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Emotional Damage in Pastoral Ministry: Contributing Factors and Effect on Pastors' Performance.

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Abstract

This study examined the contributing factors to the emotional damage resulting from ministry demands that leave pastors stressed depressed due to burnout that affects pastors' performance at the Central Kenya Conference. A descriptive research design using the Phenomenological method was adopted. The study targeted 40 district pastors out of 201 within the eight stations in the conference and eight pastors' representatives. The research utilised interviews and questionnaires as protocols for collecting data. Five (5) participants from every eight stations were purposively selected. The questionnaire was then administered to the participants who had been selected. Additionally, interviews were done with the representation of eight pastors' as informants to deduce their particular views and perspectives on emotional damage. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was adopted in analysing the data. In the analysis process, several themes emerged that describe what causes emotional damage among the pastors: 1) Failure to receive forgiveness, 2) failure to forgive, 3) ministerial stress, 4) seeking a position, 5) financial challenges, 6) personal influence, 7) loneliness, 8) distraction and conflict, 9) ministerial placement, 10) anger This paper recommends ways pastors can experience emotional healing to improve their pastoral effectiveness.

Key Terms: Emotional damage, pastor's performance, pastoral ministry, emotional healing and pastoral effectiveness.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Although God's emotions are not explicit from the onset of creation, the step of creating human beings in His image (Gen 1:26, 27; 9:6) is from the scriptures. This implies that God was satisfied with creation, but he was happy with all he created by affirming it was good. Everything to be good displays God's emotions of joy and happiness. This is evident in Genesis 1 and 2, Adam and Eve displayed emotions of joy and happiness. For instance, when God presented Eve to Adam, he could not hide his feelings of pleasure (Gen 2:23). Likewise, his emotional outburst of happiness dribbled with excitement could not be hidden from Adam. Another occasion Adam was emotionally excited is when he saw the fruits of the tree was pleasant and good for food... " (v. 9 ESV).

Their disobedience ruined their pre-fall emotions of happiness and joy that reflected slalom's environment, eating the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:6). As a result, shame replaced God's love, peace, fun, and happiness in their lives (verse.7). This verse appears to state that shame is an emotion that develops into fear, a negative fear that made both "... the man and his wife hide from the presences of the LORD God..." (v.8). Covering themselves with leaves and running from God's presence insinuates being emotionally wounded or damaged. Damaged emotions trace their roots to the beginning of Sin, which robbed Adam and Eve of joy and happiness, leading them to regrets and disappointments (Genesis 3). The presence of sin infected every faculty; happiness turned into bitterness, joy into anger, peace into grief, love into hatred (Genesis 4). Resentment, anger and hatred led Cain to kill Abel (Gen 4:8). Williams (2003) argues that the first murder in Genesis 4 in context is an expression of ungodly emotion: sinful envy and unrighteous anger. This verse renders anger as a strong feeling of the unmet needs or expectations (Burwick, 1985; Chapman (1999).

Borrowing a leave from Cain's inability to manage his emotions associated with bitterness, anger and hatred are clear that pastors' failure to control their emotions will hurt themselves and others in their pastoral practice. Hurts and resentment lead to emotional damage that is destructive to human relationships and happiness even in the present age. Solomon says, "Each heart knows its bitterness, and no one else can share its joy." (Proverbs 14:10 NIV). He seems to suggest that only individuals can accurately assess their own emotions. However, elsewhere the Bible says that God can examine man's heart. For instance, the Psalmist says, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." (Ps 26:2). These two texts explain that the one who knows the heart is the individual himself after personal assessment, and the Lord knows what is in the human heart. The Lord knows that while pastors console and encourages others, they are equally disheartened, discouraged, low-spirited and depressed by a composite of many issues that affect them in the pastoral ministry.

