

UNDERSTANDING CLERGY RESILIENCE: A MIXED METHODS RESEARCH STUDY

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By

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ABSTRACT

There is limited literature on the current nature of clergy resilience, the specific variables that enable clergy to positively adapt to adversity, and the aspects of pre-service training and professional development that best foster clergy resilience. Clergy face adversity similar to other human service providers as well as other adversity that is unique to the profession. Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families. It decreases ministry effectiveness, lowers the sense of personal accomplishment in their role, and negatively impacts the quality of family life and family relationships. Since clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout, knowledge of the nature and state of clergy resilience may provide valuable intelligence to mitigate these impacts. The positive psychology perspective of resilience research seeks to understand positive adaptation to adversity rather than its negative outcomes.

This study approached resilience from a holistic, systemic perspective using the strength-focused philosophy of positive psychology. This study used an operational definition of resilience as a developmental process that arises from a combination of individual, relational, and contextual variables, including cognitive appraisal, and results in positive adaptation to adversity and stress (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011; Gu & Day, 2007; Masten, 2001; Windle, 2011). The purpose of this study was to explore Christian clergy perceptions of variables that impact the development of professional resilience in their roles. This study involved a holistic investigation of variables that clergy perceive as impacting their professional resilience, including adversity, individual, relational, contextual, and organizational variables. This study also considered how pre-service training and professional development could support clergy resilience.

This study used a mix-methods convergent exploratory design, began with an online survey that collected data from 519 clerics across Canada. The survey consisted of closed-ended scale questions analyzed through SPSS, and open-ended questions, which were analyzed through thematic coding, using NVivo 12. Simultaneously, as the survey, 13 one-on-one interviews were conducted with clerics using a semi-structured interview guide with questions related to adversity, variables that support clergy resilience, and helpful and desired initiatives. Interview data were analyzed through thematic coding, using NVivo 12. Following the initial analysis of the survey and interview data, findings were presented to interpretation panels to add interpretative data. Interpretational panel data was also analyzed through thematic coding, using NVivo.

This study's findings provided valuable insights into the development of clergy resilience for individual clerics, educational institutions, denominations, and congregations. Through the survey scales, the current nature of resilience and well-being appeared to be good. Several areas showed some strength, including high resiliency trait, a good level of grit, and participant satisfaction with their health and wellness. Congregational flourishing, age, distance from personal supports, and mentors all had statistical connection to scale responses.

Clergy participants reported adversity variables that are challenging in their role or to their resilience, categorized in the themes of workload, expectations, isolation, and personal challenges. Clergy also reported variables that support their resilience, categorized in the themes of spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices. Spiritual dimensions were very prominent for clergy, especially the centrality of calling to ministry, theological meaning-making, and relationship with God.

Participants reported helpful aspects of pre-service training and professional development. Aspects of pre-service training included rigorous discernment and screening of calling and the inclusion of required practices, such as spiritual direction or mentorship. Aspects of professional development included a variety of skill development opportunities, lifelong learning, and conferences and networking with peers. Participants also reported desired initiatives which included more wellness opportunities and increased organizational prioritization of clergy wellness.

The Clergy Resilience Model was developed from these findings as a tool that may help clergy resilience both on an individual and systemic level by creating awareness of critical factors. This study is unique in its focus on Canadian Christian clergy, and while some of the findings may have value to clergy in other contexts, the findings should be generalized with caution.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Resilience theory and research have grown over the last several decades, broaden from a narrow focus on children with traumatic backgrounds to adults and professionals. Different professions, such as nursing and teaching, have begun to consider resilience and how it might be enhanced among its workforce. Like other professions, clergy routinely encounter stress and adversity in their roles, and the issue of burnout is a concern.

There is a substantive body of literature related to clergy adversity and burnout but limited clergy resilience literature. Meek et al. (2003) highlighted the lack of published research related to clergy resilience and positive coping and functioning, despite the important role of clergy in providing human service and organizational leadership. Instead, published literature has focused primarily on impairment and burnout of clergy in response to stress. However, many clerics do weather the stress and adversity they face and demonstrate resilience in their roles and research is needed to understand the variables related to this outcome.

It is essential to gain more firsthand research with this unique profession to understand the variables affecting resilience and how they may be similar and different from other professions. Clergy burnout is well documented, as is declining numbers of people entering the profession (Joynt, 2017). Both of these factors put faith communities at risk of a clergy shortage crisis. Understanding the nature of clergy resilience may play a role in mitigating these factors by developing resilience interventions and programs.

Background to Clergy Resilience and Adversity

Clergy as a group of professionals play a significant leadership, educational and caregiving role in society. Clergy serve important educative and leadership functions in promoting justice and well-being in society (Abernethy, Grannum, Gordon, Williamson, & Currier, 2016). Clergy have a significant educational role related to congregants' spiritual, relational, and emotional well-being, such as preparing people for adversity and influencing them toward resilience (Allain-Chapman, 2012). Further, clergy are frontline human service providers who provide significant caregiving as they help people through substantial transitions such as marriage, illness, death, bereavement, and crisis and disasters (Abernethy et al., 2016). As a group, the clergy play a critical role in modern society, fulfilling these and other vital functions.

Clergy Resilience

Resilience is a developmental process that arises from a combination of individual, relational, and contextual variables, including cognitive appraisal, and results in positive

adaptation to adversity and stress (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011; Gu & Day, 2007; Masten, 2001; Windle, 2011). From a faith perspective, resilience may be considered to develop in the active struggle to grow in the face of adversity rather than acquiescence (Allain-Chapman, 2012). However, Christian beliefs about self-sacrifice, trusting God, and unworthiness and punishment due to sin may inadvertently glorify adversity and challenge a resilient response; therefore, a nuanced approach to spiritual beliefs must be taken when considering clergy resilience (Allain-Chapman, 2012). Titus (2006) defined “‘spiritual resilience’ as the capacity, when faced with hardship and difficulty, to cope actively using religious resources, to resist the destruction of one’s spiritual competencies, and to construct something positive in line with larger theological goals” (p. 28). Spirituality and religious beliefs are involved in understanding good and evil, purpose, and life goals and can contribute to resilience through coping strategies and meaning-making (Titus, 2006). The nature of a person’s spirituality will determine its effect on resilience (Titus, 2006). Coping with hardship, resisting deformation, and constructing new strength out of hardship are three dimensions of resilience (Titus, 2006). The positive psychology perspective of resilience theory allows such a focus on the adaptivity and capability of the clergy.

A workplace-focused understanding of clergy resilience is also essential. It includes conditions that occur over a person's life course that enable individual adaptation to adversity and involves building workplaces that support healthy resilience (Griffiths, 2014). When considered from either an occupational psychology perspective or a management approach focused on reducing work stress, both streams agree on resilience as a complex and transactional process of individual and workplace variables that includes organizational processes and culture as part of resilience building (Griffiths, 2014). This perspective acknowledges the interaction of individual biographies with their past and present contexts that impact resilience (Day, 2014).

As literature related explicitly to clergy resilience is limited, it was important to consider literature related to professional resilience generically and also to consider allied professions, such as teaching and health care. Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) included clergy alongside counsellors, health care providers, social workers, and teachers, as a broad group of caring occupations focused on healing, counselling, and teaching with many commonalities. A key commonality of the various caring professions is the use of self in the change process of the professional's work (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Constant demands on caring professionals can result in overload due to the inability to say no to needs (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) described clergy as an allied helping

profession, where the professional has to maintain a one-way caring nature in their professional relationships. This one-way caring relationship requires effort from clergy and can be a stressor. Mitchell and Anderson (1983) considered bearing sorrow and being empathic to others' suffering as an ethical obligation of the clergy. Burnout is a particular risk for professions that focus on the needs of others, such as clergy, making it challenging to balance self-care (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Understanding the resilience processes of these caring professions is important.

Resilience theory has been applied to clergy (Meek et al., 2003) and to the development of programs to enhance clergy resilience (Abernethy et al., 2016). However, there is limited published human research directly involving clergy to gain knowledge of the variables that impact their resilience. Instead, resilience principles have been extended from overall resilience research and other professions, without knowing how this may be relevant or irrelevant to clergy resilience.

Adversity and Burnout. Clergy face stressors that are similar to other professions but also many that are unique to the profession. For example, clergy's stress is similar to mental health professionals in that clergy are sought out in times of spiritual or mental health needs. However, different from other professions, clergy often lack boundaries embedded in other human service professions, resulting in stress on the clergy (Meek et al., 2003). Congregants expect to receive unidirectional spiritual, emotional, and social support from clergy, typical of caregiving roles. However, distinct from other caregiving roles, clergy are socially and relationally connected with congregants, yet do not receive support from them (Eagle, Miles, & Proeschold-Bell, 2017). The role can place demands that put clergy at risk of stress-related concerns (Abernethy et al., 2016). These stressors have a significant impact on the clergy.

Understanding some of the unique adversity that clergy face is key for understanding the vital place of resilience. Forney (2010) highlighted three categories of adversity faced by clergy, including: (a) crisis and mental health demands, (b) role ambiguity, and (c) deficiency of boundaries with congregation due to on-call nature of the role and intrusiveness of congregants through expectations and criticism. Further, Meek et al. (2003) reported clergy stressors being: (a) expectations of personal and professional perfection, (b) lack of family supports, (c) financial strain, (d) lack of privacy, (e) church transitions and moves, and (f) on-call demands of the role. According to Jackson-Jordan (2013), compassion fatigue, avoidant or accommodating conflict style, and high role expectations by self and others, are factors that place clergy at risk of burnout. These stressors impact the clergy and the spouse and family and can result in a negative

quality of life (Abernethy et al., 2016). Role ambiguity and complexity, and expectations of perfection are especially significant stressors impacting clergy.

The impact of role-related stress, such as those discussed for clergy, activates the stress response system. When stress is chronic, it can negatively impact physical and mental health and present a risk for clergy burnout. There are three types of stress: positive, tolerable, and toxic (Pearlin, Menaghan, & Lieberman, 1981). Positive stress (eustress) presents a short-term challenge that is positive overall for growth and development. Tolerable stress is serious but temporary and tolerable when buffered by supportive resources, such as relationships. Chronic exposure to stress that is serious and prolonged without the buffering of resources is considered toxic (McEwen, McEwen, & Milliken, 2017).

Chronic workplace stress can lead to prolonged activation of the stress response system and alterations in the autonomic nervous system (Chandola, Heraclides, & Kumari, 2010) that hinder the ability to modulate the stress system. It can lead to hypervigilance, physical problems, such as inflammation (Hänsel, Hong, Cámara, & von Känel, 2010) and heart disease (Chandola et al., 2010), and mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety (Shigemi, Mino, Tsuda, Babazono, & Aoyama, 1997).

Studies comparing Christian clergy's work in different denominations and countries reveal similarities in roles, job demands, and time use (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). Proeschold-Bell et al. (2013) found that rates of depression in the United States' clergy were higher than the national adult population. Financial stress is related to depression in clergy and non-clergy studies (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). The sense of calling to ministry can increase the sense of failure for clergy (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). Doubting one's calling is related to depression, whereas ministry satisfaction is related to lower anxiety levels (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). Increased years in ministry is associated with increased depression and anxiety, possibly due to prolonged exposure to stressors (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013).

Burnout is considered to be caused by chronic stress and results in emotional breakdown (Abernethy et al., 2016). Burnout is a stress phenomenon and is distinct from mental illness, but maybe a predictor (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Burnout negatively impacts the ability to respond to the demands of the role and the stress associated with it (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Burnout is a particular risk factor for professions that focus on the needs of others, such as clergy, making it challenging to balance self-care (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) differentiated between meaning burnout and caring burnout. Meaning burnout occurs when the

sense of calling to one's caring role "no longer gives sufficient meaning and purpose in one's life," resulting in an existential crisis due to loss of meaning in one's work (p. 152). Meaning burnout can occur when the role becomes routine or when the professional no longer feels they are helping, effective, or making a difference (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Caring professionals need to have a sense of success, even in small ways, to ensure meaning in their roles (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Caring burnout is the more commonly understood definition of burnout and involves the decreased ability to engage emotionally (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Clergy burnout is considered by Forney (2010) to be a mixture of reduced accomplishment, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion.

Burnout hinders the clergy's ability to provide spiritual and organizational leadership and limits their use of positive coping strategies (Abernethy et al., 2016; Forney, 2010). Due to emotional exhaustion, clergy can lose interest and vitality in their work, and cynicism and emotional distance can arise due to depersonalization (Abernethy et al., 2016). These can combine to decrease ministry effectiveness leading to lower personal accomplishment in their role (Abernethy et al., 2016). Burnout impacts clergy not only professionally but also personally, negatively impacting the quality of family life and family relationships (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families.

Clergy burnout is also a concern due to attrition. Jackson-Jordan (2013) addressed clergy burnout as a critical factor that impacts job satisfaction and the ultimate decision to leave the profession. However, Forney (2010) also warned of the effects of clergy burnout beyond attrition. Clergy experiencing burnout may stay in the role but operate in a maintenance role due to a lack of passion and creativity (Forney, 2010). Beyond attrition or poor professional performance, burnout is also a concern due to its negative impact on the clergy's personal lives and families.

Purpose of this Study

This study aimed to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development, and individual care. As indicated, clergy play significant leadership, educational and caregiving roles in society. The further development of clergy resilience initiatives in pre-service training, professional development and individual care are critical to ensuring clergy continue to function well. These initiatives are particularly relevant to the profession as clergy face unique stressors

that require a resilient response to avoid burnout. While resilience theory and insights from resilience research have been applied to clergy, there is limited published human research directly investigating clergy resilience.

Problem Statement

There is limited literature on the current nature of clergy resilience, the specific variables that enable clergy to positively adapt to adversity, and the aspects of pre-service training and professional development that best foster clergy resilience. Clergy face adversity similar to other human service providers and other adversity that is unique to the profession. Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families. Burnout decreases ministry effectiveness, lowers the sense of personal accomplishment in their role, and negatively impacts the quality of family life and family relationships. Since clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout, knowledge of the nature and state of clergy resilience may provide valuable intelligence to mitigate these impacts. The problem is that we do not have sufficient knowledge for mitigation. The positive psychology perspective of resilience research seeks to understand positive adaptation to adversity rather than its negative outcomes.

The Research Questions

This research study will explore three main research questions:

1. What is the current nature of Christian clergy resilience and well-being in Canada, including what types of adversity do clergy perceive as impacting their levels of stress and burnout?
2. What variables, individual, social and relational, or contextual and organizational, do clergy perceive to impact their professional resilience?
3. What aspects of pre-service training and professional development are described as best helping to foster clergy resilience?

The Researcher Stance

The research questions were influenced by my stance as a researcher; both by my profession as a therapist, as well as by my commitment to Christian faith and accompanying sense of calling to church ministry with my husband, who has been vocational clergy for over 20 years. As stated by Siegel (2017), the "research questions one asks, deems important, and pursues are influenced by one's cultural, racial, gender, or otherwise specified location" (p. 5). While my profession was outside of the church, our vocational calling as a couple was first and foremost to church work, and this shaped the decisions I made about my career. As a clergy

spouse for over 20 years with numerous friends and other family in full-time clergy roles and as a professional therapist who has worked with clergy, I have personally seen the adversity clergy face. My background had a profound effect on my choice of a research topic and my approach to it.

