

**Sustainability in ministry and the
prevention of dropout for Australian
Baptist Pastors serving in local church-
based ministries.**

by
Keith Mitchell



**Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS),
University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Sydney, Australia**

March 16, 2020

Signed certificate of original authorship

I, Keith Mitchell declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctorate of Philosophy, in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

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This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Acknowledgements

A large part of my gratitude for this research is to the participants who offered their time and energy so that this study could be undertaken. Each of these people's stories is precious and has been regarded with the utmost care. These people's efforts can be remembered in posterity as they contribute to research in the area of pastoral sustainability and preventing dropout.

To my supervisor Dr. Tony Holland a big thanks for your wisdom and guidance over the time of this study. Your insights and sagacity, as I undertook this research has been invaluable.

Thanks to my wife Ruth for her support in so many ways as I undertook this important piece of work. Her ongoing love and care throughout the journey was so very much appreciated. This gratitude extends to other members of my family as well.

To my editor Erin Sessions, who conducted copyediting and proofreading in accordance with University protocol, much gratefulness is also offered.

Finally, I offer recognition to God the father whom I personally recognise as the creator of this universe, and Jesus the son as sustainer of all things. I acknowledge, ultimately, that it has been through God's Holy Spirit's power that this dissertation has been able to eventuate. To you God I say many thanks.

Abstract

The threat to society of having diminished numbers of pastors in church based ministry is too high a cost to ignore in Australia, especially considering the financial and emotional costs experienced by pastors, their families, the churches that they have served in, and the costs incurred by government agencies affected from their dropout. As a result this study has emanated out of a desire to see pastors sustained in pastoral ministry rather than dropout and experience these sorts of costs.

In this scholarship an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study was undertaken to unearth reasons for sustainability of Baptist pastors in Australia. IPA studies differ to other studies in that they involve a three-fold process in method that engages phenomenology, double hermeneutics, and idiography. As a result IPA studies tend to have small sample sizes due to their idiographic nature.

This was the first study in Australia amongst pastors that had used IPA, was the first to compare pastors who had been sustained in ministry against those that had dropped out, and was inaugural in that it was conducted by a researcher who had served in the field of study. These distinctive factors meant that rich data could be obtained for analysis. The study engaged a cohort of three Baptist pastors in Australia who had served over 10 years in church based ministry, known as Pastors In Ministry (PIMs), and compared to a second cohort of Australian Baptist pastors who had dropped out of pastoral ministry prior to serving 10 years, known as Out of Pastoral Ministry (OPMs). Through a coding process themes in this research emerged showing convergences and divergences of experience between the two cohorts. Analysis of these results found that the main contributing factors to sustainability and preventing dropout was the development of: emotional intelligence (EQ or EI), the type of social support that pastors had around them, the level of spousal support that they experienced, the approach in which personal conflict was processed, and the manner in which spiritual resources were employed. These results are unique to Australian pastors and their sustainability and now contribute to the ongoing research that is being conducted amongst pastors in Australia surrounding sustainability and preventing their dropout.

This research supports previous research that has affirmed the key to sustainability for pastors is high job satisfaction and low emotional exhaustion. It endorses this previous research by indicating that the manner in which these two factors are most likely enabled for pastors is through the contributing factors that were discovered. It draws attention for theological colleges, denominations, and other support services to focus upon EI development in people considering and currently engaged in pastoral ministry.

Glossary

In this dissertation there are various terms utilised that may not be familiar to some readers and so this glossary is included at this point of this dissertation. The following list of defined terms aims to add fluidity to the ongoing reading of this project to those not accustomed to such terms from the field of study:

Baptist Congregational System – a Baptist church is a congregational church using a governance system where ‘authority resides primarily in the local church (and is shared by laity and ministers) and ascends (for limited purposes of common action) to regional, national and inter-national institutions – such as a Baptist association (regional), a Baptist union or convention (national) and the Baptist World Alliance: but these entities cannot interfere in the exercise of the autonomy of the local church’ (Doe 2015, p. 148).

Baptist Polity – Baptist churches are considered to be ‘a community of believers in a particular place where the Word of God is preached and the ordinances of Believers’ Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are observed’ (Doe 2015, p. 150). ‘Baptist polity’ is the unique manner and way in which worship is conducted and participated in and decisions are made compared to other Denominations.

Call of God – the Call of God is generally accepted as a universal appeal by God to love him (Hillman 2008; Labberton 2014). However, there is also a secondary call that has been recognised relating to a person’s sense of identity and contribution to society. This secondary call engages a more specific sense of being directed to enter or partake in a designated role vocationally (Elangovan et al. 2010). It is this secondary understanding of ‘calling’ that has been utilised in this study, with a religious understanding that it is a divine call from God and is somewhat supernatural (Labberton 2014).

Church Plant – There are considered to be five stages in a church’s life cycle: conception, development, birth, growth, and reproduction. A church plant is where conception commences and then aims to continue through these other stages ‘with the

ultimate goal of reproducing other churches or church plants' (Malphurs 2011, p. 20). Church plants often have a different polity compared to established churches.

Denomination – This is a sub-group of a cluster of churches within the organised Christian religious movement, identified and set apart from other Denominations through certain characteristics of polity and ecclesiastical aspects. For instance the Baptist denomination is a set *body* or *form* composed of defined boundaries and 'adherents' separate to other Denominations of the Protestant movement (Richey 2013).

Ecclesiastical/ecclesiology – this is a generalised theological term in reference to Denominational church processes and ideologies concerning identifiable and visible expressions of structure, governance and spiritual expression. It is taken from the Greek word '*eklesia*' meaning public assembly of people of faith in Jesus Christ (Mounce 2006).

Hermeneutics – Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation of a text within its own context and was originally utilised in the exposition of biblical texts (Smith et al. 2009). However, through influences from the likes of Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) the exposition of texts has been expanded to other historical documents and scholarly materials so as to be closely read within their time and context of writing, now known as '*(lecture de texte)*, or textual exegesis' (Davidson 2010, p. 1).

Manse – A manse is the term utilised for a church owned home for the pastor and their family to reside in during their tenure as that church's pastoral leader. It is sometimes provided as part of a pastor's financial package of employment in that church (Cross & Livingstone 1997).

Ordination – 'Ordination itself is the process by which the vocation of individuals to serve as ministers is recognised and by which they are 'set apart' for ministry' (Doe 2015, p. 145). Either a Denomination or an individual church, will recognise a person being set apart for ordination based around certain accepted and completed parameters of training, character and spiritual leadership. These processes are unique to each Denomination.

Parachurch – this is a Christian organisation that works as an independent faith-based agency, often emanating from a particular denomination. Generally, parachurch organisations are not directly accountable to any one church congregation or denomination through authority lines. These organisations make their own decisions, and aim to work alongside church-based ministries as a type of adjunct and support structure (Willmer et al. 1998)

Resilience – There is a growing tendency in research towards the examination of resilience in vocational service. Resilience is considered as a person having ‘the competence to seek the right connections with those who are most helpful during times of stress’ (Worsley 2015, p. Kindle Location 62).

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context of Study - Religious Practitioners

The study of the sustainability of clergy is an important facet in research that could ensure retention of pastors in church-based ministry roles. ‘Sustainability’ is employed in this research as this term is an acquainted concept for Christian pastoral workers, particularly in pastoral formation through their theological training. The concept of sustainability embraces a wider aspect of life, more than just vocational service, since pastoral service is a whole-of-life occupation. The term sustainability, coming from the influence of pastoral theology, is utilised in the concept of caring for others in a pastoral sense and essentially relates to a person’s ability to endure and transcend circumstances (Clinebell & McKeever 2011). Encountering sustained pastoral leadership does not necessarily mean that a pastor is satisfied in their vocation. In considering the concept of sustainability in pastoral leadership, this study recognises that ‘Sustainability is seen as maintaining normal living while in the midst of chronic stress’ (Worsley 2015, pp. Kindle Locations 153-4). Pastoral ministry is a vocation that often encounters prolonged stress.

Pastoral theologians Clebsch & Jaekle (1983) expressed that sustainability revolves around four main concepts:

1) **Preservation**, which means to maintain a troubled person’s situation ‘by holding the line, against other threats, or further loss, or excessive retreat’ (Clebsch & Jaekle 1983, p. 44). In other words, this aspect of sustainability aims to prevent the pastor experiencing increased personal emotional turmoil or agony from overstress. Instead they are psychologically enabled to maintain where they currently are at in their disposition to avoid dropout;

2) **Consolation**, which serves in ‘helping to relieve a disconsolate person from his (*sic.*) sense of misery, even while acknowledging that the damaging or robbing experience that initiated disconsolation remains irreparable in and of itself’ (Clebsch & Jaekle 1983, p. 47). This basically surrounds the pastor being relieved from a sense of desolation that overstress can sometimes evoke and accept the pastoral ministry events that they are unable to change;

3) **Consolidation**, which is a state of being where a person takes stock of remaining resources (most likely emotional, social, and physical) and the ‘person selects out of a seeming totality of woe some foundations for reconstruction of life’ (Clebsch & Jaekle 1983, p. 47). In other words, ministry struggles are placed into a different perspective within a larger picture of pastoral existence; and,

4) **Redemption**, which is the last aspect of sustainable function, which involves a person who feels deprived, to embrace their sense of losses in life and regroup remaining resources such that they ‘begin to build an ongoing life that once more pursues its fulfilment and destiny on a new basis’ (Clebsch & Jaekle 1983, p. 48). This function essentially expects that a pastor’s positive outlook towards pastoral ministry is recovered again and they have learnt to accept sitting with an ambivalence of acknowledging the reality of losses and previous struggles that pastoral ministry has brought, and the joys and excitement that ministry can also bring from within.

There are many examples in the Bible of God’s workers being sustained in their ministry of leadership, despite not necessarily enjoying or being enriched by their experiences. Such examples recognised in the scriptures are people like Jeremiah, Jesus and Paul. Jeremiah, for instance, was a prophetic leader of his time and yet faced threat of death from various enemies like Anathoth, recorded in the book of Jeremiah (Jer. 11:18-23) (Bruce 1986), and was beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin for a time (Jer. 20:1-3) (Bruce 1986). Jesus Christ, similarly, faced both rejection from people and eventually was killed for his ministry work as recorded in the

Bible's stories from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (Bruce 1986). Paul the Apostle faced struggles in his ministry of leadership and recounted some of these challenges in his second letter to the Corinthians (2Cor. 11:23-29) (Bruce 1986). In this part of Paul's letter, he stated that he faced flogging, fear of death, beatings, being shipwrecked, dangers in various places, starvation, and a lack of clothing. From these scriptural examples, it can be seen that enjoyment and satisfaction in ministry may not always be the ultimate facet of sustainability, unless hardship and struggle are seen as a satisfying means towards achieving some other goal. In fact, adversity and suffering are reflected upon and have been recognised as expected within pastoral ministry, and so the need to prepare and assist pastors for longevity of ministry is important (Elkington 2013).

However, counter to the concept of sustainability, there are claims that clergy throughout the world, also known as ministers of religion or pastors, have been facing a crisis of vocation, surrounding a rise in dropout rates from serving in church-based ministry (Beebe 2007). Dropout, in this study, is defined as those people who, at the time of being interviewed, had left church-based ministry in pastoral leadership and either: transitioned to a different profession from Christian-based ministry; were involved in a role or function in a Christian-based organisation like a Bible College, Denominational office, or parachurch establishment; or had left to serve in a different Christian context from the church Denomination in which they commenced.

The reasons for such dropout have often been associated with a variety of interior and exterior factors creating mental and physical health issues that, in turn, leads to dropout (Muse et al. 2016). Dropout within any profession is problematic because its consequences often mean a lessened pool of workers for the roles and positions required in the future within that vocation. For instance, it was stated within a study in the Netherlands that there is international concern surrounding the dropout of nurses, including Australia, creating a shortage of nurses for the future (Bakker et al. 2018).

The vocation of church-based ministry is no exception to the phenomenon of dropout

and experience of a shortage of workers due to clergy dropout (Joynt & Dreyer 2013). Various studies of clergy have identified the effect a lack of available clergy would have on societal resources both spiritually and practically (Adams et al. 2016; Burnette 2016), and the high emotional turmoil that ensues to clergy, their families, and the churches that they have served (Lee & Fredrickson 2012; Miner 2007).

Unsubstantiated estimates in Australia by the likes of Croucher (2003), through a form of informal ethnographical research, claimed that there were over 10,000 ex-pastors in Australia back in 1991, who had dropped out of church-based ministry prior to retirement. This figure does not seem to have been updated since that year; and is not presented Denominationally, nor is it gender-specific. It is this cohort of ex-pastors that is of great concern, because Croucher (2003) claims that some of these ex-pastors have incurred irreparable damage from their ministry experiences and no longer see a continued journey in 'Christian service', or in fact have not continued faith in Christianity. One such published example of dropout is Steve Bagi and his experience towards burnout prior to dropout (Bagi 2008). In Bagi's (2008) story he recounted his journey into burnout whilst ruminating over factors that he conceived led to this outcome in his life. Bagi (2008), like other 'ex-pastors' who have dropped out of pastoral ministry, was left to find employment in another vocation and engage in re-education into another profession at his own personal expense. The costs are high for this cohort of ex-pastors and the churches that they served, as pastors attempt to re-establish themselves in new lifestyles and roles vocationally, and as churches adapt to a replacement pastor when pastors depart their church.

Burnout tends to gain a focus in research on clergy dropout but whether burnout is a leading contributor to dropout is a concept that is not definitive. Various studies undertaken throughout the world amongst clergy have tended to posit the assumption that burnout is a main contributor to clergy dropout from church-based ministry (Barnard & Curry 2012; Miner 2007; Rossetti & Rhoades 2013). However, these studies surrounding burnout amongst pastors have generally drawn upon theories and insights from the field of psychology and particularly from the area of occupational

psychology. In fact, there remains a plethora of conceptualisations for the notion of burnout and its interpretation within the context in which it is experienced (Schaufeli et al. 2009).

The meaning and measurement of burnout is often contentious and difficult to capture. Amongst research, burnout is generally defined as the result of prolonged stress leading to ‘emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (a defense mechanism by which caregivers and service providers experience emotional distance from their clients), and feelings of ineffectiveness or lack of personal accomplishment’ (Galek et al. 2011, p. 633). The concept of stress originally captured by Hans Selye [1956] and developed in the health field (Tracy 2009), is often recognised as ‘the disruption of meanings, understanding, and smooth functioning so that harm, loss or challenge is experienced, and sorrow, interpretation, or new skill acquisition is required’ (Benner & Wrubel 1989, p. 59). Admittedly, no one single definition satisfies the complexity and multi-faceted nature of stress and burnout (Irvine 1997) so for the purpose of this dissertation stress and burnout will be taken in a more phenomenological manner.

There are studies that focus on either internal aspects causing burnout through high idealism and personality aspects, or studies that focus on external factors such as work situations, organisational structure and management factors (Grosch & Olsen 2000). For instance, Miner et al. (2010), in a study surrounding clergy burnout, expressed a focus on the relationship between internal aspects of ‘internality, multidimensional burnout, and job satisfaction’. However, work by Trihub (2010) focused on burnout through external aspects such as: clergy’s lack of support services; discouragement by churches in allowing clergy to take time off; churches restricting involvement in clergy prayer groups; and churches deterring attendance at clergy retreats. Such studies ultimately aim to understand the factors causing clergy dropout as a result of burnout so that counter strategies and approaches can be recommended to reduce the occurrence of dropout (Chandler 2009). However, it has not been established that burnout is conceived of as the main contributor to clergy dropout amongst the literature.

Symptoms of burnout can overlap and encompass a range of phenomena at the scale of the individual, including ‘emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment’ (Miner et al. 2010, p. 167). So the phenomenon of burnout needs to be explored holistically and conflated with other symptoms, such as depression (Frykholm 2018), withdrawal, depersonalisation and suicidal thoughts (Kraft 2006), because it has generally been determined that burnout shares many symptoms with other health conditions. This means that overall clergy mental health and wellbeing should be recognised as important aspects surrounding causes of dropout, rather than just burnout.

It should be noted that not all dropout should be conceived as adverse. In fact the encounter of dropout for some pastors may be helpful in assisting them to avoid an encounter with burnout, depression and/or some other at risk behaviour including suicide, self-harm or suicide ideation. Therefore, a withdrawal from ministry should be recognised as an appropriate response for pastors especially if they are experiencing overbearing situations such as strained marriages, family issues, health issues, and/or other personal crisis situations. Dropout may also be an indicator to pastors themselves and others that they were not necessarily well suited to the vocational role as a pastor. Overall, attrition is a natural part of any vocation and therefore should not be treated as an unexpected occurrence particularly related to pastoral ministry.

In the USA context, since 2007 over a ten-year period, the Duke Divinity School had been collecting data surrounding the sustainability of clergy around notions of mental health and wellbeing (Proeschold-Bell & Byassee 2018). This research was generated through funding of US\$18 million (Duke Divinity School 2019). The Duke Divinity School’s initial rationale for research into clergy health revolved around pastoral well-being amongst United Methodist clergy in North Carolina currently serving in church based ministry; with attentiveness raised at the high costs in health insurance for clergy, deemed to be due to higher than average rates of obesity, coronary disease, diabetes and stress (Proeschold-bell 2011; Proeschold-Bell & Byassee 2018).

The research has been qualitatively and quantitatively based. Collection of data has engaged quantitative means surrounding pastors' physical, emotional, and spiritual health with initial data collected from administered surveys in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 (Proeschold-Bell & Byassee 2018). It should be acknowledged that this research has emanated out of physiological, sociological and spiritual factors in clergy health rather than the occurrence of burnout or overstress. Proeschold-Bell, who has been a leading researcher in this study has utilised both grounded theory and descriptive phenomenological analysis in this pervasive research program (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2011; Eagle et al., 2019; Case et al., 2020). However, most of the research in this clergy health project was quantitatively focused. Despite having a qualitative focus in its methodology, the research did not engage an ecclesiastical structure that was congregationally-based surrounding governance, or undertaken in an Australian context. Also, it did not examine clergy who had already dropped out of ministry throughout the research period or their reasons for dropout, neither was it undertaken by researchers who had experienced the field of study personally. descriptive phenomenological analysis

However, studies on burnout have continued and typically been developed and adapted from research supplied by Maslach & Jackson (1981) that utilised the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) to measure burnout experiences amongst professionals in human service industries. Research surrounding burnout in this regard has tended to recognise that burnout occurs as an accumulation of factors developed over time and left 'unattended' by a person (Kraft 2006; Schaefer & Jacobsen 2009). The definition of burnout has been identified, since its inception in literature from the 1970s, as a concept based on 'its context and the intentions of those using the term' (Schaufeli et al. 2009, p. 214). In this study, burnout has been understood as a mounting issue in a pastor's life, as a result of a failure to attend to a range of personal issues in their lives. However, this study recognises that burnout may not necessarily be the main cause of dropout in all or most clergy cases, and so this study will pay close attention to reasons for clergy dropout from Australian churches, alongside grounds for sustainability of serving in

church-based ministry. There is a burgeoning body of literature examining the reasons for clergy dropout, but there are very few that have captured the Australian context and even fewer Australian-based studies surrounding the explanation for sustainability. This dissertation, however, will provide due attention to the Australian context within a specified Denomination to assist the filling of this gap in research.

1.2 United States of America (USA) and United Kingdom (UK) Contexts Concerning Dropout

Various peer-reviewed studies amongst clergy in the world, other than Australia, have been conducted regarding dropout and utilised the assumption that stress and burnout are the reasons for clergy dropout. In the USA it was determined that at least 17-20% of Protestant ministers were facing burnout at any one time, and with another 20% facing higher than average levels of stress that could potentially lead to burnout (Wind 2001). However, details of whether these actual ministers then progressed to dropout from church-based ministry are unclear due to the lack of longitudinal approach in the studies.

Other research comprising clergy stress and burnout indicated a dropout rate of three ministers leaving church-based ministry every day amongst North American churches, including the USA and Canada (Elkington 2013). Elkington (2013), in his research, undertook a brief online review of 51 pastors from a range of countries and Denominations, including Canada, Netherlands, France, Germany, Norway, South Africa, UK and the USA. In this survey, it was considered that pastors were choosing dropout as a means of alleviating their stress (Elkington 2013). Other organisational research data, conducted without peer-review or a methodological basis, has shown that 90% of USA clergy in formal pastoral ministry roles were leaving church-based pastoral ministry before retirement age (Leading From Your Strengths July 15, 2008). Statistics provided by organisations such as The Fuller Institute, George Barna, and Pastoral Care Inc., claimed 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates who entered church-based

ministry will have left this ministry within the first five years; and that another 50% of pastors in this same cohort had considered leaving church-based ministry (Leading From Your Strengths July 15, 2008). However, the reasons for dropout were not presented. Other non-peer reviewed web-sites also discuss pastoral dropout statistics claiming varying estimates ranging between 1500 and 250 pastors attrition each month (Pastoral Care Inc. 2020; Dance 2019; Gortner 2020). These figures seem to provide: a generalised view across the USA, speak broadly across a range of Denominations, and consider both male and female together. Some of this anecdotal type research concerning dropout, it is being asserted that 'Clergy are leaving church based ministry in greater numbers than ever before' (Spencer et al. 2012 p. 1). Despite deficiency in empirical data regarding dropout of clergy across Denominations and countries, evidently there still exists dropout within the vocational area of pastors that has raised cause for concern and the need for further research (Croucher 2003; Pastoral Care Inc. 2020).

In essence, statistics espoused by various sources concerning clergy dropout amongst Protestant churches are archetypally unsubstantiated and do not necessarily present the reason why they dropped out (Stetzer 2015). However, more defined research by the likes of Rossetti & Rhoades (2013) amongst US Catholic clergy did claim that 1.5-2.3% of priests scored in the severe range for burnout; but this study did not provide dropout figures due to its lack of longitudinal investigation. Amongst Protestant clergy, Muse, Love & Christensen (2016) have recognised, through a study conducted by the Lilly Endowment, that figures comprising dropout from church-based ministry within the first five years after being ordained, were between 1-16%. This study was limited to Denominations in the USA and did not consider gender or ethnicity variances.

With the exception of Rossetti & Rhoades (2013) and Muse, Love & Christensen (2016), the USA and UK-based statistics involving clergy dropout from church-based ministry are essentially unsubstantiated numbers. The statistical variances in sources concerning clergy attrition from church-based ministry means verifiability of clergy

dropout numbers amongst UK and USA clergy is inconclusive. However, taken together, these studies do provide an indication that dropout is a concern for clergy in church-based ministry, and for the vocation, as in most human service professions (Dollard et al. 2003).

It is worth noting that despite the alarmist tone that these studies seem to have promulgated regarding pastoral dropout, they have essentially fueled further peer-reviewed studies in the area of clergy sustainability and preventing dropout. In this such studies have posited pastoral ministry as a worthwhile vocation on the world stage of social research just like other vocations such as police, nurses, and so on (Dollard et al. 2003).

1.3 Australian Context Regarding Dropout

The phenomenon of clergy dropout is not restricted to the US or UK. In Australia, for instance, clergy dropout has been identified as a concern and a small but important body of literature has been produced. For example, a 1992 survey conducted in Perth, Australia amongst a range of Denominational clergy, showed 27% of all pastors had experienced burnout, or suffered a breakdown or serious illness whilst in full-time church-based ministry (Brain 2006). A later survey conducted by Dr. Ian Hay of Brisbane's Griffith University, amongst Anglican clergy in Southern Queensland churches in 1995, claimed 45% of clergy had been bordering on burnout, with the figure at 44% for those who had been ordained for more than 15 years (Brain 2006). Despite the vintage of this research, these statistics do provide an indication of differences in Denominational issues involving clergy burnout and overstress and have essentially propagated further research amongst pastors concerning sustainability and preventing dropout. However, these figures did not provide substantiated data as to the numbers and reasons of clergy dropout.

Over previous decades, empirical research has been undertaken nationally for clergy across a range of church Denominations in Australia by Kaldor & Bullpitt (2001), through the conducting of the National Church Life Survey (NCLS). This was a nationwide and inter-Denominationally conducted survey of 4,400 ministers, pastors, priests and leaders of organisations or parishes in 1996, and the survey has evolved since. This NCLS research demonstrated that stress and burnout were pervasive factors affecting the ongoing nature of church-based ministry in Australia and were contributing to the level of dropout from church-based ministry. Amongst this cohort of participants, 21% of Anglican and other Protestant church leaders' were determined to be facing the concern of burnout, with another 56% determined as being borderline to burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001). The NCLS has been a quantitative research study piloted in Australian churches, that is now conducted every five (5) years across a range of Denominations since its inception with the 1991 NCLS survey (NCLS Research 2019b). As interesting as this study has become for Denominational leaders, it does not recount the reasons for those who have dropped out prior to the study being conducted, nor has it provided statistical data concerning numbers that have dropped out due to overstress and/or burnout.

The NCLS now examines sustainable ministry and leadership amongst a range of pastors in Australia (NCLS Research 2018). In addition to survey questions, it has now been determined that sustainability of pastoral leadership in church-based ministry is indicated around two main aspects of ministry: satisfaction and emotional exhaustion (NCLS Research 2018). At the time of writing of this dissertation, the latest survey results from Australian clergy in 2016 had not been published nor disseminated publically, due to restrictions placed on release of results by individual Denominations that were involved (NCLS Research 2019a). Informal discussions with NCLS staff indicated that individual Denominations did not want their data promulgated publically and so the data is currently inaccessible due to privacy restrictions in Australia (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) 2018). However, previous results issued by the NCLS recognised the vulnerability of clergy as they face stressors in

their profession, with indicators of risk of burnout for leaders who expressed ‘high levels of emotional exhaustion and low levels of satisfaction’ (NCLS Research 2018). The NCLS research considered positive and negative stimuli in a pastor’s life and ministry, and asked what internal processes were available to enable a ‘thriving in ministry rather than just ‘surviving’’ (NCLS Research 2018). The NCLS statistics come from a range of different Denominations and include ‘lay’ (non-ordained) leaders and ministry leaders (NCLS Research 2018).

Despite the varying and unsubstantiated estimations of the rate of dropout of pastors from church-based ministry throughout parts of the world, the figures in Australia within the NSW and ACT Baptist Denomination demonstrate that there is an issue of clergy dropping out of church-based ministry prior to retirement. Data obtained from the previous Director of Ministries of the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT (Clendinning 2016) demonstrated that between the years of 1994 and 2013, 57.6% of people who had been ordained as Baptist ministers in the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT had remained in church-based ministry. In these same recorded years: 20.8% of Baptist pastors had dropped out of church-based ministry and moved to a non-church-based approved Baptist ministry; 3.0% had dropped out of Baptist church-based ministry and moved to another Denomination; 4.9% had dropped out of church-based ministry through retirement; and 13.7% had dropped out of church-based ministry by no longer serving in any Christian ministry and, so, were no longer accepted as ordained Baptist ministers 2016). These statistics indicate that if the trend continues, concerning dropout from church-based ministry, that nearly half of all NSW and ACT ordained Baptist pastors who enter church-based ministry will no longer be serving in that capacity by the time of their retirement. This demonstrates a rate of dropout in the Baptist movement of churches in NSW and ACT that will have (future) consequences for finding and appointing clergy to serve and lead churches, serve local communities, engage in community development, and undertake cross-cultural mission. This in turn, means an effect on future ministry resources and provision of clergy.

Rates of dropout within a vocational group create a gap in professional experience, and

a diminished provision of more seasoned and experienced pastors for church-based ministry for future years. As a result, the professional memory in the vocation diminishes and appropriate experienced-based pastoral mentors and pastoral coaches are also reduced. This deleterious aspect of church-based pastoral ministry in turn creates a perception amongst Christian circles that portrays a negative impression of the pastoral profession, such that fewer people consider this as a vocational choice in the future.

So, overall, in response to the varying types of dropout figures comprising clergy, a growing amount of research has been developing regarding stress amongst clergy and how they might thrive in ministry rather than burn out (NCLS Research 2018). NCLS research in Australia has shown concern concerning pastoral leadership and the researchers welcome ongoing conversations ‘about sustainable leadership in Christian ministry’ (NCLS Research 2018). It is in ongoing research in the area of pastoral sustainability, that this study can contribute, by conducting further quantitative and qualitative studies within Australia across Denominations, contexts, and genders.

1.4 The Journey: My Interest and Aims in the Ministerial Vocation

I had served as an ordained pastor in church-based ministry for over seventeen years within Baptist churches in Australia prior to undertaking this study. Serving in church-based ministry as an ordained minister has its challenges, including unique stressors encountered in this vocational area, such as the ‘pedestal effect’ and ‘fishbowl syndrome’ (Cotton et al. 2003, pp. 315-22). The ‘pedestal effect’ is when people inadvertently idolise their pastor such that they subconsciously consider their pastor as somewhat divine and super human. The pastors, in response, then also place expectations on themselves to ensure that they live up to these conceived standards of individuals, like being put up on a pedestal. The ‘fishbowl syndrome’ surrounds pastors and their families and the constant perception of being watched and observed

in their roles by others; such that they develop an expectation of themselves to live up to a certain façade and imagined expectations (McMinn et al. 2005).

Prior to becoming part of the clergy and entering into pastoral ministry, I had completed an undergraduate degree in business and became a qualified Chartered Accountant in Australia through the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (ICA). I worked in various chartered accounting firms within Australia with accounting clients from a range of business and organisations in both public and private sectors in New South Wales, Australia. Accounting services provided to this clientele involved accounting advice, auditing, managing of accounts, and conducting of taxation. Through the influence of my undergraduate degree, my financial acumen, and the chartered accounting environments that I worked in, I tended towards quantitative approaches in research, because of the predominance of numbers in business and managerial vocations. It is this vocational background that has influenced my consideration of the financial cost that a pastor's dropout from church-based ministry can have on individuals and their church communities. My vocational background has also enabled great appreciation for quantitative research practices alongside qualitative approaches.

After getting married, I had a vocational shift that led me into church-based pastoral ministry and so I undertook four (4) years of pastoral training and education at Morling Theological College, to become an ordained Baptist minister in New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Australia. The awards that I undertook here provided a focus on pastoral theology, the social sciences and influenced a more qualitative research approach. It was throughout these years of training that I encountered personal trepidation over possible dropout from pastoral ministry through overstress and burnout. As a result, I became quite attentive to developing personal strategies to avoid burnout and dropout. During these training days at Bible College, I continued working part-time in accounting and part-time in church-based ministry in Sydney churches, whilst being involved in my own personal family formation, including marriage and children. This was a tumultuous time, but it was during these years that I learnt the need to balance the many facets of life which include and impinge

upon many vocations, but especially the unique factors of pastoral ministry in a Baptist church and its Denominational environment.

During my years of ordained Baptist ministry after theological training, I served in various churches as a senior pastoral leader overseeing vision, pastoral care, providing pastoral leadership, undertaking other religious services and engaging with local community in mission activities. Throughout this time I experienced the joys and excitement of church-based ministry; encountered two near-burnout experiences; faced the challenges and emotional turmoil of juggling responsibilities as a pastoral leader whilst attending to my own family's needs; and was confronted with the reality of pressures that clergy endure as they try to faithfully serve their spiritual calling to God, and service towards other people.

During my latter years of serving in church-based ministry, I studied a Masters award in adult education and completed a qualitative research project on burnout and overstress in pastoral leadership. It was from this initial research comprising pastoral leadership burnout, using a case study approach, and the positive response from my research project supervisor, that provoked me to consider further study in the area of pastoral sustainability in church-based ministry. It was not until a few years later, when I had stepped away from directly church-based ministry and undertook a lecturing role – teaching in the area of pastoral and practical theology at Morling Theological College – that the opportunity to continue this research arose. During my time teaching at Morling College, and through constant encounter with pastors in training and pastors who were serving in the field of church-based ministry, I developed a greater desire to continue my research into pastoral sustainability.

Overall, my own journey in pastoral ministry in church-based environments and becoming a theological educator has led to the forming of a strong desire to further explore appropriate strategies for sustainability, and to gain insight into understanding the ongoing challenges, such as overstress, burnout and dropout, that pastors in church-based ministry will likely experience. It has also enabled a focus on seeking

perspicacious formation processes in theological training so that students are better prepared for sustained practice in church-based ministry so as to avoid dropout. I recognise that these insights will inform teaching pedagogies in my instruction, aimed at reducing dropout and ensuring the sustainability of pastors in church-based ministry.

This means a focus on seeking appropriate ongoing development strategies and programs in the sustaining of those who have completed their formalised theological training and who are serving in churches currently. This thesis has, therefore, emanated out of a longing to see subsequent generations of pastors sustained, resilient, enriched and passionately enjoying their vocational experience in pastoral and church-based ministry, rather than driven by fear of the possibility of myself and others dropping out of church-based ministry.

Although not now on the so-called ‘frontline’ of pastoral ministry, I regularly engage with those who serve as clergy in church-based ministry through mentoring, networking and interaction with students as they undertake their theological training and formation. This has enabled me to acquire insightful knowledge of the culture and the terminology used by clergy, particularly in the Baptist Denomination. None of the people involved in this study have been in a direct pastoral relationship with me or been trained by me through my lecturing at Morling College. This relational distinction between researcher and participant has aimed to ensure a level of arms-length research, and the avoidance of power differentials that could influence collusion and/or manipulation in the procurement and analysis of research data (Israel 2014). Though some participants had some collegial relationship with me during my years of pastoral leadership in church-based ministry, the process that I employed to differentiate myself from requesting their involvement in this study was such that they did not feel pressured by this previous relationship to be involved. Details of this process will be provided in Chapter 4 Research Design.

Denominational theological colleges aim to train people for pastoral ministry and make

their ordination candidates aware of the unique challenges of serving in church-based ministry, especially concerning responsibility for their own self-care and through understanding the experiences of those already involved in pastoral ministry. Students are encouraged to develop an awareness of self-care management alongside appropriate strategies of leadership and Bible knowledge. Kaldor & Bullpitt (2001) claimed that Australian pastors were generally aware of the ravages of overstress, possibility of burnout, and their need to engage in self-care strategies. Other research from Burns et al. (2013) affirmed this same concept amongst USA pastors. However, if Burns et al. (2013) and Kaldor & Bullpitt (2001) are right in their conclusions then it would be expected that the dropout rates from serving as a pastor in church-based ministry should be minimal, unless awareness is insufficient and/or there are other factors as causes for dropout.

Over the years of ordained Baptist ministry both in church-based ministry and as a theological educator, I acknowledge that I have reflected upon my own longevity and sustainability in pastoral church-based ministry, and compared myself, as best I can through informal discussions, to various clergy who have dropped out of pastoral ministry. Some of these people who had dropped out, I had completed my own theological education and training with, or they were pastoral leaders in other Denominational movements with whom I had networked. Throughout these occurrences I have constantly pondered, ruminated and considered whether my own experiences, and personal adoption and implementation of professional development, were strong contenders in developing sustainability in my over seventeen (17) years of ordained church-based ministry, or was it something else that sustained me?

Added to the encounters of dropout of pastoral leaders, are stories of other ministers throughout the world and in different church Denominational movements who had burnt out or dropped out of church-based ministry for moral indiscretions or health reasons.

Overall, I have wondered that maybe I had undertaken something helpful in my life so as to achieve serving in church-based ministry for an extended period of time compared

to others. As a result, my own personal concern for sustainability and the resilience of clergy underpins this research project.

It has been my own personal experiences of church-based ministry that have helped me realise that it is possible for ministers to face the stressors that church-based ministry can involve, or even avoid near burnout experiences, and be sustained in church-based ministry over a period of time. Dropping out of church-based ministry is not necessarily for the reason of stress, as some research has claimed. I have often recalled from my own theological training that one of my lecturers in my pastoral studies warned strongly about pastoral stress and dropout, and the need to engage in self-care. Maybe the reason for my longevity in ministry was that I had listened more intently than other students in these lessons concerning pastoral ministry, and I was able to implement appropriate self-care strategies where others did not. Or perhaps, there were other reasons for my longevity in ministry? These perplexing questions around sustainability in church-based ministry have led to this journey of researching the phenomena of sustainability and dropout amongst clergy. Quantitative studies have tended to collate data from what is already known to prove a hypothesis; qualitative studies tend to examine aspects comprising what and why, that could then be utilised further through quantitative-type studies. The choice for a qualitative study was for the stated reasons of exploring the ‘why’ and the ‘what’.

It is the voices and untold stories of those who have dropped out of church-based ministry that has also precipitated this research. By hearing the stories of those who have dropped out of pastoral leadership in church-based ministry, and evaluating them against the stories of those who have remained, then there may be a gaining of further insights into the reasons for dropout of clergy from church based ministry. These understandings may then in turn create the development of new insights and strategies in training for future generations of those entering church-based ministry so that future experiences of clergy will be improved, sustainable and positive. In essence this study posits itself to encourage the development of preventative strategies to avoid dropout because it accepts generally that prevention is better than the cure (Gérvás, Starfield &

Heath 2008) in a metaphorical sense.

Similarly, preventing the effects of stress, and the impact it has on one's mental health, is a concern for this thesis. With mental illness now considered the 'largest disease contributor to the disease burden in middle and high-income countries (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2004)' (Dimoff & Kelloway 2013, p. 203), the need to continue research into stressors in various vocations, and the connection between mental health and sustainability, makes further research in this regard important. Inevitably pastors will experience unique mental health struggles in their vocation compared to persons in other professions, so continued and specific research is required. It would, therefore, seem prudent and financially responsible that church Denominations throughout the world keep developing training and preventative strategies that incorporate holistic pastoral development, ministerial formation, awareness of stressors and indicators of burnout, and effective self-care practices, rather than tending to focus time, money and other resources on emotional and physical recovery after the fact.

It must be noted that this research is not aiming to solve the problems that dropout, for whatever reason, can cause amongst pastors and churches, but will instead add to the mounting studies regarding sustainability of clergy serving in church-based ministries throughout the world, such that dropout is minimised. It is envisaged that this research will add to the development of a more effective understanding of sustainability and dropout so as to advance more pertinent strategies, pastoral training, support services, and systemic transformation of church communities.

1.5 The Main Research and Sub-Questions

The main research question asks what aspects in clergy experiences' have been assisting clergy in their sustainability in church-based ministry; and what facets of pastoral experiences are causing dropout from church-based ministry? Essentially, in light of the data concerning the occurrence of dropout of clergy from church-based ministry, alongside research that claims pastors are aware of the need to self-care, why are there

still incidences of dropout from ministers in church-based ministry? This main question will be directly addressed in the results of this study.

Added to the main research question is a list of sub-questions emanating from numerous possibilities and convoluted reasons for dropout of pastors in church-based ministry.

Questions keep arising as to the reason, or reasons, for these dropout levels despite ongoing research into stress and burnout in ministers of religion and self-care for sustainability. These sub-questions that have been developed concerning dropout and sustainability of pastors serving in church-based ministry are numerous and can be categorised into various stages of pastoral ministry development:

Stage 1: Procurement and selection for pastoral ministry

Are denominations that are procuring and selecting candidates for pastoral ministry undertaking these processes adequately, in relation to dropout and sustainability, particularly considering:

- a. How much do personality factors, previous life exposures, prior ministry experiences, family of origin matters, age, gender, and so on, affect the pastoral ministry development, in relation to sustainability and avoiding dropout?
- b. How much does a candidate's ability to differentiate praxis from self impinge on the processes of sustainability?

Stage 2: Theological and pastoral formation for pastoral ministry

In what way do the theological aspects of training effectively assist pastoral ministry candidates concerning sustainability, particularly regarding:

- a. Is ministry preparation and training adequate and appropriate?
- b. Are the various self-development practices and processes that pastors are taught to enact adequate?

- c. Are some self-development practises presented to pastors in training more appropriate for some pastoral styles of leadership compared to other pastoral styles of leadership?

Stage 3: Ongoing pastoral ministry development

In what manner do ongoing pastoral ministry development processes and Denominational services contribute effectively to sustainability, particularly regarding whether:

- a. There is a failure of pastors to enact professional development practices regularly and appropriately?
- b. The congregational system in which pastors serve, particularly considering the Denominational context, is so challenging that only certain people are able to be sustained for an extended period of time?
- c. Pastors are enacting spiritual practices appropriately as a means of sustainability?
- d. Pastors are adequately updated on the unique challenges and differing systems of parish-based pastoral ministry including appropriate professional development?

Each of these stages and the various sub-questions have been considered in this study and discussed in relation to results procured through an interview process.

Further to these types of sub-questions is the consideration of what would the person who has remained in longer-term ministry, and those who have dropped out of church-based ministry, want to say to: the newcomer into pastoral ministry; educators of pastors in training; and Denominational leaders that liaise with and have oversight of church-based congregations? These questions will be asked of people interviewed in this study to elicit insights and understanding into what sustains clergy and what could be contributing to dropout.

There seems to be a deficiency of peer-reviewed literature and research into the multifarious sub-questions concerning sustainability of church-based pastors. It is this absence of principal research concerning sustainability, resilience, and self-care practices amongst pastors in overcoming factors causing dropout that has become the major focus in this study, and the methodology adopted in examining the experiences of pastors. The absence of research concerning this multiplicity of issues to do with sustainability beckons further and more pervasive research to be undertaken so as to reduce the levels of dropout that occur for ordained pastors serving in church-based ministries in both Australia and throughout the world.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Research into the sustainability of ministers of religion and the avoidance of dropout is evolving throughout the world, including Australia. However, this literature review will establish that the economic and non-quantifiable aspects of clergy dropout justify the need for further and pervasive research specific to this vocation, alongside the various gaps in research. Rationalisation for this study will be established by identifying the many and varied gaps in research previously undertaken comprising the prevention of dropout of clergy and pastoral sustainability, especially in Australia within the Baptist Denomination. It will also demonstrate that most of the studies concerning the pastoral vocation, including Australia, tend to:

- Focus on burnout and/or stress,
- Be more empirically based,
- Have been conducted by people who have not been involved in the pastoral field,
- Explore pastoral participants who are still in ministry rather than have already dropped out of ministry, and
- Examine the prevention of burnout and coping with stress rather than preventing dropout.

The current literature review will in turn compel and justify the utilisation of:

- Diverse methodological approaches to be employed in ongoing research. This utilisation of various research methodologies will enable an extension of previous theory regarding clergy and/or unearth further unexplored factors concerning dropout and sustainability;
- The exploration of different church Denominations, including ethnicities and genders, so as to discover the distinctions in theological education, church context and pastoral development. In turn this may highlight unique factors and their effects on dropout and sustainability; and

- Researchers who have been in the field of study so as to extract an altered perspective in the acquiring and analysing of research data and discussion of results. This will provide heightened insights for further research gained from the researcher's close involvement in the field personally.

It is, therefore, envisaged that the results of this research will be utilised for further qualitative and quantitative studies into the area of pastoral sustainability and prevention of dropout. Furthermore, it is imagined that ongoing research studies will result in:

- Advanced development of effective training stratagems for clergy's ongoing sustainability and effectiveness in church-based leadership through theological education;
- Increased awareness of struggles that people in the pastoral vocation uniquely experience, especially the emotional wounds (sometimes unwittingly) inflicted by people in their churches;
- Information for Denominational leaders in the implementation of appropriate ongoing pastoral development programs; and
- A positive perception for people considering serving as a pastoral leader in church-based ministry vocationally.

2.2 Significance of Study in Ministerial Religious Practices

The concept of stress and its effects on job retention, formulated by Hans Seyle [1956], is not a new concept to the Western world and its emergence has been extrapolated across various professions within society (Tracy 2009). In formalised research conducted since the coining of the term 'stress', the varied and unique factors causing stress have often been examined amongst professions such as doctors, engineers, agents, lawyers, nurses, psychologists, general practitioners, police, teachers (Dollard et al.

2003; Kwok-bun 2007), counsellors (Wallace et al. 2010) and social workers (Dollard et al. 2001). Despite developing research amongst specific human service based professions there 'is little or no systematic work examining the impact or nature of stress on clergy and therefore no clear direction for the development of interventions or organisational recommendations' (Cotton et al. 2003).

Since Cotton et al.'s comments about clergy stress were espoused over a decade ago, research on stress leading to 'burnout' has been emerging as a research theme and generating interest because of stress and burnout's negative effects on productivity, efficiencies and socialisation of individuals, even amongst clergy (Adams et al. 2016; Miner et al. 2015; Visker et al. 2017). A study conducted by Adams et al. (2016) that conducted a literature review on burnout in professions provided an international comparison between a range of professions across the world. It summarised results surrounding the incurrence of emotional exhaustion (EE) and depersonalisation (DP) leading to burnout as follows.

Compared to studies of other helping professionals, clergy appear to exhibit a similar level of EE as social workers, counselors, and emergency personnel and a lower level than teachers or police officers. Generally, clergy appear to report higher levels of DP than social workers or counselors, similar DP levels to teachers, and lower DP levels than emergency personnel and police officers. Clergy seem to display higher levels of burnout in the PA domain than counselors, similar levels of burnout (moderate) in the PA domain to social workers and teachers, and lower levels of burnout in the PA domain than emergency personnel and police. (Adams et al. 2016, p. 166)

This study incorporated some Australian based comparison amongst counsellors, psychotherapists, social workers, humanitarian aid workers, occupational therapists and graduating theological students.

Such studies by the likes of Adams et al. (2016) provides an indication that burnout is

an issue for pastors but not necessarily in a dramatic fashion as some researchers have indicated. It is, therefore, noted that stress, overstress and burnout are not unique to the pastoral profession, rather they are ubiquitous, but research into religious practitioners in their pastoral leadership is required so as to minimise future dropout as a result of these factors. As Schaefer & Jacobsen (2009) state ‘Numerous careers cause professionals to feel overwhelmed by excessive hours and stress, but most careers do not demand that one always be a role model for a community of people’ (Schaefer & Jacobsen 2009, p. 37).

2.2.1 Contribution of Pastors to Society

Ministers of religion are generally recognised as having had important contribution to societal support structures, thereby, justifying the importance of this study. Galston (1994), in his study, outlined the place that the church has had in society, arguing that religion has had a positive effect on societal transformation, particularly in the Western world. Various advancements in society have also been precipitated by the influence and work of ministers of religion, especially in the areas of: education; mental health services provision; emotional support concerning life situations such as in tragedy, death, divorce and other losses; pastoral counselling in a range of issues; other care-type areas (Cotton et al. 2003; Jacobson et al. 2013), and family household formation (Garland 2012). Societal and health reforms have often been attributed to various Christian leaders such as: the abolition of the slave trade in previous centuries; the development of palliative care in the health sector; and the inauguration of chaplains in hospitals, prisons and social agencies (Holifield 2010).

There are also a range of other pastoral practises such as teaching, worship facilitation, pastoral care/pastoral counselling, sustaining the church institution, and evangelising that church pastors engage in that are unrecorded in documentation, but that are generally recognised by church institutions themselves and as goods for society

(Galston 1994). And other research has reckoned that churches and their pastors are effective in ensuring a better level of mental health amongst people in their church communities, thereby, avoiding the need for some parishioners to incur costs engaging the services of mental health professionals (Bornsheuer et al. 2012).

If these somewhat unsubstantiated contributions that clergy provide towards society are true, then any reduction in clergy numbers is going to deliver negative societal consequences; particularly concerning: the influence on mental health of people; ethical matters contended within society; and, the provision of a range of varying social services amongst the wider community, including religious services. In fact, it could be the indication of a

looming crisis in pastoral leadership affecting the ability of Denominations to provide adequate numbers of clergy to provide for the ritual and spiritual needs of their membership. (Beebe 2007, p. 258)

2.2.2 Reasons and Significance of Study in Baptist Churches

In light of the impact that ministers of religion have amongst countries and societies across the world, the study of clergy sustainability and prevention of dropout is an important aspect in ensuring ongoing supply of pastors to fulfil church-based ministry roles. By providing a positive picture regarding the pastoral vocation, this may encourage other people to consider this role in the future. In order to narrow the research field of this study, clergy connected with the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT (2019b) were interviewed. This Denominational movement was easily accessible to me because I had been involved with and was acquainted with their ecclesiastical practices, polity and culture. Participants that were engaged had not been in a formal power-differential relationship with me. My relationship with each participant will be enfolded into the case studies so as to demonstrate any collegial

relationship that may have existed prior to interview.

Baptists are generally defined by belief statements compared to other Denominations and would normally include convictions comprising a combination of confessions.

Baptists affirm traditional Christian doctrines but within this larger framework of beliefs there are many 'convictional genes' found among various members of the Baptist family throughout the world (Manley 2006, p. 8).

The main common beliefs that Baptists hold to doctrinally tend to include:

- Sovereign Lordship of Christ
- The supreme authority of the scriptures
- Church understood as a gathered community of committed disciples
- Congregational government
- Priesthood of all believers
- Baptism by immersion for believers only
- Ministry of leadership through pastors, elders and deacons,
- A strong associational principle between local churches,
- Religious freedom
- Strong emphasis on mission, including evangelism (Manley 2006, p. 8).

Despite being a minority Denomination, comparative to other Denominations within Australia (Manley 2006), the Baptist Denominational movement is the largest Protestant network of churches and pastors throughout the world, with estimates of over one hundred million people affiliated as a Baptist church attender (Ellis 2006). Baptists include a conglomeration of networks including Baptist churches aligned to the Baptist World Alliance, 231 member organisations in 121 countries (Baptist World Alliance 2019a), comprising 47.5 million members in 168,491 churches' (Baptist World Alliance 2019b), Southern Baptist Convention (Southern Baptist Convention 2015); and various other Baptist networks throughout the world, including Australia (Australian Baptist Ministries 2019).

Baptist churches are considered part of the ‘free church’ movement and have an ‘evangelical’ heritage amongst churches throughout the world (Ellis 2006). A ‘free church’ is a church separated from State churches like Anglican and Catholic churches. The

...evangelical “religion” has always been “gospel” religion, or religion focusing on the good news of salvation brought to sinners by Jesus Christ (Lewis & Pierard 2014, p. Definitions).

The evangelical arm of the Christian church essentially holds to certain beliefs related to the Christian faith. These beliefs and standards generally are related to four qualities as detailed by Bebbington (1988, pp. 2-3):

- 1) *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed;
- 2) *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort;
- 3) *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and
- 4) *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.

Baptists in Australia are considered evangelical and are associated and aligned together through connection with the organisation ‘Australian Baptist Ministries’, yet are separated by individual State governance structures, including slight differences concerning belief statements. For instance, Baptist pastors serving in the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT Churches generally accept the Statement of Belief as approved by the 1979 Assembly of NSW and ACT Baptist Churches, amended 2002 and 2003 (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019c), whereas Baptists in Western Australia hold to a Statement of Faith (Baptist Churches Western Australia 2010). These commonalities surrounding governance mean that there is potential for results from this study to be extrapolated, with a level of qualification included, across wider Baptist networks nationally and internationally.

Since this dissertation has focused on one Denominational expression amongst

Christian churches in the world, the research findings are illustrative of one network of clergy in Australia rather than being illustrative of all Denominational movements.

Some other Protestant Denominations differ in governance structure and theology to Baptists such as: Uniting Church, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Pentecostal, and Anglican. However, there are comparable Denominations within Australia that hold to a similar ecclesiology, beliefs, and polity to Baptists, such as Australia's Churches of Christ (Churches of Christ Australia 2017), and this may justify extrapolation of results into such church movements and Denominations. Therefore, this research has potential to contribute to other Denominations like the Churches of Christ movement, operating under similar theologies and governance structures.

2.2.3 Economic Cost of Clergy Dropout

In justification of this research, the cost of clergy dropout can be quantified in monetary terms by considering the estimated value of: individual costs of training a pastor, church congregational expenses in employing a pastor, and Australian Government and insurance expenditures in recovery costs for a pastor if they dropout of church-based ministry due to mental or physical health reasons. If departure of the pastor from church-based ministry involves leaving all Christian-based ministries then often there would be an additional cost related to retraining into another vocation at either the expense of the pastor, or through compensatory means from the church for legal reasons.

Australian Baptist pastors incur considerable individual cost and time in their ministry preparation for accredited and ordained ministry. For instance people seeking Baptist accreditation in NSW and ACT generally undertake a pathway of application and education based on relevant standards set down by the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT (2019a). These standards involve a usual pathway of study at Morling

Theological College involving thirty two (32) units of study (Morling Theological College 2019a). There is generally no financial support available for people training for Baptist pastoral ministry in Australia from relevant stakeholders and so applicants must self-fund their journey towards accreditation and/or rely on the generosity of others. The personal financial cost to a pastor in being training for Accredited Baptist ministry in New South Wales (NSW) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Australia, typically involves achieving two separate and government-accredited tertiary awards to meet formation requirements. Firstly, it generally means completing either: an undergraduate award (comprising twenty four units at \$1908 per unit for Domestic students), or a graduate award (comprising twenty four units at \$1908 per unit) for Domestic students; and a post-graduate award (eight units costing \$2360 or \$1908 per unit) depending on whether a student had completed a theological award at undergraduate or graduate level, respectively (Morling Theological College 2019b). Therefore, a typical Baptist pastor's study journey takes place over a four year full-time period and would total \$64,672 for an undergraduate student pathway, or \$61,056 for a graduate student pathway (Morling Theological College 2019b). These figures will differ if a person was on a pathway of studies seeking accreditation as a Baptist minister that undertook diploma-level studies as part of their thirty-two units, or engaged in postgraduate research as part of their studies.