Though some of today's pastors are relatively untroubled, they need help to release the pressure inherent in ministry to causes by others (Wiseman et al., 2003). He further argues that others are close running on empty, both spiritually and emotionally, and all need someone they can confide in to provide real help. Simply put, a deduction of Wiseman, pastors, like all human beings, are emotional beings that are confronted with situations that leave them emotionally wounded and, if not addressed, impede their pastoral ministry. Such unresolved

issues affect the clergy's physical, mental, spiritual, and inner person; thus, leading to emotional damage. The Psalmist exemplifies emotional damage when he said, "My heart is wounded within me." (Psalm 109:22b (NKJV). Emotional damage occurs due to an intrapersonal conflict (that relates to internal factors) or interpersonal conflict (external factors contribute to that). Emotional damage appears in manner and form those results in unhappy memories (Mbiti, 2010). As such, these wounds may need a multi-dimensional approach to heal the body, the mind, the soul, and the whole society.

Whatever the cause, forgiveness and reconciliation are unescapable that act as a vehicle to overcome hurts that produce negative emotions making one become a victim of unhealed memories of past wounds. This study analysed the following three research questions:

1. What are the contributing factors to emotional trauma/damage?
2. How does emotional damage/trauma affect pastors' performance in the pastoral ministry?
3. What strategies are used to restore emotional damage among Adventist pastors in the Central Kenya Conference

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature has been taken from all existing continents, including America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In addition, the role of emotion in human functioning and well-being has been a topic of much consideration and debate throughout the ages in secular and Christian fields of study, including philosophy, theology, biology, psychology, and psychotherapy (Kim-van Daalen, 2013). Johnson (2019) did a study in America about the African American pastors whose daily demands of ministry leave them under tremendous stress as they try to serve God's people in multiple roles in ministry. He further argued that pastors are expected to perform their duties often with superhuman perfection; ministry and life can get so crowded with emergencies and obligations that the pastors maintaining a healthy lifestyle can become unstable or cease to exist.

Stone (2010), on his part in ancillary studies conducted in America, revealed that 67 per cent of pastors experienced emotional stress at least monthly because of the nature of the works they do and only one-third of the pastors said the amount of fulfilment they get from their job is right where it should be. He further explains another study that focused on the family, which revealed that 80 per cent of pastors and 84 per cent of their spouses are discouraged or are dealing with depression. Additionally, other studies in the Southside of Jacksonville, Florida, linked Clergy's stress and depression with internal, external, and spiritual factors, while Francis Schaeffer Institute indicated that 70 per cent out of 1,050 pastors surveyed between the years 2005 and 2006 fought depression (Gauger, 2012; Krejcir, 2008).

Similar studies show that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America supports those conclusions by observing that Lutheran pastors have a depression rate three times the national average for male pastors and four times the national average for female pastors (Novak, 2008). The same was true in the Southern Baptist Convention, which shows that about 2,100 pastors and church staff suffered from depression (Osgood, 1999). In addition, the

study revealed that Catholic priests experienced more significant depression and anxiety in the same country, seven times the depression rate found in the general population (Lombardo et al., 2002).

Another study of burnout in Roman Catholic clergy in the same continent by (Harris, 2010) revealed that clergy who work one-on-one with people experienced a depression rate of 72 per cent, compared to monastic clergy, who shared a depression rate of almost forty per cent and who lived in private, removed communities, such as monasteries. Recent studies and news articles discuss the increasing number of pastors who suffer burnout and leave the ministry at 1,800 annually in the United States (Currier et al., 2019; LaVelle (2021). Similarly, it was discovered that clergy burnout is a challenge in the United States and an international sensation; research conducted in Hong Kong by 80 Chinese pastors discovered that 95 per cent of the pastors experienced burnout symptoms (Chan & Chen, 2019).

