in Churches of Christ Ministry
Phelan conducted two large statistical studies in Victoria and New South Wales, in
1990 and 1991 respectively, for the Churches of Christ denominational bodies in those
states. His aim was to identify "issues and stress" among the clergy and in his 1990
study in Victoria he found that "as a whole, ministers were not more stressed than the
population at large. They are distributed on a normal curve with the majority coping
pretty well."

However, 20% reported significantly high levels of stress and, in the summary of his
findings, he indicated that the three issues that concern ministers most were:
1. balancing the expectations and requirements of family, congregation, community
   and other work;
2. spending more time on routine work matters than desired;
3. dealing with people who are critical of them.

These issues were found to be the same and in the same order of concern in the study conducted in New South Wales a year later, and, interestingly, correlated closely with the issues identified by Jongeling (1991) among Uniting Church ministers.

Finally, with regard to ministers' attitudes to their denominational structures:
- 38% were not optimistic about the future of Churches of Christ.
- 48% did not believe they got the support they needed from the denomination.
- 49% did not feel OK about structure and procedures within Churches of Christ.
- 51% did not believe the system of ministry appointments worked well,
- 58% did not believe that Churches of Christ cared sufficiently for their ministers.

The most widely accepted interpretation of the results of these studies when they were done was that ministers in Churches of Christ were operating within the high range of work-related stress, and that generally morale was rather low.

e. Ministry and Church - Restoration or Ruin

Farmer (1989) described the present situation for Churches of Christ ministers as almost impossible. "Without spiritual growth and renewal, an even greater percentage than at present will leave full-time local church pastoral ministry in the near future".

The problem for and in the church, as he described it, was sixfold:
- Congregations had lost the urgency and primacy of evangelism.
• They had also lost sight of the simplicity and flexibility of the ideals of their heritage.

• Theological colleges needed to depend more on the spiritual vitality of their programs and community life.

• Theological college students often tapped into practices of spirituality that came from outside the traditions of Churches of Christ, which could create tensions when they were placed within churches, and those who weren't cultivating their spirituality easily tended towards cynicism about ministry and the church.

• Many highly pressured ministers were experiencing a spiritual renewal within their ministry, but often their lay partners in leadership in the churches were not experiencing such renewal, creating tension for some.

• It was increasingly the case that average Australians, while not rejecting basic Christian beliefs, did not like the structured, formal, traditional nature of the church.

He went on to reflect that ministry needed to be founded on a deep and personal spirituality. Ministers "cannot take others beyond the limits of their own spirituality" and since it was a major task of ministry to aid people in their spiritual journeys, ministers must cultivate their own spiritual resources.

While many factors may have been involved, two seemed to be at the heart of this lack of spiritual growth.

• Firstly, from their inception Churches of Christ rejected those spiritual disciplines which were closely associated with Catholicism - the Daily Office of prayer, fasting and Spiritual Direction.

• Secondly, the lack of collegiality among ministers, even of neighbouring congregations, which was often founded on a competitive view of the task
of ministry and the sense of autonomy generated by the fact that congregations are self-governing.

These deficiencies undermined both internal and external sources of strength and support for ministers, leaving them vulnerable to stresses and disillusionment.

In a statistical analysis of the Active Membership of Churches of Christ throughout Australia, Farmer observed that in the ten years to 1988, total Active Membership had grown by only 9% (less than 1% a year), and in fact during the 1987/88 period, membership, nationally had dropped by 72 persons. He also observed that during this latter period just 9% of the congregations were responsible for 76% of the additions to membership by baptism.

He thus painted a picture of a church in crisis. The Ministry was clearly under pressure as more were leaving for reasons other than retirement than were graduating from Churches of Christ theological colleges. The small number of congregations that were growing was more than counter-balanced by the three quarters of the congregations that were stable or declining.

As a result of these observations, Farmer sought to alert both church members and ministers to the importance of their own spiritual development in the possible revitalisation of the Church. Churches of Christ have an inherent flexibility that should make them well able to respond to the needs of people in Australia today, but this could only happen within a spiritually healthy church, and with spiritually healthy ministers.
In considering the issue of experiencing stress in the ministry, Pryor (1986) reported from his discussion with 20 ministers, doctors and psychiatrists who had lengthy experience in counselling ministers within the Uniting Church in Victoria. He asked these people "Can you identify the main kinds of stress or special need that ministers came to you with?" At the top of the list was "Marriage and ministry in tension, marriage breakdown and sexuality."

Of the six studies considered here, this was the only one to raise this issue, but it is never the less a significant professional hazard for those in ministry. Hart (1984) devoted considerable attention to it, although he writes from a Californian perspective, and Croucher, in his work through John Mark Ministries has frequently acknowledged marital tensions and infidelity as a significant hazard for those in ministry. See also Bratcher (1984) and Merrill (1985).

From all these studies several things became clear. At the very least, ministers perceived themselves to be working under significant pressure at several points in their professional and personal lives. In some senses, it was such perceptions more than the realities, that exerted the greatest influence on people's lives. It is fair to say, however, that many of the pressures are indeed real and are very much the product of the way such paid positions in the church have evolved.

If it is clear that some ministers, as primary care-givers, are working under a considerable amount of vocational stress, then it may be agreed that they need some formal systems to provide for their care. It has been said that ministers and their families are the least cared-for people in the whole community. Part of the reason for this is that no-one thinks of the minister needing such care, just as it is hard to think of doctors getting sick with the 'flu.
2.4 Structural Context

In their work entitled, “Sociology through the eyes of faith,” Fraser & Campolo (1992) invited their readers to consider the different ways in which people have tried to understand the relationship between church and society. The following is an outline of them. While the following is both lengthy and detailed, it was considered helpful to demonstrate both the diversity of views that exist in trying to understand the relationship between church and society, and the depth of enquiry that has gone on to explore that fact. A minister’s view of this is fundamental to the way the work of ministry is done.

The theories espoused by Karl Marx in the later half of the nineteenth century challenged many of the conventional paradigms of social, political and even ecclesiastical theory. At the turn of this century, Troeltsch, a theologian, maintained a healthy scepticism about the ability of Marxism or the Christian Orthodoxy of his day to offer satisfactory critiques of history and how religion affects society.

Troeltsch postulated in a work published in 1911, entitled *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, that there were at least three social results, rather than one as traditionally assumed, that grew out of Christian faith. These were three very different ways of relating faith to the social world, but each with clear Biblical warrant. (Fraser & Campolo, 1992)

In effect, he was suggesting that people within the church were generally operating from one of three different paradigms for understanding the interface between the church and society. These three paradigms he designated the "Church-type", the "Sect-type" and "Mysticism".
He defined each of these in great detail, but, in essence, the "Church-type" paradigm saw the Church as overlaid on society, preserving and protecting it. The faith related Christians to their social setting in very positive terms and sought to gather within the Christian community the total population so that in some senses the two were indistinguishable. Indeed, some with such views saw this role as divinely given, for the good of the whole community.

Clearly, this is the epistemology behind those who support the notion of state churches. An interesting facet of such a view is that the good purposes of God are worked out in society through the institution of the church, over-riding individual frailties such as corrupt bishops or monarchs.

The "Sect-type" paradigm, in contrast, saw the Church as standing apart from the society, rejecting it, rather than seeking to transform it. This view saw the church as a minority sub-set of the community that was joined voluntarily rather than by birth. Such communities were strongly cohesive with clear orders of discipline and often refrained from so-called "worldly" activities that might offer the taint of sin.

The establishment of monasteries and the traditions of reclusive hermits in the early church were clearly founded on such suppositions, but more contemporary examples that Troeltsch pointed to were the Anabaptists of Europe and the Amish people of North America.

The "Mysticism" paradigm stood between the other two, in some senses, because this view had little interest in either embracing the society or withdrawing from it. Mysticism in this context was not about a quest for some form of transcendental union with the divine. Instead, it pointed to a radical individualism that made the faith a very personal matter, and consisted more of feelings about God than of desires to join either ecclesial or social organisations.
Troeltsch recognised that each of these paradigms led to a different view of the nature and role of the Church in society, but "felt that neither the Church-type nor the Sect-type of Christian faith could muster the goods to influence or shape the modern world decisively." (Fraser & Campolo, 1992. P.218)

Just a few years later, in a work entitled *Christ and Culture*, an American theologian, Niebuhr, (1917), developed Troeltsch's ideas, producing a more detailed model of the church's inter-relationship with the world and postulating five paradigms in a
continuum between the "\textit{Christ-of-Culture}" and the "\textit{Christ-against-Culture}" stances.

The "\textit{Christ-of-Culture}" paradigm, as with Troeltsch's "\textit{Church-type}", proposed that the faith was inextricable from the culture and that in many respects the culture was as much a vehicle for God's goodness as the faith. Rather than seeking to set a new social order at odds with the larger society, Christ energised the Church within the social group.

The "\textit{Christ-against-Culture}" paradigm, as with Troeltsch's "\textit{Sect-type}", proposed that the culture itself was an expression of human rebellion against the will and purposes of God and was the arena of personal vices such as greed, violence, vanity and so on, and was the place of the Evil One's rule on earth. In order, therefore, to be faithful to God, people had to adopt an alternate life-style that stood against the culture of society.

A metaphor he used to explain this regarded the world as being like a sinking ship and the church as being like a lifeboat. The work of Christians within such a paradigm was to get as many people into the lifeboat as possible. There was neither time nor reason for trying to save the sinking ship. Evangelical zeal and the saving of souls was the only legitimate concern for Christians.

In between these two stances, Niebuhr proposed three further intermediate paradigms: the "\textit{Christ above Culture}" position, the "\textit{Christ and Culture in Paradox}" position and the "\textit{Christ Transforming Culture}" position. These endorsed an element of truth in each extreme, but proposed a middle ground in which the culture and social arrangements retained the essential goodness intended by the Creator, but never the less in a distorted and corrupted form. The work of Christians was to build on those positive elements of society while challenging those expressions of evil and
corruption which they saw distorting the culture. Niebuhr proposed that Christians within the Church had different views on how this should best be done, hence his three intermediate paradigms.

The "Christ-above-culture" paradigm, closest to the "Christ-of-Culture" end of the continuum, appealed to the ability of people of good will being able to discern a "natural law" within the social structures by means of natural reason. An expression of this would be the secular society's willingness to value prudence, temperance, honesty and courage. To these, however, the Christian faith would want to add the complementary values of faith, hope and love, building on the existing foundation and taking social structures beyond what they would otherwise be.

The central paradigm proposed by Niebuhr, "Christ & Culture in Paradox", described a dualism by which many Christians lived. Living in both the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of this World, the Christian had one set of rules or "laws" governing behaviour within the Church and another set of rules or "laws" governing behaviour outside the Church. Both were legitimate, though different. This may have created tensions and paradoxes but the Christian lived in both kingdoms at the same time.

In the third of these intermediate paradigms, and closest to the "Christ-against Culture" end of the continuum, Niebuhr described a "Christ-Transforming-Culture" paradigm which maintained that while human culture was corrupted by sin it had the potential to become aligned with and subject to God's will. This was the mission of the Church, to transform the whole of community life so that it reflected God's will. The focus of such action went beyond the transformation of personal lives to the transformation of the very social structures in which Christians lived.
Recently, sociologists Fraser and Campolo (1992), have sought to blend the work of these two writers of an earlier era, and have proposed four typical paradigms of Christian social thought. The axis on which the paradigms rest relates to attitudes towards social institutions. At one extreme, the social institutions are viewed as positive realities in human life and, as such, as training grounds for community, while
at the other extreme churches view social institutions as negative realities, functioning primarily as restraints on evil.

The first paradigm on the positive end of the continuum is called "Christ of/above Culture". The emphasis here is that Christ is the fulfiller of the best in human culture, that the church is integral to the social order and that the mission of the church is to produce a unity between it and the civilisation. Examples of churches that operate within this paradigm are the state churches, such as the Church of England and the Greek Orthodox church - eg. to be Greek is to be Orthodox. The culture and the religion are inseparable.

The second paradigm is called "Christ transforming Culture". The emphasis here is that while the church needs to be involved in all the normal arenas of social life there is a sense in which it stands as a moral witness for the culture. Fraser & Campolo, (1992), suggest that there are at least four different tactical expressions of this desire to produce social change. The focus of each is different, but the object is the same - to Christianise the structures of society.

Some Christians talk of a social Gospel in which emphasis is placed on meeting bodily needs such as food, clothing and shelter before addressing the spiritual needs. The Biblical warrant claimed for such action is Jesus' declaration that whenever Christians help alleviate the suffering of some of the least important people, it is as if they are alleviating Jesus' own suffering, (Matthew 25:31-40) Consequently, when Christians work for helping institutions such as Amnesty International or Australian Volunteers Abroad they are actively engaged in bringing about appropriate and God-centred social change.

The next paradigm is called "Christ and Culture in Paradox". The emphasis here is that there can be a separation of religious and civil life and that different rules apply
within each. This is applicable on both a corporate and individual level. For example, in one's role as a Christian one is honest and caring about others, but in one's role as a successful business person one cannot really afford to be honest. Many others in business are not, and, in the pursuit of corporate goals, one's ambition focuses care on one's self.

In its corporate manifestation, such a paradigm sees the church as one of a number of institutions within society that maintains an autonomy that keeps it unaffected by society and vice versa. Hence we find the argument for the separation of Church and State, where there should be no interference by either in each other's affairs, but especially of the State's by the Church, as a current expression of this paradigm.

The final paradigm is called "Christ against Culture" and is reflected in the practice of some Christians of drawing very precise boundaries between the Church and society. The underlying assumption of this paradigm is that there are some socially sanctioned behaviours and functions which are intrinsically incompatible with the Christian faith. Participation in such behaviours or functions cannot be countenanced by authentic Christians and avoidance is usually achieved in one of two ways. Either by withdrawing completely from society and setting up a separate social order as the Amish have done in the New England states of the USA, or by overt non-compliance from within the society, avoiding violence and military service as the Christian Brethren do, or by not paying that portion of taxes that are directed towards supporting armed forces.
By way of summary these models stand as contemporary attempts to describe the paradigms through which Christians seek to interpret their relationship to the culture in which they live. The Church exists, not in a vacuum, but in society. Regardless of the particular point from which one is looking, the church is engaged in some form of relationship with the society.