In addition to these study fees, students incur additional costs associated with study requirements in purchasing relevant textbooks, and meeting other extra-curricular requirements such as ministry training standards courses, and marriage training courses (Morling Theological College 2019a). If a student is unable to pay their College fees upfront at the time of undertaking, then students are able to access the Australian Government based Fee-Help program and defer payment. If the Government supported Fee-Help approach is adopted to fund study requirements then pastors incur an accumulating cost each year against the Australian Consumer Price Index (CPI) until the debt is repaid (The Department of Education and Training 2018).

Besides personal costs to pastors, Baptist church congregations in themselves encounter an economic cost in employing a pastor. In Baptist congregations the funds supplied to finance pastoral leadership are generally based on a voluntary basis, whereby congregants and attendees of that church community contribute financially on a weekly basis. At present, recommended costs for a Baptist church to employ an accredited pastor in a Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT' church varies based on full or part-time employment status, years of service after accreditation, and the role that they serve in that particular Baptist church. These recommendations are based on stipend regulations set down by the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT (2019). For instance, the stipend recommendation advocates that an Accredited Lead Pastor position who had served one year after being accredited is entitled to an annual payment of anywhere between \$118,657 and \$93,957 (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019d). Based on recommended figures presented by the Baptist Churches of NSW and ACT this support amount would be composed of a base stipend amount of \$57,002, plus \$6,555 covering a 11.5% superannuation contribution on this stipend amount, plus a motor vehicle allowance of \$7,000, and a housing allowance of between \$48,100 and \$23,400 based on local property markets (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019d). The housing allowance is payable only to the accredited pastor where the church does not provide a church manse, or has not provided a leased property as a residence. In Sydney, Australia the rental amount for a three (3) bedroom dwelling could cost on average \$975 per week in an inner ring of Sydney suburbs, to \$450 per week in an outer ring of Sydney suburbs (Department of Family and Community Services, State of New South Wales 2017). Long service leave expenses have not been considered in these calculations since long service leave is not awarded until at least fifteen years' continual service has been attained, vested at ten years (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019d). The costs of a pastor's length of tenure with a particular congregation means an accumulating expenditure to that congregation over time as each year there are increments based on the recommended sliding scale of the annually adjusted Baptist Stipend Recommendations (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019d).

Besides personal and church-based costs if a pastor drops out and leaves their vocation, additional costs are likely through government support services for unemployment and retraining; and insurance costs if the exit was for mental or physical health reasons.

Unfortunately the prospect of being reemployed in the Australian context is a challenge for older workers without the required skills for a certain profession so an older person could struggle more to be reemployed in Australia (Meyers 2016). Under Australian support services if a person is seeking employment and has been unable to attain a paid role then they can gain financial support through payment of the Newstart Allowance (Australian Government Department of Human Services 2019). This payment is available to eligible job seekers with provision of up to \$501.70 every 2 weeks (this figure is updated 20 March and 20 September each year), based upon employment status, personal circumstances and savings for a partnered individual (Australian Government Department of Human Services 2019). Depending on the length of unemployment, this will determine the amount that this support service accumulates to for an individual and the cost to the Australian Government. Therefore, an ex-pastor who has a twelve-month reliance on the Newstart allowance would mean a cost of \$13,044.20 to the Australian government.

If a medical issue was the reason for dropout from church-based ministry, then besides Newstart Allowance the Australian government makes provision for funding medical assistance for physiological and mental health disorders. The Australian Government-based agency Medicare subsidises the cost of medical conditions for Australian citizens residing in Australia. If the health issue is related to mental health then funding is made available for up to ten individual counselling sessions per calendar year through Medicare rebates with a recognized health care provider, after referral from a General Practitioner. After the first six sessions an ongoing referral from the referring doctor is required to attain the final four sessions (Australian Government Department of Health 2014). Assuming the ten sessions are 'bulk billed' each year then this could add another

\$1981.50 to government costs per annum per person paid by Medicare. Medicare will pay an amount of rebate for a Clinical Psychologist providing a service utilising Scheduling Item number 296 of \$198.15 per session (Australian Government Department of Health 2018). The Australian Psychology Society (APS) recommends for the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 an amount for \$251 per session for this item number (Australian Psychology Society 2018). The gap payment between what a Clinical Psychologist could charge and the Medicare rebate will also mean that there is another ongoing expense for the pastor. This could mean that for ten sessions of 45 to 60 minutes in length that the gap payment incurred by the pastor could be up to \$52.85 per session based on recommended payments by the APS (2018) and the estimated Medicare scheduled item rebate (The Department of Health 2019). This would leave an annual gap payment to be incurred by the pastor of \$528.50 per annum. Totaling the cost of possible Government payments, paid over a twelve (12) month period of unemployment, for a pastor who has dropped out of church-based ministry for mental health reasons and is now relying on Newstart and government funded mental health benefits would therefore total over \$14,794.30 per person per annum.

In some cases, if there has been a nexus made between the work context and the incurrence of health issues for the pastor then the New South Wales government based Insurance & Care NSW (icare) Workers Insurance agency may become involved and responsible for compensating the pastor's costs related to loss of earnings, medical treatment, medical service expenses, and return to work assistance (Insurance & Care NSW (icare) 2019b). Depending on the time of assessed mental health recovery of the pastor, this will determine the amount of compensation costs of insurance. Usually, funds 'could be paid up to 95 per cent of your pre-injury average weekly earnings (PIAWE) for a set period of time' less the value of any 'deductible amount' valued from non-monetary benefits (Insurance & Care NSW (icare) 2019a). This, therefore, adds an additional cost to a cover a pastor's dropout through both insurance agencies and the church for the remaining gap of pre-injury weekly earnings.

In Australia, if the number of pastors dropping out is increased, then other economic consequences to Australian society could be incurred for services to society that they no longer provide. For instance, pastors often encourage, personally serve, and assist churches and faith-based agencies to engage in local and national community ventures. Some of these activities include: social welfare programs; the development of faith-based school education; financial aid to those in crisis; and pastoral counselling services to people in need. The withdrawal or reduction of church-based pastoral leadership in Australia would mean that the costs of social services and education that churches provide to local communities would shift onto already stretched Government agencies, services and budgets. For instance, it is claimed that 30% of all schools in Australia are religiously affiliated and this mainly being with Protestant or Catholic connections (Rowe 2017). Considering that there were 3,849,225 students enrolled in schools in Australia in 2017 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018) then this means that there are 1,154,768 students being educated within religiously based schools. If clergy diminish in future years then the development of religious based education would most likely decrease and in turn cause a transition of these numbers of students into public based schools, thereby, incurring greater Australian government budgetary costs.

Therefore, from an economic point of view, it can be seen that the financial costs of a pastor dropping out of church-based ministry for health or other reasons is detrimental to a range of different stakeholders including: the clergy themselves, the churches who were involved in their employment, insurance agencies, local communities, and the Australian Government.

2.2.4 Non-Quantifiable Costs of Clergy Drop out

Justifying Research

It can ultimately be identified that dropout affects pastors individually and financially but it also impacts pastors' families' emotional and practical situation, alongside the

church communities in which they served. Pastors themselves may also face a crisis of faith and question their sense of God's call on their life as a result of dropping out, thereby, being left with a diminished sense of value (Schaefer & Jacobsen 2009). A pastor's dropout may also mean that their spouse and children are left with additional needs in processing the turmoil and conjecture concerning the departure (Lee & Fredrickson 2012; Miner 2007). Similarly, the congregations and local communities that pastors were serving at, and in, prior to dropping out usually experience emotional turmoil as well (Miner 2007).

As a result of a change in pastoral staff, there is often a stalling on: local, national and international projects that their faith communities were developing and supporting. The emotional stories of pain and disappointment can be seen at various websites in the USA such as 'Ministry Impact Resources' (Gilman 2016) and in Australia at John Mark Ministries (Croucher 2001-2015). Since church attendees voluntarily give most churches revenue then there is more likely to be an emotional attachment to the person that they are supporting through their giving. These sorts of costs are not necessarily quantifiable but do elucidate the turmoil that a pastor's dropout can cause.

The waves of sadness and disappointment of a pastor's dropout from church-based ministry often flows into the Denomination's ongoing expression of faith and religious expression in detrimental ways (Adams et al. 2016; Burnette 2016). For example, a culture of dropout in a Denomination affects the deliberation of new candidates considering church-based ministry in the future. As a consequence, reduced numbers of pastors available to serve in churches is encountered, thereby, diminishing the level of assistance in the meeting of social and emotional needs of people in society, including the provision of counselling, religious services and social justice (Adams et al. 2016).

2.2.5 Conclusion On the Justification of the Study of Clergy and their Sustainability and prevention of Dropout

Overall, the cost of dropout from the vocational area of religious ministers, both economically and psychologically, is seen to be too high to ignore and so this study has endeavoured to give voice to those who have dropped out of church-based ministry, with the aim of reversing the occurrence of dropout and unearthing factors that may not yet be espoused as reasons for sustainability. In turn, this research will encourage the development of more advanced and apposite research into prevention of dropout and the development of training programs, encourage improved pedagogical elements for training and educational programs, and increase insights into pertinent support services for clergy.

2.3 Overview of the Ministerial Context of Pastoral Service

The magnitude of the stress therefore depends on a dynamic relationship between the stressor and the compensatory processes...if compensation is perfect and rapid, little or no stress occurs in the system. If compensation is imperfect or inadequate, the stress is larger and may be threatening to life or health (Lovallo 2005, pp. 38-9).

Pastors face environmental factors that cause unique stressors compared to other vocations especially other 'human service workers'. In fact, developed research has determined that there are both inimitable internal and external factors that clergy encounter compared to other vocations (Bickerton 2013; Donovan 1992; Miner 2007; Proeschold-bell et al. 2011; Spencer et al. 2012). As a result of the unique vocational environment that pastors face, it is generally accepted that ministers of religion experience greater emotional exertion and consistent interaction with people compared to many other professions because of the blurred boundary lines between self, ministry, family and other relationships (Justice & Garland 2010). This means that clergy encounter augmented risk of creating emotional dissonance and are at increased risk of moving closer towards burnout compared to many other vocations through a range of unique factors (Dollard et al. 2003; Wicks 2005). However, it must be noted that these factors in themselves are not necessarily accepted as reasons for all dropouts from pastoral ministry.

Cotton et al. (2003) expressed in a study of Salvation Army officers within Australia in the year 2000 that understanding the differing dynamics involving clergy and the effect that these factors have on the minister, church and their families could result in greater understanding of the vocation and the development of more appropriate interventions to prevent dropout. The research utilised a mixed-method approach including both a qualitative and a quantitative study. The quantitative study examined the work strain and efficacy that clergy were experiencing, in light of factors identified in the qualitative component of the study. In their results, Cotton et al. (2003 p.315-22) called

for further research in a range of areas and the use of other methodologies. Furthermore, they explored the following ‘clergy stressors’. These factors are helpful in understanding research in the area of clergy stress in Australia. Although, it must be noted, not all clergy necessarily experience these same stressors. For instance, Baptist pastors in New South Wales, Australia, incur some variance on Cotton et al. (2003)’ list of factors. These variances will be noted in the ensuing list that Cotton et al. (2003)’ espoused in their work. These similarities and differences have been elucidated based on personal experience as a Baptist pastor, mentoring experiences of Baptist pastors, general conversations with Baptist Denominational leaders, and from interviews conducted in this research study.

Clergy stressors

- **Time demands** – where people and churches create disruption for the pastoral role through indiscriminate requests and implacable demands at any time of the day or in a week. The fulfilment of these requests means that the time available for pastors to undertake other pastoral functions becomes both distracted and limited. In essence, pastors can be focused more on urgent tasks that are not important rather than important tasks that may not necessarily be urgent (Covey 2013). In turn they then can increase hours worked to meet demands (Cotton et al. 2003). For Baptist pastors time demands are a similar experience with the incurrence of a constant struggle in navigating the demands of church based, leadership, family, and other personal matters.
- **Financial demands** – the qualifications earned and hours worked by clergy are not considered commensurate with wages received. Alongside this factor regarding finances, are challenges concerning lack of retirement plan, personal housing, and issues in receiving income-in kind rather than monetary funding. These challenges arise since both pastoral salaries (called stipends) and church budgets that meet those salaries, and other church operating costs, are limited by expected contributions of attendees and supporters. Clergy can feel guilt in trying to meet their material needs and do not feel it appropriate to seek further

funding, especially since no professional organisation – to support their claims in a collective bargaining manner – usually exists. No human services/resources department or workers union exists *per se* to represent pastors (Cotton et al. 2003, pp. 315-22). The Baptist Association of New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory provides stipend recommendations for pastors serving as Baptist pastors (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019) are commensurate with meeting standards of living in Australia. However, since these are only recommendations not all churches will necessarily be in a position to provide these stipend amounts. Churches may very well alter initially agreed arrangements even after a pastor has commenced due to church financial struggles. Similarly, to the Salvation Army, there is no body able to ensure that Baptist churches oblige a pastor's financial arrangements despite possible advocacy from the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT.

- **Identity and Image** – there is an appearance of the ‘clerical collar’ that pastors are perceived to have throughout: their training, society, and Denominational settings in which they serve. This illustrates the concept of being ‘holier’ than others and faultless as a person. There can be a dependency upon other people concept of themselves as a pastoral leader, with the fear of failure at the fore. This then in turn creates a lower sense of self-esteem and disillusionment, thereby, creating anxiety and tension for the pastor (Cotton et al. 2003). Baptist pastors can face these similar dynamics elucidated by Cotton et al. (2003) and are challenged constantly by who they are as a person in pastoral ministry.
- **High Expectations (Emotional Demands)** – The traditional image of a pastor in church contexts and society creates what is known as ‘the pedestal effect’. This, in essence, is where the leader is considered above others spiritually and pastoral leaders struggle to live up to the perfectionism that surrounds this image of faultlessness and being put up on a pedestal. The expectations that undergird this persona are created from their personal perceptions from self, family, congregations, Denominations and God (Cotton et al. 2003):

- This kind of unhealthy self-expectation occurs when clergy establish unrealistic concepts of themselves. For example, they may ensure that they are humourless and have an impeccable lifestyle. They feel they need to ensure they portray a positive image to peers; yet manage issues themselves, avoiding the seeking of assistance externally (Cotton et al. 2003).
- Family expectation may present in maintaining an image of spouse and children in their roles as the 'perfect marriage' and 'perfect children'. As a result of trying to maintain this image, dysfunctionality can develop in the spousal relationship or in parenting, by failing to address any unhealthy patterns in the marriage and family formation processes. Due to the effect of this expectation a disparity can arise between the covenant of marriage and ministry, creating strain and tension in the marriage. Shame felt can then limit the seeking of assistance (Cotton et al. 2003).
- Congregational expectations mean that there can be an anticipation that pastors have a certain level of pastoral competency and ability. This has been ranked as the second highest stressor for pastors (Cotton et al. 2003). It is unknown whether this is the same rated stressor for Baptist pastors but congregational expectations are a shared incurrence.
- Denominational systems can create an unhealthy spirit of competitiveness between churches and their 'performance'. As a response, pastors may become 'workaholics' aiming for success and recognition (Cotton et al. 2003).
- Unhealthy God-expectations can also develop for pastors as they personally conceptualise meeting a perception of God's standards and his expectations (Cotton et al. 2003).

Clergy that aim to live up to any or all of these expectations place themselves into a position where they risk confusing personal identity and the role that they are undertaking. Correspondingly, Baptist pastors face these dynamics, as

well, having to navigate the emotional turmoil that each expectation can infuse upon them.

- **Family boundaries** – This relates to the encroachment of pastoral demands and expectations on family time and zones. The ability to separate work and life is an arduous and contentious task as pastors seek to have their own free time, but need to conduct professional practice at varying times and places based on their relational encounters. This is accentuated if the clergy home (*manse* or *parsonage*) is within the vicinity of the church location and accessibility to the pastor is apparent to community members (Cotton et al. 2003). This is a common stressor for Baptist pastors as they aim to regulate the boundaries between family and ministry zones. For example, doing regular shopping at the local shopping centre and inadvertently meeting a community member that ends up turning into a pastoral conversation.
- **Role Conflict and Ambiguity** – The existence of dual relationships (Justice & Garland 2010) adds to stressors for pastors. Here clergy are contending with both professional and personal aspects to their role, and trying to negotiate the dual relationships of people who are both friend and congregant. Another example of role conflict and/or role ambiguity is known as the ‘Messiah Complex’. The ‘Messiah complex’ is recognised as a pastor seeing that they need to save a person from their distress or life challenges and then they can become too enmeshed in a person’s life, sometimes inappropriately (Cotton et al. 2003). Baptist pastors incur equivalent tensions in this regard. They sometimes may have to traverse friendships with those that they serve alongside, and occasions to discipline when inappropriate behaviour occurs.
- **First Few Years of Ministry** – it has been determined that the level of dropout in the first few years of ministry has been higher than at other times due to increased levels of stress and inexperience of the pastor. Since this is a transitional period between their initial theological training and a new stage of life, the setup of pastoral supervision and establishment of supportive relationships can often be delayed, which is to the detriment of sustainability

(Cotton et al. 2003). Although, not verifiable, it could be assumed that these dynamics are analogous amongst Baptist pastors, especially those who move to country or regional areas where support services are not so readily accessible. However, in Baptist training processes at theological college and candidature processes employed by the Baptist Denomination the need for support in the first few years of ministry is strongly emphasised.

- **Relocation** – It was determined that clergy and their families face a higher rate of mobility in where they live compared to many other vocations, but second to the Defence Forces. The challenge of a pastor and their family connecting with new people relationally in a new local setting only to then move onto another church location and do the whole process of connection again, can cause instability in being able to create and maintain close community relationships. Often family members can feel disempowered in a decision to move since the choice to move may be forced upon them by the pastor or Denominational leaders. The move also then has an impact on the career of the spouse, friendships of family members, and education of their children (Cotton et al. 2003). This concept of detachment from pre-existing relationships and reattachment to new ones is shared with Baptist pastors. However, the set number of times that this occurs is probably less compared to Salvation Army pastors who tend to be moved between churches on a regular basis as part of their Denominational polity.
- **Lack of Social Support** – The pastoral ministry has been found to be quite isolating because it is difficult to make deep and meaningful friendships. Relationships that pastors develop tend to be unilateral in engagement, meaning they do not gain support personally themselves. This reduced level of social support has then: caused issues in marriage connections; created a sense of seclusion; invoked role overload; created burnout; developed depression; and allowed inappropriate relationships with congregants to be formed (Cotton et al. 2003). This stressor would be envisaged as a disparity for Baptist pastors, since Denominational and theological training consign such a high regard for social

support for their pastors. In this study it is the effect of the level and type of social support that lays conjecture whether it is contributing to preventing dropout and/or a pastor's sustainability.

- **Gender: '*The Shadow Ministry*'** – The issue of how men are perceived in church ministry and how women are perceived in pastoral roles is different and this has its own consequences for both genders. Particularly for women, the concept of equality in role as a pastor is still a source of contention and consternation. The lack of support sources, such as mentors, for women in dealing with the unique factors for female pastors means that women in ministry tend to be seen as lesser and ultimately not honoured like male clergy are. They often end up, in a sense, 'shadowing' men in their leadership roles rather than standing in their own right as a pastoral leader (Cotton et al. 2003). Female Baptist pastors do anecdotally report similar experiences to Cotton et al. (2003)' study, but for the sake of narrowing the research cohort in this thesis, the focus has been upon male pastors.
- **Congregational tensions** – The church congregation can encounter 'in fighting' and numerous unresolved conflicts between congregants and pastor and tensions between members themselves. These unresolved conflicts could have been patterned in cycles of the church's life cycle and can cause stress to the pastor and their family. Clergy, in resolving conflicts, sometimes heighten these issues through a lack of insight and ability in handling conflict. Since pastors are reliant upon volunteer funding from congregants, they can sometimes be reticent to confront people and are extremely careful how they present themselves. This then causes isolation and frustration in community relationships (Cotton et al. 2003). The concept of conflict is envisaged as a comparable issue for Baptist pastors, since any vocation that engages people would incur some sort of human dynamic and tension.
- **Changes in society** – Over recent years, as a result of society's perceptions and public changes, clergy are no longer seen and honoured as they once were. These broader changes in society (called secularisation) mean that there is a

constant need to ensure appropriate relevancy and contextualisation in the way that a church functions, so as to keep operating and maintain attendance. As a result, pressure for a church's survival causes pastoral leaders to work tirelessly towards an increasing church attendance and sustained funding of church budgets including their own salary. 'There is a desire to be successful and have a full church and when a church is struggling to survive that can produce stress' (Cotton et al. 2003, p. 321). Baptist pastors face this same stressor with theological training colleges, churches, and Denominational leaders placing high emphasis on performance through increased attendance, new church plants, revitalisation of current churches, and expansion of church services and events.

- **Church structure: '*A Unique Organisation*'** – Adding to the complexity of the pastoral vocation are the operational aspects of the church's polity, or their ecclesiastical or structural arrangements. Unlike many other non-church institutions, clergy and churches operate within Denominational constraints and government legislations but often without clarity around job descriptions, time expectations, anticipated results, authority lines and complaint procedures (Cotton et al. 2003). Baptist pastors encounter the same issues in this regard. For example, the theological aspects of leadership within Baptist church structures are often counter-cultural to regular societal approaches. For example, the servant-leader model of leadership style (Greenleaf & Spears 2002) is taught pervasively at theological college. This model of leadership positions a pastor as servant to all, which means that their expression of power and authority is diminished compared to a more autocratic approach. This style operates counter to a hierarchical structured approach to leadership where a leader delivers direction with an expected result from others. As a result tension and stress tends to arise for a Baptist pastor as they attempt to lead in a servant-based approach within their congregational-based church structure.
- **Religious upbringing** – An added complication for individual pastors may be their previous religious experiences; growing up as the child of a pastor or missionary or in a different religious context. In some cases, those who have

transitioned from a church-based past into pastoral leadership can be lonelier and more prone to problems than those from non-Christian backgrounds. As a result, the level of emotional instability and ability to socialise becomes confused and heightened and ministers become: perfectionistic, concerned, introverted, withdrawn and isolated than other people (Cotton et al. 2003). Baptist pastors are no exception to these dynamics regarding upbringing as each pastor has their own individual journey and would face similar adjustment behaviours.

Although not mentioned by Cotton et al. (2003), another aspect of pastoral ministry worth adding to this list of factors arises from work conducted by Hendron et al. (2012), which posited secondary trauma as a factor to be considered. Ministers, and even Baptist ones, often encounter second-hand the traumas of others whilst serving in their vocation in a vicarious manner, and this contributes to stress, especially in their ministry encounters. As can be identified from this list of unique stressors for clergy, there are possibly many and varied stressors that clergy experience compared to other vocations. It is through understanding this array of differences that more apposite research may be enabled especially amongst individual Denominational pastors like Baptists.

2.3.1 Studies On Factors Involved in Pastoral Stress and Burnout

It is a multiplex of unique factors, internal and external, that research is examining so as to unearth what is causing overstress and burnout in clergy (Beebe 2007). And as this literature review will now demonstrate, the previous studies that have been undertaken have contributed greatly to the vocational field of pastoral ministry with studies posited within:

- A particular country and its culture;
- A specific or unspecified gender;
- Certain or combined Denominations;
- The utilisation of a stipulated methodology;
- Being conducted by some researchers who have worked in the field of pastoral ministry, but mainly by those who have not, such as psychologists;
- Being less concerned with dropout and more concerned with burnout; and,
- Examining a cohort of people still in ministry rather than those who have dropped out.

It is helpful to note though that burnout or stress does not necessarily mean the occurrence of clergy dropout, and clergy dropout is not always the result of burnout or stress (Bickerton 2013). Besides mainly examining stress and burnout, results of individual studies tend not to be generalisable across: countries, church Denominations, and genders. This, therefore, allows for more specified studies to: take place amongst other countries, like Australia; engage with other Denominations, like Baptists; understand unique gendered aspects; and engage in other possible reasons for dropout other than just stress and burnout (Adams et al. 2016).

2.3.2 Non-Australian Based Studies On Pastoral Stress and Burnout

Some of the global research that has been undertaken regarding clergy stress and its effects is not refereed, having been taken from various informal websites; or the data is contextualized for the non-Australian ministry context. For instance, Tony Stoltzfus, a USA source, attempted to capture pastoral burnout research from his survey of what he considered more reliable sources such as Pastor to Pastor, Fuller Institute for Church Growth, Focus on the Family, Ministries Today, Charisma Magazine, TNT Ministries, Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Global Pastors Network (Stoltzfus 2009). Stoltzfus determined that there were 18 factors that placed pastors at great risk of being vulnerable to burn out. However, despite the efforts of such sources, these generalized findings have been deduced without academic rigor, peer review, or submission to refereed journals. Also, these unsubstantiated studies did not consider the uniqueness of individuals like: gender, ecclesiology, ministry context, cultural aspects, and pastoral circumstances in determining the occurrence of burnout. As a result further studies have taken place across the world that has exhibited greater peer review, increased academic rigor especially in methodology, and broadened consideration of the unique factors incurred by pastors.

Research amongst USA Catholic priests established that ‘a priest who likes what he does, has a strong sense of inner peace, and has a limited history of psychological problems, plus a strong network of support from friends and a strong relationship to God, is very likely not going to burn out’ (Rossetti & Rhoades 2013, p. 341). This study surveyed 2,482 Catholic priests and was the largest survey of Catholic priests at its time.

Other research on dropout, utilising Grounded Theory, included interviews with thirteen participants, who had dropped out of full-time pastoral ministry in their later twenties and thirties, from South African churches near Pretoria. This study determined that a combination of varying factors, based on the individual, were presenting as reasons for

dropout from church-based ministry (Joynt & Dreyer 2013). These factors included: a lack of affirmation and appreciation by people they serve, a limited level of training for a particular context, unresolved personality clashes with other church leaders and people in their church communities, manipulation and control by various parties in the church, and a lack of adequate resources to fulfil their pastoral leadership function (Joynt & Dreyer 2013). This study seemed to highlight that it was a convolution of various factors, uniquely encountered for an individual and left unattended over time, that were at the forefront of the reasons for dropout from church-based ministry, rather than a predetermined list of factors leading to burnout.

Different regional contexts in pastoral ministry have also been explored in research amongst clergy and their sustainability. For instance, rural ministers in the USA were studied in relation to some of the unique factors that they encounter in rural ministries compared to non-rural pastors (Miles & Proeschold-bell 2012). This study was quantitative in nature and focused on a single Denomination called the United Methodist Church (UMC), USA and engaged with 1,726 clergy by way of survey on their health. The results indicated that despite rural pastors experiencing different factors compared to non-rural pastors, they exhibited 'lower levels of several stressors and more positive experiences' (Miles & Proeschold-bell 2012, p. 23).

In other studies in other parts of the world, generalised organisational factors, and work-home interaction had been explored with respect to the rate of burnout in male Norwegian church ministers (Innstrand et al. 2011). This study was a quantitative study conducted amongst 480 Evangelical-Lutheran Church pastors to measure burnout by way of an adapted Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)-based questionnaire. The survey took place in 2003 and in 2005 and their results indicated: that higher levels of education in pastoral education, having greater goal orientation in praxis, better sense of personal identity, and more established 'work-home facilitation' contributed to a pastor being less prone to burnout.

All these previous studies have delivered results that have either: related to a unique

ecclesiology different to Australian Baptists and were either: non-Protestant; focused on burnout rather than dropout; involved unidentifiable gender factors; were conducted by a researcher who had not necessarily experienced the field of pastoral ministry, usually a psychologist; were not longitudinal; examined participants who were still currently serving in a church rather than had already dropped out; and utilised more of a quantitative approach in methodology. This means that their findings are not necessarily generalisable across countries, denominations, and genders. Despite the benefit of these studies to research surrounding sustainability of pastors there are gaps in the research that allow research to be undertaken amongst other countries, church contexts, Denominations, genders, researchers different to psychologists, methods, and varied participants.

Burns et al. (2013) presented published materials related to their seven years of research amongst pastors in USA concerning pastoral ministry and sustainability through a more qualitative approach. The data that they utilised in their research was collected and collated from pastors and their spouses through a range of peer cohorts over multiple days at retreats called 'Pastors Summits'. At these gatherings, discussions involving the difficulties of pastoral ministry were engaged and feedback formulated. In their summation, five themes of sustaining practice that pastors should be aware of were raised:

- 1) Ensuring that that they take time for spiritual formation to ensure fruitfulness and effectiveness in their vocational role.
- 2) Take responsibility for their own self-care so that their communities in which they serve recognise the pastor's limitations as a person and that they are not defined by their pastoral role and calling of God.
- 3) Develop and engage with emotional and cultural intelligence development so as to manage emotions and be aware of differences in context of the places that they serve.
- 4) Focus upon their marriages' and families' spiritual and emotional health because this is the foundation of ongoing sustainability of the pastorate. A call for

congregations to support this focus was also mentioned.

- 5) Cultivate a healthy balance between leadership and management aspects of the pastoral role, ensuring that they take responsibility for both but are not driven by either (Burns et al. 2013 p. Kindle Location 165-280).

Burns et al.'s (2013) work concerning: emotional and cultural intelligence, the spiritual and emotional health of marriages and families, and healthy balance between leadership and management have not predominated other studies in non-Australian research. However, psychological factors and social support in self-care have been explored. The following literature outlines studies in the areas of clergy stress and burnout, considering: spiritual factors, psychological aspects, social support and self-care research, and Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Psychological Factors and Sustainability

Research in other countries such as England has examined psychological factors leading to burnout (Francis et al. 2010). This study surrounded male clergy working in the Church of England and explored concepts around burnout related to current self-esteem, recalled self-esteem as a child, and personality. The Church of England is part of the Anglican communion worldwide (The Church of England 2018). This quantitative-based study of over 1278 Anglican clergy in England aimed to build on previous research that had 'hypothesised relationship between self-esteem and work-related psychological health' (Francis et al. 2010, p. 557). Francis who conducted this research has had some church based pastoral exposure as an Anglican priest and so this does contribute greater potential for increased insight into results amongst UK based studies that are ecclesiologically Anglican.

Research by Barnard & Curry (2012) examined interior factors such as self-compassion and correlation to satisfaction in ministry of seventy five (75) United Methodist Church (UMC) clergy from the south-eastern USA. In this study, 'Hierarchical regression was used to examine if current clergy's desire to please others, guilt or shame orientation,

ability to be self-compassionate, and ability to differentiate self from role uniquely predicted variation in burnout' (Barnard & Curry 2012, p. 149). This study concluded that greater levels of self-compassion were connected to increased satisfaction in ministry and greater propensity to lessen the occurrence of burnout. Self-compassion, in this study, was defined as a mixture of three aspects:

First, it entails offering kindness, patience, and understanding to oneself during times of failure or disappointment. Second, individuals high in self-compassion recognize that others go through similar experiences and feel connected rather than isolated during times of pain. Third, individuals who are high in self-compassion neither ignore nor ruminate about their own shortcomings. (Barnard & Curry 2012, p. 149-52)

Results concluded in a correlation between burnout and personality, but particularly alongside the level of self-compassion in a minister.

Besides specific psychological factors, some studies have engaged other experiences such as loneliness and its effect on sole rural pastors in rural communities (Scott & Lovell 2015). This study 'assumed the existence of several interrelated challenges in the lives of rural pastors' (Scott & Lovell 2015, p. 91) and was limited in its sample size to rural pastors in USA.

Studies on clergy burnout have also examined the effects of family systems affecting clergy, particularly surrounding the ability to differentiate themselves in conflict situations. For instance, a study by Beebe (2007) across a range of clergy from varying USA-based Denominations' including male, female and retired ministers from upstate New York, used a quantitative approach utilising various research survey tools within a framework of family systems. Their results indicated that 'Providing clergy with a perspective allowing them to functionally assess self-role differentiation could offer a powerful tool for intervention in the areas of burnout and conflict management (Beebe 2007, p. 271).

In another study, comprising clergy in the UK, burnout was being assessed using

a modified form of Maslach Burnout Inventory.

As part of a longitudinal study, the same cohort of clergy, all those ordained to stipendiary ministry in one year in the Church of England and the Church in Wales, answered postal questionnaires in their first, second, third, and seventh years of ministry. They numbered 340, and of these 77% were male and 23% female. (Randall 2007, p. 42)

In this study the results expressed that ‘emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, were negatively correlated with chronological age’ (Randall 2007, p. 44) and provided useful insights for further research in clergy stress and burnout and supporting younger clergy (Randall 2007).

These studies concerned with psychological factors are limited by: country of study, gender engaged, methodology utilised, Denomination explored, and the fact that the researchers in these studies predominantly had been working in the area of psychology and had not been involved in the pastoral field. This, therefore, enables scope for other research to be carried out in other countries like Australia, and considering psychological factors.

Self-Care and Social Support in Sustainability

Questions involving stress and dropout have also arisen as to whether clergy have consistently implemented self-care principles pertinent to their distinctive nature of ministry; particularly considering their own personal family background, Denomination, personality, conflict style, and so on. There are various concepts regarding self-care but, in this study, self-care has been defined as ‘engagement in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that maintain and promote physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being’ (Tan & Castillo 2014, p. 90).

Various studies have demonstrated a need to develop a variety of social support systems as part of a self-care approach for pastors. A study by Francis et al. (2018) utilised data gained from the Church Growth Research Programme to study 1,268 full-time paid Church of England ministers under the age of 68 years considering personal,

psychological, contextual and doctrinal or church factors. In this research the impact of professional support services upon clergy was positively correlated to a reduced sense of stress (Francis et al. 2018).

Burnette (2016, p. 136) affirmed ‘Social support from the congregation reduced the negative relationship between pastor burnout and turnover intentions.’ This study was a quantitative based study in the USA utilising the Congregational Life Surveys (USCLS) conducted in 2001. The USCLS survey was a quantitative study, similar to Australia’s NCLS research, surveying a range of Denominations related to congregations and pastoral leadership.

Meek et al. (2003) recognized in their research that clergy engaging with high-skill support, like counsellors and psychotherapists, was a sustaining resource. This study was utilised in providing insight for those working alongside clergy as professional support, such as psychologists. The research was conducted using a mixed-method approach, with qualitative questions for a survey to identify data themes, and a second quantitative survey of three hundred and ninety eight (398) pastors, which then determined twenty six (26) exemplars of sustained pastoral practice. The study concluded that a pastor’s resilience was determinant upon:

- 1) balancing time and boundaries concerning personal life and ministry functions, and connectedness to other people especially their families and other support people; and,
- 2) placing an importance on God, involving: a sense of their call of God, engaging in spiritual disciplines, and self-awareness around God’s nature. (Meek et al. 2003, p. 342-4).

In research amongst clergy and their spouses by McMinn et al. (2005) ‘intrapersonal, family, and community forms’ of self-care were affirmed through multiple studies. This research recognized various social support practices that should inform self-care of

clergy and stated the importance of:

intrapersonal resources related to spiritual formation, getting time away from work, exercising, pursuing hobbies, and so on. The marriage relationship itself is also an essential aspect of care for many clergy and clergy spouses. Though marriage can be difficult because of the unique nature of pastoral work, those who are able to nurture and maintain a healthy marriage relationship find it an important resource for life adjustment. Interactions outside of marriage—such as friendships, mentoring, and accountability relationships—are also important for some pastors, but surprisingly few mention these as a primary coping resource. (McMinn et al. 2005, p. 579)

Further work was conducted by McMinn et al. (2008) using Grounded Theory, examining the emotional and spiritual health of clergy spouses. This study emphasized the ‘importance of spirituality, social support, limit-setting, and healthy lifestyle choices’ (McMinn et al. 2008, p. 445) in managing stress more effectively in a clergy’s family. This research also recognized a need for support from highly skilled professionals, like counsellors and psychotherapists, as a good self-care resource.

In other USA-based research Oraker et al. (2011) conducted a survey using a modified Likert-type instrument of twenty three (23) Presbyterian pastors in Southern Colorado, USA. This research surveyed barriers that clergy encountered engaging in self-care practices. From this study it was determined that developing a clergy assistance program would be beneficial to both clergy themselves and congregations to implement self-care in order to develop sustainability.

Outside the USA and UK, research has been undertaken amongst Seventh Day Adventists to ‘examine the differences in work-related behavior and experience patterns of theology students at Friedensau Adventist University and Seventh-day Adventist pastors in Germany, in the domains of professional ambition, resistance to stress, emotional well-being, and religiosity and spirituality’ (Votmer et al. 2011, p. 292). Their results indicated that there was a higher incidence of burnout amongst pastors compared to the theology students and that further developments on clergy health and preventing burnout should focus on contextual factors, including aspects of spirituality

(Voltmer et al. 2011).

The concept of self-care as a sustaining practice for clergy was also considered in a New Zealand study exploring the process of self-care, which examined physical, emotional, psycho-social, intelligence, spiritual, and professional components of a person's vocation and life (Vaccarino & Gerritsen 2013). This research was based on 57 responses from male and female Anglican clergy and questioned clergy's 'self-care their boundaries, working hours, rest and the Sabbath, and networks of support' Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013, p. 73). This study concluded that self-care was important and that clergy needed to engage in high-level support services that involved a combination of highly trained supervisors, spiritual directors and accountability partners (Vaccarino & Gerritsen 2013).

Muse et al. (2016) asked through quantitative analysis whether the 'Clergy in Kairos' program could be shown to reduce symptoms of burnout and depression. The 'Clergy in Kairos' program is a week-long intensive multi-therapist outpatient intervention program that takes place in Columbus, Georgia, USA. The program involves engagement in various therapeutic processes such as spiritual direction, vocational assessment, determination of the level of stress and wellness of participants, and personal renewal through such means as therapeutic massage (Pastoral Institute 2019). In this quantitative study of 144 clergy members on this retreat, the Beck Depression Inventory was utilised to survey a range of Denominationally-based pastors. These surveys accumulated data before the retreat commenced and six months after the retreat concluded. These results were placed against a control group made up of Presbyterian and Methodist ministers. This study made no solid conclusions concerning the efficacy of this week-long retreat aimed at producing resilience and renewed hope, but instead the study called for further qualitative research in this area. However, they stated:

a significant difference in the lives of persons who get treatment before their exhaustion has penetrated deep enough into their soul to bring their sense of self-worth and their call into question. (Muse et al. 2016 p. 156)

The results from this study were commensurate with similar studies by McMinn et al. (2005), McMinn et al. (2008), Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013), Oraker et al. (2011), and Burnette (2016), with respect to the importance of self-care, especially through engagement with professional support.

Practices like engaging in physical activities, days off, diets, holidays, mentors, spiritual disciplines, self-development efforts, boundary keeping, continuing education, Sabbath keeping, rest and relaxation, friendships, workload reallocation, family focus, spouse and social engagement have all been included in non-peer-reviewed publications and works exploring sustainability through self-care (Gallagher 2019; Exantus 2012; Lane 2014; Lee 2012; Lewis 2009; London & Wiseman 2003; Macdonald 2011; Schaefer & Jacobsen 2009; Stone & Barna Group. 2010; Tiansay 2003; Wilson et al. 2007). Despite these strategies possibly being helpful, there was no basis of evidence involving their effectiveness and so employment of them by clergy may not necessarily mean sustainability, prevention of burnout, or prevention of dropout.

Despite the insights gained from these various studies on self-care, they were non-Australian based, did not always indicate a specific Denomination, were conducted under the assumption of a specific reason for dropout such as burnout, were conducted by researchers with no pastoral field exposure, were not always gender specific, and were sometimes more focused on assisting mental health professionals in supporting pastors than developing theological training and Denominational support services.

Call of God

The concept of the call of God has also been recognised as a sustaining factor in church-based ministry by some researchers (Lee 2012; Meek et al. 2003). In understanding the concept of the call of God it is helpful to realize that:

God's call encompasses the foundational purposes of our lives and also guidance for life's concrete work and activity. Calling isn't just a category for those who pursue some form of recognized ministry; it's about God's desire for all of our lives as ambassadors of God's kingdom. This is our primary call. This primary call for all of us

leads naturally and secondarily to God's call for each of us. (Labberton 2014, p. 16)

It is this secondary call that is more distinctive and encompasses the belief of a personal and specific call of God to serve in the pastoral vocation (Labberton 2014). This concept of a more precise secondary vocational call has been investigated even amongst non-religious professions to discover work motivation (Elangovan et al. 2010). Lee & Fredrickson's (2012) work did not provide: a methodological basis in their research into the call of God; the specifics concerning Denominational practices; and gender differences. Instead their study appeared to be more generalised in its construction.

Spirituality Factors and Sustainability

Other studies in the USA examining specific factors surrounding sustainability, have measured such aspects as the feeling of the presence of the power of God as an aspect of overall clergy health and guidance in life. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2014) conducted a study on United Methodist clergy in USA utilising a quantitative measurement tool called the '*Clergy Spiritual Well-being Scale*' to measure features of spirituality. The research acknowledged its 'assumption that experiencing the presence and power of God more frequently indicates closeness to God' (Proeschold-Bell et al. 2014, p. 890). This study argued that closeness to God is ultimately sustaining for pastors.

Other USA-based studies have presented findings on self-care practices like spirituality, determining that prayer, meditation and other spiritual practices were effective tools for clergy in preventing burnout and achieving sustainability. Golden et al.'s (2004) study on United Methodist clergy of varying genders utilised a quantitative approach to survey three hundred and twenty-one (321) participants, using various psychological tools to assess spirituality. And previously mentioned studies from the likes of Burns et al. (2013); McMinn et al. (2008) and Meek et al. (2003) have all presented findings that spiritual practices are important aspects of preventing burnout and developing sustainability.

These studies on spirituality were often conducted within a specific USA-based Denomination, were not always gender specific, tended to utilise a quantitative focus in

methodology, were overseen and conducted by psychologists who had no pastoral experience, and were examining clergy health rather than overall dropout.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Roth (2011), and Burns et al. (2013) have made specific reference to emotional intelligence (EQ) as an important aspect of sustainability in clergy. EQ, or sometimes known as EI, can be defined as ‘the ability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others around us and is often thought to guide one’s thinking and actions’ (Newton et al. 2016, p. 1012).

Broadly defined, EQ has been seen to involve aptitude in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Stein 2017). In a more defined sense, EQ has been categorised in EQ-I 2.0-360 survey by Health Systems as:

- Self-perception (self-regard, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness)
- Self-expression (emotional expression, assertiveness, independence)
- Interpersonal composite (interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibility)
- Decision making (problem solving, reality testing, impulse control)
- Stress management (flexibility, stress tolerance, optimism)

(Oswald 2015, p. 2)

It has been claimed that EQ is a better predictor of work performance than IQ (Intelligence Quotient), and that EQ, unlike IQ is able to be taught and developed (Furnham 2009). Mayer et al. (2000) expressed that emotions

‘are internal events that coordinate many psychological subsystems including physiological responses, cognitions, and conscious awareness...has often been conceptualized (particularly in popular literature) as involving much more than ability at perceiving, assimilating, understanding, and managing emotions.’ (Mayer et al. 2000, p. 267-8).

Essentially the theory of EQ espouses that in business, workplaces, and a range of other contexts building relationships with other people is more significant than having technical skills. In essence everyday social intercourse has been ignored to the detriment of developing an ability to read and respond to emotions in self and others (Furnham 2009). However, it must be noted that there has been a failure to reach consensus as to whether EQ should be conceptualised as cognitive ability, a personality trait, or as stated in popular writing, a grab-bag of desirable personal characteristics. No decision rules exist that allow us to evaluate personal qualities, such as empathy, assertiveness, and optimism, as emotionally intelligent behaviors or not. It is also generally agreed that EQ can be split into multiple components, yet there is no consensus on the nature (or even the dimensionality) of these components.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) have expressed that there are various dimensions of EQ and identified 4 separate branches. These branches are identified as:

1. The perceiving and expressing emotions branch which ‘concerns how accurately and how fast individuals can express emotions and identify, detect, and decipher aspects of emotional experiences and emotional displays’ (Côté 2014 p. 463).
2. The using emotions branch which examines ‘how well individuals capitalize on the systematic effects of emotions on cognitive activities such as creativity and risk taking’ (Côté 2014 p. 466)
3. The understanding emotions branch, which inspects ‘how accurately individuals reason about various aspects of emotions, such as when they attach labels to emotions and identify connections between events and emotional reactions.’ (Côté 2014 p. 466)
4. The regulating emotions branch that assesses ‘how well individuals can increase, maintain, or decrease the magnitude or duration of their or others’ emotions.’ (Côté 2014 p. 467)

Studies examining EQ by Goleman, McKee & Boyatzis (2004) have claimed that having positive emotions and feeling good has a better effect on work performance and cognitive decision making than experiencing mild anxiety over extended periods of time. A study of sixty-two CEOs from some of the *Fortune 500* and other US service companies found ‘that the more positive the overall moods of people in the top management team, the more cooperatively they worked together and the better the company’s business results’ (Goleman et al. 2004, p. 15). These results denote that the level of internal support has a part to play in sustainability alongside the ability to process personal emotions, especially those of a negative nature. This study also demonstrated that ongoing leadership is determinant upon aspects of EQ such as managing emotions.

Research into EQ has tended to be focused on vocations other than clergy or undertaken in a generalised sense across societies. However, there have been some peer-reviewed studies on identifiable aspects of EQ within clergy such as awareness and role identity. For instance, a study undertaken by Pooler's (2011) in a peer-reviewed article claimed that a constant erosion of identity in pastors and failure to effectively seek appropriate support to process ministry stressors can lead to ministry misconduct and therefore dropout from pastoral ministry. This article utilised a case study of a pastor, through the lens of ‘Role identity theory’, but was not Denominationally specific and was USA based. This paper was limited in its evidentiary support with respect to EQ and is not necessarily helpful in gaining clarity around the place of EQ in the field of pastoral sustainability.

Although not specifically researching the area of EQ, a PhD study by Wasberg (2013) established that self-differentiation was an important aspect of managing emotions and ongoing leadership effectiveness. The ability to manage emotions is seen as an aspect of EQ. In Wasberg's (2013) study a mixed-method approach was used, whereby qualitative data was first procured through interviews of seventy-eight (78) clergy in the United States across a range of Denominations. These findings were then used in a quantitative study to examine the differentiation of self and clergy role amongst ninety-seven (97)

clergy. From this study it was concluded clergy need to have:

the ability to self-regulate and learn from experiences, to discern contextual meanings from the larger social setting, to be willing to accept risks inherent to the process of change, and the ability and willingness to seek and sustain connection with followers, especially during times of tension or conflict. (Wasberg 2013, p. 150)

A study by Cochran (2018) provided support that EQ was a strong contingent in sustainability of senior male Southern Baptist pastors. Using a descriptive phenomenological study of 18 male senior level Southern Baptist pastors who had served over 5 years, the study specifically looked at whether EQ was a main factor in length of tenure.

The limitations of these studies into EQ generally relate to: not being specifically related to sustainability, were generally undertaken by non-pastoral researchers, were not Denomination specific, did not consider gender issues, took place in the USA, and were generally quantitatively focused.

Summary of Findings

The following table summarises the main findings in the literature based on global studies, except Australia, showing country or countries of origin, Denomination/s examined, some of the main discussion from findings, and the predominant methodology or methodologies utilised.

<u>Study</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Main findings</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
Rossetti & Rhoades (2013)	USA	Catholic	Interiority - inner peace and psychological factors. Exterior - support.	Quantitative

<u>Study</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Main findings</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
Joynt & Dreyer (2013)	South Africa	Various	Interiority - unresolved conflict and lack of encouragement.	Qualitative - Grounded theory
Innstrand et al. (2011)	Norway	Evangelical-Lutheran Church	Interiority - personal identity.	Quantitative
Burns et al. (2013)	USA, & Canada	Various	Interiority – spiritual formation, CQ, EQ, psychological issues, personal drive. Exteriority – spouse support, self-care.	Qualitative – ethnographically inspired.
Francis et al. (2010)	UK	Church of England	Interiority - self-esteem and work-related psychological health.	Quantitative
Barnard & Curry (2012)	USA	United Methodist Church	Interiority – self-compassion	Quantitative
Beebe (2007)	USA	Various	Interiority – self-differentiation	Quantitative
Randall (2007)	UK	Church of England and the Church in Wales	Interiority - emotional exhaustion and depersonalization	Quantitative
Francis et al. (2018)	UK	Church of England	Exteriority - professional support services	Quantitative
Burnette (2016)	USA	Various	Exteriority – congregational support	Quantitative
Meek et al. (2003)	USA	Unreported Evangelical denomination	Exteriority – professional social supports	Mixed method - Qualitative [undisclosed – phone interviews] and quantitative)
McMinn et al. (2005)	USA	Various	Interiority – support, spiritual formation. Exteriority – spouse relationship	Quantitative
McMinn et al. (2008)	USA	Various	Interiority amongst spouses – professional support,	Qualitative - (undisclosed - phone interviews)

<u>Study</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Main findings</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
Oraker et al. (2011)	USA	Presbyterian	Exteriority – self-care through external support.	Quantitative
Voltmer et al. (2011)	Germany	Seventh Day Adventists	Interiority - spiritual	Quantitative
Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013)	New Zealand		Exteriority – professional support services, & other external support.	Quantitative
Muse et al. (2016)	USA	Methodist	Interiority – professional support.	Quantitative
Proeschold-Bell et al. (2014)	USA	United Methodist	Interiority – spirituality.	Quantitative
Golden et al.'s (2004)	USA	United Methodist	Interiority – spirituality.	Quantitative
Wasberg (2013)	USA	Various	Interiority – self-differentiation.	Mixed Method – (qualitative – [undisclosed – interviews] and quantitative)
Cochran (2018)	USA	Baptist	Interiority – EQ.	Qualitative

It can be recognised from this literature from these world wide studies, excluding Australia, that a predominant number of studies have been conducted with a quantitatively focused methodology, were conducted in the USA, and unearthed interiority as a main factor regarding reasons for sustainability. The main findings considered spirituality and psychological reasons as the main interiority aspect of sustainability. The studies also presented a strong basis for professional support services and other forms of external support as contributors to the prevention of dropout and reducing the incurrence of burnout.

Conclusion Regarding Non-Australian Based Studies on Stress and Burnout

Overall, the review of literature from countries throughout the world opens up a place for further research to capture unique aspects of sustainability and preventing dropout in: other countries like Australia; using a varying qualitative methodology such as phenomenology; engaging with specific church Denominations such as Baptists;

focusing on gender specifics; reviewing reasons and experiences of dropout rather than just assuming stress and burnout; comparing those who have remained in ministry against those who have dropped out; and, developing studies directed by researchers who have experienced the pastoral field other than mainly psychologists.

2.3.3 Australian Based Research Into Pastoral Stress and Burnout

Turning to the Australian context of research conducted on clergy, it can be noted that there are specified studies of Australian clergy involving sustainability that are Denominationally specific, gender focused and a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. However, as will be determined from this review, these studies, as valuable and significant as they are, demonstrate a gap in the research so as to enable engagement with:

- The use of varying qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology;
- Specific church Denominations such as Australian Baptists;
- Maintaining a gender-specific focus such as male pastors;
- Examining those who have dropped out of church-based ministry in comparison to those who have been sustained in ministry;
- Reviewing the wide range of reasons for sustainability in other countries;
- Clergy dropout for reasons other than stress and/or burnout.
- Researchers who are more acquainted with the field of pastoral ministry, other than mainly psychologists.

Some research globally in the area of generalised burnout has identified stages towards burnout as a leading factor in dropout, rather than the occurrence of one catastrophic event (Adams et al. 2016; Lewis 2009; Maslach et al. 2001). In research into clergy burnout, though, there has tended to be a recognition that it is a range of factors, if left unattended by the minister, that can lead to a state of burnout and ultimately dropout from church-based ministry (Schaefer & Jacobsen 2009).

One such example of this movement towards burnout from a range of unattended factors and failing to be sustained in ministry has been presented in a self-published reflective autobiography by Steve Bagi (2008). Bagi disclosed that he was an Australian ex-pastor who recounted his own personal journey towards dropout from church-based ministry as a result of burnout. He cogitated that as a result of an accumulation of internal and external factors that he had left unaddressed in his leadership and personal life, rather than just one devastating event, he burnt out and ultimately dropped out of church-based ministry (Bagi 2008). Bagi (2008) did not reveal which Denomination he had served in, but there were signs in his writing that it may have been a congregational governance structure, such as Baptist. He recounted that his confluence of factors leading to burnout and dropout included:

a) A faulty attitude of self.

This is often recognised as confusion concerning ‘role identity’.

One’s role identity develops as one interacts socially with others and responds to others’ expectations. When others associate an individual with a particular role, the role will increasingly merge with the self-concept. (Pooler 2011, p. 707)

This meant a blurring of identity between who he was as a Christian believer and in his role in the ‘clerical collar’.

b) Lack of attention to the toxicity of the congregational system in which he served.