Consequently, it was also established that clergy work between 50 and 60 hours weekly has resulted in physical and emotional fatigue (Berry et al., 2012). Additionally, this study revealed that stress is attributed to pastoring a demanding congregation, the pastors' daily responsibilities of administrators, pastoral counsellors, teachers, leadership trainers, and grief counsellors, which is often overwhelming (Runcan, 2013). Moreover, Hart (2006) observed that burnout is compassion fatigue. He further argued that pastors tend to become overly involved emotionally, overextend themselves, and then feel overwhelmed by the emotional demands imposed by others. On the same subject, he argued that the more people (pastors) are responsible for, the greater the extent of burnout. Coate (1989) added that clergy stress is encapsulated in the mismatch of human need and demand and the capacity to give.

Additionally, (Kamau, 2018) contends that compassion fatigue is characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from excessive exposure to human suffering, a common phenomenon among professional care providers. She extensively researched the phenomenon among the Full Gospel Church Clergymen/women exploring the risk factors of compassion fatigue among the clergy, utilizing a sample of 14 males and three female clergy care providers from the Full Gospel Church in Nairobi whose findings established that 30.8 per cent predisposing them to compassion fatigue.

She further revealed that most of the respondents had experienced a traumatic event in the recent past and had dependents under their care, thus potentially increasing their vulnerability to compassion fatigue. She also discovered that most respondents spend between 30 to 40 hours a week providing pastoral counselling besides other duties. On average, the clergy attended about seven clients a day, which implies that clergy are exposed to compassion fatigue while providing therapy services. Finally, she suggested the need for proper support systems to buffer clergy caregivers against adverse effects of trauma care. She also sees a need for the church to consolidate and reinforce social support systems within and without the church through incentives and collaboration with social support stakeholders. Essential Theological education programs should be incorporated

in education on the relationship between compassion fatigue and helping services. Clergy should be taught strategies of disengaging from the traumatic environment without necessarily abandoning the clients.

Similarly, a study in Kenya by (Wambugu, 2013) reveals that most Kenyans seek help from pastors when in crisis. However, the pastors are inadequately trained in handling trauma; there is a need for a practice engraved in biblical principles of the spirituality of solidarity, ethics and professional competence. Lack of adequate training in those areas posed significant threats to effective pastoral caregiving in the Kenyan Church. Importantly, pastors trained in dealing with such issues will reap benefits by providing helping services. It will also contribute to the area of knowledge to counselling professionals as it brings in a rich integrated spirituality and psychological treatment.

Nevertheless, there is disagreement on the application of the term clergy burnout. Fichter (1984) claims clergy burnout does not exist, said that the problem is distress, a product of frustration, and repeated disappointment. While (Nees, 2010) differed with Fichter, arguing that stress is a part of an everyday life necessary for clergy to focus on the long-term ideals rather than the short-term stresses that rob ministers of joy in their work. Subsequently, (Bakker, 2002) tried to distinguish between stress and burnout. He observes that extroverts tend to follow the path of stress, while introverts tend to follow the path of burnout. His views were supported by a study among Baptist, Anglican and Methodist clergy. The study revealed a general population of introverts' struggle with stress accounting for forty-seven per cent, Anglican clergy at sixty per cent, Baptist clergy at fifty-eight per cent, and Methodist clergy at fifty-one per cent. This proposes then that majority of clergy struggle from stress expressed through burnout.

A study in Brazil shows Catholic priests, in their pastoral work, are under constant scrutiny, experience a myriad of stressors, face countless demands and unrealistic expectations and are surrounded by an increasingly secular culture that is less supportive. As a result, priests may encounter significant burnout levels, characterised as a syndrome resulting from insufficient responses to chronic emotional stress (De Lima Dias, 2019).

Rolph et al. (2012) conducted a study in England examining the experiences of stress among a sampled Anglican clergy serving in Wales. The study assessed the clergy's overall assessment of their present health, their understanding of the characteristics of strain, their stress cause identification within their experience of ministry, their evaluation of the levels of symptoms of anxiety within their lives, the people they call in times of stress for support, their strategy for and styles of recreation, their views on enhancing initial clergy training to equip clergy to cope with stress and their assessment of the pastoral care provision available to clergy.