This illustrates two things. Firstly, for those outside the church, it is evident that Christians have a particular way of viewing the world, that is determined by various sets of assumptions. This affects the way that they interpret events and their relationships to social institutions. Secondly, for those who stand within the Church,
this illustrates that there is more than one Christian way of viewing the world and describing the relationship the church has with it.

The purpose of this lengthy excursion has been to illustrate that much thought has gone into identifying the differing underlying assumptions that shape the way Christians think. Each denomination of the church could be characterised as being predominantly inclined towards one paradigm or another. This would not mean, however, that all the congregations of that denomination fitted with that paradigm.

While it is recognised that Churches of Christ as they exist in WA are a diverse group, it could be suggested that it stands in the continuum somewhere close to the fourth paradigm, “Christ Against Culture.” Many congregations and ministers are comfortable with the notion that they should withdraw from the so-called evils of society, and even the perceived errors of other groups or denominations within the Church. However, some congregations and ministers are very much committed to the notion that their role in society is to transform the culture and would hence feel more affinity with the “Christ transforming Culture” paradigm.

Bodycomb (1978) conducted a study among Churches of Christ and Uniting Church people and ministers in South Australia. In one part of the study he wanted to determine whether people were passive/aggressive in their stance towards the world. He accurately anticipated that the bulk of respondents would be in the middle, but he noted that passivity outnumbered the aggressives three to one. Yet interestingly, about a third said that the church should take a stand and offer leadership to the community on social issues, over 90% said that the church should do more than just speak about social issues in sermons, and over 95% rebutted the suggestion that the church should not be involved in social action.
2.5 Conclusion

To summarise the discussion up to this point, consideration was first given to a proposed definition of pastoral care, then the pastoral care needs of ministers were examined from three particular contextual points of view, the structural, professional and personal contexts.

The fundamental question of "What is Pastoral Care?" was the first to be addressed and the definition arrived at that had specific application to the setting of this study was:

> Pastoral care of care-givers is an activity directed at their personal and spiritual well-being and is aimed at facilitating in all spheres of their lives as full an integration as possible of faith, calling and function in the work they do.

The consideration of the Structural Context focused on the relationship between the church and the social order. This arrived at an understanding that the role of the church is to call for constant transformation of the social order for the better. This implied an active, even dynamic, relationship between the church and society in which interaction was vital to the well-being of either party. In other words, it could be said that the church needed interaction with society to keep it relevant and society needed interaction with the church to keep it moving towards a better and more compassionate society.

Consideration was then given to the Professional Context with a focus on the nature of the minister's job description and it was demonstrated that not only did ministers have to be proficient in a wide and growing range of tasks, they were working in a period of changing expectations and some significant social re-definition.
The complexity of these extensive and changing demands contributed significantly to the stress under which ministers operated and for which they were often in need of care and support. Consideration was also given to some of the other hazards to health and well-being that go with the ministerial territory such as competing priorities and conflicting expectations.

Finally, consideration was given to the Personal Context in which ministers experienced significant stress in trying to meet their obligations to family in the context of very demanding jobs. In this way the study has sought to demonstrate the nature and extent of the pastoral care needs of ministers.
CHAPTER 3: CONGRUENCY TESTING

All researchers need to be confident about the foundations upon which their studies are built. This was all the more the case with this study which was based on secondary rather than primary research methodologies.

It was indicated in 1.2.4 that a form of Peer Review was built into the process in order to determine the congruency of the study's suppositions with perceptions of ministers in the field. "The purpose of this step is to ascertain whether the study had accurately identified the issues that were perceived to be important and relevant by those in the field." (p.18).

The step which is reported on here was vital to the study, no matter what its outcome. If the feedback indicated a high level of congruency, then progression on to the remainder of the study would have been possible with confidence. But the same would have been possible if the feedback had challenged the initial assertions. If it had been apparent that those initial assertions had to be modified, then once modified to the extent that they were congruent with the perceptions of "those in the field", the remainder of the study could be undertaken with no less confidence than if they had not needed modification.

3.1 Sample Selection

A sample of 10 ministers was chosen at random from the alphabetical listing of churches, approximately 100 in all, in the 1993 Churches of Christ Resource Handbook. Of the ten chosen, one indicated that he would be happy to be part of the process, but that within a week he would be travelling overseas for several weeks. It
was decided that he would simply be regarded as a non-return, rather than trying to find another person from the list to replace him.

Phelan and Regan (1991) identified the following demographic variables as valuable indicators of the kinds of stresses ministers live with. In the background information for their study they asked about age, gender, marital status and number of children, all personal factors, previous occupation, number of years in current placement, type of ministry, career total of placements, number of years in ministry, type of training and whether ordained, all professional factors and geographical location of present placement and congregation size which were all structural factors.

With respect to these variables, and those profile characteristics identified by Phelan (1990) as indicating a higher propensity to high stress levels, the sample used for this step could be broken down as follows:

- **AGE**: Three of the ministers were between 36 and 45 years old, with one younger and five older.
- **GENDER**: All but one of the ministers were men.
- **MARITAL STATUS**: All in the sample were married and living with their first spouse.
- **SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN**: Three in the sample had school-aged children, one had no children, and the remainder had adult children living away from home.
- **EXPERIENCE**: One of the older ministers and three of the younger ministers were in their first ministries.
- **YEARS IN CURRENT MINISTRY**: Four ministers had been in their current placement for less than five years.
• **TYPE OF MINISTRY**: One minister was working in a hospital chaplaincy setting as well as a parish setting. The remaining eight were working full-time in local parishes.

• **STAFF MIX**: Three ministers were in multi-pastor churches with various levels of office and administrative support. The remainder worked alone, although some had administrative support.

• **TYPE OF TRAINING**: One minister was trained overseas, another was trained within the Baptist tradition, and yet another had trained in a non-denominational setting, two were trained in the Churches of Christ seminary in Sydney, and four were trained in the Churches of Christ seminary in Melbourne.

• **ORDINATION**: Five of the ministers had been formally ordained.

• **GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**: One minister was in a country church, but three of the eight in the city had had significant rural experience.

• **CONGREGATION SIZE**: Four ministers had congregations of less than 100 members, two had 100-149 members, one had 150-199 members and two had over 200 members.

When this sample is compared with the much larger sample in Phelan and Regan's (1991) study, there are only minor variations in the proportions, such as one might expect from such a small comparative sample.

After indicating their willingness to participate, each minister was sent a copy of the study to date, including the Abstract, and was asked to complete an attached questionnaire. The thrust of the questionnaire was to determine whether the author had accurately described the environment in which the study was being conducted, and whether perceptions concerning the theological framework for the study were appropriate.
3.2 The Feedback

In the main, the feedback indicated that the respondents considered that the study was heading in the right general direction, and that the situation and the issues had been reasonably correctly described. However, some comments were made about the writing style and some peripheral aspects of the study that resulted in the slight modification of the study thus far.

3.2.1 The Introduction

The Introduction, or Chapter One, was intended to give the background to the study and some description of its context and was included in the material sent to the sample. It was hoped that this would enable the respondents to understand better the content of Chapter Two, which was the real subject of the questionnaire. There were no items in the questionnaire related to Chapter One, however, some respondents made notes on the copy of the text which was returned.

Arising out of the discussion of the place of the Church among the Human Services, some expressed concern about the secular context of the study, with comments such as “while one can learn from the Human Services, the basis of ministry is very different. Is it Biblical or Human Service based or oriented?” Such a perception seems to have arisen from a possible misunderstanding of the context in which this study is going to be examined. If this study was part of a Master of Ministry program conducted by a seminary, its content would have been written up in a very different way, with much more reliance on an existing understanding of the faith paradigm, and perhaps a greater reference back to the Bible as an authoritative reference point than has been the case.
Indeed, a comparison of the style of this thesis with that of Brain's (1994) Doctoral dissertation for Fuller Theological Seminary will illustrate this point well. Brain makes frequent appeals to Scriptural references and his literary style assumes an awareness of his faith and its associated jargon, technical language or verbal shorthand.

Having said that, the comments were a stimulus to modify the approach to the writing sufficiently to demonstrate a little more clearly the faith context of the study and the author.

3.2.2 Theological Framework

All respondents appreciated the exposition of the various paradigms for understanding the inter-relationship between the church and society, and agreed with the assessment made in the study that most Churches of Christ congregations would be characterised as fitting the “Christ against Culture” paradigm. A suggestion made by one respondent was that a diagrammatic representation of the various paradigms might be helpful. This suggestion resulted in the figures that are now part of the text.

3.2.3 Social Context

All respondents grasped the issues that were at stake here, and none offered any other possibilities. Two, however, declared that they disagreed with the author’s stated position, ie. that the underlying causes for ministerial dysfunction were more frequently structural than the result of personal inadequacy. Such disagreement was accepted because the purpose of this section was to identify the author’s presuppositions, while acknowledging that there were other tenable positions. Subsequently, the study
proposed that a continuum rather than a dichotomy would be a more appropriate model for understanding this context.

3.2.4 Defining Pastoral Care

Most respondents acknowledged the value of the range of ideas embodied in the definition of pastoral care in this context. Two indicated that with regard to the notion of integration, more than just "faith, calling and function" ought to be involved. Integration of personality, character and giftedness should also be focussed on. Only one respondent offered a slight restatement:-

*Pastoral Care for care-givers is essentially care for another's personal and spiritual well-being that is aimed at facilitating the integration of their faith, calling and function through the work they do.*

The distinction drawn in this was subtle and did not substantially challenge the definition as it was offered. Further consideration led the study to adopt a definition of pastoral care that articulated the three areas of concern, the *structural*, the *professional* and the *personal* issues.

One respondent took the opportunity of the context of this question to affirm that there were no formal pastoral care services for him as a minister at the time of writing, "and absolutely nothing for wives!" This respondent also noted that because ministers are often in transition from one ministry setting to another, the need for care was significant. Such a response strengthened the resolve to continue this study into such an important issue.
3.2.5 The Minister's Job Description

The questions about the minister's job description brought responses that were broadly similar to the observations in the study. Most agreed that the workload was both diverse and heavy. One respondent expressed misgivings about the influence of "modernity" on ministers' pastoral roles. It may be a reality, but he felt that the church should try to re-engage with the "vertical or transcendent" dimensions as influencers of how the role of ministry is expressed.

One respondent drew attention to changing social values rather than a more complex life-style as a source of distress and role confusion for ministers. Contemporary society is increasingly suspicious of religion and church leaders. This can be partly attributed to the media attention given to high profile ministers who have been disgraced, such as Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart, and more recently to increasing accusations against individuals in religious orders, who have been responsible for the care and welfare of children, and who have preyed on and abused many children over many years. People are much more inclined to be suspicious or questioning of religious leaders today, and this undermines personal confidence in the role of minister for many.

3.2.6 The Professional Hazards of Ministry

The questions about the professional hazards of ministry invited respondents to consider the significance of people leaving the vocation and whether it was something that ought to be prevented so far as possible. One respondent expressed concern about the loss of "good, competent" ministers from the profession, but felt that a little
bit of natural selection, "weeding out the good intentioned", was beneficial in the long run.

Another saw these questions as an opportunity to comment on the importance of the local church from which ministry candidates come, and the structures of the seminary training program being willing to test a candidate's "sense of call" to ministry, rather than accepting it as a fait accompli.

The findings raised by the studies of Jongeling (1991), Wilson (1988), and Phelan (1991) were considered by almost all respondents to be congruent with their experience of ministry. Some said that not all the issues raised were a problem to them personally, but that they could understand them being problematic for others.

3.2.7 Why care for the Care-giver?

Finally, with regard to the reasons for caring for the care-giver, all respondents felt that the study, thus far, had identified the salient issues in this regard. One said this section "hit the nail on the head." Another commented that the final reason discussed, to care as an expression of the fundamental Christian duty to love one another, could have been dealt with from a positive perspective rather than the negative. In reflecting upon these comments, it was decided that the three issued discussed here would flow better if they were considered in the reverse order, ie.

- as an expression of a core value;
- as an attempt to increase the long-term value of the investment that has been made in those who trained for ministry;
- as an expression of the church's duty of care to its employees.
3.2.8 Conclusions

The final questions in the questionnaire concerned the overall impressions of the study thus far, and all respondents considered that the study was coherent and dealt with all the issues that they considered relevant. Only one respondent offered an issue that could be added to the study in some way. This was a reference to the ability of a minister to tune in to the peculiarities of a local church that may require particular approaches to leadership, or perceptions of job descriptions.

Many respondents expressed delight that such a study was being conducted, and commented that they hoped that it would be taken up by the church and listened to when it was completed.

3.3 Response to Peer Review

The feedback from the Peer Review precipitated a few particular changes to the study, but many more very subtle changes. In the main, it was a satisfactory confirmation that the study was built on an adequate assessment of both the current socio/theological context of Churches of Christ in WA and the issues that are perceived to be pertinent by those in the field concerning the care for ministers.

As a result of this step, the most significant changes to the study and the author's approach to it are listed as follows:

- The faith context of the study became more overt.
- Diagrams were designed to convey concepts.
• The impact of changing social values in relation to the role of ministers in society was investigated.

• So that a line of logical connection was evident, the order in which the proposed reasons for caring were considered was reversed.