Churches exhibit a predetermined approach to the handling of stress and anxiety by individual members of their church community, and so the responses to anxiety and stress are often based on past patterns of tactics in dealing with conflict and decision making (Rockwell 2010). Bagi (2008) determined that a lack of awareness and insight comprising the church’s congregational system added to the accumulation of factors that lead him to burnout. His concept of the

congregational system could be correlated against Murray Bowens' work on systems theory (Richardson 2005), and essentially considers the ability of a pastor to differentiate themselves from the church system in which they minister (Beebe 2007; Matthews 2005). The lack of ability to differentiate in turn causes tense reactions from others in the church when changes and adjustments are made, even to regular events and church expressions (Richardson 2005; Rockwell 2010; Wasberg 2013). For instance, this tension could come from community members over something as simple as a change in church service format or church seating configuration, and the pastor then overreacts to this tension due to their inability to address their own emotional anxiety.

c) Avoidance of the issues of self-care.

For Bagi (2008) this meant avoiding a disciplined and intentional approach to personal development and its impact on ministry situations. This ultimately meant that various factors needing attention in his life were avoided to the point of incurring burnout.

Researchers in Australia have tended towards accepting that there is a progression towards burnout and utilise this concept to identify sustainability in clergy. For instance, this accumulative list of unattended factors concerning sustainability of Australian clergy has been captured in studies by Research NCLS 2013 (How do leaders thrive and not just survive?). Their exploration claimed that a combination of factors is sustaining pastors in their vocational service within Australia. Their six personal foundations contributing to a leader's wellbeing and helping sustain effective leadership were considered as: 'spiritual foundations', 'clarity of purpose', 'sense of self', 'integration', 'supportive relationships' and 'balance and boundaries' (Kaldor et al. 2009):

Spiritual Foundations: Your spiritual foundations remind you of your identity and dependence on God and your place in the world. Active ongoing spiritual formation and a deepening relationship with God is a necessary resource upon which Christian leaders draw.

Clarity of Purpose: Your personal sense of purpose, or calling in your ministry is an important foundation, which will act as a reference point, an internal compass to help you stay on course and persevere.

Sense of Self: A strong sense of self and of personal autonomy means that while you may care deeply about your ministry, you maintain a sense of identity separate from it. Not becoming dependent on the affirmation of others, or on the authority of your position, is a strength in times of stress.

Integration: Having a sense of integration will mean you feel your gifts and passions are a good fit for your ministry role. This may vary from one task to another but a good amount of overlap means you feel more able to live out your role and be a genuine model to those around you.

Supportive Relationships: Being able to make and keep friends can be a challenge for some in ministry roles. The support you receive from close friends and family can make a critical difference in how well you face demanding times in ministry.

Balance and Boundaries: Constant and unbroken engagement in ministry can stop your energy levels returning to a natural and healthy equilibrium. If you are able to 'unplug', relax and put time aside for separate activities and priorities, you are likely to improve your sustainability in ministry. (NCLS Research 2018, Personal Foundations)

A 2011 National Church Life Survey research was undertaken by survey of over 6,000 leaders in Australian churches, including 2,000 senior leaders, who completed their Leader Survey. Initial conclusions from NCLS research was deduced from an accumulation of quantitatively based research amongst Australian pastors between 1996 and 2009. This research by NCLS Research (2013) has now drawn the conclusion that a pastor who experienced higher levels of ministry satisfaction and lower levels of emotional exhaustion was less prone to burn out (NCLS Research 2018).

Results from the 2011 National Church Life Survey have reaffirmed the value of six *personal foundations of sustainable leadership*. These foundations are stronger in leaders who are avoiding burnout and thriving in their ministry role (NCLS Research 2013 How

do leaders thrive and not just survive?).

NCLS Research (2018) was conducted amongst leaders who chose to participate and who were still ministering within the pastoral vocation at the time of survey. Essentially, it took snapshots of data at each time of the surveys. This empirical approach has been helpful in establishing the personal foundations of sustainability for pastors. However, if we were to add research of pastors who had dropped out of ministry then these foundations could be affirmed, embellished, or refined.

NCLS Research' (2018) studies reviewed internal and external factors in determining the causes of burnout in pastors. However, similarly to previous studies, this research has operated on the assumption that all pastors have engaged with and responded to the surveys issued in previous iterations of the NCLS. Essentially the surveys issued are not completely anonymous as they can be traced to individual church leaders, and a cost is required to participate, which compromises the value of the voluntary participation and the worth of the research. This means that those pastors who have already burnt out, are close to burn out, or did not see value for money in participating, will most likely have not engaged in the surveys, especially since anonymity is not preserved and assured through a signed consent process. The reasons for dropping out of ministry, for those who had left pastoral ministry, are lacking in this form of research. Therefore, the Australian-based NCLS research, despite its pervasiveness and large quantitative data, has limitations in establishing the accumulating factors, and lack of pastoral development strategies, that could be contributing to sustainability and prevention of pastoral dropout from church-based ministry.

Researching what already exists, as the NCLS has shown, is a helpful endeavour but further research comprising those who have dropped out of church-based ministry and comparing their ministry and life aspects to those who have sustained their ministry, has the potential to gain greater insight into concepts for sustainability not yet considered. This could in turn add to other qualitative and quantitative studies involving factors that are enabling sustainability for pastoral ministry and the prevention of dropout.

2.3.4 Research Literature Into Specific Factors

Causing Dropout in Australia

Amongst the myriad factors that have been considered to cause clergy burnout for Australian-based pastors, are valuable and important studies examining specific factors and their effect on ministers. Similar to the non-Australian based studies of clergy stress and sustainability these studies tend towards being quantitative in methodology, were more focused on burnout as the reason for dropout, explored Denominations other than Baptist, tended to be conducted by researchers who had not experienced pastoral ministry, and were not always gender specific. Some of these factors that have appeared in research into Australian-based pastoral ministry are listed and categorised below.

Job Satisfaction

In Australian-based research, the concept of lower job satisfaction leading to higher attrition in human service vocations has been identified (Dollard et al. 2003). Research in Australia has delivered various studies that have contributed to the evolving research concerning clergy burnout in the Australian context and one such study was conducted amongst graduates from theological colleges in the first twelve months after graduation and compared to the time of graduation. This study utilised a quantitative-based approach in measuring the scale of burnout, depression and anxiety in graduates twelve months after being in ministry (Miner 2007). This research was conducted across a range of Denominations, engaging mixed genders, using a questionnaire, with a small sample of forty four (44) participants, and using ‘subscales of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment’ (Miner 2007, p. 17). This study discussed personality factors as a predisposition of burnout and distress. Even though the study acknowledged its limitations around the use of a small sample, and only assessing after twelve months of ministry experience, it did not stipulate whether these graduates had been ordained as clergy or not. As a result, the study may not have taken into account augmented training for those who were being specifically prepared

for church-based ministry in a specific Denomination.

In further research conducted amongst Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Uniting Church and Anglican Denominations in Australia by Miner et al. (2009), a quantitative approach was adopted, utilising questionnaires to study internal orientation to ministry amongst a range of varying issues, especially the effects of secularisation upon faith of the minister. The study did not stipulate a gender division but it was assumed that some females would have been included since the Uniting Church ordain women. In the conclusion of this study it was stated that ‘ministers experiencing more difficulties with a sense of spiritual connectedness, autonomy, and competence experienced greater burnout and distress than those reporting lesser difficulties’ (Miner et al. 2009, p. 476). The study acknowledged that further research could be undertaken with other Denominations.

Continued research by Miner et al. (2010) used quantitative analysis of clergy and the occurrence of burnout. Data was taken from the NCLS 2001 Survey of leaders, and from 2,132 responses, the ‘relationships between three dimensions of an internal orientation to ministry, three factors of burnout, and ministry satisfaction’ (Miner et al. 2010, p. 170) were examined. Of the sample 11% were female. The results concluded:

- (a) the validity of a three-dimensional structure of (i) internal orientation to ministry, and (ii) burnout as applied to clergy;
- (b) the applicability of an internal model of ministry orientation as affecting both burnout and ministry satisfaction; and
- (c) the partially mediating role of burnout in the relationship between internal orientation to ministry and ministry satisfaction. (Miner et al. 2010, p. 181)

In essence Miner et al.'s (2010) results authenticate that internal aspects of clergy, particularly surrounding the development of job satisfaction, contribute to the reduction of burnout.

A more recent study has continued a focus on job satisfaction, in Australian-based

research on clergy, as being a key aspect of sustainability and prevention of burnout. This empirical-based study by Dowson & Miner (2015) engaged '1289 Australian church leaders (709 clergy, 580 lay leaders) who completed a national survey to support the development of effective and sustainable leadership in churches' (Dowson & Miner 2015, p. 76). Of this sample 34.3% were female. Different Denominations, gender differences, and varying theological training levels were included in this study, but these unique factors were not specifically identified in the results. The results discussed positive reasons for coping with stress based on the effect of an intrinsic religious orientation. This orientation was discussed as a stabilizing aspect of ministry in: providing meaning for participants in stressful life events; the place of social and spiritual support in buffering stress; and the attachment aspects of spiritual faith (Dowson & Miner 2015).

In essence, these various studies provide a beneficial and significant impact, but also evidence the place for further research that places greater consideration upon:

- Denominational specifics,
- gender nuances,
- comparison between those who have dropped out of ministry and those who have been sustained,
- use of different types of qualitative methods of research, and
- researchers undertaken by those who have been engaged in the field of pastoral ministry rather than only researchers who have not.

Spirituality and Sustainability

Research in Australia involving spirituality has also demonstrated that developing interior aspects of a pastor's development, such as spirituality and spiritual practices, could be helpful to sustainability. Work by Bickerton (2013) examined spiritual resources and ministries in relation to those who may have the intention to dropout of ministry. He stated that:

Spiritual resources emerge as an important category of resources for work engagement

among religious workers, and the present investigation indicates the need for energy to be invested in the ongoing development of spiritual resources to maintain work engagement. (Bickerton 2013, p. xiii)

Bickerton's (2013) Australian-based study affirmed previous research from the likes of Golden et al. (2004). This study was unique in that it was quantitative in nature and undertaken by a researcher who had not experienced pastoral ministry.

Further results by Bickerton et al. (2014), concerning spirituality in Australian Christian workers, were expressed in an exploration that connected 'spiritual resources, job resources, and work engagement'. The research consisted of a study of four hundred and ninety six (496) Australian Christian workers surveyed online at various points over a period of one and a half (1.5) years and included a mixture of church based pastors, chaplains, youth workers, missionaries, theological lecturers and Denominational leaders. 36.3% of the sample were female participants. This study discussed that the 'pursuit of job resources in order to reduce skill deficits must be balanced with the ongoing cultivation of spiritual resources if work engagement is to be maintained over the longer term' (Bickerton et al. 2014, p. 386). This concept that prayer and meditation are effective tools for clergy in their self-care practices was somewhat affirmed in a further study undertaken by Miner et al. (2015).

Despite this continued work on spirituality and job retention amongst clergy in Australia, and its significant and helpful contribution, the research so far qualifies space for further studies to:

- be conducted by researchers who have experienced the field of study,
- provide a more specific Denominational focus,
- compare cohorts of those who have dropped out of ministry to those who have been sustained,
- consider gender specific aspects, and
- utilise other methods of research, especially qualitatively constructed.

Mental Health and Sustainability

Other quantitative research has been undertaken to examine personality preferences as an indicator of greater clergy health and the potential for burnout. For example, research involving psychological factors has studied extraversion versus introversion across clergy, such as that conducted by Francis et al. (2009). In this study, a sample of 3,715 clergy from Australia, England and New Zealand were questioned and the research examined ‘the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (negative affect) and the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (positive affect), together with a measure of Jungian psychological type, the Francis Psychological Type Scales’ (Francis et al. 2009, p. 200). Of this sample 19% were identified as women. The results indicated that ministers that had a preference ‘towards introversion and thinking experience lower levels of work-related psychological health than clergy who prefer extraversion and feeling’ (Francis et al. 2009, p. 200).

Another study looking at psychology and personality preferences was based on Psychological Type Theory and personality type through Jungian influences on personality testing, such as the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator. Data accumulated from 677 ordained clergy who undertook the NCLS Leaders Survey 2 was correlated against the Personal Wellbeing Index tool (Robbins & Hancock 2015). 21.5% of the sample identified as female. The results indicated that ministers who were more Judging (J) in personality, and more organisational in the way that they structure their lives, had higher levels of wellbeing (Robbins & Hancock 2015). This research involved a range of: Protestant and Catholic clergy; clergy with differing years in ministry; genders; and ages.

A more Denominationally-based study conducted by Fallon et al. (2013) presented research from on Uniting Church clergy based in Victoria and Tasmania. This study surveyed 782 ministers in the Australian Uniting Church using an adapted form of the Delphi technique to determine a range of factors that cause challenges in pastor’s experiences. Clergy then rated these factors as they considered the most potent factors in assisting them in sustainability. Females counted between 36.9% to 37.7% across

the 3 phases of the research process. In conclusion, it was claimed that ‘priority action items may include fostering greater supportive links between clergy to increase social support and providing clergy with greater opportunity for autonomy in their role (this may include mediation for dispute resolution in placements’ (Fallon et al. 2013, p. 37). The researchers also alluded to the impact of theological issues and spiritual foundations as aspects of future research. Fallon et al.'s (2013) work called for further research comprising clergy resilience and post-traumatic stress.

The significant and worthwhile studies conducted in Australia on psychological factors in, similarly to other aspects of sustainability and the prevention of dropout, justify:

- research by researchers who have experienced the field of study,
- engagement with other Denominational networks,
- considering those who have dropped out of ministry,
- contemplating gendered experiences, and
- employing a range of methods in studies.

Self-Care and Social Support in Sustainability

It was previously mentioned in this dissertation that research conducted through NCLS surveys indicated that pastors were generally aware and equipped with the necessary self-care strategies required for pastoral ministry once they had completed their theological training (Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001). However, awareness of the need to self-care and actual implementation of self-care practices is a different question, which did not seem to be explored in these studies.

Amongst research in self-care within the Australian context, it has been claimed that the most helpful self-care strategy has been talking with someone else like their spouse or another clergy member (Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001; Sundby & Nienaber 2009). These studies were conducted mainly amongst clergy serving in church governance structures that were more bureaucratic and authoritarian in ecclesiology, such as Anglican and Presbyterian, were quantitative in method, and the respondents were overwhelmingly

male. Even another unpublished Australian study involving self-care, that was more qualitative in approach, did not necessarily consider unique factors such as ecclesiology and gender in its claims that social support is important as a self-care strategy (Saundercock 2009).

Practices like engaging in physical activities, taking days off, healthy diets, taking holidays, meeting with mentors, spiritual disciplines, self-development efforts, boundary keeping, continuing education, Sabbath keeping, rest and relaxation, maintaining friendships, reasonable workload, time with family, spouse and social engagement have all been espoused as helpful in sustainability. However, these strategies are included in non-peer-reviewed publications and works and so lack academic rigour (Bagi 2008; Brain 2006; Croucher 2003).

Overall, the contribution of studies so far, conducted around self-care and social support in Australian studies around pastoral sustainability, justify ongoing engagement with:

- different methods of research,
- researchers who have had pastoral experience,
- further Denominational focuses,
- gender differences, and
- research participants who have dropped out of pastoral ministry.

Other Factors in Sustainability

Unlike studies undertaken in other countries around other factors in sustainability, which have examined factors like call of God, and emotional intelligence, there is a gap in the literature that has engaged specifically in these aspects within Australian based churches, and more so in congregational governance structures such as the Baptist Denomination.

Summary of Findings

The following table summarises the main findings in the Australian based literature showing Denomination/s examined, some of the main discussion from findings, and the predominant broad based methodology or methodologies utilised (if stated in the study).

<u>Study</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Gender Focus</u>	<u>Main findings</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
(Miner 2007)	Various (Anglican, Presbyterian & Uniting Church)	Mixed	Interiority – personality factors.	Quantitative
Miner et al. (2009)	Various (Presbyterian, Church of Christ, Uniting Church and Anglican)	Mixed (<i>assumed</i>)	Interiority – spirituality, personal autonomy & internal orientation.	Quantitative
Miner et al. (2010)	Various	Mixed	Interiority – job satisfaction and internal orientation.	Quantitative
Dowson & Miner (2015)	Various	Mixed	Interiority - intrinsic religious orientation & spirituality. Exteriority - social and spiritual support.	Quantitative
Bickerton (2013)	Various	Mixed	Interiority - spirituality	Quantitative
Bickerton et al. (2014)	Various	Mixed	Interiority – spirituality and work engagement.	Quantitative
Francis et al. (2009)	Various	Mixed	Interiority – psychological factors regarding introversion and extroversion.	Quantitative
Robbins & Hancock (2015)	Catholic and Various Protestant	Mixed	Interiority – psychological factors regarding introversion and extroversion.	Quantitative
Fallon et al. (2013)	Uniting Church	Mixed	Interiority – spiritual. Exteriority – social support & conflict resolution.	Quantitative
Kaldor and Bullpitt (2001)	Anglican and Presbyterian	Male	Exteriority – spouse and clergy support	Quantitative

<u>Study</u>	<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Gender Focus</u>	<u>Main findings</u>	<u>Methodology</u>
Sundby and Nienaber (2009)	Anglican and Presbyterian	Male	Exteriority – spouse and clergy support	Quantitative
Saunderscock (2009)	Various	Various	Exteriority – social support	Quantitative

Similar, to other world wide studies amongst pastors, sustainability from the Australian based research seems to be pointing towards the effect of factors involving interiority especially spirituality, psychological aspects, and exteriority dynamics around social support.

Conclusion Regarding Factors in Australian Clergy Involving Stress, Burnout and Sustainability

Some of the research that has evolved in the area of clergy dropout has begun to identify that ‘it is clear that there are some significant differences in the profiles of clergy recorded across different Denominations’ (Kaldor et al. 2009). Congregational ecclesiological contexts such as Baptist Churches within Australia are deficient in peer-reviewed research regarding approaches that may be enabling sustainability and preventing dropout amongst pastors. So, despite some Australian-based research concerning such things as apposite self-care principles for sustaining those serving in pastoral ministry (Francis et al. 2009; Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001), the current gaps in research allows for further research within the Australian context considering:

- specific Denominational clergy,
- gender specifics,
- the use of qualitative methods such as phenomenology,
- utilising researchers that have had pastoral experience, and
- participants who have dropped out of ministry compared to those who have been sustained.

2.3.5 Comparison of Literature Between Australia and the Rest of the World

This literature review has revealed that the context of research between Australia and the rest of the world, mainly the USA, has shown similarities and differences in factors surrounding sustainability of pastors. In both Australia and rest of the world the literature has predominated in expressing that exterior factors such as social support, and interior factors such as spirituality and psychological issues are the main reasons for sustainability of pastors. However, other factors interspersed throughout the literature could also be contributing to sustainability. It would therefore be pertinent to examine the Australian context further and consider its unique setting.

The literature review has also demonstrated that pastoral ministry and reasons for sustainability differ between clergy based on many possible factors, including but not limited to:

- country of service,
- Denominational involvement,
- theological training,
- role or position as paid, unpaid, and/or ordained or laity,
- location of service such as rural or non-rural,
- emotional intelligence,
- call of God,
- various psychological aspects,
- personality such as extrovert or introvert, and judging or perceiving
- self-care practices,
- social support,
- job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion,
- previous experiences in ministry, and
- spiritual engagement.

Differences in vocational demands based on some of these factors seem to determine

the types and intensities of stressors that clergy face and the resources that might be available. Unique training processes for Australian based pastors are, in essence, attributable to the individual Denomination that they will be serving within. As a result studies into pastoral stress and dropout are being called for comprising further research across Denominations and countries (Faucett et al. 2013; Miles & Proeschold-bell 2012). These sorts of responses amongst researchers thereby, indicate that more international and Denominational research focused studies is required around pastoral sustainability and preventing dropout.

So as this review of studies which explore clergy sustainability and rates of burnout and/or dropout has demonstrated, there are a range of factors that could be contributing to the rates of dropout in pastoral ministry and sustainability that current research has sought to unearth both quantitatively and qualitatively with the current emphasis appearing to be on certain exterior and interior aspects. However, the possibility of other factors not yet unearthed in research with pastoral leaders warrants further studies amongst clergy through more qualitative-based methods such as phenomenology so as to examine the lived experiences of participants (Lewis & Staehler 2010). These studies could then in turn provide new insights and nuanced adjustment to further research that organisations like NCLS' research in Australia has undertaken concerning the 'personal foundations of sustainable leadership.' (NCLS Research 2018).

2.4 Varying factors Regarding Baptist Pastors and their Church Environments

There are Australian Denominations which lack research into pastoral dropout and that previous studies have not engaged with some Denominations. One such Denomination that lacks focused research attention concerning its pastors is Baptists in Australia.

Ordained Baptist ministers in Australia face varying governance issues compared to other non-congregationally based Denominations because of their polity. Ordination for Baptist ministers in Australia recognises that they have attained the relevant training and formation to be employed in Baptist churches of Australia. In fact Baptist ministers or pastors in NSW and ACT actually ‘accredit’ and ‘ordain’ their candidates for pastoral ministry (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019a):

Accreditation involves the formalised approval of people as suitable, and available, for ministry within the Baptist churches of NSW & ACT. It recognises they have met certain requirements, that they have the appropriate qualifications and credentials for ministry, qualifications and credentials that are usually recognised nationally, and internationally by Baptist Associations and Unions belonging to the Baptist World Alliance. (Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT 2019a)

Working within a congregational ecclesiology is a differing factor for Baptist pastors compared to other ministers in other Denominations like Catholic, Anglican, and Uniting Churches. Essentially in Baptist churches the decision-making processes of the church are vested in the church community as a body of people rather than a church head, or overseeing Denominational body. Each Baptist church is legally constituted in its own right and undertakes its decision-making processes independently of any governing body in its oversight of its activities:

Each local Baptist church in our movement is autonomous, and responsible for setting its own vision, budget, programs, activities, and decision-making processes. Local churches choose to affiliate together as part of State Unions for fellowship, encouragement, equipping, accountability, mutual ministry and administrative support. (Australian Baptist

Individual Baptist churches can associate themselves with State networks of Baptist churches, and this enables pastors to move between churches around Australia without them needing to undertake further training or meet further requirements. In the Australian Baptist Ministries network there are State Associations between New South Wales and ACT; South Australia; Northern Territory; Queensland; Tasmania; Victoria; and Western Australia (Australian Baptist Ministries 2019). These State Associations come together and partner in projects and events that individual churches would not be able to accomplish by themselves. This is a difference to other non-congregationally based Denominations, where authority and support resources for clergy are vested, and most often provided, within the hierarchical structure. Ensuring a designated pathway of theological training is different for Baptist pastors since the employing body is the local church. This means that an individual congregations can decide what type and level of theological training is considered satisfactory for them, unless they have accepted the Baptist Association's recommended requirements for a pastoral leadership position. In other Denominations the holding of church leadership is often determinant upon certain regulations and requirements set down by the Denominational structure.

This associative process of Baptist churches differs to other church Denominations such as Catholic, Anglican, and the Uniting Church which utilise a hierarchical-type structure in decision making, accountability and polity. These Denominations are structured in such a way that oversight is provided by a governing body or person, whereby, protective measures involving their clergy can be employed and implemented in matters of congregational and ministry issues. For instance, priests in Catholic churches are supported and answerable to the local Bishop or Pope (Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 2018); in Anglican churches ministers are supported and accountable to the General Synod (Anglican Church of Australia 2016); and, in The Uniting Church ministers are supported and responsible to the Assembly (Uniting Church in Australia 2018). However, in Baptist Churches pastors are ultimately answerable to their

congregations rather than a person or governing body, and personal support is self-initiated rather than monitored by others. In Baptist churches, power and control essentially resides with the congregational members and thus diminishes the authority and ability of pastors to take control, lead and take action at times (Winslade 2009).

State Denominational Baptist leaders essentially only have authority to cancel a Baptist minister's accreditation rather than enforce a church congregation in what they should do concerning church situations. Also, unless the Baptist pastor seeks and desires support from Denominational heads then support will not be able to be provided. This means that in matters where a church is facing congregational issues or financial distress, the State Denominational leaders have no authority or jurisdiction to intervene unless invited to do so. For example, if a Baptist congregation is abusive towards their pastor, there is no accountability for any of its misdemeanours, other than in matters of Australian and State laws. Whereas in Uniting Churches or Anglican churches, a person higher up the ecclesiastical ladder can be employed and force the seeking of a resolution if unresolved congregational issues arise in a congregation. This unique governance issue for Baptist pastors means that Baptist clergy and their congregations need to employ different measures concerning the resolving of issues compared to other more hierarchically structured Denominations.

Summary of the Unique Factors that Baptist Pastors Incur

- Congregational governance means that power is vested in the congregation rather than structures or individuals and so this affects leadership expression and authority in a more restrictive manner than more hierarchically based church structures.
- Denominational power is restricted to within individual Baptist churches rather than a hierarchical structure. This means that advocacy and accountability for pastors from external sources needs to be by invitation from the church and/or pastor rather than imposed from a top down approach. This influences the level of support that a Baptist pastor is able to have from Denominational bodies

when internal church conflict arises.

- Support services are not imposed on Baptist pastors but rather must be sought and self-initiated by pastors themselves. This means that a lack of initiation to build a support base both internally and externally is a self-responsibility.
- Individual congregations rather than Denominational heads are responsible for financial support, hiring and firing, and ongoing monitoring of pastors. This means that there is greater dependence from a pastor serving in an individual church to rely on the church's capacity in skill and expertise surrounding administrative and managerial function. Since individual churches are too small to provide human resource services for pastors this means there are minimal protections for Baptist pastors if they are required.
- There is no established and accepted approach in theological formation of Baptist pastors that individual churches have to accept for a person being their pastor, compared to many other Denominations. Because each church is independent they have authority and power to accept whomever they want as their pastor. It is only the decision of the church congregation that determines whether a certain level and type of training is accepted as sufficient and appropriate for their context in employment.

Conclusion On Further Research of Baptist Pastors in Australia

So, overall, the dynamics that Baptist pastors face compared to other more bureaucratically configured movements and Denominations like Catholic, Anglican and the Uniting Church, comprising: decision-making processes, pastoral formation in leadership, ecclesiology, ongoing pastoral development and church context, makes them distinctive in the causes of stress, burnout, means of sustainability and prevention of dropout. As has already been demonstrated, the minimal qualitative studies that have taken place amongst Australian-based clergy, particularly Baptist pastors, justifies further examination of this Denomination through varying methodologies, so as to unearth factors that could be contributing to sustainability and the prevention of dropout.

2.5 Anticipated Results

As the review of literature has demonstrated there is a strong propensity that a mixture of interior and exterior factors will be recognized as contributors to a pastor's sustainability and the prevention of their dropout. In essence the focus that a pastor has on spiritual aspects and their psychological insight may very well be important characteristics surrounding interiority. In conjunction with internal aspects it would also seem that the main external contributor to the pastor would be their social support. However, as will now be demonstrated engaging a method and methodology that has not been utilized significantly could justify or challenge current research and be a great contributor into discussions surrounding clergy sustainability.

3. Methodological Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation delivers an explanation of the chosen methodology, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), and presents justification for its implementation in this study. IPA is compatible with an ontological and epistemological position of ‘critical realism’ and is a pragmatic approach for a research method. This validation process will argue that IPA is a methodology that focuses upon an integrative approach, using phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography to reveal themes and areas of further research involving sustainability and dropout of clergy.

3.2 What is IPA?

Through an inductive approach, IPA analyses data for patterns to discern themes that can inform current theory or generate new concepts. It is basically conceived as a qualitative methodology that utilises a ‘bottom up’ approach’ by taking the particulars and moving into conceptual and theoretical frameworks (Coyle 2016).

The main forerunner and expander of IPA is considered to be Jonathan A. Smith in his seminal paper on IPA (1996). From that point, IPA continued to be utilised in the realm of psychology in ensuing decades, gaining influence particularly in health sciences like nursing, and brought a more qualitative approach to research in psychology (Smith 2004). However, Smith’s more known work ‘Interpretative phenomenological analysis: theory, method and research’ (Smith et al. 2009) has added to the engagement of IPA as a methodology, rather than as a philosophy, across a range of fields other than nursing. IPA has been characterized epistemologically as undertaking a set mode in conducting research by describing a corpus of empirical research expressed within an adjusted concept of phenomenology (Smith et al. 2009). IPA differs from pure and descriptive phenomenology in that:

every experience entails immediately and necessarily the position of both a subjective and an objective pole and phenomenology aims to study not the psychological rules of the relation between a specific consciousness and its particular objects, but instead the general and universal laws of this correlation, its different structures and its different properties. (Simone 2015, p. 253)

IPA has been debated to be both a philosophy and methodology but because it engages with ‘the careful and systematic reflective study of the *lived experience*’ it posits itself more as a methodology (Mills 2014, p. 181) and so has been accepted as such in this dissertation. IPA focuses upon the lived experiences of a person and how they make sense of their experiences and the meaning that they associate with these experiences through their ‘*lifeworld*’, whilst acknowledging the place of the researcher (Smith 2004; Smith et al. 2009). IPA can be seen more as an ‘extension’ of phenomenology amongst human science research rather than a philosophy in itself (Sloan & Bowe 2014, p.1296). From this position, IPA is helpful as a method for this study because it considers subjectivity with greater diligence than a pure and descriptive phenomenological study, and enables analysis to be used in a more interpretative fashion compared to pure and descriptive phenomenology. Due to having personal experience in this field of study there is a greater chance of bias and subjectivity occurring for me as a researcher. However, IPA enables the researcher to procure themes from the data whilst still considering the place of the researcher in the process, with research acumen and being closely attentive to bias and subjectivity (VanScoy & Evenstad 2015).

In IPA, the researcher is acknowledged as primary in the analytical process, since the researchers own biases are seen as a means of making sense of the phenomena experienced (VanScoy & Evenstad 2015, p. 338-57). This, therefore, provides a greater richness to analysis and use of data than just producing a narrative of people’s experiences. This study, therefore, differs to pure and descriptive phenomenology in that it focuses on the larger and more profound experiences of the people interviewed so as to ‘contemplate, take stock, worry, and to try and make sense of what is happening’ (Smith et al. 2009, p. 188). In reality Smith et al. (2009) have attempted to

'operationalise' phenomenology, so as to enable it to be adapted easily to other disciplines than just in the area of psychology (Pringle et al. 2011, p. 22-4).

Pragmatically IPA differs from a pure and descriptive form of phenomenology by enabling a declaration to be presented from participants, as to their lived experience, through an interpretative lens (Lyons & Coyle 2016; Smith et al. 2009). This interpretative lens in IPA, allows the researcher to hear people's stories and question them concerning their concept of belief, and through a much more inquisitorial manner compared to pure or descriptive phenomenology (Pringle et al. 2011). As a response:

IPA stresses the interpretative and hermeneutic elements, seeking to capture examples of convergence and divergence, rather than focusing solely on commonalities(Pringle et al. 2011, p. 22)

It, therefore, does not rely on having preconceived conceptions of what the findings might be but rather aims to remove these preconceptions so as 'to allow the analyst to identify central concerns within the data' (Storey 2007, p. 3 of 17).

Overall, IPA engages an 'empathic but critical hermeneutic process to produce an interrogative account based on experience' (Wagstaff et al. 2014, p. 2). Therefore IPA, it can be argued, is a qualitative methodology comprising: various pragmatics induced from phenomenology, utilising an interpretative framework from influences in hermeneutics, and adopting a specific idiographic perspective (Eatough 2016; Shinebourne 2011).

3.2.1 Constructing an IPA study

Larkin, Watts & Clifton (2006) explain that IPA involves a three-fold goal in support of

its methodological stance to not only reduce personal biases but to deliver academically rigorous results. In essence, since IPA is more than a pure and descriptive phenomenological study, but rather engages phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography, there are some methodological aspects that need to take place in a planned manner (Sniebourne 2011; Wagstaff et al. 2014). The phenomena are examined through technique, guideline and procedure (Welch 2001). It is the plethora of suggestions and the complexity of issues involving clergy sustainability and preventing dropout that has justified the validity of a phenomenological methodology utilising IPA, and because IPA's unique features suit the examination of anecdotes of sustainability and dropout. The IPA approach enables the consideration of a number of factors such as gender, country, Denomination, ministry settings and pastoral roles to be defined, so as to limit the number of interplaying factors in research on clergy dropout.

3.3 Phenomenological Employment

Firstly, IPA examines how a person of interest has experienced and understood an event or phenomenon as seen in phenomenological philosophy. Phenomenology embraces the experiential and internal validations of phenomenon encountered by individuals, and discusses theories rather than empirical imperatives in the research process (Pringle et al. 2011; Simone 2015). The concept of phenomenology comes from the Greek word '*phainomenon*' which means a thing that is visible or appears as opposed to reality (Rockmore 2017). Phenomenology aspires to describe the lived experiences of others under the presupposition that there 'exists an essential perceived reality with common features' (Starks & Brown Trinidad 2007, p. 1373). IPA is described, in this dissertation, as existing within aspects of the philosophical stream of phenomenology that developed in response to the period of Scientific Rationalism and Enlightenment, during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries' 'reason' and 'knowledge' debates (Tarnas 2010).

As a divergent philosophy, compared to empiricist methodologies of previous days, phenomenology allows a challenge to presuppositions from more positivist influences

in research methodology (Ihde 2012). This is helpful for this dissertation as IPA aims to unearth aspects of clergy dropout not yet discovered for further empirically-based research. IPA instead aims to challenge current theories or propose revised or new ones and does not aim for universal principles to be discovered (Pringle et al. 2011).

IPA attempts to engage in rigour, and a reduction of subjectivity and bias through its method (Smith et al. 2009). IPA applies a high standard of academic rigour in its qualitative approach and method by: engaging in a well-considered approach to the gathering of data; the use of interview data gained from participants with measured analysis in the formation of themes; analysis of themes with deep reflection and thoughtfulness; and a comparison of themes amongst participants and cohorts to develop conclusions and make further recommendations for ongoing discussion and research (Pringle et al.

2011). The difference with IPA as a phenomenological study is its therapeutic aspect, in that:

Phenomenological research is potentially transformative for both researcher and participant. It offers individuals the opportunity to be witnessed in their experience and allows them to ‘give voice’ to what they are going through. (Finlay 2011 p.11)

It was Edmund Husserl (1859 –1938) that enabled a descriptive, and representative phenomenology of a person’s experience which identified the place of subjectivity (Verene 2007). Husserl was considered to be at the forefront of phenomenological philosophy at the turn of the Twentieth century, building directly on Kantian philosophy (Simone 2015).

Husserl’s phenomenology is, although original, a form of transcendental philosophy, that is of a philosophy which focuses its attention on the relationship between the experiencing subjectivity and the experienced objectuality and that postulates a somehow necessary correlation between the level of subjectivity and the level of objective world, although with various possible emphases. (Simone 2015, p. 245)

In and of itself, simply engaging in a pure and descriptive process of a person's experience in phenomenology does leave exposure to developments in constructivism and relativism. As a researcher who believes in absolute truth, relativism is not conducive to my belief system. It was French philosophers Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre (1905–1980) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908 –1961) who extended 'Husserlian phenomenology in an existential direction, to take cognisance of our corporeal and historical situatedness' (Moran 1999, p. 402).

Overall, IPA posits itself within Edmund Husserl's approach to phenomenology to go 'back to the things themselves' (Smith et al. 2009, p. 1). However, it's saving grace for a critical realist such as myself, is as IPA recounts past events it does this by adopting a hermeneutical approach and idiographic focus so as to delimit the relativist and constructivist elements of pure and descriptive phenomenology.

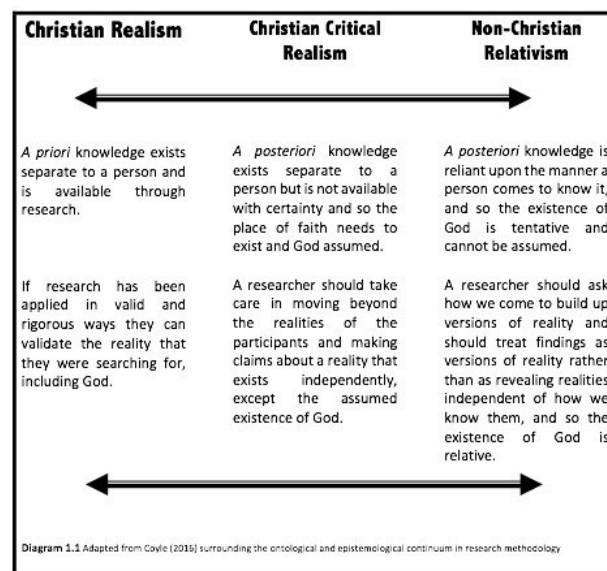
3.3.1 Discussion regarding realism and relativism

A quantitative-based approach to research, more attune to realism, states ontologically that *a priori* knowledge of the world exists and epistemologically is obtainable without bias and subjectivity through the appropriate accumulation of data (refer to Diagram 1.1). It is considered that through objective analysis a causal relationship between the world and our perception of it will be displayed (Coyle 2016). Essentially this is known as the 'scientific method' (Crotty 2015). Qualitative methodologies, such as IPA, position themselves between the place of critical realism and relativism, ontologically and epistemologically (refer to Diagram 1.1). It has been contended that the essence of the concept of phenomenology is open to interpretation based on one's perception of this term ontologically and epistemologically (Rockmore 2017). In other words, there is scope for researchers who hold to varying ontological and epistemological views regarding truth and knowledge to have differing positions along the continuum between realism and relativism. IPA, therefore, has been argued to be an acceptable methodology for a researcher who holds to a position of critical realism (Archer et al. 2004; Smith 2010; Jeong & Othman 2016). In essence, it is situated in between one side

of the spectrum claiming *a posteriori* knowledge exists without certainty but may or may not be obtainable (Gergen 2001) and realism which claims that a reality exists and can be known as long as the research process has been undertaken rigorously and objectively (Coyle 2016).

When deciding upon a methodology, that is amenable with a researcher's ontological and epistemological position, it is helpful to realise that methodologies spread across this spectrum from realism to relativism (refer to Diagram 1.1) can be acquiescent with a person of religious faith. Critical realism, where IPA is located, in essence outlines a challenge to positivism and relativism because it claims that knowledge 'although in principle concerning realities independent of the knower, is never independent of the knower' (Wright 1992, p. 35). So, when it comes to attaining knowledge there can be an exception regarding the existence of God due to his grace.

The importance of the question of the possibility of knowing God lies in the nature of theological knowledge as objective; in other words, the knowledge of God is dependent upon the nature of God himself, who makes possible his own knowledge. This is important to acknowledge because the possibility of our knowing God lies outside of us, is given to us in grace and is given in such a way that it can be said to save us (hence, "soteriological"). (Adams 2015, p. 41).



Therefore, despite pure and descriptive phenomenology being posited more as philosophy regarding human existence and the interpretation of that experience in constructivist ways, IPA can divert from this position because of its engagement with hermeneutics and idiography.

3.4 Hermeneutical Approach

Since IPA is integrative alongside phenomenology, ‘phenomenology uncovers meanings, hermeneutics interprets the meaning’ (Pringle et al. 2011, p. 21). IPA is useful in this dissertation because it interprets a person’s experience in light of cultural, contextual and physical surroundings but with awareness of a two-way relationship in the hermeneutical process between researcher and the research participant. This process is called a ‘double hermeneutic’ and has influences from Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1764-1834), and Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) (Smith et al. 2009).

IPA synthesizes ideas from phenomenology and hermeneutics resulting in a method which is descriptive because it is concerned with how things appear and letting things speak for themselves, and interpretative because it recognizes there is no such thing as an uninterpreted phenomenon. (Pietkiewicz & Smith 2012, p. 363)

Heidegger, in particular, opposed Husserl’s ‘pure phenomenology’ and explored the concept of ‘hermeneutic phenomenology’. This essentially was the interpreting of ‘*everydayness*’ (*dasein*) through the use of hermeneutics. Heidegger recognised that a person is ‘embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns’ (Smith et al. 2009, p. 21).

Heidegger is accepted as the main proponent of hermeneutical developments amongst phenomenology; however, it was Schleiermacher’s influence that seems to have affected Heidegger’s phenomenology in part (Jensen, 2008). For Schleiermacher

interpretation involved what is called grammatical and psychological interpretation. The former is concerned with exact and objective textual meaning, while the latter refers to the individuality of the author or speaker. (Smith et al. 2009, p. 22)

Schleiermacher adopted a holistic and artistic view of the interpretative process and utilised a combination of concepts in interpretation of text. These features were concerned with: understanding the writer and text; considering the influences and shaping of text as a result of local language and community conventions; and developing and utilising artistic research skill and intuition when examining the text (Smith et al. 2009).

Heidegger, however, differed to Schleiermacher's practical approach to hermeneutics and instead built 'philosophically' on the concepts that Schleiermacher proposed. He acknowledged the effect of the 'preconceptions' of the researcher in examination of the phenomena (i.e. previous personal experiences of the researcher alongside assumptions and possible biases of the researcher) as contributory to the interpretive process (Smith et al. 2009). The use of language and the meaning making of a person in the phenomena thus became important to Heidegger (Sloan & Bowe 2014).

Heidegger's contributions to the implementation of hermeneutics in IPA were picked up through the work of Gadamer regarding language in hermeneutics.

For Gadamer language is not independent of the world: the world is represented by language and language is only real because the world is represented within it. Gadamer connected language with ontology and, from the influence of Heidegger's work, focused on a mode of being rather than the epistemological mode of knowing that was most prevalent in philosophy up until that time. (Sloan & Bowe 2014, pp. 1294-5)

For Gadamer, hermeneutics was a dialogue between past and present, since the present is when the interpretive process takes place. This means that understanding an author's intent is difficult and so it is important to find the meaning of the text in its time and context rather than the person who authored it. This in turn has meant that there is a reliance upon the researcher who interprets and analyses the text as well as the author

of the text, thus resulting in a ‘double hermeneutic’ in the IPA process (Smith et al. 2009). This means IPA involves ‘empathic hermeneutics with a questioning hermeneutics’ (Smith 2015, p. 26) to enable a more critical exploration to unfold and to develop a richer analysis.

3.5 Idiography

IPA utilises idiography as its third methodological component. This is an in-depth analysis of a person’s lived experience ensuring finer detail is unearthed (Sniebourne 2011). Idiography is research that offers a focus upon individual cases, ‘namely to distinguish the study of specifics from the study of ‘things-in-general’ (Larkin et al. 2006, p. 103). Developed by Gordon Allport (1962), idiography identifies particularities from results rather than generalizing to discover universal expressions of phenomena in findings (Coyle 2016). Through the use of idiography, IPA aims for the researcher to gain ‘renewed insight’ regarding the phenomenon and its connection to the participant and their world (Larkin et al. 2006, p. 117). As a result, in the use of idiography, IPA engages single cases in great depth as ‘a starting point in the process of analytic deduction, affording an opportunity of working from the ground up by drawing together additional cases to move towards more general claims’ (Sniebourne 2011, p. 47). The results of participants are presented as both ‘convergences’ and ‘divergences’ (Smith 2015, p. 27). The sample sizes, therefore, tend to be smaller than in other qualitative studies and can be as small as three or four (Smith et al. 2009). Although, this aspect limits generalisability of the study, it instead aims to make contributions to theory rather than empirical universal applications (Pringle et al. 2011). In essence, IPA differs to descriptive phenomenology because it adopts an ‘idiographic commitment to discerning individual meaning-making within qualitative data’ (Lyons & Coyle 2016). This means that it is more focused upon the particular and avoids the generalization of claims often made across various groups or populations (Smith et al. 2009).

As a qualitative research approach, IPA allows for multiple individuals (participants) who experience similar events to tell their stories without any distortions and/or prosecutions.
(Alase 2017, p. 11)

4. Research Design

4.1 Justification for Using IPA

As part of these deliberations surrounding the adoption of IPA as a methodology, this chapter will outline reflections on its research design: in reduction of possible subjectivities and biases in the research; and in the various dynamics utilised in authenticating the study's processes and results regarding its method. It is these considerations and employment of methods, within the research process, that has aimed to ensure a robust academic work of rigour and increased research acumen.

Despite current research aiming to identify features of stress and burnout leading to dropout amongst pastors, there has been a diminutive peer-reviewed examination of the vast range of factors leading to dropout utilising a qualitative methodology such as IPA and the examination of a person's experience (Klenke et al. 2015). However, it is in light of these gaps in studies on clergy sustainability and prevention of dropout that there exists justification for further research utilising qualitative methods such as IPA.

There are multiple systems that pastors are contending with, from their families, church constituents, leadership teams, ministry contexts, Denominational distinctiveness, other ministry settings outside parish-based ministries, and so on (Grosch & Olsen 2000). This complexity of factors and their interplay demands space for research with a less positivist approach to be engaged, so that more pervasive research can take place to both challenge and uphold current theories (Wells 2013). A range of previous methodological approaches, within religious and church settings, has not necessarily engaged the ecological and complex interactions of pastoral leaders and their family-type systems in ministry to be unearthed to any great depth. Basically, pastoral stories of struggle and dropout have not been included in peer-reviewed studies, and any comparisons made between those who continue in ministry and those who drop out are absent.

It is the recognition of the varying cohorts of ex-clergy and currently serving clergy, and my position as a critical realist, which has justified the adoption of the IPA approach in this research. In this research project, the area of interest was looking at the life experience of religious ministers serving in a Baptist Denomination against those who dropped out of the same Denomination.

Phenomenology uses the first-hand encounter as the area of interest, and analyses it for themes or motifs. Academic rigour is assured by supporting the data with excerpts from participants' stories, and immersing oneself in a protracted period as a researcher with the data, to ensure 'thoroughness and completeness' (Mills 2014; Shinebourne 2011).

The phenomenological approach in this research has enabled consideration of stories of those individuals who have dropped out of pastoral ministry, alongside those people still involved in pastoral ministry at the time of this study. It has also sought to comprehend the participants' experiences and how participants have viewed their experience through an interpretative process (Rossman & Rallis 2012).

...the aim of phenomenology, in very simple terms, is to do away with interpretation and to let the things themselves speak for themselves. Once we have learnt to do this we will have a firm foundation for a science of the phenomenal. (Lewis & Staehler 2010, p. 6)

The themes and conclusions obtained from this phenomenological data have potential to be utilised in further qualitative and quantitative studies focused on vocational issues amongst clergy and their families. It also has the potential to inform pedagogical practices in vocational training in the area of pastoral leadership; and it can assist clinical supervision processes and professional assistance of clergy in mental health and their sustainability.

This study, therefore, has therapeutic possibility for the community of ex-pastors to enable healing to happen, and it potentially serves the current pastors to consider a more positive approach to be formed in their praxis. Besides benefits to the presently serving pastoral and ex-pastoral cohorts, it also has great worth to educate, inform and raise

awareness amongst congregational members in churches concerning the ravages and challenges that can occur in pastoral ministry.

4.2 Research process in the use of IPA

Since IPA attempts to understand the meaning that people attribute to their actions, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions, the best means of gathering such data is through direct contact by way of face-to-face interview. As Gallagher (2012) outlines, the hermeneutical process in phenomenological research is best expressed verbally. Therefore, determining that an approach aimed to encapsulate the full meaning of participants' experiences and unique situations through a face-to-face interview process seemed most prudent. As Crotty (2015) said, 'we cannot be described apart from our world, just as our world – always a human world – cannot be described apart from us' (Crotty 2015, p. 79). This means that we need to be embedded within the world of participants and understand the world from their perspective.

The research process for this project, in its utilisation of IPA has considered: the importance of the researcher's place in the study, the rationale for the research process in utilising interviews as method, justification for the selection process for conducting interviews, the selection process in interviews, the procurement process of participants for interview, and the actual interview procedures. All these factors have aimed to add both credibility to the study and delimit the possibility of subjectivity and bias.

4.3 Importance of the Researcher in the IPA Research Process

As the researcher of this study, I had been involved directly in church-based ministry for over seventeen (17) years. This is a distinguishing feature of how this research was undertaken, compared to the many and varied other studies amongst clergy that have taken place. Researchers from within the field of psychology have mostly been the ones

that have undertaken studies in the area of clergy regarding stress, burnout, sustainability and prevention of dropout. Besides the influence of these researchers resulting in a predominate amount of studies that are quantitative in nature, it has also meant that the researchers were not necessarily as acquainted with the experiences of clergy as someone who had themselves been involved in the pastoral field for an extended length of time. Utilising researchers who were acquainted with the vocational environment of church-based ministry, like the researcher of this study, provided greater potential for an expanded understanding and insight into pastors and their experiences of pastoral ministry.

It is determined that the greater level of acquaintance with the jargon of clergy, more knowledge of the field of study, and greater understanding of context than some other researchers, could mean an increased level of empathy and insight gained in the study. Of course the possibilities of bias and subjectivity are deemed higher for someone who has experienced the context that they are researching, because of the possibility of countertransference and their own emotional triggers affecting the interview and analysis process (Banerjee 2014). However, these delimitations are addressed later in this dissertation in discussions regarding the selection and interview processes.

Overall, the gains from this study were determined to outweigh the possibilities of manipulation of results due to bias and subjectivity from the effect of countertransference; especially because of the employment of stringent research strategies and procedures, which will be explained later in this thesis, to reduce these possibilities and ensure a high level of research accuracy and quality.

4.4 Rationale for Semi-structured Interviews in the IPA process

The foundational question for IPA is, ‘What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?’ (Patton

2002, p. 104). Any phenomenological inquiry offered to participants provides the chance for the voices in their stories to be authenticated and in turn become agents of the study through the process of interviewing and reporting (Eatough 2016). So, face to face, semi-structured interviews were selected as the tool for this IPA research design, as they enabled freedom in the interview process to capture elements of data untapped in previous research studies, especially non-verbal signs and signals.

...phenomenological interviewing is most effective for exploratory or descriptive research aims, though some findings from phenomenological interviews are used in support of applied research aims. (Guest et al. 2013, p. 119)

The semi-structured and informal interview approach is a prudent approach in an IPA study since it aims to encapsulate the unique factors of each individual participant; instead of using a structured interview; which operates off a predetermined aim to collect a certain type of data (Smith 2015). The allowance for variation in an interview process is important in IPA interviews as it enables the eliciting of data that could be helpful in further analysis. The interview schedule, therefore, becomes a guide rather than a set standard in interview, and the process of interview an actual dialogue that collects pertinent data unique for the individual being interviewed (Smith 2015).

The use of the phenomenological philosophy in IPA allows for an interviewee to express their experience in a non-threatening, safe space with a feeling of acceptance and affirmation. Overall, this was performed with an aim to minimise prejudice and bias. In essence, the semi-structured interview enabled a life map of the person's life world (*'lebenswelt'*) to be explored (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

In regards to approach and considering the type of interview questions to be employed, it was recognised that a base of open ended-type questions would enable a layering of responses to evolve, that would create a structural technique, so that the subjective aspects of the participants' interviews were facilitated in the conversation and the person's experiences would arise through the interview process (Flick 2014). In response to this consideration, broad-based questions were used to enable

participants to express and share the factors that they felt pertinent to the research. This enabled participants to speak on their own thoughts and reflections in question categories rather than be directed to elicit a certain response. This approach was important to avoid assuming that there was a predetermined list of causes of sustainability and dropout from ministry (Cotton et al. 2003). Since some researchers had previously specified certain reasons for sustainability, such as: call of God (Lee & Fredrickson 2012), spirituality (Bickerton et al. 2014), or early ministry experiences (Miner 2007), it was important to enable a more open interview process to see if these types of responses arose or not.

The broad questions that were utilised in the interview process can be found in Appendix H Interview Questions. These broad questions were chosen in order to elicit feelings regarding the pastoral events experienced from participants. It is often claimed that certain practices of self-care are important in theological formation and that theological training is an important aspect of sustainability. Also, since looking for themes of sustainability through self-care was one aspect expressed in the literature, having a direct question in regard to self-care seemed important to ensure that it arose in the interviews.

In essence, this inductive approach aimed to reconstruct from the ground up data into theory (Given 2016). The in-depth qualitative data gained through this phenomenological methodology (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011) enabled aspects regarding sustainability to emerge. In this process, empathic reflective statements needed to be used.

4.5 Justification for Selection Process of Interview

An understanding of an individuals' experience is necessary and vital to the IPA approach (Castro et al. 2011). Due to the unique nature of stressors, the work of Larkin (2005) and Cohen et al. (1995) has indicated that an interview process is a better investigation of stress than a checklist. However, previous studies, other than work by Joynt & Dreyer (2013), have not explored people who had dropped out of church-based ministry. Drawing upon stories of those who have dropped out of pastoral ministry as a cohort, and then comparing to a cohort of pastors who had continued in pastoral ministry, is acknowledged as a means to capture data that could continue discussions and ongoing development of research in the area of religious practitioner stress, burnout, dropout and sustainability. This comparison study sets up two cohorts of people; those who have continued in pastoral ministry in a church-based ministry context for an extended period of time, against those who have dropped out of pastoral ministry.