As a clergy spouse, I shared values and experiences and characteristics with my research participants, affording me insider status. As outlined by Dwyer and Buckle (2009), I was considered an “active member researcher” (p. 55) due to my commitment to the goals and values of Christian clergy. Being an active member researcher was a contributing factor in facilitating my partnership with the Flourishing Congregations Institute for survey distribution to a large sample of clerics. Further, my insider status as a clergy spouse afforded me trust and acceptance with my participants and credibility with other knowledge users, such as denominational and congregational leaders. As a professional therapist, I had credibility as a researcher with knowledge users, such as spiritual directors and other therapists.

Besides my Christian faith and my ministry experience, my educational experiences have impacted but have not exclusively determined my current philosophy. I am a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist (RMFT) and was influenced toward social constructionism and interpretative approaches in my education, where qualitative knowledge is heavily favoured. In my graduate research methods class, quantitative methods were not criticized; however, there was a lack of attention on it. For my MA thesis, I used qualitative, semi-structured interviews to answer my research question regarding the roles and interactions between pastoral and lay leadership in churches (Clarke, 2005). My undergraduate studies were in religious studies, Christian theology, biblical studies, and hermeneutics, and these have shaped my ontology and what constitutes knowledge. Since graduation, I have expanded into other therapeutic approaches such as motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy and seen the value of quantitative tools for studying the effectiveness of therapeutic approaches. For example, studies of motivational interviewing regularly use coding systems in their research, and I value the consistency it brings to the research. The public health care field values evidence-based therapeutic approaches, which are often evaluated based on quantitative methods. I believe the focus on quantitative evidence has value but should not be the sole determination of therapeutic effectiveness. This perspective on the value of both quantitative data and qualitative data has informed my decision to use a mixed-methods methodology.

Description of the Study

This study considered both the quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions through mix-methods (MM) methodology and used a convergent exploratory design, using triangulation (Creswell, 2002). A theoretical framework (Figure 2.2) discussed in chapter two informed this study and guided the research questions' development and inform the analysis. My study began with a survey and one-on-one interviews, followed by interpretation panels (Noonan, 2002). The study started with data collection through an online survey to collect data nationally from clergy using purposive sampling and distribution through the Flourishing Congregations Institute (FCI) that had contacts with Christian clergy across Canada. Closed-ended survey questions were analyzed through SPSS, and open-ended questions were analyzed through thematic coding using NVivo.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed for individual interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select 13 interviewees, selecting from clergy who faced adversity in their role. Thematic coding of interview data provided more in-depth insights into the variables that clergy perceive as impacting resilience in their role.

Finally, interpretation panels composed of multidisciplinary professionals with expertise in denominational leadership, clergy education, and clergy wellness added interpretative data to the survey and interview findings. The use of interpretation panels helped the data maintain an experiential grounding necessary for recommendations that led to practical solutions and worked toward a consensus understanding between myself, the researcher, and participants (Noonan, 2002).

Significance

As a profession, clergy occupy a unique space in modern Canadian society, as human service providers, yet not existing in the public domain, such as education or health care. This unique place as a profession may create some uncertainty about the importance of clergy in society. However, clergy have a significant role in leadership, education, and caregiving within their congregations and communities. Due to the clergy's influence, the negative impact of role-related adversity and stress impacts individual clerics, their families, and their congregations and also affects communities and society more broadly.

The findings from this study provide valuable insights to help clergy to flourish through resilience in their roles. The findings can be used to foster clergy resilience in post-secondary preparation and ongoing professional development. Further, this study revealed important

insights into organizational variables that can be influenced by roles such as denominational leaders and church boards. Additionally, the study revealed variables that clergy report as having a significant impact on their resilience, which has implications for spiritual directors or counsellors, who provide spiritual and psychological support to the clergy.

Further, as findings from this study may increase clergy's resilience; also, there may be several indirect results, as resilience helps to mitigate burnout, clergy family life may be improved. Likewise, attrition may be decreased, leading to cost savings for congregations. Finally, increased resilience may lead to increased clergy effectiveness in their roles and congregational flourishing.

Definitions

The following definitions of terms used in this study.

Burnout. Burnout is defined as a response to prolonged job stressors that causes cynicism, exhaustion, and inefficacy (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). For this study, burnout is viewed in contrast to resilience. When inquiring with participants about variables that impact their resilience, burnout may be referenced as the opposite end of the response continuum.

Christian. Christian encompasses Catholic, mainline Protestant and conservative Protestant traditions within the Canadian setting.

Clergy or cleric. The clergy are a group of formal religious leaders whose roles and functions differ depending on the religion. For this study considering Christian clergy, alternate terms such as pastor, minister, or priest are relevant. In this study, the term clergy includes formal vocational roles within the church, either paid on a part or full-time basis. Informal, unpaid leadership roles are referred to as lay leadership and often include elder, deacon, board member, or lay pastor. Cleric is the singular term used in this study.

Compassion fatigue. A descriptive term for a helper experiencing the negative aspects of helping others and feeling like their work does not make a difference. Compassion fatigue can include burnout and secondary trauma (Stamm, 2010).

Contextual and organizational variables. Organizational variables such as clerical, congregational, denominational, educational, or theological systems, policies, and practices that have an impact on the resilience of clergy.

Denomination. This term is used broadly and includes all the various Christian faith traditions, such as Catholic.

Personal variables. Within-person variables such as personality traits and cognitive appraisal that have an impact on the resilience of clergy.

Positive psychology. Positive psychology is a strength-focused approach that investigates variables that contribute to flourishing or peak functioning (Joseph, 2015). For this study, a positive psychology approach will consider variables that lead to resilience while also taking a holistic perspective that recognizes that adversity is also part of clergy's experience but not the primary focus of this study.

Resilience and professional resilience. Resilience is considered a developmental process that arises from a combination of individual, relational, and contextual variables, including cognitive appraisal, and results in positive adaptation to adversity and stress (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011; Gu & Day, 2007; Masten, 2001; Windle, 2011). Professional resilience is positive adaptation to work-related adversity. For this study, a wholistic systemic perspective will be used to ask participants about their perception of variables that impact their resilience in their role as clergy.

Social and relational variables. Between-person variables, such as peer support and mentorship that have an impact on the resilience of clergy.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations applied to this research.

1. Resilience literature was delimited, as not all resilience literature was relevant to clergy. Resilience literature that considered resilience as a process rather than a personality trait was the focus of literature reviewed. Also, the focus of the literature reviewed was on clergy resilience and similar helping professions of nursing and education.
2. This study was delimited to considering Christian clergy only, excluding those of other faith traditions. While some of the findings may have value to the clergy of different religions, further research to test these findings with the clergy of other faith traditions is needed.
3. This study was delimited to consider clergy resilience primarily from a social science perspective and does not consider in depth the theological aspects of clergy resilience. While theology was considered in this study, it was done so to provide context and was not integrated into my methodology.

4. This study was unique in its focus on Canadian Christian clergy. While some of the findings may have value to clergy in other contexts, the findings should be generalized with caution without further research to test these findings in other contexts.
5. This study was delimited by my personal ontological and epistemological perspectives arising from Critical Realism (CR) and the pragmatic mixed methods approach to methodology taken in this study. My CR ontological and epistemological perspectives were shared to give context to my understanding of knowledge, but CR was not integrated into my study methodology.
6. This study was delimited to June – December 2020, when the data was collected from participants, which was early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations of the Study

The research findings were limited by the following:

1. All findings were limited by the fact that this study occurred during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The impact of this time on the findings was all-encompassing.
2. Developmental nature of the survey instrument used in phase one, which I adapted from a previously used instrument based on the literature review and the conceptual framework I chose. This study and future research can lead to the refinement of the instrument.
3. Self-selection of who participated in the study, especially the survey, and the unknown effect on the findings.
4. Social acceptability in responses causing some participants to hold back in their descriptions. Interviewees did not tend to express as many critical responses, as found in the survey responses. Even in the survey, participants may have found it difficult to disclose responses that were socially unacceptable or contrary to their theological values.
5. The level of trust I developed with participants and the comfort they felt in being forthcoming and honest. I attempted to mitigate this by considering theological beliefs in the wording of survey questions and asking probing interview questions in a conversational tone while being considerate of the Christian beliefs of interview participants.
6. Participants' ability to reflect and have insight into the questions asked and also participants ability to accurately communicate. Initial screening of participants for interviews was used to alleviate this problem partially.

7. Personal biases due to my professional perspectives and personal beliefs may have also impacted the findings. A Protestant Evangelical belief system was a dominant influence in this study due to my belief system and connections. The inclusion of interpretation panels, with members from diverse Christian traditions, was used to minimize the possible impact of this limitation.
8. Correlations from the survey data are not considered to be causal.
9. This research was exploratory to gain an overall understanding of the three research questions; however, it does not capture nuances, such as the frequency or intensity of adversity or resources.

Assumptions

The following assumptions underlie this study and the methods chosen.

1. It was assumed that by using a survey this allowed more clergy to provide data providing more understanding of their experiences.
2. It was assumed that there would be a commonality in clergy's experiences and that the interview data would provide an understanding of what other clerics might experience.
3. It was assumed that in collecting both survey data and interview data that common themes would emerge.
4. It was assumed that due to the emphasis on spirituality that super-natural variables impacting clergy resilience might be identified by participants and that these variables would be valuable to document.
5. It was assumed that clergy resilience might be enhanced through programs and policies and that knowledge gained through this study might help design evidence-informed programs for clergy.

Organization of the Thesis

My dissertation is organized into seven chapters, with each chapter building from the previous. This chapter one introduction summarises my study, including some background information necessary for understanding the problem underlying this study. Chapter two is a literature review that provides a detailed summary of relevant resilience research related to clergy resilience. This chapter begins broadly considering the development of resilience research and the three main approaches to resilience in order to situate the approach I have taken in this study. Chapter two also contains the conceptual framework I used to investigate variables related to clergy resilience.

Chapter three includes the research design and methodology and outlines the approach used in this study. This chapter outlines the theory behind the mixed methods methodology I used and how it was appropriate for my clergy resilience study. This chapter further outlines the survey, interview, and interpretation panel methods and how they will be utilized. Chapter four contains findings from the survey I conducted in relation to the research questions. Chapter five contains the interview findings, and chapter six contains the interpretation panel findings and final analysis. Chapter seven contains my discussion of findings and how these relate to the literature discussed in chapter two, answers my research questions, implications for the development of clergy resilience, recommendations for future research, and a reconceptualized theoretical framework for clergy resilience. This chapter concludes with a discussion of significant lessons learned from this study related to clergy resilience.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

As indicated, the purpose of this study was to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. The use of a positive psychology perspective of resilience theory ensured a focus on the clergy's adaptivity and capability. Resilience is a critical way to address issues of role-related stress and burnout.

There was limited literature on clergy resilience; but a substantive body of literature related to clergy adversity and burnout. Published literature has focused primarily on impairment and burnout of clergy in response to stress. Meek et al. (2003) highlighted the lack of research about clergy resilience and positive coping and functioning, despite the clergy's role in providing human service and organizational leadership. As literature related explicitly to clergy resilience is limited, this chapter reviews literature related to resilience theory, beginning broadly considering its history and development. Then, resilience literature for allied professions of teaching and nursing is reviewed, as it can be useful to understand clergy resilience due to the common caregiving and educative aspects of the professions. Finally, literature specifically addressing clergy resilience is reviewed. A funnel approach that moves from broad literature to a narrow focus specifically on clergy resilience enabled insight from general resilience literature and specific insights related to the unique features of clergy resilience. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of what was currently known about clergy resilience and what may be generalized from other similar professions.

A search for relevant published literature was conducted in the PsychINFO database looking at the key term of psychological resilience combined with resilient*, hardiness, persistence, grit, or stress manag* plus clergy, minister, or priest, which yielded eight potential sources, including two that turned out not to be relevant and three dissertations. There were two published studies (Lee, 2010; Meek et al., 2003) that explicitly investigated the process of clergy resilience and one (Abernethy et al., 2016) that examined the impact of a resilience intervention with the clergy. An initial search also included the term pastor but yielded nothing related to clergy, but many sources associated with the Positive Appraisal Style Theory of Resilience that has the acronym PASTOR. A review of the reference lists of relevant articles and dissertations yielded additional sources related to clergy resilience. Due to the limited literature on the subject, time span or other limits were not placed on the search.

A scan of clergy resilience content on Canadian seminaries or colleges websites was also conducted. On December 16, 2019, I conducted an advanced Google search of Canadian English sites for the key terms of seminary, seminaries, or college; clergy, priest, or pastor; and resilience or wellness. The keywords of truth and reconciliation were specifically excluded, and the key term minister was not included as an alternative for clergy due to connects with government content. Of the top 20 hits, only two were directly relevant and two indirectly relevant to the search. The most prominent was Wycliffe College and the Wycliffe Wellness Project, a decade-long research project focused on clergy wellness connected to the Anglican Church of Canada (“Wellness Project @ Wycliffe,” n.d.). The other direct result from the search was for Queen's College, Faculty of Theology, citing one continuing education session on clergy wellness. The two indirect results from the search yielded denomination websites rather than seminaries or colleges. First was a result for the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, department of Clergy Formation and Wellness and their Resilience Journey 2019 program, funded through a grant from Duke University (“The Resilience Journey 2019,” 2019). The second was a result for Canadian Baptists of Western Canada, which included a paragraph on their website related to clergy wellness.

In Canada, the Wycliffe Wellness Project seems to be the most prominent in clergy wellness. In the United States, Duke University has the Duke Clergy Health Initiative with the United Methodist denomination to improve the wellness of their clergy through programs and studies (“Clergy Health Initiative,” n.d.). Both of these projects focus on clergy wellness which has some differences in focus but related to resilience.

Resilience Theory and Research

Resilience research, which focuses primarily on strengths, is multidisciplinary and has been located mainly in psychiatry, developmental psychology, social sciences, and to a lesser extent in health, medicine, and education (Windle, 2011). Resilience research is a young field beginning in the 1970s by studying exceptionally resilient children despite traumatic circumstances (McAllister & McKinnon, 2009). In the 1980s, resilience research evolved from its investigation of personality traits to identifying individual and community risk and protective factors of resilient children and youth (Greenfield, 2015). More recently, resilience has evolved further to take a contextual perspective in understanding various populations' protective processes (Gu & Day, 2007). Understanding the evolution of the field and the different streams of focus is vital for situating specific types of resilience research.

Richardson (2002) and Masten and Obradovic (2006) described three resilience research waves, agreeing on the first two but diverging on the third. They both agreed that wave one began with at-risk children and focused on identifying resilient qualities and characteristics of those who survived extreme traumatic adversity. Resilient qualities identified in wave one were labelled protective factors or developmental assets and involved debate around whether these factors were genetic or learned. Based on a belief that they can be learned, the Search Institute popularized the 40 developmental assets for youth used in education (Richardson, 2002).

The second wave of resilience research had a focus on the process of accessing resilient qualities through coping. In Richardson's (2002) model, this involved the process of responding to disrupting adversity through either resilient integration that results in accessing resilient qualities and growth or dysfunctional integration that results in unhealthy means of coping. Masten and Obradovic (2006) considered the second wave of resilience research to be focused on understanding the systems and processes that cause the resilient qualities.