Having established, by means of this exercise, that the description of the Contextual Issues was congruent with the perceptions of a sample of the cohort of Churches of Christ ministers, it was possible for the study to proceed to the consideration of the Research Questions which constituted the body of the study.
CHAPTER 4: PROGRAM DIRECTIONS

We all live in a less than ideal world and as such the directions in which we want to go are frequently being modified or influenced by external factors. The same is true when considering the establishment of pastoral care services for ministers. Before deciding what actual services could be provided, consideration had to be given to the factors that might influence what could be implemented. Some might describe these as mere political realities, but whatever they are called, they were the subject of the next Research Question:

2. What factors might influence the shape of services set up to meet those needs?

This led naturally to the third Research Question:

3. What should such a pastoral care service consist of and how would it be provided?

Here, the main conceptual work has been done, as consideration was given to why the Church should commit resources to caring for ministers, how these and other factors might fashion what was deemed possible, and some possibilities for particular things that could be done so far as program directions.

Initially, three propositions were considered as influential in shaping the services that might be set up. They provided a philosophical framework for the provision of pastoral care for ministers. Such a rationale was considered necessary at this stage in the study as a polemical device, establishing the basis for a response to the demonstrated need. The propositions were also considered in detail because the extent to which each proposition was accepted would be influential in shaping the final outcome of the study. In addition, it was noted that certain structural, professional and personal factors would be influential in shaping the final outcome.
These factors led into a careful consideration of the third Research Question, by identifying steps that could be taken at each level that would enhance the welfare of ministers.

4.1 Philosophical Framework

The literature that has been written about the hazards of ministry, as discussed in Chapter Two, is vast and covers major research projects, journal articles and books with many particular foci.

A key issue frequently addressed was "Burnout" which had a very high personal, professional and institutional cost. This was a natural end-point focus for any discussion of the hazards of ministry, however, more attention needed to be given to the issues that were evident much earlier and in some senses as part of the journey towards burnout.

A fundamental question had to be asked, the answer to which would provide a philosophical framework for the provision of pastoral care services. Why should the Church care for its ministers? Three propositions were developed concerning:

1. the church’s core value “to love one another”;  
2. the prudence of maximising the potential working life of those who train;  
3. the church’s duty of care to its employees.

These can be seen to address each of the three areas considered significant in this study, the personal domain, the professional domain and the structural domain.
4.1.1 Core Values

*Christians are called to love one another, especially those they call to serve them as ministers.*

If nothing else, the centre of the Christian faith is about values. And the central value is love. Jesus, when asked which commandment in the Law was the greatest, responded, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40).

The traditional understanding of this saying has always been that if people governed their relationships with each other by the Principle of Love then they would comply with all the requirements of the Law. The Apostle Paul re-iterated this notion in his letter to the church in Rome when he said: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the Law. ... Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Romans 13:8 & 10)

There are numerous injunctions in the letters of the New Testament to love one another, attending to one another's needs in the same way that Jesus attended to the needs of those around him. Indeed, these loving and caring qualities of the Christian community were to mark the Christians out as special. Jesus is recorded in John's Gospel as saying: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

This is the ideal that the Christian community is called to strive to achieve, and much of the time such love and harmony are evident and distinguishing qualities. However, in the absence of these qualities, the Christian community seems to be the uglier and
nastier because of the expectation of the opposite. Thus, the members of the Church are called upon to care for one another in times of need.

It can be seen from the following sample of the kinds of contexts in which ministers might experience stress, and therefore be in need, that they might turn to different people according to the situation. These gave some direction to the kinds of responses that could be made to meet the need.

There have been occasions in Christian communities when conflict and strife occurred, when members got caught up in power struggles that displayed less than Christian values. If a minister was at the centre of such a power struggle, the effects were invariably traumatic for all concerned. Such conflict between sub-groups or between a minister and a sub-group could be regarded as the antithesis of Christian community and is a denial of the high calling placed on Christians. In situations such as these ministers frequently need real pastoral support for these are indeed high stress situations for them. Because the heart of such problems involve antagonism from competing groups within the congregation, it is unlikely that such pastoral support will be forthcoming from within the congregation. Confiding in a colleague may provide the necessary support and pastoral care for the minister. The intervention of an individual or group with institutional responsibilities may provide the necessary support in such a situation.

However, there are many other occasions when ministers may be in need of pastoral care that are not related to congregational conflict. Marriage difficulties, family problems, sickness settling into new parishes, self-doubt such as is often associated with "mid-life crises", even questions of the meaninglessness of faith are all situations that require pastoral care for ministers who are trying to cope. Where deeply personal or functional issues are at stake, institutional or congregational leaders are neither likely to be turned to by a minister, nor are they the most appropriate to turn to.
Indeed, they would be most unlikely to have the necessary skills to be of much help to ministers in such crises. In such cases a personal confidant, spiritual director or professional counsellor might be the most appropriate to turn to.

But there are some pastoral crises for ministers that congregational leaders may well be able to offer good pastoral support. Times of grief in the loss of a parent, spouse or child, times of accident, injury or illness and even times of burn-out have been times when some ministers have experienced wonderful support and pastoral care from the members of the congregations. In fact, it would be fair to say that the occasions when ministers in such circumstances have felt neglected by their congregations would be exceptional rather than the norm.

It is clear that ministers, then, are quite likely to experience times when the internal caring systems of the congregation in which they work are adequate to meet their pastoral care needs. In other circumstances it may be more appropriate for the minister to turn to a colleague or other confidante as the source of that care. In yet other circumstances, institutional structures need to be in place to step into the breach, to meet the need, and to enable ministers to be ministered to.

Ensuring that ministers have access to these sources of care in their times of need is an example of the church responding to that core value of caring for one another.

4.1.2 Productivity

The church should seek to maximise the effectiveness and tenure of those who have trained and work as ministers.

This proposition may seem to have a cold, hard face to it and yet it was not meant to be so. It was founded on the recognition that the church, and the individuals who have
submitted to training for ministry, have made significant sacrifices to enable them to become ministers. That is to say, the church has borne some of the cost of training an individual minister by its financial sponsorship of the seminary, and sometimes its particular financial sponsorship of the individual. The individual has borne some of the cost of training in the form of tuition fees, foregone careers and family dislocation.

These constitute a significant investment in the vocation and its value is multiplied by maximising the working life of those who train. A student, completing ministry training at age 25 years, should expect to yield a return on that investment for 40 years at least. However, if a minister was to leave the vocation after just ten or fifteen years because the pressures were too great to bear, and the church had done nothing to provide pastoral care for the minister, then the church would be getting little more than a quarter of the ministry potential it should have expected. People certainly leave ministry for reasons other than the lack of pastoral care available to them, but this factor is not an insignificant one.

From Farmer's (1989) observation about graduates from the Churches of Christ (NSW) Theological College the churches were gaining a mere 5 to 10 year return on the training investment. He also observed that while the three Churches of Christ seminaries were providing an average of 20 graduates per year for local church ministries, "the numbers leaving that role for reasons other than retirement are greater."

Neither Farmer's (1989) study, nor any other discovered in the course of this study, offered any description of the reasons that ministers give for leaving their vocation, although this is the subject of concern for an organisation called "John Mark Ministries" set up recently in Victoria by Croucher, himself a minister who has stepped out of the parish ministry setting. The author of this study is aware anecdotally of some: burnout, less severe, but still significant stress, family circumstances, financial
pressures, mid-life crises, crises of identity and faith, marital infidelity, professional misconduct, disillusionment with "the powers that be" in denominational structures, and perhaps many more. It is clear that some of these are associated with structural matters, some are associated with professional matters, and some are associated with personal matters, hence the tripartite approach to the program directions.

There is only one acceptable explanation or acceptance of the number of ministers experiencing such a short tenure in the profession. Churches of Christ have a non-clerical or low view of ministry and ordination. Those who are trained are ordained to a function within the church, not to an exclusive role such as those in the sacerdotal traditions of the church. The chief difference, apart from the training, between the minister and the members of the church is that the minister is paid to do the work of ministry, so that more can be done, while the members do the work of ministry as volunteers. This means that if ministers leave the paid ministry, they need not cease being ministers because they can simply continue ministry, perhaps doing different tasks, as a volunteer.

However, there is a qualitative difference between ministers and members of the church, created by the training that ministers do, so that not only do they spend more time doing ministry than the volunteer members of the church, they do that ministry from a greatly enhanced skill base. It was into the gaining of these skills that the church and the individuals made such a significant investment and such an investment should not lightly be relegated to the sidelines. The denominational structures, congregations and ministers should expend all possible effort to keep those skills active in the church for as long as possible and in the most effective settings as possible.

Longevity in the vocation, however, is only one aspect of this proposition. A more immediate focus of this study was made on the effective performance of duties. In all that was considered about vocational stress, the most significant consequence of it was
that ministers performed their duties at less than optimum levels. If morale was low, if distress was caused by a lack of role definition, or clear boundaries to the work or structural impediments to optimum function, then in the day to day execution of ministerial duties, ministers would be less productive than they could be.

This may be easier to understand by looking at a worker in a vocation with more tangible outcomes. Consider two factory workers, for example. One has to operate machinery with tools that are makeshift, has poor lighting and ventilation around the machines, has to walk miles to the toilet and overcrowded lunch room, and is in constant fear that a supervisor will make unrealistic demands of him that might put his employment in jeopardy. The other has been provided with appropriate tools for the machinery, works where lighting and ventilation are good, amenities are adequate and easily accessible and where the supervisor's role is to ensure that the worker reaches his highest production capability. It is easy to see that the second worker will achieve a much higher level of productivity than the first.

While the production outcomes of ministers are much less tangible than those of factory workers, the same principle applies. Ministers will produce more and better quality ministry work if they are happy and in a well resourced working environment.

Covey (1989) drew a distinction between Production and Production Capability (P/PC). A piece of machinery could achieve high output if it was run non-stop with no down time for maintenance. However, such a strategy would leave the machine irreparable after a short period of production, having produced far fewer units than if a small investment of time and maintenance had been made. "In our quest for short-term returns or results we often ruin a prized physical asset", he said.

To protect against this he said that people need to find the right balance between Production and Production Capability. Focusing too much on Production resulted in
ruined health, worn out machines, depleted bank accounts and broken relationships. Focusing too much on Production Capability was like "a person who runs three to four hours a day, bragging about the extra ten years of life it creates, unaware he's spending them running." While finding the appropriate P/PC Balance, as Covey called it, may be difficult to judge at times, it lies at the heart of effectiveness in every sphere of life, not just the workplace.

If churches were willing to do all they could to help achieve this P/PC Balance for their employees they would have happier and much more effective ministers.

One of the difficult dimensions of this lies in the fact that a large part of the P/PC Balance is found in very intangible things. The minister's inner core is what most greatly influences this factor. The spiritual nature of this vocation means that effectiveness will be commensurate with the quality of the minister's personal spirituality and prayer life. In many congregations, the Protestant work ethic has become so pervasive that intangible things such as prayer and meditation are not recognised as work, and so are expected to be attended to by the minister in other than work time. However, without a deeply grounded spirituality ministers would be in danger of losing their credibility for not "practising what they preached." Again, it is evident that there is a complex interaction of structural, professional and personal factors needed in the achievement of this proposition.

4.1.3 A Duty of Care

Employers have a duty of care to ensure that the conditions of employment and the workplace are such that they do not endanger the well-being or health of their employees.
This applies to much more than just the physical conditions of the work place, although they are important. Indeed, the physical conditions of the work place is a matter that has attracted some attention by the "Ministers' Salaries & Conditions Review Committee" of Churches of Christ in WA.

In the discussion of the Minister's Home in its 1992 report, the Committee addressed an aspect of the physical working conditions that had a relationship to an important stressor in ministry - the difficulty of separating personal and work time and space. In relation to the provision of study/office facilities, the report said "the ideal situation is to have facilities at both" the church building and the home. In other words, it was not fair to expect the minister to work completely from a home-based office, nor was it fair for the home to be so compact that there was no room there for either a private study or a place to attend to the personal needs of parishioners.

The problem with having to work completely from a home-based office is that it increases the feeling that there is no separation between work time and personal time. The on-call nature of the job is such that ministers frequently find it difficult to maintain that separation at times. Having a work place away from the home at least created some physical separation that encouraged a little more psychological separation than might otherwise be possible.

A church member once said to me "The Manse should be the minister's 'Castle' where he can let his hair down without anyone knowing." In other words, ministers need personal and private space for their own well-being. Yet frequently ministers have reported informally to me that their experience of Manse life was like living in a fishbowl. Their lives were constantly under scrutiny. For a church to fail to provide such personal and private space in any way is to breach its duty of care for the minister.
However, as stated above, more than just the physical conditions of the work place are at stake in this matter of a duty of care. The highest order concern found by Phelan (1990) was balancing expectations and requirements of family / congregation / community / other work. This blurring of the boundaries of the job was a significant contributor to stress and occupational dysfunction and as a result, Phelan recommended that "a booklet be produced setting out the necessary steps in formulating a Job Description for ministers and key Church Board positions." Clarification of the demands and the expectations of the job was regarded as an important step towards enhancing the well-being of the minister, especially one in a first appointment. It helped maintain a focus on the necessary tasks and reduced the extent to which ministers were required to juggle competing expectations and demands.

Attending to these two matters is an expression by the employer of its duty of care, by seeking to reduce the impact of independent stressors on the employee. As stated above, in Chapter 2, many of the stressors that impact on ministers are organisational rather than personal or societal. Over these they have less influence because they are external to the ministers - beyond their control. It is in the power of the institution to address structural stressors so that they have a reduced impact on its employees.

4.1.4 Overall Aim

By way of summary of the underlying principles that should guide the provision of pastoral care for ministers, it can be seen what the overall aim or objective of such an enterprise should be when the single sentence statements of each of the above propositions are drawn together:-
The Church needs to provide pastoral care for its ministers as an expression of a core Christian value to love each other and care for each other's needs, so that its ministers can work most effectively for as long as possible, and as an expression of its duty of care to its workforce.

The primary objective, the most desired outcome, of such a response is a workforce whose members are cared for in all spheres of their lives. As a secondary objective it is hoped that they will be happy and committed to the work they do and effective in it because the Church looks after them.