4.6 Selection Process in IPA Interviews

In this study, it was important to procure participants from two cohorts and maintain as homogenous a sample as possible (Smith et al. 2009). This process of two cohorts was engaged so that an adequate comparison of themes could be made between each group regarding sustainability and reasons for dropout. In order to narrow parameters in the selection process, the following factors were taken into account to seek a more homogenous sample:

- 1) country of ministry;
- 2) church Denomination served in,
- 3) time served in church-based ministry,
- 4) gender of the person,
- 5) theological institution that they trained at, and
- 6) the year that a participant took in completing their formalised theological training leading to ordination.

This does mean a reduction in the generalisability of results across countries, Denominations, years of pastoral service, gender of clergy, the training institution of theological formation, years of engagement in theological formation leading to ordination, and cultural background of the pastor.

In line with the restriction of the cohort's parameters, a purposive sample was used. A purposive sampling is 'deemed appropriate when a study requires the selection of 'unique cases that are especially informative' (Neuman 2006, p. 222). As a result, the sample was selected within the following restricted parameters:

1) Australian-Based Setting of Ministry. Considering many of the studies comprising clergy stress, burnout, sustainability and prevention of dropout have occurred throughout countries other than Australia, this study has chosen the Australian setting for its unique context and need for further research.

2) Baptist Denomination. Baptists are one of the largest Protestant Denominations (of clergy) in the world. This could mean a greater opportunity to extrapolate results due to similar ecclesiological factors in this Denomination worldwide. Therefore, the Australian based Denomination called Baptist Churches of New South Wales (NSW) and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has been chosen, because of its connection worldwide with similar Ecclesiologies. See Diagram 2.1 for a map with the location of these churches within Australia.

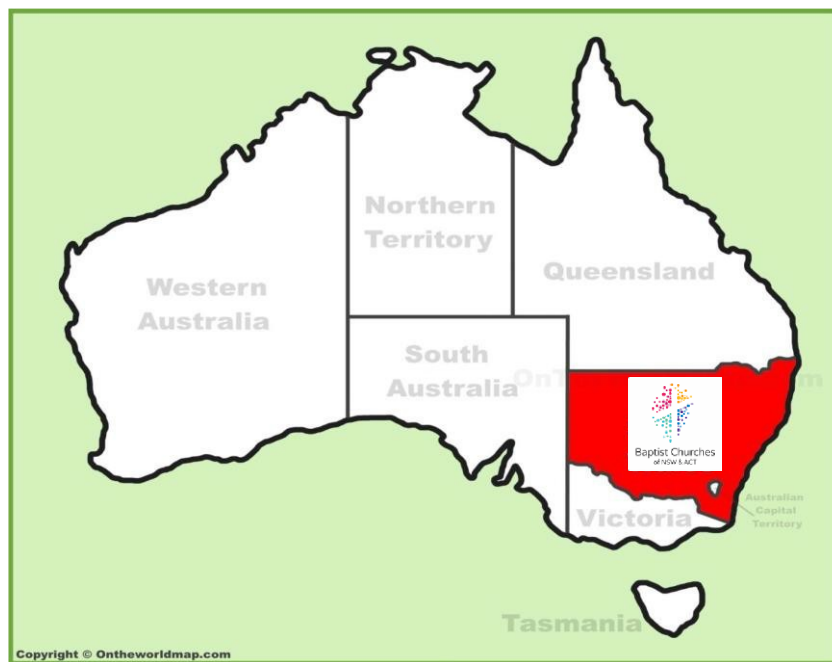


Diagram 2.1 Location of Baptist Churches in New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory

For expediency's sake, these Baptist pastors were selected from a convenience sample from the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT. Since I already had a connection with this network and had assured access to appropriate participants, especially ex-pastors who had dropped out, procuring participants was more accessible than other denominations and other states and territories.

Seeking people who had dropped out of pastoral ministry was deemed more difficult due to changes in people's contact details since leaving pastoral ministry and a greater sense of unwillingness to participate due to previous pain and hurt from dropping out. By utilising current networks, achieving this task of procuring participants was more successful. Seeking participants who were still serving was deemed easier since a record of Accredited Baptist Ministers, with length of service and contact details, was maintained by the relevant Denominational Head.

3) *Ten Year Period of Service*. The time period of service was decided as ten years of ordained ministry. This cut-off period of service was decided based on results from the National Church Life Survey (Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001). Studies from this research showed scores involving overstress of ministers in their first year, known as the ‘honeymoon year’, were much lower than later years. However, scores of overstress increased in the three to five years following, and further in the five to ten year marks, but then declined after the 10 year mark (Kaldor & Bullpitt 2001). These figures demonstrated that factors particular to a pastor’s first ten years of full-time service after ordination were significant and would be worthy of attention.

4) *Male Selection*. Males were selected because there are currently more male pastors than female pastors in pastoral roles, and so this would make procurement easier. The female pastoral experience tends to be significantly different contextually compared to male pastors. In fact, some previous research has claimed that the female experience tends to involve more discrimination, varying emotional responses and different ministry conditions compared to male pastors (Frenk et al. 2013; McDuff 2001; Niemelä 2011; Proeschold-bell et al. 2011; Robbins et al. 2011). So, by delimiting factors comprising gender selection this study aimed to moderate the idiographic aspects in line with IPA methodology.

5) *Theological Training Institution*. Since I had selected Baptist pastors from NSW, Australia it was expected that these pastors would have completed their formal theological studies at the State-based theological institution for training NSW and ACT Baptist pastors. Therefore, participants that I considered in my parameters were Baptist pastors who had undertaken their training at Morling College, Macquarie Park, Sydney, Australia. Morling College is the ‘Baptist Bible & Theological College of NSW & ACT, training pastoral and related ministries in NSW & ACT churches’ (Morling Theological College, 2018). It is considered an evangelical Bible College committed to the core values of the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT. In recognition that this research was an

independent project, neither Morling College or the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT were deemed stakeholders in this research since they did not request this research or have access to research data.

6) Time Period of Theological Training. Programs for training pastors for ordained Baptist ministry have changed and been altered over time. Since 1991, Baptist pastors have been trained through what was a newly accredited award called the Bachelor of Ministry. This award became the favoured training pathway for pastoral candidates for undergraduate students. The Bachelor of Ministry is a TEQSA (The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency 2017) accredited bachelor-level award through the Australian College of Theology (Australian College of Theology 2019). This award engages more practically ministry-focused units and praxis subjects for candidates undertaking studies leading to Baptist ordination. Completion of these candidates' theological formation would have occurred from 1995 onwards as a candidate's program is traditionally four (4) years of formalised theological training.

Therefore, in these interviews I focused on attaining a purposive sample from a pool of male Baptist pastors from the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT, Australia, who had completed their formalised training after the year 1995 at Morling College, and were still serving in a Baptist church for at least ten years, or had dropped out of Baptist pastoral ministry prior to around the ten year mark.

It is acknowledged that procuring participants from the pastoral field in which I have ministered and been involved, does create greater concern for bias and subjectivity in procurement. However, I have not been in any position of authority or influence, in my role, over the pastors who were interviewed or those who had dropped out of pastoral ministry, and so the potential for bias, power differential and subjectivity has been contemplated but could still exist.

4.7 Procuring of Participants for IPA Interviews

Participants who fitted the parameters of interview selection were approached directly by way of the Denominational Head of the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT, known as the Director of Ministries of the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT (DOM), rather than the researcher. Procurement meant that interested parties could reach out directly to the researcher or through the DOM if they wanted to participate. This created an ‘arm’s length’ approach to sampling such that if any person contacted by the DOM did not want to participate then they had freedom to do so without any knowledge or prejudice from the researcher. This also meant that people who genuinely wanted to be involved in the study could respond directly to the researcher without knowledge from the DOM. Even if people passed their names through the DOM, anonymity and confidentiality could be appropriated, as the DOM was not informed who was approached for interview and included in the study. This approach aimed to procure people and increase anonymity so as to develop a safer space for participants to share their stories without fear of prejudice (refer to Appendices A, B and C).

The DOM held a register of currently serving pastors and had contact details of some pastors who had dropped out from being a pastor in the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT. The Denominational Head sent a letter of request to twenty-three (23) currently serving pastors who fitted the parameters of sampling. Of those sent letters, fifteen (15) people were willing to be approached by the researcher. This cohort has been referred to as Pastors In Ministry (PIMs).

Ten (10) people who had dropped out of pastoral ministry before the ten-year (10) mark were sent request letters by the DOM. Of these ten (10) people, eight (8) people responded and were willing to be approached for interview. This cohort has been referred to as those Out of Pastoral Ministry (OPMs).

Candidates who indicated that they were willing to participate in the study were then approached by way of letter in an email. This letter was written to allow possible participants to avoid feeling pressured into participating (refer to Appendices D and E). This process aimed to ensure participants genuinely wanted to be involved rather than through coercion or some sort of expectation. This was particularly important since the researcher may have known possible participants approached, even though no authority existed over them from the researcher.

Each participant was informed that their participation would be anonymous and confidential. This approach of anonymity and confidentiality aimed to gain a rich narrative of information to be sourced, and to offer people assurance that they were not identifiable. If a positive response was received from the researcher's email then the researcher contacted the respondent by phone to arrange an interview. This tactic aimed to develop a continued sensitivity and opportunity for a possible participant to decline at any stage of the process, so that they did not feel co-opted to continue.

A purposive sample (Bryant & Charmaz 2007) of the fifteen (15) PIMs and eight (8) OPMs was then undertaken to bring the number of recorded interviews down to fourteen (14). Of the fifteen (15) PIMs willing to participate, seven (7) were selected for interview with one (1) participant used as a test scenario for practicing interview technique utilising IPA's approach. The selection of PIMs was determined through the researcher's previous collegial relationship, to ensure the most 'arm's length' process as possible. In IPA's methodology, sample sizes are usually small and so only three (3) stories were analysed fully against each other for themes and included in this study.

Out of the eight (8) OPMs that responded, seven (7) were selected for interview. Similarly, to the PIM process, previous collegial relationship with the researcher was considered in relation to whether they were appropriate interviewees or not. Of the eight (8) OPMs willing to participate, seven (7) were selected for interview with one (1) participant used as a test scenario for practicing interview technique utilising IPA's

approach. However, similarly to the PIMs, the need for small samples sizes is such that only three (3) OPM stories were analysed fully against each other for themes and included in this study.

Considerations about the number of interviews were ultimately decided through research by the likes of Mason (2010) into the work of PhD candidates who concluded that ‘saturation’ numbers is somewhat arbitrary and numbers were often influenced by supervisors and examiners. However, Smith et al. (2009) recommended small samples of between three (3) to six (6) interviews were best when conducting IPA studies so that a more in-depth result and rich analysis could eventuate. To ensure enough data could be accumulated for this research, five (5) PIM and five (5) OPM interviews were undertaken, completed and transcribed. Out of these ten (10) transcribed interviews, six (6) were finally selected for full analysis in the results, equally divided between PIMs and OPMs in order to enable balance between the two cohorts. The six (6) participants chosen were selected based on varying factors that will be described in each case so as to disclose any possible subjectivity and bias in selection and as part of transparency.

4.8 IPA Interview Process

In phenomenological interview processes the researcher aims to unearth experiences of the participants through empathic and inquisitory means. It was Heidegger who recognised the social and cultural position of understanding in this process, so gaining contextual data was also important in the interview (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012). This contextual data was accumulated in the first part of the interview, without a recording device, through the use of a small verbal survey (see Appendix G). This data related to age of participant, church contexts served in, family phase in life, and attainment of their theological education.

Marshall & Rossman (2011) stated that three events need to occur to ensure a less biased interview process and ensure a richness of the participant’s experience is

expressed with integrity in the results. Firstly, there needs to be a focus on the past experience of the researcher, called *epoche*, through a process of bracketing. Husserl denoted the concept of '*epoche*' in investigation to be employed so as to identify subjectivisms in the phenomenological process. From the Greek word meaning 'to suspend judgment', the '*epoche*' is a form of bracketing of personal opinion that is brought into the method (Creswell & Poth 2018). In essence, Husserl added into phenomenology the need for researcher subjectivities and biases to be bracketed from influencing the research; thus allowing for connections between people's experiences and their context of existence to be explored in analysis (Cerbone 2008). So, in response to Schleiermacher's holistic coverage of interpreting the text, Heidegger's interpretative lens and hermeneutical aspects, and Gadamer's concepts of recognising a researcher's preconceptions regarding interpretation, IPA embraces a dynamic approach to the 'bracketing' of preconceptions of the researcher in its approach (Smith et al. 2009). Thus, in a holistic manner, IPA becomes concerned with how a phenomenon appears, and the implications of the researcher themselves, in making sense of that appearance as context, is analysed in the interpretative process (Smith et al. 2009).

Secondly, in regards to ensuring integrity in the results, there needs to be a concentration on the present experiences, called *phenomenological reduction* (Marshall & Rossman 2011). This is a process of identifying the basis of the phenomenon through interpretation. This has been included in the actual analysis of the interviews themselves. Finally, there needs to be a phase called *structural synthesis*, which looks at details regarding the lived experience of the participant that took place (Marshall & Rossman 2011). This aspect has been included in the analysis process of participant interviews.

To ensure a positive phenomenological approach during the actual interviews, I was conscious of mine and the participant's body language, tone inflection and choice of

words. By becoming aware of these factors in the interviews, this enables the researcher to limit their own personal emotions and biases. Lynne Baab (2014) calls this process 'parking', whereby, personal emotions and triggers are 'parked' to the side and dealt with after the interview. This parking process ensures a person-centred approach in the interview is maintained and there is less chance of countertransference to occur. The personal emotions of the researcher are then memoed for later processing outside the interview space.

Use of open-ended questions, with the occasional closed question, was used as a strategy in the interviewing process alongside empathic listening. To be empathic and questioning in a hermeneutical sense is to both stand inside the shoes of the person in analysis and align with them in empathy, but to also stand at a bit of distance from the person so as to ask curious and critical questions of their situation (Eatough 2016). So practically, 'it is necessary for an IPA analysis to begin with an empathic stance before adding a critical layer during later stages of analysis' (Eatough 2016, p. 51). This double hermeneutical process enables both the researcher's and research participants' influences to be utilised in analysis. In this 'the participants try to make sense of experience (the first hermeneutic layer), upon which the researcher makes his/her own interpretation (the second layer)' (Jeong & Othman 2016, p. 559). In deference to pure descriptive phenomenological studies, this means the hermeneutic process focuses on empathy and suspicion 'to delimit subjectivities and biases that a phenomenological approach can engage' (Smith et al. 2009, p. 36). Therefore, the reflexivity of the researcher in the case studies was important to be expressed in this dissertation because it provides transparency and a framework for the researcher's '*speaking position*' to be known to readers in evaluating the rigour of the research process (Coyle 2016).

Interviewing with an IPA focus required a slightly different interview technique compared to some other semi-structured approaches in qualitative research. Using IPA meant a greater level of empathy through reflective statements to draw out a person's story and a willingness to being diverted to what the participant felt was important.

This approach ensured a richer and more detailed recount by the participant than just procuring data that the researcher wanted to hear.

...phenomenological interviewing is most effective for exploratory or descriptive research aims, though some findings from phenomenological interviews are used in support of applied research aims. (Guest et al. 2013, p.119)

Appropriate empathic phrases in response to a participant's words facilitated deeper disclosure from participants. It is this aspect of empathy, which can affect the interview process, as it could have either diminished exploration or enlivened it (Baab 2014; Egan 2014; Evans 2010; Minichiello et al. 2008; Pembroke 2002). The following statements are examples of phrases delivered in the interviews to engage participants in a more empathic manner:

- So, it sounds like you've been quite courageous.
- So, it sounds like you've come to new levels of awareness.
- So, you felt hurt and pain, but you put up this guard to protect yourself from it.
- So, it sounds like that brought you some sort of excitement and joy.
- Sounds like some struggle and pain there.
- It sounds like it was a very challenging period.

These types of empathic reflective statements seemed to enable participants to reflect more deeply and share additional insights in response to that particular facet of the interview. It was also in light of this reflective affirmative process that I was able to check data that participants had delivered at that time to confirm their perception of the event that they were describing. This was important to reduce subjectivity in the analysis.

Throughout the interview process it was important to be present for oneself and present with the interviewee, through appropriate active reflective listening, so as to enable empathy to be engaged (Stairs 2000). This approach aimed to draw out the lived experiences (*lebenswelt*) of the person by creating a safe space for participants to share

their story without feelings the fear of prejudice or judgment.

To ensure that the method of interviewing and recording was appropriate, I set up two (2) practice interviews to test equipment, locations, questions, and interview processes. The feedback that was received from these two interviewees was frank and honest and enabled me to be confident in my approach and manner in future interviews that I conducted.

Each of the participant interviews were one (1) hour in length composed of: thirty (30) minutes to answer the survey to gain information regarding context; and thirty (30) minutes of recorded interview through the semi-formal dialogue process. Conducting a thirty-minute (30) interview meant a lessened transcription process and cost. The questions that were used to guide the semi-formal dialogue section were constructed based on the literature review and context (see Appendix H). These open-ended questions aimed to provide space for the participant to contemplate their experiences in pastoral ministry and what aspects could have contributed to their sustainability, and dropout, where they conceived it as applicable. Question 6 (see Appendix H) was included to ensure that contextual factors regarding theological training at Bible College, the Baptist Denomination's involvement and the various churches that participants had been involved with were expressed. A statement that the interview would end soon was delivered prior to the final three (3) questions so as to prepare participants for the end of the interview. The final three (3) questions aimed to provide space for participants to expound themselves on any aspects of their experiences that they felt were relevant to their encounters and that had not yet been said. By adjusting the phraseology of a question, aimed to enable the participant to think differently, this means they could explain themselves differently.

After participants made final comments, I asked them how they found the interview as a debriefing process, so that any unresolved emotional aspects could be expressed. Participants at this point were also reminded if they needed to talk further about

anything that arose for them that they had the list of therapists to contact, if they needed to.

Interviews took place in sound-contained areas in mutually agreed locations such as library rooms, pastors' offices, and coffee shops. The researcher felt that this approach enabled the interviewees to express their experience in a manner and location that was non-threatening, accepting, and without prejudice.

4.9 Reducing the Occurrence of Subjectivities, and Biases, and Other Credibility Considerations for this Study

It was noted earlier that there is a higher than normal chance of subjectivity and bias appearing through countertransference, since as a researcher I had been engaged in the field of study myself. These delimitations have been addressed through:

- the employment of memoing,
- the use of bracketing,
- engaging in personal clinical supervision;
- outlining personal conflict of interests with each participant; and
- considering ethical aspects within the process.

However, the study has also considered other important aspects to maintain credibility by:

- obtaining appropriate interviewee consent;
- employing an appropriate process in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of participants;
- assessing and considering risk and safety factors;
- interview data analysis processes;
- storage of data of interview materials; and

- result checking of data.

4.10 Memoing, Bracketing and Clinical Supervision

In an interview situation where emotion is involved, it is important to be aware and have insight into the place of both the researcher and the participant. The key in this engagement is ensuring that the researcher has a good level of self-awareness and ability to differentiate oneself from the interviewee and their story. This aims to ensure that the researcher avoids their story becoming embedded and mixed in with the participant's story. To assist this differentiation process, the practice of bracketing was utilised. Bracketing is the broad terminology referring to 'a method to protect the researcher from the cumulative effects of examining what may be emotionally challenging material' (Tufford & Newman 2012).

Although it is impossible to eliminate all biases and presuppositions, this study has utilised 'bracketing', by way of 'memoing' and clinical supervision, to limit these possibilities throughout the entire research journey. 'Memoing', in this research, involved the recording of personal thoughts in research through such means as personal note taking and journaling (Birks & Mills 2011). To ensure quality in the research process, particularly through the coding and analysis of data, the record of researcher's own personal thoughts, feelings, ideas and insights was gathered in a hand written diary, a digital note pad, and in digital notes using software called NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2015). This process of memoing was an important aspect to the research process regarding possible subjectivities, biases and personal opinion, since it enabled thoughts, planning and any internal dialogue to be captured as part of the interrogative hermeneutic process. By recording these personal reflections in written form across the whole progression from interview selection to analysis and delivery of the written work, a deeper process of reflection was enabled (Wall et al. 2004). An example from this diary is included below to demonstrate how bracketing took place:

PIM #4: Meeting with my second participant at his home. He offered this venue as one

he feels comfortable in. I note that this is unfamiliar for me so I will need to be mindful of my physical position in the interview and how I feel in an unfamiliar private environment.

Another aspect of bracketing in this research that was employed, other than memoing, was the engagement of clinical supervision. By sitting and processing emotions and thoughts with a registered therapist throughout the entire research process, this sought to develop greater personal awareness in relation to my own personal emotional aspects, personal biases, and subjectivities in the research process. In essence, this enhanced the hermeneutical process of analysis and interpretation by ensuring personal triggers did not impede or convolute results and analysis.

4.11 Conflict of Interest

It is acknowledged that as a researcher with a role and position as a lecturer and being a previous Baptist pastor could cause a perception of a power differential in the interview and research processes. The researcher's relational connection with the DOM could also be conceived as influencing the research process for participants. This perceived conflict of interest in the research study was unavoidable as a researcher in this project (Israel 2014) and so delimiting was required. To delimit this conflict an 'arm's length' offer was made through the DOM in the sending out of request letters rather than myself as the researcher. Also, all people approached were people I had not been directly involved with in either a ministry context of serving together, or had taught them whilst at Bible College. The greater opportunity to gain rich data from participants, having personally been in pastoral ministry, outweighed the possibilities of subjectivities and bias. It was determined and agreed by the Ethics Committee of the University of Technology (UTS) that the opportunity of a greater sense of empathic interviewing because of previous experiences and understanding of pastoral ministry as a researcher was justified in outweighing this conflict. Having been involved in the field of study previously was important for this study since, as the literature review demonstrated, a predominance of research had been undertaken by psychologists, and people who had

not been involved in pastoral ministry.

4.12 IPA Ethical Considerations

Undertaking human research brings forth ethical issues and risk factors for both participants and researcher. As a result, approval was sought and received from the University of Technology Sydney's Ethics Committee in meeting their guidelines. Approval to undertake this research was received under Approval Number HREC 2014000018. In attaining this approval, the following ethical issues concerning the research process were considered and determined:

4.13 Informed consent

In the procurement of interviewees, informed consent was necessary (Brinkmann 2010; Singer 2003). A letter was presented to all participants informing them of: possible risks and discomforts of the interview process; the overall purpose of the investigation; the main features of the design; a description of the benefits of the study; and notification that the interviews were voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw at any time without prejudice (see Appendix E). After participants had agreed to these terms, written consent was obtained as the participant's sign of commitment and intentionality (see Appendix F).

4.14 Anonymity and confidentiality

In conducting the interview processes, there was a need to inform participants that as a researcher I would endeavour to maintain anonymity so that they could not be identified in any published materials.

In the research context, confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed and the identity of research participants will be protected through various processes designed to anonymise them, unless they

specifically choose to be identified. (Wiles 2013, p.42)

In the case studies and results, anonymity was maintained by using a pseudonym for each participant, and by removing particular contextual information that could potentially identify a participant. Besides informing participants of a need to break confidentiality for legal reasons, life threatening risks, possible self-harm, suicide, or a reportable crime, participants were informed verbally and in written form of the level of confidentiality that was being established so that they could feel safe and secure to speak frankly, honestly and openly (Israel 2014) (see Appendices E and F).

4.15 Risk and Safety Factors Considered in the Study

Individuals were made aware in written form that their experience may give personal benefit to themselves from participating in the study because their story could be retold as they had opportunity to express their views and feelings to a wider audience. This is a possible side effect of the research but did not justify participation. The larger risk in the interview process for participants was the psychological or emotional wellbeing of the person rather than physical concerns. However, emotional engagement can manifest into physical expression and so I asked participants to choose a public environment if possible. This request was for both my own safety and the security of the participant.

Physical manifestation through emotional trauma is deemed a diminished risk in a public place compared to a private location where there are no witnesses. All OPMs nominated a café or public library as the place of interview. However, all the PIMs interviewed nominated either an open place in their church building, somewhere in their home, office space at church, or a public library. Not all those interviewed were utilised in analysis. This presented a message to me that generally, PIMs felt safer to speak in more private places. In the more private locations, I ensured that both me and the participant were seated in a manner that each had easy access to an exit from the space of interview, if required.

It was expected that feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, anxiety and ongoing pain could occur for participants throughout and after the interview process and so I provided and directed each participant to an appropriate list of counsellors and psychologists, if required. This was presented in a written form for participants to take with them. Government funding through government agencies in Australia would usually provide a rebate for these services if required, so the cost would be minimised for a participant who needed this service (Australian Government Department of Health 2014). Throughout the interviews, only one (1) participant indicated a possible need for these services at the end of the interview but this person was not included in the analysis phase.

Researchers can also become affected emotionally by their research, especially regarding the dynamics between participant and interviewer around transference and countertransference (Hollway & Jefferson 2013). The emotional triggers that eventuate in psychoanalysis are very real and can impede a researcher's effectiveness, especially in a phenomenological study. To counter and minimise these possible emotional connectors bracketing was engaged.

Alongside the use of diary entries and supervision in the bracketing process, it was recognised that the researcher had over twenty (20) years' experience and academic knowledge regarding interview and face to face processes. The researcher's own pastoral background had the potential to cause greater bias and subjectivity compared to a person who had not experienced pastoral ministry, but the researcher's approach in interviewing aimed to limit the effects of these triggers (Baab 2014). Although it is recognised that there is no guarantee that all subjectivities and biases have been eliminated in this research, the researcher's twenty-plus years engaged in pastoral counselling was considered a possible diminishing factor of presuppositions.

4.16 Interview Data Analysis Processes

The data from the recordings was transcribed by utilising a paid transcription service and edited by this same service provider. This provider was chosen for their contractual assurance that data would be utilised with a high level of security and confidentiality. The transcripts were checked by the transcriber but further checking and editing against recordings was undertaken by the researcher to ensure accuracy.

The transcribed data from interviews was analysed through a qualitative-based research data software compatible with an Apple Macintosh computer, called NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd 2015). Each software program has its pros and cons, but NVivo was decided upon because it was compatible across both Apple and Windows systems and made transferring of data easier between software platforms. NVivo was helpful as it could be saved on individual devices rather than relying upon internet access and a web-based program. This enabled analysis to occur when internet access was not available and gain a higher level of security through encrypted password protection.

The process of coding data in NVivo enabled a categorisation process within various nodes or themes. In line with phenomenological analysis, the interviews were read and reread multiple times by the researcher so that they were immersed in the participant's story (Usher & Jackson 2014). The use of bracketing was essential during this phase.

The data collected was contrasted, compared and correlated in various ways against itself to determine themes regarding Baptist pastors and their ministry sustainability. A mixture of open coding and selective coding was used in the coding process so as to enable connections between phenomena and concepts to be unearthed (Flick 2015; Urquhart 2013). Open coding was utilised to capture any phenomena of the participant that could indicate a new aspect of insight for further research or analysis. Selective coding was applied particularly to aspects involving the research question of self-care practices.

IPA is committed to getting as close as possible to personal lived experience in its own terms but recognizes this is an interpretative endeavour on the part of the researcher. A distinctive feature of IPA is its idiographic lens offering detailed readings of each case before moving, cautiously, to general conclusions. (Smith & Rhodes 2014, p.2)

To enable a concise and in-depth process of interpretation to occur, an expositional approach was adopted in analysing transcribed data. Having been a preacher for over twenty years and utilising an expositional approach to speaking, this process was familiar to me. In exegeting a scriptural text, the process involves understanding the context and location of the spoken text, the person speaking it, the metanarrative of the letter that it sits within and the background behind words and phrases (Levering 2008). All these factors were considered within the analysis of the verbatim data.

4.17 Storage of Data of Interviews Materials

Interview recordings and transcribed data were initially retained in a relevant media format and encrypted onto a cloud storage device called Oxygen Cloud (UTS eResearch Staff 2015). This storage medium was free for University postgraduate students and enabled data to be encrypted and easily accessed from any site. This level of security was important for data retention and to ensure participants' anonymity and confidentiality. A workable copy of the research was then maintained on a password protected Apple computer and an encrypted storage medium as added off-site back-up.

4.18 Result Checking

Throughout the interview process, reflective questions were presented to participants to check that data was being accurately expressed and understood in the interview process. These reflective statements were used within interviews to ensure that as a researcher what the participant was saying and what was being heard were accurate, especially

emotively. Examples of reflective statements were noted in the paragraph on interview processes. As there was still a strong possibility of bias and subjectivity entering into the research process, the researcher sought to undertake a Delphi survey to check results against a group of appropriate and relevant experts through rounds of questioning (Clibbens et al. 2012). However, time parameters and word limitations diminished this line of approach. Instead, the researcher presented research and findings at a gathering of theological educators and pastors to seek their feedback. The feedback from this presentation gave validation and endorsement of results and renewed insights into ensuring parameters of the study were appropriate. This was deemed a satisfactory alternative to the originally intended Delphi Survey.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Summary of Analysis Approach

Results were compiled through a process of analysis through various phases. This analysis process occurred as follows:

Step 1. Case Study and Analysis of Pastors Still In Ministry (PIMs) as individuals

Individual case studies were constructed on each participant in this cohort. Each participant was then analysed to unearth themes for that participant.

Step 2. Comparison Analysis of Pastors Still In ministry (PIMs) as a cohort

A comparison was undertaken between individual case studies and further analysed so as to extract common themes amongst participants in this cohort.

Step 3. Case Study and Analysis of ex-Pastors Out of Pastoral Ministry (OPMs) as individuals

Individual case studies were constructed on each participant in this cohort. Each participant was then analysed to unearth themes for that participant.

Step 4. Comparison Analysis of ex-Pastors Out of Pastoral Ministry (OPM's) as a cohort

A comparison was undertaken between individual case studies and further analysed so as to extract common themes amongst participants in this cohort.

Step 5. Comparison Analysis of the both Cohorts: PIMs and OPMs

In this last phase, an analysis was undertaken comparing the main themes across each cohort and seeing the divergences and commonalities for the purpose of developing a conclusion and recommendations.

Steps 1 and 2 will appear in this chapter with steps 3, 4 and 5 appearing in chapter 5.

5.2 Participant Portraits

There were six (6) people analysed in this study comprising two cohorts of individual participants. The first cohort of three (3) participants were people who:

- were still serving as ordained Baptist pastors in church-based ministry at the time of interview; and
- had served at least ten years after they were ordained.

This cohort is known as PIMs (Pastors In Ministry).

The second cohort comprised of three (3) participants. These participants were persons who:

- were no longer serving in a church-based ministry as a Baptist pastor; and
- had dropped out of pastoral ministry before serving 10 years after being ordained as a Baptist minister.

This cohort of participants is known as OPMs (Out of Pastoral Ministry).

Each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality, as well as removal of some identifying details to ensure anonymity was maintained. Full transcribed data has not been provided in this dissertation to safeguard anonymity and confidentiality. To ensure academic rigour, transparency, and integrity, a summary of transcribed data that de-identifies individual participants has been presented instead. A summary of participants is presented below.

An important aspect of qualitative research is its reflexivity (Coyle 2016). To ensure transparency and context regarding the selection of each candidate, interview location details and church regions have been included at the commencement of each

participant's case study. Also, since emotional and non-verbal signals of participants were important for this study, details about body and emotional language were also included at times.

The PIM profiles have been presented as individual case studies and the analysis of each individual PIM participant's experiences is presented, with respect to their sustainability. These case studies are then compared against each other to determine common themes of sustainability as a cohort of PIMs.

The OPM profiles have been presented as individual case studies and the analysis of each individual OPM participant's experiences is presented with respect to their sustainability and dropout. These case studies are then compared against each to determine common themes of sustainability and dropout as a cohort of OPMs.

The themes of the two cohorts of PIMs and OPMs are then compared and analysed against each other, particularly considering sustainability and dropout, prior to conclusions and recommendations being delivered.

5.2.1 Participant Snap Shot

Name of Participant	Age at time of interview	Marital Status at time of Interview	Years in First Marriage	Number of children at time of interview	Theological Education Qualifications	Years to Complete Theological Studies	Still in Ordained Pastoral Ministry at time of interview	Years in Ordained Baptist Ministry	Number of Baptist Churches Served During Ordained Years	Number of Paid Pastoral Roles in Church-Based Ministry During Ordained Years
Benjamin	Mid 40s	Married	18	2	Degree and Diploma	4	Yes	18+	3	4
Cain	Late 40s	Married	30	3	Diploma and Graduate Diploma	6	Yes	13+	2	2
Daniel	Mid 40s	Married	19	4	Degree and Graduate Diploma	4	Yes	18+	3	3
Felix	Early 50s	Separated	23	4	Degree and Graduate Certificate	4	No	9	2	2
Ham	Late 30s	Separated	15	2	Degree and Diploma	5	No	5	2	2
Jacob	Late 40s	Married – undertaking intense couple therapy	23	3	Degree and Diploma	6	No	6	2	2

5.3 Pastors In Ministry (PIM) Participant Portraits

The following portraits and analysis represent those participants who were Accredited Baptist ministers and ordained. Each one of these participants had been engaged in a Baptist church in pastoral ministry for over ten years at time of interview.

5.3.1 Profile: Benjamin

Benjamin was a white male pastor in his mid-forties (40s) and had been ordained and involved in church-based ministry for over eighteen (18) years at time of interview. He had been married for eighteen (18) years and married after he completed his theological training. He and his wife had two children during his years of pastoral service, both now aged in their primary years. He held both Degree and Diploma-level awards as part of his theological studies and had studied for four (4) years to attain these qualifications and to qualify for Baptist accreditation and ordination. Prior to entering pastoral ministry, Benjamin had vocationally been working in a trade position and held a Certificate-level qualification.

Baptist Church Ministry Experiences for Benjamin

Benjamin had served as a pastor in three (3) different Baptist churches as an ordained Baptist pastor in four (4) different roles:

- 1) Benjamin's first church was a suburban church in Sydney. He served there for four (4) years with two (2) of these years as a student prior to his ordination. This role was a full-time role as an Associate pastor of children, youth and young families. His main role was overseeing children, youth and young family programs and involved general pastoral duties and monthly preaching.
- 2) His second church was a small church in a more rural area of New South Wales for nine (9) years. It was a full-time Senior Pastor position and was a sole pastor role.

This position involved general pastoring and preaching functions.

3) The third church served by Benjamin was in a regional area of New South Wales in a full-time Associate pastoral role and as part of a team situation. This role had been held for five (5) years and involved overseeing general pastoral care and small groups.

4) For the last twelve (12) months Benjamin had remained at the same church as before, but his role had changed to Acting Senior Pastor. This role involved a range of general pastoral duties and responsibilities.

Selection Process for Benjamin

I was at Theological College the same time as Benjamin but in a different year group and so had minimal contact with him whilst attending the College over my years of training. There had been no real direct pastoral connections with him since he completed his Bible College training and I held no position of authority or influence over him at the time of the interview. After interviewing Benjamin, and receiving his transcribed interview, my selection of Benjamin for analysis was based on a fascination with the fact that Benjamin had engaged in a range of church contexts and was prepared to move back to an associate role after having experienced a senior pastoral role. My general sense of people involved in pastoral ministry is that there is a tendency for most people to see youth ministry as a vocational starting point, prior to progressing to either an associate role and then a senior pastoral role. In other words, there tends to be a cultural consideration that a pastor has reached the ultimate part of their career when they gain a senior pastoral role. It was this abnormality against cultural norms with Benjamin moving from a Senior Pastor to Associate Pastor that fascinated me as a researcher.

Interview Dynamics of Benjamin

Location of Interview:

The location of the interview was held in a privately booked library room in a quiet space where no interruptions could take place. The interview was held with a round

table between Benjamin and I, with chairs facing opposite and directly across from each other. The room was well lit and the temperature in the space was quite warm. The room where we met was a larger space that had windows around it. The interview took place in an area out of the line of sight of people walking through the library. So overall, the environment was relaxed and private to elicit openness and safety for Benjamin to engage.

Body language

Benjamin presented in a relaxed pose sitting in his chair opposite me behind the round table. His tone of voice seemed to be relaxed and confident at the commencement and during the whole interview period. Initially in the interview, Benjamin did not provide much direct eye contact but from about fifteen (15) minutes into the interview he then began to engage in more direct eye contact. At one stage of the interview, Benjamin put both hands on the table and leant forward. He kept knocking his watch on the table and then at another stage was fiddling with his watch and making a clicking noise of opening and closing the watch clasp. It was these actions in the interview process that caused me to ensure eye contact was maintained; a relaxed position was kept; and reflective statements were delivered. As a result, Benjamin seemed to then relax and cease fidgeting. At various occasions throughout the interview, Benjamin's words and emotions were reflected more deeply and elicited interesting insights. This whole process aimed to ensure that Benjamin felt listened to in an empathic way so rich data could be conveyed by Benjamin. This seemed to be achieved.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

In total Benjamin utilised fifty-four (54) different type of emotive words in his description of his experience.

Whilst we spoke, Benjamin used twenty-four (24) descriptive words in a positive manner within our conversation. These words, in order when they first appeared,

were: exciting, positive, good, fortunate, supportive, love, enjoyed, excited, privilege, challenges (used in the sense of personal growth), affirmed, wisely, helpful, really big, peace, blessed, likeable, equipped, understand, alongside, enjoyable, re-energise, healthy, enjoyed.

Whilst we spoke, Benjamin used thirty (30) descriptive words that were negative in connotation whilst we talked. These words, in order when they first appeared, were: hard, worrying, worried, disappointed, disappointment, disappointing, attacking, overwhelmed, trouble, avoid, conflict, hate, festers, blows up, difficult, against, struggled, struggle, burnt out, isolated, overwhelmed, frustrated, hard, struggling, frustrating, trouble, unhappy, hard times, terrible, accusations.

The manner in which Benjamin expressed his emotional words can be seen by his opening response to the preliminary part of the interview:

I love being a pastor. So, I feel, that it's something that I love to do. I can't imagine myself doing anything else. I feel that God has really called me to do it, and so I think it has to be a calling. And therefore because of that, I've really always enjoyed it. There's been hard times and good times, but I've always enjoyed it and loved doing it, yeah.

The next part of the conversation was further evidence of this expression of a variety of words where, within two hundred and three (203) words, fourteen (14) different emotive words were articulated. Only one (1) of these emotive words was repeated in his conversation.

In the debrief questions at the end of the interview Benjamin stated that he had been affirmed in the interview process stating that it went 'fine' and was a 'positive experience' even though he was unsure how hard the questions were going to be at the beginning.

Benjamin's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Overall, Benjamin expressed that he loved being a pastor, really enjoyed pastoring and that he had been in a 'privileged position'. He stated: 'I can't imagine myself doing anything else.' Yet Benjamin acknowledged that there had been both hard times and good times throughout.

Benjamin stated that in the good times of ministry he felt 'settled and *<pause>* sometimes challenged' and that he was in a 'privileged position' because he got to see what God was doing in people's lives. He also mentioned that challenges were not necessarily a bad thing and that that he would sometimes think in the back of his mind 'it'd be easier just not be a pastor'; but these thoughts did not lead him to thinking of dropping out of ministry. In the bad times, Benjamin stated that he might have felt worried about how things might turn out, or have felt disappointed when people did not 'act as Christians (*laughs*) or the way you would expect them to act'. However, Benjamin said that when he had feelings of 'worrying' that he would 'need to trust in God in those times.' It was after these statements involving how he felt about his experiences that I made a reflective statement back to Benjamin to check what he was saying:

'So, you think - so you're saying the positive experience is outweighing any challenges that have been there and any negative.'

Benjamin agreed to this reflective statement by saying 'Definitely. Yeah.'

In his recount of experiences in church ministry Benjamin stated that he enjoyed 'getting down and talking to people and, um, just getting to know their story', 'seeing people come to know Jesus' and 'seeing people also growing in Christ, like just maturing as Christians.' Alongside this, however, Benjamin mentioned that he did have struggles with difficult people in his church ministry period but he said that he would not have thought of the situation as 'terrible'.

Even in some of the more challenging times of pastoral ministry Benjamin reflected on times of doubting himself and stated that he recognised the intensity of ministry:

I guess there have been times when I've faced a situation where somebody was, I guess, attacking my ministry, and in that time I felt a bit overwhelmed, and a bit like, 'I don't want to be a pastor'. I wouldn't say that happened often and that didn't last long.

Benjamin's First Church

In his first church, Benjamin mentioned issues of conflict with various people that he had come in to pastoral contact with and recounted stories of struggle with these situations. He did not talk much else about this context.

Benjamin's Second Church

In his second, church Benjamin indicated that he had a lot of farmers and teachers in his congregation. However, he also expressed that in this church it was a struggle because the church had a pattern of losing people regularly. Since the church was located within a town where people resided for a time and would then leave the town, Benjamin stated this dynamic created a transition for a lot of people in the church. This transition of people was based on reasons of being a doctor or teacher for a temporary period in the town. He said:

And so, people would come into the church and then they'd stay for a few years and then they'd move on. And often they were the ones that were, you know, the committed people and the real people that we really missed.

He stated that he recognised the 'fruit' of ministry in the neighbouring churches because attendees would switch churches to other local churches to meet their own personal family needs for their own children and youth. These other churches were able to provide services that Benjamin's church could not provide because his church was much smaller in number of attendees. Benjamin stated that this was hard and mentioned:

You've gotta have a kingdom perspective and realise that you're, you know, to take people to a certain level and then you release them and let them go. But it's hard to do, it's hard work <laughs>. So, especially when the church is struggling and, you know, you wanna see it grow and <laughs> so.

He mentioned that there were some great people in this church but the struggles that he experienced caused him to reflect on his situation and eventually encouraged him to move on to another church. It was as a result of these dynamics experienced over time that Benjamin said that he needed to go into a bigger church so he could be part of a team:

I was finding out I was getting a bit overwhelmed. And frustrated more than anything, because we worked so hard.

In response to the struggles in this second church he moved to a different church stating that he saw this as a good thing in order to 're-energise' and 'take a bit of time out, um, from being the lead pastor.' He mentioned that this was a move to enable him to specialise more in his gifts of pastoral care and stated that he was aware of a type of burnout in his ministry whilst in this second church. Benjamin proceeded to say that he thought the contributing dynamics to his state of being at that time was the result of a combination of factors including: being in a small church, working hard, not seeing many results, and feeling more isolated from his support networks. Benjamin talked further about his struggles and 'dynamics' of being in a small church and stated that he and his wife did love this church but that he felt it was necessary to step back for a while and cease being a pastoral team leader (Senior Pastor).

Upon reflection on his words, regarding his stepping from a senior role to an associate role, I stated: 'Sounds like it was a sense of humility there for you with that, in stepping back?'. To this reflection Benjamin said 'Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!' in a

strong positive and affirmative manner.

Benjamin's Third Church

Benjamin's role in his third church was not mentioned much in the telling of his story and so not much detail was provided. However, Benjamin ruminated over the feelings of being under a Senior Pastor after just previously being in this role himself. He stated:

By being under another team leader who did things quite differently to the way I might do them, it was good because — it was a good experience to learn, you know, what another person would do, and to learn some leadership lessons too from Joe (*name altered for anonymity purposes*). I think he was a good person to learn from, but it was hard. It takes a bit of humility and you can't keep saying, 'What I would do if I was the pastor.' Like you had to bite your tongue sometimes *<laughs>*.

Benjamin's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Benjamin recognised that the call of God to be a pastor was there for him and stated that this was important for him and was the reason why he had enjoyed pastoral ministry.

Benjamin's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Conflict was a focus in Benjamin's first two church contexts. Regarding his attitude towards conflict Benjamin said:

I hate conflict, but you've just gotta! - but I think conflict can be good too. It can — it brings it (i.e. *the issue*) out into the open. If you just try and, ah, pretend that conflict doesn't exist and don't deal with it, that's when it all festers and blows up.

Benjamin, in relation to conflict, mentioned that he felt that he been fortunate because he had been in churches where he did not experience a lot of conflict. He said:

and maybe that's partly because I do think I have a gift of being able to help people through

conflict and live at peace with one another.

In the interview Benjamin mentioned that in his overall handling of conflict he was:

good at getting alongside them and helping them to learn to listen to each other and think about where the other person's coming from rather than just thinking about themselves.

In addition to this comment, Benjamin mentioned stories of other pastors and the conflict that they had faced. He mentioned that he had heard through his attendance at pastoral renewal retreat groups that some pastors had encountered some terrible and ungodly experiences. Benjamin acknowledged that he had not experienced conflict in these ways.

In response to hearing Benjamin's story concerning his handling of conflict, I stated a reflective statement to ensure the hearing of his story accurately and stated 'it sounds like you've been quite courageous because you stepped in – you recognised the situation and then you stepped into that?'. Benjamin responded with:

'Yeah? I don't know if I'd call it 'courageous', but I guess I've recognised when I need to deal with something and I've dealt with it.

Benjamin raised an issue where there was conflict in his first church, referring to an ex-pastor and his wife, who were good friends of him and his wife. He mentioned that he recognised that they were not talking to him and they had gone 'silent' in their relationship with him. In this story, Benjamin mentioned that this ex-pastor and his wife took the side of their daughter in a conflict that Benjamin was having with their daughter. He stated that he felt this response by the pastor was unwise. Benjamin specified that despite him feeling quite immature as a person at that time, he approached the couple directly over the issue instead of letting it continue. He referred to being disappointed by these people and expected more from them having been in pastoral ministry themselves. Benjamin felt that it was important to inform the Church leadership of the incident and what had occurred. He mentioned that the church leaders were supportive of him and that he had felt that they had been helpful in the way that they addressed the issue and how they handled it. Benjamin said: 'I felt very affirmed and supported by them and I thought they handled it quite wisely.'

In his second church context, Benjamin recounted the story of a conflict that related to some people who were accusing Benjamin of taking sides in a disagreement between two other people. In this situation, he went directly to the people who were making these accusations and addressed the issue directly. After recounting the story Benjamin said:

So I guess I nipped it in the bud a bit by going and seeing them and talking to them about it and they left the church, but I guess, I've learned that you've got to try. You gotta have good communication. A lot of trouble seems to happen when there's not good communication.

When I raised the question with Benjamin why he felt that he was able to effectively deal with conflict he said:

I think it's just, I think it's a gift that God's blessed me with, that I seem to be able to. People seem to like me <laughs> and it feels a bit like I'm showing off saying that, but <laughs> but it does! I don't seem to have to work at it; they just like me. So. I guess I'm a likeable person <laughs>.

After these stories I reflected with Benjamin on how he dealt with conflict by stating: 'So, you recognise that there's an issue in the communication on this issue and I will face it?' To this Benjamin responded: 'That's right. And I need to step out and face it.' Benjamin then went on to state that he did not like conflict but that if he did not address the issue then it would 'fester and blow up'.

In trying to capture what Benjamin had been stating about his experiences of conflict, I asked another reflective statement:

So it sounds like you're able to position yourself, and differentiate yourself from the emotion of that situation. Is that right?

To this he said in a very positive and affirmative manner: 'Yeah! yeah!.'

Benjamin's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

In relation to the question on giving advice to people considering entering pastoral ministry Benjamin said 'Don't rush it!' Upon further inquiry as to what Benjamin meant by this statement, he mentioned to ensure that a person has life experience by 'doing something else for a few years' rather than pastoring. He stated that he felt that working with people in pastoral ministry was a big responsibility and difficult and so having some life experience was helpful. He stated that what he felt had really helped him prepare for pastoral ministry was being in his previous profession for five (5) years before going to Bible College and training for pastoral ministry.

He added that not becoming a Senior Pastor straight away was helpful to him and serving as an Associate Pastor beforehand was beneficial. Benjamin recounted that he would have struggled if he had gone straight into leading a church after his Bible College training. He felt that he could mature and learn a few more 'practical skills' for a few years before moving into a more senior pastoral role of responsibility:

Just kind of, um, not taking on too much responsibility too quick, I think, helps a lot.

See it as a learning experience during and while you're an associate.

He indicated that he did not feel equipped in a practical sense for commencing as a sole or lead pastor after Bible College training, but that the College did prepare him theologically and that was not a 'bad thing':

I think the College really tried hard, but I think, you know, obviously there are some things that you just can't learn at College. It doesn't a hundred per cent prepare you.

Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry by Benjamin

As part of his response to the question on sustainability, Benjamin mentioned that he had mentors, attended pastoral renewal retreat groups, networked with other pastors, connected with the congregation, recognised people who are supportive of him and his family, changed ministry positions where necessary, became part of a pastoral

team situation, had self-awareness, developed practical skills, ensured he had Denominational support, and reflected on personal health. Benjamin stated that he had a mentor early in his ministry career but did not have a mentor in the more recent years. He saw the value of having a mentor and was searching for one now but said that he was still recalling things that he had gained from one of his first mentors many years back claiming that he was ‘excellent’. Benjamin claimed that it was ‘relationships’ that had assisted him. In fact, he recounted that he nearly became burnt out in his second church and had felt that he and his wife had become isolated. It was then that he recognised that he wanted a team ministry for his next church context. He mentioned at this point of the interview that, ‘it’s been important to have good self-awareness and to know when you need to step [out].’

Other reasons for sustainability that Benjamin raised were the need to have good self-awareness and to know when to change churches even for the sake of self-care. Benjamin mentioned that he transitioned from a sole pastorate role in his second church to an associate pastoral role in a larger church as a self-care strategy stating: ‘I just needed to have a break from being the main leader in the church.’ At this point I stated: ‘So, it sounds like you’re able to identify that and to be able to sort of step into a different role?’ To this he said: ‘Yeah. And that was hard to do.’

Benjamin then reflected on his current role as Acting Senior Pastor and said:

I think maybe in another ten years, I’ll need to do that again. I think that’s a good thing to do, to re-energise yourself a bit and take a bit of time out, from being the lead pastor.

Benjamin’s Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

Benjamin made a claim in his interview that relationships were important for him in his sustainability.

External Sources

Benjamin stated a helpful aspect of support externally was having an older pastor as

a mentor earlier in his pastoral ministry years. This mentor spoke into his life in positive ways. In particular, some of this mentor's words had been helpful when facing various struggles, particularly in his second church when he was dealing with people leaving the church due to its small size.

Benjamin stated that external support practices, such as pastoral retreat groups were 'excellent', 'helpful' and 'a really big help'. He stated that he felt that he had plenty of support around him and being open with people was important as well and that he had received support from these other pastors in their settings and had learned from them.

Benjamin spoke positively of Denominational support and interaction with Denominational leaders mentioning a couple of names that were very supportive of his transitions between churches and procuring new church placements. He felt that they were very apt to help him a lot and he thought in turn it was important to support the Denomination so this could continue.

Internal Church People

He found the church leadership had been very supportive and helpful in his first church, especially regarding the conflict that he faced. He said:

I felt very affirmed and supported by them and I thought they handled it quite wisely. So that helped me through that time.

Church attenders were acknowledged as a support as he faced struggles in conflict with other individuals, especially in his first church. He stated that if the whole church were against him that this would be a problem for him. He indicated that he needed people to 'walk with him'. He said:

I kinda get on well with them (*i.e. the church people*) and I think that's important to relate well with your congregation and be one of them.

Spouse and Family:

Benjamin did not speak a lot about his family but did mention discussions with his wife before he moved from his second church to his third church and that she felt isolated at this second church. There were positive feelings towards his spousal relationship in the manner that he referred to his wife. He mentioned that he felt churches had been supportive of him and his family.

5.3.1.1 Analysis and Discussion of Benjamin's Themes

Analysis of Interview Setting, Dynamics and Selection Process for Benjamin

Interview Setting Analysis

The relaxed atmosphere that seemed evident in the interview process could be conceived as a positive in the interview process and the procurement of data. It seemed like an atmosphere of discretion was created by having the interview in a private space away from people passing by. This aspect could have enabled a more relaxed feel for Benjamin in the interview and assured him of a feeling of anonymity. This relaxed state of being seemed to take a bit of time to develop in the interview but it did seem apparent, after I continued to remain focused on Benjamin's story and engage him in reflective statements, and he shared more of his story in a relaxed manner. This most likely made Benjamin feel heard and listened to.

Interview Experience

Benjamin demonstrated a variety of positive and negative words with a slightly greater weighting on the use of negative words. However, the weight of using more negative words did not seem to have any causal relationship to him being sustained in ministry. Instead it seemed that Benjamin presented an ability to utilise a variety of both positive and negative emotive words in expressing himself in the interview.

The debrief questions at the end of the interview indicated a positive response to the discussions and lends itself to the claim that he was able to express himself confidently and openly. This means that he was able to deliver helpful data involving his experience thus giving greater credibility to the data that has been procured.

Analysis of Benjamin's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Context Dynamics

Benjamin had engaged in three different contexts in four (4) different roles. It could

be perceived that the shift in these churches and roles was important for Benjamin with respect to his experience of sustainability, especially since Benjamin mentioned that moving from one church to another was a self-care strategy. The mixture of city, rural and regional locations for his church contexts, created a variety in his ministry experiences.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

Benjamin's comments regarding moving from a role in leadership as a Senior Pastor to an associate role seems to indicate a level of awareness and courage to act on personal need at that time. This sort of willingness and determination to move against cultural norms in pastoral ministry seems to be an indication of courage and confidence in Benjamin. Even though he was not willing to accept the words that I said over him as being 'courageous' it seemed evident that he was humble instead. It is worth noting that his current ministry at time of interview as Senior Pastor has come at a later stage in his ministry career. This later date of being a Senior Pastor raises the question: When should someone progress into a different position and which role in pastoral ministry are they better suited to in regard to church size, church location, church dynamics, etc.?