Richardson (2002) and Masten and Obradovic (2006) disagreed about the nature of the third wave. Richardson (2002) considered wave three as focused on research on resilience as a “force that drives a person to grow through adversity and disruptions” and seeks transformation (Richardson, 2002, p. 307). However, Masten and Obradovic (2006) identified the third wave as resilience research focused on policy, prevention, and intervention endeavours. Masten and Obradovic (2006) considered the first three waves to be behavioural and concluded with a call for a transdisciplinary fourth wave and focused on multivariant analysis. Based on literature since Richardson (2002) and Masten and Obradovic (2006) described their waves, it would seem that Masten and Obradovic’s description of the third wave as focused on policy, prevention, and intervention endeavours is well-founded. There are numerous studies of prevention and intervention approaches with diverse populations to be found.

Resilience research can also be viewed as consisting of different streams. Two dominant streams of resilience research focus on resilience as a personality trait or resilience as a contextual process that allows for positive adaptation to adversity (Smith-Osborne & Bolton, 2013). Resilience as a personality trait is a reputable stream of resilience research (Smith-Osborne & Bolton, 2013); however, I focused on the stream of research that looks at resilience as a process, including the strength-focused perspective of positive psychology and a focus on context. It is essential to specify which stream of resilience theory underpins my research as the

diverse approaches in the field can hinder the evaluation and comparison of findings (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011).

The trait perspective of resilience is connected to Block and Block's (1980) ego-resiliency, which refers to personality traits but does not require the individual to have experienced adversity. In contrast, the process view of resilience considers resilience to arise in response to challenging circumstances (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). A resilience definition limited to personality traits has the danger of placing responsibility for resilience solely on the individual rather than on the context. Resilience is best understood as both specific to the context and as a developmental process (Windle, 2011). A trait only definition of resilience misses both the developmental nature and importance of contextual factors to resilience (Windle, 2011). Personality traits play a role in resilience; however, resilience is best defined as a process or phenomena, not an individual trait. Rather than a trait focused definition, resilience as a contextual process is a holistic perspective that considers individuals, families, communities, workplaces, and policies (Doney, 2013).

Resilience as a process. The field of positive psychology has contributed to resilience research, focusing on the adaptivity and capability of people. This stream of resilience research focused on personal and interpersonal strengths and resources (Richardson, 2002). Resilient qualities described through positive psychology included happiness, subjective well-being, optimism, faith, self-determination, wisdom, excellence, creativity, morality and self-control, gratitude, forgiveness, dreams, and hope (Richardson, 2002). Seery and Quinton (2016) spoke from a social psychology perspective and highlighted healthy self-esteem, positive religious beliefs, and cognitive restructuring as predictors of resilience. In talking about the resilience development of children, Masten (2001) determined that “resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources” (p.235). Resilience is understood as an ordinary human adaptive process rather than an unusual phenomenon experienced by a select few (Masten, 2001). Richardson (2002) also considered resilience to be practical and simple. The process theory of resilience has been applied to diverse fields ranging from information management, military medicine, nursing, and social work practice (Smith-Osborne & Bolton, 2013).

As resilience theory interacted with social work theory, it brought a multidimensional and multidetermined view of resilience (Gu & Day, 2007) that considered context and aligns with the view of resilience as a positive adaptation process (Windle, 2011). Windle (2011) felt resilience

varied across the life span as it is a process of navigating, adapting to or handling adversity through available individual, relational, and contextual resources that allow for positive adaptation. This process view of resilience recognized that accessibility or inaccessibility of assets and resources affect a person's capacity for adaptation (Windle, 2011).

In addition to identifying resilience as a process impacted by multiple variables, it is also developmental, as it changes over time based on protective factors. Much of resilience research has focused on the importance of protective factors and assets in the face of adversity (Windle, 2011). Protective factors are considered resources external to the individual, whereas assets are deemed resources within the individual (Windle, 2011). Gu and Day (2007) claimed that "the nature of resilience is determined by the interaction between the internal assets of the individual and the external environments in which the individual lives and grows (or does not grow)" (p. 1314). From a developmental perspective, threats to an individual's adaptive process arise in the systems of cognition, attachment, emotional and behaviour regulation, and motivation to learn and engage (Masten, 2001). Along similar lines, Ebersöhn (2014) considered individual resilience to be a multidimensional process that combines personality traits, developmental processes, and learned skills.

The terms 'resilience' and 'resiliency' can cause confusion. The term 'resilience' is favoured for a process perspective and 'resiliency' for the trait perspective (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Luthar et al., 2000). However, Richardson (2002) used 'resiliency' to describe the first two research waves, which includes the process perspective and 'resilience' to describe resilience as motivational energy. According to Luthar et al. (2000), 'resilient' reflects the relative nature of the phenomena as an evolving process rather than a fixed trait, wherein a person is experiencing adversity and adapts positively. I followed Luthar et al.'s (2000) use of the terms 'resilience' or 'resilient' for the process perspective and 'resiliency' for the trait perspective.

Related constructs. There are several associated constructs to resilience, such as coping, grit, and hardiness. First, Fletcher and Sarka (2011) argued that while resilience and coping are related, and the terms often exchanged, they are distinct constructs. Resilience is a process that influences the appraisal of situations, whereas coping is a response to a stressful experience (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011). Fletcher and Sarka (2011) stated that "resilience influences how an event is appraised, whereas coping refers to the strategies employed following the appraisal of a stressful encounter" (p. 13). Fletcher and Sarka (2011) differentiated coping as a behaviour and

resilience as a process that involves cognitive appraisal. Coping is part of the process of resilience, but they are not the same constructs.

Resilience, hardiness, and grit are similar in that they are all deemed to help with challenges, adversity, and failure but are also considered distinct constructs (Martin, Byrd, Watts, & Dent, 2015). January (2016) identified hardiness as the oldest of the constructs and considered it a characteristic of those who see meaning in life, align their responses to their life goals, and have perceived control over negative events. Mental toughness is a sports psychology concept similar to hardiness and includes the above three characteristics with confidence, which is a high level of self-belief (January, 2016). Hardiness is not defined by the presence of adversity, differentiating it from resilience.

January (2016) identified that related constructs of grit and hardiness have potential relevance to resilience research. Grit is considered the newest of the constructs and is associated with an individual trait (January, 2016) January (2016) differentiated between the related constructs of grit and resilience, considering grit is to be "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" compared to resilience which is regarded as the "ability to maintain or regain mental health after experiencing adversity" (p. 123). Resilience is considered by Stoffel and Cain (2018) to be an inherent aspect of grit. Resilience, hardiness, and grit are similar in the appraisal of adversity as an opportunity for growth (January, 2016). While these constructs overlap, they have distinct nuances and should not be used interchangeably.

In addressing the problem of clergy adversity and burnout, resilience was the most appropriate construct. It is important to understand the role coping plays in the resilience process but not to equate the two constructs. Grit, by its nature, is focused on goal attainment, which is an important aspect for professionals but not in the same way it is for students or athletes. Hardiness is the construct that has the most overlap with resilience but does not explicitly consider the presence of adversity. Coping, hardiness, and grit are important constructs that offer relevant insights for a complete understanding of clergy resilience. However, consideration of resilience, specifically of clergy in their vocational ministry role, will be the most useful construct for my research with its account of adversity and the process of positive adaptation.

Professional resilience. Resilience research was traditionally focused only on those who experienced trauma, but in more recent years, the term has been applied to broader situations and less traumatic adversity (Stoffel & Cain, 2018). While resilience research began with the study of children, it has since been applied to a variety of professions, including clergy, health care,

education, social work, post-secondary, and private industry (Griffiths & Edwards, 2014; Jakel et al., 2016; Kapoulitsas & Corcoran, 2015; McDonald, Jackson, Wilkes, & Vickers, 2013; Meek et al., 2003; Perez et al., 2015; Potter, Pion, & Gentry, 2015; Stephens, Heaphy, Carmeli, Spreitzer, & Dutton, 2013; Weidlich & Ugarriza, 2015). In the early 2000s, research began to focus on applying resilience theory to professionals and sought to identify protective factors that help professionals resist work-related stress and burnout (Greenfield, 2015). Seery and Quinton (2016) considered resilience broadly to be the ability to manage well to stress in general. In 2004, a pivotal study took the fundamental concepts from the resilience of children and applied them to professions that experience work-related stress (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Resilience research of professionals runs parallel to research on stress management and burnout (Greenfield, 2015) but focuses on those who stay in the profession, having faced adverse events and restored their well-being (Clarà, 2017). Resilience research offered important contributions to professional well-being.

The application of resilience theory to professionals and workplaces has unique considerations. A workplace-focused understanding of resilience includes conditions that occur over a person's life course that enable individual adaptation to adversity and involve building workplaces that support healthy resilience (Griffiths, 2014). When considered from either an occupational psychology perspective or a management approach focused on reducing work stress, both streams agree on resilience as a complex and transactional process of individual and workplace variables that includes organizational processes and culture as part of resilience building (Griffiths, 2014). This perspective acknowledged the interaction of individual biographies with their past and present contexts that impact resilience (Day, 2014). In considering all of the definitions and variables that affect resilience, I define resilience of professionals as a developmental process (Windle, 2011) that arises from a combination of individual, relational, and contextual variables (Gu & Day, 2007), including cognitive appraisal (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011) and results in positive adaptation to adversity (Masten, 2001).

Critiques of Resilience Theory

There are many critiques of resilience theory that were worthy of consideration in applying it to the clergy. In the application of resilience theory to nursing, Traynor (2017a) was highly critical of an individualistic application in which workers are blamed for systemic problems and how policy-makers may misuse this approach to resilience to deflect responsibility. Aranda and Hart (2015) also expressed concern that a focus on resilience can shift

policy away from responding to inequitable situations that cause adversity to arise and instead place responsibility on the individual. A systemic approach recognizes that the work setting can enhance or hinder resilience processes (Doney, 2013). Using an individualistic definition of resilience, rather than a holistic definition, leads to a policy focused on individuals and their resources or traits rather than organizational variables (Doney, 2013). While the clergy profession is not impacted by public policy in the same manner as education and health care, the misappropriation of resilience theory to place responsibility on clerics to be resilient and ignore organizational variables that cause adversity needs critical awareness.

Due to the linkage between resilience and adversity, it is essential to recognize the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic forms of adversity. Intrinsic adversity are aspects inherent to a role, whereas extrinsic sources of adversity are not and arise due to organizational practices and policy (Doney, 2013). Traynor (2017a) highlighted that resilience interventions are appropriate for intrinsic adversity circumstances but may not be for extrinsic adversity. In the case of extrinsic adversity, workers' lack of resilience may be natural and necessary to bring about change in an organization, as responsibility is placed back where it belongs, and the system is forced to address systemic sources of extrinsic adversity (Traynor, 2017b). This critique from nursing has important insight for intrinsic and extrinsic adversity in congregational systems and how to incorporate resilience interventions.

Resilience interventions do not remove the need for organizational policy and good human resource management. One concerning assumption that arises in applying resilience theory to professionals is the assumption that staying in the profession equals resilience, whereas leaving the profession is assumed to be succumbing to adversity. This assumption is not valid as some professionals may leave their occupation as an expression of resilience (Mansfield, Beltman, & Price, 2014), and some may stay, even though they are not experiencing resilience because they have no other options (Traynor, 2018). Gu and Day (2007) considered resilient teachers to sustain a commitment to the teaching role. Mansfield et al. (2014) argued a nuanced relationship between resilience and attrition rather than a direct cause and effect. While attrition is a critical factor in advocating for the support of resilience, it is important to understand that there is no direct correlation between a professional's resilience and staying in the profession.

In the same way, a professional may be resilient but not effective in their role. While burnout may impact a professional's ability to be effective in their role, other factors also impact effectiveness. If a professional is resilient but not effective, other approaches such as

performance management should be applied, as the issue is not one of resilience. Resilience programs may prevent burnout but are not a treatment for those experiencing burnout and are only appropriate where there is a baseline of functioning in the role. If a professional is ineffective due to burnout, then mental health support should be considered. For example, McDevitt (2010) identified negative behaviours and isolation associated with burnout among catholic priests as requiring a specific technique. Interventions focused on resilience should not be viewed as a solution for performance issues or mental health needs.

It is unknown if there are thresholds of adversity that can exceed the resilience capacity of professionals. Even with an approach to resilience where all the individual, relational, and contextual resources that support resilience are maximized, it is unknown if there are levels of adversity that can exceed resilience capacity. The curvilinear relationship with adversity and resilience from stress inoculation theory suggests that high levels of adversity can impede resilience (Seery, Holman, & Silver, 2010). It is vital that individuals and organizations do not consider resilience as the ability of professionals to adapt to never-ending adversity.

Despite the criticisms of resilience research, Masten and Obradovic (2006) contended that "recurring attributes of person, relationships, and context emerge as predictors or correlates of resilience across diverse situations, implicating a 'short list' of probable and rather general factors associated with good adaptation" (p. 21). Masten and Obradovic (2006) suggested that variables can be understood and enhanced to foster resilience. Consideration of resilience research critiques and its application to professionals are valuable to ensure that resilience theory is applied holistically. A review of these critiques can ensure that the personal, relational, and contextual resources found by research to support professional resilience be reinforced by their organizations, but that resilience theory is not an excuse for organizational issues that lead to extrinsic adversity.

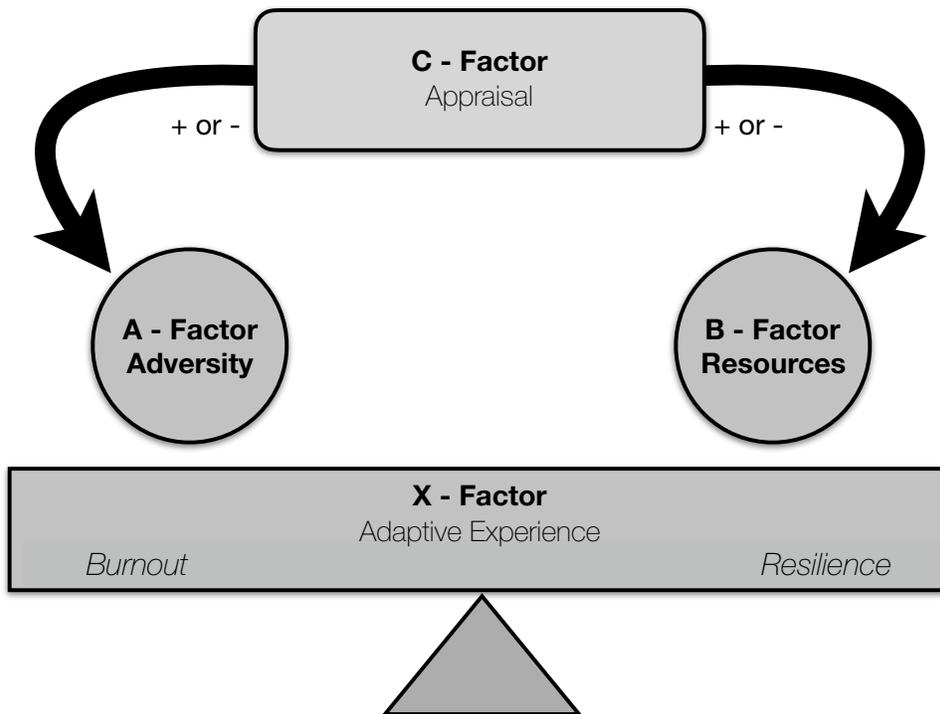
Theoretical Frameworks

Several theoretical frameworks can enhance an understanding of resilience as a process, including Hill's (1958) ABC-X model, Meichenbaum's (2005) stress inoculation theory, Liu et al.'s (2017) Multi-System Model of Resilience, and Richardson's (2002) Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency. First considered is Hill's (1958) historic ABC-X model of family stress, modified by Patterson (2002) and used by Lee (2010) with clergy resilience. The ABC-X model seems to align with Fletcher and Sarka's (2011) emphasis on appraisal in the process of resilience. ABC-X model considered the balance of adversity (A-factor) in relation to resources

(B-factor) plus the appraisal or meaning made of both adversity and resources (C-factor) influencing the crisis or stress experience (X-factor). The ABC-X model aligned with Masten and Obradovic (2006) definition of resilience as "mental processes and behaviour in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors" (p. 14). This definition also aligns with a study by Eagle, Hybels, and Proeschold-Bell (2019) that highlighted the importance of cognitive appraisal in the perception of social support and recommended interventions for clergy that boost perception of social support, such as cognitive reframing. An adapted ABC-X model (Figure 2.1) considers essential variables for understanding resilience.