4.1.5 Other Influential Factors

At each of three levels already identified there are factors that will "influence the shape of services set up to meet" the pastoral care needs of ministers. In some instances it is impossible to tell whether the factor will be a significant or insignificant influence, but in other instances the significance will be almost self-evident.

Firstly, at a personal level, the extent to which ministers are willing to work frankly with their struggles and access services that might help them when they are in the midst of times of need, will ultimately determine the shape of services that are offered. Schaller, (1972) said that there needed to be a climate of positive discontent within a person or organisation before change was possible. There have been signs of such positive discontent amongst the ministers of Churches of Christ in WA over the past couple of years. It is to be hoped that this will facilitate change in this area.

At a professional level two factors could also be influential in determining the shape of the services that are provided. Firstly, the extent to which seminary training ventures into the area of spiritual and professional development, in addition to offering courses in the academic and practical skills appropriate for ministry, will influence the nature of
the inner resources that ministers have available for their own welfare. This, in turn, will influence the kinds of programs that are developed to offer assistance.

Secondly, the state of collegiality that exists among ministers will influence the kinds of services that are needed. In the introduction to this study it was noted as a precipitant factor for this study that a mere six ministers registered interest in attending an annual refresher camp. Since that time, and indeed by the time of the final publication of this study, a great deal of work has been done among this group in establishing informal networks of care and consciously trying to lift morale and camaraderie among ministers, and at this time there is a much healthier level of collegiality. Illustrative of this, was an attendance of 75 at an end-of-year supper night.

At a structural level three factors are evident. Firstly, the corporate focus of the church will determine the level of priority that is or can be given to the pastoral care needs of ministers. Two decades ago in more than just Churches of Christ, there was an emphasis on church growth as a corporate focus which brought a number of stressors to bear on those in ministry. The performance indicators were all quantitative and corporate outcomes were expressed in terms of so many new congregations "planted" each year. Fortunately, with the hindsight of those two decades, the focus has softened, and more recognition is being given to the need to care for the ministerial workforce if the corporate objectives are going to be achieved.

Secondly, a core value of the denominational culture will be influential in this respect. As with many of the denominations of the reformed tradition of the Church, Churches of Christ have proclaimed the "priesthood of all believers" as a fundamental principle of their ministry. As each of the denominations that adhere to this principle do so out of different historical contexts, they all seem to have different understandings of the meanings of the words. Williams (1957) explains that for Churches of Christ this arose primarily as a reaction to the clerical classes that existed in other denominations where
the clergy had a different status in the church than the members. Theirs was to be an egalitarian approach to Christianity in which all members were priests and could perform so-called priestly duties, and they were to exercise a mutual ministry to each other. This was a literalistic expression of the biblical notion of a “Kingdom of priests” (Revelation 1:6) in which all would share in the priestly functions, and none would reserve any special functions to themselves alone. There were some with specialised functions, Elders, Evangelists, etc., but these positions conferred no special status and if, for example, evangelists were to preach, this did not mean that others could not preach, or if elders baptised this did not mean that others could not baptise.

The advent of trained ministers created a tension for the church which Williams (1957) noted. If all members of the church were called to exercise the priestly ministries that would nurture and sustain the church, why should some people be trained, called and set apart for a specialised ministry in the congregations as “ministers”? If “ministers” were trained, called and set apart, how could the members exercise their ministries?

The resolution of this tension seems to have occurred by two means. Firstly, where priests in other denominations may have had exclusive rights to baptise and celebrate the Eucharist, Churches of Christ ministers work in congregations where any member can officiate at such sacraments with the same authority as they have. Secondly, ministers are regarded as members of the congregations they serve in and have no ex-officio right to represent the congregation in denominational affairs.

This cultural environment has led in Churches of Christ to what might be called a low view of ministry. All ecclesial authority lies in the hands of the congregation and the leadership in the hands of lay people. Ministers are appreciated and sometimes honoured, but they come and go. In Baptist churches, which are culturally and theologically very similar to Churches of Christ, a much higher view of the minister
and ministry prevails. Baptists ministers have a much more clearly defined authority in the congregation and the denomination.

This low view of ministry is bound to influence the extent to which churches are willing to acknowledge that they have a role to play in providing pastoral care for ministers, especially if it is to involve the commitment of denominational resources. It will also influence the extent to which internal, structural change can be made to the workings of the church in a bid to relieve some of the stressors that ministers have to live with.

A third factor, influential at a structural level, is ecclesiology, or the nature of the church. In a very strict sense there is no higher authority for governance among the Churches of Christ than the local congregation. But in almost every place where congregations exist which call themselves "a Church of Christ", they have formed associations of Churches of Christ. These are essentially forums for co-operation, voluntarily participated in, with no powers over local congregations.

In Figure 5, an attempt is made in the form of an organogram to illustrate the kind of relationship that exists between local congregations and the various structures of the Association of Churches of Christ in WA (Inc.). However, to illustrate in this way is not to explain all that needs to be understood about the structure of Churches of Christ.

There is a divergence of opinion within the Association about the fundamental purpose of the structures of the Association and this divergence finds expression by individuals as well as by congregations. On the one hand there are those who maintain that the structures exist to enable the churches to do collectively what they individually do not have the resources to do. Indeed, this co-operative emphasis is implicit in the
This is more explicit in a promotional brochure, *Churches of Christ: A Church for Today*, which states "Through conference, local churches co-operate with other like-minded churches to combine resources, and support the wider mission of the Church in Australia and overseas."

Thus, at a state level, the Association of Churches of Christ has created structures to provide aged care services, which the resources of a local church could not do. It also manages the purchase of new properties for new congregations, welfare services, a medical facility and a mechanism for enabling people to become endorsed ministers of the Church.

At a national level, structures have been created to enable overseas aid and mission to be done, mission among Aboriginal peoples, educational and publishing resources, and the representation of Churches of Christ in ecumenical bodies. These are all possible by combining the individually inadequate resources of local churches into the collectively adequate resources of the Association.

On the other hand, there is a view held among some that the focus of co-operative work is to enhance the local work. A clear articulation of this position is found in a Churches of Christ in NSW (1992) document which begins by articulating the principles which guided a Vision & Strategy Group.

These principles were:

A. **Within Churches of Christ in NSW, God’s work is primarily exercised in and through local churches.**

B. **Any Conference structures set up outside the local church should be predominantly to co-ordinate and facilitate the functions of and agendas set by local churches.**
C. Resources for ministries co-ordinated and facilitated by Conference structures should be exercised primarily within the local church and come primarily from the local church.

D. Conference resources should be kept to a minimum. Thus the Conference should support the local church ministries, rather than vice versa.

E. Any Conference structures should be consistent with Churches of Christ in NSW being a "grass roots" movement.

This view limits the interest of local churches to those things which are relevant to their local settings. The congregations in which this view is dominant, have little to do with and provide little or no resources for collective activities that have no connection with local issues. In New South Wales, the proposal of the Vision & Strategy Group to the Association was to devolve completely the Association's work to the local congregations, creating a network structure.

Ministers and congregations in Churches of Christ in WA operate within one or other of these two paradigms of the church and this will influence the extent to which they are willing to contribute to and support any initiatives that are taken structurally to provide for the well-being of ministers. Whichever view dominates in both the mind of the minister and the local church in which he or she works will have implications for the extent to which he or she is willing or able to access structures of care that may be provided at an institutional level from time to time.
4.2 Personal Program Directions

The third Research Question invited consideration of possibilities for actual services that might be needed to address the pastoral care needs of ministers. *What should such a pastoral care service consist of and how should it be provided?* In order to address this question, consideration was given to possibilities for program direction in each of the three levels identified, personal, professional and structural.

In both of the studies that have been considered, relating to stress among ministers in Churches of Christ in Victoria and New South Wales, the same recommendation was made concerning an effective mechanism for delivering personalised pastoral care services to ministers.

4.4.1 A Minister to the Ministers

They recommended the appointment of a Minister to the Ministers. In both instances it was emphasised that anyone in this position had to be independent of any of the structures of power within the church and had to be of the highest integrity and trustworthiness. Such an appointment has been made in Western Australia, with some reference to the findings of the report in Victoria, but with very little conceptual work as to how the position should function to deliver the services.

Western Australia presents some unique problems for the functioning of this position, given that the state covers a third of the continent, Churches of Christ ministers range from Halls Creek in the north, to Kalgoorlie in the east and Albany in the south. The cohort of those to be cared for by this Minister’s Pastor, as he prefers to be called, includes all existing parish ministers and chaplains in schools, hospitals, industry and the services, ministers between placements, often in secular employment, and retired
ministers. The 1996 Resource Handbook of Churches of Christ in WA lists 85 Endorsed, Provisionally Endorsed and Lay Ministers in parish settings, 26 of whom are located in the country, 28 in Chaplaincy settings or in para-church groups, 3 working for Agencies of the Church, 9 Retired Ministers and 13 Ministers without tenure. Some of all of those groups are located in the country. This comprises approximately 140 individuals across the state and does not count spouses and children living at home. This huge and scattered "parish" is the responsibility of one person, so far as pastoral care is concerned.

In order to effectively minister to them definite strategies have to be developed that will be enabling rather than restricting. The following metaphor is offered to help illustrate how a different approach to this particular ministry should be taken.

4.4.2 A Model - Hobby Farmer vs. Station Manager

It was mentioned briefly above that one model for ministry is that of a shepherd. A contemporary Australian equivalent might be a hobby farmer. A hobby farmer has a small allotment and therefore has small numbers of stock. This enables them to take on something of pet-like qualities, with each being known individually to the farmer and each valued. So, often in a church we find one person caring for a single group of people. Each member of the group is known by the carer, and both parties value the intimacy of that relationship. This model has been adopted by many in a parish setting and it works well for small groups of people up to about 70 in number.

There is, however, a related agricultural metaphor for ministry, that can help shape an approach to ministry when the group that needs to be cared for is larger than a hobby farmer can cope with. This is known in American Church Growth literature as the
"Rancher" model. A contemporary Australian equivalent term would be a "Station Manager".

While Hobby Farmers often regard their stock like pets and attend personally to their needs, Station Managers approach the care of their sheep or cattle in a very different way. Because their stock may be scattered over large areas, and be too numerous for them to know exactly how many there are, they care for them by ensuring that bores are always working to supply water, and that feed is available for them. Often they will use stockmen to attend to the fine detail, they simply ensure that all the needs of the stock are provided for.

The Minister's Pastor is in a similar situation. Not only does he have a group of people that in many respects is too large for a "shepherd" approach, it is scattered far and wide, like the cattle on a North West station, two to the square mile. This should shape the way he approaches the delivery of pastoral care services. The Ministers' Pastor should establish strategies that will ensure that all ministers can access the support structures they need to cope with the stresses and strains of their calling. This may involve developing a network of "stockmen" who can attend to individual needs, or it may involve establishing "windmills" and "haystacks" as places that ministers can go to for their refreshment and pastoral care.

Such an approach to the delivery of these pastoral care services would be both appropriate and congruent within the context of ministry in Churches of Christ. It is appropriate to manage the size and geographic spread of the ministers as well as the diversity of styles and paradigms from which ministers are operating. It is congruent with the diversity of approaches to ministry that exist within Churches of Christ.
4.3 Professional Program Directions

As a preliminary to considering some program directions for ministers at a professional level the study sought to gain some understanding of how ministers view their role of ministry. This was done by examining some models of ministry that have been developed as metaphors to assist in understanding ministry.

4.3.1 The Wounded Healer

One of the most profound models for understanding the nature of Ministry was proposed Nouwen (1972). He spoke of Ministers as "Wounded Healers" and said in his Introduction that "the minister is called to recognise the suffering of his time in his own heart and make that recognition the starting point of his service" (p. xvi). For ministers to be effective and for their ministry to be recognised as authentic, their service must come "from a heart wounded by the suffering about which (they) speak" (p.x vi).

The starting point for his exploration of this as a metaphor or model for ministry was an old Hebrew legend about the Messiah, which goes as follows:

"Rabbi Yoshua ben Levi came upon Elijah the prophet while he was standing at the entrance of Rabbi Simeron ben Yohai's cave ... He asked Elijah, "When will the Messiah come?"

Elijah replied, "Go and ask him yourself."

"Where is he?"

"Sitting at the gates of the city."

"How shall I know him?"
"He is sitting among the poor covered with wounds. The others unbind all their wounds at once and then bind them up again. But he unbinds one at a time and binds it up again, saying to himself, 'Perhaps I shall be needed: if so I must always be ready so as not to delay for a moment.'" (Nouwen, 1972, p81f)

His discussion of this image led to such comments as: "He is both the wounded minister and the healing minister" (p.82) and "he who proclaims liberation is called not only to care for his own wounds and the wounds of others, but also make his wounds into a major source of his healing power," (p.82-83).

Much of his thesis depended on these two statements. The first three chapters of his book were entitled "Ministry in a Dislocated World", "Ministry for a Rootless Generation", and "Ministry to a Hopeless Man". In these he painted a picture of a world in much pain, to which the Messiah (Jesus) came, and to which ministers continue to bring the Messianic message of hope. His fourth and final chapter was entitled "Ministry by a Lonely Minister" and it was here that he developed his thesis that for ministers to be able to offer healing to a wounded world, they must also have experienced the wounding of the world.

Most ministers who have read this book readily identify with the salient parts of the imagery, as indeed I did. Most effective ministry arises out of having been somewhere along the same road as the wounded who come for "healing". Where the minister seems to stand aloof from "the real world", as if unaffected by it the way "mere mortals" are, healing cannot really take place.

Pryor, (1986) gave a detailed critique of this model and commented on its applicability to Ministry in the Uniting Church of Australia. His analysis of Nouwen's concept began with the recognition that not all ministers would see themselves as either
"wounded" or as "healers" (p.13). But he went on to say, building on Nouwen's argument, that all of humanity was "wounded" by its sinfulness and the brokenness of human nature, that those in ministry who were experiencing vocational distress were being subjected to "additional wounds and suffering" (p.13).