Benjamin demonstrated a generally positive tone regarding the challenges that he had experienced in his church contexts. He seemed to be able to see these challenges as a cause of personal development in his pastoral ministry. His level of expectations in ministry experiences appeared realistic and seemed to have reasoned this out in a positive manner. Overall, Benjamin seemed to express that personal development as a result of challenges and struggles was a good thing. This seems to indicate that he had a good sense of himself and a reflective ability.

Benjamin's self-talk seemed to be weighted more towards a positive outlook on the challenges that he experienced in his ministry than negative, despite the number of negative words that he expressed. This is an indicator that Benjamin presented with a

high level of self-awareness and personal insight concerning the events he experienced in pastoral ministry. Benjamin's acceptance that ministry had good and bad times seemed to indicate this level of awareness, as well, in this vocational role.

Benjamin's recount and attitude towards the challenges and loss of people from his church seemed to present a realistic expectation and experience of church-based ministry. He seemed to recognise that his experience of struggle and loss had a greater purpose in developing 'fruit' for the overall kingdom of God rather than just his local-based church. This internal processing of Benjamin's experiences presents evidence of awareness and courage regarding his role-identity.

Benjamin's preparedness to move from being a Senior Pastor to an Associate Pastor provides greater evidence of his role-identity as well. The choice to move churches indicates a high level of awareness involving his own personal leadership and what his limits are in that leadership. His comments about the learning opportunities as an Associate after being a Senior Pastor verify this as well. His decision to no longer be a Senior Pastor, for a while, so he could learn from someone else in a team also evidences that his identity was not wrapped up in what he did. In fact, his decision to transition from Senior to Associate Pastor is confirmation of humility in leadership. He clearly recognised the struggles in his feelings around this decision but seemed mature in his need to move churches despite how he felt. This, therefore, indicates a developed sense of self for the purpose of sustainability, humility and courage.

Overall, it appeared that Benjamin's level of personal awareness and insight demonstrated assertiveness, humility and courage in his life. He seemed to self-initiate changes and personal development in his leadership through the choices that he made. Operating alongside his self-awareness and insight is a level of expectation regarding ministry experiences that appeared realistic.

Analysis of Benjamin's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

A specific sense of the call of God seemed important for Benjamin in him continuing

in pastoral ministry. He identified this as an important reason for his sustainability in ministry.

Analysis of Benjamin's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Benjamin seemed to be a person that was willing to confront people when there was an issue that he perceived as conflictual in nature. He did not seem to avoid engaging in conflict but, in fact, he demonstrated insight into when communication and conflict processes needed to be engaged. There seemed to be intentionality in the manner in which Benjamin dealt with conflict and he demonstrated personal insight in how he approached conflict. Benjamin recounted that appropriate processes in dealing with conflict were important. He had made clear statements that he had tried to moderate situations where conflict seemed evident and that he should approach people directly so that conflict did not fester and escalate. There were strong indicators towards having a positive view towards conflict despite it being perceived as having challenges. It seemed that being able to face conflict with a sense of aiming to resolve it had been helpful in Benjamin's ministry.

The experiences Benjamin recounted concerning the conflict situation in his first and second churches are evidence of his positive approach and attitude towards conflict. Here it was demonstrated that he was not only aware of relational factors with people and potential situations of conflict, but he was aware of unhealthy processes that could eventuate in conflict situations as well. Benjamin demonstrated that he was willing to face issues of potential conflict and work towards a healthy resolution alongside recognising that he was good at conflict. Yet Benjamin seemed to demonstrate that he was able to live with the ambivalence of unresolved conflict, especially when people walked away from his church as a result. However, alongside Benjamin's engagement in conflict there seemed to be recognition of a good level of support around him, both externally and internally, that provided an ability to face the emotional issues of conflict and seek resolution where possible.

Overall, it seemed Benjamin was attentive to the nature of conflict and its

devastating effect if ignored and avoided. He also demonstrated that he was willing to confront issues at an early stage of the conflict as a preventative measure.

Benjamin's insight that he was good at conflict supports a positive sense of self as well. Benjamin's acknowledgement that he is able to separate issues from emotions, evidences his being well differentiated as a person in pastoral ministry, too.

Analysis of Benjamin's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Benjamin's acknowledgment and indication that his theological education had its limitations in preparing him for pastoral ministry demonstrated an awareness of his formation for pastoral ministry. A level of being realistic in his expectations was evident in his statements that further skills were established whilst in pastoral ministry rather than expecting the College to provide all his training. In other words, his expectations seemed reasonable and measured towards the place of theological education rather than adopting an unrealistic expectation of what the theological institution should provide.

Benjamin's comments regarding his early experiences of church-based ministry in an Associate role and having some work experience prior to church-based ministry indicated that a progressive developmental approach towards leadership responsibility was helpful. In fact, his statement regarding working in a paid non-church-based vocation area before entering pastoral ministry indicated that he was aware of development processes in his own leadership at that time as well

Analysis of Benjamin's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Benjamin indicated at times that he was worried throughout his ministry experiences but that he dealt with this worry by employing a self-care approach of trusting in God. Overall, it seemed that Benjamin had a high level of awareness regarding

ministry experiences and a need to rely upon God as a means of enabling sustainability.

Benjamin seemed intentional about his self-care and support processes. This was indicated by his employment of a variety of strategies such as retreat groups, and a mentor. It seemed like he had developed an intentional plan involving self-care and indicated that he had directly implemented some self-care strategies to protect himself. In an approach towards self-care, it was apparent that Benjamin felt that the change in churches was an important move for the sake of longevity in ministry. The fact that Benjamin recognised that this wasn't an easy step to take, but was seen as a healthy process to prevent burnout and maintain his emotional wellbeing, demonstrates a sense of awareness and insight even in the midst of struggle.

Benjamin's statement that in 'another ten years' he would do a similar thing and move churches again does indicate that he is astute and aware of the processes in his own self-care. This would indicate he had positive role-identity by not connecting his need to maintain a pastoral role for the sake of pride and achievement.

Overall, it seemed that Benjamin's intentionality in the manner of self-care was a contributing factor to enable sustainability. These deliberate choices were evidenced by Benjamin's level of insight and awareness in the need to self-preserve and care for himself in his role as a pastor.

Analysis of Benjamin's Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

It seemed evident during the interview that Benjamin recognised that relationships with others meant a lot to him in sustaining him in ministry, especially as he faced certain experiences particularly related to conflict. It seemed that support, and the other types of support that Benjamin had around him, was an important aspect of sustainability.

Benjamin did not indicate any professional help, but he had a range of internal

church sources and external people that provided him with support over the years. These sources of support seemed to be initiated and enabled by him personally. For Benjamin, it sounded like in his early years of ministry that the mentor that he engaged had a large impact on supporting him in his sustainability even over the years ahead. This mentor is known to me and is renowned for having a high level of skill in mentoring pastors. The range of support externally and internally that Benjamin specified seemed to indicate that support networks were important for Benjamin. Benjamin identified the importance of social support and seemed intentional about ensuring it was implemented in his life, especially in his earlier years.

Other supportive people recognised by Benjamin were: pastors from his pastoral retreat groups, Denominational leaders, leaders inside the church, and congregational members. Even though Benjamin did not mention much regarding his spouse he did not indicate a lack of support or struggle from his spouse. There was no indication of relational strain with his spouse and his tone when discussing her seemed affirmative.

Overall, it seemed evident for Benjamin that appropriate types and level of support both internally and externally were important in his sustainability. It seemed that there had been engagement with highly skilled people for support such as a mentor, and Denominational leadership.

Summary of Benjamin's Themes

Emotional processing

- Personal awareness and insight was clearly demonstrated.
- He demonstrated confidence, humility and courage in his experiences of church-based ministry.
- He portrayed positive feelings towards his experiences amongst many struggles.
- He acknowledged struggles and challenges but these incidences did not

outweigh his more positive approach to his ministry.

- He had been able to differentiate himself from his vocational role as a person.

Emotional language

- He demonstrated a variety of positive and negative words with a slightly greater weighting on the use of negative words.

Experienced events

- He had encountered four different ministry settings. He expressed struggle and enjoyment in each of his experiences. Conflict was evident in most of these contexts.

Types of church settings

- All settings were traditional church-based roles and he experienced being an Associate Pastor prior to becoming a Senior Pastor and then returning to being an Associate Pastor, before becoming a Senior Pastor again.

Call of God

- Call of God was important.

Conflict ability and style

- Conflict existed in most church contexts and a demonstration of a willingness to approach conflict through confrontation was evident. He engaged in open communication and demonstrated awareness, courage and assertiveness in conflict processes.

Theological education

- He was realistic about the limitations of his theological training in preparing him for pastoral ministry.
- He saw that having life experience prior to becoming a pastor was helpful.

Self-care and sustainability

- He was intentional about employing strategies in self-care and saw the need for these strategies in his sustainability.

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- He recognised isolation at times and ensured that he engaged in highly skilled support services externally through experienced mentors and Denominational leaders.
- Connected with Denominational leaders in a positive manner.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- He had support internally from leadership and church congregants when required.

Support – spouse

- It appeared that he had some level of support from his spouse.

5.3.2 Profile: Cain

Cain was a white male pastor in his mid-forties (40s) and had been ordained and involved in church-based ministry for over thirteen (13) years at time of interview. Cain had been married for thirty (30) years and was married before he completed his theological training. He and his wife had three (3) children born before he entered theological training. These children were now adults in their mid-twenties (20s) at the time of the interview.

He held diploma and graduate diploma-level awards as part of his theological studies and studied for six (6) years to qualify for Baptist Accreditation and to be ordained. He had been in a trade role prior to entering pastoral ministry but indicated no qualification attained for this role.

Baptist Church Ministry Experiences

Cain has served in two (2) different Baptist churches as an Ordained Baptist pastor in two (2) different roles.

- 1) Prior to ordination, Cain was the youth pastor in a medium sized, urban Sydney church for over six (6) years whilst he undertook his theological studies. This role involved pastoral care and leadership of youth in the church.
- 2) After ordination, Cain had taken on the Senior Pastor role at this same Sydney church. This full-time Senior Pastor role lasted for nearly ten (10) years. This position involved general pastoral duties, pastoral leadership, and oversight of the church.
- 3) Cain's second church was in a small inner-urban church as a full-time Senior Pastor in a solo role with general pastoral oversight and local community involvement. He had been in this role for nearly four (4) years. This role involved a bi-vocational aspect working with a parachurch organisation.

Selection Process for Cain

I had minimal collegial relationship previously with Cain and so did not know of his story prior to interview. He was not in my year group at College whilst he was

studying, and I had no encounters with him throughout his time in pastoral ministry. There was no other position of authority or influence over Cain held by me as a researcher. Cain was chosen as he fitted the parameters of the study serving over ten years, but his story fascinated me as he had been engaged in a senior role of ministry of a larger church and then was willing to serve in a smaller church thereafter. In general observations of people involved in pastoral ministry there is a tendency for most people vocationally to see youth ministry as a starting point, prior to progressing to either an associate role or a senior pastoral role. It was this abnormality of moving from a senior role to a sole pastor role in a smaller church in a different context that fascinated me as a researcher as it stood against cultural norms.

Interview Dynamics Regarding Cain

Location of Interview:

The interview took place in Cain's church office. The room had low ceilings and minimal natural light from windows, but this created a sense of security. The outside noise was somewhat distracting initially in the interview due to traffic noise and so I needed greater attentiveness to stay focused on Cain's story in a reflective manner.

Body language

I sat opposite Cain in the interview with each of us on swivel chairs with nothing in the middle. Cain looked relaxed and engaged in the conversation. He had shown a fair bit of interest in the pre-interview session when the initial questions were being asked.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

The total variety of emotive words utilised by Cain in the interview was sixty-three (63). Cain commenced the interview expressing a variety of emotional words with eleven (11) different emotive words used within the first one hundred and fifty-seven (157) words stated.

Throughout the interview the number of different positive emotional words used by Cain was twenty eight (28) including, in order when they first appeared: confirmation, character building, learning, support, sustaining, encouraging, energetic, excited, relief, respect, positive, love, good, nice, helpful, supportive, empowering, high, studious, affirmations, funny, blessed, expansion, great, joyous, enjoyable, fulfilling, relief.

The range of negative language used was thirty-three (33) in variety, and incorporated, in order when they first appeared: challenging (used in a debilitating sense), challenge (used in a debilitating sense), dysfunctional, grieving, hardest, strong, wrong, tangled, harder, isolated, cope, isolation, frustrated, whinged, disempowering, suffer, losses, scrawny, frustrating, garbage, hard, major, struggle, stress, disintegrate, ugliness, 'F off', uninspired, stresses, immature, neglected, criticisms, hardest.

His final comments in response to how he felt about the interview expressed his emotion as such: 'I'm fine. Hasn't been too deep and meaningful. It's been fine mate. Yeah. I'm fine. I'm happy to share that stuff.'

Cain's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Cain expressed that the last nineteen (19) years of ministry were the 'best and hardest' times of his life but that he was generally positive about his ministry experiences. He stated that these years had their complications because 'it's always a challenge just working with people because people are very flexible.' He stated that there are costs in being a pastor in ministry and expressed that there was a need to 'weigh up the costs' in pastoral ministry. However, he said 'seeing all those great and joyous things that make pastoral ministry actually enjoyable and fulfilling' is what kept him going. He expressed that he had feelings of disappointment when people did not 'act as Christians'. In his recount, Cain shared how in his first church a marriage breakdown between the then Senior Pastor and his wife was 'probably one of the hardest periods of time both personally and as a church' that he went

through. He expressed that the church was ‘really grieving’.

Cain expressed frustration at times towards the Baptist system of governance but generally he saw it as okay. He indicated that the congregational processes in a Baptist church were not a perfect system and expressed that the Baptist membership expression of power can be frustrating:

You know, you’re the pastor of this church. It’s almost like the church is this little body and it’s got a whole, like a little scrawny person with a big, fat person growing off its hip and you can’t exercise any control or really give any direction. So that’s kind of disempowering, I guess, in a way, just frustrating.

Regarding his leadership ability, Cain stated that he was okay as a pastor but he said he was aware that he was not a ‘great manager’ or strong leader and struggled to get ‘his head’ around ‘all the things that need to happen’. He stated because he was not a good manager that in his first church, he failed to identify some aspects of church-based ministry that he should have given attention to. He mentioned, however, that in his current church there was no church-based programs and so his lack of managerial skill is not causing such a problem. He recalled feedback in his first church as Senior Pastor, from other people, that he had neglected ‘people and programs’ as he led. He said that: ‘I’ve sort of neglected, not purposely, but just haven’t seen to some things properly.’

Cain mentioned that he became a Senior Pastor after a church incident and so he sort of fell into the role. As Senior Pastor, Cain recounted a time where he was facing near burnout and as a result he ended up changing churches. It was at this time that he stated that he would get out of his car on a Sunday morning and consciously say to himself: ‘okay time to put on that happy pastor face.’ He said that he knew something was wrong and wondered whether he was meant to be here or there was something personal going on inside him. He said:

There are Sunday mornings when you wake up and when you have too many of those Sunday mornings when you wake up and go ahh, uh oh. It’s not Friday or its

not Saturday you know, ahah, you think ah 'okay God are you trying to tell me something here?'

During this period Cain stated that he recognised he would try and escape the whole pastoral ministry exposure but specified that this was a not a good thing. He mentioned that it was his mentor who assisted him in identifying his near burnout experience at his first church. This mentor was Denominationally connected and was able to assist him to transition into a new church as a means of sustainability. He recounted a story indicative of his emotional state at this near burnout period and the feelings that he was having. This story related to a time when he was in his office one afternoon and the phone rang:

The phone rang and I sort of mumbled under my breath for it to 'F off', cause I'm like 'as if', cause I didn't feel like answering the phone or you just, you just very feel very uninspired.

He stated that since he changed churches and is now in a sole pastor role in a smaller church that he actually now looks forward to Sunday church services.

Cain indicated that he has had a strong pastoral care focus in his ministry with people despite the challenges that came with working with people. He mentioned that his most enriching experiences in ministry were doing:

.. men's retreats out in the bush <laughs> sitting around fire, you know, just sharing stories and smoking a cigar. <long pauses>. Probably those times.

He stated that he viewed pastoral events and situations as 'character building', saying that there were challenges being with people in pastoral situations, like the death of a child and in knowing what to say at those times:

Just sitting down, having a cuppa with a person who's going through crap <laughs> and just sitting and listening to them. And then having them say, after ten minutes of me not saying a word, just saying 'thanks for listening to me and giving me the time.'

Cain recounted the positive aspects of personal encouragements that he had received from people in his ministry over the years. These comments came as a result of the pastoral care that he provided people and in his conducting of church services. He stated from a personal sense that he could see a church service had 'gone well' even though there may have only been fifteen (15) or twenty (20) people present at the time. He saw so called 'successful church events' as giving him encouragement for a period of time after that. He talked of 'good things' such as couples who got together, and mentioned other couples who 'work through their garbage and you know you've had a little bit of a part in that.'

Cain indicated that the balance of being a youth pastor, personal financial pressures, undertaking Bible College, having three younger male children in primary and kindergarten years, were factors that he most struggled with when he reflected on the challenges that he faced in ministry. When talking about his personal finances he stated that income was a major stress, but he always seemed to be able to pay 'the bills and run cars and, you know, get kids pushbikes and clothes and all of that.' Other personal events Cain recounted, that were a challenge for him, was the ending of the marriage of one of his adult children and the mental health issues associated with that. He said 'So, we've have had to ride through that ugliness.'

As Cain reflected and recounted experiences and events in his first church, he presented personal encouragement that he felt Regarding this church as well. He said that it was really good at one stage when there were a lot of challenges going on in the church that there was also between three (3) and six (6) people who were studying at the theological College during his senior pastoral leadership years. Considering the location and context of his church he stated:

I thought that was a pretty darn high percentage to have people being very studious and stuff and going to Morling. So that was really good.

Cain's Experiences in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Cain recognised that his role as a pastor was a calling from God. He stated how positive and challenging ministry was but said:

It really is a role that you have to know that you're meant to be there. And, you know, I'm not saying I haven't questioned that at times but, 'God, is this really where I'm meant to be?' But I've usually had the confirmation that I'm meant to be where I'm – where I'm at.

Cain mentioned having a sense of God's call in both churches that he had served. He saw the call of God as important for him, particularly when he faced conflict. As he spoke about the call of God he said:

If I was, you know, making beer bottle lids I'd not expect to wake up and get excited about work. But pastoral ministry you've got [to] have a sense of, not every day you're going to get it you don't get that with any job, but a sense that 'You know I'm meant to be here and I'm excited about the work!'

Prior to becoming a pastor, Cain said that he never considered pastoral ministry until his Senior Pastor invited him to consider it, and so he accepted. He said: 'So, totally untrained, unordained, literally off the factory floor, I'm suddenly a youth pastor.' However, Cain mentioned that God's call had since then been a sustaining factor for him in his ministry.

Cain's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Cain expressed that he was frustrated at himself because he tended to avoid conflict, but he said listening to people's criticisms was important. He discussed aspects of conflict and the need to confront others and mentioned that he is not much of a 'confrontationist'. He recounted that in his family of origin, and growing up, that conflict or seeing confrontation was not part of his experience. He said, 'I've never heard my parents raise their voices against each other.'

In relation to Cain discussing conflict, I asked what was happening for him at those

times where he felt the need to confront or face conflict. To this he recounted a story that involved a member of his extended family that was in a ministry position in his church. Here he said that this family member ‘was doing some stuff which was just wrong’ but because of this person’s ‘very strong personality’ Cain did not confront him as he felt he should have. Cain mentioned other situations of conflict concerning different ministry areas and stated that he did not confront as he felt he should have at other times as well.

When asked what he felt disempowered or disabled him in ministry, Cain referred to conflict type situations and said it was ‘strong personalities involved in various situations’ that disempowered and disabled him. He stated that in the interest of ‘keeping the peace’ that he tended to keep his ‘mouth shut’.

Cain’s Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Cain expressed that he felt the training was ‘great’ and ‘really good’ as he physically pointed to the various theological awards that were in his office. He stated that he liked the learning, recognised that it assisted him for ministry, and that it had expanded his mind. However, he indicated that he was not a big reader and stated that he did not expect his theological training to teach him everything for pastoral ministry.

Regarding his early experiences, Cain stated that he had no initial training or experience prior to entering into a youth ministry position in his first church but stated that as he ‘processed’ this role he saw ‘confirmation along the way’ from individuals making him think that this was what he was meant to be doing with his life.

Sustainability and Self Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry by Cain

In response to what Cain felt had sustained him in ministry he mentioned that ‘whinging’ to his wife about situations, feeling loved and supported by people in the church, and his mentor were helpful processes. He, also, stated that there were times

when people would say that they appreciated him as he listened to them, or the church service went well, or a church visitor would come up after a service and say ‘you know, I really sense the spirit of God in this place.’ Cain said these sorts of comments were affirmations to him and would keep him ‘on a high for quite a while.’

He said that he had found the pastoral renewal retreat groups helpful, saying that he had been involved with them for over twenty (20) years. Other times he found it helpful to go into the bush by himself with his 4-wheel drive and ‘escape’.

Cain’s Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

External Sources

Cain stated that he saw the Denomination as a good support and help and stated that he did not expect the Denominational leaders to reach out unless you asked them for assistance. He was positive about their role and recognised that they were there to help, but he said that they would not impose themselves on a church or pastoral situation unless invited to be involved.

Cain stated that he had a Denominational leader as a mentor throughout his time in his first church. It was this leader who recognised the challenging emotional state that Cain had found himself in and was able to assist him to move forward into another church context. This leader expressed concern over some of the systemic issues of remaining in the same church for a long term and the cycles of pastoral leadership. This leader had high-level skill in mentoring, particularly emotionally. This mentor’s words resonated with what Cain was experiencing when he nearly burnt out. About this form of external support Cain said:

I have a fairly positive view of, and my experiences have been very positive with, the union, association, whatever it’s called.

Cain stated that he had ‘long-term friendships’ that had been helpful in sustaining his

years in ministry. This was particularly identified in his current church where he and his spouse felt like they only had one real couple that they felt connected to.

Amongst the group of long-term friendships from his first church he mentioned that there were a few close friends and a range of at least twenty (20) people that had been supportive of him and his wife as they continued in church-based ministry.

Cain also mentioned pastoral renewal groups were good for him as a support. These retreat groups would meet for about a week annually over a three-year cycle.

Internal Church People

In response to sustainability Cain said: ‘Always had a good eldership, a good supportive eldership. So that was really good. So that was an empowering thing.’

Cain mentioned that he felt that he and his spouse had a number of families in his first church that supported him whilst he was pastoring there. He indicated that ‘Being treated as a friend of the church is a nice thing.’ He stated that these other families were in a similar life phase and spent time together having parties and travelling together. He recognised the support of these people as important, especially when he moved churches. Of these supports he said:

So that kind of stuff outside of the church – the general church stuff socially was – was a helpful thing as well.

In his current church context, Cain recognised that he and his wife had now experienced a change in their relationship in a positive manner and felt they had become more connected as a couple. This arose because they faced a struggle of feeling isolated because no one they knew was living nearby. Cain said that there was a greater sense of isolation compared to his previous church because he did not have ‘that same sort of friendship support’ as existed before.

Spouse and Family

Cain recognised the importance of spending time with his family in ministry and the role that his wife had as support. She was recognised as providing Cain insight into: his pastoral ministry, administrative aspects, the events that he experienced, and challenges that he faced. He said she was a help in:

...keeping me in check <laughs>, making sure I don't respond or react in ways which are <laughs> immature.

Cain recounted that his wife helped him to ensure that he did not overcommit himself in ministry and, since she had experienced living in a pastor's family, she was aware of the struggles of pastoral ministry. Cain stated that pastoral ministry had been hard for her but stated that since they changed churches to where they are now that this has been good for their marriage.

5.3.2.1 Analysis and Discussion of Cain's Themes

Analysis of interview Setting, Dynamic and Selection Process for Cain

Interview Setting Analysis

Although initially distracted by the setting and environment I became aware of this preoccupation in the interview and intentionally remained focused on the interview process so I could remain present with the participant. After this point of awareness, I was able to ensure that I gave Cain my full attention to ensure that he felt listened to and free to share his journey with me. Cain would have already been acquainted with the level of noise since it was his office.

Interview Experience

It was evident that emotional words pervaded the conversation with Cain demonstrated by the multiple emotional words utilised. He displayed an equal variety of positive and negative emotional words throughout. This is an indication of the range and level of his emotional language and expression. Cain's comments of being happy to share, stated at the end of the interview, demonstrate that he was in a good emotional space to share and was relatively positive in his demeanour.

Analysis of Cain's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Context Dynamics

Cain had engaged in two different contexts in two different roles since being ordained over thirteen (13) years ago. He had encountered two (2) urban churches in two (2) different contexts with two (2) very different sizes. These dynamics have presented Cain with somewhat limited church exposure but a variety of roles and leadership exposure.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

Cain seemed realistic about ministry experiences and their effect on his life but was also able to develop a positive reframing of struggles in his life. There was also an overall level of awareness expressed that was insightful. For instance, he made

comments indicating that the challenges that he faced in his ministry were character building. He also demonstrated an ability to see the experiences in his second church concerning the experience of less social support as positive for his marriage. Cain also made statements recognising that theological training was positive yet demonstrated awareness that he did not expect to develop all his leadership skills at Bible College. The statement regarding enjoying church now compared to his experience at his previous church identifies his ability to recover from times of struggle and challenge in ministry situations.

There was strong demonstration of personal awareness at various times in the interview. For instance, Cain acknowledged that he was not a strong leader or a good manager and that he tended to avoid confrontation and conflict. However, he also acknowledged that his lack of confrontation of some people did have a negative effect on his ministry that he wishes he had avoided. Even though Cain demonstrated a reasonable level of awareness in his leadership, he had support people at times when his insight seemed to be diminished. For instance, he acknowledged that at times in his leadership when he seemed to lack insight that he relied on his spouse as the source of perception. It is worth noting that his wife's experience as a pastor's child inevitably presented her with insights and awareness to assist Cain's leadership experiences. Also, in his near burnout experience at his first church, Cain acknowledged that he recognised that something was not right in himself. However, it was his mentor who circumvented the progression towards burnout. This mentor was able to validate the emotional state that Cain had been experiencing and assist him to recognise near burnout. This mentor had been counsellor-trained and so the support that Cain received would have been a higher therapeutic level than just general social support.

Cain demonstrated an ability to self-encourage and develop a good sense of 'self'. For instance, his statement regarding the number of people that were at his church studying at the theological College demonstrates a sense of self pride and self-encouragement. The sense of feeling valued and having a good sense of 'self' is

also recognisable in his statements around the long-standing positive emotional effect from people's statements of encouragement regarding his ministry; and his recognition of energy gained from carrying out pastoral care situations.

Analysis of Cain's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Cain's various statements concerning God's call seemed to indicate that call was important to him in to remain in pastoral ministry. For him, this call seemed to be specific to the actual church setting and was essential when facing challenges involving conflict. It seemed to be an important aspect that Cain looked for to uphold him to continue in church-based ministry.

Analysis of Cain's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Self-awareness featured in Cains' approach to conflict and the need to confront. He recognised that he had a conflict avoidant style and would withdraw at times as a coping strategy but that this avoidant nature would particularly occur with people who were strong personalities. This awareness was demonstrated in his statements that he needed to confront eventhough he did not feel like it, and he recognised that his avoidant approach to conflict resolution emanated from his family of origin.

Awareness was also revealed with him stating that he had support from his spouse through periods of conflict and that she would assist him and that he was not well experienced in dealing with conflict. In fact, it seems that when conflict became overwhelming for him it was his connection to external sources with high-level counselling skill that assisted him to work through it, despite him tending towards conflict avoidance. Cain acknowledged that his avoidant behaviour was an aspect of continual growth for him and his ongoing ministry, yet he was aware of the need to confront and would do it at times. Cain's avoidant approach to conflict did seem to cause issues in his first church but his awareness of this, support from his mentor, and eventual change of ministry role to another church seems to have contributed to sustainability in ministry throughout.

Overall, Cain recognised that people supporting him was a sustaining factor when he faced times of conflict, and that taking some time out and ‘going bush’ was helpful as well. It could be acknowledged that Cain used withdrawal as a self-preservation strategy during times of conflict and recognised that strong personalities were a challenge for him and so he would withdraw. His current church role did not seem to indicate evidence of many conflictual situations like he experienced in his first church. Overall, it seemed that there was a lack of assertiveness in the manner that Cain dealt with conflict and so he was basically conflict avoidant. However, this aspect of his conflict style seemed to be compensated by having support people around him both from his spouse and externally.

Analysis of Cain’s Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Cain indicated a positive picture of his theological formation and appeared realistic about its limitations in formation for pastoral leadership. There is a cultural aspect within the Baptist movement that tends to normalise higher levels of academic studies as being important for pastoral ministry. However, Cain’s academic training being at diploma level did not seem to have an effect on diminishing his sense of self, in this regard, and he presented as proud of his accomplishments. In fact, Cain’s recognition of the assistance that his training developed in him for pastoral ministry and its importance in his life are signs of a healthy self-esteem.

Analysis of Cain’s Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Cain demonstrated awareness of various self-care practices that had been integral in his sustainability. These revolved around such things as his spouse, mentor, Denominational leaders, retreat groups and personal encouragements that he received. It appeared that having support and developing ability to self-encourage were sustaining factors for Cain in regard to self-care. His awareness of his pastoral care gifting and the joy that he received from that seemed to be a positive aspect in his ministry role as well.

Cain's withdrawal at times for retreats and self-reflection seemed to be a good experience for him as a means of self-preservation. This withdrawing may have enabled space for him to process emotionally what was occurring for him at that time. However, the support that he received seems to have enabled him to avoid a burnout experience. Changing church locations also seems to have been a sustaining feature of self-care to avoid burnout.

Analysis of Cain's Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

Cain undertook his youth pastoral role without training or formal education, but it seems that the place of support from multiple people seemed to have played a strong part in his early years of ministry prior to his theological education. In this, Cain demonstrated that support, both externally and internally, had been aspects to assist him in sustainability. He did not express any formalised professional therapists, but it is known that the support he received from his mentor was professional in nature. It seems like support was important for Cain since he indicated that he felt supported from his: spouse, church friends, church leadership, mentor, Denominational leaders and pastoral retreat groups. Cain, especially, did mention that that having supportive leaders inside the church was significant for him, especially when he faced some high-level conflict in his first church. He also recognised that his spouse's support assisted him administratively and in various ministry situations.

Cain's attention towards his family indicated that this was important for him. There were some family challenges regarding child issues, and financial pressures that seemed to be higher stressors, alongside ministry; but he was able to give attention to these areas when needed.

Summary of Cain's Themes

Emotional processing

- He demonstrated a level of awareness, insight and realism regarding his ministry.
- Where he seemed to lack insight, he recognised the support of other people to

develop it.

Emotional language

- He displayed an equal variety of positively and negatively charged emotional words throughout.

Experienced events

- He had engaged in more traditional church leadership roles in varying contexts but had experienced being a youth pastor prior to senior leadership.

Types of church settings

- All settings were traditional church-based contexts.

Call of God

- Seemed important to him.

Conflict ability and style

- He was aware that he was conflict avoidant and this affected him. However, support assisted him.

Theological education

- He had a positive view of his theological education and recognised its benefit to his pastoral leadership. Yet he was realistic about the limitations of this training as well.

Self-care and sustainability

- He had been intentional about employing different self-care practices. These appeared to be self-initiated.

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- He had a range of external support from the Denomination, other pastors, and mentors. This support assisted him directly at times especially during periods of conflict.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- Internal support was experienced from church friends and church leadership.
- Internal support was helpful during high levels of conflict.

Support – spouse

- Support existed from his spouse. She also seemed to be a good source to process his emotional state at times. Her awareness and previous experiences seemed to assist his awareness and insight.

5.3.3 Profile: Daniel

Daniel was a white male pastor in his mid-forties (40s) and had been ordained and involved in church-based ministry for over nineteen (19) years at time of interview. Daniel had been married for nineteen (19) years and married after he completed his theological training. He and his wife had four (4) children ranging in ages between teenage and primary years. He held both degree and diploma-level awards as part of his theological studies and had studied for four (4) years to attain these qualifications to qualify for Baptist Accreditation and to be ordained. Before entering pastoral ministry, Daniel had not gained any previous qualifications, but he had been involved in a different paid profession.

Baptist Church Ministry Contexts for Daniel

Daniel had served in three (3) different Baptist churches as an ordained Baptist pastor within three (3) different roles:

- 1) His first ministry role was in an urban Baptist church working amongst youth and young adults. This role was for around six (6) years, in which four (4) of these years were as an unordained student pastor and two (2) years as an ordained Associate Pastor. This role involved general pastoral leadership and pastoral duties including teaching, preaching and oversight of the teenage and young adult-aged demographics.
- 2) Daniel's second ministry role was in a senior pastoral role in a small-sized suburban Baptist church for over ten (10) years leading a team of people. This role involved general pastoral leadership, and pastoral duties including teaching, preaching and oversight.
- 3) Daniel's third and current role has been held for over five (5) years and has involved leadership in a senior role in a regionally based Baptist church leading a team of people. This function involved general pastoral leadership, and pastoral duties including teaching, preaching and oversight.

Selection Process for Daniel

I had minimal contact with Daniel prior to interview but had known him for many years. The encounters with Daniel were mainly through an occasional speaking engagement at his church or meeting each other at Denominational events. Although I was conscious of my previous history with Daniel, the possibilities of bias and subjectivity were acknowledged through memoing. I had not been at theological college the same time as Daniel and I had no authority or influence over him. I selected Daniel because it fascinated me that he had been sustained in ministry for over eighteen (18) years yet had suffered bouts of depression throughout his ministry vocation.

Interview Dynamics

Location of Interview:

The interview location chosen by Daniel was his house in the front living room. The space had a relaxed feeling and seemed to create a relaxed posture for Daniel. There were no other family members present at the time and the location was quiet. We sat at an angle from each other on an L-shaped lounge, which presented an informal dynamic.

Body language

Daniel seemed to speak easily and constantly without much prompting on any of the questions asked in the interview process. He showed no real sign of nervousness and maintained a relaxed demeanour throughout the time that he was speaking. Daniel's interview was longer than other participants and went for forty-five minutes instead of the usual thirty minutes. Daniel presented as confident and in a relaxed state with a lot of direct eye contact and a smirk-type smile, alongside a calm vocal tone.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

The total number of emotive words used by Daniel was eighty-three (83).

The number of positive emotive words was twenty-six (26) , in order when they first appeared: wonderful, strength, humility, courage, strong, happy, equipped, affirmed, comfortable, fired up, untarnished, excitement, nice, powerful, broaden, positive, grace, defend, generous, satisfying, saved, exciting, empowering, incredible, impressed, and healthy. He used the word ‘expectation’ twelve times in the interview. The word ‘expectation’ has been classified as positive on some occasions because it was used in a positive manner surrounding experiences. For instance on one occasion as Daniel was reflecting on hope he stated having an ‘expectation of heaven’.

Daniel had utilised fifty-seven (57) negative words in the interview, in order when they first appeared: frustrated, burden, intently, anxiety, depression, not easy, sinfulness, weakness, confrontation, hard, struggles, unreasonable, confronts, lazy, sinful, accusation, unhealthy, criticise, difficult, sadly, battle, enormous stress, upset, stressful, challenges, rebukes, frightened, temptation, firing out, ridiculous, anxieties, distracted, burnout, ignorance, drama, pressure, impoverished, frustration, intensity, incompetent, mediocre, unrealistic, manipulate, bitterness, argument, sleepless, tight, resistant, critical, enemy, ill health, difficult, grieve, sick, frustrated, and expectation. ‘Expectation’ here has been classified as negative in use because it was used negatively surrounding some situations that unfolded in experiences. For instance in reference to disappointment Daniel stated ‘some people have unrealistic expectations’.

In the final debrief question on how he felt about the interview, Daniel stated that he probably ‘rattled on’ but said that pastors tended to do that and that he hoped what he said was helpful. He recognised that he had reflected on some of his thoughts before and had engaged in tools to assist him to do that and so he felt ‘fine’ about the interview experience.

Daniel's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

In response to how he felt about pastoral ministry Daniel said that he felt that 'there has been fruit', meaning results, and that it had been satisfying at times. He also ruminated that he had felt 'frustrated and the burden of leadership and pastoral ministry' intently sometimes. But he said that he had recognised that these struggles came out of his anxiety and occasional depression that he had experienced. He expressed the reality of his cognitive processes and stated:

...the longer I go on, the more I'm aware that, the little fantasy side of my brain that says, 'We'll just get to this patch and it will be easy.'

In relation to being a pastor, Daniel stated that he had 'no expectation that this was gunna be easy and that it should be enjoyable all the time *<laughs>* you know.' Overall, he said that he recognised when his anxiety and depression were evident that this meant he became distracted and his work efficiency was reduced.

When recalling events in his leadership, he reflected on a story where he was ruminating over an upcoming church meeting and how his thought processes operated regarding this situation. He recounted an example of his self-talk at this point:

Okay, what if the worst happens? What if this does go to a church meeting and what if the church decide to agree with this person? Where would that put me? Well, the church wouldn't tip me out. I'm confident of that. I know the church well enough and their relationship with me. But it is conceivable that they could change their mind on that. And again, I don't think that would happen but in the dark night, you're lying there in bed, you think it could happen.

In his second church, Daniel was discussing the creation of a vision for the church and he expressed that he had some self-doubt over whether the church would 'buy into' what he felt was God's vision for the church. He recounted that there had been some good things happening and that he had brought a lot of church health but then felt he wanted to be in a larger church, and that this church did not seem destined

for that. It was to this that he said:

Starting to feel that the church wasn't gonna go where I like. I idealised how it could be. And so [there were] some frustrations with that. So, we got, I got through it but not untarnished, you know.

Besides depression and anxiety, Daniel expressed that he had other learning difficulties that he had contended with in ministry related to personal ability. He related that he had severe reading issues from a young child and that this had affected the internal messages he had of himself in a negative way. He said that one of the things that he had to overcome was the inner voice that said: 'I'm a terribly incompetent speller, incompetent writer, and ahh, you know very clumsy.'

On reflection of his overall history in pastoral ministry Daniel recognised that he was close to burn out about ten (10) years ago. Since then he had been more cautious despite the pressures that he had felt. He stated:

I think to be brutally honest, I would never have admitted it at that time but when I started out in ministry as a young man, and people talked about burnout, there was always probably part of me saying 'Oh no what's wrong with them?' You know? Which is just the, you know, which is the confidence of ignorance. <laughs>

It was during this time that he felt supported by his associate pastor who was able to pick up some of the preaching responsibilities and Daniel felt he was able to take six (6) weeks' long service leave and go on a trip away. After this 'time out' he said that he didn't return to ministry 'all fired up' but that he did come back 'surviving better.' He mentioned that he then implemented further self-care strategies to prevent the situation arising again. He did this deliberately by becoming involved in a pastoral renewal retreat group, and ensuring that he took his days off. He said that the burnout experience 'snuck up' on him. It appeared that his Associate pastor had recognised some of the signs that Daniel was vulnerable emotionally prior to the near burnout and time out.

Daniel, in dialogue regarding his own personal pastoral leadership, stated that his leadership was not authoritarian but rather aimed to bring people with him on the journey. He realised that some people will just not come with you. He mentioned that in a Baptist system he sometimes wished there was a more positive culture at times but overall reflected that:

...congregational governance is just hard...leadership is not easy, for a number of reasons. One is myself.

In talking about the governance of Baptist churches, Daniel said he was reminded that church ministry wasn't going to be 'easy' and 'enjoyable all the time' but he expressed that in his own experiences he encountered 'wonderful people' and seeing God at work. Alongside this, he also stated that despite some of the wonderful things in church ministry that there were also unhealthy aspects concerning church culture, like a culture of criticism. He found facing this form of church culture very difficult but recognised that he could not control how people would respond to issues or even manipulate them but that he could present guidance and counsel instead.

Daniel was able to accept that he felt gifted in preaching and stated that he was excited about preaching and having opportunity to 'be able to encourage and release people in this ministry.' He expressed that he was encouraged by a sense of God in his preaching as a result. Daniel said that he really enjoyed and had helped: giving people permission to do ministry; working in a team; encouraging and working with leaders; and advising people. In this he added that he had previously experienced church cultures where they were 'in ill health' and had become 'permission withholding cultures'. However, he countered that comment with saying that he was not an 'overly emotional person' but would 'tear up' when he had a 'real sense of God working in someone's life.' He said that he felt it was wonderful and 'a great humbler to know that you do a tiny little thing and then sometimes there's incredible impact.'

Daniel mentioned that leading finances as a Senior Pastor was a growth area for him. He said:

The constant challenge of, you know, motivating people to be generous and in a volunteer organisation. So, the finance is and has been a huge learning curve as well.

In discussion of his thought processes in his move from his second church to his third church, Daniel expressed that there was temptation to leave his second church and ‘go out firing’ but instead he tried to leave the church as healthy as he could instead of denigrating the people and church’s reputation. He added to this part of the conversation that he recognised that because of the intensity of frustration in pastoral ministry he could see how some people could be embroiled in unethical behaviours like relational affairs or other ‘moral stuff’. Daniel said that he recognised that if a lack of energy developed in pastoral ministry that this could manifest into looking elsewhere for ‘excitement’ and hence affairs and immoral events could occur. He said: ‘It didn’t happen to me, by God’s grace.’ However, Daniel indicated that his near burnout incident began a process of his movement out of his second church a few years later to his move into his third church where he is now Senior Pastor. Since this time, Daniel expressed that he now sees himself as ‘getting better’ at being sustained in ministry despite facing more and deeper challenges than he had previously experienced in ministry. He stated that he felt better equipped to deal with ministry issues than he ever had before.

During the interview, Daniel used scripture passages and other imagery in his self-talk in his recount of ministry stories. At one stage he referred to a sci-fi film series and at other times biblical stories and narratives. One such reflection was the story when Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat and the storm came up and the disciples panicked because they feared they were going to drown. He recounted a large proportion of the scriptural narrative and then ruminated:

All right. How do I act well in this? I talked about how do I both listen yet be firm in what I believe I’m called to do to? As far as it depends on me, as far as it’s appropriate

within my responsibility to defend the church, how do I do that? But to let go of those things that it is not my responsibility or right to do. So I can't control.

Daniel stated that he felt that he had expectations of himself and that people had over him and caused him to think whether he was 'doing the right thing.' In this he stated that he was aware that for his personality type he wanted to keep everyone happy and so this interplayed with the way that he did conflict:

In the church, there are, you know, there's a huge array of expectations. And some of them are reasonable and others are quite unreasonable. But part of the journey is discovering now which ones are reasonable 'cause I can be sinful and lazy like anyone, so, just because someone confronts me and I don't feel good about it, doesn't mean actually their expectation is wrong. They actually may be right. And I need to repent of something or change something. And so, some of the stresses being for me, like, am I doing the right thing? Is this person's expectation more accusation right?

Daniel's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry:

Daniel indicated that the call of God was important for him. He stated: 'I felt, I feel this is my calling and this is what I'm shaped for.' As he was contemplating God's call into pastoral ministry, he recounted a story following the seeking of counsel regarding his call into pastoral ministry. He said:

And I spoke to a senior Christian leader, who I like and respect, but asked him, 'What do you think?' And he said, 'Well, you're not ungifted. And, you're a bit soft and stuff.' <chuckles> And I went and told my friends this and they, we all laughed, we were young.

Daniel indicated a consciousness of the importance of God's call for him, especially at challenging times of pastoral ministry. For him, he stated that he would ask God if this is God's call and consider whether in the long term this is where he felt God wanted him. Daniel expressed that call was important for anyone entering ministry because of how hard pastoral ministry is. He stated that giftedness was not necessarily evidence of God's call as some might think.

The journey of Daniel's vocational call into pastoral ministry seemed a struggle for him and he ruminated over whether he should proceed to ordination, especially in light of hearing stories about how hard ministry really was. As Daniel was recounting some of his challenges and struggles of pastoral ministry alongside call of God he mentioned:

I guess that's been a battle in all that and part of that burnout as well, who are you? And where's God want you to be? And are you gonna let this mediocre thing, hold you back?

Daniel's Experience of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Daniel stated that he did not enjoy conflict or confrontation and yet recognised that this was a part of pastoral ministry and that he required courage and strength to face it. He claimed that through conflict, he discovered more of his weakness and his frailty. He acknowledged that not all people are going to get on with each other. Yet despite the years of pastoral ministry, Daniel stated that he still found the intensity of conflict a personal struggle and it takes a toll on his life. He mentioned that for him it has been very stressful. Daniel reflected on one situation when he said:

So how do I love this person and avoid developing bitterness, seeing them as the enemy, you know, getting the mindset of where I want to win the argument and score the points, you know, in the argument. And which always, and for me I think for most people, goes on in their head in the sleepless night, you know, around and around the argument that could be said, you know, what could happen? Ah-ah.

Despite Daniel expressing that he found conflict and confrontation difficult, he felt that God used him as a peacemaker and that he was able to sit down with people having issues and 'navigate without blowing the whole thing up.' He expressed in regards to the way that he does conflict: 'And my wife tells me, 'Oh, you're good at it.'

Daniel's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Daniel's reflection on theological training stated that he was happy with the theological education that he attained but did not feel that the College was going to teach you everything you needed to know for pastoral ministry; and so, for a church or an individual to have the expectation that a theological College will teach everything was wrong. He mentioned that he believed in more of a discipleship model within a local church but recognised the importance of theological education and how it is required to assist pastors to have tools in ministry, broaden their horizon, and present different ways of thinking.

Reflecting on his early church experiences in his first church Daniel said:

Early on with our first ministry, we were involved in this church in decline. I wasn't the Senior Pastor or anything, but I look back now, with my studying experience, and understand what was happening to the church. The church was in decline. They didn't know where they were going or who they were and very resistant to change. At least some people were very critical. It was very easy then to make the congregation the enemy, you know. The congregation won't let me have this music. They won't let me do this. They won't let me. But, that's really unhealthy.

Daniel recounted that he felt that life experience went hand-in-hand with pastoral experience but that he was young when he commenced pastoral ministry, and this had its consequences. In fact, he stated that he felt particularly young in his first church and recognised that when a fresh church vision was required, he did not know what he was doing.

Daniel's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Daniel mentioned that spiritual practices such as prayer times were really important for his sustainability and made a statement for new pastors to ensure that they took their days off and took their long service leave when it becomes available. He referred to the importance of sustainability through self-care by reading books and

other materials and having a long-term structured mentoring-type program that focuses on living.

Daniel also mentioned that self-care was his responsibility to ensure sustainability of his ministry. He expressed that he experienced depression and stated how this had affected him in regard to his concentration. At these times, he recognised that he needed to step back from ministry as a self-care strategy. He felt that the pastoral retreat groups that he had been involved with over the last twelve years were something that ‘saved’ his ministry particularly at these times of diminished energy. Around implementing self-care he stated:

It’s your responsibility to make it happen, you know, and so don’t wait for the Denomination or the church or something, just to someone to be enlightened, ‘how are we gonna give you this time or you go and do that.’ Take responsibility for it.

Daniel’s Experiences of Support in Baptist ministry

External Sources

Daniel spoke positively of the assistance that external support offered him. Besides pastoral retreat groups and mentors, Daniel mentioned that he had ‘some confidantes’ with whom he got to pray into situations that he was challenged by. He stated that this prayer support assisted him in gaining new insights into issues in his life that were affecting his thought processes and ‘playing into the fact that the church wasn’t becoming all that I imagined it could be.’ It was through his time of near burnout that Daniel mentioned that he went for some ‘prayer counselling’. He mentioned that this assisted him in his thought processes at that time.

As he looked back, Daniel thought that the implementation of an overseas mentor was a ‘powerful time’ of significance in his life at one point in his ministry. This mentor was a skilled pastoral leader that assisted him to work through aspects of leadership and self-care. These meetings were often had through Skype calls.

Support from Denominational leaders was mentioned as a positive development for Daniel over the last twenty (20) years. He saw these leaders were available to him when he required it and was impressed with their level of support at those times. He stated that he seemed to place a reasonable expectation on their role as leaders and that when he was down in spirit that he did not expect more from them than they were able to give.

Internal Church People:

Daniel mentioned the support that he received, in his second church, from one of his associate pastors at that time. In fact, it was this pastor that was able to determine that Daniel was developing emotional dissonance, tending towards depression, and sliding towards burnout. This pastor's support was positively received.

Spouse and Family:

Daniel spoke positively of his spouse's contribution in support of him. He said that she was very supportive and had assisted him to see events in a different light at times, especially in conflicted situations. He recognised that her assistance helped him to avoid becoming embittered with people. He felt that his spouse was together with him in ministry and in partnership.

5.3.3.1 Analysis and Discussion of Daniel's Themes

Analysis of Interview Setting, Dynamics and Selection Process of Daniel

Interview Setting Analysis

Daniel's choice of his home as the place of interview indicated that he wanted a safe and relaxed place for him to engage in the interview. It signified that Daniel was seeking a level of privacy not necessarily achieved at other more public locations where he could be seen by other people, such as his church office. This may well have contributed to the extension of the interview and the level of disclosure that he presented in interview.

Interview Experience

Even though there had been some previous collegial relationship with Daniel, he seemed comfortable enough to share openly and freely with me. His openness to share personal experiences like depression, learning difficulties, and near burnout, indicated that he must have felt safe to be able to share. The extended length that the interview went for, compared to other interviews, seemed an indicator of this freedom and comfortableness as well.

Daniel's use of emotional words added up to two times the use of negative words compared to positive words used. The range of emotional words demonstrated Daniel's repertoire of expression and could have been developed from his engagement with highly skilled mentors and pastors throughout his time in ministry. The types and amount of emotional language seems to be an indicator of his level of ability to process emotion.

Analysis of Daniel's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Context Dynamics

It seemed that Daniel had encountered a range of church settings as well as different size churches. His first experience of a church in decline did not seem to diminish his pursuit of pastoral ministry but may well have provided realism for the future.

Daniel's second church had a range of experiences but seemed to present more experiences comprising conflict. This second pastoral role was in an older suburban church of Sydney and so reflected a certain level of church cultural and societal dynamic in its resistance to change. By his third church, Daniel had developed some high-level support networks including Denominational leaders, other pastors, mentors and retreat groups. This third church was in a regional area and presented different experiences of societal culture and dynamics.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

Daniel demonstrated a high level of awareness and insight on a range of aspects in his pastoral leadership. Indicators of this awareness and insight were recognised amongst:

- comments regarding his personality type and how this could affect his approach in ministry circumstances.
- his gifting in preaching and the encouragement this is to himself.
- his feeling to denigrate his second church prior to leaving but instead avoiding saying anything bad.
- his realisation of the Baptist system and its limits, particularly involving congregational factors.
- his need to avoid controlling a situation even though that is what he desires to do.
- recognising the possibility of moral indiscretion despite not entering into that himself.
- his ability to reframe his negative self-talk and the irrational thoughts that sometimes arose and turn these conversations into being realistic in thought instead.
- reflective comments immersed in stories and images.

It must be mentioned that this development of awareness and insight seems to have occurred through the implementation of various support services, and intentional

strategies of reading and reflecting. His connection to a prayer counsellor and other highly skilled pastors could also have contributed to his development of emotional processing. However, it is to be recognised that it was Daniel's internal support from his Associate Pastor in his second church that assisted him when he failed to become aware that he was sliding towards burnout as a result of depressive symptoms.

Overall, Daniel expressed realism about pastoral leadership and expectations despite a negative self-talk that preceded him arriving at this point cognitively.

Analysis of Daniel's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Daniel raised the concept of call at various times throughout the interview and directly indicated that it was an important aspect for him as a component of his sustainability.

Analysis of Daniel's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Daniel experienced and struggled with conflict and expressed that openly. Yet Daniel indicated that he was very much aware of the realities of conflict and how he seemed to have grown in conflict over his years of pastoral ministry. He seemed to be realistic about his position in conflict situations and his part in the process. He demonstrated awareness of his own frailties but realised that he was good at resolving conflict. His ability to overcome conflict seems to be a strong theme for Daniel. This all adds to the level of awareness and insight that Daniel displayed.

Daniel was able to vocalize his stress and struggle in conflict and gave insights into his own self-talk regarding conflictual situations. He was open about conflict situations and their effect on him personally. The manner in which Daniel reflected on his ability to handle conflict was further evidence of his awareness of self and acceptance of his own ability to handle conflict effectively.

Analysis of Daniel's Experiences of Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Daniel spoke positively regarding the place of his theological training and he seemed realistic about expectations of what college could deliver in preparation for pastoral ministry. In fact, Daniel accepted that there were other models of formation such as discipleship that should work alongside theological education conducted at a Bible College.