He observed that the Data provided by 73 clergies (10 female and 63 male) represented a group of men and women professionally engaged and are well informed of their vocational stress-related dynamics, displaying work-overload classic signs, and are essential of and resistant to techniques that may contradict the pastoral care of stressed clergy with the management role that is acceptable of the Church's hierarchy of archdeacons and

bishops. Other studies also examined how ministers cope with the different ministry-related stressors. For example, Humphers-Ginther et al. (2015) conducted a statewide survey among the members of the clergy serving within the Assemblies of God church located in Minnesota to assess the current occupational burnout levels and the degree to which selected coping mechanisms are used to reduce stress. In this study, two previously validated self-report instruments were used to quantify levels of burnout and measure the use of 15 coping mechanisms.

It was established that 52 useable surveys were collected from clergy members serving in roles ranging from Senior Pastor to Missionary. It was found that a total of 65.4 per cent of the sample bordered on burnout or experiencing some level of burnout. The most commonly noted coping strategies used among the selection included “Religious Coping” and “Planning”. Differences in coping strategy use were found between those who are and are not experiencing some level of burnout. Few other studies have addressed burnout among Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) clergy. Therefore, a quantitative research design was adopted for an ex post facto analysis of 130 pastors from the Pacific Union Conference completing two questionnaires: the Pastoral Services Demographic Data Sheet (PSDDS) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) that revealed that many Seventh-day Day Adventist ministers were reported to experience high stress in their ministries. They found it difficult to function optimally under these circumstances (Edwards, 2003).

In North America, a similar study on SDA Pastors examined the types of stress among the Seventh-day Adventist clergy (Heck et al., 2018). They discovered that clergy stress among a sampled 261 Seventh-day Adventist pastors included: 1) lack of social support, 2) financial stress, and 3) time and workload stress. In addition, they observed that in terms of coping strategies, pastors sought relief most often through: a) reflective growth/internal change; b) social/emotional coping; c) passive coping; and lastly d) action-oriented coping. Significant correlational relationships existed between passive coping and financial stress, relocating stress, and congregational stress.

In addition, they found significant inverse correlations between coping through reflective growth or internal change and relocating stress and congregational stress. There were no meaningful relationships with action coping or social/emotional coping and any stressor. Multi-regression analysis reveals that passive coping strategies were significantly related to financial stress. Thus, the greater the financial strain, the more likely pastors were to engage in passive coping strategies. Other coping strategies showed no significant relationships when included in multi-regression analysis. They concluded with recommendations for Church administrators to address structures and practices for pastors, including an expansion of coping mechanisms to help pastors handle their stress.

A study conducted in Austria reveals that diverse religious affiliation has consistently been shown to help individuals cope with adversity and stressful events (Fischer et al., (2010). He further argues that Muslims are more likely to adopt interpersonally (collective) coping strategies (seeking social support or turning to family

members). At the same time, Christians are more likely to engage in intrapersonal (individualistic) coping mechanisms, such as cognitive restructuring or reframing the event. It was observed from the literature on coping strategies that Muslims indeed tend to use an interpersonally oriented (collective) coping style when dealing with adversity. In contrast, Christians are more likely to employ intrapersonal (individualistic) strategies when facing comparable scenarios.

In the southern part of Africa, (Strümpfer et al., 1996) conducted a pilot study of 10 male Anglican priests having an individual interviewed about their roles, experiences of stress, the impact of their work on family life and problems of working for the church. Out of one hundred and ten usable sets of data (44 per cent return rate) analysed, resulting in three stressor scales: Person-role Conflict, Quantitative Workload and Role Insufficiency. A study was conducted in Kenya using census and convenience sampling, with a sample size of 131 pastors as participants. The study had shown how many Church ministers leave ministry prematurely due to burnout, which affects their commitment to the Church (Muasa, 2021). There is a relationship between Intrapersonal struggles and emotional damages/trauma. The intrapersonal has an impact on individual thoughts. Evans's (2013) view is that intrapersonal struggles occur in the mind-affecting thoughts, values, principles, and emotions. Intrapersonal struggles also involve conflict driven by values, religious beliefs, and upbringing (Turrel, 2018). Such Conflict is difficult to handle and may lead to restlessness and uneasiness and even cause depression. No one can clearly explain how intrapersonal occurs, but its adverse effect on behavioural responses speaks volumes.