Figure 2.1 Adapted ABC-X Model.

Source: Margaret Clarke



Note. This figure is based on Patterson, J. M. (2002).

The ABC-X model considers the various variables involved in the resilience process. As highlighted by Seery and Quinton (2016), it is not possible to understand resilience without understanding the adversity a person is currently facing. For example, a high sense of well-being may not reflect resilience, as two people may have high well-being, but one is due to a lack of adversity, whereas another is due to resilience in response to adversity (Seery & Quinton, 2016).

The ABC-X model provides a framework that captures the essential variables of the resilience process.

Another theoretical consideration in understanding resilience is stress inoculation theory (Seery & Quinton, 2016) which arises from stress management and anxiety treatment. Stress inoculation considers moderate levels of adversity to activate personal resources, such as social supports, and to achieve a sense of mastery (Meichenbaum, 2005). Research suggests a curvilinear relationship between adversity and resilience, where those who experienced moderate adversity had better outcomes than those who experienced low or high adversity (Fletcher & Sarka, 2011). Lifetime adversity seems to predict resilience, with resilience considered as a function of collective adversity over the life course (Seery & Quinton, 2016). Consideration of this curvilinear relationship helps to better understand the resilience process over the life course.

The third theoretical consideration is Liu et al.'s (2017) Multi-System Model of Resilience (MSMR), which conceptualizes a multilayered approach to resources with three concentric circles. The MSMR begins with the more influential inner circle of core resilience, including the individual variables, aspects like demographics, health behaviours, and the physiological system's response to stress. The next circle is referred to as internal resilience, which includes psychosocial variables that can be acquired through interpersonal sources, such as social competency, coping and appraisal, and hardiness. The final circle is external resilience, including socio-economic status, geographic location, and educational institutions (Liu et al., 2017). The MSMR is a model that views resilience as a part of functioning in response to everyday stress and is helpful in viewing clergy resilience as a process arising from multilayered resources.

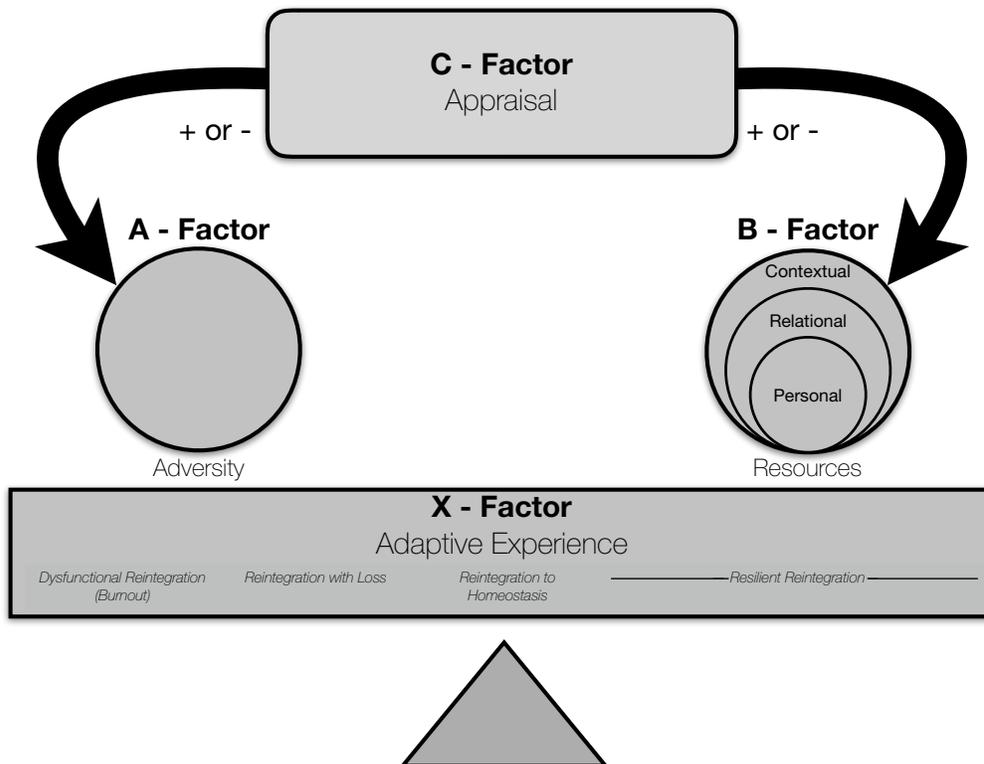
Richardson's (2002) Resiliency Model is the final theoretical consideration and looks at the impact of adversity and stressors on biopsychosocial-spiritual homeostasis and the disruption and reintegration process. Protective factors are deemed to buffer the effects of adversity affecting homeostasis. Biopsychosocial-spiritual homeostasis is considered to be stable physical, mental, and spiritual adaptation to current circumstances. Richardson (2002) believed there to be four possible outcomes of reintegration following homeostasis disruption, including (a) dysfunctional reintegration, (b) reintegration with loss, (c) reintegration back to homeostasis, or (d) resilient reintegration. Richardson (2002) would appear only to consider positive adaptation to be above-average functioning and not to include the near-average function as suggested by Luthar et al. (2000), which may be viewed as resilience depending on the adversity face.

Richardson's (2002) four possible outcomes offer additional insight into the above theories considering the possibility of both reintegration back to homeostasis and resilient reintegration as potential criteria for resilience.

I have modified the ABC-X model, referred to as the Adaptive Resilience Model (Figure 2.2), which incorporate insights from Liu et al.'s (2017) and Richardson's (2002) models.

Figure 2.2 Adaptive Resilience Model.

Source: Margaret Clarke.



Note. This figure is based on Patterson, J. M. (2002), Liu et al. (2017), and Richardson (2002).

Individually none of these theories is complete; however, by integrating components Liu et al. (2017) and Richardson (2002) into Hill's (1958) ABC-X model, a broader model is

achieved. Adapting Liu et al.'s (2017) multisystem perspective of resources into Patterson's B-factor allows for a holistic view of resources. The inclusion of Richardson's (2002) four categories of reintegration provides a more nuanced view of the adaptive outcome. While not illustrated in the diagram, Meichenbaum's (2005) stress inoculation perspective highlighted that the balance of A-variables, B-variables, and C-variables is not a simple equation due to the potential curvilinear relationship between adversity and resilience.

Learning from Allied Professions of Nursing and Teaching

As literature related explicitly to clergy resilience is limited, it was beneficial to consider research related to professionals' resilience generically and consider allied professions, such as teaching and health care, due to similarity in their educative and caregiving roles. Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011), in addressing the resilience of caring professionals, included clergy alongside counsellors, health care providers, social workers, and teachers, as a broad group of occupations focused on healing, counselling, and teaching with many commonalities. A vital commonality of the various caring professions is the use of self in the change process of the professional's work (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Constant demands on caring professionals can result in overload due to the inability to say no to needs (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011). Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison (2011) described clergy as an allied helping field and one where professionals maintain a one-way caring nature of their professional relationships, which requires effort and can be a stressor. Burnout is a particular risk factor for professions that focus on others' needs, such as clergy, making it challenging to balance self-care (Jackson-Jordan, 2013). Understanding the resilience processes of these caring professions is important.

Like clergy, teachers experience a high degree of stress and burnout, and resilience theory is important for supporting both workforces. It would be misleading to apply resilience theory to professionals unless there is adversity experienced that requires adaptation (Windle, 2011). Teachers are similar to clergy in that they encounter adversity through high levels of everyday stress and are more at risk for burnout than other occupations (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012). Teacher burnout is a worldwide phenomenon (Fernet et al., 2012; Leroux & Théorêt, 2014), with teaching being one of the most stressful professions (Gu & Day, 2007). Despite the adversity faced, most teachers do not leave the profession (Gu & Day, 2007). Compared to nursing, the adversity faced by teachers is less trauma-related and is instead

connected to the everyday stress of the occupation (Day, 2014). Similar to clergy, this daily adversity requires a resilience response process from teachers.

Teachers face frequent stressors that include: heavy workload, working with limited resources and supports, challenging needs of students, (Leroux & Théorêt, 2014), expectations of the performativity of teachers and students due to education policy reform (Gu, 2014), demanding school settings, relational and emotional demands of the role (Fernet et al., 2012). Teaching is emotional work as authentic, caring relationships with students, and sustained engagement requires emotional energy (Day & Hong, 2016). In research related to teacher burnout, the work context was considered the primary determinant of burnout and as were aspects such as job demands, absence of job resources, school policies and climate, interpersonal conflict, student behavioural problems, administrative leadership, decision-making participation, recognition, support from colleagues, and professional development (Fernet et al., 2012). Resilience has also been found to be sequenced mini-processes consisting of linked events where adaptation to adversity occurs (Ebersöhn, 2014). While the specific stressors clergy and teachers face are different, they are similar in the nature of it being everyday adversity.

The psychological approach to resilience has been extended to teachers with additional insight from a sociocultural perspective into the contextual nature of resilience (Day, 2014). Day (2014) highlighted this contextual nature by saying that the “capacity to be resilient in different sets of positive and negative circumstances can be enhanced or inhibited by the nature of the external and internal environments in which we work and our interactions with these and the people with whom we work” (p. 641). Professional contexts affect resilience and must be considered for a full understanding of the phenomenon.

The resilience of teachers is a process that arises from the interplay of the individual and their personal and professional context (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). The importance of the contextual impact on teacher resilience is connected to findings that stress abates in teachers who resign (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Gu and Day (2013) viewed teachers' resilience as fluctuating based on personal, relational, and organizational variables embedded in their contexts, such as socio-economic, environmental status, policy requirements, societal values, norms and expectations, and the social dynamics of the teacher-student relationship. Context is unique to each teacher due to personal circumstances and attributes of the school and setting. For example, teachers in the Yukon identified stress factors of human and physical geography, such as limited daylight hours, isolation, travel difficulties, and limited

professional development (Kyriacou, 2011). Such factors are specific to geographic location, illustrating the interplay of personal elements of the professional and context of the organization. This interplay is also a consideration for clergy as each congregation has unique attributes such as geography, polity, and cultural norms.

While the resilience of teachers was a newer area of investigation, it holds great promise for responding to the adversity teachers face. There were limited studies that directly examined teacher resilience, with only 24 studies identified by Beltman, Mansfield, and Price (2011) but more than currently available for clergy. There was a new focus of research on the growing perspective of teacher resilience as relative, relational, developmental, and dynamic rather than an innate quality (Day, 2014). Unlike the nursing field, which tended to take a more individualistic perspective of resilience, resilience research with teachers appeared to be rooted in understanding contextual variables as key to teacher resilience processes.

Clergy and teachers were also similar in their role in helping others to develop resilience. Day (2014) highlighted the unique need for everyday resilience of teachers as the “resolute everyday persistence and commitment” (p. 641) to teaching, learning, and leading. Teacher resilience is also necessary as teachers are expected to help students develop resilience (Gu & Day, 2007), and from an isomorphic perspective, this is not possible without the resilience of teachers. Day (2014) recognized that school leaders need to model resilience to stimulate and build it among teachers so that teachers can model and simulate it for students (Day, 2014). Similarly, clergy resilience is important for clergy to model and encourage congregants’ resilience.

Resilience theory has also been applied to the nursing field. Similar to teachers, literature related to nursing offers insight for clergy. In nursing, several wave three studies (Masten & Obradovic, 2006) investigated various interventions to increase nurses' personal resilience (McDonald et al., 2013; Sigalit, Sivia, & Michal, 2016). Adopting resilience interventions seemed to be connected to the traumatic adversity nurses face as a regular part of their role. In nursing, resilience is closely tied to addressing compassion fatigue associated with nurses leaving the field (Jakel et al., 2016). In articles related to nursing and resilience, compassion fatigue and trauma are frequently mentioned; however, compassion fatigue was less often cited in the education field. Instead, the focus tended to be on the importance of resilience in the face of everyday adversity (Day, 2014) as opposed to traumatic adversity. Clergy have some

similarity to nursing in that they are sporadically exposed to traumatic events but are very similar to teaching in their exposure to everyday adversity.

Nursing and education resilience research both offer unique insights for considering clergy resilience. In nursing, resilience research tends to be more individualistic and focused more on individual nurses' resilience (Traynor, 2017b). In contrast, research related to the resilience of teachers seems to include a broader systemic focus that includes contextual factors (Gu & Day, 2007). The individualistic approach taken by the nursing field failed to consider contextual factors and instead placed responsibility on the individual nurses rather than the organization (Traynor, 2018). The broader approach taken toward teacher resilience may have arisen due to the criticisms of the individualistic approach taken in nursing, or it may have been connected to the different aspects of adversity, traumatic compared to every day, between these two fields. When looking at teachers' resilience, a broader perspective was taken compared to the nursing field, which invited a systemic approach to resilience policy and interventions. The systemic approach is important for clergy resilience due to the nature of congregational life; however, the individualistic understanding also offers valuable insight as congregational structures and organization are often beyond clerics' control. Teachers, nurses and clergy all face adversity in their roles; however, a proactive resilience approach can foresee and respond to problems, ideally preventing outcomes, such as burnout.

Clergy Resilience

Clergy adversity was well established in the literature; this literature highlighted the problem of burnout and attrition, making resilience a worthwhile consideration. While various popular articles cited statistics of a high number of clergy leaving the profession, none can be found having used reliable research methods (Burns, Chapman, & Guthrie, 2013). Maslach and Leiter (2008) considered professional burnout as a problem related to seven specific organizational areas: (a) workload exceeding human limits, (b) insufficient control due to role conflict, (c) lack of reward and recognition, (d) perceived unfairness in processes, (e) interruption of social support and work community, (f) value conflict between professional and workplace, and (g) role-person incongruity. According to Jackson-Jordan (2013), compassion fatigue, avoidant or accommodating conflict style, and high role expectations by self and others, were risk factors for burnout. Further, Grudem (2016) expressed a burnout risk for clergy is the sense of calling to change the world and taking more responsibility than is reasonable. Clergy risk factors for burnout included limited resources, multiple roles and responsibilities, high

expectations, low appreciation and salary, and social isolation (Abernethy et al., 2016). Risk factors for clergy burnout were well documented.