His mention of working before he entered pastoral ministry seems to also have had a positive impact on his sustainability since it presented him with some life skills prior to entering pastoral ministry.

Analysis of Daniel's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Overall for Daniel, it seemed like intentionality in implementing self-care had contributed to his sustainability. His choice to: read books, despite his learning difficulties; join pastoral retreat group; have a mentor; take his holidays; and having prayer counselling, may all have been helpful in his sustainability. The choice to undertake these strategies was recognised by Daniel as his responsibility rather than be externally imposed upon him. This indicates awareness of a need for assertiveness and courage to implement these strategies for oneself.

Analysis of Daniel's Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

Daniel indicated support both externally and internally in his pastoral leadership. Internal support was demonstrated when Daniel's Associate Pastor at his second church assisted him to avoid sliding towards burnout. This information provides evidence that internal leadership was an important factor in Daniel's support.

Daniel identified that support from external sources such as: pastoral retreat groups, mentors, a prayer counsellor, and Denominational leaders, has been helpful. His choice to engage with a highly-skilled overseas mentor at one stage and at other

times employing lesser qualified people indicate an awareness of the level of support that was helpful to Daniel at various times in his pastoral ministry. These highly- skilled people could have been contributors to the development of his emotional language and processing and sustainability.

Daniel's spouse seems to have also been supportive of him in his ministry role, thus contributing to sustainability. In fact, it seems she has been able to assist Daniel to see the times of conflict in a more positive manner and with a different frame.

Summary of Daniel's Themes

Emotional processing

- He demonstrated a good level of awareness, insight and realism regarding his ministry.
- He was aware that there were struggles and challenges but reflected positive self-talk concerning these times after a period of emotional processing.
- Recognised his gifting and was able to self-encourage concerning his ministry.

Emotional language

- He used two times the number of negative words compared to positive words.

Experienced events

- He had engaged in more traditional church leadership roles but had experienced being an Associate Pastor prior to senior leadership.

Types of church settings

- All settings were traditional church-based roles.

Call of God

- This seemed important to him.

Conflict ability and style

- He was aware that he needed to engage in conflict but despite the strain

of those situations he was able to work through the emotional toll.

Theological education

- He had a positive view of his theological education and recognised its benefit in his pastoral leadership. Yet he was realistic about the limitations of his theological training in preparing him for pastoral ministry.

Self-care and sustainability

- He had been intentional about employing different self-care practices. These appeared to be self-initiated.

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- He had appreciated Denominational leaders as support.
- He engaged a prayer counsellor that seemed to assist him to be more aware of emotional aspects in his life. This prayer counsellor was clinically trained.
- He had a mentor of a high skill and experience level at times throughout his ministry period of service.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- He identified support from church leadership at times.

Support – spouse

- He felt supported from his spouse. She also seemed to be a good source of help to process his emotional state.

5.4 Analysis of Pastors In Ministry (PIMs) Cohort

5.4.1 Comparison of PIMs

Comparison of Interview Experiences

Each of the PIMs interviewed seemed relaxed and focused throughout most of the interview process and they all indicated that they felt that the interview went well. This commonality in positivity towards the interview process gives credence to the attainment of rich open data being obtained from participants. This, therefore, adds quality to the results attained.

Comparison of Baptist Church Contexts and Roles Served

All PIMs analysed had served over thirteen (13) years as an ordained Baptist pastor in a church-based ministry role prior to interview. Each of the PIMs, other than Cain, had served in three (3) separate Baptist churches. However, Cain had experienced two (2) different pastoral roles within his two (2) churches during his time as an ordained Baptist pastor compared to four (4) roles and three (3) roles for Benjamin and Daniel respectively.

They each had the following commonalities in their experiences:

- served in the capacity as either a youth pastor or Associate Pastor prior to move into a senior pastoral role.
- lead a pastoral team of people.
- engaged with an established urban Sydney church prior to serving in either a regional church or another urban-type church of a different size.
- served in a team ministry during their theological training and prior to moving to their second pastoral role.
- involved in youth ministry and/or young adults ministry roles prior to moving to a senior role.
- all encountered a near burnout experience.

In analysing these aspects of church context, it can be seen that the variety of roles, number of churches served at, and types of churches served in, reflected a diversity amongst PIM experiences. So, in this study, it could be conceived that church size and context had no direct correlation with sustainability. However, experience in a youth/young adults role in a pastoral team situation prior to moving to a senior role was a common theme.

Benjamin and Cain had both experienced a pastoral transition from being a Senior Pastor to then becoming an Associate Pastor or Sole Pastor of a smaller church. Only Daniel moved to a larger church.

Comparison of Family Dynamics

There was commonality across the ages of the PIMs and having children during their years of service. However, the number of children and their ages differed between each PIM. This means that there was a common element of family formation and child-rearing acting in conjunction with their pastoral role. However, the stages of formation were different with Cain parenting older children compared to Benjamin and Daniel. Furthermore, the years of marriage varied between Cain who was married for thirty (30) years and Benjamin eighteen (18) years and Daniel nineteen (19) years. This demonstrates that years of marriage is not a defining element of commonality.

Comparison of Theological Education and Previous Vocation

There was no defined commonality in the process of theological education leading to ordination. Cain undertook his studies over a six (6) year period compared to Benjamin and Daniel who both took four (4) years. Also, Cain undertook diploma and graduate-diploma level studies for all his theological training, whereas Benjamin and Daniel both completed a degree and then a diploma.

Each PIM had stepped into pastoral ministry after the age of twenty-five (25) and

had been engaged in a previous vocation prior to entering church-based ministry.

Each PIM spoke positively of their theological training and seemed realistic about the limitations of pastoral training.

Comparison of Church Experiences

All participants had mentioned that conflict had been an experience in their leadership of Baptist churches. Each participant had also indicated an experience of a near burnout encounter and had experienced a challenged mental health state at some point in their pastoral leadership. Each of the PIMs had supportive spouses, highly skilled external support, and experienced some level of internal support in their ministry, particularly throughout periods of conflict. It appears that having appropriate support was a defining feature amongst a range of factors for PIMs.

5.4.2 Themes of PIMs

Encounters of Conflict

All participants mentioned that they had experienced personal conflict in their churches. Conflict situations were not recounted for each church that they had pastored, but there were various incidences of conflict recalled in their experiences of the churches that they pastored.

Participants expressed how they approached conflict and in what way they personally responded to it. Benjamin and Daniel both expressed that they faced conflict and were willing to confront situations, even though they recognised the struggles that conflict can sometimes have. They both stated that they seemed to address conflict quite well and mentioned that support from external services was important to sustain them through these times. Cain similarly did mention the importance of support in his experiences of conflict despite tending towards conflict avoidance.

It appears that the three PIMs' statements regarding conflict is an indication of a heightened level of awareness and insight into themselves and their leadership approach. The ability to raise and acknowledge their conflict style and note their personal areas of growth in the art of conflict indicate a high level of personal insight and awareness about the handling of conflict. Therefore, it appeared that awareness of self-in-conflict was a common theme amongst all the PIMs. This could well evidence an aspect of sustainability and preventing dropout.

Leadership Awareness and Insight

A range of emotional words was used by PIMs in the interviews. It is to be noted that each PIM had engagement with highly-skilled mentors, and/or professional counsellors, and/or highl- skilled pastors who could have assisted them to develop their emotional language. It appears that having appropriate support was an important aspect of sustainability. The following table presents the summary of the number and variety of emotional words used by PIMs.

Name of PIM	Number of Positive Emotional Words	Number of Negative Emotional Words	Total Number of Emotional Words
Benjamin	24	30	54
Cain	28	32	63
Daniel	17	38	55

The range of emotional words that was deemed positive or negative when used differed between Daniel and the other two participants. However, Daniel had indicated that he did experience depressive episodes in his life so this could have contributed to the greater number of negatively expressed words. All PIMs had at least fifty (50) variances on emotive words used in interview. This is an indication of their level of emotional processing.

Alongside the use of their emotional language, all PIMs spoke with a sense of realism and insight regarding the experiences that they encountered. In the recount of their experiences they indicated insight into: required personal areas of development, awareness of their weaknesses and limitations with respect to their leadership ability, and having realistic expectations about Denominational support and ministry situations that they encountered.

The fact that Benjamin and Cain were willing to move from a senior pastoral position to either an associate role or a solo role in a smaller church is an indicator of self-identity. They each expressed that they felt this was a good move, especially so that they could continue in pastoral ministry. This similarly adds to the level of personal insight and awareness in their leadership and level of self-esteem.

All participants indicated that their theological education was positive, excellent, or was deemed positive. Yet each yet PIM acknowledged realistic expectations concerning the limitations of theological training for pastoral ministry preparedness. This insight is an indicator of the level of awareness of each PIM comprising their pastoral formation processes. Overall, it seemed that self-awareness and personal insight were important aspects of sustainability for all PIMs and indicators of their level of emotional intelligence.

Realism and Pastoral Leadership

Another factor that surfaced was the level of realism that PIMs expressed regarding their experiences. Besides not expecting that theological training would prepare them totally for pastoral leadership, there were various statements which indicated that they were aware that they did not expect pastoral ministry to be easy. In fact, on various occasions the PIMs mentioned that the Baptist system was a struggle but expected this in a congregational system. Overall, it seemed that having a realistic expectation of events and training has been a contributing factor in sustainability and the processing of emotion.

Sense of God's Call

Each PIM had a similar conceptualisation regarding the call of God and remaining in ministry. An affirmed sense of call from God to a church and vocation was important for each of them. Although there did not appear to be any direct correlation in and of itself between call and sustainability, it may well have had an effect on sustainability amidst a variety of other factors.

Self-Care Practices

All PIMs indicated an intentionality concerning the implementation of self-care practices. There were various practices that were expressed by each PIM as important aspects of sustainability, including: spiritual practices, mentors, and attending retreat groups. In this study, various practices were expressed by PIMs when asked what they felt had sustained them in pastoral leadership. These were able to be classified into categories as either Internal, External or Community Focused practices. Internal practices are recognised as practices that are completed within a person's emotions, thinking and personal wellbeing. External practices are practices completed through an external source or interaction with another person or object. Community-based practices related to external practices that involved more than one person in the employment of the practice. These can be seen in the following table, which has classified practices as either: Internal, External or Community Focused.

There was a consistent theme concerning the employment of some sort of community-focused practice in the self-care that the PIMs employed, particularly related to having an external mentor, pastoral groups, and Denominational connection. Some practices related to an internal focus and did not arise in these interviews for all PIMs, especially internal strategies of praying and bible reading. This does not mean that these practices did not take place for these PIMs, but their lack of expression is an indicator that they were not necessarily deemed as a predominant aspect of sustainability compared to other aspects expressed. This is

particularly clear especially since community-focused strategies predominated PIMs recounts. This is an indicator that relational aspects were important to PIMs.

From this analysis, it can be seen that community-focused strategies predominated the reflections of all PIMs when it came to intentional self-care practices. Since community engagement is a means of verbally processing emotions, it seems that this could be correlated to the level of emotional expression that PIMs exhibited.

Experiences of Support

All participants were positive about having some form of external support through their ministry, either Denominationally, a formalised mentoring arrangement, or professional clinical help. The types of support identified by the PIMs were all deemed as high-skill-level services. It appears that having available skilled assistance to process personal issues in ministry has been helpful for all PIMs. Mentoring and pastoral groups were particularly identified as a main support strategy for each PIM in relation to sustainability. However, it also appeared evident that having internal church support, especially from church leaders, was important in ministry situations particularly when encountering conflict.

So overall, it seemed evident for these PIMs that the type of support that they received was an important aspect of sustainability. Ensuring that highly-skilled mentors, Denominational leaders, or professional support services were engaged appeared significant in this regard.

Spouse Support

Amongst all PIMs, spouses appeared like they were supportive. Each PIM had experienced their marriage relationship over eighteen years (18) years, although in and of itself the length of a marriage is no indicator of success in relationship. There could, however, be a correlation between the manner in which a pastor was able to express themselves in their pastoral leadership and their marital relationship. Perhaps the level of personal awareness and insight portrayed by each PIM in their church

leadership was extrapolated into their marriages as well.

The following table presents the summary of the types of internal, external and community based practices employed by PIMs.

Name	Types of Internal Practices	Types of External Practices (<i>Did not involve socio-relational interaction</i>)	Types of Community Based Practices (<i>Involved socio-relational interaction</i>)
Benjamin	Trust in God	Changed churches	Pastoral retreat groups Pastor networks Supportive people internal and external Denominational support
Cain	None mentioned	Time away Changed churches	Pastoral retreat groups Spouse Supportive people internally Denominational Mentor Denominational support
Daniel	Prayer Reading books	Days off Long Service leave	Pastoral retreat groups Denominational and non-denominational mentors Internal leaders Denominational support Spouse

5.4.3 Conclusion On PIMs

There was a general sense that when conflict arose that it was best confronted and dealt with. When this process did not go well with the other individual then it was the support of internal leadership and the type of external support that were

sustaining factors at that time. Having a supportive spouse seemed also to be a contributing factor in a pastor's sustainability in church-based ministry within a Baptist ecclesiology. Awareness of limitations of self and the church system seems to have been common amongst all PIMs.

However, a clear strength of each PIM seems to be the manner in which they were able to process and view their emotional state at difference phases in their pastoral ministry experience. The discussions and elements developed from analysis of the PIMs tends to point toward affirming that a certain level of emotional processing and awareness was important in sustainability and preventing dropout.

PIMs demonstrated their EI through a robust use of emotional vocabulary, they embraced change, they were aware of some of their strengths and weaknesses, they had been a good judge of character of people, they seemed difficult to offend, they knew their boundaries and when to say no, they mostly let go of their mistakes, they did not hold grudges, they neutralized toxic people, and presented an ability to laugh about their circumstances at times. Although no formalised examination through the use of an EI test took place, there were indications that EI played an important part in each PIM's sustainability.

5.5 Out of Pastoral Ministry' (OPM) Participant Portraits

The following portraits and analysis represent those participants who were Accredited Baptist ministers and ordained. Each one of these participants had been engaged in a Baptist church in pastoral ministry for less than ten years at time of interview and had dropped out of pastoral ministry.

5.5.1 Profile: Felix

Felix was a white male pastor ex-pastor who had entered pastoral ministry during his forties (40s) and dropped out in his fifties (50s) just prior to serving ten years as an ordained pastor. He was married before he entered pastoral ministry and undertook his theological training at Morling College attaining a bachelor-level award in ministry and a Graduate Certificate in Divinity. He had four (4) children upon entering pastoral ministry ranging in ages between zero (0) and seven (7) years and had been married for twenty-three (23) years prior to dropping out of ministry. At the time of the interview he had four (4) children ranging from nineteen (19) down to twelve (12) years of age. Felix was now separated from his wife and was undertaking intense professional therapy since he dropped out of pastoral ministry. Prior to entering pastoral ministry, Felix had attained qualifications working in human services.

Baptist Church Ministry Contexts for Felix

Felix served in two (2) different Baptist churches during his ordained ministry:

1) Felix's first church role was for three (3) years as an Associate Pastor in a regional church in NSW. This was a part time role involving one (1) to two (2) days per week. His main ministry responsibilities in this church involved overseeing music, responsibility for the night service, and looking after small groups.

2) In his second church, Felix was involved in a church plant in a regional area of NSW. This position was held for seven (7) years as Senior Pastor in a part-time capacity. It was a paid role for three and half (3.5) days per week. As the pastoral team leader, he was responsible for various unpaid volunteer staff. His main role and function as Senior Pastor in this position was general pastoral duties and connecting the church to the local community so as to bring new people into the church.

Selection Process for Felix

I had had no previous contact with or knowledge of Felix prior to interview. He had completed his theological studies after I had left Morling College and before I commenced lecturing at Morling. Felix was interesting to me because he presented close to the ten-year mark of this study, had been married for over twenty years, but encountered marital breakdown after he had dropped out of ministry. I was intrigued if there was any correlation between his marital dynamics and pastoral ministry dynamics which meant he was unable to achieve ten years of service.

Interview Dynamics Concerning Felix

Location of Interview:

The interview took place at a public library with a study room during the middle of the day. It was a hot day and the room was warm as a result. There was a round table between us and our chairs faced each other square on.

Body language

Felix presented with body language that included direct eye contact and a square on position across the round table. He sat upright and appeared quite rigid as he spoke. After the recording device was switched off Felix rapidly exited as he had a personal matter to attend to.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

Felix spoke throughout the interview in a type of sermonising and advice-giving

style of voice. He tended to be quite assertive and passionate on the issues that he had expounded upon.

Felix used a variety of emotive words in his interview that involved thirty-six (36) different types of positive words. The words utilised in a positive manner were: empowered, passion, joys, strong, sustained, good, okay, glad, cool, beautiful, well, safe, secure, powerful, nice, delight, pleasure, confident, constructive, strength, impressed, well, strong, funny, fantastic, brilliant, dynamic, amazing, happy, blessing, build, better, best, perfect, and great.

Throughout the interview Felix used eighteen words (18) in a negative manner to describe his experiences. These words were: tough, stressful, negative, nasty, bitterness, deflated, resent, bad, hard, disappointed, traumatic, juggling, sad, placating, struggles, weaknesses, decimated, and afraid.

A total of fifty-four (54) different emotive words were utilised by Felix.

When Felix was asked to express what he felt about certain aspects of the interview he used the word 'think' instead of 'feel' to respond to the question. For instance, in response to the question that requested what he 'felt' about the Denominational connection he used the word 'think' twice in response to the question. He was then asked again what he 'felt' about all that he was saying, and he said the word 'think' twice again in response rather than expressing himself emotionally. Felix also used various metaphors to describe his story, such as, freight train, and the concept of 'journey'.

At the end of the interview in the debrief section, Felix stated that he thought the interview was a good chance to 'get out what's here' as a reference to what was happening for him internally. He mentioned that the interview was 'perfect' and 'great'.

Felix's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Felix expressed that he had enjoyed and felt empowered during his time of Baptist pastoral ministry. He stated that 'there was plenty of joys' and that the 'good stuff' was good. In his final words of the interview he stated: 'All I can say overall, it's unreal – it was the best journey of my life. Hard, tough, but in the end, I can't think of anything better to do...'

Felix mentioned that he had struggles during his pastoral ministry, was upset about some opposing theological issues that some bible college lecturers wrote about, and recognised that encouraging words that he received were a struggle for him to 'own'. For the purpose of de-identification the theological issue that Felix raised has not been included in this written work. At one stage, he received some words from his mentor that said he would have a time of rest. Felix said that it was another eighteen (18) months after those words were stated that he dropped out of ministry and left the vocation.

First Church Experiences

Felix did not discuss ministry matters regarding his first church ministry experience other than to recognise that he commenced in youth ministry and developed a passion for seeing changed lives in young people:

So we took this group of kids who were so insular and it was all about them [turning] into being all about others and then they had a passion and that passion still goes on.

Second Church Experiences

Concerning his second church, as a church plant he stated that he had a 'view or vision' of what it was going to develop into but when it did not eventuate as he had anticipated he became disillusioned:

And I have a lot of regrets about that, and I certainly learnt a lot. I would handle it very differently, now uhm... if I was to go back.

Even though Felix expressed that he knew it would be hard work in the church plant, the feelings that he encountered in disappointment were unexpected:

The significant Kingdom work was gonna take place there and when it didn't, it just – it caused me to question a whole lot of stuff and I still don't have answers for a lot of that.

Felix stated that thought he had developed in his level of self-awareness since dropping out of church-based ministry and that this awareness has been formed through professional therapy. Therapy has enabled him to understand and recognise his emotional posture throughout that time:

So, I – I kind of shielded myself from everybody, anybody that was close to me, my kids, my wife... So, in some regards, I had a good self-awareness of what was going on within me to an extent, or what I would allow me – myself to see, but I had a good picture of what other people were experiencing, to say enough, and you need help.

When Felix was asked what he would recommend to other pastors considering entering pastoral ministry he stated:

Entering pastoral ministry – I would say <pauses> really – If you think your self-awareness is good go deeper because it may not be enough.

After dropping out of Baptist ministry, he said that he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and stated that he was living with this condition throughout his pastoral ministry. His PTSD was not discussed any further in the interview but was being addressed in therapy. Since undertaking professional counselling, Felix felt that he was more secure in himself, and that the clinical treatment had been helpful, but more sessions were required. In regard to professional therapy, he stated:

So, in the end, it's – it's been a helpmate, to – to unpack all of this and some of the stuff that people have said in a constructive way that was – I wouldn't call it negative, but real and so I'd been able to unpack that and say, 'Okay. Yeah. I get that.'... The things that were said to me during ministry, but I've unpacked it afterwards.

Felix mentioned that whilst he was in ministry, he was aware of his strengths and survived on those strengths. He said that he allowed others to do other roles that he considered weaknesses. Felix did not mention what these weaknesses and strengths were. The final decision Felix made to depart from pastoral ministry was predicated on thoughts regarding whether he had the energy to continue and whether he could deal with the ‘protagonists’ and the possible destruction that could arise. Note, it seemed at this point Felix’ word choice would have better suited use of the word ‘antagonists’ than ‘protagonists’. In the end, he realised that he would leave it for someone else to ‘take the church where it needs to go.’

Felix described his dropout from pastoral ministry in a disjointed manner and the journey out of pastoral ministry through these words:

And – and the weaknesses for me, ate away at me, and my strength, not strengths, but my strength to – to keep going and – and of course, as it chops away, you got no legs to run anymore and so, burnout comes really kind of quickly, or would occur. And so, you could see it coming and it’s like a freight train and you can see the signs. You can see the signals and that’s why I got out.

He stated that he was glad that he dropped out of ministry.

Felix’s Experiences of the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

With respect to the concept of God’s call to serve in church-based ministry, Felix stated that he recognised the sense of God’s call in choosing a location of ministry:

I thought it was where I needed to be. I mean, you’ve got – God’s calling you – we’ll use those kind of catchphrases – to a place of ministry, you know you in the right place... but the one thing I did always wonder was how long I would, you know. I just knew that there was a sensation in me that said, ‘This may not be forever, but for right now, you are gonna be a pastor.’

Call was expressed by Felix at various times throughout the interview. He said at one point: ‘but I always felt like I was in the right place’ and at another

stage he said that it was knowing his sense of call that assisted him through his years in ministry: 'I knew I had a – a foundation of being called. I knew that was strong and that was solid that – And nothing could separate that.' Felix stated that an aspect of sustainability for him was: 'getting back to knowing that - that this was my call in life.'

God's call was mentioned as leading him to dropout of ministry as well:

I thought about it, prayed about it for another six months, talked to my wife about it and said this is what I think God is calling me to do, uh... and resigned, and we finished well.

Felix's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Felix recounted negative stories of conflict and struggle from both his training days at Bible college in theological training and in his second church in the church plant. In his second church, he recalled situations of conflict, pastoral struggles, and feeling disempowered in conflict, especially dealing with people with severe mental health issues. In this he estimated that during a really tough period of his leadership that there

were at least seventy (70) percent of our church had mental health issues of some sort... So, in conflict, I was terrible, you know. I was a – I wasn't great. Uhm... so, I had someone else to do that for me.

He mentioned that in relation to conflict he had to 'step up' to do conflict with others, even though he didn't like it, and try and tell himself not to be afraid. However, Felix stated that he essentially put up a 'protective hedge' to shelter himself in conflicts. He recognised that he had bitterness towards others and that there was a lot of things that he did not like and so he justified himself in building up this emotional wall of protection. Felix did not explain what this protection looked like, but it was assumed that counselling had revealed this since he dropped out.

Felix mentioned that in his daily pastoral duties he was dealing with ‘minute stuff’ in individuals and their conflict. He recounted that on one occasion he was going through ‘a really tough episode’ and the level of stress caused him to ‘snap a little bit.’

Felix’s Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Felix saw his theological training as positive and helpful, yet he stated that he would not recommend the College because it did not train him with enough practice. He spoke highly of lecturers at the theological College, however, it was during the interview when he was recounting different conflicts that he mentioned an incident that occurred whilst at College, concerning a specific experience and the response from some lecturers at the College. He mentioned that this situation caused a lecturer to confront him. Felix stated that he did not feel that this incident was well handled, and that he felt that the people who had offended him did not apologise to him for the hurt that they caused him. In retrospect, Felix noted that he would now ‘pick the stuff’ that he would challenge others on instead of asserting himself and causing a conflict to arise. He gave no other details about the incident in the interview. He appeared overall to be disappointed in what his theological training provided, despite mentioning it was helpful and positive.

Aspects of Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry for Felix

In relation to sustainability and self-care, Felix mentioned that he: ‘was looking at the journey ahead, and I – I looked at where I was at mentally and physically.’ It was in recognition of his own need of self-care that he essentially extricated himself from pastoral ministry. Felix mentioned that he undertook intentional practices regarding self-care and that his dropout from church-based ministry was, in a sense, a self-care practice.

Some of the aspects expressed around self-care, for Felix, were: engaging in prayer, spiritual contemplation, and meeting with an external mentor. He stated that he found these approaches helpful during his years in church-based ministry. In response to the question regarding people considering entering pastoral ministry, he especially recommended that having a spiritual director would be helpful.

Felix ruminated on what things sustained him and said:

I mean everything from doing just the practical stuff uhm.. you know, you see people become Christians. You see, you know, people healed – You see a lot of – so many different things that go on in people's lives that sustained through tough times uhm... you, you know, you get to experience so many things that is about seeing people grow, you know, increasing people's wellbeing so to speak.

Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry by Felix

External sources

Denominationally, Felix felt that there was a divide and lack of support between local Baptist pastors and so felt no support there. He also stated that he felt that there was a lack of Denominational support during times of church conflict and this 'deflated him a little bit'. Felix referred to the separateness of Denominations and began speaking quite fervently on how Denominations could work together instead of separately.

I - I lo-... lost - lost faith in the powers within the Union and – but then again, I realise now that, you know, they're only doing the best that they could do, what they had, and they were all human just as much I was... I'm – dis – disappointed in the local cluster group within the Union.

Felix mentioned that he had a mentor who was a pastor from a different Denomination who assisted him for three (3) to four (4) years through his church plant experience. This mentor approached Felix and said that he wanted to 'walk the journey' with him. This pastor's church plant was in another part of Sydney, rather

than a regional area like that which Felix was pastoring in. This mentor provided words through prayer counselling that Felix took as encouragement for his future. It was here that Felix stated:

These words of rest were coming out and I'm thinking, 'That's really cool,' and I could see a picture in the spirit what was going on and it was me laying in this beautiful field, just resting and I thought, 'Okay. Well, when's that? You know, what's that all about?'

In response to the interview question concerning what recommendations Felix would offer other pastors entering ministry he said:

Uhm.. connect with the local guys. Make it your task to say, 'I wanna walk with you, not take away something away from you'...and no matter what it costs, try and build relationships so we can build a better Baptist Union, you know, a – a brotherhood almost.

Internal Church People

Felix made no direct references to internal people as support in his church-based environments.

Spouse and Family

Felix mentioned at one stage at his second church that there was a person with bipolar who was causing a lot of stress for his wife. Felix mentioned that he wanted to protect his family from the struggles in ministry that he was experiencing, and prior to the decision to dropout stated:

I can't take my family through that. I can't take through – I don't have the – the mental energy to do that 'cause I'm on the edge now. So, it's probably a good time now to stop, take time out of ministry, finish well.

Felix stated that after he had been praying about dropping out of ministry that he then spoke with his wife and said to her:

Look, we're gonna push bad relationships and I don't want to do that for you, for the kids...

Felix did not mention his wife's response to his statement, but it was after this time that he dropped out of ministry and his relationship with her fell apart.

5.5.1.1 Analysis and Discussion of Felix's Themes

Analysis of Interview Setting, Dynamics and Selection Process of Felix

Interview Setting Analysis

The positioning of chairs showed a good interview situation from a physical point of view. Physical positioning is important in the communication process so that a person feels comfortable and relaxed to engage. The heat of the room could have affected focus in the interview for Felix and myself. However, the flow of conversation from Felix seemed to indicate good engagement despite the temperature.

Interview Experience

Since I had no previous encounters, experience or knowledge of Felix, this made my feelings towards Felix in the interview seem less open to having preconceived perceptions of him compared to say if I had a previous relationship with him. However, in the journaling I stated that this gave no permission for me to be any less attuned to personal triggers of my own previous experiences.

Felix's direct eye contact, sitting upright, having a rigid sitting posture seemed to indicate defensiveness in the interview. Since I had had no previous relational history with Felix this may have contributed to the interview dynamics being more formalised than relaxed. It was determined from his body posture that Felix was focused and attentive in the interview and demonstrated a sense of being present with the questions that he was being asked. However, the feeling of formality may have meant a less relaxed state, and may have led to not gaining greater insights.

Felix demonstrated a range of emotional words with more positive than negative words used in a ratio of nearly two (2) positive words compared to one negative emotional word. His words were of a fairly sophisticated level. The encounter with professional counselling since dropping out of ministry may well have contributed to the development of his emotional language. It is uncertain whether the range of

emotional language was evident prior to this professional counselling. However, Felix did not use many words related to frustration despite him expressing a range of frustrating events in his interview.

Felix's use of imagery in his recount seemed to indicate a developed sense of expression. It is unknown whether this form of expression existed prior to his professional counselling, however.

It could be seen that Felix evaded talking about his feelings despite several attempts being made to assist him to discuss his experiences. His use of the word 'think' rather than 'felt' was an indicator of this and this in itself could have been used as a protective technique to deal with any PTSD symptoms that he was experiencing. He tended to theologise about an issue rather than express his personal emotions. Perhaps the pain of talking about incidences was so challenging for Felix that evading emotion was a coping mechanism in his life. It could be considered that a key to being sustained in the years that he served in church-based ministry was to maintain a more cognitive approach to events rather than engaging emotionally. This diminished emotional aspect may be a contributor to Felix's need to drop out of pastoral ministry, and may have had an effect on marriage separation and the need for ongoing counselling.

Analysis of Felix's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Contexts Dynamics

Felix had only experienced churches in two regional areas of New South Wales and had experienced being a Senior Pastor in one of these churches, albeit in a part-time capacity, and as part of a church plant. Both of Felix's church contexts were part-time during his pastoral years, which meant he was bi-vocational throughout his near ten years of service. This bi-vocational work meant that he had not experienced the dynamics of a full-time church pastoring role.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

It seemed that Felix was still processing painful events from his time in pastoral leadership, as indicated by his current engagement in professional counselling, his mention of PTSD, and his marital separation. The manner in which he spoke also seemed to indicate that this pain was still quite raw and as yet not resolved to a settled position.

The challenges that Felix expressed during his years in church-based ministry seemed to be quite thought-provoking for him, especially as he mentioned various struggles comprising: Denominational engagements, conflict with Bible College lecturers, various church incidences with people, disappointments over church growth results, and lack of fulfilled expectations in ministry. Felix's perception of his period in ministry as 'good years', in light of all these challenges and struggles, seemed counter to these experiences that he endured. This could demonstrate a diminished lack of awareness for Felix or a smokescreen for his true feelings.

It was stated by Felix, through counselling, that during his pastoral years he had been more aware of the needs of other people than he was of his own needs. In fact, Felix's statements concerning the need for deep self-awareness as a recommendation to people considering entering pastoral ministry is evidence that he sees the need for self-awareness as an important feature of sustainable practice. -Perhaps throughout his time in church-based ministry this awareness was not well developed for Felix and so now he has become a proponent of being self-aware. This insight seems to have developed through professional counselling.

It seemed like Felix's expectations of ministry results did not eventuate, even with his anticipation that pastoral ministry would be hard work. As a result, it appeared that Felix had deep disappointment in his interview responses, despite saying more positive phrases about his time in church-based ministry. Felix indicated that he had expected the church plant to be different to what had happened. This expression seemed to conflict with him saying that his ministry years were the best that he

could encounter and he would not have missed it. Although Felix had a realistic level of expectation about the need for hard work, he did not seem to have a realistic expectation of level of awareness about the emotional turmoil that can take place in ministry.

In Felix's discussion regarding his own strengths and weaknesses in ministry situations, it seemed like Felix was aware of some aspects of how he operated in ministry. These facets could have been developed from his training in his theological studies. However, it seems that emotive aspects were not developed through his years of theological training and, in fact, he still held unresolved pain from an encounter with a lecturer over ten years prior. There are various times when Felix demonstrated awareness of his church setting and the church system that he was encountering, such as presenting a percentage of people with mental health issues in his church at one time. However, it is unknown whether this level of awareness had developed since having professional counselling.

Felix acknowledged that burnout was coming and so he 'got out', thus indicating some level of awareness of his own personal being. The way that his mentor and the prayer counselling raised the concept of 'rest' seems to have ultimately precipitated his decision to choose to dropout of church-based ministry. It could be said that Felix's decision to drop out was a self-fulfilling prophecy interwoven with the concept of a self-preservation strategy. It did not appear that Felix was addressing the issues that had arisen for him in any intentional or profound manner, other than through prayer counselling from his mentor. Felix's mentor was a pastor external to the Baptist system and so would not have been apprised of Baptist polity. Also, prayer counselling is not a formalised and recognised form of professional therapy. Rather, prayer counselling allows the person to share live events to one person in the room and then for this person to present images and impressions to the person through spiritual insight in prayer. This form of prayer counselling does not enable the participant to process emotional aspects that they are experiencing but rather provides pictures to assist the person to gain understanding of events that are

transpiring in their life.

Felix demonstrated signs of accumulated and unresolved stress whilst in his church-based ministry and prior to him dropping out. This was evidenced in a comment that he stated referring to a period of time when during a normal ministry incident something inside him caused him to 'snap a little'. Perhaps the lack of awareness and build-up of unresolved tensions could have contributed to a period of overstress leading to dropout. There did not appear to be any formal or professional supervision to assist the emotional dynamics that Felix was facing over time, and so this lack of support could be conceived as a contributor to a lack of sustainability in his church-based ministry. Overall, it seemed that there was a lack of awareness of leadership requirements in the setting that he was serving within.

Felix's disclosure that he had PTSD throughout his whole pastoral ministry period seems another indicator of his lack of development of awareness whilst in church-based ministry. His PTSD was only discovered after he had dropped out of pastoral ministry and entered into professional counselling. It was only in the time post-dropout and through professional counselling that this was realised.

This lack of awareness in Felix also seemed evident in relational aspects with his spouse, despite over twenty (20) years together. The fact that since dropping out of ministry his marriage showed signs of issues could indicate a level of ability in the way he dealt with relationships overall in his life. This almost sequential event in relational breakdowns could be an indication that there is a correlation between the way that Felix related to his spouse and the way that he related to people in church-based ministry. These relational aspects seem like they could have accumulated in both his church and family life without attention until after he dropped out of church-based ministry. Overall, it seems Felix's intentionality in seeking assistance at a professional level, after dropping out, seems to have had a positive effect on developing this awareness.

Felix stated that he was kind of aware of his strengths during his time in church-based ministry. However, despite Felix's awareness regarding his strengths in ministry he did not seem to overcome his areas of weaknesses and instead stated that he relied on his strengths only. This raises a question of leadership formation and whether failure to address weaknesses affects sustainability.

Analysis of Felix's Experiences in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Call seemed to be a strong focus for Felix in what he conceived as sustaining during his church-based ministry. He seemed to demonstrate awareness of its importance, stating on several occasions that it was a key to sustainability whilst in church-based ministry. Yet, call was also used as a reason for dropping out of church-based ministry. The words that Felix received of 'rest' in prayer counselling could have precipitated this development. The sense of God's call can be conceived as subjective and so Felix's statement that he also felt called out of church-based ministry also is open to further discussion.

Analysis of Felix's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

From what Felix expressed, it seemed that he tended to dislike conflict because he indicated that he was willing to engage in it when he saw its importance, but not on all occasions. In fact, his statement that he had someone else do conflict for him seemed to indicate an avoidance technique concerning his handling of conflict. Felix's comment to pastors entering pastoral ministry raised the issue of conflict and that they need to choose their conflicts well. The fact that Felix focused on this aspect of pastoral insight in his advice to pastors presents as a strong indication that conflict was a challenging aspect in Felix's period of pastoral ministry. In fact, on one occasion Felix mentioned that his own wife was overburdened by conflict. Perhaps a more assertive approach to conflict by Felix and a less avoidant style may well have contributed to sustainability for Felix. The lack of emotional support when conflict occurred for him also seemed to contribute to a lack of being sustained in ministry.

Felix presented with an expectation regarding conflict situations that anticipated resolution of conflict, thus demonstrating a lack of awareness and realism around conflict. This seemed evident in his comments concerning the conflictual incident at Bible College with lecturers and the apology that he expected but did not receive, alongside the multiple conflicts at his second church that he engaged in. It appeared that Felix's expectations were not realised and so he became disappointed as a result.

Overall, it can be seen that Felix encountered conflict at multiple places and times throughout his pastoral ministry, but it was his conflict style that created high periods of stress and strain and his own lack of awareness of self.

Analysis of Felix's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Felix spoke positively of his theological education and recognised its assistance in pastoral ministry. However, the manner in which Felix recounted the incident at College with lecturers, the lack of apology he felt that he had not received, all seemed to present a sense of him still processing the pain of this incident despite it being over ten years since it had occurred. Also, Felix appeared, overall, to be disappointed in what his theological training provided despite mentioning it was helpful and positive. This dichotomy seems to be an indicator of a diminished level of security in his own self-identity. The inability to overcome the emotional aspects of this incident so long ago points to a reduced ability to process emotion.

Analysis of Felix's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Felix displayed a few internal practices in his self-care and an external source by way of mentoring. This mentor was not part of the Baptist Denomination so possibly would not have understood the dynamics of Baptist ecclesiology. However, Felix did not mention other communal sources as support.

Felix indicated various factors such as mentoring, spiritual practices and seeing

results in his ministry as sustainable aspects. However, the mentor that he was meeting with did not seem to process emotional aspects with Felix and so this could have meant that he did not develop emotional processing and awareness of self in the various events and situations that Felix encountered in church-based ministry. Also, the mentor, and not Felix, initiated this mentoring relationship so the importance of intentional self-care is not apparent.

It seemed like Felix was relying on seeing ministry results as a means of sustainability. By being reliant upon results as a sustaining aspect ultimately places a person in a vulnerable position, especially if one does not see expected results. In Felix's case, when the results did not eventuate, he expressed extreme disappointment and ultimately dropped out of ministry. To experience realised expectations is a precarious aspect to rely on for sustainability, especially since personally he would have no control over people responding and being part of the church. Overall, it appeared that meeting personal expectations was important to Felix in sustainability. This appears to be possibly be an aspect of role-identity and self-esteem.

Analysis of Felix's Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

Internal church support was not mentioned or indicated by Felix. In fact, there seemed to be a lot of high-needs people in the church, which meant internal relationships were more of a drain than support.

For Felix it seemed like most of his support came from an external pastor from a Pentecostal background who acted as a mentor. The mentor, rather than Felix himself, precipitated this mentoring relationship thus indicating that Felix's mentoring relationship was not self-initiated. This mentor was not within the Denomination and so would not have been aware of some of the nuances of Denominational challenges. Also, this mentor did not seem to provide supervision of his emotional state or personal issues but rather undertook more of a coaching aspect

to assist Felix with his church planting experience. This pastor provided more of a prophetic style of mentoring.

It seemed apparent that Felix did not feel supported by Denominational leaders and so lacked this level of external support. He indicated disappointment in Denominational support and local Baptist networks and so it seemed that he was somewhat separated from a range of external support. It appears that Felix had a certain expectation of Denominational leaders and other Baptist pastors that they failed to live up to.

Overall, it seems that Felix did not have a support network during his church-based ministry that engaged in high-skill-level processing of his emotions, unlike the professional help that Felix engaged after he had dropped out of ministry. Felix's comments regarding the assistance that clinical counselling had done for him since he dropped out of church-based ministry seems to indicate that he had grown in personal awareness since then.

Felix did not mention or discuss much in regard to spousal support. It seemed there was strain upon his spouse at various stages during his time in church-based ministry. The ensuing breakdown of Felix's marriage could be indicative of unresolved emotions and tensions in his life and the level of awareness that existed during his time in church-based ministry. But this comment is conjecture and would require further research to establish. Felix's words concerning his spouse seemed to indicate that decisions about ministry engagement and dropout were made without consulting her. He stated that he wanted to 'protect' her and the kids from the struggles of ministry. This seemed to present as him making the decision and not necessarily consulting her about what she thought. This lack of consultation was also indicated in the way that he decided to drop out of ministry by saying God was calling him out of pastoral ministry and he didn't want his wife to go through that. These comments all could be indicators of relational issues that surfaced later after he left church-based ministry.

Felix indicated stress for his spouse from an incident that occurred with a woman with bipolar in the church. He did not indicate any support for her through these struggles. The fact that marriage counselling happened afterward and the marital relationship broke down, could be indicators of underlying relational issues not addressed during his time in pastoral ministry. If emotional connection was a challenge for Felix, then emotional attachment in marriage may also have been a strain. The absence of the wife's voice and a sense of togetherness in the final decision to leave pastoral ministry is a sign that there may well have been relational problems prior to the separation after he left pastoral ministry. The lack of spousal support could well have been a contributor to sustainability amongst a range of other aspects.

Summary of Felix's Themes

Emotional processing

- Felix seemed to demonstrate minimal awareness and insight throughout his years of church-based ministry.
- He seemed to have an expectation of people and events and when they were not realised this caused unresolved personal disappointment.
- It seems his awareness and ability to process emotion came after he left church ministry and was developed through clinical counselling.

Emotional language

- Felix demonstrated more positive than negative words, but this level of emotional language could have developed post-dropout through clinical counselling.

Experienced events

- He had engaged in a more traditional church leadership role as an Associate Pastor and then experienced a church plant as Senior Pastor.

Types of church settings

- His first church was a traditional church-based role prior to a church planting context.

Call of God

- This seemed important to him.

Conflict ability and style

- He was aware that he tended to be conflict avoidant and so there were some times that he did not engage in conflict when he should have. This insight may well have been developed through clinical counselling.

Theological education

- He had a tainted view of his theological education but recognised its benefit to his pastoral leadership. He did not appear realistic about the limitations of theological training in preparing him for pastoral ministry despite him seeing its benefits.

Self-care and sustainability

- There did not appear to be a strong sense of self-initiating of self-care practices despite various strategies being engaged

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- He did not indicate that he felt supported by Denominational leaders during his time in church ministry. A more realistic view of their role seems to have been developed since undertaking clinical counselling
- External social support did not seem to provide emotional processing in his life but acted more as a coaching relationship.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- He did not indicate internal support from leadership or people in the community.

Support – spouse

- There was no real mention of spousal support.

5.5.2 Profile: Ham

Ham was a white male pastor ex-pastor who had entered pastoral ministry during his mid-twenties (20s) and had been ordained and involved in church-based ministry for over five (5) years prior to dropping out of church-based ministry. He had been married for fifteen (15) years when he dropped out of pastoral ministry and had two (2) children in younger primary age at time of interview. He was separated from his wife at time of interview. He held degree and diploma awards as part of his theological studies and had studied for five (5) years to attain these qualifications in order to qualify for Baptist accreditation and ordination. Prior to entering pastoral ministry, Ham had vocationally been working in a commercial service profession where no qualifications were required.

Baptist Church Ministry Contexts for Ham

Ham had served in two (2) different Baptist churches as an ordained Baptist pastor within two (2) different roles:

- 1) He spent four (4) years as an Associate Pastor in a church-based ministry in a suburban part of Sydney in a full-time capacity. Two of these years were as an ordained pastor and two years whilst he was studying at theological college. In this time, his role involved general pastoral duties amongst children, youth and young adults.
- 2) In his second context he served as team leader of a church plant for two and half (2.5) years where he conducted the commencement of a church planting team and was then involved in launching the church plant.

After departing Baptist pastoral ministry, Ham returned to his previous profession that he had undertook before he entered pastoral ministry. Ham is still connected in with a local church and indicated that he was very supportive of the pastor at his church.

Selection Process for Ham

I had minimal contact with Ham prior to interview and so this enabled a distance for me in knowing his story and having preconceived ideas about him. I did not know of Ham's story or his journey through church-based ministry prior to interview. My selection of Ham was based on my intrigue in him being engaged in a church plant and that his marriage broke down since he dropped out of church-based ministry. This seemed to indicate a possible pattern that I discovered with Felix in his church planting experience and ultimate marriage breakdown and so this brought an element of commonality to this study.

Interview Dynamics Regarding Ham

Location of Interview:

Ham had chosen a café in a venue close to his work place. We sat inside the café with windows, an open space, and with minimal other people present. Negligible disturbance took place from other people and the staff serving us. I had informed staff of my recording of an interview and so not to disturb us. We sat opposite each other at a square table with a coffee each on the table. The meeting felt relaxed and engaging for Ham and myself.

Body language

Ham initially did not present with much eye contact but upon using reflective statements he became more relaxed and involved more eye contact. He sat upright and in a relaxed state after the first period of time in the interview.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

There were a variety of emotive words used by Ham in interview. There were fifteen (15) positively focused words expressing his experience, including: strong, happy, graciously, faithful, strong, positive, good, strength, enriching, encouraging, content, excellent, flexible, open, glad.

During the interview Ham utilised sixteen (16) words in a negative emotive manner including: disillusioning, naïve, hate, selfish, negative, bad, challenge, hesitancy, uncertainty, hard, regrets, challenging, ugly, bitter, needy, and detraction.

There total number of different emotive words was thirty-one (31) in the description of his experience.

In response to the debrief question towards the end of the interview process Ham said:

Uhm... it felt very easy to share actually which is a good thing. Uhm... and I'm actually, just actually talking and talking about the experience uhm... does raise emotions uhm... and does raise things that I hadn't thought about before that – that I'll probably analyse and think about 'cause I tend to do that, but not in a bad way. I kind a think it's – it's good reflection.

Ham's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ham indicated that, overall, ministry was a positive experience and mentioned specifically that his early church roles and functions were particularly positive and a 'really good experience'. Ham mentioned that his church-based experiences were a positive encounter despite the challenges and dropping out of ministry.

Concerning experiences that he enjoyed in ministry, Ham stated that he 'loved just one-on-one people time', building into leaders and discipling people. He said that he did not like 'the big crowd stuff' but enjoyed and found it positive regarding preaching and preparation to preach and teach.

When speaking of some of the struggles that Ham faced in church-based ministry he said that he felt distracted by things external to the church and the health of his marriage. He mentioned that he felt that he was selfish and that he struggled with time management and

always feeling like I'd never done enough. So – And I'd – I'd always push myself harder 'cause I – I just never felt I'd done enough.

In this he stated that he struggled with time management concerning: general pastoral ministry, time with his family, and connection with other networks within Denominational activities.

At the time of dropping out of ministry, he saw that it did not seem too 'difficult'. However, Ham then said that in the period leading up to his dropout, he then unpacked some of the pain and angst that had been occurring, and the sense of disillusionment that he felt from that time period. Ham did not mention that he did this 'unpacking' in any formal manner with professional assistance other than through prayer counselling.

Ham mentioned that disillusionment was noted as a reason for dropping out. After leaving ministry he stated that he reflected on his dropout and said:

I think that (*dropout*) made me a bit weary of – of pastoral ministry. It caused me to doubt the call, I think. And it caused me, if I'm really honest, I wouldn't have said this at the time, but if I look back, I reckon, there was a bit of bitterness towards uhm you know, towards God even.

Ham stated that some of the matters that affected him in ministry were time management, not being 'strong enough' to be able to say no to ministry demands, and personal insecurity. Regarding this he said that he would 'always' push himself harder cause he felt he had never done enough.

Ham's First Church

He mentioned, concerning his first church, that he felt 'fulfilled', a sense of achievement, and that he was where God wanted him to be. He indicated that he still had a lot of relationships with youth and young adults from the church that he had maintained. In this he stated:

It was a challenging time and, you know, it was financially challenging and hard on marriage and that sort of thing, but I always felt like I was in the right place and that was really a positive thing for me.

Ham's Second Church

In his second role as a church planter, Ham indicated that he had a challenging time, particularly since it was a 'dual leadership' situation with a friend of his. He said that the situation was 'disillusioning more than anything' and mentioned the concept of disillusionment several times in the interview regarding this situation. Ham mentioned that he had a lot of regrets concerning the church plant and would do a lot of things differently next time. He also said that he did not want to spiritualise the concept of disillusionment too much but indicated that the 'enemy' had gotten into him and affected his ministry. The 'enemy' is a reference to the scriptural concept called the devil. Ham stated:

Challenging on reflection because uhm... we were always – we were very wishy washy about who was lead pastor. So, we – we were – we – we had a sense we're both gonna do – be – we were both gonna lead it together and we thought we could make it work 'cause we had such a good friendship.

Retrospectively, in reference to the set-up of the church plant Ham revealed that

really, we should have drawn a line in the sand before – before launch, before all that happened to say, 'Someone's gonna have to make the call.'

Ham's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Ham stated that he felt a strong call to move from his first church into the church planting experience. He said he could not explain this concept except to say that there was a strong connection to God that gave him this feeling.

Despite the pain of undertaking the church plant and the unresolved aspects of his

journey, Ham indicated that he would have felt regret if he did not go in that direction. He said:

I felt glad that I went into that church plant environment 'cause I thought if I hadn't done it and I'd felt like it was a call, then I'd probably get to the end of my days and think that was one regret that I would've had that I didn't do that.

Ham said that the sense of God's call was still there for him and is still processing what that means and looks like for him now.

Ham's Experience of Conflict in Baptist Church Leadership

Ham expressed many references to his experience of conflict in the church planting situation. Here he encountered unresolved conflict with a colleague in ministry that escalated when the colleague's spouse became involved. Ham determined that this unresolved conflict stemmed from a lack of clear definition of who was the ultimate leader in the church planting team. Ham mentioned that he was a conflict avoider. He made numerous references to this incidence of conflict as he detailed this part of his story. In reference to this conflict Ham said:

I'd have say the conflict – the uh... the conflict within the church plant although it wasn't that bitter or needy, but that did cause a slight detraction from, you know, from the – from staying in ministry, I suppose.

As Ham detailed his experience of conflict in this setting I checked what he was saying and I said:

So, it sounds like you're saying that 'you know the results, and the fruit didn't come as what I expected to.'

To this he agreed. Ham mentioned that this tension and conflict mainly occurred with the team leader's spouse in this church plant context. He said:

'Cause we just – we didn't imagine it unfolding the way that it did, and it never got ugly. So

there was never full-on conflict, but we just – it was always underlining stuff and that sometimes maybe, that's worse because it – it can just be there without really uhm...

Retrospectively, Ham stated that the conflict was not dealt with effectively and it should have been 'sorted out beforehand' rather than getting to the point where the situation of working together was not working.

As I was listening to Ham's story, and in response to the details concerning the unresolved conflict and relationship with his own spouse, I asked Ham:

So are you saying you made a decision, 'Are we gonna leave this – this for the sake of our relationship?' And – And then afterward, you've been processing that since then.

Ham agreed positively to this summation.

Ham's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Ham presented a positive view on his theological training and claimed himself as more of a 'Pentecostal sort'. He stated that he saw the difference in theologies at College amongst students compared to his Pentecostal type of theological position and stated that it was really good for him in his ministerial development to have encountered these differences. He stated that the College reflected a range of theologies so it was helpful in that way.

Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry by Ham

Reflecting on his own leadership development and ongoing development, he claimed that he did not really continue pursuing his developmental opportunities but basically 'dropped it' claiming that it was his own fault and no-one else's.

He raised that devotional practices, in having a personal relationship with God, were considered a self-care strategy and gave him 'real strength'. He also mentioned that prayer counselling was a good experience and presented direction over decisions to leave church-based ministry and in the dealing with the conflictual situation

regarding the church plant.

In response to the question about advice to people entering pastoral ministry, Ham stated that pastors should gather around themselves strong people and connect in with networks to ensure accountability, support, Bible study, leadership, etc. He said ‘just find some sort of support group and maintain it throughout all the years in ministry. He went on to say that pastors should listen to materials online, go to conferences, and do self-leadership. He mentioned that it is important not to expect other people to do all this for you.

Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry by Ham

External people

Ham mentioned the need for external relational support in ministry. He said when the ‘tough times’ come, and this support is not in place, then it is too late to create it. He stated that the ‘sense of network is really important.’ He indicated that at his first church the Senior Pastor was a good trainer and mentor to him, upholding him as a person who had a good amount of experience. He stated that even though he did not always agree with decisions he felt supported by him.

In his second church that type of support was not so evident. As conflict arose with another team leader and that leader’s spouse, he struggled greatly in this church ministry experience. As a result, Ham sought external support but in the form of prayer counselling. Through this prayer counselling Ham specified that he worked out where to go concerning the conflict situation in this church planting experience. This prayer counselling did not enable the processing of emotion in Ham. It was here that a vision was presented to him through the counselling experience. It was at this point that Ham stated that disillusionment arose as he processed the church plant situation. Of this encounter he said:

So we had to make a decision either – either if we stay and fight that could it get ugly? Or we just sort of graciously leave? So, we took the – the second uhm... option.