Pryor then dealt with three fundamental questions:

1. What sustains the ministry of the wounded healer?
2. What characterises the ministry of the wounded healer? and
3. What transforms the ministry of the wounded healer? (p.14ff)

His discussion of these questions provided some helpful extrapolation of Nouwen's concept into an Australian context.

As to what sustains the ministry of the wounded healer, he suggested a rightly apprehended concept of 'ministry' and 'call' to the vocation of ministry. Those who saw ministry as "doing something to people in community (rather than with them)," and who experienced call to ministry as "atoning for one's omissions/commissions of the past (rather than as a liberation in obedience under God)" (p.15) were headed, he said, for quick sands that would surround the very entry point of ministry. "Because the needs of people are insatiable, if ministry is perceived primarily as a summons to meet human needs, then God will become a task master, the people adversaries, and their unmet demands an endless source of frustration, guilt and depression." (p.15)

In his discussion of what constituted a correct apprehension of ministry and call, Pryor expanded on two aspects. Firstly he said that ministry must be theocentric rather than laocentric. While "the key New Testament image of ministry is servanthood ... the self-giving and sacrificial service is rendered to the Lord, rather than to the community of faith." (p.15) He said that ministry involved being a servant of God's grace rather than grace's piece-worker or lawyer. In other words, ministry, rightly apprehended, was about serving God, rather than serving people. Indeed, it could be
readily observed that those in ministry, suffering much by way of distress in their vocation, were frequently those who had become so focused on serving people that they thought they are the only Messiah’s in the phone book.

The second aspect that Pryor developed was influenced much by the work of Niebuhr, (1956), in his book, "The work of the church and its ministry". Niebuhr said that ministry was about witness in that the task of ministry is to commend the "good news" that is known personally. By this comment he was pointing to the need for one's ministry and sense of call to that ministry to arise from a deeply founded spirituality that demonstrates an authentic life. It is a cliche to say that ministers must “practice what they preach”, yet it arises from a deep truth. Effectiveness in ministry is either diminished or enhanced by the extent to which the minister's spirituality demonstrates this new way of living. As a living example, not a paragon of virtue, the minister demonstrates what it means for any follower to seek God's way.

If witness is the foundational work of ministry, it is none the less important for us to understand how one comes under the apprehension that this is to be their vocation. Niebuhr (1956) explored the concept of 'call to ministry' and identified four implicit elements:

a. the call to be a Christian;
b. the secret call or inner persuasion of experience;
c. the providential call, based on one's equipment with talents and divine guidance; and
d. the ecclesiastical call by the community of faith. (pp.64ff.)

The first three of these were experiences common to all Christians, he said, but they should never be confused with the fourth. Just because one was confident of one’s 'call' to be a Christian does not mean that God was calling one to be a minister in the
church; however, one cannot, obviously, claim to be 'called' to be a minister of the church without first having experienced a calling to be a Christian.

Attaining the fourth aspect involved three expectations of prospective ministers:

1. a personal sense of vocation forged within an encounter with God;
2. evidence of being so chosen by demonstrating the moral, intellectual, physical and psychological gifts necessary for the work of ministry;
3. the issue of an invitation or a declaration of acceptance by the church to serve as a minister.

Three similar criteria are applied to prospective candidates for ordination in Churches of Christ. They must first have completed a course of study in which the gifts necessary for the work of ministry are carefully honed. They must be recommended by the college and state authorities of the church as a suitable person to exercise ministry, and they must have received and accepted an invitation from a congregation to serve as minister. A "call" to be a minister in the absence of the above three criteria is considered to be something like a 'false alarm'.

The important issue here is that a correct apprehension of what it means to be 'called' into ministry is a vitally sustaining factor. This is why it is important for any ecclesiastical 'call' process to be well balanced. To either over-emphasise the secret and personal senses of call, or to focus on apparent human talents and personality traits, could easily lead to compulsiveness and ultimately personal disaster for ministers. Whitehead & Whitehead (1980) referred to a "promiscuous ministry" (p.155) where the minister tried to meet every need that arose, in whatever form, and claimed that this was ultimately only possible at the expense of the minister's fidelity to and effectiveness in the ministry to which he or she was called.
Pryor (1986) drew this issue to a conclusion very well:

Implicit in the call to ministry is a call to be liberated and whole, to receive God's grace first to oneself, and then to respond to this gift with a joyful, serene life in the midst of the pain and pressures of God's 'peculiar people'. To be called into ministry means to experience failure, fatigue and the need for supportive human relationships; it also means to experience uplift, insight and strength, gifts and graces, which can be found solely in the One who is ultimately the Caller. The source of life and hope is what essentially and finally sustains the ministry of the wounded healer. (p.18)

In considering what characterises the ministry of the wounded healer, Pryor (1986) expanded on three basic concepts,

1. a Biblical understanding of humanity,
2. the vulnerability of this in ministry,
3. the willingness of ministers to own their own woundedness and need for healing.

These three concepts flowed logically from one to another. Firstly, it was clear from the Biblical record that the creation of human beings was a risky enterprise for the Divine. While God created us with the view that we should love him, this left us free to refuse to love him and be accountable to him. This was the heart of sin and the essence of the Biblical view of humanity. As Pryor (1986) said: "The 'good news' of God's continuing love and renewing action comes frustratingly gift-wrapped in the 'bad news' about humanity: that we are a people hell-bent on escaping God's view, care and call to new life in Christ." (p.18)

One astounding aspect of the Biblical record is its willingness to portray the heroes of the faith as having feet of clay. Abraham lied about his wife while in Egypt; Moses lost
his cool and was angry with God; Elijah despaired that God had left him to be the only one trusting him; Jeremiah resented God's involvement in his birth; Peter's denied friendship with Jesus in the face of his execution; and Paul fought with John Mark. The Biblical record is clear - to be human is to possess the ability to let the side down.

This is also the lot of the minister. Eadie (1972) researched sources of stress for ministers in the Church of Scotland. The publication of his results was challenged by Wild (1973) in "The Sunday Times" because they could "undermine the credibility of ministers and the trust in which they are held." The premise of this accusation was that ministers somehow were not subject to mental, emotional or inter-personal conflict, and are equally not subject to the same physical and spiritual diseases as 'normal' people.

Unfortunately for Wild, ministers are just as vulnerable to failures and shortcomings as any 'mere mortals'. This in fact becomes part-and-parcel of what it means to be a minister. These, asserted Pryor (1986), were the marks of vulnerability - neglected opportunities, lost hopes, shattered dreams, unrealistic expectations, the failure to listen, impatience, anger, jealousy, low morale. All these, and more, became the 'wounds' of the ministers, some self-inflicted, some from others.

If human weakness was the only element, it would have been the end of the story, but what Nouwen (1972) and Pryor (1986) pointed us to was that grace and forgiveness paradoxically enabled the wounded one to reach out with healing hands. The fact that ministers were weak enabled them to help those who were weak; the fact that ministers were suffering enabled them to help others who were suffering.

This, however, was dependent on the final concept - the willingness of the ministers to acknowledge that they were both wounded and in need of God's healing. Pryor said succinctly that ministers "need to be able to move from the status of victim to victor in
their personal and pastoral circumstances. A pro-active and intentional stance in ministry should not be adopted or promoted as weakness-denying but as weakness-accepting." (p.20)

Finally, Pryor (1986) considered what it was that transforms the ministry of the 'wounded healer'. In a fascinating exploration of spiritual writers from the fifteenth century to the present day and a careful exegesis of key New Testament verses he proposed that what had the ability to sustain and transform ministry was that self-giving dimension of God's love in a person's life which could over-ride the stresses and strains of everyday pastoral work. He called it "the spirituality of kenosis-in-service [italics added]". (p.21)

This self-giving and serving approach to ministry was modelled on the life of Christ and was not easily apprehended in our contemporary society. "It is a spirituality to be sought in prayer, but equally importantly in the rites and roles of ministry-in-community." (p.22) He derived much of his thought about this Greek word kenosis from its use in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul quoted the words of an early Christian hymn which said:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied [ekenosin] himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death.
even death on a cross.

*Phil. 2:5-8 (NRSV)*

Pryor observed in this context that Christ did not give up the power to forgive or heal or save; rather, he relinquished his claims to human authority, his divine privileges, and his immunity to evil and death.

Some might mistake this self-giving humility for submission and lack of autonomy. If it were either of these there would be no transforming power, but rather subjection, oppression and a complete absence of power. However, when it is an expression of one's God-given freedom, when it is voluntarily entered into and not forced upon one, then this self-giving humility has the power to transform the ministry of the 'wounded healer'.

### 4.3.2 Some Churches of Christ Models of Ministry

In an essay that described and critiqued five different approaches to ministry, Chapman (1982), drew attention to a changing reality for Churches of Christ. Whilst at one time in the not too distant past there was a fairly uniform philosophy and practice of ministry in Churches of Christ, over the last twenty years there has developed a considerable range of different styles. The five models he described were each in evidence among the churches and were, he said, theological models. By this he meant that theological issues were at the foundation of each model and these gave rise to different outworkings for each ministry setting.

He called the five distinctive styles or models: the traditional model, the church-growth model, the social action model, the charismatic model and the relational model.
A. The Traditional Model

This approach to ministry was the one Chapman said was fairly uniformly practised by Churches of Christ ministers a generation or two ago. Ministry in this style was essentially a "spiritual" enterprise. The focus of ministry was the spiritual lives of the flock, and the style of leadership was based on example of life rather than organisational or administrative ability.

"At its best this model has fostered a devotion to Jesus, a commitment to his way of life and a love of the Scriptures. It has resulted in the development of personal integrity, decency and a simple winsomeness." (p.3) This fitted well with the observation above that the range of task for ministers in an earlier time was much smaller - to preach, to teach and to visit.

B. The Church Growth Model

This model appeared in Australia in the early 1970's and was fashioned on the work of Dr Donald McGavren and Win Arn from the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. It brought an intelligent and enterprising approach to ministry which some might say had developed up to this present time to being pragmatic and entrepreneurial. Church leaders were encouraged to set themselves measurable goals and develop time-related strategies that would lead to them being achieved.

In some senses this model was an inter-disciplinary approach, blending the experience of both the church and business to create an approach to ministry that was both pragmatic and effective. On the one hand there was a concern for the spiritual welfare of non-Christians, but on the other hand there was a concern that the organisational structure was relevant to contemporary society. This style of ministry demanded "administrative and personnel skills of a high order, together with a capacity for visionary thinking and bold action." (p.7)
C. The Social Action Model

The focus of this model was on the here and now rather than the next world, which would look after itself, if we looked after the here and now. It was built on the assertion that much of Jesus' teaching demands a radical life-style that was committed to overcoming oppression, poverty and injustice.

Chapman identified three sub-groups within this model.

1. Those who concerned their ministry with social issues close at hand - helping the unemployed, settling refugees or caring for the aged.
2. Those with a more global view and who got involved in political action as an expression of the Gospel in action.
3. Those more concerned with life-style and often focused on community living.

D. The Charismatic Model

This model arose out of the Charismatic Renewal movement of the 1960's & 70's and was so named because of its emphasis on the 'charismata' or gifts of the Spirit. Ministers who experienced this 'renewal' claimed that their ministry had "been revolutionised by a new spiritual empowerment and relationship with Jesus." (p13)

While different management styles may have been found, the common element was an exuberance about faith and ministry, and a leadership approach that emphasised the need to use the spiritual gifts God has given us all.

E. The Relational Model

This model of ministry focused on behaviours and relationships. It had an affinity, Chapman claimed, with early Alexandrian theology which emphasised God's original intention for humanity to be in intimate relationship with Him. God's love for each person is unconditional and persistent and the objective of ministry within this model was personal growth in response to that love.
This model was also inter-disciplinary, seeking to integrate theology and Christian experience with psychological and sociological understandings.

Chapman's purpose in discussing these different models of ministry seems to have been two fold:

- to make it clear to ministers that a number of internal and external factors would pre-dispose them to being more effective in a church setting where the expectations of ministry matched the model of ministry with which they operated;
- to confront theological educators to do more to help graduates more clearly identify the model or models with which they can comfortably operate.

His penultimate comment was evocative. "The minister and congregation, like two marriage partners, need to work out their own unique pattern. This may result in more divorces, but there will be a great deal more honesty and reality." (p.20)

4.3.3 Some Pragmatic Models

Finally, here, three very pragmatic metaphors of my own are added, that illustrate how some ministers and churches are perceived to approach ministry. These are not necessarily dominant or pervasive models of ministry among the churches, simply patterns that reflect some of the expectations that exist.

A. The Sales Person

In this approach to ministry two emphases are clearly present. The first emphasis links with the evangelical zeal that marks much of Churches of Christ and is founded on the
premise that the Church has a product that non-Christians do not have and that its basic task is to devise an appropriate sales pitch that will persuade them that they do, in fact, need it.

The minister, in a setting where this supposition prevails, is the head sales rep. It is his or her task to develop the best and most persuasive sales pitch and to consistently notch up the highest monthly total of "sales". The commercial setting closest to this is the network marketing organisations such as Amway, Omegatrend, Tupperware and Nutrimetics. One's effectiveness in such a model is dependent very much on having an extensive network of friends and acquaintances.

The second emphasis that is apparent in this model is the importance of a charismatic leader and a reliance on a Positive Mental Attitude approach. This is a style pioneered within the Christian context by Peale (1953) and his next generation pupil, Schuller (1967). Its exponents rely on many of the techniques of the motivationalists in the network marketing organisations mentioned above, although the reverse may in fact be the case.

Hence, in this model, the minister is figurehead, senior sales rep., and coach, and as with coaches in sporting teams, so long as results are achieved their position is secure, but should they not be bringing in the top results, they will soon be looking elsewhere for work.