Expectations of personal and professional perfection were significant stress for clergy. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) emphasized the sacred nature of clergy calling. They indicated:

This call, or the desire to serve God through ministry, can arise from a specific extraordinary incident or event, years of discernment, religious mentors identifying an individual as a potential leader, or all three. No matter how the call to ministry occurs, it is always sacred...when someone gives sacred meaning to something, they will: exert substantial energy and time for it... Clergy experience stronger pulls to their work than employees in other professions....(Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015)

Self-expectations due to the sacred nature of their call to ministry can cause stress for clergy.

A key requirement of the clergy is the spiritual expectation to be skilled in biblical and theological knowledge and to engage in personal spiritual transformation and exemplify personal spirituality. There is “the sense of a minister having to *be* a special sort of person, not only in the actual caring and proclaiming work, but in all areas of his or her professional and personal life” (Coate, 1989). A superstar mentality can be demanded of clergy by the church (Bartlett, 1993). There are also expectations of clergy giving but not wanting from those served (Coate, 1989). Clergy deal with others' innermost needs but are unable to share with people at that same level (Irvine, 1997). Further, the employment relationship can result in a demoralizing contractual relationship (Avis, 1992) or in being overly invested in the church's success or failure due to reliance on it for vocational and financial support (Rediger, 1997).

Clergy were also expected to take a symbolic role as a parental figure for the congregation and receive the congregant's emotional projections (Avis, 1992). Congregants expect personal attention from pastors, especially in a crisis, desiring to be known and accepted (Oswald & Johnson, 2010). The clergy carry other symbolic roles, such as the bearer of holy and of eternal truths and values, and the expectation to act as a type of conscience to society (Coate, 1989). Symbolic roles also include cultural stereotypes, such as clergy as a hero (Malony & Hunt, 1991), who is always available, never angry, and a source of unlimited and unconditional care (Coate, 1989).

Historically clergy have held prominence in society due to education and these types of symbolic societal roles. However, this status has fallen in modern society, as the clergy's education is no longer above the average person in society, or the church and clergy have been

the subjects of scandal (Means, 1989). I experienced firsthand this loss of prestige in speaking about my research interest and had numerous people respond negatively by stereotyping clergy in relation to the sexual abuse cases among the Catholic church or the history of residential school abuse. These scandals seem to have led to a more common negative stereotype of clergy and a view that clergy do not play a positive role in Canadian society. Intrusive and unrealistic expectations of the clergy and is correlated with burnout (Abernethy et al., 2016).

Role ambiguity is another significant stress on the clergy. The clergy role has become increasingly complex in modern society, and there is a great deal of ambiguity and confusion regarding the role (Means, 1989). For example, the growth of multiple staff in churches has resulted in more organizational structure and complexity in the church. Multiple staffing has led to a broader definition of the clergy to include more than teaching, preaching, and shepherding. Clergy training has historically focused primarily on theological and biblical matters resulting in clergy being viewed as a specialist in what God has to say through the bible (Blackaby & Brandt, 1997). However, currently, clergy encompass varied roles that include far more than preaching and teaching. Clergy training is critiqued as inadequate in management issues, relationship skills (Dibbert, 1989), conflict management, emotional dynamics, and team-building skills (McNeal, 1998).

Also, as one entering a congregation from outside, clergy are required to attune to the culture and values of the church and local community (Burt, 1988). To lead the church, the clergy must become a part of the church and be committed to it (Osborne, 1989a). As an outsider, clergy may experience difficulty entering the church culture and social system due to an inability to attune relational dynamics and political forces (Irvine, 1997). This dynamic can result in tension and conflict between clergy and a congregation arising from differences. The impact of entering an unknown congregation, especially as a leader, causes stress on the clergy (Pappas, 1995).

Further, Ershova and Hermelink (2012) highlighted two sides of congregational organizations, spiritual and administrative. They emphasized the central role leadership plays in organizational culture and in managing conflict between the spiritual and administrative sides. Hudson (2010) quoted Copenhaver (1990), who emphasized the dynamic and interrelated nature of distinct clergy tasks. The spiritual and administrative roles require different skills, and clergy are judged on both their technical abilities and spirituality or appearance of spirituality (Malony & Hunt, 1991).

Clergy are expected to work within the given polity of their congregation and its structural form related to authority and responsibility. Such structures can cause stress or discouragement in clergy when authority and responsibility are disproportionate (Getz, 2003). Denominational or congregational polity and structures arise from a combination of biblical principles, historical roots and contextual input (Van Gelder, 2000). Davis Olds (2017) highlighted that leadership in congregations is shared among the official roles of clergy and lay roles and unofficial roles, and clergy must navigate this shared leadership. The importance of understanding roles aligned with Dollhopf and Scheitle (2013), who drew attention to the fact that polity and practice do not always align in congregations. Navigating the complexity of the formal and informal polity of the congregation is a stress for clergy.

Additional role complexity is seen in the expectation of clergy to show prophetic leadership in calling congregants to change and spiritual growth (Oswald & Johnson, 2010). Clergy are required to have skill in leading change and transformation in congregations. Steinke (2010) highlighted that while transformational leadership may often be discussed, it is harder than expected due to disruption caused by change, a lack of clergy skill to lead change, and the difficulty in changing mission. Awareness of congregational life cycle and path of redevelopment are further requirements of clergy in an era of congregational decline (Mann, 1999). All of these expectations are significant stressors that clergy face in their role.

Meaning burnout occurs when the sense of calling to one's caring role "no longer gives sufficient meaning and purpose in one's life," resulting in an existential crisis due to loss of meaning in one's work (p. 152). Meaning burnout, compared to caring burnout, can occur when the role becomes routine or when the professional no longer feels they are helping, effective, or making a difference (Abernethy et al., 2016). Abernethy et al. (2016) considered bearing sorrow and being empathic to others' suffering as an ethical obligation of the clergy. Clergy encounter traumatic adversity, but more commonly, they experience everyday adversity, similar to teachers. Understanding the type of adversity experienced is important in the study of clergy resilience (Skovholt & Trotter-Mathison, 2011).

Malcolm, Coetzee, and Fisher's (2019) research on core stressors and core satisfiers for those in Christian ministry also provided related insight into resilience. They emphasized the need for ministry specific measures due to the unique nature of ministry, saying, "responding to a sacred call offers powerful resources to a person engaged in ministry" (Malcolm et al., 2019, p. 314). They emphasize that the absence of stress does not equate with wellness. It is helpful to

understand both factors that contribute to stress and those that bring satisfaction in vocational ministry life, as they are separate dimensions. Core satisfiers are considered "aspects of ministry life often described as life-giving, enjoyable, satisfying, meaningful, or fulfilling" (Malcolm et al., 2019, p. 324). In comparison, core stressors are defined as "aspects that are often experienced as unenjoyable, unsatisfying, uncomfortable, meaningless, stressful, discouraging, life-eroding, or frustrating" (Malcolm et al., 2019, p. 325).

Malcolm et al. (2019) developed the Positive Aspects Inventory (PAI) and the Negative Aspects Inventory (NAI) to assess these ministry stressors and satisfiers. The NAI factors include: (a) role and responsibility pressures, (b) work relationship challenges, (c) challenges to personal spiritual practices, (d) leading through change and controversy, (e) pastoral care challenges, (f) perceived expectations strain, (g) family versus ministry conflict, (h) time and workload strain, (i) financial challenges, and (j) preaching challenges. The PAI factors include: (a) creative initiative, (b) personal spiritual practices, (c) leadership/management practices, (d) pastoral care practices, (e) fostering faith development, (f) vocational calling, (g) social responsibilities, (h) ongoing learning, (i) building work relationships, (j) time and diversity of tasks, (k) community worship and liturgy, and (l) preaching.

Malcolm et al.'s (2019) NAI and PAI have several mirrored pairs, including (a) personal spiritual practices and challenges to personal spiritual practices, (b) pastoral care practices and challenges to pastoral care practices, (c) building work relationships and work relationship challenges, (d) time and diversity of tasks, and (e) preaching and preaching challenges. The core satisfiers were determined as those factors that are "at least moderately positive and at least moderately available to be enjoyed" (Malcolm et al., 2019, p. 325). In contrast, the core stressors were determined as those factors that are "at least moderately negative and at least moderately frequent in occurring" (Malcolm et al., 2019, p. 325).

Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) also considered satisfaction and stressors related to mental health. They identified four categories of clergy satisfaction, including (a) work satisfaction, (b) interpersonal relationships, (c) intrapersonal satisfaction, and (d) family satisfaction. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) considered ministry stressors to be mainly interpersonal. They recommended increasing social support, decreasing social isolation, and decreasing financial stress to promote the clergy's positive mental health. Their study found "10 per cent of participants reported feeling 'very' or 'extremely socially isolated,' with an additional 20 percent reporting feeling 'moderately socially isolated' (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015). Clergy who experienced

congregational support reported greater ministry satisfaction, whereas critical congregants were connected to clergy negative mental health, lower ministry satisfaction and quality of life (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015).

In reporting two primary studies of clergy, Meek et al. (2003) highlighted two key aspects of resilience. The first aspect was work-life balance through intentionality and healthy boundaries. Intentional relationships with family and friendship outside the family are considered to combat isolation. Second, Meek et al. (2003) considered dynamic spirituality central to clergy resilience. This dynamic spirituality includes the clergy's sense of calling, spiritual disciplines to sustain strength and purpose, and belief in God's sustaining work in their life (Meek et al., 2003). Clergy also need support in having a realistic appraisal of circumstances, reconnecting to their calling and vision, and opportunity to share struggles. Meek et al. (2003) made recommendations to proactively supporting clergy resilience beginning in seminary preparation, support of denominational leaders walking alongside clergy and encouraging a balanced life.

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie's (2013) research was a Lilly Endowment Inc. funded project that occurred over seven years of research with 73 US evangelical married male pastors, who exhibited fruitfulness in ministry, and their spouses. These pastors and spouses attended multiday retreats and met in peer cohorts to discuss the challenges of ministry. Based on their research Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie (2013) identified five aspects of clergy thriving as (a) cultivating personal spiritual formation, (b) self-care of physical, mental, and emotional health (c) managing emotional and cultural intelligence, (d) prioritizing the health of one's marriage and family, and (e) developing leadership and management skills.

While there is limited research on variables related to clergy resilience, there are a number of resilience interventions arising in recent years. In addressing the problem of burnout, Jackson-Jordan (2013) advocated for a prevention intervention for clergy focused on self-care, education on resilience, and development of supportive relationships to ensure that resilience is maintained for their congregational and community roles. Grudem (2016) described clergy self-care as “attending to... social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual life and setting up patterns that will promote health in all those areas” (p. 34). Jackson-Jordan (2013) also recommended that clergy resilience be enhanced by educating congregations on supporting clergy health. Clergy self-care and a congregation valuing clergy health are considered by Jackson-Jordan (2013) to foster resilience.

Searby's (2015) book on pastoral resilience is an example of knowledge arising from pastoral theology. It included aspects of biblical studies, spiritual formation, pastoral counselling, and the author's experiential learning as a pastor and as a teacher and mentor of other clerics. Searby (2015) defined resiliency as "the ability to overcome adversity and maintain effective living and leading while experiencing growth" that is developed in community through a cyclical process (p. 7). Searby (2015) cited four assumptions to his approach to pastoral resilience, including (a) adversity is normal, (b) the importance of self-understanding of the influences of personal experiences, (c) growth can result from adverse experiences, and (d) spiritual and relational resources are available to help clergy be resilient. Searby (2015) identified ten principles of clergy resilience as (a) intimacy with God, (b) mentoring relationships, (c) daily focus on calling, (d) emphasis on core values, (e) awareness of strengths, (f) knowledge of weaknesses, (g) good boundaries, (h) emotional stability, (i) rejection of invalid messages, and (j) acceptance of grace.

Additionally, supportive peer relationships, good workflow management, interpersonal and conflict management skills are believed to foster resilience. Jackson-Jordan (2013) also recommended systemic change to address clergy burnout and enhance resilience by developing peer groups, clergy training in conflict management and interpersonal skills, and support for clergy spirituality. Further, Jackson-Jordan (2013), in speaking to the need for productivity resilience, encouraged clergy to have a workflow system that minimizes overload and being pulled in numerous directions. Interventions to foster resilience target both personal and professional domains.

The spiritual dimension of clergy resilience was highlighted by (Meek et al., 2003) and is focused on by other authors. Titus (2006) defined "'spiritual resilience' as the capacity when faced with hardship and difficulty to cope actively using religious resources, to resist the destruction of one's spiritual competencies, and to construct something positive in line with larger theological goals." (p. 28). Spiritual beliefs involve an understanding of good and evil, purpose, and life goals and can contribute to resilience through coping strategies and meaning-making (Abernethy et al., 2016; Allain-Chapman, 2012; Forney, 2010; Titus, 2006). The nature of a person's spiritual beliefs will determine its effect on resilience (Abernethy et al., 2016; Allain-Chapman, 2012; Forney, 2010; Titus, 2006). Spiritual beliefs may increase or decrease resilience.

Further, Allain-Chapman (2012) connected resilience to faith and religion in its influence on motivation and self-appraisal. Resilience is developed in the active struggle to grow in the face of adversity rather than acquiescence (Titus, 2006). Christian beliefs about self-sacrifice, trusting God, and unworthiness and punishment due to sin may inadvertently glorify adversity and challenge a resilient response. (Titus, 2006). Spiritual beliefs affect how adversity is appraised. If it is based on the belief in a good God, adversity is mitigated.

Conversely, if adversity is appraised as arising as a judgment from God, it can increase the adversity (Allain-Chapman, 2012). Resilience is fueled by self-worth, agency and a vision of things being better in the future (Allain-Chapman, 2012). For Christian clergy, hope is theological and a matter of the will that is ultimately focused on God and the “flourishing that he offers” with divine assistance (Titus, 2006).

Along similar lines to Allain-Chapman (2012) and Titus (2006), but from a cognitive perspective, Forney (2010) explored the dispositions of gratitude and hope as cognitive appraisal habits for clergy. Hope links the present situation to future goals and includes a sense of agency to reach those goals. Additionally, Forney (2010) theorized that living into one's calling in adverse situations enables resilience. For clergy, a balanced sense of control involves the paradox of viewing the self as having control over the ministry, rather than being a victim of circumstances, while also acknowledging God's sovereignty in aspects beyond one's control (Forney, 2010). The spiritual dimension of resilience is considered a central element in fostering clergy resilience.

Christianity has a distinct theological belief system that shapes believers' philosophical worldview and impacts explicitly their interpretation of adversity (Titus, 2006). A holistic understanding of clergy resilience is best achieved through the inclusion of theology, in addition to psychology. Religious people find motivation in the ideologies and values of their faith (Titus, 2006). Thus, understanding the spiritual dimension, in addition to the physical and psychological, is an essential element of holism and understanding human behaviour (Tuck & Anderson, 2014). Through theology, clergy bring knowledge of God's guidance amid adversity (Nouwen, 1989). Clergy's theological frameworks affect their ministry and underlie how they respond to adversity (Fallon, Rice, & Howie, 2013). Theological beliefs of hope, suffering, and ministry calling can act as interpretative filters for the experience of adverse events and determine spiritual coping resources, thus influencing the resilience of clergy.