These diverse effects result from the grudge of strained relationships filled with hatred, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, and divisions (Gal 5:20). This text suggests that in form, grudge (bitterness) is an attribute to the natural works of the flesh that often leads to broken relationships. Such may lead to broken relationships, disrespect, indignant behaviour, suspicion, and misunderstandings. Likewise, McSwain and Treadwell (1997) argue that misunderstandings and differences in pastoral ministry contribute to intrapersonal and interpersonal struggles, corporate blowups, and community controversies. These brawls and their forms lead to emotional brokenness, spiritual wounds, hurt, hatred, or psychological pain that needs emotional healing and consequently healed relationship.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Failure to Receive Forgiveness

Failure to receive forgiveness was one of the identified causes of the intrapersonal struggles. In particular, 65 per cent of the participants mentioned it: "Leads to restlessness and uneasiness or can even cause depression" (P 23). Another respondent had this to say, "Unwillingness or a refusal to resolve the matter implies a rejection of God's mercy as depicted in the parable of the unforgiving servant" P 5). Additionally, it was held that "refusal to forgive as a serious implication on our relationship with one another" (P 34).

One more respondent revealed that the "inability to forgive has a spiritual consequence and proof that you don't love God" (R 7). Similarly, Dahiya (2021), who conducted a study on the relationship between forgiveness

and employee happiness, held views. In this study, a cross-sectional survey was administered to a sample of 357 employees working in the Indian organisations in North India, whose results showed that forgiveness at work is positively associated with employee happiness. It also revealed that refusal to forgive leads to individual loss and ruined relationships in the workplace. Finally, McIntosh and Rima (2007) relate unforgiveness as the avenue Satan uses to gain entrance to believers' life of which we are reminded not to be ignorant (2 Cor 2:11) to this open invitation to Satan's bondage.

Failure to Forgive

Failure to forgive was another potential contributor to emotional damage among the pastors. For instance, 77 per cent of the participant say, "if they do not forgive, they give room for anger and bitterness to ruin every relationship" (P 24). Others were of the view that, "when pastors fail to forgive, they can't enjoy their pastoral ministry" (R 7). One of the participants believed that, "without forgiving you become depressed" (P 17). Another respondent thought that, "failure to forgive is a lack of spiritual maturity." (R 1). One the same vein, one participant held the position that: "failure to forgive make one miss valuable and enriching connectedness with others." (P.8). Similarly, Wohl et al. (2008) view failure to forgive as an intrapersonal self-punitive or disciplinary style in self-forgiveness and interpersonal in other-forgiveness.

Ministerial Stress

The participants' view also emerged that ministerial stress was categorised as another cause of stress among the pastors in the central Kenya Conference. In particular, 85 Percent of the pastors said, "ministerial stress leads to low moments and endless stress especially when not sure where you have been deployed" (P 13). Others thought that: "despite having good experience in serving the Lord, there were challenges related to the workload that sometimes weighed them down when performing their ministerial responsibilities" (P 3).

Additionally, one of the respondents reported that "stress in the ministry leaves the pastor exhausted, resulting in mental stress" (R 7). Another respondent added that, "this not only hurt but also discourages to some degree contemplating quitting the ministry" (P 39). Consequently (Liang, 2009) relate stress to ministerial overworks or strains due to lack of rest results in mental exhaustion.