In reference to Denominational support, Ham said that that he didn't feel 'neglected'. He stated that he felt supported but Ham himself indicated that he 'dropped the ball'. He mentioned that times with a particular Denominational leader were 'enriching' and presented 'really encouraging times'. Ham said that he did not realise that he needed this support at the time but now recognises its benefits:

And I think, Denominationally, they're definitely – they definitely allowed lots of points of engagement. It's probably more of my side that I didn't engage for whatever reason that let me down a bit.

Internal Church People

Ham felt families in his first church supported him as an Associate Pastor and they continued this strong support when he moved to the church plant role as well. However, in the church plant, he felt that his colleague was a supportive friend until his friend married and conflict arose with his friend's spouse. There was no indication of any other support in his experiences in the second church context.

Spouse and Family

Ham mentioned that the health of his marriage was always an issue for him. He said there were matters that needed attention to improve the marriage's health and 'make ministry work'. He stated that when he entered pastoral ministry there was support from his spouse, but it seemed like 'she sort of came in not kicking and screaming, but sort of she then had to accept me and the call' He mentioned that it 'was an unfair expectation in some ways.' He is now separated from his spouse.

Ham stated that he found it a 'challenge' and 'challenging' to have time for his family and marriage. Other than the marital issues that Ham mentioned, there was minimal mention of other family dynamics.

5.5.2.1 Analysis and Discussion of Ham' Themes

Analysis of Interview Setting, Dynamics and Selection Process of Ham

Interview Setting Analysis

The choice of location did not seem to give any real impression about Ham's situation other than it was out of convenience because it was near his workplace. His willingness to meet in a public manner seemed to be indicative of him feeling comfortable to retell his story.

Interview Experience

His comments stated as part of the debrief question indicated that he expressed some level of anxiety in the interview. This was also denoted by his initial body language at the commencement of the interview.

Ham presented with a near equal number of positive and negative emotional words in his interview. The thirty-one (31) emotive words utilised was an indication of Ham's level of emotional awareness.

Analysis of Ham's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Contexts Dynamics

Ham had been in both an established church setting and a church plant in his experiences. These two different situations seemed to have a different effect on Ham's sustainability. In his first church, he demonstrated a range of support, whereas in his second church as a church planter the leadership did not live up to his expectations.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

There is evidence that Ham as a pastoral leader at the time of church ministry had diminished awareness, a low level of insight, and self-esteem issues. The low concept of self-esteem seemed evident from his direct mention several times in the interview that he'd never done enough, and he had a need to keep pushing himself

further. These statements are indicators of the need for validation in his life and a low self-esteem.

A diminished sense of self-awareness and low level of insight seemed evident from instances when he mentioned that he had been processing events since he left ministry. In fact, when he first dropped out, he stated that his departure from ministry seemed uneventful but since then pain and disappointment had been arising. These post-dropout insights have extended to the feelings of disappointment around relationships and lack of realised expectations with the church plant. The level of realism against expectations seemed a challenge for Ham and so his spiritualising of events seemed to mask a need to address his pain of unrealised expectations. For instance, Ham mentioned disillusionment around the church plant but also referenced the devil's influence in this as well. Essentially, it could be true that spiritual forces were at play but the disappointment that was bred in Ham did not seem to be addressed at that time. This shows a diminished ability to process emotion and to have a smokescreen instead of deal with hurt and pain.

Ham's mention that he was a conflict avoider is indicative of insight about himself, but his lack of assertive ability around conflict situations in the church plant indicates a lack of courage and insight around conflict in his life as well. It seemed like he was unable to process his emotions about the conflict alongside struggles in his marital relationship. This lack of addressing of issues in both pastoral leadership and spousal relationship could indicate a correlation with an inability to process emotion effectively in whole-of-life.

Overall, it seemed apparent that Ham did not seek professional assistance regarding the hurt from his experience but has slowly processed the issues since he dropped out. However, his mention of still 'unpacking' indicates that he is still sitting with an amount of residual pain and hurt from his experience in his pastoral ministry. These unresolved issues in Ham's life seem to add evidence to the lower level of insight and awareness. Even though he mentioned that for the sake of his relationship he

dropped out, there seem to be indicators that challenges around time management, money, and energy exerted were conflated with this.

Analysis of Ham's Experiences in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Call of God seemed to be a large theme for Ham. He referenced a sense of call at various times in the interview. However, it does not seem that a sense of God's call in and of itself was sufficient to sustain him. In fact, his mention that he is still processing what this sense of call meant for him indicates that he is still unresolved on this aspect of his life.

Analysis of Ham's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Ham experienced a large amount of conflict, particularly in his second church. The number of references to conflict that Ham made in his story recounting unresolved conflict with his colleague seemed to indicate that this was a major experience during his ministry period.

Unresolved conflict seemed to be a destabilising force for Ham. There did seem to be an avoidance behaviour concerning the conflict situation in the church plant. Ham affirmed this in his comment regarding being a conflict avoider. Although, Ham's comments were interwoven with concern for the relationship with his friend, it seemed that he abdicated an attempt at a resolution and growing through the experience for the sake of the church plant's ongoing nature. Ham's direct statement that said he was still processing this conflict demonstrates the depth of how conflict can affect a person in their sustainability in ministry. Ham's statements indicated a lack of ability to deal with conflict and the emotion that is often associated with it.

Overall, it seems Ham's tendency to avoid conflict progressed to where it became unresolvable for him. This ultimately led to Ham's dropout from ministry. The awareness that Ham had of his conflict style and the decision to leave, demonstrates an awareness of issues in his ministry life but ultimately his lack of assertiveness appears to have destabilised his ongoing ability. For Ham, it seemed that a general

lack of awareness throughout the church plant situation especially regarding boundaries of leadership meant that conflict was not resolved. The lack of awareness of boundaries seems to have interplayed with unresolved relational issues and may have meant that he chose to dropout as a type of ‘escape strategy’.

Analysis of Ham’s Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Ham stated that his theological education was a positive experience and that he saw benefit in the differences that the college presented to his theological position. It seemed like he appreciated the spectrum of theological views presented at College and its effect in his church ministry period.

Analysis of Ham’s Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

It appeared that Ham was trying to undo some of his own unhealthy decisions and prevent others from falling into the same trap when he mentioned his advice to pastors entering ministry. He seemed to present quite adamantly the need for support as a major self-care strategy especially since he indicated that he failed to do this for himself.

Ham seemed to identify a level of awareness of giftedness and role, yet he mentioned that he dropped the ball regarding continuing professional development because of busyness. It seemed that Ham was not able to set boundaries and deal with issues in his life from a self-care perspective. This was indicated when he stated that he was a ‘yes’ person. This lack of assertive behaviour correlates to his comments comprising his approach towards conflict and his spousal relationship.

Analysis of Ham’s Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

It appeared from Ham’s statement regarding his experiences and the challenges that he faced that support and friendship was important to Ham. However, this support seemed diminished internally and externally. Also, he was challenged with his spouse and family time. He is now separated from his wife, and Ham indicated that

there were some unattended issues with his spouse during his time in church-based ministry. His statement concerning his spouse being dragged into ministry may well have been a statement of the spousal challenges that he faced.

There seemed to be limited engagement in high level support services external to his ministry context. Firstly, Ham spoke of Denominational support that was offered but he failed to engage with them indicating that he denied a support process that would have been highly skilled and insightful. Ham mentioned that he had a mentor in the church plant context, but it appeared that this mentoring was more of a coaching role than processing emotion in a mentor capacity.

He did mention prayer counselling as an aspect of external support, but it does not appear that this form of external support provided any emotional processing support.

In his first church, he mentioned that he felt supported by his Senior Pastor but in his second church this internal support did not seem evident with the co-leader and his spouse.

It appears from Ham's mention of support from friends in his first church, and the breakdown of his friendship with his friend and co-leader in the church plant, that there was a general lack of awareness of the type of support that was sustaining for him. There also seemed to be a demonstration of a lack of awareness regarding the triangulation with his friend's spouse in the church plant experience. Overall, these incidences point to a diminished ability to seek appropriate support and a lower level of emotional processing, especially around a low sense of self-esteem.

Summary of Ham's Themes

Emotional processing

- Ham seemed to demonstrate minimal awareness and insight throughout his years of church-based ministry.
- He seemed to have an expectation of other people and events and so when

they did not transpire as he had hoped he became disillusioned.

- It seems his somewhat increased awareness and ability to process emotion came after he left church-based ministry through personal development.

Emotional language

- Ham demonstrated more positive than negative words, but this level of emotional language could have developed post-dropout through personal reflection.

Experienced events

- He had engaged in more traditional church leadership roles as an Associate Pastor and then experienced a church plant as Senior Pastor with another person.

Types of church settings

- His first church was a traditional church-based role prior to a church planting context.

Call of God

- The sense of God's call seemed important to Ham.

Conflict ability and style

- He was conflict avoidant in his approach to conflict.
- The challenges with his spouse and unresolved conflict with his friend were all signs of a lack of assertiveness in his leadership style around conflict.

Theological education

- He had a positive view of his theological education and recognised its benefit to his pastoral leadership.

Self-care and sustainability

- His intentionality in self-care did not appear evident.

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- It seemed that support was focused on a prayer counselling relationship rather than any emotional processing.
- Church support was mainly external and seemed concentrated on a coaching mentor arrangement rather than any emotional processing.
- No signs of professional counselling were evident.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- He did not indicate internal support from leadership although he did have friends in his first church.

Support – spouse

- There seemed minimal support from his spouse in entering and being involved in pastoral leadership.

5.5.3 Profile: Jacob

Jacob was a white male pastor ex-pastor who had entered pastoral ministry during his early thirties (30s) and dropped out of pastoral ministry during his late thirties (30s).

He had been married for twenty-three (23) years and was married when he entered pastoral ministry. He and his wife had three children during his pastoral years and prior to dropping out. They were aged between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years, and they had two girls and a boy. He was still married to his wife, but he was in intense relationship therapy with her at the time of the interview.

Baptist Church Ministry Contexts for Jacob

He spent six (6) years of service in two church settings prior to dropping out of ministry:

- 1) Jacob's first ministry was in a small urban church for three (3) years as a solo pastor in a full-time capacity. Here he performed general pastoral duties in a multi-cultural context.
- 2) His second context was in a church plant for nearly three years in an outer part of Sydney. In this setting he was full-time, attempting to establish and grow a new church plant with financial support from the Baptist Denomination.

Selection Process for Jacob

I had previous contact with Jacob in years gone by but had no contact in the last couple of decades since he completed his theological training. Jacob's story was unknown to me at time of interview. I was aware that I had a previous relationship with Jacob, albeit many years ago, and so diarised this fact to raise awareness of potential subjectivities and biases. Jacob had pre-prepared responses on a sheet of paper even though I had not given any questions to him previously. This is

considered acceptable in an IPA study so that self-expression can take place for participants.

Interview Dynamics

Location of Interview:

We met in the back area of a café sitting opposite each other at a square table within a shopping complex. We drank hot chocolates. He placed himself such that he had his face towards a wall, possibly as a sign of wanting privacy and so people in the café did not distract him. This was a bit of a disturbed experience for me in the interview process due to ambient noise ricocheting into the area and staff were coming near attempting to serve us. At one stage I had to put my hand up to staff and indicate non-verbally not to collect cups.

Body language

Jacob showed some signs of anxiety and agitation in the interview by fiddling with various things on the table and continuing to glance over his shoulder as though someone was coming. His body posture was quite stiff as he sat at the table and as he spoke with me.

Response to Questions:

Emotive Language

Jacob used a variety of positively and emotionally focused words in the interview. The number of positive emotional words that he used amounted to thirteen (13). These words were noted as: fantastic, wonder, real, good, great, best, significant, meaningful, appreciate, succeed, thrive, enthusiasm, and joys.

Negative emotional words used in his interview were: hard, crash, cropper, angst, unresolved, conflict, bad, racist, pressure, decline, struggling, dysfunctional, demanding, sucked, evaporated, deficient, unforgiving, devastated, critical, pressured, harder, pear-shaped, dropout, and rocky. This amounted to a total of twenty-four (24) negatively charged emotional words.

Jacob used a total of thirty-seven (37) emotionally stimulated words with a two to one ratio of negative words to positive.

Jacob's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Overall, Jacob expressed that he enjoyed his time in ministry and felt great about his time, stating it was 'just the best time.' He mentioned that his 'highs were very high' and his 'lows were very low' but the time was meaningful. As he reflected on his two church ministries, prior to exiting church-based ministry, Jacob stated that both church settings were 'fairly challenging gigs.' He stated that he never thought that he would drop out of ministry.

As Jacob ruminated over his experience and his eventual dropout from pastoral ministry, he stated that he probably required more godliness and maturity and that he would have better fitted into a larger church system with wider levels of support than a small system with more 'pressing' features and less support.

In his first church, Jacob mentioned that he felt that there was:

a lot of pressure and it was a small church about 30 people and so, there's a lot of pressure there [to] sort of help – help the church survive and grow and not decline and – and there was also some of me there in, you know, going and wanting to go, I wanna succeed. I wanna be a success. And uhm.. you know, so probably more godliness on my side or more maturity would've really helped.

Jacob discussed his first church as a setting in which he was a bit too 'invested' but acknowledged that the church in itself was 'fairly unhealthy'. Here he stated that

I think it actually put some chips on my own shoulder about myself and I – I wanted to prove uhm.. I wanted to prove that I could succeed and, you know, first church out and you don't want to uhm...

He mentioned that he saw it as very important to have people around him during his

time in pastoral leadership but in his first church he indicated that there were not a lot of people around to support him. He mentioned that having people around himself limited personal mistakes in ministry.

In his first church situation after he was ordained, Jacob mentioned that the church had a culture of student pastors coming and going and so for him to remain would have been difficult. He stated that there was a pattern of bad interactions with pastors over the years and some of the people were racist and so pastoring in a multi-cultural area and facing that dynamic was difficult for Jacob. He said that he felt he was on his own, to a large degree, in this church and so did not have the support he felt that he needed. He expressed angst about his first ministry context but did not mention why that anxiety was there, or what strategy he adopted in addressing the issues of this anxiety.

As he ruminated over his first ministry experience, he claimed:

So probably in my enthusiasm and probably partly due to uhm.. my own lack of awareness that some of those things were about me and not about the church uhm.. I – I pushed hard and I came a cropper for it uhm.. and at the end of day – And so, I had a bad leave.

However, in response to his insights that he stated about him leaving he stated that he would not have been a leader if he did not have to attempt to change anything in the church. He said he would have just been the ‘medicine man’ and shook a ‘couple of bottles’. After he dropped out of ministry he did meet with a key Denominational leader and obtained marriage counselling with his spouse. It was through his discussions with this key leader that some new level of insight regarding ministry seemed to be developed.

Reflecting on his first church he recognised in hindsight that in this ministry situation:

I think probably *<pauses>* I wanted to – I wanted to help this church to change and to adapt

and to succeed and thrive and some of my own needs were in that.

In his second ministry context Jacob experienced a pioneering church plant situation in an outer urban area of Sydney. He stated that there were a lot of demanding people in that church plant that 'just sucked the life out of you.' He stated that eventually the team just 'evaporated for very good reasons.' Jacob stated that he recognised a dysfunction existed in the church plant but it was not stated whether this insight was retrospectively gained after dropping out of ministry or as he was involved at the time.

Jacob said that he did not expect to be church planting once he left theological college but did acknowledge that this church planting period was a very difficult time. He stated that in hindsight he would not have considered church planting an option. Through this part of his narrative he raised the challenge of the Baptist system of congregational governance and compared it to the Anglican ecclesiastical system. In the Anglican system he said that he felt clergy were 'more protected.'

In his second church situation, Jacob raised aspects of the pressures on the small church planting setting:

like 82 percent of what was going into the plate was going into my pocket. Because that's – there's just that pressure in the system in a small church where – where you are the guy who takes most of the cash out of the place.

Here Jacob said that he felt bad because he was 'such an expensive commodity to be in that system.' Jacob indicated struggles in this church plant context regarding finances and had agonised over getting some part-time work to 'pay the bills'. As a result of the pressures in this church planting context, Jacob said that he was 'driving' and 'pushing' change but ended up 'crashing'. He said that he never thought he would ever crash but it was the 'crash' that should have come. Jacob stated that prior to dropping out that 'ministry was becoming a source of significance in terms of the interaction of ministry.'

As Jacob was discussing his final decision to drop out from ministry he said:

I just uhm.. I just called it and said, 'We're not making progress. It's not my shape to be starting a group from scratch. And it's not me.'

Jacob discussed at this point that it had been a really hard and difficult period concerning his dropout from church-based ministry and said that he was 'devastated'. He also mentioned at this point that he had 'trained for four years' and poured his 'heart and soul' into his vocation and 'was absolutely lost' that he was dropping out of ministry. In retrospect, Jacob indicated that he would have been better suited to a larger church plant with a greater team of people if he had remained in a church planting environment.

Throughout the interview Jacob mentioned six (6) specific incidences that related to him speaking of being invested into his ministry and his own sense of a need for significance in the way that he led, in order to achieve something. There were fourteen (14) references to personal excuses regarding Jacob's inability or experience of negative events. Jacob presented with nine (9) places in the interview where he raised the concept of expectations not being realised both during his theological training and in his pastoral roles in his two church contexts.

Jacob's Experience in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Jacob did not make any direct statements that he had a sense of specific call to either of his church contexts. He indicated that they both seemed to eventuate out of availability of ministry settings rather than vocational call. He stated that both church positions were inaugurated and facilitated by a Denominational leader. The second church position arose through the provision of some funds towards a church planting role. Jacob indicated that he came into ministry because he felt that he was doing God's will and believed that God wanted him to do this. For Jacob, to walk away from church ministry was devastating to him especially because of the call of God on his life.

Jacob's Experience of Conflict in Baptist Church Leadership

Jacob recounted that there were various conflicts over the years in church-based ministry. However, it was over a conflict incident in his first church that a Denominational leader became involved, and that seemed to be the incident which perturbed him the most. He stated that the conflict developed into a '3 or 4 out of 5 level conflict' prior to the Denominational leader being involved. The Denominational leader facilitated a meeting with the church to attempt to resolve the dispute. Jacob stated that it became 'pretty messy at the end'. He mentioned that it ended up a 'bad leave' when finishing at this church. Jacob stated that this had a 'big impact' on him and his spouse and affected them so much so that they dropped out of ministry temporarily before moving into the second church setting in a church plant.

In his second church setting there were various conflicts that occurred and these wore him down over time. There was no sense of resolution with some of these conflicts.

Jacob's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

As Jacob reflected on his training at College, he mentioned that the self-care aspects that he was exposed to concerning spiritual formation, self-awareness through undertaking Myers-Briggs Inventory Tool, and retreat options were all fantastic and good. But he did mention that he did not attend College thinking that he was preparing for church planting; recognising that church planting had its own unique challenges compared to other church-based ministry in an established church.

Jacob's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Jacob mentioned that he enjoyed being part of a Pastor's renewal retreat group, a local pastors' network and ad-hoc type mentoring by a local pastor. Jacob indicated that he would have benefited if the mentoring arrangement had been 'a slightly more formalised mentoring strategy.'

When discussing aspects of his own sustainability and self-care, Jacob stated that he recommended that the Denomination should take a better look at the selection process of pastors. He considered that the process was flawed, in the manner that the interview process for accepting people as Baptist pastors took place. He also mentioned that he was unsure whether it was his lack of maturity or a combination of a range of things that affected his sustainability. From these comments it appeared that Jacob did not take responsibility for his own self-care.

Jacob stated, as he recounted advice for people contemplating future pastoral ministry, that future pastors need to ensure that they do self-care but not ‘cast off’ their previous career and just rely upon pastoral ministry for their future.

Jacob’s Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

External people

Jacob made direct statements about feeling a lack of support from the Denominational leaders in their care of him, but stated that in hindsight he probably should have found an Associate Pastor role as part of a team with ‘some other wise people around and had less chance to make one or two really strategically dumb and unwise decisions’ instead of church planting as a solo pastor. He stated that he saw this team aspect as a safeguard for himself in ministry.

Jacob mentioned, after the first church that he pastored, that he and his spouse went to see a psychologist. A leader of the Denomination at the time recommended this. However, Jacob stated that this therapy seemed to be forced on him as a must do rather than a decision that he made for himself.

Jacob seemed to indicate that he was not formally mentored throughout his church planting days and as a result considered that this external source would have been helpful to him. He would have valued mentoring that was able to assist him to process things better especially in practical areas where he was skill deficient or

training deficient. He then added with a fair bit of passion that the Denomination needed to ensure that they are going to train and invest into people who enter pastoral ministry to avoid future issues.

Jacob raised concern over the Denominational leader who arranged pastoral positions and the fact that he also was the person who mediated church conflicts. He felt that this was a dual relationship and ‘wearing multiple hats.’ However, in the same part of the interview, Jacob said that he appreciated this person’s referral to a Christian psychologist to assist after departing his first church.

Internal Church people

Jacob never spoke specifically about any support internally. In fact, he raised that he felt that there was a lack of internal support in both church contexts. Particularly during the conflictual period in his first church there was no mention of internal support.

Spouse and Family

Jacob mentioned that there were struggles with his spouse during the time in both church situations that he experienced. In relation to his first church conflict, Jacob mentioned effects that this had on his wife. To this he stated:

Look, my wife is supportive <pauses> through that process, but I – I just – I think that <pauses> I don’t – She came from an Anglican background and was doing some Anglican ministry and I’m not sure – I think that she probably didn’t really understand some of the differences with congregational churches and some of the pressure.

Regarding his second church situation he said that he felt that it was ‘pretty unforgiving’ in the culture of the place and that this affected his relationship with his wife. Jacob and his spouse had been engaged in multiple sessions of counselling since he had dropped out of ministry. It was as a result of this post-dropout period of counselling that Jacob said that he had now identified that during his time as a pastor

he had been more reliant upon ministry rather than his spouse. Jacob said:

The counsellor that we've been going to has talked about ministry as my – my mistress and now – and – and as a source of significance.

Jacob indicated that his wife had influence over him and his decision to continue and dropout in ministry:

She – I wanted to go on and – and, you know, go elsewhere. She wanted to – to – to pull the pin and walk away. Uhm.. she – she had issues with me. She had issues with our prospects.

Jacob indicated in a very strong tone that he did not have a very good marriage and that he had issues with her contributing towards the decision to drop out of ministry.

5.5.3.1 Analysis and Discussion of Jacob's Themes

Analysis of Interview Setting, Dynamics and Selection Process of Jacob

Interview Setting Analysis

The setting seemed a bit disturbed and so could have upset the collection of data from this interview. However, I was aware of these circumstances and attempted to intently focus on Jacob as he spoke. I ensured that I made diary recordings to try and diminish the possibility of corrupted data and to mitigate subjectivity and bias. This was one of the last interviews that I undertook and so I had greater experience and could be attentive in settings where there was ambient noise and distractions, which could potentially interrupt the interview and my technique.

Interview Experience

The fact that Jacob had pre-prepared answers fascinated me as it seemed to indicate that he really wanted his story to be told. Even though I had some previous contact with Jacob, he was chosen because he presented a strong willingness to tell his story. Despite my previous relationship with Jacob, I had determined that the many years

since my last contact enabled a distance in the interview, since I did not know his story and so I came to the interview without any preconceived ideas. I sensed that my previous relationship with Jacob enabled a safe place to share his story and know that he would be listened to. This previous relationship seemed to enable Jacob to share his story, as he felt safe that it would remain anonymous.

Jacob's non-verbal responses seemed to indicate an anxiety in attending the interview and in sharing his story and so it is uncertain how much his emotional responses affected his interview responses. His pre-prepared answers indicated that he had a strong desire to share his story despite these emotions. There seemed to be a lot of aspects of pain that were expressed and still unresolved for Jacob that could indicate a lower level of ability in being able to process emotions. His pre-prepared answers alongside this anxiety could be an indication of the level of pain and hurt that Jacob still carried in his life as result of his time in church-based pastoral ministry.

Jacob seemed to use a certain level of emotive words that was an indication of his level of emotional processing in a ratio of two times as many negative words to positive words. He may have used elaborate descriptive words but the limitation in variety of words could be indicative of his emotional development and stability.

Analysis of Jacob's Leadership Experiences in Baptist Church Ministry

Ministry Settings and Contexts Dynamics

Jacob's main encounters with a small urban church and small urban church plant means that Jacob faced church dynamics of, and required a leadership style for, smaller church contexts. Both churches faced financial challenges due to their small size and so this meant that Jacob would have had the challenge of leading with minimal resources compared to larger church contexts, where more people and funds are normally available. However, the historical context and traditions of each church location would have been different and therefore required an adapted leadership style. Both churches had small leadership teams and Jacob was a solo pastor in each.

Awareness of Self and Leadership

Ambivalence seemed to be evidenced in Jacob's interview regarding his experiences in church-based ministry. In one sense, Jacob expressed his experiences with a great level of disappointment, yet he also stated that he enjoyed his time in ministry. There seemed to be a strong sense of self-blame and expression of self-esteem issues evidenced in various statements that Jacob made throughout the interview. On numerous occasions throughout the interview it could be identified that Jacob displayed a minimised level of insight and lack of awareness during his time in church-based ministry. Jacob mentioned that dysfunction existed in both church settings that he led, however, Jacob did not express how he addressed this dysfunctionality and its effect on himself. This could be an aspect of Jacob's leadership ability and lack of insight and his level of self-awareness.

Alongside Jacob's concept of his own self-awareness, he showed a lack of adaptive ability in leadership. This concept of adaptability was particularly seen within his involvement in the church plant. Jacob's comments that he did not feel equipped and did not feel like he had a passion for the church plant setting does reiterate his concept of his self-awareness during his time in church-based ministry and a lack of aptitude to develop and adapt his leadership for these church contexts. Jacob indicated that questions have now arisen as to his competency in leadership in himself. This concept of self-doubt is seen in his statements about: the ministry setting did not match his leadership style, his level of support internally and externally, his personality, and a lack of personal ownership of issues. All these factors seemed to point towards a lack of self-confidence and insight into himself during his time in church-based ministry.

Jacob's blaming: the church settings he ministered within, his spouse's attitude towards his ministry, his lack of external support, and that personal expectations had not been met in church-based leadership, all indicate his emotional state was challenging for him. These are all indicators of his poor personal approach in

leadership, level of awareness of self, and diminished level of realism towards pastoral ministry. The depth of despair exhibited when Jacob was discussing his dropout experience from ministry is another indicator of his level of insight and awareness comprising personal expectations. The possibility to dropout of ministry did not seem evident for Jacob prior to his dropout from ministry. This lack of realism regarding potential to dropout points to Jacob's level of awareness in pastoral leadership.

Jacob seemed to indicate that he was conscious of the financial strain and limited resources that small churches and church plants could face but this reality did not seem to be well accepted by Jacob. In fact, it appears that Jacob did not greatly develop in his leadership ability from his first experience in a small church prior to his move to another small church.

Jacob's mention and blame that he expected and required better training from his theological training to undertake a church plant is another indicator of a lack of realistic expectation. It could not be expected that theological training should prepare a person for every future ministry context. Jacob's lack of self-initiation in developing his leadership for the church plant situation, but rather relying upon his previous theological training, supports the concept that Jacob had minimal awareness and insight in his leadership expression and need for development.

It could be claimed that Jacob's negative concept towards his first church may never have been effectively worked through emotionally and as a result issues continued into his second ministry context within the church plant. This indicates Jacob had a challenged sense of self and misconstrued concept of reality concerning aspects of life in church-based ministry. Jacob's use of a limited number of emotional words regarding his disappointment and unrealised expectations demonstrates this level of emotional cognisance. Jacob's concept of low self-esteem was indicated when Jacob mentioned he was too invested in his ministry. Perhaps his identity was wrapped up in what he did rather than who he was.

Jacob's statements concerning his need for support in leadership to guide him in decision making seems to demonstrate a dependency on other people in his leadership actions. This need seems to indicate a fear in his leadership connected with a low level of self-esteem thereby indicating a lack of assertive ability in leadership. The fear of making mistakes that Jacob indicated may also connect to the way that he conflicted with and related to his spouse. Also, Jacob's statements comprising him being an Associate Pastor rather than a solo pastor is another indicator of him laying blame elsewhere rather than ownership of his need for personal development. Overall, Jacob's lack of self-initiation in seeking support and asserting himself could be an added indication of a minimal level of awareness and insight.

It appears that Jacob became aware of some of his own identity issues in hindsight through professional therapy rather than at the time of his pastoral leadership. The therapy that he has received since dropping out seems to have been an important aspect in development of awareness and insight regarding his spousal relationship and his leadership during the time of church-based ministry.

Overall, it seems that Jacob's level of expectations not being realised was significant in breeding disappointment and negativity towards his experiences in church-based ministry and eventual drop out of ministry. Alongside this, it can be evidenced that Jacob's relational dynamics in conflict and with his spouse also were influential in him dropping out of ministry. Generally, it did seem that Jacob was not assertive enough in dealing with personal issues in his life and so this concept adds to indicators of a low level of self-esteem, awareness and insight. However, as Jacob discussed, his dropout from church-based ministry demonstrated courage by saying that he was willing to 'call it'. However, this decision to dropout did seem to act more as an escape strategy from the challenges of his church-based leadership.

Analysis of Jacob's Experiences in the Call of God in Baptist Ministry

Jacob seemed to make direct statements concerning call to indicate that call was an important aspect of sustaining him in his ministry. However, it can be acknowledged that the sense of the call of God was not sustaining in and of itself for Jacob despite his strong words on this issue regarding sustainability.

Analysis of Jacob's Experiences of Conflict in Baptist Churches

Jacob indicated that he did not do conflict well in his first or second church context and it is uncertain what contribution his theological training had played in his ability to do conflict. However, these unresolved conflicts could also be correlated with his relational issues in his marriage relationship. Jacob's challenges with conflict in both his church-based leadership and in his own home could all be indicators of a low level of ability to deal with conflict. This could, therefore, have been a contributor towards him dropping out of church-based ministry.

Jacob's positive statements concerning the Anglican Church system protecting their clergy more than the Baptist system, could be construed as an inability to develop in personal conflict skill and laying blame at the church and Denominational system. This affirmation of another ecclesiology over the church system that he was involved in could show a lack of acceptance of ownership regarding his own level of skill and ability.

Analysis of Jacob's Experiences in Theological Education and Training for Baptist Ministry

Jacob's statements concerning the lack of preparation that he received at theological college involving church planting is an expectation of the College that may not have been deliverable. Bible colleges are not a place that is meant to equip a person for every ministry context that a person may encounter in the future. Rather, the College is to provide the ongoing tools and resources to continue self-initiation in leadership development. Jacob did not seem to really be aware of the place of theological education and its limitations in formation processes. Essentially, the blame that he

laid at others concerning his decision to undertake the church plant is an indication that Jacob failed to self-reflect on his own needs of personal leadership development and growth in this area of ministry.

The process for entering and being trained for church-based ministry has changed since Jacob had been trained over twenty years ago. Jacob's lack of acknowledgement in the interview of these changed processes is another indicator of a diminished sense of self-awareness and insight. It seemed that he was still sitting with the same painful events from many years ago, that he had experienced prior to him dropping out of ministry.

Analysis of Jacob's Sustainability and Self-Care Experiences in Baptist Ministry

Jacob did not specifically mention whether he personally employed self-care principles that he learnt from College or reflect on what he took from learning from his time in theological education. Rather, there seemed to be a sense that Jacob was reliant upon others in his own sustaining rather than developing his own sustainable practices and employing them in his own leadership development. He appeared to blame others for his lack of support and self-care rather than recognise a lack of self-initiation in his own life.

Jacob's insights containing advice to people entering pastoral ministry seemed to indicate that self-managing personal emotions and implementing self-care processes was important in sustainability, despite his own failure to enact these issues whilst he was in church-based leadership. It could be recognised that Jacob's own pain and experiences were influencing his statement at this time.

Analysis of Jacob's Experiences of Support in Baptist Ministry

For Jacob, there were statements concerning relational issues with his spouse and essentially her lack of support. This lack of support was recognised to some extent after dropping out of his first church but further realised when dropping out of all

church-based ministry. Jacob's marital issues did not seem to be addressed until after he dropped out of church-based ministry and he engaged in marital therapy with his spouse. Not having the support of spouse seems to be an issue that contributed to Jacob's eventual dropout of church-based ministry.

It did not appear that Jacob felt supported from internal sources in both church-based contexts that he served. Rather, it seemed like Jacob was expecting support from internal sources but then used this lack of internal support to justify reason for his dropping out of ministry.

It seemed that Jacob did not feel supported by external sources such as Denominational leaders either. However, the expectations that Jacob seemed to present for their support might well have been an unrealistic expectation. However, the failure of Jacob to be aware of the type of self-leadership required in his ministry contexts and instead blaming the Denomination for its lack of care of him are added evidence regarding unrealistic expectations on others. Overall, it seems that Jacob demonstrated an inability to take responsibility for himself in ministry decisions and contexts when it came to developing a support network.

Jacob did not mention any formalised support that he had in his second church context but perhaps meeting with a psychologist for a period of time after his first church may have assisted him for some time in his second church. It appears that the current counselling that Jacob had been engaged with had been opening up feelings from his pastoral leadership years that he had not addressed at that time. This is further evidence of a lack of awareness and insight, during his time in church-based ministry, and ability to process personal emotion.

Summary of Jacob's Themes

Emotional processing

- Jacob seemed to demonstrate minimal awareness and insight throughout his years of church-based ministry.

- He seemed to demonstrate disappointment in ministry and laid blame for this disappointment at both himself and other people. This indicated a lower view of self.
- It seems his awareness and ability to process emotion came after he left church-based ministry and encountered this through clinical counselling.

Emotional language

- Jacob demonstrated usage of more negative words than positive but he could have developed in emotional language post-dropout and since engaging in clinical counselling.

Experienced events

- He had engaged in more traditional church leadership roles as an associate pastor and then experienced a church plant as a solo pastor.

Types of church settings

- His first church was a traditional church-based role prior to a church planting context.

Call of God

- The sense of God's call seemed important to Jacob.

Conflict ability and style

- The challenges with his spouse and unresolved conflict with others were all signs of a lack of assertiveness in his leadership style.

Theological education

- He had a positive view of his theological education but was disappointed that it had not prepared him for all ministry contexts. His expectations may not have been realistic.

Self-care and sustainability

- His intentionality in self-care did not seem evident. He employed some strategies but did not seem to self-initiate some of these strategies, but relied on others instead.

Support externally - mentors, counsellors and Denominational leaders

- He did not seem to appreciate the Denominational support that had been provided to him.
- No signs of professional counselling were evident during his years of pastoral leadership other than for a brief period in between churches with a psychologist.

Support internally - friends, leadership, church

- He did not indicate internal support from leadership or friends and had an unrealised expectation existing in this regard.

Support – spouse

- There seemed strained support from his spouse in being involved in pastoral leadership.

5.6 Analysis of Out of Pastoral Ministry (OPMs) Cohort

5.6.1 Comparison of OPMs

Comparison of Interview Experiences

Each of the OPMs interviewed seemed to portray a level of anxiety throughout some or most of the interview process. This anxiety was to be expected considering that participants were talking about painful situations in their past that may have had shame and disappointment attached. These dynamics were unavoidable and so could have convoluted the interview process. However, these aspects aimed to have been countered to some degree by the process of ensuring confidentiality, being reflective and empathic through the interview, and allowing candidates to choose their own interview location. These processes, therefore, aimed to add quality to the data attained. All OPMs were interviewed in a neutral venue chosen by the participant and so this brought a commonality in the interview process.

I had minimal contact with each participant prior to interview and so this added to a lessened opportunity for subjectivity and bias. It is noted that at time of interview, and since dropping out of pastoral ministry, that Felix had been attending professional therapy and so this could have affected the results. His therapy could well have contributed to his current use of emotional words. Jacob and Felix had engaged in professional therapies since dropping out of church-based leadership yet Jacob did not present with a higher variety of emotional words in the interview compared to Felix who did have counselling.

Comparison of Baptist Church Contexts and Roles Served

All OPMs analysed had served less than ten (10) years as an ordained Baptist pastor in a church-based ministry role prior to interview. Each of these OPMs had served in only two (2) separate Baptist churches and had only experienced two (2) ministry roles.

Commonalities of OPMs' experiences:

- served in the capacity of a senior pastoral role after one other role or position.
- experienced a church planting situation as their second church context.
- had minimal internal church support.
- experienced the dynamics of a small church being in a church plant.
- none of them mentioned a near burnout experience.

In analysing these aspects of church context, it can be seen that there was minimal variety of roles, and number of churches served in, thereby reflecting a similarity amongst OPMs' number of experiences. So, in this study, it could be conceived that number of experiences could have had a correlation with sustainability. Also, the fact that all had experienced a church planting situation prior to dropping out could have been significant.

Comparison of Family Dynamics

There was a lack of commonality within the age of OPMs and having children during their years of service. This means that there was no shared element regarding age and family formation in conjunction with their pastoral role and so does not seem to be significant regarding sustainability. The years of marriage varied between each OPM thus demonstrating that years of marriage is not a defining element of similarity.

Comparison of Theological Education and Previous Vocation

Each had achieved undergraduate awards leading towards accreditation and ordination and so this added to this cohort's homogeneity. Felix spoke positively of this aspect but expressed disappointment as well in preparing him practically for ministry. Ham only spoke positively about his theological formation process. Jacob, on the other hand spoke negatively of the level of preparation that theological training gave him especially concerning him entering into church planting. Overall, there was a general malaise towards theological education except for Ham.

Each OPM had been involved in a profession prior to pastoral ministry. This brought

a common thread to the OPMs in this regard.

Comparison of Church Experiences

All participants had mentioned that conflict had been an experience in their leadership of Baptist churches. Each of the OPMs did not seem to indicate that they had internal support, supportive spouses, or highly skilled external support particularly throughout periods of conflict. It appears that not having appropriate support was a defining feature amongst a range of factors for OPMs and their reasons for dropout.

5.6.2 Themes of OPMs

Encounters of Conflict

All participants mentioned that they had experienced personal conflict in their churches. Conflict situations were not recounted for each church that they had pastored, but there were various incidences recalled in their experiences amongst the churches that they pastored.

Participants expressed how they approached conflict and in what way they personally responded to it. All OPMs displayed conflict avoidant behaviours or an inability to process conflict in a healthy manner. It appeared that there were many occasions where conflict was not handled well or resolved satisfactorily.

Alongside the struggles with conflict, OPMs appeared to have a lack of support to process the emotional aspects of the conflict. In time, the debilitating aspects of conflict led them to drop out.

It appears that the three OPMs' statements containing conflict is an indication of a weakened level of awareness and insight regarding self and their leadership approach. The ability to raise and acknowledge their conflict style but not seem to

develop in ability around conflict seems to indicate a low level of personal insight and awareness concerning the handling of conflict. Therefore, it appeared that low awareness of self in conflict was a common theme amongst all the OPMs. This could well evidence an aspect of reducing sustainability and enabling dropout.

Overall, all OPMs seemed to indicate that they did not do conflict well or used conflict avoidance as their strategy. A lack of awareness of the emotional struggle in conflict seemed evident for this cohort and the need to develop an ability and skill in conflict management was strongly evident.

Leadership Awareness and Insight

Each of the OPMs generally demonstrated a low level of personal awareness and insight that could have contributed to their dropout. A low self-esteem also seemed to be an issue for two of the participants in this cohort but for Felix a low self-esteem may have been masked by his PTSD discovered in his post-dropout counselling.

A range of emotional words was used by OPMs in the interviews. It is to be noted that Felix and Jacob had engagement with professional counsellors after they dropped out of ministry and so this could have assisted a development of their emotional language. It appears that having appropriate support was an important aspect of sustainability since none of the OPMs seemed to have this during their church-based ministry. The following table presents the summary of the number and variety of emotional words used by OPMs.

Name of OPM	Number of Positive Emotional Words	Number of Negative Emotional Words	Total Number of Emotional Words
Felix	36	18	54
Ham	15	16	31
Jacob	13	24	37

The range of emotional words that were deemed positive or negative when used differed between Felix and the other two participants. Felix had more positive words expressed than negative. This seemed an anomaly considering he had been diagnosed with PTSD. Felix had at least fifty (50) variances on emotive words used in interview compared to Ham and Jacob who were less than 40. This is an indication of their level of emotional processing.

Alongside the use of their emotional language, all OPMs spoke with a lack of realism and insight concerning the experiences that they encountered. In the recount of their experiences, they indicated minimal insight into: required personal areas of development, awareness of their weaknesses and limitations regarding their leadership ability, and expectations concerning Denominational support in ministry situations that they encountered.

Each of the OPMs indicated blame towards: their theological education, Denomination leaders, church situations, and their spouses to some extent. These statements were indications that they were still holding pain and hurt from their experiences after many years and an indication of their emotional processing ability.

Overall, it seemed that self-awareness and personal insight were important aspects of cause for dropout of all OPMs and an indicator of their level of emotional intelligence.

Realism and Pastoral Leadership

Another aspect regarding OPMs that surfaced was the level of realism expressed concerning their experiences. OPMs did not necessarily expect pastoral ministry to be easy but they were heavily disappointed when results from their efforts did not eventuate. In fact, OPMs displayed an unrealistic expectation towards ministry events that arose.

Overall, it seemed that having a realistic expectation of events would have been a contributing factor in sustainability and the processing of emotion but instead it contributed to dropout because it was set in an unrealistic manner in the minds of OPMs.

Sense of God's Call

Call did not seem to predominate each OPMs sense of sustainability in ministry but was mentioned by each participant as important for entering and dropping out of ministry.

Self-Care Practices

Self-care practices were able to be classified into categories: Internal, External or Community Focused practices. Internal practices are recognised as practices that are completed within a person's emotions, thinking and personal wellbeing. External practices are practices completed through an external source or interaction with another person or object. Community-based resources related to external practices that involved more than one person in the employment of the practice.

Jacob seemed to outline a range of self-care practices that he implemented. However, it is worth noting that Jacob did not express positivity towards his local pastor's group, his pastoral retreats, denominational contact, Denominational mentor or a psychologist. The psychologist was only implemented for a temporary period as part of satisfying Denominational requirements, rather than personal choice. Also, the

external mentor was only implemented in his first church, but no mention of a mentor appeared after that time. Also, other than for Ham, spiritual practices did not predominate the recount for sustainability. Both Felix and Ham had prayer counselling, but prayer counselling does not process emotions or events that have transpired. Instead, prayer counselling simply enables prayer into challenging situations that take place.

From this analysis, it can be seen that community-focused strategies did not predominate the reflections of all OPMs when it came to intentional self-care practices. In fact a lack of external practices predominated the data attained alongside a minimal positive perception of external support.

Experiences of Support

All participants spoke about Denominational support in a negative manner and had not engaged with these leaders in a positive manner. The expectations that each OPM had towards the Denominational leaders did not seem to be realised. All OPMs did not indicate that they engaged with highly skilled support that could assist them to process their emotion either.

So overall, it seemed evident for these OPMs that the type of support that was employed was minimal and had an important effect on sustainability. Ensuring that highly skilled mentors, Denominational leaders, or professional support were engaged could have been significant in preventing dropout if the OPMs had implemented these resources.

Spouse Support

Out of the three OPM participants all were either separated or in intensive therapy with their spouse. All participants had indicated marital issues whether during or after dropping out from pastoral ministry. It seems that there could have been a strain on the marital relationship that was in existence at the time of pastoral leadership in church-based ministry; but this may well have not been addressed at that time. Each

participant had been married between sixteen and twenty-three years prior to divorce or separation. Since these would be considered long-term marriages, compared to marriage statistics, it would be helpful to see what issues were underlying the marriage breakdown that may have been left unaddressed. There may have been a correlation between the relational dynamics in church ministry and the marriage relationship, which became evident after dropout. The culture of church ministry may well have made the thought of separation at that point too awkward and could have had major consequences for the pastor's position.

The following table presents the summary of the types of internal, external and community based practices employed by OPMs.

Name	Types of Internal Practices	Types of External Practices (<i>Did not involve socio-relational interaction</i>)	Types of Community Based Practices (<i>Involved socio-relational interaction</i>)
Felix	None mentioned	None mentioned	Non-Denominational mentor Prayer counselling
Ham	Spiritual devotion	None mentioned	Prayer counselling
Jacob	None mentioned	None mentioned	Local pastor's group Denominational contact Denominational Mentor Pastoral retreats Psychologist Spent time with family

5.6.3 Conclusion Regarding OPMs

There was a general sense that when conflict arose the OPMs tended to avoid it. As a result, all participants expressed a range of unresolved issues over their years of ministry. They continued to experience the pain and turmoil of these events despite them occurring many years ago. Alongside the emotional turmoil experienced with conflict, was a lack of support from internal leadership, appropriate external sources, and spouses. There seemed to be a diminished awareness of the effects of conflict and a low insight concerning how to resolve conflicts.

However, the main aspect for each OPM seemed to be the inability to process their emotional state at difference phases in their pastoral ministry experience. The discussions and elements developed from analysis of the OPMs seemed to indicate that a certain level of emotional processing and awareness was important in sustainability and preventing dropout.

OPMs demonstrated lower aspects of EI through their use of emotional vocabulary, lack of awareness of some of their strengths and weaknesses, lack of emotional boundary and when to say no, they ruminated over their pains and hurts, they seemed to hold grudges, they continued to experience toxic people, and presented an inability to laugh about their circumstances. Although no formalised examination through the use of an EI test took place, there were indications that EI played an important part in each OPMs' lack of sustainability and eventual dropout.

5.7 Comparison and Analysis of PIMs against OPMs

This section elucidates the similarities and differences between the two main cohorts of participants known as PIMs and OPMs. The comparison of data is listed in point form for ease of viewing and convenience of analysis.

In analysing the two cohorts it is important to state that for the purpose of ensuring a homogenous sample all participants interviewed were: middle aged, had only undertaken theological studies at Morling Theological College, were white males, and had only been involved in Baptist ministry contexts. This large number of similarities in the sample is required for the purpose of the study's idiographic integrity in an IPA study. These delimited differences between both cohorts enables the two cohorts to be compared such that differences that could be contributing to sustainability, as opposed to dropout, are noted. In IPA studies smaller homogenous samples need to be preserved as much as possible.

Comparison and Analysis of Both Cohorts

Church Context and Role

- Both cohorts had experienced multiple contexts of ministry; up to 2 contexts only for all OPMs. OPMs tended to have 1 or 2 contexts experienced prior to dropout as compared to 2 or more for the PIMs. This was a difference in the two cohorts regarding context of ministry.
- All OPMs had been involved in a church planting situation prior to dropping out; whereas all PIMs had not been involved in a church planting context. This was a difference in the two cohorts involving context of ministry.
- Both cohorts had participants who had experienced traditional contexts of Baptist ministry and so this meant a similarity of context.
- Both cohorts had participants who had experienced a range in sizes of church experiences and so this delimited variances of causality in organisational structures.

Pastoral Role Experiences

- Both cohorts had participants involved in team ministry and some in single pastored churches and so no deviation of role was distinguished.
- All PIMs had been in an associate role prior to a senior role which showed progression in responsibility of role experiences. However, this progressive concept comprising role responsibility did not occur for the OPMs and they tended to experience a greater level of responsibility for the whole church without necessarily experiencing an associate role beforehand.
- Both cohorts had participants who had experienced part- and full-time roles and positions over their years of church-based ministry and so this did not designate any main differences in roles.
- All participants spoke positively and negatively of their pastoral experience and so this did not create any discrepancy between the two cohorts.
- All OPMs tended to avoid conflict situations compared to PIMs. PIMs seemed to present as more assertive in their approach to conflict, except for Cain. Cain was aware of his personal disposition concerning his conflict style and how his family of origin had been formative in this development within him. He did, however, seem to have a highly-skilled-level of support employed around him that assisted him to process emotion throughout periods of conflict. OPMs did not have high-level support that assisted them to process their emotion and did not show a strong awareness regarding the manner in which they conflicted. This was a difference between the two cohorts.
- The variety of emotional-language words used in the interview process was predominantly higher in PIMs than amongst the OPMs. The only exception was Felix, but he had been involved in high-level counselling since dropping out of ministry, and it could be surmised that he had most likely developed in his language since dropping out. Emotional language was a divergence amongst the two cohorts.

- All PIMs had faced a near burnout experience during their period of ministry and did not drop out. In fact, the near burnout experience of PIMs was identified by an external person of a high-skill-level in emotional processing. This was either their mentor, pastoral supervisor or an Associate Pastor. Each PIM did note that they did recognise something was not right in their life prior to the external source identifying their vulnerability towards possible burnout. Once the external source identified their situation, each PIM then implemented a strategy to counter the slide towards possible burnout. Strategies engaged by PIMs to prevent burnout seemed to present as a type of withdrawal from ministry context for a period of time. For PIMs, this withdrawal was either employing an extended leave of absence, or engaging a change of ministry position and/or context. In comparison, the OPMs did not recount a near burnout experience or overcoming a near burnout experience. They did not identify an external source who was able to identify that the OPM was in a vulnerable emotional state at any time. This was a divergence between the two cohorts.

Support Experiences

- Amongst OPMs there was no indication they had been mentored by highly skilled people such as therapists, denominational leaders or other emotions- focused pastors or mentors. The support services that OPMs engaged did not appear to assist them to process emotive aspects experienced in their pastoral roles. In comparison, all PIMs had support people that were more attuned to processing emotional aspects experienced in pastoral events. This was a divergence between the two cohorts.

Call of God

- The sense of a specific call of God involving placement was evident in PIMs but this call of God did not seem as strong for the OPMs. This has demonstrated a divergence in results.

Theological Training

- All participants were positive about their theological training and formation. However, OPMs tended to mention limitations of their training in a negative manner and expressed disappointment concerning these limitations.
- PIMs tended to recognise the limitations of theological training, and spoke with a greater level of understanding regarding the place of theological training amongst a range of leadership development responsibilities. This reflected a divergence in results.

Self-Care Aspects

- Spiritual expression was not strongly mentioned amongst most participants in either cohort. However, there was some mention of spiritual aspects at various times in the interviews, but these were not strongly identified with intentional self-care strategies. This reflects a convergence in results.
- Most PIMs seemed to identify that they were intentional regarding employment of self-care strategies and their implementation. They appeared to take personal responsibility for their own personal leadership development. The OPMs did not seem to portray a strong regard for personal development and self-care implementation. This reflected a divergence in results.

Denominational Experiences

- All PIMs spoke relatively positively regarding denominational support services and recognised the limitations of what denominational leaders were able to provide as support in pastoral ministry. However, the OPMs tended to blame or feel disappointed by denominational leaders for a perceived lack of sufficient support. This reflected a difference between the two cohorts.

Family and Spouse Situation

- Not all participants commenced church-based ministry with children having been born, and not all participants were married when entering pastoral ministry. This is an indication that family formation aspects did not seem to

contribute to sustainability or the prevention of dropout.

- Spousal support was more evident amongst PIMs than amongst OPMs. PIMs tended to speak more positively of their spouse's support in their role and function as a pastor than the OPMs did. The PIMs' marital relationships seemed positive from what was expressed in the interviews. However, all OPMs expressed concerns over their spouses during their time in church-based ministry and had marital issues after they had dropped out. These marital issues expressed themselves in either divorce, separation or high-level marriage therapy. This was a divergence in results.

5.8 Limitations of Results

The interview is a type of snapshot of a participant's experiences at that time and so a range of factors could have affected the results acquired. The interview could have been affected by:

- the setting of the interview, particularly for participants speaking in an unfamiliar location;
- the emotional state of the participant on that day, especially if a level of anxiety existed in relationship to the interview process;
- the atmosphere of the setting, including temperature and décor of venue;
- the level of emotion experienced in recounting past experiences; and
- the formal nature of the interview reducing the creation of a relaxed feel.

It was envisaged that the level of anxiety would have been higher for the OPMs as they had already dropped out of ministry and may have been feeling a greater level of shame and guilt at no longer being in ministry. Finally, the OPMs all were interviewed in unfamiliar locations and so may not have been relaxed compared to the PIMs who were in more familiar settings. Overall, these situations were unavoidable for the one-off interview situation and so the process of interviewing aimed to reduce these factors.

Despite this study's rigor in maintaining academic acumen and reduction of personal bias and subjectivity, this study could still incur a level of partiality and reduced objectivity, as with any study. All research has a level of subjectivity and bias that readers and other researchers ultimately decide upon regarding its efficacy. The manner in which these issues have been addressed in this study have been previously mentioned.

Since this study was idiographic in nature, it is limited in extrapolation to other countries, across varied denominational movements, genders, ages, and level of theological training. These homogeneous aspects are indicative of an IPA study and is consistent with other IPA studies that have been undertaken (Smith et al. 2009). Note, greater attention to cultural aspects of participants may well have added to the idiographic aspects and could be helpful to include in future studies.

Finally, this study only examined pastors who had been sustained up unto the ten-year mark of ministry experience since becoming ordained. Rates of dropout and the possible reasons for dropout after this point of experience were not considered and could mean different results.

6. Discussion, Analysis of PIMs against OPMs, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Discussion, Analysis of PIMs against OPMs

Introduction to Comparison of Findings:

This study makes a significant contribution to the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in the study of pastors. It is the first such project that has utilised this methodology to unearth rich data in the area of pastoral sustainability and preventing dropout in Australia.