Meaning that arises from belief systems impacts individuals' resilient response and experiences of suffering when faced with adversity. Peterman and Schmutzer (2016) differentiated between pain and suffering. Pain is objective, typically social or physical in origins, whereas suffering is subjective, typically emotional or mental, based on interpretation of an event. Pain and suffering have a complex relationship, as there may be pain without suffering and suffering without pain (Peterman & Schmutzer, 2016). The subjective interpretation and meaning assigned to pain will determine if it leads to suffering (Peterman & Schmutzer, 2016). Theological beliefs generally play a significant role in the interpretation clergy assign to their experiences.

Further, belief systems influence the meaning made of adversity. According to Park and Folkman (1997), meaning involves answering the question of why an event occurred and is considered a critical aspect of existence and response to adversity. Congruence between a person's belief system, referred to as global meaning and the appraisal of a given situation, referred to as situational meaning, is essential (Park & Folkman, 1997). Distress arises when there is an incongruence between situational and global meaning (Park & Folkman, 1997). Global meaning includes beliefs about the benevolence of the world, self-worth, competency, and control (Park & Folkman, 1997). Situational meaning involves primary appraisal of the event's significance and secondary appraisal of what can be done about the event, such as available coping strategies and resources and expected outcomes (Park & Folkman, 1997).

Park and Folkman (1997) considered success in meaning-making to occur when the situational meaning is altered to fit global meaning or when the global belief system is altered to accommodate the adverse situational event. If the situational and global meaning is not brought into alignment, the discrepancy will cause distress. According to Park and Folkman (1997), "religiousness is an important philosophical orientation that affects their understanding of the world, and that makes reality and suffering understandable and bearable" (p. 121). Religion provides global meaning by providing causal reasons and various coping strategies (Park & Folkman, 1997). Belief systems, especially religious beliefs, tend to be stable and most often, the situational meaning is reappraised, rather than the global belief system changed (Park & Folkman, 1997). Clergy global belief systems are the basis from which situational adversity is appraised. The nature of the clergy's theological belief system will impact the meaning of adversity, thus influencing clergy resilience.

Hope in the future fulfilment of God's promises can alter the interpretation of situational experiences clergy encounter. A theology of hope can evoke patience and perseverance from Christians amid adversity. Patience involves remaining strong and calm in the face of suffering, and perseverance involves persisting in attaining the desired goal (Titus, 2006). Patience and perseverance arise from faith in God's promises coming to fruition regardless of current challenges. However, Eggerman and Panter-Brick (2010) found that faith perspectives such as this can also be connected to a sense of powerlessness and resignation to current circumstances as "God's will." Resignation to God's will may be a type of religious coping strategy. Still, it may diminish a person's sense of agency and use of other more active coping strategies to address the adversity. In a balanced theology of hope, hopeful perseverance is different from resignation and leads to increased strength (Peterson, 2000).

Beliefs about suffering are a significant aspect of Christian theology. Two aspects of significance in a theology of suffering are that suffering is recognized as part of being a follower of Jesus, with Jesus as the primary exemplar to follow, and adversity is considered redeemable by God to bring about growth in the Christians life. Both of these characteristics of a Christian theology of suffering have the potential to impact clergy resilience positively. Faith is grown as God redeems suffering to bring spiritual development. Christianity views the current era as one in which adversity and testing occur (Wilder, Charles, & Easley, 2007). Christians are not alone in their suffering; instead, the Holy Spirit is present with them and empowers believers to suffer (Moltmann, 1967). The expectation of adversity combined with the awareness of God's presence in the midst of it is a theological perspective of Christian clergy that enables resilience. However, Christian doctrines can also glorify suffering, martyrdom, and overemphasize the belief that God's strength is best displayed in human weakness (Titus, 2006). Peterson (2000) noted that some adversity is unnecessary, and that common-sense wisdom is a guide to avoid suffering for the wrong reasons.

Clergy's sense of calling to ministry is also a central part of their belief system and results in interwoven personal, professional, and religious identities (Pargament, Tarakeshwar, Ellison, & Wulff, 2001). Scripture highlights that ministers are colleagues and partners in God's work of the "rescue and re-creation" of the world, referring to them as "fellow workers with God" (Wright, 2008, p. 184). A humble self-awareness recognizes God's grace in collaborating with people, despite human limitations, in his redemptive plans. This humility can encourage reliance on God's power for ministry and ensures clergy avoid a 'messiah complex' where they

minister from their own strength (Meek et al., 2003). Clergy can base their self-worth on their ministry success; however, worth found in God's acceptance provides a solid foundation for Christian ministry (Seamands, 2005). As ministry is focused on the needs of others, rather than the ministers, clergy stress and burnout can arise from clergy carrying the burden of ministry themselves rather than being empowered by God (Grudem, 2016; Seamands, 2005). When clergy hold a balanced view of their calling, it allows them to view themselves as actively collaborating with God in his purposes, rather than passively standing by helplessly (Forney, 2010).

Resilience Interventions

Resilience interventions are an area of increasing research focus. Masten and Obradovic (2006) referred to the focus on prevention and intervention as the next wave of developmental resilience research. Atkinson, Martin, and Rankin (2009) highlighted the prevention appeal of interventions to enhance resilience with those who face significant adverse factors and said, "fostering resilience is central to the paradigms of strengths-based practice" (p. 137). However, Atkinson et al. (2009) also cautioned this avenue is complicated by challenges in measuring resilience and limited evidence that building resilience is possible. The uptake of resilience programs is often unrelated to research evidence and can be considered a fad that is hoping to simplistically fix problems (Atkinson et al., 2009). In speaking about school-based resilience interventions, Doll and Lyon (1998) cautioned against a fad-based approach that moves ahead without an adequate research base and encouraged interventions to be focused on known correlations of resilience. In considering means to foster clergy resilience, it was important to note these cautions and construct interventions based on recommendations arising from research findings.

There are some recommendations for fostering clergy resilience arising from literature. Forney (2010) provided an overview of two approaches to enhance clergy resilience. The first approach is developing professional skills in conflict management, change, human resource management, financial skills, and skills to run programs. The second approach focuses on cultivating four personal assets of (a) growing relationships with God, self and others, (b) persistence in seeking spiritual change, (c) a balanced sense of control over the ministry, and (d) belief in the value of suffering for growth (Forney, 2010). Also recommended are clergy investment in supportive relationships, the clergy being trained in healthy boundaries and the practice of gratitude, and promoting self-care that includes emotional, relational, spiritual,

intellectual, and physical aspects (Forney, 2010). In considering recommendations specific to clergy alongside nursing and education recommendations, there are many promising avenues to investigate for fostering clergy resilience.

Authors also make numerous general recommendations regarding resilience interventions or means to access resilience that may align with clergy resilience. Fletcher and Sarka (2011) recommended interventions, such as workshops, that focus on the cognitive appraisal system, including practicing gratitude and the opportunity to build protective factors, such as strengthening relationships. Stoffel and Cain (2018) recommended developmental protective factors such as peer and family support, coping skills, mentorship, and social connections. Richardson (2002) recommended meditation and prayer as a means to access resilience. These recommendations may be promising clergy interventions to study.

Recommendations made for teacher resilience are also worthwhile to consider for clergy as well. Factors to enhance teacher resilience are deemed common resources that are simple and easy for the individual or organization to provide (Johnson et al., 2014). Support for the interrelated levels of the individual, team, and school protective factors (Schelvis, Zwetsloot, Bos, & Wiezer, 2014) allow for the development of resilience processes by teachers in response to the adversity faced. Factors of teacher resilience are considered to be (a) a sense of agency, (b) a strong support group, and (c) pride in achievements and professional competence in areas of personal importance. (Howard & Johnson, 2004)

Additionally, three categories of coping skills in response to adversity are (a) skills to change stress, (b) skills of changing the meaning of stress, and (c) skills to manage stress once it has emerged (Doney, 2013). Strong support is referred to as relational resilience by Gu (2014). It involves individual agency and capacity in maintaining connections and relationships within schools with leaders, colleagues, and students, which become a resilience resource for teachers. Another promising approach to teacher resilience noted by Leroux and Théorêt (2014) included using teacher reflective practice to increase agency through problem-solving and as a potential avenue to develop teachers' resilience. These recommended interventions from the education field may show promise for clergy resilience interventions.

Further, recommendations from health care are worth noting for fostering clergy resilience. Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007) recommended reflective journaling, positive professional relationships, fostering optimism, insight into emotional needs, having an existential belief system, and balancing work and personal activity. A study by McGarry et al. (2013) also

supported the importance of optimism for professional resilience. (McAllister & McKinnon, 2009) recommended education on resilience in pre-service training, the opportunity for on the job learning from practice, and a generative professional culture that includes role models, mentoring, coaching, and supportive colleagues. Based on their study, McDonald, Jackson, Vickers, and Wilkes (2016) endorsed collegial networks, external support from friends and family, purposeful engagement in self-care, and engaging in self-motivating thoughts. Perez, Haime, Jackson, Chittenden, Mehta, and Park (2015) recommended self-care through diet, physical activity, sleep, and a pleasant workspace impacted resilience as well as meditative practices and supportive relationships. Potter, Pion, and Gentry (2015) found that resiliency coping skills of self-regulation, intentional focus on one’s mission in life, relational connection, and perceptual maturity in being true to one’s self and instead of seeking external validation. Recommendations from researchers, specifically those who have studied allied professions of nursing and teaching, provide insight into clergy resilience, offering factors related to individual and systemic responses.

As discussed earlier in the review of relevant theoretical frameworks, Liu et al.'s (2017) Multi-System Model of Resilience (MSMR) conceptualizes a multilayered approach to resources with three concentric circles. Considering the numerous resilience interventions outlined above, it is helpful to use the MSMR's three categories (Liu et al., 2017) of personal, relational, and contextual to identify resource type.

Table 2.1 Recommended Interventions Classified by Resource Type

Intervention	Population	Author	Resource Type
Education on resilience	Nurses/Clergy	McAllister and McKinnon (2009); Jackson-Jordan (2013)	Personal
Workshops on the cognitive appraisal system, gratitude, etc.	Generic	Fletcher and Sarka (2011)	Personal
Fostering optimism	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Personal
Engaging in self-motivating thoughts	Nurses	McGarry et al. (2013)	Personal
Realistic appraisal of	Nurses/Clergy	McDonald et al.,	Personal

circumstances		(2016); Meek et al. (2003)	
Increase social connections	Generic	Stoffel and Cain (2018)	Relational
Strengthening relationships	Generic/ Clergy	Fletcher and Sarka (2011); Jackson-Jordan (2013)	Relational
Strengthen peer and family support	Generic/ Nurses	Stoffel and Cain (2018); McDonald et al., (2016)	Relational
Strong support group	Teachers	Gu (2014); Howard and Johnson (2004)	Relational
Positive professional relationships	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Relational
Collegial networks	Nurses	McDonald et al. (2016)	Relational
Coping skills	Generic	Stoffel and Cain (2018)	Personal
Coping skills to change stress, change the meaning of stress, and skills to manage stress once it has emerged	Teachers	Doney (2013)	Personal
Coping skills of self-regulation, intentional focus on one's mission in life, relational connection, and being true to one's self and instead of seeking external validation	Nurses	Potter, Pion, and Gentry (2015)	Personal
Mentorship	Generic	Stoffel and Cain (2018)	Relational
Generative professional culture including role models, mentoring, coaching	Nurses	McAllister and McKinnon (2009)	Relational
Sense of agency	Teachers	Howard and Johnson (2004)	Personal/ Contextual

Balance of work and personal activity	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Personal/Contextual
Pride in achievements and professional competence in areas of personal importance	Teachers	Howard & Johnson (2004)	Personal/Contextual
Use of reflective practice/journaling	Teachers	Leroux and Théorêt (2014)	Personal
Reflective journaling	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Personal
Insight into emotional needs	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Personal
Meditation and prayer	Generic	Richardson (2002)	Personal
Meditation	Nurses	Perez, Haime, Jackson, Chittenden, Mehta, and Park (2015)	Personal
Practicing spiritual disciplines	Clergy	Meek et al. (2003)	Personal
Having an existential belief system	Nurses	Jackson, Firtko, and Edenborough (2007)	Personal
Reconnecting to calling and belief in God's sustaining work in their life	Clergy	Meek et al. (2003)	Personal
Engaging in self-care	Nurses/ Clergy	McDonald, Jackson, Vickers, and Wilkes (2016); Perez, Haime, Jackson, Chittenden, Mehta, and Park (2015); Jackson-Jordan (2013)	Personal

In considering the recommended resilience interventions for teachers, nurses, and clergy, many themes apply to all these professions. The cognitive process is the most common theme with recommendations related to gratitude, optimism, self-motivation, realistic appraisal, coping, emotional regulation, and spiritual beliefs. Social or relational connections is another theme, with specific recommendations related to family, friends, mentors, and professional relationships. A third theme involves behavioural recommendation and includes self-care, journaling, mediation, and spiritual practices.

It is interesting to note that the majority of recommendations are personal and place responsibility on the individual. There are no recommended interventions that solely target the responsibility of the organization, although several have some aspect of organizational responsibility alongside individual implications. Resilience interventions with these professions seem to be primarily individualistic. To take a more holistic approach to professional resilience, an increased focus on organizational interventions seems warranted.

Reviewing resilience literature related to nursing and education provided some useful context for understanding clergy resilience due to similarities in the caregiving and educative functions. However, generalizing from these fields has some limitations, especially due to some of the unique adversity clergy face. Specific literature related to clergy resilience falls into three categories, as outlined below.

Table 2.2 Approaches in Clergy Research Literature

Primary research approaches	Theological approaches	Integration of secondary research into theology
Meek (2003) Lee (2010) Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie (2013) Abernathy (2016)	Forney (2010) Searby (2015)	Titus (2006) Allain-Chapman (2012)

Four published studies investigated clergy resilience or a clergy resilience intervention directly (Abernathy et al., 2016; Burns et al., 2013; Lee, 2010; Meek et al., 2003). Forney (2010) and Searby (2015) represented a theological approach to clergy resilience. In comparison, Titus (2006) and Allain-Chapman (2012) took a primarily theological approach to resilience while integrating resilience research. This study took a primary research approach to understanding clergy resilience, although it recognized that spiritual beliefs and theology would most likely be a central aspect of what was reported.

Summary of Chapter Two

In considering literature regarding clergy resilience, there were some challenges to consider and exciting areas to investigate. An important consideration arising from the literature is the nature of the investigation of clergy resilience. Atkinson et al.'s (2009) cautioned that resilience interventions could become a fad without evidence that they are effective. There are only three published studies (Burns et al., 2013; Lee, 2010; Meek et al., 2003) that explicitly investigated the process of clergy resilience and one other (Abernethy et al., 2016) that examined the impact of a clergy resilience intervention. As such, it is important to develop a foundational knowledge of clergy resilience before 'putting the cart before the horse' in the development of interventions. While allied professions offered insight into clergy resilience, foundational knowledge specific to clergy resilience was needed to inform the development of clergy resilience interventions. My study sought to expand the foundational knowledge about clergy resilience and provide evidence for future clergy resilience interventions.

Despite the challenges and cautions in resilience research, it is a valuable construct that has the potential to address the problem of clergy burnout. The theoretical framework I used for the study was useful to investigate clergy resilience and gained insight into the unique adversity and resource variable of this population and insight into how it might be fostered in the future through professional development.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As discussed in chapter one, there is limited literature on the current nature of clergy resilience, the specific variables that enable clergy to positively adapt to adversity, and the aspects of pre-service training and professional development that best foster clergy resilience. Clergy face adversity similar to other human service providers as well as other adversity that is unique to the profession. Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families. It decreases ministry effectiveness, lowers the sense of personal accomplishment in their role, and negatively impacts the quality of family life and family relationships. Since clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout, knowledge of the nature and state of clergy resilience may provide valuable intelligence to mitigate these impacts. The positive psychology perspective of resilience research seeks to understand positive adaptation to adversity rather than its negative outcomes.