Seeking Position

Several participants, 77 per cent, re-counted how the Pastors' fights to ascend into leadership positions hindering the pastor's and the church's growth. Similarly, 65 of the respondents reported, "the spirit of fighting for church position resulted into hatred among the pastors." (R 8). One of the participants narrated how pastors "falsely accuse and slander their colleagues among the elders and other ministers when Conference elections approach to be elected as leaders." (P 7).

Inversely, some respondents were of the view that "pastors slandering, gossiping, maligning or betraying others leave deep wounds in that individual heart." Another reported this creates conflict, tensions and divisions among

the church members, colleagues and with those in leadership.” (P 24). Molobi (2011) many tensions, divisions and breakaways within the AIC resulted from spiritual, doctrinal differences, internal politics and financial squabbles. He also alluded that some joined the church with ulterior spiritual and physical motives, depending on their interests.

One Participant reported, “The members who headed to court after church elections in Central Kenya Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist church were disappointed when their candidates were not re-elected.” (P 33). One of the respondents in the nomination committee reported that “there were threats in the nomination committee that if some individuals were not leadership position, they would proceed to Court” (R 5). Matshobane et al. (2018), how power struggles become contentious in the Pentecostal church to a point where members took each other to legal courts, ending in multiple schisms that tarnish the image of the Pentecostal movement. Most literature on church conflicts approaches power struggles as caused by personality disorders. Some result from structural factors rather than personal ones emanating from a hybrid nature of polity in the Pentecostal church and other structural elements of conflict like finances, education, and leadership.

Equally, in Kenya, Seventh-day Adventists is not immune to leadership struggles. Those who went argued to be representing the interest of those who were dropped from leadership positions (Otieno et al., 2015). He further argued that such made several petitions seeking orders to stop those elected not to assuming Office. He wrote several petitions [have been written] arguing unless urgent remedies are in place. The SDA church is on the self-destruction path, claiming that delegates were manipulated during the electoral process.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognises that the call to gospel ministry is not to bestow special privileges or positions but to live a life of devotion and service to God. God qualifies one to a higher position and knows the worth of each person who holds a leadership position. Promotion is God’s business, not ours. The Psalmist says that promotion comes from God, and he determines who takes leadership place (Ps 75:6-7 KJV). In other words, when one leaves promotion to God, there will be no politics in the pastoral ministry. The spirit of hatred and ambition among the pastors during the church elections will die; no one will ever fight for a position to unseat the leaders in the Conference. Instead, there will be false accusations and slandering among fellow ministers when Conference elections approach or going to court when one is relieved of their responsibility.

Financial Challenges

On finance, 55 per cent of respondents reported that financial stress is a chronic stressor among many clergies and their families. One of the participants said that, “clergy are underpaid and as a result lives beyond their means leaving them vulnerable in their ministry” (p 25). Similarly, one of the respondents reported, “it is painful when a pastor cannot manage his/her finances well” (R 6). It was also reported that pastors with financial burdens “do not set a good example to the flock” (R 3).

Another said, “Pastors borrowing from members may strain their relationship with others” (p 19). Those among the respondents felt that “when such members have spiritual challenges, a pastor may show open favouritism,

which is a big trap for many pastors in the ministry” (R 3). Apart from lack of social support, financial stress is real among the pastors (Heck et al., 2018 & Omungo et al., 2020).

Personal Influence

In the analysis process, 63 per cent of the respondents reported that pastors misuse their influence. In comparison, 97 per cent of the participants’ narrated how pastors use their power and authority in the pulpit. For example, one participant said that “whether out of the pulpit or on, should be ministers in word and doctrine and be patterns of good works” (p 18). Also, one respondent that “pastors in the pulpit and other settings, they should be a living preacher” (R 1). Moreover, “a pastor can accomplish more by his godly example than by merely preaching in the pulpit” P 13).