The one advantage that this model may have, for anyone whose skills and personality suit it, is that it has a very narrow focus of activity and expectations. So long as newcomers are being brought along and they buy the product, the rest of the minister's work is of secondary importance.
B. The Small Business Model

In this model, ministry is seen to be very similar to running a small business. As with the above model there is a product to be sold. As in many small businesses, the resources for the task are very limited. Thus, it is not unreasonable to expect the minister to work long hours at the task. After all, small business operators put in very long hours. Many ministers work morning, afternoon and evening most week days, and over a quarter in Bodycomb’s (1989) study reported working in excess of 75 hours a week.

It also becomes reasonable, in this model, to expect the minister to be competent at many tasks. A small business man will do the cleaning, the book-keeping, the ordering, the advertising and promotion, sales and make the morning tea. Similarly, ministers will preach, teach, counsel, administer, advise, lead, labour, garden, clean, type, post, and many other tasks.

Another facet of this model is that the work of ministry tends to be done on a shoestring budget. As in small business, so in the church. There is no spare money to employ support staff or to provide the proper equipment for tasks. The object is to make do as best you can with what you have got. Many ministers find they use their own resources for special tasks rather than trying to persuade the church to provide them.

C. The Missionary Model

This model comes in two forms. In the first the minister is a missionary to the congregation. Consider the experience of a missionary recently sent to work among the Indian community in Fiji. The missionary was Australian and had little experience of Indian cultural life. The expectation from the Mission Society was that providing the missionary with a house among the people would be sufficient to enable a church
to be started. There were no other staff from the Mission Society in Fiji. No other material resources were provided for the task.

In some ministry settings a minister is in a similar situation to the missionary. The prevailing culture and values of the congregation are relatively unknown to the minister. The minister, by virtue of position and lifestyle, is very different from the congregation. The work is very focused on the congregation and opportunities for support from outside are limited.

In the same way that a missionary in a cross-cultural setting overseas is primarily responsible for the establishment and nurture of the group of Christians in the congregation, so, in some churches, the minister's primary task is to establish and nurture the faithful who belong to the congregation.

The second form in which this model is expressed is where the local congregation is like a mission station. The whole group of people are committed to using the church as a base from which to be missionaries into their community. A large part of the energy of the group is directed towards training and mobilisation to meet the needs of those outside the group. This is reflected in a range of activities to reach people - sporting clubs, toy libraries, play groups, friendship clubs, interest groups, after-school children's activities, child-care co-operatives, health and fitness groups and more. Very often these activities are conducted by church people but with very few church people being the actual "clients" of the activities.

In this form the emphasis is on the team, and as such is a much more supportive environment for ministers to work in. The interesting thing is that at an anecdotal level at least, this second form is most often longed for and described by ministers as what they would like to see in their congregations. However, many of the "laity" in
congregations would assume that the first form is an appropriate expression of what is normal.

Goetz (1995) reported on a recent survey of 5,000 American pastors and a similar number of congregation members on their feelings about evangelism, the subtle or not so subtle art of persuading non-Christians to become believers. In addressing the question "Which evangelism terms do you feel positive about?", the five terms which were more highly preferred by ministers than laity all presupposed the active involvement of the laity in a team, while the three terms that were more highly preferred by the laity than ministers relied on the activity of the one evangelist. (p.75)

![Figure 6. Which Evangelism Terms do you Feel Positive About?](image)

This research echoes the observation above that ministers would generally prefer to see their congregations as Mission stations, while the laity prefers to see the minister as the Missionary among them.
Identifying and exploring all these models of ministry makes it apparent that there is no one dominant model within Churches of Christ. Indeed, this diversity is one of the organisational realities with which any response to the pastoral care of ministers will have to contend.

Three significant organisational factors have led to this situation.

1. The lack of denominational structure or authority lends itself to great diversity at the congregational level; ie. self-governing congregations take on their own form and shape, according to local needs and the influences of local leaders.

2. There is no uniform approach to worship across the denomination, such as is found in the more liturgical traditions of the church. Once again it is true that in this area of church life, local needs and the influences of local leaders creates a great deal of variety between congregations.

3. The absence of denominational structure and authority has also meant an absence of uniform training requirements and standards for ministers. Local congregations have no constraints upon them in respect to who can and should be employed as a minister. Hence a church may employ a person who has had no formal training to prepare for being a minister, or it may employ someone who has trained at a non-denominational Bible College, or Missionary Training College, or it may employ a person who has trained in a Churches of Christ seminary. If all those employed as ministers were trained in denominational seminaries there would be less likelihood of significant diversity in ministry styles.

There is, however, a great deal of diversity, both in the approaches ministers have to ministry and the emphases of local congregations. Just as the existence of many cultural traditions within the one nation, Australia, has consequences for how governments operate and how its people express their social integrity, so the diversity
described above has implications for Churches of Christ. Some celebrate our diversity. Other abhor it, or at least fear it.

Allsop (1995) said "One paradox facing Churches of Christ is that diversity is both our strength and our weakness." (p.2). He referred to a brochure entitled "Churches of Christ: A Church for Today" which has tried to articulate the values, beliefs and mission that are held in common by those congregations of Christians that call themselves Churches of Christ. Such a task has been increasingly difficult to do as the range of diversity within the denomination has increased over recent years.

This prompted Allsop (1995) to ask two questions: "At what point does this diversity and autonomy become the basis for fragmentation?" and "Is the future of Churches of Christ to be a network of exciting, diverse and sometimes conflicting local expressions of autonomous congregations?" If fragmentation was to be the outcome of this diversity then the denomination would gradually lose its identity and any strength and witness that it may have had, and eventually cease to be relevant. Channelling that diversity into a co-operative network had the potential to transform the church into one that was congruent with a pluralist and diverse nation.

Allsop (1995) acknowledged that some in the church were afraid of this diversity, but he argued that it should be acknowledged and that the church should "strategically work to become a comprehensive church which embraces many different values and beliefs." (p.2) This diversity would then become one of the core values of the organisation.

There was just one response to Allsop's (1995) article in the Letters column of a subsequent issue of The Australian Christian. This letter indeed reflected the fear of diversity he had anticipated. Headed "Diversity Leads to Confusion", the author,
Hughes, concluded with the question "Where are the leaders who are strong enough to lead us back to 'where the Scriptures speak, we speak' and stay with it."

The de facto diversity that exists in Churches of Christ has consequences for the institutional response to the pastoral care needs of ministers. Because ministers will have a variety of understandings of how they should work in ministry and what are reasonable expectations of them in ministry, and because congregations will reflect a wide variety of values and ethos which will affect what they expect their ministers to do for them, whatever structures are set up to provide pastoral care must take these matters into consideration.

Allsop (1995) argued that the church should affirm itself as a comprehensively diverse organisation, but it was clear that this had not yet happened. At an organisational level, this approach to ministry could at best be described as eclectic. This, however, implied a degree of intention, when in reality the diversity was more like the product of haphazard choices. This diversity was also found in the styles and emphases of the congregations which make up Churches of Christ.

The organisational reality for Churches of Christ is that it is little more than a loose confederation of independent evangelical congregations. There is a network of positive goodwill between groupings of congregations, but there is what could be described as something less than goodwill between some of those groupings.

Unlike hierarchically structured denominations of the church, Churches of Christ are much more organic in structure. A Biblical metaphor of the church likens it to a body in which the different structures and organs of the body have different functions. In some senses the different groupings of congregations within the church could be seen to offer different functions for the well-being of the whole. One grouping of congregations may be evangelical, another grouping may be charismatic, another
ecumenical and yet another very much concerned about social issues. Each gives expression to one part of the whole.

Such is the complexity of people's understanding of the nature of ministry and it was considered here in such detail because this factor has a significant influence on how to approach the recommendations for program direction at the professional level.

4.3.4 Training Options

It was recommended in Victoria that training options be offered for ministers in two key areas - time management and conflict resolution. The same issues were identified as key areas in New South Wales. In addition, training options should be considered to address stress management, effectiveness in the face of inadequate resources and exploring the mid life years. These training options were suggested to be in the form of in-service seminars, workshops or even more formal training options. It would seem reasonable to extrapolate this recommendation into the formulation of a structured post-graduate award available through the multitude of accredited ministry training facilities that exist already in Perth. This may give added incentive for participation.

4.3.5 Ongoing Professional and Spiritual Development

It was evident in both studies that ministers were concerned about their personal and spiritual development. The Victorian report recommended that ministers' conditions of employment include provision of a book allowance and a number of days paid study leave each year. This has in part been institutionalised in Western Australia where the Ministers' Salaries and Conditions Review Committee recommend a $400 per year
book allowance be provided for ministers, and that churches be sympathetic to requests from ministers who request paid study leave. No number of days were stipulated as reasonable. This was left to the discretion of the minister and local church board.

The Victorian study also recommended that “resources aimed at helping individuals further their spiritual journey” be collected and made available to interested ministers. This seemed to be too weak a response to what was identified as a “key area of concern” for ministers. It was felt that the recommendation should go further, with the Ministers’ Association being encouraged to ensure that some part of its annual refresher camp be devoted to enhancing the ministers’ spiritual lives, that regular retreat days be organised with appropriate spiritual directors, that churches encourage their ministers to participate in such times of spiritual renewal, and finally that ministers be positively encouraged to be involved in continuing education as an integral part of their professional development.

4.4 Structural Program Directions

Phelan (1990) listed a number of recommendations arising from his study among Churches of Christ ministers in Victoria. Phelan and Regan (1991) came up with a different set of recommendations arising from their study of Churches of Christ ministers in New South Wales although there was some overlap. Some of these required action at a structural level and so provide some guidance to the comments here. It is noteworthy that the dominant ecclesiastical paradigms in Victoria and New South Wales compare with the two paradigms discussed above. Victorian Churches of Christ are predominantly co-operative in their view of the Church, while New South Wales Churches of Christ are predominantly independent or local-church oriented. Neither of these two paradigms is predominant in Western Australia’s Churches of
Christ. They co-exist and each seems to have had periods of ascendancy among the churches during different periods of history.

Because of this it was considered to be of value within the terms of this study to consider the recommendations from both reports as giving possibly appropriate direction to a program of pastoral care for ministers in Western Australia.

4.4.1 Recruitment and Staff Management Training

A recommendation made to the churches in Victoria was to take seriously the matter of educating local congregations in the matter of recruitment and management of their ministers. Most congregations had few people experienced in staff selection panels and knew little of the skills necessary to interview and select an appropriate minister.

In response to the evidence in the study, Phelan (1990) also suggested that draft Job Descriptions might help alleviate some of the dilemmas that arise from conflicting role expectations, by spelling them out clearly in the first instance. Similar Job Descriptions should also be produced for the key office holders of the congregation.

These matters could be attended to by the publication of a Resource Booklet outlining the relevant information, and conducting training seminars for church members to increase their awareness and skills in these matters. While such a program activity does not directly act on ministers, it addresses their pastoral care needs by working to alleviate a significant stressor for them.
4.4.2 In-service Workshops for Ministers with High Risk Profiles

The Victorian study identified ministers under the age of 35 and/or in their first ministry setting and/or working in congregations of less than 50 people as having the highest levels of dissatisfaction/worry/concern. Highest stress levels were evident among those who were between 36 and 45 years of age, had school-aged children, were in about the third year of their current ministry, worked either in a congregation of less than 50 people or one with 100-149 people, were in their third ministry, scored low on the “Trust of Other People” measure and had been exposed to a high level of life changes in the previous 12 months. The findings in New South Wales differed very little from these.

As a result it was recommended that a program of in-service workshops be offered to ministers with these profile characteristics giving them input that was relevant to their situations, sometimes of a personal or professional development nature, sometimes to give skills related to their congregation type needs. “The emphasis of (these workshops) would be on issue formulation and agreed action and support rather than training.” Phelan (1990, 4.4) A spin-off of such a program would be to enhance the sense of camaraderie and the potential of networking support among this group.

4.4.3 Improved Relationships - A Department of Ministry

In both Victoria and New South Wales it was evident from the studies that a large proportion of ministers felt generally negative towards the “head office” departments of the church. As a result recommendations were made in both studies related to the possible restructuring of the committees that operate in relation to ministers.
A restructuring somewhat along the lines suggested in the studies has already occurred in Western Australia and is illustrated in Figure 5. The work that was previously done by an Advisory Board, a Minister's Salaries and Conditions Committee, a Christian Union Committee and a Ministers' Association was amalgamated into one Department of Ministry and Training. The constitution was not prescriptive of what committees should be set up to do the Department's work. It only defined the areas of responsibility of the Department as described in Figure 5.

The focus of the recommendation was really a subset of the recommendation in that it primarily concerned relationships between ministers and the Advisory Board - that committee with responsibility for finding or advising ministers about new placement possibilities. Phelan (1990) writes:

"In virtually all modern organisations, where people are the key resource, there has been formed a Personnel and Human Resources Department to co-ordinate the issues of recruitment and placement, employee relations and morale, training and development, occupational health and safety, terms and conditions of employment and so forth. ...I recommend that the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Department be reviewed to include all matters pertaining to ministers (e.g. above), so they are all co-ordinated under one umbrella." (p. 4.7)

While most of the matters identified above have been included in the Terms of Reference of the Department of Ministry and Training it may be valuable to bring this recommendation to the attention of the Department officials to ensure that they are being attended to.

The only other program direction possibilities that became apparent in the course of this study were be the development of educational programs for congregations that
tackled such issues of concern for ministers as unreasonable role expectations, the minister's need for personal time and space, and the traditionally low view of ministry and its implications for the work force.
CHAPTER 5 : DESIRED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

Having determined that there was good reason to establish pastoral care services for ministers, and having suggested some directions in which that program might go, the next step in the study demonstrated that identifiable and measurable outcomes could be determined at the setting up stage, and that, with appropriate evaluation strategies in place, sponsors and stakeholders would be able to decide about the on-going viability of the service.