To reiterate, the purpose of this study was to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. First, the study examined the current nature of clergy resilience. Second, the study investigated variables that clergy perceive as impacting their resilience. Finally, the study explored aspects of pre-service training and professional development to best foster clergy resilience.

In this chapter, I describe the overall research design used to investigate my research questions, including my ontology, epistemology, methodology, and methods. The following chart provides an overview of the approaches that informed my study. The table below illustrates my research stance.

Table 3.1 Researcher Stance

Ontology	Critical Realism
Epistemology	Critical Realism
Methodology	Mixed Methods
Methods	Survey, Interviews, and Interpretation Panels

Understanding my ontological and epistemological stance will enable a greater understanding of the methodology and methods used in the research design.

First, the chapter begins with examining my ontological and epistemological, philosophical stance as a researcher and then considers how mixed-methods (MM) is an appropriate methodology. Quality MM studies involve rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods, including sampling strategy, data collection plan, and an analysis approach that includes integration (Creswell, 2015). Second, methods for data collection are outlined. Next, the reliability, credibility, and transferability of the study design will be considered. A data analysis plan will then be delineated, integration of findings considered, and a visual model of the MM design included. Finally, this chapter concludes with an overview of ethical considerations for this study. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thorough understanding of the MM convergent design that was used, including data collection through a national survey and interviews, with the inclusion of interpretation panels in later analysis.

Critical Realism as a Philosophical Paradigm

Critical Realism (CR) is an ontological philosophy (Mueller, 2015) and a theoretical approach that is advantageous for understanding the resilience of clergy. CR is an international and multidisciplinary approach that is primarily associated with the philosophical work of Roy Bhaskar (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 1998). CR is a theoretical response to positivism in social science investigation (Manicas, 1998) and critiques empirical investigation and the covering law model and its law-like views of causality and predictability (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobson, & Karlsson, 2005; Manicas, 2006; Mueller, 2015). CR views physical and social science as ontologically different due to the nature of social systems being open. Mueller (2015) critiqued positivism, saying, "the complexity inherent in the expression of real-life phenomena defies explanation *and* prediction... adherence to the model and the associated conception of causality are consequently inadequate, and the positivist-inspired emphasis on prediction is also largely unreasonable" (p. 137). Instead of prediction and causality, CR focuses on descriptive explanation and understanding, specifically of the deep reality of underlying mechanisms of social phenomena (Mueller, 2015). CR seeks an understanding of social agents' intentions that are part of any investigated phenomena (Manicas, 1998).

The underlying foundations of CR are critical theory and realism. Aspects of both of these theories underpin CR and serve as its foundation. Critical theory was a response to the objectivism of a positivist approach to social science investigation (Manicas, 1998) that critiqued the positivist attempt to study social phenomena without considering the social factors and contexts that create and maintain the phenomena (Kahlke, 2015). Critical theory is concerned

with understanding the social world to expose concealed domination (Manicas, 1998). Critical research is focused on changing society through critique and challenge (Merriam, 2009). Critical research focuses on the context with consideration of power dynamics in order to question the status quo and empower people (Merriam, 2009). My study was aligned with critical research in its consideration of how clergy resilience is contextually influenced.

CR is also grounded in realism. Central to realism is the belief in person-independent reality, in that what is real, even social phenomena, exists regardless of our observation (Mueller, 2015). Realism is a response to subjectivism and emphasizes that while social phenomena are socially constructed, they are constructed out of something and have existence (Mueller, 2015). Recognizing that there is a reality but that it is difficult to capture, Easton (2010) stated, "critical realists resolve the tension by arguing that the world is socially constructed but not entirely so. The 'real' world breaks through and sometimes destroys the complex stories that we create to understand and explain the situations we research" (p. 120). In this way, CR differs from social constructionists in the possibility of knowing reality (Easton, 2010), even if only in an incremental measure. In this way, CR counters subjectivism through its views of social phenomena as both socially constructed and independently real (Mueller, 2015).

Proponents of realism acknowledge layers of reality with deep structures that include largely unobservable generative mechanisms (Mueller, 2015). Manicas (1998) explained the duality of social phenomena as society precedes individuals while also only existing due to the practices of individuals. Society may be oppressive of individuals, but individuals participate in and perpetuate the society that may be oppressing. In this way, society is both enabling and constraining. Social structures are the creation of casual agents who are capable of transforming it. Through greater understanding, social science can help people exercise their agency to create an enabling society (Manicas, 1998). Realism acknowledges the shaping power of social structures while also viewing persons as ultimate casual agents in the unobservable mechanisms. These ontological premises of realism form a dominant part of CR's foundation.

The combination of realism and critical theory results in CR's unique understanding of social phenomena. CR is not a middle ground between objectivism and subjectivism but rather a unique ontological perspective (Mueller, 2015). Mueller (2015) stated, "critical realism is often erroneously situated as a kind of compromise between the philosophical orientations that, when roughly placed along a continuum, reflect what have historically been viewed as opposite and

incommensurable paradigms" (p. 139). CR includes insights from positivism and constructivism; however, it is not a middle ground between the two but rather a divergent alternative.

Critical Realism and Christianity

As mentioned earlier, CR is primarily associated with Bhaskar's philosophy; however, there was a range of thinkers in the 1960s who developed ideas that would be termed critical realist, with Bhaskar being one of the most widely known and often considered the standard for critical realist thought (Walker, 2017). A group of scholars, including Archer, Collier, and Porpora, explored CR's implications for Christianity. Their critical realist thought development was largely independent of any direct link to Bhaskar's thoughts, resulting in two strands of critical realism (Walker, 2017). Shipway (2004) also indicated an intellectual tradition of employing critical realist thought in Western Christianity and referred to it as theological critical realism. Wright (2011) also detailed this tradition of CR in Christianity, saying:

In 2000 Brad Shipway drew attention to the existence of an independent tradition of critical realism generated by a triumvirate of scientist-theologians: Ian Barbour, Arthur Peacocke, and John Polkinghorne. Shipway's call for dialogue was taken up by Alister McGrath, whose *Scientific Theology* included an extended discussion of Bhaskar. (p. 336)

According to Shipway (2004), McGrath made connections between prior theological critical realist thought and CR, particularly the work of Bhaskar, and in doing this, further developed theological critical realism.

Walker (2017) considered that there was a valuable opportunity between faith and CR. He expressed, "critical realism can provide a ground for rational debate between faith and reason and ultimately can change the way in which people view the world" (p. 125). Wright (2011) also spoke about the value of critical realism in the Christian realm. He said,

it is vital that critical realists do not lose sight of their under labouring role: to subject religious and secular traditions to scrutiny in the light of the insights of critical realism, and to invite their adherents into conversation, will require attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness and responsibility on all sides. It will necessarily be a slow process, one that will require wisdom, patience and intellectual humility. (p. 353).

Shipway (2004) also saw the value of CR to theology and said, "Bhaskar allows the distinction to be made within theology between vertical explanation and horizontal explanation, thus

enabling theology to engage appropriately with the different levels of the world” (p. 195). As discussed CR has value in the study of theology.

McGrath is acknowledged as bringing theological critical realist thought and Bhaskar’s CR together. McGrath (2003) drew these two strands together in his three-volume *A Scientific Theology*. Dew (2011) believed that McGrath’s *A Scientific Theology* was one of the most significant treatments of the relationship between science and theology recently by an evangelical scholar. McGrath’s scientific theology (ST) asserted that theology and natural sciences are related disciplines and that interchange arising from shared epistemological assumptions benefits both.

While McGrath is one of the most well-known Christian critical realist thinkers, others are less known who also offered important insights. Walker (2017) highlighted Lonergan, another Christian scholar who has contributed to CR yet is largely unknown. Lonergan, a Canadian Catholic philosopher and theologian, offered valuable thoughts, especially his perspective on knowing, that are consistent and complementary to both strands of critical realist thought.

Lonergan’s insights into the process of knowing provided important insight into knowledge production. Lonergan viewed knowing as a structured process (Walker, 2017). Lonergan’s four moments of knowing as “experience, intelligence, reflection, and deliberation” (Stinnett, 1992, p. 99). First, experience is the inner experience of outer sensations, which supplies the material for questions of intelligence. Second, questions of intelligence allow for data to be named and relations among data, including humans, to be theoretically described. Third, questions of reflection judge the answers to the questions of intelligence concerning the probability of verification. Finally, questions of deliberation consider the consistency of knowing and doing and ensuring that theorizing is consistent with practice. Stinnett (1992) described Lonergan’s view of “knowledge is attained by experience, understanding, and judgment; it is fulfilled in praxis” (p. 104). This structured way of knowing was a valuable CR insight for my study of clergy resilience.

McGrath’s CR perspective emphasized five key aspects. First, he emphasized the existence of reality independent of human perception. Second, he emphasized that all theories or doctrines are accountable to reality. Third, he emphasized that reality is complex, multilayered, and often obscured. Fourth, McGrath emphasized that knowledge is mediated through human understanding but that there still is some access to objective insight. Finally, he emphasized there

can be varying degrees of certainty about an object of study (Dew, 2011). Dew (2011) stated, “McGrath shows how a critical realist navigates between modernity and postmodernity by accepting the valuable lessons of both periods, without falling prey to the dangers of either” (p. 60). Dew (2011) proposed the McGrath’s critical realism is a favourable alternative to the modern and postmodern epistemological perspectives in theological science.

McGrath offered several areas of insight for my study of clergy resilience in the areas of theology, stratification, representation, and theory. First, McGrath's theological insights were useful for considering the spiritual dimension of clergy resilience in the focus on revelation and centrality of Christ. Dew (2011) summarized McGrath’s ST as:

(1) a response to reality as that which exists objectively, (2) a posteriori discipline, (3) an approach that sees theology as a response to its distinctive object, (4) an approach aimed at giving an explanation of reality, and (5) as a postulate, McGrath argues that ST is, and should be, Christocentric. (p. 57).

Theology is considered posteriori as it arises from divine revelation (Dew, 2011). Shipway (2004) emphasized McGrath’s “argument for the use of a posteriori reflection. The idea here is that the Christian faith's key themes emerge from a posteriori reflection on the person of Christ, rather than being defined by a priori concepts about God and humanity. As a result, the adequacy of any theological proposition should be determined by how well it represents the person of Christ within that theology” (p. 197). Understanding the centrality of Christ and revelation were significant considerations for studying clergy resilience.

Second, McGrath's insight into stratification was also useful for investigating clergy resilience. CR acknowledges that the objects of social sciences are different from natural sciences and that social reality is stratified. So also, theological critical realism emphasized the objects of theological knowledge are also different from those of the social sciences. They are also stratified and require different approaches to be known (Shipway, 2004). Theology is considered a distinct and valid discipline with its own methods of study and has a relationship to the natural and social sciences (Shipway, 2004).

Different levels of reality require distinct modes of investigation and representation (McGrath, 2003). McGrath (2003) identified that stratified reality is consistent with a Christian view of the world. McGrath (2003) emphasized that reality is not compartmentalized into categories like physical or spiritual but rather is interconnected and experienced as a whole. Different disciplines and techniques need to be developed and used to investigate specific

aspects. McGrath's (2003) ST identified eight interconnected strata of Christian revelation: (a) text, (b) patterns of worship, (c) ideas, (d) communities, (e) institutional structures, (g) images, (h) vocabulary, and (i) religious experience. Each layer requires exploration appropriate techniques to observe what may lay behind that strata (McGrath, 2003). My investigation of clergy resilience needed to understand the different strata of the social and spiritual dimensions.

Third, McGrath's insight into representation was also useful for understanding clergy resilience. Representation of reality occurs through words which enable what is discovered to be described and discussed (McGrath, 2003). Reality is also represented through propositional form and images; however, there are limitations to representation, especially in the human capacity to represent the mystery of the divine (McGrath, 2003). Analogies can also represent the divine but must be grounded in Christian doctrine and have authority from the Christian community and divine revelation. However, analogies are also limited and might be misleading in the analogical relationship of the two entities. Analogies are only a partial representation, not a total representation of any reality. Complex stratified reality requires an interlocking series of analogies to ensure a complete view (McGrath, 2003). My study considered the interlocking social and spiritual dimensions, and McGrath offered insight into how these might be represented.

Finally, McGrath also provided a valuable perspective on theory. McGrath (2003) viewed theory as a "communal beholding of reality" involving "active and engaged participation" (p.77). Theory arising from my study of clergy resilience has begun to be developed within the social and spiritual Christian community by including interpretation panels. McGrath's insights related to theology, stratification, representation, and theory were important to consider. The history of critical realist thought within Christian scholarship and the insights from theological critical realism enhanced CR as a paradigm for my study of clergy resilience.

I found an affinity with critical realism's overarching belief in social phenomena as both socially constructed and independently real (Mueller, 2015) as I consider humans to hold a unique place in the world as casual agents having creative power to socially construct our world through the ability to narrate and make meanings. How we assign names, descriptions and narrate experiences is powerful and results in real-world actions. We construct *meaning*, but I see this as different from socially constructing *reality*, even though much of human experience is lived out of socially constructed meaning. Culturally available meta-narratives confine a person's

process for making meaning, but people can also modify or create new narratives as agents. My perspectives aligned with CR in the view of persons as causal agents.

I also believe in revelation, knowledge arising not from human narration but originating in the Creator and interpreted by people through the socially available discourse of their time. I believe humans are whole beings and that the physical, social, and spiritual dimensions are interlocking. As such, physical and spiritual reality supersedes human interpretation and narration, yet our understanding of reality is intertwined with our individual and cultural meaning-making. My perspective on this aligned with theological critical realism.

CR was valuable for understanding the resilience of professionals for a number of theoretical and practical reasons. First, its theoretical foundations in critical theory examine resilience from a perspective that considers contextual mechanisms that may be oppressive (Manicas, 1998); while its realist underpinning acknowledges deep layers of reality (Mueller, 2015). Second, the stratified understanding of resilience moves away from a limiting empirical view to increasing understanding of the underlying mechanisms, emphasizing the importance of open systems, double hermeneutic, and individual agency in the phenomena of clergy resilience (Mueller, 2015). Greater incremental understanding and explanation of distinct mechanisms that cause real phenomena is central to CR (Mueller, 2015). Both societal or contextual mechanisms, such as economics, and personal mechanisms, such as emotional, are considered to be involved in causing phenomena. Each individual is unique in how they are influenced, enabled, or constrained by these factors (Houston, 2001). Theological critical realist thought provided further consideration of spiritual mechanisms, such as revelation, in phenomena (McGrath, 2003). CR proponents recognize the shaping power of social structures while also viewing persons as ultimate casual agents in the unobservable mechanisms. This study sought to understand the personal, contextual, and spiritual mechanisms that impact clergy resilience while also acknowledging how they uniquely impact individual clergy and help clergy to exercise their agency in relation to the mechanisms. The knowledge arising from this study will be weighted overtime in its fulfilment in practice (Stinnett, 1992).