Likewise, random samples among the Catholic priests show how bishops use their power and status to subordinates. In contrast, respondents had concerns about the misuse of power by their bishops (Kane, 2017). In addition, Doukhan (2014) warns leaders of the temptation to abuse power or assume powers over others. In addition, Sanou (2021) advises leaders on how to avoid falling into the temptation of abusing power or assuming superiority over others; they should conceptualise leadership as a call to selflessly serve others. He further says that God, who serve humans with all they need for their wellbeing, should be the vocation of every Christian leader. In his argument, he depicts Christ’s example who set the tone for using power and authority in spiritual leadership by calling His disciples to find greatness through servant hood, pointing to the fact that He came to give service but not to receive it (Matthew 20:28).

1) Loneliness

On loneliness, 78 per cent of the participant reported loneliness as one of the causes of distress in the pastoral ministry. In comparison, 62 per cent of the respondents attributed loneliness to burnout trying to balance leadership and family demands. One of the participants said, “Why we do not develop close friendships among ourselves as pastors are lacking formative modelling ministers.” (P 22). Another participant was of the view that, “clergy isolating themselves from the rest results from betrayal by colleagues or by the members among the congregation to their supervisors” (P 12). It was also evident from one of the participations that, “some pastors’ developed a loner tendency due to wounds from the past that compel them to put a barrier with other colleagues.” (P 39).

In the same vein, (Exantus 2012) discovered through research conducted by the Barna Group in 2006 that examined why pastors struggle with their interaction with others. The result revealed why pastors struggle with personal relationships like other adults in society. This study was conducted on Southern Baptist pastors in the Central Florida region, also known as Greater Orlando, which comprises counties often included in Central Florida demographics. The study depicted that 61 per cent of the pastors admitted that they have few close friends; one in every six of them feels unappreciated. He further observed that they also dealt with family problems.

According to the results, one in every five contended that they are currently dealing with a challenging situation, thus affecting their morale in their pastoral ministry environment.

Distraction and Conflict

On distraction and conflict, 98 per cent of the participants reported that conflict among pastors could cause clergy stress. Some respondents noted, “Conflict affects their response to their call.” (R 3). The participants, on their part, said that “unresolved conflict negatively affects their relationship with each other in the ministry and their families.” (P 16). Tanya (2007) contended that “79 per cent of pastors say critics distract them as they perform their pastoral ministry and 48 per cent of pastors say conflict among staff and lay leaders is a significant distraction.”

Ministerial Placement

On ministerial placement, 69 per cent of the participant viewed pastoral placement as a reward. They reported that the leaders often transfer pastors, especially when they perceive them as rivals or a leadership threat. However, there was a mixed response on ministerial placement. Some participants “perceived transfer as punitive” (P 23), while there those “whatever the situation, perceived ministerial placement gave them a new experience serving in different cultures and environments.” (P 5). Edström and Galbraith (1994) argue that organisations use transfers to maintain or develop an organisational structure where leaders believe that to succeed; one must affect individual behaviour and assure that the change in personal behaviour will have an organisational impact. One of the respondents reported, “He does not believe that pastors are transferred to punish them.” (R 6).

Transfer viewed positively has missional implications in service utilising one’s talents and skills. Murugesan (2011) views transfer as “a lateral shift causing movement of individuals from one position or geographical area to another without involving a change in duties, responsibilities, skills needed or compensation.” In other words, the transfer is more of talents and skills that the individual possesses in the ministry and, if well placed, is a blessing to the organisation.

Anger

From the analysis, 78 per cent of the participant viewed anger as an intense feeling in response to frustration, hurt, disappointment or threat. Consequently, 83 per cent of the respondent viewed anger as a response to threat any form of betrayal, which prompt an individuals’ fight in defence of what they term as violated rights. One participant concurred that “anger develops when the brain interprets an experience to mean threatened, insulted or when senses danger, reacts in self-defence.” (P 11). Platt (2005) presents the positive and negative of anger. The benefits include overcoming fears and building confidence to respond to danger or threats, which leads to a fight or flight response. In contrast, disadvantages of anger consist of excess anger serving as a numbing agent emotionally and cognitively. He further indicates that a failure to recognise and understand our

levels of anger leads to problems. In addition, research has revealed that anger is correlated with heart disease (Kam, 2009).