5.1 Introduction

The first concern here was to consider in some detail the kinds of behavioural outcomes that ought to be achieved as a result of providing a system of Pastoral Care for ministers. These would effectively become the objectives of the program and the intention of this question was to develop some objectives for the Pastoral Care System as it was established within Churches of Christ.

Phelan (1990) looked at six indicator areas to assess the what stressors and issues of concern ministers were experiencing. These were concerns, ministry issues, mood traits, life changes, trust in other people and optimism. Various instruments were used to measure these and together they provided a profile of the stressors being experienced. Consideration of these aided in the definition of the desired outcomes of an effective program of pastoral care for ministers.
The final step of the study was to develop some evaluation strategies that would enable those responsible in the church to see the extent to which those outcomes had been achieved. Evaluation, in fact, had been the missing factor in existing studies about developing pastoral care services for ministers. Pryor (1986) and Blaikie (1979) both talked about the pressures that existed for ministers, and the need for the church to provide some mechanisms to ameliorate them, but neither talked of the need to build into those mechanisms an ability to review and assess their effectiveness. Even Phelan (1990), who made some recommendations about structural change that might assist ministers, gave no indication of how it might be determined that those changes had had the desired effect.

5.2 Behavioural Outcomes

In considering an appropriate definition of Pastoral Care for this study, it was concluded in Chapter 2 that:

The pastoral care of care-givers is an activity directed at their personal and spiritual well-being in all spheres of their lives and is aimed at facilitating as full an integration as possible of faith, calling and function in the work they do.

In discussing the factors influencing what pastoral care services for ministers might be established in Chapter 4, it was concluded that as employers, churches should care for the well-being of their ministers as an expression of the core value of the church to
love one another, they had a duty of care to ensure the welfare of their employees, and they should be keen to maximise the productivity of the ministers they employ.

Thus the study arrived at a statement in 4.1.4. of what should be the basic objectives of a Pastoral Care system for ministers. Any system of Pastoral Care for ministers should be determined to:

1. Reduce the levels of stress experienced by ministers, particularly those matching a number of the profile characteristics that correlate with higher stress levels;

2. Reduce the rate of dropout from the profession.

There are sufficient instruments available to measure levels of stress for the first to be assessed with reasonable accuracy. While the second is very tangible and measurable, care needs to be taken in measuring this to determine the reasons for dropout. Some may very legitimately leave the profession and yet have a strong sense of having been cared for by the denominational structures and the local church. In other words, dropout may not be directly related to stress or a lack of pastoral care for a minister.

In many of the studies cited so far, there was an implicit assumption that stress was the root cause of ministerial dysfunction, and that alleviating those stressors would contribute significantly to overcoming that dysfunction. This may have been somewhat simplistic as an assumption but as has been noted in Chapter 2, work-related stressors are significant contributors to poor performance and premature departure from the profession.
Having said that, it was interesting that Phelan (1991) commented that as a whole, "ministers are not more stressed than the population at large. They are distributed on a normal curve, with the majority coping pretty well." But he also made an observation that "ministers scored much higher on the 'Exposure to Stressful Events' measure than the population at large."

It seems that ministers are adept at coping with quite high levels of emotional stress. This would seem to be similar to what one might expect for Emergency Services workers, who are daily confronted with experiences which might cause lasting trauma for those not so regularly exposed to it.

Phelan’s research concluded, however, that while ministers could and did cope with high levels of emotional stress, it was a different matter when the stressor was workload related. Constant exposure to stressful conditions turns stress into strain or chronic overload. The two major concerns that caused dissatisfaction for those ministers experiencing higher levels of stress seemed to be evidence of that:-

1. Balancing expectations and requirements of congregation/family/community;
2. Having routine activities rather than significant ones take up most time.

The stressors that had the most negative impact on ministers and their ability to cope were related to their actual work load, as well as their expectations and those of others about their work load.

In seeking to address these, with the view to deriving the objectives for the Pastoral Care system, it was necessary to devise strategies that related to three basic areas.
Achieving the desired behavioural outcomes would be dependant on effecting change in these three areas.

1. **Personal Issues**, often relating to individual circumstances as well as personality traits and behaviour patterns.

2. **Professional Issues**, such as inadequacies in basic professional skills and some of the traditions of professional practice; and

3. **Structural Issues**, such as recommended salaries and conditions, denominational structures and inter-relationships, are often causes of stress over which ministers often feel they have little control;

While it was convenient to segregate these issues, they were often inter-related. A minister who was struggling to cope with work while his children were going through high school, may have been struggling for reasons other than just the family dynamics that existed. There may have been a deficiency of structural supports. It may have been that the stipend was insufficient to cope with the financial demands of secondary schooling. If a person offering pastoral care to such a minister just focused on the individual issues such as inter-personal relationships and family dynamics, without attending to the structural issues, they would be as effective in helping as a fire-fighter would be putting cupfuls of water on a house fire.

### 5.2.1 Individual Issues

Pastoral care in this area is often both important and urgent, or a Quadrant I activity as discussed below. It involves attending to personal crises that may be workplace or
family centred, attending to problems that may be created by an individual’s personality traits, or attending to the complex interaction of a minister’s internal and external expectations.

These issues are often of the highest order. A sick person in hospital is only able to focus on the immediate task of getting well and has little capacity to attend to the minutiae of family life. Attending to these issues is necessary because they tend to overshadow all other issues. However, when a minister is in crisis, to only focus pastoral care activities on the immediate crisis might be like the chicken farmer illustrated in Figure 7, designing better sticking plasters for the cracked eggs, rather than designing a soft basket to catch them.

Figure 7. The Chicken Farmer
The need for careful management of the inevitable inter-play between stressors that have been identified by this and other studies becomes obvious. The ability to discern whether the particular crisis is a symptom of an underlying structural problem that needs to be attended to, or whether it is related solely to personal development issues, will be a paramount skill for anyone involved in the pastoral care of ministers.

In 4.4.1. it was recommended that a Minister’s Pastor be given primary responsibility for this area of the pastoral care program for ministers. Behavioural outcomes that could be looked for as this program becomes established are:

1. easier and perhaps earlier intervention on behalf of ministers in times of conflict with their congregations;

2. ministers reporting a greater sense connection and belonging among their colleagues;

3. Ministers’ families, especially spouses, reporting a greater sense of well being and support for them in their work by the denominational structures and by the local congregations.

Attending to these matters is attending to those things that Covey (1989) referred to as Quadrant II matters. His work was concerned with making a connection between Time Management and personal and organisational Mission Statements. He proposed a matrix to illustrate the categories of things we spend our time on.
Covey stressed the importance of attending to those things in Quadrant II, things that were not urgent, not deadline-driven, but that were important. These things were like preventative maintenance activities that are done in order to prevent crises occurring in the future. If the church, both at a congregational and denominational level, attended to these structural issues, then it is fair to predict that there would be fewer individual crises for ministers.

### 5.2.2 Professional Issues

The studies by Phelan (1990) and Phelan and Regan (1991) indicated that many ministers felt they could benefit from some professional development in some of the basic skills of time management and conflict resolution. Ministers also felt that it was a
struggle to maintain their personal and spiritual development in the midst of the many competing claims on their time.

Training in these areas could well be built into Ministerial Training programs but attention needs also to be given to those who have already graduated without being given these skills. In-service training in these and other areas of professional skill development could be a valuable contribution to the pastoral care of ministers, reducing stressors related to lack of confidence and competence. There could be added value for the churches and ministers if the training could be structured into some form of post-graduate award, as suggested in 4.3.4. that recognises the minister's commitment to on-going training and professional development.

The issue of spiritual development could be difficult to attend to in some respects because of the spiritual culture of Churches of Christ which is fairly individualistic and devoid of such features as spiritual directors which are well accepted in other traditions of the church. However, there is a growing openness among ministers to the ancient traditions of spiritual disciplines such as spiritual directors, retreats and prayer and fasting. Indeed, at a recent Annual Minister's Camp, one minister was asked to run a workshop on meditation, which he reluctantly agreed to do. To his surprise, nearly a quarter of the participants chose to do this workshop, and have requested more since. It may be that with some effort on the part of the Churches of Christ Department of Ministry & Training, the spiritual culture may be gradually changed.

Churches of Christ in WA have already recognised the importance of networking among ministers as a mechanism of pastoral care. It seems to be a characteristic of
ministry among Churches of Christ that it is a solitary life. A colleague may be working just a few kilometres away but ministers rarely got together for friendship and mutual support.

There is a some collegiality among graduates from each of the theological colleges from which ministers come, but this is generally with those who shared some or all of their time together at theological college.

In response to this, in 1991 the Department of Ministry & Training established regional groupings in the metropolitan area, and acted to invigorate similar groups in country regions. These groupings brought together about 15 ministers for regular times of interaction and mutual support. Most groups meet quarterly, but some groups meet monthly. Some groups have used such gatherings as opportunities to consider some professional issues together. Others have used the time for prayer and mutual support. In either case, it is clear that a significant proportion of ministers take advantage of these gatherings - not all, but certainly half to three quarters.

Behavioural outcomes that could be looked for as a result of the implementation of such program directions would be:

1. an increased number of ministers involved in professional development workshops organised by the Ministers Association or the Ministry Training Centre, or even in general courses at universities and TAFE colleges;
2. increased participation in the regional network meetings and a growing involvement in retreat days and similar events as organised.
5.2.3 Structural Issues

In 4.2, three areas of activity at the structural level were identified and recommended. The first related to training church members in the business of recruiting and managing staff; the second related to targeting high-risk profile ministers for special attention and support, and the third was directed at enhancing healthy working relationships between ministers and “head office”. Attention to each of these would lead to tangible behavioural outcomes.

With regard to the training of church members about staff management, the expected outcomes of an effective training program would be:

1. more competent and confident church members recruiting staff;
2. ministers feeling more confident about the selection processes;
3. greater likelihood of a better match when appointments are made, evidenced by fewer short tenure appointments, or appointments being terminated early.

With regard to support services for ministers with high risk profiles, the expected outcomes would be:

1. a general improvement in reported welfare of ministers in this category, ie. that fewer report working under high stress levels;
2. fewer dropouts from people in this category;
3. greater sense of camaraderie among this group.

Finally with regard to relationships between ministers and “head office” staff, the expected outcomes would be:
1. better working conditions for ministers that ultimately leads to higher morale;

2. a healthier workforce that is spending less time sick.

5.3 Evaluation Strategy

Having determined the basic outcomes or objectives that should be striven for in providing Pastoral care services to ministers, and having demonstrated the need to attend to achieving these in three particular spheres that would have various impacts on ministers, the study gave consideration to the development of an appropriate evaluation strategy.

Chelimsky, (1978), proposed a number of reasons for undertaking evaluations:

- for management and administrative purposes
- to assess the appropriateness of program changes
- to identify ways to improve the delivery of services or interventions
- to meet the accountability requirements of funding groups
- for planning and policy purposes
- to test innovative ideas on how to deal with particular problems
- to decide whether to expand or curtail programs
- to support the advocacy of one program over another
- to test a particular social science hypothesis or a principle of professional practice
Because the provision of Pastoral Care for ministers in Churches of Christ is a new and innovative approach by the organisation in response to the needs of the ministry cohort, with the exception of perhaps the last two, evaluation is appropriate for all the above reasons.

However, as stated in the introduction to this chapter, the fundamental reason for proposing that evaluations be undertaken was to determine the extent to which the desired outcomes of the program of Pastoral Care had been achieved. Those outcomes had been proposed in terms of behavioural outcomes and had been reduced to two basic propositions:

1. to reduce the levels of stress being experienced by ministers;
2. to reduce the rate of dropout from the profession.

In order to determine the extent to which those objectives had been achieved at some time in the future, the first step in evaluation is to establish the benchmarks, ie. describe the current situation in order to see how much change has been effected by providing the Pastoral Care services.

Rossi & Freeman (1989) provided a systematic approach to different forms of evaluation and the stages in the life of a project at which different forms of evaluation could and should be applied. This work echoed the pattern demonstrated by Newman (1987) in his very practical handbook for Human Service Organisations. They each suggested that there are forms of evaluation that can guide the decisions that need to be made at the different stages of a project as illustrated in Figure 9, from Newman, p.8.
Evaluation can be done before a project is even conceived. This would be like a needs analysis that tested the market-place to see what needs were not being met. Rossi & Freeman (1989) referred to this as diagnosing social conditions and needs, while Newman (1987) called it identifying the mission. In the light of such market surveys, decisions could be made about the design of appropriate programs or interventions.

There is a sense in which this study has sought to bring together a number of diagnostic studies to enable a conclusion to be drawn about the need for pastoral care services for ministers. The studies referred to, for the most part, did not themselves lead to this conclusion. That has been a function of this study.

Another important function of such preliminary evaluation is to establish the benchmarks referred to above, stating in measurable terms the current situation. When
later evaluations put findings alongside these they demonstrate the effect, for good or ill, of the program or intervention that had been devised.

Having made decisions about the directions in which service provision needs to be made, somewhere, early on in the life of the program, the next stage of evaluation needs to confirm that appropriate choices were made, and that the program is achieving the desired results and coverage. This is an important step in the early stages of any program, and can create opportunities to fine-tune the activities, making minor adjustments to the original design so that the objectives are more effectively achieved.

Further evaluation is needed along the way with any program. This enables program managers or the relevant stakeholders to monitor the progress of the program, confirming the program's coverage, impact and efficiency. This form of evaluation provides valuable data that can be added to what will be the most important evaluation, in terms of the continuing life of the program.

Towards the end of the agreed funding period for a program, an impact assessment needs to be conducted. Such an evaluation will assess the impact of the program, based on the benchmarks established at the start of the program and compared with the objectives for the program that were formulated. After such an impact assessment has been conducted, decisions can be made about the future of the program. The necessary questions at this stage will be:
1. Did anything change?