The main finding in this study, through the use of IPA, places the concept of emotional intelligence as a key reason for the sustainability and prevention of dropout of clergy in Australian Baptist churches. This unique and new finding regarding clergy sustainability in Australia can be seen as commensurate with research undertaken by NCLS Research (2018) and Miner et al. (2010), as it provides a reason for the occurrence of low exhaustion and high job satisfaction in the sustainability of clergy. The findings in this current study have some consistency with previous research concerning clergy sustainability in areas of clergy support, and familial aspects but differed regarding spiritual expression, conflict management, and the ‘type’ of support employed in pastoral care strategies. The results of this study are inaugural for research in the Australian context involving clergy sustainability and more specifically congregational governance structures. Overall, it is conceivable that the manner in which clergy develop in their EQ is affected by the way in which they: process conflict, their spousal relationship, and how they engage with the type of social support regarding emotional processing. This in turn will affect a pastor’s ability to be sustained in ministry and prevent dropout.

Main Theme Analysis, Discussion

Emotionality

There has been mounting evidence amongst research studies involving emotional factors that the manner in which emotion is expressed is an indicator of a more developed level of EQ (Metin and Metin 2017). Comparisons made in this study between PIMs and OPMs seemed to indicate that increased emotional expression was a common theme for PIMs compared to OPMs. One such indicator from this study was the use of emotional language that was expressed in interviews. The number of emotional words expressed by PIMs was predominantly higher than amongst the OPMs; except for Felix who had been engaged in therapy since dropping out. In Felix's case, therapy may well have affected an increase in development of his emotional language since dropping out of ministry. Ongoing research in the area of neuroscience is supporting the concept that the utilisation of emotional processing affects a person's adaptability and the onset of a more developed EQ.

Emotional expression itself clearly involves elaborate cognitive processing as data are integrated from many sources in the brain (often in milliseconds), and this occurs, in the main, outside awareness. The reported story of what a person feels, the conscious narrative flow of evaluations, interpretations, and explanations of experience often only come afterward. (Greenberg 2002, p. 159)

In Felix's case this emotional processing was subsequent to his drop out of pastoral ministry and so a development in emotional expression could be deemed to have occurred through his undertaking of therapy. Although this was not a quantitative study the word count around emotional words could be significant in indicating aspects of emotional processing amongst Australian pastors and be an indicator of the potential for sustainability.

Alongside presentation of emotional language, OPMs did not seem to be able to remain in challenged emotive circumstances over a longer time span compared to PIMs. This lack of longevity, comparatively, indicates that strain and unresolved ministry issues were unable to be processed emotionally over time and could have become a contributor to dropping out of church-based ministry. In comparison, PIMs seemingly either: dealt with their challenges more effectively; learned to be more accepting of the challenges that they faced; or were intentional in self-preservation by taking time out and/or changing their church context when required. The ability to process emotion and be aware of the effect of ministry events predominated the responses of those who were sustained in ministry.

Conflict

All participants, amongst both PIMs and OPMs, faced deep and pervasive stresses and pains related to conflict. PIMs seemed to express being more upfront and willing to confront other people compared to the OPMs' approach to conflict. The PIM exception to this was Cain who acknowledged that he had a more conflict avoidant style regarding disagreements. However, in Cain's situation the type and level of support that he had around him, and his level of personal awareness around this issue seemed to assist in processing the emotional turmoil that conflict brought him personally. Each of the OPMs, on the other hand, had a conflict avoidant approach, did not demonstrate personal awareness of their conflict approach, and did not show an ability to process emotional turmoil that they encountered. In fact, there seemed to be an eroding of emotional endurance amongst OPMs comparatively to PIMs. The handling of the emotional aspects regarding conflict could very well have been a contributing factor to enabling sustainability amongst PIMs.

This study demonstrates that the manner in which a pastor contends with conflict, and processes the emotions that are encountered in conflict, appears as a contributor to sustainability. In the study by Beebe (2007), the ability for a pastor to differentiate themselves emotionally was seen as a contributing factor in sustainability, alongside the employment of a more collaborative form of conflict management. Since conflict

involves emotions, the ability to do conflict well could be conflated with EQ. Jordan et al. (2009, p.178) stated:

research that has been completed has been primarily done using student samples, but the findings of these studies support theoretical models of the link between emotional intelligence and better conflict resolution. More research is required in workplace settings to further understand the links between emotional intelligence and different types of workplace conflict.

It therefore appears that the ability to manage conflict and the emotional aspects that relate to conflict was more prevalent amongst PIMs than OPMs and supports the place of EQ in sustainability and preventing dropout amongst some clergy in Australia.

Spousal Support

A key and repeating factor in these results was the marital relationship and level of support provided by the spouses of clergy. All PIMs seemed to express positive thoughts and emotions regarding their marital relationship, whereas OPMs did not. It is significant to note that all OPMs' marital relationships manifested themselves in separation, divorce or high-level marital therapy after dropping out of ministry. Since each OPM tended to avoid conflict in church-based ministry it could be surmised that there was a similarity expressed in the OPMs' marital relationship as well.

Daniel Goleman raised the importance of EQ in marital relationships in his research (Goleman, 1985). He deliberated that the lack of EQ in a marriage amongst couples could be destructive and damaging. If there were a clear correlation able to be made in the pastor's ability to process emotion in both their church based ministry and in their marriage then this would add further support to the importance of EQ and clergy sustainability. This correlation of relational approaches in both church and family was not specifically explored in this study and is conjecture at best, but could inspire further research comprising clergy's relationships and the area of EQ.

Spousal support was expressed as a key aspect of sustainability for clergy in previous research studies conducted in countries other than Australia (Burns et al. 2013; Oraker et al. 2011; McMinn et al. 2008; Meek et al. 2003). This means that this finding regarding the need to provide greater attention to spousal relationships is the first instance for the Australian research context comprising sustainability of clergy.

Social and Other Support

Another aspect of support that was evidenced in the results was the ‘type’ of support employed by clergy. All participants had some level of support expressed in their interviews, but the range of support employed seemed to be a defining feature between the two cohorts. All PIMs presented with more highly skilled people that they had engaged with for emotional processing, compared to the OPMs. Also, PIMs were able to recognise the presence of internal support more than OPMs were able to. This defining feature of emotional processing and awareness of other people’s support are aspects that correlate with a higher level of ability in emotionality.

These findings around support demonstrate that sustainability is determinant upon a variety of social support and, in particular, support that is highly skilled in emotional processing. The need for a range of social support is consistent with work conducted by Francis et al. (2018), Muse et al. (2016), Dowson & Miner (2015), Fallon et al. (2013), Burns et al. (2013), Rossetti & Rhoades (2013), Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013), and Oraker et al. (2011). However, these previous studies did not conclude that highly skilled support was the most effective in terms of sustainability. The results in this study actually reach greater agreement with Vaccarino & Gerritsen (2013), McMinn et al. (2008) and Meek et al. (2003) who did recognize that support engaged with highly skilled people like counsellors and psychotherapists was better a practice for clergy sustainability. However, despite concurrence, these studies were not Australian-based. This means that the results of this current study are germinal for the Australian context, with regard to the ‘type’ of support engaged and the place of sustainability.

Engagement with highly skilled mentors or therapists in emotional processing

supports the concept of how emotionality is developed amongst clergy. Emotion is believed to be learnt, and so facilitating emotional processing through therapy could be a key component in development for clergy especially from professionals or highly-skilled emotional support people.

Spiritual Resources and Call of God

Some previous studies determined that prayer and meditation were effective tools for clergy in sustainability through self-care practices (Miner et al. 2015; Bickerton et al. 2014; Tan & Castillo 2014; Burns et al. 2013; Fallon et al. 2013; Rossetti & Rhoades 2013; McMinn et al. 2008; Golden et al. 2004; Meek et al. 2003). This current research would not deny that spiritual engagement was an aspect of self-care, but this aspect did not overtly come up in the themes discovered in all participants. However, it may be conjectured that the manner in which spiritual focuses were employed may have assisted the development of emotional processing and sustainability instead. It could be argued that spiritual practices engaged emotively may very well have a better positive effect on sustainability than only employing a method of spiritual practice. This, in fact, was demonstrated in the language that PIMs utilised when discussing their spiritual connection to God. PIMs used more emotional language when discussing their relationship to God than OPMs did.

The concept that EQ is developed through the manner in which clergy enact spiritual practices is arguably supported by the results of Dowson & Miner (2015). In their work amongst Australian clergy, attachment to God was seen as a contributor to counteracting the negative emotional effects of ministry. Therefore, it's the manner in which spiritual practices are employed that may advantage sustainability in clergy. Aspects of attachment theory support these findings on EQ (Pines 2004), and so, if spiritual practices are engaged emotionally then EQ may have been further developed amongst PIMs. Attachment theory claims that a personal sense of security is attained for a person when they experience engagement from primary caregivers who are

accessible and responsive in dependable ways, particularly around worth of self (Pines 2004). The concept of EQ enhancement through spiritual practices could be another area for further research to be undertaken in future studies on clergy sustainability.

Call of God did was not a defining feature in sustainability, as some previous works determined (Lane 2014; Lee 2012; Elangovan et al. 2010). However, attentiveness to call of God amongst the expression of spiritual practices was identifiable as a contributor to PIMs' sustainability compared to OPMs. This sense of attention around the call of God may very well be correlated with the PIM's demonstration of a more intentional approach to personal development and individual awareness. Anecdotal statements by the likes of Labberton (2014), Lane (2014), Lee & Fredrickson (2012), and Elangovan et al. (2010) concerning call of God being an important aspect of pastoral sustainability may very well be supported from this result. Further work around call and sustainability may bring greater clarity to understanding clergy sustainability.

6.1.1 The Prominence of Emotional Intelligence

There has been greater advancement in rigour and peer-reviewed research concerning EQ since it became a research interest (Jordan et al. 2009). It is the advancement of research involving EQ that is being discovered as a key component in leadership effectiveness including longevity in vocational areas (Stein 2017).

The outcomes presented in this study considering emotionality, emotional processing, and emotional expression seem to align to EQ being an important aspect of sustainability and preventing dropout amongst clergy in Australia. It must be noted that concepts of EQ pervade other studies surrounding emotionality. For instance EQ can be seen as having alignment with emotional labour theory, effort reward imbalance theory, ministry satisfaction and rates of exhaustion, social skill, and theory of locus of control.

Emotional Labour Theory and EQ

Emotional labour has been raised as a component of a pastor's well being in research surrounding sustainability (Kinman et al. 2011). Emotional labour theory theory is:

an umbrella construct comprised of three interrelated facets: (a) emotional requirements of the job and/or organization, (b) voluntary intrapsychic efforts to manage one's own emotions at work (basic emotion regulation), and (c) the performance or behavioral display of emotion (which may or may not be effortful). (Barry et al. 2019, p. 19)

In Kinman et al.' (2011) quantitative based study of 180 clergy in the United Kingdom surrounding job satisfaction, psychological distress, emotional labour and social support it was postulated that the development of higher levels of job satisfaction and reduced levels of distress was associated with social support around emotional processing. Kinman's (2011) study being posited on emotional labour theory and the manner that emotion is employed is akin to aspects of EQ and thereby lends support to the predominance of EQ in sustainability.

Effort Reward Imbalance Theory and EQ

Besides emotional labour theory EQ could similarly be associated with clergy' studies regarding effort-reward imbalance theory particularly some of the emotionally related aspects that attach to anxiety and depression. Effort-reward imbalance theory postulates "external and intrinsic demands are weighed against vocational rewards, such as money, approval, and status control." (Proeschold-bell et al. 2013, p. 442).

In a study of United Methodist' (UM) clergy Proeschold-Bell et al. (2013) employed several surveys to sample over 1700 pastors regarding anxiety and depression against

reward-imbalance theory. Through analysis of results this study of UM clergy concluded that the prevention of anxiety and depression in clergy could be circumvented through employment of “policies and programs informed by effort-reward imbalance theory” (Proeschold-bell et al. 2013, p. 451). This study’s results also expressed the importance of engagement of appropriate social support so as to process emotional aspects (Proeschold-bell et al. 2013). It is appears that this engagement in processing emotion with appropriate support stands as a connector between effort-reward imbalance theory and the need to develop EQ as a means of sustainability.

Ministry Satisfaction and Exhaustion

Previous leadership studies by NCLS Research (2018) and Miner et al. (2010), has claimed that high job satisfaction and low emotional exhaustion are keys to sustainability amongst Australian clergy. The concept of work satisfaction was also recognised as a feature of clergy health and wellbeing in the ten (10)-year study concerning United Methodist clergy in North Carolina, conducted through the direction of Duke Divinity School (Proeschold-Bell & Byassee 2018).

The results of the present study, however, could conceivably be placed in conflict with these previous studies’ results. The finding that EQ amongst clergy is important for sustainability, in fact, could instead be claimed as the means to developing high job satisfaction and low emotional exhaustion. Enabling the development of EQ in clergy, therefore, facilitates sustainability by reducing emotional exhaustion and increasing job satisfaction. The results provide the ‘how’ of these factors around sustainability.

Research in other non-pastoral studies by the likes of Metin & Metin (2017), Newton et al. (2016) and Jordan et al. (2009) support the results claiming that EQ is conducive to lower stress and higher job satisfaction. In essence, lower stress could be conflated with lower emotional exhaustion developed through a pastor’s ability to process

emotion effectively. Other non-clergy related studies in job satisfaction and EQ have shown that job satisfaction is developed through an ability to regulate and evaluate their own emotions comparable to those with low EQ (Metin and Metin 2017).

“A comprehensive review also documented that EI is associated with better overall health, increased work satisfaction, higher spiritual well-being, and decreased risk of job burnout among mental health professionals (Powell, Mabry, and Mixer 2015). In summary, the available research supports the link between EI and various indicators of well-being.” (Metin and Metin 2017, p. 356)

Locus of Control

Findings surrounding emotional expression are consistent with research around the concept of Locus of Control (LOC). LOC is a theory promulgated by Rotter (1954) based on social learning theory (Galvin et al. 2018). In this theory it is postulated that a person's main concept surrounding control in their lives is mainly through either interiority aspects and personal influence (LOC-I), or outside and external influences to themselves (LOC-O).

Individuals who fail to see a connection between what they do and what happens to them and view what happens as the result of luck, fate, chance, or powerful others are externally controlled. Conversely, those who tend to perceive a connection between their efforts and what happens to them are internally controlled. (Nowicki et al. 2018, p. 85).

For pastors this would mean that those who tend towards LOC-I are more likely to recognise that they have influence or affect over experiences in their lives even from God's Holy Spirit, who is believed to reside within them. Clergy who are more attune to LOC-O would tend to see themselves being at the mercy of other people, organisations, and maybe even God himself, thereby creating a more

blaming approach around their experiences.

Individual differences across a variety of qualities (e.g., capability, desire, and persistence) influence beliefs about internal versus external control. Specifically, these unique characteristics shape the extent to which individuals attribute their ability to achieve future success (or failure) to their actions. (Galvin 2019, p. 821)

Although there are no specifically known pastor related studies exploring the concept of LOC the results of this study's OPMs and PIMs is consistent with concepts of LOC. For instance in the present study OPMs tended to blame others external to themselves for their experiences even denouncing denominational leaders, theological colleges, congregants, and spouses. In contrast PIMs seemed to be more readily accepting of their situation and recognised limitations that the external resources could provide for them. This form of emotional processioning seemed apparent in pastors' ability to regulate emotional responses to their experiences. PIMs did not tend to lay blame on others but recognised their personal exertions with others. In this regard LOC-I could be a contributor to a pastor's sustainability.

Research surrounding LOC and the area of EQ has been formulated by the likes of Turnipseed (2018), who formulated that a person with LOC-I has strong correlation with higher levels of EQ. Turnipseed (2018) recognised that LOC-I was a strong effect to "improve coping skills, stress management, and wellbeing" (Turnipseed 2018, p. 332).

Connecting Studies Involving Emotionality and EQ

It seems apparent that each of the theories expressed previously and their prevailing studies associate with the four branches of EQ that Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008) conveyed

regarding: distinguishing and expressing of emotions, the engagement in emotions, the ability to comprehend emotions, and the managing of emotions (Côté 2014). Stein (2017)'s review of the literature, as a contrast to Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008), expressed similarly three main aspects of EQ being apparent across a range of studies engaging emotionality. Stein recognised that the three main aspects of EQ are:

1. The ability to identify emotional information in oneself and in others.
2. The ability to manage emotional information in oneself and in others.
3. The ability to focus emotional energy on required behaviors to get things done. (Stein 2017, p. 38)

The concept of EQ is not well researched amongst clergy and, in fact, is relatively new in research since being popularised by Daniel Goleman just over twenty five (25) years ago (Goleman 1995). Goleman (1995) theorised that EQ was a better indicator of performance than just Intelligent Quotient (IQ). He outlined that aspects of neuroscience supported his theory and that emotional responses were as important as rational thought in the processing of life situations especially those that were perceived as a threat in some way (Goleman 1995). Promulgation of EQ research has been demonstrating that aspects of the brain can 'hijack' responses through neural transmissions reacting to emotional responses rather than responding to logic (Amthor 2016). When faced with a perceived threat the emotional brain short circuits transmissions to the rational mind to provide a response that essentially propagates the fight, flight, fright response (Goelman 1985; Amthor 2016).

However, Goleman's theory that EQ is better than IQ as a work performance indicator and is teachable has been criticized because of the lack of empirical data supporting it and that 'the EI movement has simply relabeled and repackaged "interpersonal" or "social skills" as EI' (Furnham 2009, p.138). Prior to Goleman (1995) social skill was deemed the notion of emotionality (Furnham 2009). However, more recent formulations of social skills have conflated it with EQ. 'Social skill' is seen more as:

a person's ability to manage relationships with others. As a component of emotional intelligence, social skill is not as simple as it sounds. It's not just a matter of friendliness – although people with high levels of social skill are rarely mean-spirited. Social skill, rather, is friendliness with a purpose: moving people in the direction you desire, whether that's agreement on a new marketing strategy or enthusiasm about a new product. (Andreatta 2018, p. Social Skills)

EQ has been criticised as being anecdotal at best (Jordan et al. 2009). However, Goleman postulated his theory of EQ as an indicator in work performance by stating that EQ is a better indicator than IQ in professions where relational encounters predominate (Goleman 1985).

Mayer (2013) provides a helpful overview of the development of the concept of EQ stating that between 1900 and 1969 research in the realm of intelligence and emotion were separate disciplines and that a search for 'social intelligence' was being explored. In the period 1970 to 1989 the forerunner to the merging of cognition and affect and their examination resulted in concepts of social intelligence and multiple intelligences being espoused through the likes of Howard Gardner (Mayer 2013). The phase between 1990 and 1993 was acknowledged as the first significant period of development regarding EQ with EQ becoming recognised as an actual intelligence supported through brain science (Mayer 2013). The period 1995 to 1997 has then been deemed the period of popularising EQ through the influence of Daniel Goleman's seminal work on EQ in 1985 (Mayer 2013). From 1998 to the present EQ has then steadily developed both mounting support and criticism in its measure and importance (Stough et al. 2009). Although this study has not entered into the debate regarding empirical support for EQ it has established that the ability to identify, manage and process emotions has been formative in a pastors sustainability.

6.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Studies comprising clergy sustainability and the concept of EQ are non-existent amongst Australian clergy and so this study presents new findings on clergy sustainability and the place of EQ for the Australian context. This study has demonstrated that amongst Australian Baptist male clergy, EQ is conceivable as a key aspect in sustainability leading up to over ten (10) years of ministry service. These findings enable a place for further study and exploration of EQ, and preventing clergy dropout in the Australian context, across a range of other denominations, with female clergy, clergy with different cultural backgrounds, and a longer period of ministry service after the ten-year (10) mark. These differences in EQ levels for PIMs compared to OPMs, may relate to – and enable studies into and the development of resources for – preselection of pastoral candidates, theological training and ongoing development processes.

This was the first study conducted in Australia that examined clergy sustainability and the prevention of their dropout by interviewing pastors that had both dropped out of ministry or had been sustained in pastoral ministry for an extended period of time. It was the first study amongst clergy throughout the world that utilised IPA as its methodology. It is also the first time that a study related to sustainability of clergy was undertaken by a researcher who had experienced the pastoral field themselves for an extended period of time. These seminal aspects mean this study is unique and inaugural amongst studies surrounding pastoral sustainability and prevention of dropout.

In this particular study, a comparison of two main cohorts was undertaken through the use of IPA and it was discovered that amongst Australian Baptist clergy, EQ was an important reason for sustainability and preventing dropout. It was established in the literature review that EQ was a possible contributor to pastors' sustainability and preventing dropout and this has been confirmed against those studies of clergy.

Overall, this study has identified that EQ is considered a main contributor to how sustainability might be ensured for Australian Baptist clergy and the prevention of dropout. The findings in this research are seminal in establishing a further platform of exploration around EQ and clergy sustainability amongst Baptist pastors and other Denominations within the Australian context.

6.2.1 Connection to the Research Question

The results from this study connect to the original research question and its sub-questions regarding sustainability and the possible reasons for clergy dropout in various ways as outlined below:

Stage 1: Procurement and selection for pastoral ministry

In this stage, research questions were asked that related to whether denominations were procuring and selecting candidates for pastoral ministry through adequate processes related to sustainability. Aspects of a pastor's personality, life exposure, prior ministry experiences, family of origin, age, and gender were revealed in these results and showed that a pastor's personal awareness of the facets of their past life and how they addressed them had greater effect on preventing dropout than a lack of awareness of these facets. Similarly, this stage explored the question of how much a candidate's ability to differentiate praxis from themselves impinged on sustainability. As a result, this study has revealed that an ability to differentiate emotion seemed to be a contributing factor. The results regarding these sub-questions are all indicators that EQ was an important aspect of sustainability in procurement and selection for pastoral ministry and clergy sustainability. The differing backgrounds of individual clergy in and of themselves did not seem to effect a reason for dropout or enabling sustainability.

Stage 2: Theological and pastoral formation for pastoral ministry

This second stage explored the theological training aspects that may effect sustainability: the adequacy and appropriateness of training, the various self-development practices that pastors are taught, and whether self-development aspects presented in training were more appropriate based on pastoral styles of leadership. It appeared in the results that training aspects seemed to be perceived as mostly adequate but whether pastors chose to enact them was a different question. Sustainability seemed to surround intentionality in enacting pastoral training aspects by clergy rather than just being given appropriate training. The attitude towards learning seemed to be influenced more by the emotional state of the pastor. Similarly, to Stage 1 these emotional aspects all support that EQ is an important aspect of sustainability.

Stage 3: Ongoing pastoral ministry development

In this final stage, questions were asked about whether ongoing pastoral ministry development processes and Denominational services were effective in sustainability. It was found that a clergy's intentionality in employing developmental practices and enacting spiritual practices in a specific manner around emotional connection to God enabled sustainability. It was also found that the church system in and of itself was not the main contributor to dropout but rather whether the pastor had developed sufficiently in their EQ to face the challenges of pastoral ministry in that context.

In essence, the findings in this study envision that EQ is a key aspect in Australian male Baptist pastors' sustainability for serving in church-based ministry. These findings discovered that the level of EQ of a pastor effects sustainability and preventing dropout, particularly as clergy face conflict and varying challenges in their church systems and contexts. A more developed EQ seemed to be enabled in sustained pastors through their positive attitude towards training, church challenges

and connection to Denominational services. EQ was also conceived to be developed through engagement with a range of support services external and internal to the church context; but more so through engagement with highly skilled people around emotional processing. Finally, attention to spousal relationship also presented as a key feature in sustainability, and it was hypothesized that a developed EQ presented itself in both the spousal relationship and church context for PIMs, who were sustained in ministry, whereas a less developed EQ was evident in these two relationships, church and spousal, for OPMs and contributed to drop out.

From the results and discussions, it would appear that for the sake of sustainability and the concept of a developed EQ for pastoral ministry, it is important for vocational educators and Denominational leaders to ensure that the following are covered in a pastor's: procurement and selection; training and theological development; and ongoing pastoral formation:

1. Conflict management training. This training and preparation needs to involve the candidate developing an awareness of their leadership and conflict style, their previous experiences of conflict, and their own family of origin's view of conflict.
2. Support from people who are highly skilled in emotional processing, alongside a range of internal and external social supports. This highly skilled support needs to be intentionally enacted and engaged particularly when clergy are experiencing increased areas and bouts of conflict.
3. Develop emotional intelligence comprising a wider repertoire of emotional language and awareness. EQ can be developed through training and intentionality. However, attending a professional service such as a counsellor or psychologist that uses an enhanced emotive therapy could be conceived as a helpful direction in developing: emotional language, an ability to differentiate oneself, and greater self-awareness. Awareness can be also developed through intentionality and developing a personal reflective

framework in the theological training process.

4. Be made aware of the realities of pastoral ministry and the unique factors that it entails, especially in relation to conflict. Conflict is inevitable and each ecclesiological system has its own unique challenges concerning conflict and its processes. Ensuring that a pastor is aware of ecclesiastical features, such as how a congregational governance structure operates will have a deep impact affecting a sustained ability when engaging in conflict.
5. Spousal relationship and their attitude to ministry. The marital relationship dynamics and level of support of a pastor's spouse can have an influence on sustainability. Awareness of the reality of pastoral ministry for the spouse may very well contribute to sustainability of pastors. Ensuring that marriage relationships are nurtured and attended to is also an important overall aspect of sustainability.

Although, it could be conceived that a person in pastoral ministry may not have all these aspects in place, it can be seen that giving attention to each of them is a priority in sustainability. It may be that pertinent attention to and awareness of these particular facets in a person's pastoral ministry development may be part of an effective sustainable ministry.

6.2.2 Recommendations

1) To supervisors and counsellors of pastors (therapists).

It is important for counsellors or professional supervisors (therapists), as they work with clergy, to ensure the importance of developing emotionality, particularly surrounding emotional expression. Research surrounding therapy, and emotions has demonstrated, through the area of neuroscience, that the level of emotional development affects the effectiveness in relationships (Goleman 1996, Carter 2003). Since pastors interact relationally in a range of pastoral circumstances then the development of emotions is important in therapy sessions. Advancements in studies regarding neuroscience and counseling have shown that plasticity of the

brain enables the development of emotional expression (Wilson 2014); which means EQ can be developed through therapy. Therapists need to be focused affectively in their sessions with clergy to ensure that emotional expression predominates.

In therapy sessions the development of emotional language, by expanding the repertoire of feeling words, is one aspect that will enable the development of emotional expression. Emotive language aims to provide meaning for pastors' experiences and hence affect sustainability in a positive manner. The therapeutic process should be constructed so as to provide expanded emotional language for pastors to engage. There are a multiple of sources on the internet that can deliver lists of emotional words for therapists to work with. These words can be used to assist pastors to identify feelings against their experiences particularly in therapy sessions. Individual pastors can also use these words in-between sessions through their own personal reflective praxis. Drummond (2019) provides a helpful downloadable list of emotions/feeling words in a grid type version. This document provides categories of emotion/feeling in horizontal columns, and levels of emotional intensity on the vertical. From this list, pastors can select appropriate emotion/feeling words to align to their experiences.

There are other works that could be of assistance in the area of therapy for counsellors and supervisors working with clergy. For instance Hughes and Terrell (2012)' text provides some helpful practically based exercises exploring 16 emotional intelligences and well-being skills. These exercises align to self-regard, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibility, problem-solving, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, stress tolerance, optimism and happiness/well-being. This resource has been mentioned as breaking

‘new ground in providing a cross-reference matrix that maps sixty-five exercises to four leading emotional intelligence models - the EQ-I 2.0 or EQ360, TESI and TESI Short, the MSCEIT, and EISA - making it easy to use with all the models.’
(Research and Markets 2012).

A review by Rowe (2013) of this text stated that it provided a great overview of EQ and was a good book for practical implementation. The exercises therein essentially could be adapted in the development of EQ amongst pastors through the conducting of group sessions and/or individual exercises.

Due to the emotional intensity that can arise dealing with conflict, therapists working with pastors should be observant of how pastors are managing their conflict. Clergy should be made aware of their own leadership and conflict style in this regard. Exploration of pastors’ previous experiences of conflict, and the model of conflict that they experienced in their own family of origin are important aspects worth pursuing in sessions. David Olson (2014) provides a text for pastors to explore six different leadership styles including an on-line inventory to assist awareness of their leadership approach. His text takes an approach using a three-legged stool image with each leg of the stool related to “spiritual depth (spirituality), relational health (chemistry) and ministry fruitfulness (strategy)” (Olson 2014, p. 14). As pastors gain an understanding of their own formation around leadership, and become aware of their predisposition in conflict situations then they will be better placed to develop new skills in facing future conflicts in a healthier and more assertive manner (Friedman 2011). This in turn will ensure that pastors are centered better emotively, particularly in relational situations and conflict. In the words of Edwin Howard Friedman writing to leaders of Christian organisations, pastors can become a ‘non-anxious presence’ (Friedman 2011).

2) To Theological Educators.

It is imperative to ensure that theological education engages in affective engagement and not just cognitive processing of information across its training programs (Gliebe 2012, Cochran 2018). EQ development in training needs to engage in greater knowledge around: self-awareness, developing personal insight, and differentiating self in relational and ministry situations (West 2016, Tourville 2007). These processes need to be engaged in the provision of reflective praxis amongst as many study units as possible, but particularly in spiritual formation (Gliebe 2012). Nam (2019) in a study conducted at Seoul Theological Seminary, through an 8 week teaching module on EQ for pastors, demonstrated that EQ training through theological formation was an important aspect of effectiveness in pastoral ministry.

As part of theological training reflective practice should be a priority in ensuring development of self-awareness, developing personal insight, and differentiating self in relational and ministry situations for pastors in training. Work by Osmer (2008), *engaging practical theology*, presents a insightful resource that can assist in providing a framework for learning in this regard. Osmer's (2008) resource presents a method of theological reflection that can assist pastors to integrate cognition and emotionality. Osmer (2008) describes the use of a descriptive-empirical task, an interpretive task, a normative task, and a pragmatic task in this reflective process. In other words, the reflective questions to be considered are: what is going on, why is this going on, what ought to be going on, and how might we respond? Theological training programs for pastors should, therefore, employ greater focus on supervised field exposures with both theological and emotional reflection included in assessable tasks (Hunt 2013).

Study programs for pastors also need to engage in spiritual formation that is affective. Often the process of theological education engages in a more cognitive process of learning and can tend towards becoming a more traditional form of

education (Mitchell 2014). This form of pedagogy can limit reflective formation in students (Pazmiño 2008) thereby, reducing the opportunity for development of EQ through reflection. It would be pertinent to have as many personally reflective tasks that engage emotion within units of study, so as to ensure the development of self-awareness, personal insight, and differentiation of self in relational and ministry situations.

Assessable tasks in units delivered in training should engage reflective writing, particularly focused upon emotional processing. Lecturers should be conscious of grading the process of reflection rather than the experiences, in this regard, so as to assess a student's development in reflection. In this it is important that lecturers are trained in how to grade the reflective process (Cochran 2018). The supply of relevant grading rubrics can assist guidance for students and faculty in such a marking process. Refer to Appendix I 'Theological Reflection Grading Rubric' for model of such a grading rubric.

The reflective process should consider pedagogical means such as the use of case studies, preferably through visual means alongside question and answer. Through observation of case studies students can interact directly through questioning. This means that students are presented with direct engagement in their development of personal awareness surrounding relational situations and their improvement on appropriate responses (Hunt 2013). Particularly in spiritual formation units the teaching of spiritual expression, such as Ignatius Examen, could engage in a more pronounced emotional engagement when taught and delivered to students. See Appendix J 'Varied Ignatius Examen'.

3) To Denominational leaders.

Denominations have a responsibility to monitor ongoing EQ and awareness of pastors in their accepted candidates for pastoral ministry. Denominational Heads

should, therefore, put into place processes that assess applicants as to their level of EQ (Cochran 2018). This will enable Denominational leaders to determine what areas of EQ predominate in candidates and what areas are in need of development (Hughes and Terrel 2011). This EQ testing could then be engaged again prior to ordaining the candidate so as to determine the extent of progress in EQ since initial testing at their commencement of candidature, and to be able consider continued strategies for future advancement after their ordination. There are various EQ tests on the market that could be engaged to this end. Hughes et al. (2012) mentions four models and assessment instruments. These are EQ-I^{2.0} and EQ360, Team Emotional and Social Intelligence Survey (TESI), MSCEITTM, and Emotional Intelligence Skills Assessment (EISA). Hughes et al. (2012) also provide multiple exercises within the four main models that cross references to exercises against the relevant indicators in the various EQ inventories (EQ-I^{2.0} and EQ360, TESI and TESI Short, MSCEITTM and EISA) (Hughes et al. 2012, p. 27-34). These exercises to develop EQ could be delivered to groups of pastors or set as individual tasks for candidates. However, overall testing should be supplemented with direct observation by trained observers such as supervisors, counsellors, and mental health professionals in ongoing development (Hunt 2013).

In assisting sustainability, particularly in regards to EQ development, Denominational Heads need to also communicate the essential nature of appropriate professional support and supervision. Particularly for Australian pastors in light of the recent Australian ‘Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse’ (2017) and its list of final recommendations, the need for appropriate supervision has already been highlighted for Denominations. Therefore, Denominations need to ensure that they implement policies and procedures for ongoing development of pastors that both support them and meet the recommendations of this Royal Commission. Recommendation 16.45 of the Royal Commission’s report stated that ‘religious leaders, have professional supervision with a trained professional or pastoral supervisor who

has a degree of independence from the institution within which the person is in ministry' (Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, p. 58). This means that the requirement for supervision of pastors is more accentuated than ever before and so clergy should be made aware of the need for ongoing supervision and counselling by their associated Denomination. Recommendation 16.44 stated that pastors have 'effective management and oversight and undertake annual performance appraisals' (Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017, p. 58).

The results of this study also exhort denominations to provide programs to develop spousal relationships. There are various marriage enrichment programs available that Denominations could encourage married pastors and their spouses to attend. Some programs can tend towards being more content driven than relationally engaged so denominations need to be aware of appropriate services to promote for clergy that focus on relational attachment. In Australia some of the more emotionally focused courses are *The Marriage Course* (Alpha Australia 2019) and Relationships Australia courses (Relationships Australia 2019). Alongside marriage courses it is also important that spouses are strongly encouraged to seek out their own social support that is emotively focused (McMinn 2008).

Finally the findings in this dissertation highlight the importance to provide updated conflict development services for pastors, particularly in regards to the emotional aspects endured through ongoing and unresolved disagreements (Cochran 2018). Conflict and the emotional aspects associated with it are a common theme for pastors in ministry, and so encouraging appropriate conflict training is important in the development of EQ (Friedman 2011). One such Australian based organisation, Peacewise (2019) offers conflict and mediation training services for clergy and denominations. Their ethos is Christian focused, and they can tailor programs, sessions, and offer mediation as required.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - APPROACH POSSIBLE CANDIDATE BY DIRECTOR OF MINISTRIES

(Sent by Director of Ministries, Baptist Association of NSW and ACT)

Dear *(Insert Name here)*,

I am writing to you requesting your assistance in the obtaining of participants for some research into the sustainability of pastors in church based pastoral ministry being undertaken by Keith Mitchell as a student at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Keith's research aims to procure participants who are willing to be interviewed for research purposes. These interviews will involve both currently serving Accredited Ministers of the Association and previously Accredited ministers who have now exited pastoral based ministry. Due to privacy, and confidentiality issues he has requested that I initially approach possible participants, who fit within his required parameters. An attached information sheet regarding 'Information for Participants' is provided for this purpose for you to review.

The research that he is requesting from participants would involve a face-to-face interview and should take no more than 1 hour of your time. Details of his precise requirements are in the attached document.

His research has been funded by the University of Technology, Sydney and has no direct connection with the Baptist Association of NSW and ACT or myself.

If you are able to support Keith then please contact him directly; or contact myself and I will pass your contact details onto him for possible procurement. His decision to contact you in this manner aims to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

You are under no obligation to assist in this research if you so desire. Please just indicate that in a return e-mail without prejudice and I will ensure that no future contact ensues concerning this matter.

Yours sincerely,

(Title and Name)

Director of Ministries,

Baptist Association of NSW and ACT

(Email address)

Appendix B – LETTER FROM RESEARCHER TO PROCURE PARTICIPANTS

(Sent by Director of Ministries, Baptist Association of NSW and ACT)

Attention: *(Title and Name)*
(Address)

The prevention of dropout and the sustainability of Australian Clergy in parish based ministry

Dear *(Name)*,

My name is Keith Mitchell and I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney and am conducting research into pastoral sustainability. I would welcome your assistance in the procurement of participants for my research into the sustainability of pastors in church based pastoral ministry.

My research aims to obtain participants who I can interview for research purposes. These interviews will involve both currently serving Accredited Ministers of the Association and previously Accredited ministers who have now exited pastoral based ministry. Due to privacy and confidentiality issues I am requesting that you initially approach possible participants, who fit within my required parameters, asking whether they would be willing to participate. An attached letter 'Letter Seeking Participation' is provided for this purpose that can be sent to pertinent participants.

The research that I am requesting from participants would involve a face-to-face interview and should take no more than 1 hour of their time. Details of my precise requirements are in the attached document 'Information for Director of Ministries'.

This research has been funded by the University of Technology, Sydney.

If you are able to support me and provide me the relevant participants for this research then I would be glad if you could contact me by e-mail on Keith.Mitchell@uts.student.edu.au or mobile [REDACTED], or pass your details onto Rev. Ken Clendinning who will in turn pass these details onto me.

You are under no continued obligation to assist in this research if you so desire. Please just indicate that in a return e-mail to myself or Ken and he and I will ensure that no future contact ensues regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Mitchell

m. [REDACTED]
Keith.Mitchell@uts.student.edu.au



Appendix C - INFORMATION ATTACHED FOR PROCURING PARTICIPANTS

(Sent by the Director of Ministries, Baptist association of NSW and ACT)

IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?

He is asking for a relevant list of certain Accredited and previously Accredited ministers in the Baptist Association of Churches of NSW and ACT so as to approach them with a request to participate in research regarding pastoral sustainability. Two different cohorts of people to approach will be required. The first group will be those who have been accredited as Baptist pastors since the year 2000, are currently serving in a Baptist church, and have served over ten years of church based ministry since their Accreditation. This service period does not have to be continuous or full time. The second group is those previously Accredited ministers who have exited pastoral ministry prior to completing ten years of church based service, and had been accredited after the year 2000. This group of people's service period does not have to be continuous or full time either.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

Note, that Keith's research will be completely anonymous to me and the Baptist Association of Churches of NSW and ACT other than knowing that your name was passed onto him. He will conduct the research in confidence and without prejudice if you choose to participate. None of the details delivered in the interviews will be identifiable to participants nor returned to the Association or me.

There is the possibility of emotional triggers from your past causing emotional stirrings, embarrassment or shame as you speak. These feelings may be encountered afterwards as well. If you do agree to participate Keith will brief you on these issues and he will present you with a list of counsellors if you should so need future professional assistance.

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You are a person able to give Keith access to relevant information that he requires to find out about pastoral sustainability since you have been engaged as an accredited minister in the Baptist Association. If you agree to have your name put forward then your name will be forwarded to Keith and used as a possible participant for a one hour interview. Further analysis from these interviews will be utilised for further research. Analysis of this data will aim to then eventually inform future education and training practices of people undertaking pastoral training and equipping.

DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?

You don't have to say yes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY NO?

Nothing. You will be thanked for your time so far and I won't contact you about this research again.

IF I SAY YES, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You can change your mind at any time after the interview that has taken place. He will thank you for your time so far and he won't contact you about this research again.

WHAT WILL I GAIN FROM THIS RESEARCH?

Keith is unable to provide monetary compensation of your time for participating in the interview but he will cover any ancillary costs involved in the interview process. Note though that there may be some personal benefit for you in telling your story.

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO IF INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THIS RESEARCH?

If you are able to assist in this research then please either: contact Keith directly, or send me a return e-mail to confirm your initial agreeance to this research. I will pass your name and contact onto Keith who will then be in contact with you regarding the ongoing processes concerning this research.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS OR A COMPLAINT?

If you have concerns about the research that you think I or Keith need to be aware of then contact me personally for assistance. You can also discuss this with Keith personally if you so desire on mobile [REDACTED] or e-mail Keith.Mitchell@student.uts.edu.au.

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with Keith's research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772, and quote this number (UTS HREC 2014000018)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(Title and Name)

Director of Ministries,

Baptist Association of NSW and ACT

(Email address)

(Logo of Baptist Association)

Appendix D – PROCUREMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

INFORMATION SHEET

(Sent by Researcher if an indication of interest in research was made)

The prevention of dropout and the sustainability of Australian Clergy in church based ministry

Dear

My name is Keith Mitchell and I am a student at the University of Technology, Sydney.

I am conducting research into pastoral sustainability and would welcome your assistance as a person who has been involved in pastoral ministry. I understand that you have previously been approached by Rev. Ken Clendinning, the Director of Ministries with the Association of Baptist Churches NSW and ACT, and that you have given initial consent to participate in this research by allowing yourself to be approached by myself regarding this research. The research that I am requesting from you would involve a face-to-face interview and should take no more than 1 hour of your time.

This research has been funded by the University of Technology, Sydney.

If you are still interested in participating in this research, I would be glad if you could contact me by e-mail on Keith.Mitchell@uts.student.edu.au or mobile [REDACTED].

You are under no continued obligation to participate in this research if you so desire. Please just indicate that in a return e-mail and I will ensure that no future contact ensues. You are free to retract without prejudice if you so desire. See attached 'Research Information Form' for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Mitchell

m. [REDACTED]
Keith.Mitchell@uts.student.edu.au



Appendix E - INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

(Used for participants during Interviews)

“The prevention of dropout and the sustainability of Australian Clergy in parish based ministry” (UTS HREC 2014000018)

WHO IS DOING THE RESEARCH?

My name is Keith Mitchell and I am a research student at UTS. My supervisor is Dr Tony Holland, Lecturer at UTS.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research is to find out about more appropriate self-care strategies to prevent the dropout of Baptist ministers serving in church based ministries. It aims to assist future formation processes regarding pastoral training.

IF I SAY YES, WHAT WILL IT INVOLVE?

I am asking you to determine a list of certain Accredited ministers in the Baptist Association of Churches of NSW and ACT and approach them with a request to participate in some possible research concerning pastoral sustainability. Two different cohorts of people to approach will be required. The first group will be those who have been accredited as Baptist pastors since the year 2000, are currently serving in a Baptist church, and have served over ten years of church based ministry since their Accreditation. This service period does not have to be continuous or full time. The second group is those previously Accredited ministers who have exited pastoral ministry prior to completing ten years of church based service, and had been accredited after the year 2000. This group of people's service period does not have to be continuous or full time either.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

There are minimal risks at this stage of the research through your participation. However, there is the possibility of emotional triggers from pastoral participants' past causing emotional stirrings, embarrassment or shame as they speak. These feelings may be encountered afterwards as well. People who agree to participate will be briefed on these issues and will be presented with a list of counsellors if they should so need future professional assistance.

WHY HAVE I BEEN ASKED?

You are a person able to give me access to relevant information that I require to find out about pastoral sustainability since you are engaged with accredited ministers in the Baptist Association. The relevant names that you provide will be used for selection of possible participants for interview.

DO I HAVE TO SAY YES?

You don't have to say yes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY NO?

Nothing. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

IF I SAY YES, CAN I CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

You can change your mind at any time up until July 2014 prior to the interviews taking place. I will thank you for your time so far and won't contact you about this research again.

WHAT WILL MY ORGANISATION GAIN FROM THIS RESEARCH?

Further analysis from these interviews will be utilised for a Delphi survey amongst theological colleges in Australia. Analysis of this data will aim to then eventually inform future education and training practices of people undertaking pastoral training and equipping. This will, therefore, have a flow on effect in the ongoing pastoral development processes of Accredited Baptist ministers of which your role engages. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide monetary compensation for the time spent in providing the required names and approach of these people and so am requesting that this take place out of good will for the sake of better pastoral formation processes and sustainability.

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO IF INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THIS RESEARCH?

If you are able to assist in this research then after you contact me I will discuss future processes regarding the seeking of participants.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS OR A COMPLAINT?

If you have concerns about the research that you think I need to be aware of then contact me personally for assistance. I can be contacted on mobile [REDACTED] or e-mail Keith.Mitchell@student.uts.edu.au. You can also discuss this with my supervisor Dr Tony Holland e. Tony.Holland@uts.edu.au

If you would like to talk to someone who is not connected with the research, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer on 02 9514 9772, and quote this number (UTS HREC 2014000018)

Thankyou for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Mitchell

m. [REDACTED]
Keith.Mitchell@uts.student.edu.au



Appendix F – LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

(Used for participants during Interviews)

****PRINTED ON UTS (and/or joint) LETTERHEAD****

UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY **CONSENT FORM**

I _____ *(participant's name)* agree to participate in the research project 'The prevention of dropout and the sustainability of Australian Clergy in parish based ministry (UTS HREC 2014000018) being conducted by Keith Mitchell 4 Sandringham Close, Terrigal, n. 0412 369 of the University of Technology, Sydney for his degree of a Professional Doctorate. Funding for this research has been provided by University of Technology Sydney.

I understand that the purpose of this study is to be interviewed face to face to provide information regarding my experiences in church based ministry.

I understand that my participation in this research will involve one hour of my time and could have risk of emotional triggers, embarrassment or shame but that a list of counsellors will be provided for me if required.

I am aware that I can contact Keith Mitchell or his supervisor, Dr Tony Holland if I have any concerns about the research. I also understand that I am free to withdraw without prejudice from my participation in this research project at any time I wish, without consequences, and without giving a reason and as a result the information that I provided will not be used.

I agree that Keith Mitchell has answered all my questions fully and clearly.

I agree that the research data gathered from this project will not be published in any form that can identify me in any way and will be destroyed by the end of December 2021.

_____/_____/_____
Signature (participant)

_____/_____/_____
Signature (researcher)

NOTE:

This study has been approved by the University of Technology, Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any aspect of your participation in this research which you cannot resolve with the researcher, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Research Ethics Officer (ph: +61 2 9514 9772 Research.Ethics@uts.edu.au) and quote the UTS HREC reference number. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated fully and you will be informed of the outcome.



Appendix G – PRE-INTERVIEW SURVEY

(Used for participants during Interviews)

Pre-Interview Survey

From your time in church based ordained/accredited pastoral ministry, it would be helpful to understand your background and experience in pastoral formation and ongoing formation during this time. I will ask these questions to complete a short survey to capture this data **prior** to the recorded interview.

- 1) What is your gender? (tick one) ☐ male ☐ female
- 2) What is your current age? _____
- 3) How long were you in, or how long have you been in pastoral ministry since completing your theological training? _____(years)
- 4) **If applicable.** How many years ago were you in, pastoral ministry? _____
- 5) How old were you when you entered into pastoral ministry after your theological training?

- 6) Were you married when you commenced pastoral ministry and had completed your pastoral training? **Yes / No**
 - a) If yes how many years had you been married prior to this time? _____
 - b) If no then how long after completing your pastoral training and entering pastoral ministry did you become married? _____
- 7) Do you have children? **Yes / No**
 - a) If yes how many children do you have and what are their ages?
 - 1) Child number 1 age _____
 - 2) Child number 2 age _____
 - 3) Child number 3 age _____
 - 4) Child number 4 age _____
 - 5) Child number 5 age _____
 - 6) Child number 6 age _____
 - 7) Child number 7 age _____
 - 8) Child number 8 age _____
- 8) How many churches did you serve in pastoral ministry after your pastoral training years?

- 9) How many years were you at each ministry location after completing your pastoral training?
Name of church _____
 - i. Years of service _____

ii. Role/Position (Team Leader/Senior, Associate, Youth worker, etc.)

iii. Part time/Full time? (Estimated hours per week) _____

iv. Main ministry role (eg preaching, pastoral care, etc.)

5. Name of church _____

v. Years of service _____

vi. Role/Position (Team Leader/Senior, Associate, Youth worker, etc.)

vii. Part time/Full time? (Estimated hours per week) _____

viii. Main ministry role (eg preaching, pastoral care, etc.)

Name of church _____

ix. Years of service _____

x. Role/Position (Team Leader/Senior, Associate, Youth worker, etc.)

xi. Part time/Full time? (Estimated hours per week) _____

xii. Main ministry role (eg preaching, pastoral care, etc.)

Name of church _____

xiii. Years of service _____

xiv. Role/Position (Team Leader/Senior, Associate, Youth worker, etc.)

xv. Part time/Full time? (Estimated hours per week) _____

xvi. Main ministry role (eg preaching, pastoral care, etc.)

10) What educational qualifications do you hold and in what disciplines?

Name the awards and areas of discipline at all levels

11) How many year did it take to complete your pastoral training? _____

Thank you for providing these details.

Appendix H – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(Used with participants during Interviews)

My main focus in these interviews is to hear how you have felt about your time and experiences in ministry and to hear any self-care principles that you have felt to be effective and not effective throughout this time. You will mainly guide me but at times I may seek clarification or further insight. So my first question aims to open you upto these sorts of discussions:

1. How have you have felt about your time in pastoral ministry over your years of service?
2. What factors do you feel have enabled you to be sustained in ministry (*for the years that you did serve)? **Brackets is for people out of ministry.*
3. What factors do you feel have disabled you in being sustained in ministry (*for the years that you did serve)? **Brackets is for people out of ministry.*
4. What things in pastoral ministry did you feel that you enjoyed the most?
5. What things in pastoral ministry did you feel that you struggled with the most?
6. How have you felt about your initial pastoral training at Bible College, the support from Denominational leaders and any churches that you have served at?

We will finish our interview soon but before we do that I want to ask three more questions.

7. If you were going to give advice to a person thinking of entering pastoral ministry what do you feel that you would you like to say to them?
8. A reminder that you can say **anything** without prejudice but is there anything that you feel that would you like to say to those who train and educate people for pastoral ministry, to Denominational leaders, and/or any churches?
9. Is there anything else that you feel you would like to add to our discussions today before we conclude?

Debrief questions

We have finished the more formal question section but I just want to check how you have you felt speaking about these issues today?

Just a reminder that I have provided you with a list of counsellors and psychologists if anything else arises for you after we have concluded today.

Thanks for your time.

Appendix I - THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION GRADING

Criteria	High Distinction	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Unsatisfactory/Fail
Provides connections between experiences, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings	Clearly, thoroughly and insightfully makes strong connections between experiences recorded in the field report, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings.	Clearly and with insight, makes connections between experiences recorded in the field report, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings.	Some ability to identify and reflect on connections between experiences recorded in the field report, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings.	An ability to identify and reflect on connections between experiences recorded in the field report, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings.	Very limited ability to identify and reflect on connections between experiences recorded in the field report, relevant biblical texts &/or theological motifs, and insights from relevant readings.
Provides evidence of critical evaluation of reflections and provides links between the various parts	A strongly coherent reflective evaluation that shows substantial, insightful critiquing, evaluation and linkages between the various parts. It integrated required biblical and academic references succinctly and effectively into the reflection.	A coherent reflective evaluation that shows thoughtful critiquing, evaluation and linkages between the various parts. It integrated required biblical and academic references effectively into the reflection.	A generally coherent reflective evaluation, critiquing, evaluating and linkages between the various parts, connections could be more clearly articulated. It integrated required biblical and academic references with some thought into the reflection.	A reflective evaluation that shows elements of coherence, describing some linkages between the various parts, connections could be more clearly articulated. It integrated required biblical and academic references with minimal thought into the reflection.	A reflective evaluation that lacks coherence and focus, contains limited integration and does not make linkages between the various parts. It failed to integrate required biblical and academic references into the reflection.
Evaluates the value of the event for future ministry	Illustrates a mature and considered evaluation of the impact of the experience of the event for future ministry.	Illustrates a considered evaluation of the impact of the experience of the Event for future ministry.	Illustrates a generally considered evaluation of the impact of the experience of the Event for future ministry	Illustrates an assessment of the impact of the experience of the Event for future ministry.	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the impact of the experience of the Event for future ministry.

Appendix J – VARIED IGNATIUS EXAMEN

Find a quiet and relaxed place where you will not be disturbed. Become aware of your breathing and take some breaths in, out and relax. Engage in the format below.

This task could take anywhere from 10 minutes to one hour depending on the time that you have or the connection that you make with God.

1. Become aware of God's presence. Ask yourself "What is going on for me at the moment?"
2. Review the day with gratitude. Remind yourself of the many good things that have occurred throughout the day and use emotional words that express this.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. Engage in emotional expression as you do this aspect. Use a variety of feeling words to express yourself at this time. These may be positively and/or negatively charged emotions.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask God to assist you at this stage to reframe some of the negatively focused emotions and how they could be recalibrated to a more positive focus.
5. Look toward tomorrow. Use emotive words of hope and opportunity for what tomorrow might bring.

This traditional form of Ignatius Examen can be found from many web-sites on the internet connected to Ignatius spirituality and the Jesuits (Jesuits, 2019). This version has been varied to engage a more emotive engagement with God.

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