Similarly, (Gehman 2008) view anger as a cause of emotional damage. He further stated that many toxic emotions spring out of anger, including mild annoyance, irritation, exasperation, frustration, bitterness, hurt feelings, resentment, withdrawal, brooding, depression, and violent rage. It is clear that anger destroys friendship, breaks relationships, destroys others, or destroys oneself. Anger also energises a person to retaliate or cherish the thoughts of revenge about the perceived enemy. On the other hand, (Kassinove 2019) associates' anger with negative feelings, thoughts, physiological arousal, and maladaptive behaviour that develops in response to unwanted actions perceived as disrespectful, demeaning, threatening, or neglectful.

Solomon says one-way overcoming anger is to be slow to it (Prov.14:29) because a person who is slow to anger quiets contention (Prov. 15; 18). The scripture states that he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he rules his spirit than he who takes a city (Prov. 16:32). He also says a person of good sense should not make friendship with an angry man, nor walk with a wrathful man, lest he learns his ways and be entangled into a snare (Prov 19:11; 22:24f). Lastly, Solomon says, "Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools (Eccl 7:9).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions: Given the findings above, the following conclusions are made. Failure to receive forgiveness is a serious implication in the life of the clergy. It implies a rejection of God's mercy resulting in a ruined relationship between God and others. Further consequences prove that the person who does not accept forgiveness does not love God. Refusal to forgive leads to individual loss, which opens the door to lead in self-destruction. Failure to forgive not only contributes to emotional damage among the pastors; indeed, when you fail to forgive, you also give room to Satan to plant bitterness in your life, ruining all relationships. Another emotional damage cause is ministerial stress, leading to low moments and endless stress. Such stress affects the minister's performance in their pastoral responsibilities. Financial challenges are a chronic stressor among many clergies and their families. This may lead to pastors borrowing from members, thus straining their relationship resulting in favouritism, a big trap for many pastors in the ministry. Personal Influence, especially by the leaders, is a source of stress to pastors. Applying personal influence, among others, is not an abuse of authority; it does not set a good example in word and doctrine in the ministry and the leadership.

Consequently, loneliness is not only a cause of distress in the pastoral ministry; it isolates one from others, particularly when one senses betrayal by other colleagues. It makes it difficult for one to interact with others. It is also difficult to have close friends and feel that one appreciates them. It may result in low morale in the pastoral ministry. Distraction and conflict could contribute to clergy's stress, especially unresolved conflict. Such conflict negatively affects their relationship in the ministry and their families. Distraction is met to divert the pastor's attention away from their pastoral responsibilities as they perform their religious duties. Lastly, anger also

contributes to stress and emotional damage in the ministry. Anger is an intense feeling associated with frustration, hurt and disappointment. When one is threatened, they fight in defence of their violated rights. It occurs mainly when the brain interprets an experience to mean threat, insult or a sense of danger. There are two facets of anger: positive and negative.

Recommendations: The following recommendations were made. First, pastors need to consider forgiveness as a tool for emotional healing; it is the primary act by which God expresses the greatness of his glory (Exodus 34:7) and the sine qua non of Christ's atonement (Heb 9:22). It is the foundation of the new covenant (Jeremiah. 31:34; Hebrews 8:12). Consequently, it is an act of God's love, mercy, and grace. Additionally, it means to release the wrong committed to you (Ephesians 4:31-32 and Romans 5:8). It is also to remove bitterness and defilement to those around you (Hebrew 12:14-15). Moreover, for the pastors to overcome all the emotional damage/trauma and related stress challenges, there is a need to be slow to anger (Prov.14:29) because a slow to anger quiets contention (Prov. 15; 18). Finally, pastors need to seek reconciliation; it gives a pastor's audacity to have the right standing before God because reconciliation is not possible without God.

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