2. Could more have been achieved?

3. If the program is to continue, should it be changed in any way? etc.

Such a cycle of evaluation enables a program to be constantly responsive to changing needs or circumstances, and provides the basis for the recommendations about evaluation that follow.

5.3.1 Pre-evaluation

Farmer (1989), made some assertions about the rate of dropout from the profession. His observations had a somewhat limited application given that there was no indication of which states were involved in that part of the study and whether the dropout rate was uniform or not. In order to determine the current situation, with regard to dropouts rates, particularly in Western Australia, some study will need to be conducted to determine the situation retrospectively. This exercise could be done with a focus only on the situation in Western Australia. However, there might be some comparative value if simultaneous studies were done of other states, perhaps all of Australia. To be of any significant value, this part of the study would need to look back over at least ten years so that any trends could be identified. Further value would be added if resources and time were available to track down those who have dropped out and enquire about their experience and their reasons for departing. John Mark Ministries might be a good source of trialled survey instruments to that end.
Two further figures that could be enquired into as a parallel to this is the number of graduates from the three denominational seminaries for each of these years and the number of newly established congregations for each of these years. This would demonstrate a positive or an inverse relationship between these trends, and changes in one or the other may be indicators for future trends.

This step would establish an important benchmark. For example, it might be the case that over the past ten years there was an average of five ministers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement during the first five years, and that the number was increasing gradually during the last five years. If it was then demonstrable that three years after the establishment of a formal pastoral care system, the trend had changed downward, the desired effect had been achieved by the interventions.

Another step that could be taken at this pre-evaluation stage which would establish valuable benchmarks for the future evaluation of the pastoral care system would be to replicate Phelan’s study of Victoria and New South Wales in Western Australia. The focus of these studies, it was noted above, was on stress issues for the ministers and a variety of instruments were used to determine various factors of stress. In reporting on the second study, some value was found in the ability to make comparisons between the results from Victoria and those from New South Wales.

In the context of starting up new services in Western Australia, a replication of those studies would not only provide a benchmark of stress levels, but also an indication of the extent to which the situation is similar or different for ministers here. This step would also contribute to possible future study, referred to in Chapter 1, that might
involve the study being conducted also in South Australia and Queensland. Preliminary discussions with Phelan about such a possibility indicated that it would be quite possible for the survey instrument to be administered here and analysed by him in Victoria.

When the first study was being prepared for replication in New South Wales, some of the items were slightly modified in order to reflect local circumstances. A similar step could be taken in this instance, reflecting both the local circumstances and the particular ends of this evaluation.

These two steps would be valuable steps in determining the pre-existing situation so that it would be possible to determine how effective any interventions had been. The two different forms of evaluation address specifically the desired outcomes of the interventions, so that any data collected will be applicable.

It is worth commenting here on the current situation in Churches of Christ in WA. When this study was first proposed, the relevant committees within the denominational structure were merely considering anecdotal data about problems in ministry, and looking at how other states had responded to the situation. It was thought, at the time, that the findings of this study might have been valuable in guiding decisions that might be made about possible responses to the pastoral care needs of ministers.

The conclusion of this study has been somewhat pre-empted by the appointment of a “Ministers’ Pastor” in February 1995 to provide pastoral care to parish ministers, chaplains, retired ministers and their families. This group probably constitutes the
largest parish in Churches of Christ, comprising about 130 married couples and their children and 8 single ministers or chaplains, spread from Albany in the south to Derby in the north, and from the west coast eastwards to Kalgoorlie and Esperance.

Given that fact, the Pre-evaluation strategies outlined above could almost be regarded as Formative, and able to assist in the fine-tuning of the already established program. However, the absence of the benchmark indicators that true Pre-evaluations would have given leads to the conclusion that there is still value in determining them. It is one way that the sponsors of the program will be able to assess objectively the effectiveness of it.

5.3.2 Formative Study

Formative studies assess the conduct of programs in their early stages so that program strengths and weaknesses can be identified and specific plans made for program improvements. This is fundamental to any management cycle (Newman, 1987) and needs to be applied through the life of a program. In the context of this study, the focus of this evaluation tool is to determine, early in the life of the program if impacts are being made by the program in the right general direction.

In the same way that pilot surveys help determine whether an instrument is gathering the data that is being sought, a formative evaluation can help indicate the effectiveness of the implementation of a program in its early stages. This is a monitoring and an accountability process and its primary purposes are:
1. Ensuring that the program has been implemented effectively using all the resources that are available to it in the most efficient ways possible.

2. Providing sponsors and stakeholders with evidence that what was paid for is indeed under way and beginning to have the desired results.

3. Ensuring that in the implementation of the program it has not been derailed or diverted towards other ends than those originally intended.

The questions that need to be answered at this stage are:

- Is the program reaching the specified target population?
- Are the intervention efforts being conducted as specified in the program design? (Rossi & Freeman, 1989).

The objectives for this stage of program evaluation could be achieved by surveying a small stratified sample of the target population. By this mechanism, it would be possible to see whether country ministers were receiving satisfactory contact from the Ministers' Pastor, whether those in first ministries were being reached and whether expectations generally were being met.

The data obtained in this way needs to be able to influence the delivery of the services to ministers, fine-tuning the program so that it achieves, so far as possible, maximum coverage and effectiveness, especially among those ministers who matched with two or more of the profile characteristics identified by Phelan (1990) as being associated with high levels of stress.
5.3.3 Cross-sectional Monitoring

The next, and final stage of the evaluation process to be considered here is related to on-going monitoring, as distinct from the start-up monitoring described above. This form of monitoring can have several focal points and forms, but it is essential for maintaining the on-going effectiveness and responsiveness of the program.

Sometimes, after the effective implementation of a program, it can develop a life of its own and tend towards meeting its own ends rather than those intended when it was implemented. On-going monitoring is essential for both those sponsoring the program and those managing it to maintain the focus of the program and determining the need to amend the objectives of the program in response to changing circumstances.

Rossi & Freeman, (1989: p49ff), suggest that there be three basic concerns in such evaluations and that they be obtained from appropriate cross-sections of the target populations. These are coverage, impact, and efficiency. Data about these factors are important along the way, but most important when the sponsors are trying to determine whether to continue funding a program beyond its initial period.

The issue of coverage is self-explanatory. Programs frequently are at risk of missing sections of their target population. Such gaps need to be identified so that they can be redressed in a change of approach to delivery.
It could be reasonably anticipated that this will be a significant matter for this program. Given that one person has been charged with responsibility for the Pastoral Care of ministers and their families living in an area reaching to the extremities of the state, it is conceivable that coverage may not always be optimum. This needs to be monitored constantly. The ability or otherwise to maintain optimum coverage may also indicate to the sponsors whether the program needs to be expanded.

In some respects, impact is the most important aspect of this stage of monitoring. An impact assessment gauges the extent to which a program causes change in the desired direction. This is the point at which the sponsors and stakeholders determine whether the outcomes identified above were actually achieved. This is also important in the context of determining the future of the program.

It is proposed that this form of evaluation take two approaches. The first, with its purpose on on-going monitoring, could rely on sample data collected from either stratified or random samples of the target population. An important part of the planning of such an impact assessment would be the development of the survey instrument. Once this was developed, it could be administered to a small sample of the target group each six to twelve months.

The most significant step in the impact assessment would be when, towards the end of the initial funding period, an exact replication of Phelan & Regan’s study would be conducted again and results put alongside those originally obtained. Given the established reliability of this study and the establishment of the benchmarks at the
beginning of the program through its application to the whole population, these findings would provide a most eloquent indication of the effectiveness of the program.

Effectiveness must always be counterbalanced by efficiency. Neither can be allowed to stand alone in determining the worth of a program. To that end, some consideration must be given to assessing the efficiency of the program. Finite resources, particularly money, but also the human and material resources that might be applied in a program, have to managed in such a way that the greatest possible results are obtained from them in the pursuit of the objectives of the program.

It is in this context that the mode of operation for the Minister’s Pastor, discussed in the previous chapter will become most important. One person can only be in one place at a time. The adoption of creative approaches to the management of the work could multiply the efficiency and effectiveness of that one person’s work. This might involve the use of volunteers, consultants and others who could be added as other forms of service delivery. Efficiency Assessments are designed to determine the extent to which such multiplying factors have been utilised.

5.4 Conclusions

Before articulating the particular recommendations that arise from this study, the outcomes of this chapter need to be re-iterated. The concern of this stage of the study was to describe the measurable outcomes, or consequences, that should be sought as a
result of the program of Pastoral Care for ministers. It was found that these could be stated quite simply:

- To reduce the levels of stress being experienced by ministers;
- To reduce the rate of dropout from the profession.

It was also found that any interventions that were developed to address these objectives, ought to tackle them from three perspectives:

- Being concerned about Structural issues;
- Being concerned about Professional issues;
- Being concerned about Individual issues.

Finally, it was found that an effective evaluation strategy involved evaluations at three different stages in the program to assess:

- Benchmarks for stress levels and dropout rates;
- The ongoing appropriateness of the program;
- The final overall value of the program.

The objective of all this is to enable the sponsors and stakeholders to determine the extent to which they should continue to fund the program. Clearly the sponsors in this case are the denominational structures of Churches of Christ in WA. The stakeholders are the cohort of ministers, who pay a premium in their Minister’s Association Membership Fee to contribute towards the service, and local congregations who make voluntary contributions to the denominational body to be specifically applied to providing this program. They have decided to invest some $35-40,000 a year into the existing cohort of ministers. It will be important for them towards the end of 1998 to
evaluate both the extent to which their objectives were achieved in the appointment of the Ministers’ Pastor, and the possible merits of continuing the program.

It might be concluded by such an evaluation that some different strategies could be considered in trying to achieve the ends. It might be concluded that, rather than appointing a Minister’s Pastor, the money could be applied to the provision of localised consultants, or paying for individuals to access professional and spiritual development programs, with equivalent or better outcomes achieved. Judgements about such questions will need to be made, and the evaluation data will be an essential aid in that decision-making process.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 An Overview

During the course of this study, a number of very distinct steps were taken. As the title of this study suggests, there were three distinct areas of concern. After some preliminary consideration of the fundamental question of what constitutes pastoral care, and what is its objective, the study sought to identify the nature and extent of the pastoral care needs of ministers.

It was clear that there were three contexts from which stressors arose or in which ministers experienced them. Some stressors were related to structural issues such as church polity, culture and traditions etc., some stressors related to professional issues such as the structure and demands of the job, and the collegial relationships between ministers, and some stressors related to personal issues such as family needs and personal inadequacies. These three contexts formed a framework for the consideration of the remaining aspects of the study.

Secondly, the study examined what factors might be influential in determining what actions could be taken to address the pastoral care needs of ministers, and then proposed various options that might be considered.
Having established the needs that exist for ministers, and having explored what actions could be taken to address those needs, the study proceeded to describe the desired outcomes of the establishment of a pastoral care program for ministers, and the establishment of an evaluation framework that would maximise the effective assessment of the worth of the program.

6.2 Recommendations

This study has been some time in its making, having begun in 1993 at a time when various officers of Churches of Christ in WA were simply considering what options could be pursued to provide pastoral care for ministers. It was initially thought that this study might be able to guide the people involved in deciding what to do and how to do it, and to guide them in such a way that they would avoid some of the perceived shortcomings of the pastoral care systems for ministers that have been set up elsewhere.

The findings of this study were somewhat pre-empted by the appointment of a person as the Ministers' Pastor from the beginning of 1995. At that time this study was nowhere near complete. These recommendations, then, are somewhat post ipso facto, but they are worth articulating as a concluding section of this study.
6.2.1 That a person be appointed to ensure that the pastoral care needs of ministers in Churches of Christ in WA are attended to.

Such work is inevitably going to centre around a person attending to it. Committees, even Working Groups, are notoriously unproductive in such matters. What is needed here is a person who has a heart for the needs of ministers, who is highly regarded for their integrity and trustworthiness and who can cope with the broader issues and develop strategies to attend to them.

As an attempt to make some comment on the kinds of qualities such a person should have, the following have to be considered:

- The person should be widely known and respected as someone with integrity.
- The person should be a qualified and experienced minister. At one time, in Victoria, they used a clinical psychologist for this role. This could be feasible but such a person might lack credibility, being perceived as not really understanding what the minister’s lot is.
- The person should be skilled as a listener and advocate.
- The person should be effective in managing themselves, the variable demands of the position, and the administrative aspects of the job.
- The person should be able to think and operate strategically, conceptualising the big-picture issues and translating them into policy and action.
6.2.2 That the relevant committees within the Association of Churches of Christ in WA consider, in the light of this study, what they believe the desired outcomes of a program of pastoral care for ministers should be.

The objectives established by the study would at least make a good starting point for those managing the Pastoral Care program. This recommendation invites those involved to give close attention to what they perceive to be the pivotal objectives that should be striven for. What is offered to them in this study is a starting point and a framework from which they might develop their own conclusions.

6.2.3 That appropriate bench-marking, program monitoring and impact analysis studies be conducted within Churches of Christ in WA, to ensure that appropriate data is gathered to determine the future of the program.

The study identified these three aspects of evaluation as integral to establishing and maintaining a viable and valuable Pastoral Care program. Given that this aspect constitutes the unique contribution this study makes to the field of pastoral care for ministers, this is a pivotal recommendation.
6.2.4 That Churches of Christ examine ways in which the evaluation strategy outlined in this study can be implemented.

The evaluation strategy outlined in this study does add some cost to the Pastoral Care program, especially if it is to be done properly. Research grants may well be able to be accessed, or special purpose funds held in trust. Much of the work could be handled administratively through the denominational office.

The study is indeed complete, and it has succeeded in its objective of making a unique contribution to this field. The benefits of this work should be applicable in more than just the context of Churches of Christ in WA. Its findings should lead to a much more effective approach to offering pastoral care to all who serve the church as ministers.
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