As will be discussed in the section below, mixed methods was the chosen methodology used for my study, not CR. However, my study was influenced philosophically by CR in that I sought to understand variables, contextual, personal, and spiritual, that influenced clergy resilience while recognizing the unique ways clergy may have been impacted by these variables. This study was also influenced by CR philosophy in its view of pre-service training and

professional development as a shaping social structure on the phenomena of clergy resilience. CR provided a useful ontological and epistemological philosophy for this study of the clergy as it sought to understand both personal agency and contextual mechanisms impacting their resilience while also seeking spiritual and theological insights.

A Mixed Methods Research Design

Mixed-methods (MM) methodology was my chosen methodology and aligned with the ontological and epistemological philosophy of CR in this study. MM involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data (Creswell, 2002). MM allows for asking a wider range of questions and provides a more comprehensive picture than quantitative or qualitative methods alone (Harding, 2013). MM researchers may be philosophically aligned with pragmatism, critical realism, or dialectic pluralism (Creswell, 2015).

MM treats quantitative and qualitative data as having equal value (Harding, 2013). However, various configurations in which quantitative and qualitative data may be collected and weighed in the analysis are used in MM (Creswell, 2002). MM methodology allows for the different knowledge arising from quantitative and qualitative methods to be incorporated and provide a deeper understanding of the research question (Schwandt, 2015). Consistent with CR, Scott (2007) advocated for triangulation through quantitative and qualitative methods to compensate for each of the data sets weakness and enable new understanding by revealing different layers of a phenomenon and a fuller picture as one approach compensates for the other. MM can provide data related to patterns, consistencies, and differences with the phenomena to get at underlying mechanisms (Mueller, 2015).

Quantitative measures are viewed as valuable for the generalizability of objects or structures that constrain or enable human action. Qualitative measures help understand people's subjective experiences, beliefs, and intentions (Scott, 2007). Surveys are useful in describing a phenomenon's variables and facts across a population and the relationship between variables in numeric values. In contrast, qualitative research, such as interviews, look at the meaning and how people interpret their experiences (Gideon, 2012). As foundational knowledge of the phenomena of clergy resilience and mechanisms underlying it was the desired outcome of this study, MM is an important approach.

MM is consistent with CR philosophy as it allows for an incremental understanding of the different layers of clergy resilience and consideration of underlying mechanisms. Some critique MM for the mixing of worldviews inherent in quantitative and qualitative research,

which some consider incompatible; however, others consider MM to be its own ontology and epistemology approach based in pragmatism (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2017; Creswell, 2002). Scott (2007) disagreed with the typical pragmatic response to the ontological and epistemological differences between quantitative and qualitative data in MM. Instead, Scott (2007) supported MM from a CR perspective due to its *compensation* which “operates at the ontological level by allocating different purposes to quantitative and qualitative data sets because reality is multilayered, and the different layers require different types of symbolic systems to describe them” (p. 7). In this way, quantitative and qualitative data are acknowledged as ontologically different yet valuable for understanding different layers and mechanisms of clergy resilience.

The use of a MM design allows for both the quantitative and qualitative data and interpretation based on how they agree or contradict the other (Creswell, 2002) and may describe differing layers of reality (Scott, 2007). A MM design “gathers both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative data (open-ended) data, integrates the two, and then draws interpretations based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand the research problems” (Creswell, 2015, p. 124). MM was an appropriate fit with a CR philosophy. With my research questions, both types of data were needed to provide a multilayered answer to the research questions and make recommendations that can influence change.

This study used a MM convergent design with survey data and interview data collected, preliminarily analyzed and then merged and further analyzed by interpretation panels (Creswell, 2015). Triangulation was utilized in comparing the quantitative and qualitative data and interpretation based on the ways they agree or contradict the other (Creswell, 2002). The convergent design had two phases of data collection, and each focused on specific research questions. However, the questions were also considered in how one data set confirmed or differed from the other (Creswell, 2015). MM emphasizes the value of data integration in that when statistics are combined with in-depth stories and experiences a better understanding of the problem arises than from the integrated data than from either on their own (Creswell, 2015). As practical recommendations were the desired outcome of this study, both forms of data were needed.

In this study, I collected data through a national survey and one-on-one interviews, followed by preliminary analysis by myself as the researcher and further analysis with interpretation panels. An online survey collected data nationally from clergy using a purposive

convenience sample through distribution by the Flourishing Congregations Institute with contacts with Christian clergy across Canada. The survey data allowed for a broader purposive sample to understand the current state of clergy resilience. The survey consisted primarily of closed-ended questions with a few open-ended questions. Quantitative data from the survey best answered my first research question related to the state of clergy resilience. Quantitative methods allowed me to collect data from a more significant number of clergy and resulted in an aggregate answer to the research question, which will appeal to decision-makers, such as denominational leaders, who set policy and influence professional development for clergy. Qualitative data was also collected in the survey through several open-ended questions and was valuable for answering research question two and three.

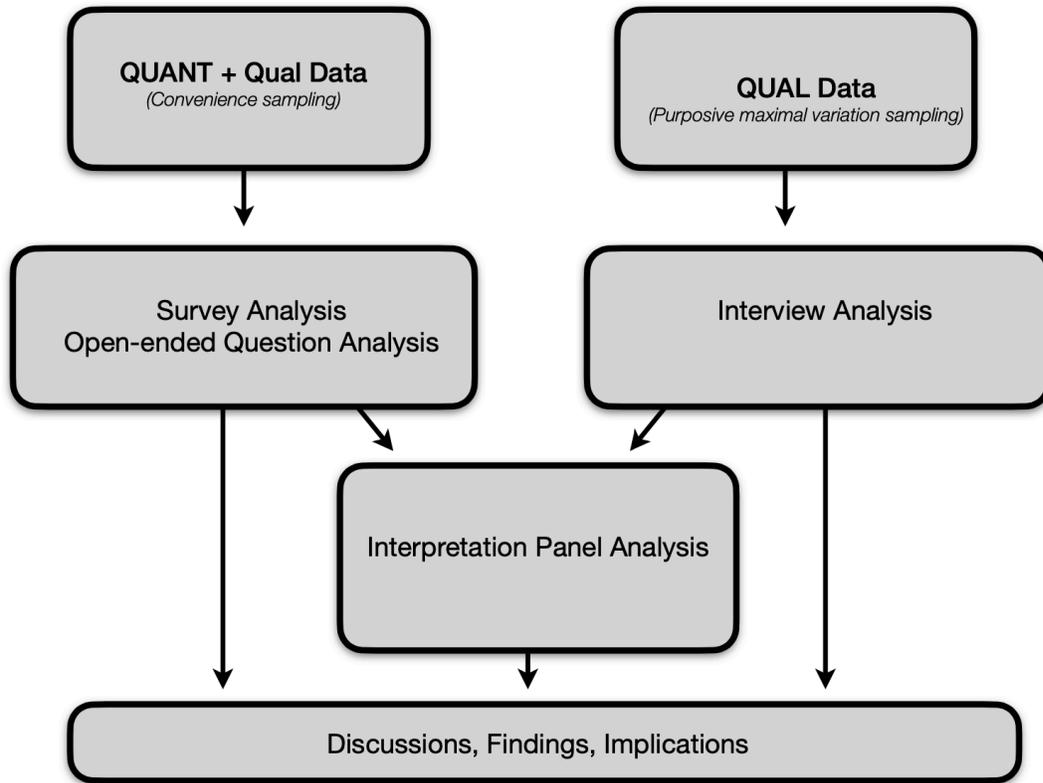
Simultaneous with the survey, one-to-one interviews were conducted. Purposive maximum variation sampling was also used for 13 interviewees and selected a diverse range of clergy who have faced adversity in their role. A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B) based on the theoretical framework was used. Thematic analysis of interview data provided more in-depth insights into the variables that clergy perceive as impacting resilience in their role. Qualitative data from the interviews were primarily considered for answering research question two regarding variables that impact clergy resilience, as it best enabled an in-depth understanding and valuable recommendations.

Interpretation panels composed of professionals with expertise in denominational leadership, clergy education, or clergy wellness were used as a key aspect of analysis and data collection. The panel members further analyzed my preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data. The interpretation panels built on the survey and interview findings resulting in a cumulative answer to the third research question regarding pre-service training and professional development (Cohen et al., 2017). The use of an interpretation panel helped me ensure that the data maintained an experiential grounding necessary for recommendations that lead to practical solutions (Noonan, 2002) and began a communal process for understanding clergy resilience (McGrath, 2003).

Visual Model of Design

The following visual model and description explains the design of my methods.

Figure 3.1 *Visual Model for Mixed Methods Convergent Design*



Data collection through the survey and interviews occurred simultaneously. The survey focused primarily on quantitative data, with qualitative also collected through open-ended questions. Interviews collected qualitative data. Data collected from the national survey and interviews were analyzed, and the presentation of this analysis was central to the interpretation panel meetings. Analysis of the survey, interviews, and interpretation panel informed the final discussions, findings, and recommendations.

Further, Table 3.2 illustrates my design matrix and shows the alignment of my methods with the research questions. This table also clarifies the procedures used and the products that resulted, ensuring that the questions aligned with appropriate methods and procedures lead to the desired end products. Each of my three research questions had specific methods and procedures to answer the question, but the methods also overlapped in answering the questions. As well, all three questions were considered together in the final discussion.

Table 3.2 Matrix of Mixed Methods Convergent Design Procedures

Question Alignment	Method	Procedure	Product
Q1. What is the current nature of Christian clergy	Quantitative data collection – national survey	Survey development	Survey instrument
		Online survey	Distribution

resilience and well-being in Canada, including what types of adversity do clergy perceive as impacting their levels of stress and burnout?		distribution through FCI partnership and two denominations (n=519)	agreement
	Quantitative data analysis – survey demographics and scales	SPSS Analysis Frequency, Distribution, Means, Standard deviation	Descriptive statistics Inferential statistics
	Qualitative data analysis – survey open-ended questions	NVivo 12 coding Thematic analysis	Codes Themes

Question Alignment	Method	Procedure	Product
Q2. What variables, individual, social and relational, or contextual and organizational, do clergy perceive to impact their professional resilience?	Qualitative data collection – open-ended survey questions and interviews	Refine interview protocol and guide Interviews (n=13) Member checks	Semi-structured interview guide Interview consent forms Interview transcripts Transcript release forms
	Qualitative data analysis - open-ended survey questions and interviews	Coding Thematic analysis	Codes Themes
Q3. What aspects of pre-service training	Connecting of qualitative data and	Interpretation panel (n=10)	Semi-structured panel guide

and professional development are described as best helping to foster clergy resilience?	interpretation panel data and analysis	Selective purposive sample	Panel consent forms Survey and interview data infographic Panel transcript
	Qualitative data analysis – interpretation panel	Coding Thematic analysis	Codes Themes
Q1, Q2, Q3	Integration of all data	Interpretation of all quantitative and qualitative results Joint display	Matrices Findings Discussion Recommendations

This table served as a guide for the processes used throughout the study and ensured alignment and organization.

Data Collection

As indicated, data collection involved a national survey, interviews, and interpretation panels and included participants from Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative Protestant traditions in Canada. Several aspects of data collection were piloted. While the survey instrument elements have been used in two previous studies, adaptations in the demographics and open-ended question sections and in some terminology were made to fit the clergy population. The full adapted survey instrument was piloted with three clergy and two researchers to get feedback on the clarity of terminology and questions. Feedback from the survey pilot was incorporated into the final survey. The interview guide was piloted with one clergy interview. Feedback from the

pilot interview was incorporated into the final interview guide. The feedback from both of these piloted aspects was used to refine the study procedures, but data from the pilots were not included in the study findings.

Survey

The purpose of a survey is to gather information from a portion of a targeted population by asking each participant the same questions, in the same way, with the intent of obtaining an aggregate response (Gideon, 2012). For this study, an online survey (Appendix A) used a self-report method. It was distributed to Canadian Christian clergy primarily by the Flourishing Congregations Institute (FCI), which has connections to Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative Protestant clergy. This initial purposive convenience sample distributed the online survey to denominational leaders and clergy directly and encouraged initial respondents to refer other clerics (Gideon, 2012). FCI sent a survey invitation email (Appendix I) to their clergy and denominational contacts, and they also posted the survey link on their website (Appendix K). I also sent information letters (Appendix J) to a variety of denominational contracts. I also posted the FCI survey link to my social media.

Using a non-probability sampling introduced error and constrained generalizability; however, as clergy are a rare population without an accessible list to draw a random sample, a purposive convenience snowball sample was the best approach to reach this targeted population (Gideon, 2012). Following the initial survey invitation, a reminder was sent by FCI.

To ensure the use of a well-designed instrument, my study adapted an instrument previously used for The Educational Resilience and Wellbeing Survey used in a study of education students in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. This instrument was also used for the Nursing Well-being and Resilience Survey used in studying undergraduate nursing students (Spurr, Walker, Squires, & Redl, 2021). This instrument was developed to gain insight into baseline patterns of resilience and well-being in a manner that helps promote well-being. The progenitive survey instrument was assembled by Professor Keith Walker and colleagues and included questions across seven sections: (a) Demographic information; (b) health status; (c) professional quality of life; (d) Cantril well-being scale; (e) Ego-resiliency scale, (f) GRIT scale; and (g) open-ended questions. This instrument provided insights into patterns of well-being and resilience for clergy. Also, using this instrument may enable future comparison of clergy resilience and well-being patterns with teaching and nursing professionals previously surveyed.

In the health status section, respondents rated the eight wellness dimensions of occupational, environmental, intellectual, social, spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial. The eight dimensions were measured on a five-point scale. These questions have content validity as they fit with the World Health Organization's definition of health status, including a broad perspective to include physical, mental, and social well-being (Karimi & Brazier, 2016). Further, this aligns with Lindert, Bain, Kubzansky, and Stein (2015) definition of well-being as "a theoretical construct which encompasses emotional (affects/feelings), psychological (positive functioning), social (relations with others) and spiritual (sense of purpose in life)" aspects (p. 737). Measuring health status and subjective-wellbeing (SWB) is important to healthy living and aging (Lindert et al., 2015). SWB measures require evaluative judgement by respondents that may be influenced by real-time life events or mood (Kapteyn et al., 2015) and present a challenge for validity. However, in a study of SWB measures, Lindert et al. (2015) did find that SWB had a predictable set point and showed stable patterns in normal life circumstances.

An adaptation of the 30-item Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) scale was also used in the survey (Stamm, 2010). ProQOL measured the dimensions of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2010). Compassion satisfaction measures the pleasure found in doing work, whereas compassion fatigue measures burnout factors of exhaustion, anger, and depression and negative feelings and fear associated with secondary trauma (Stamm, 2010). ProQOL is used to measure helping professionals feelings towards their work as a helper and has over 200 published articles (Stamm, 2010). ProQOL has been used extensively in health care and has also been validated in other contexts, such as Spain, Brazil, (Galiana, Arena, Oliver, Sans, & Benito, 2017) and Portugal (Duarte, 2017).

The survey instrument also included the Cantril Ladder, a self-anchoring ladder that uses an 11-point scale (0-10) for respondents to self-report (OECD, 2013). The two-item Cantril wellbeing scale is a self-anchoring scale that gauges individual aspirations and perceptions (Mazur, Szkulciecka-Dębek, Dzielska, Drozd, & Małkowska-Szcutnik, 2018). Data from the Cantril questions provided insight into respondents' overall life satisfaction, filling out findings from the survey's health status questions. Kilpatrick and Cantril (1960) describe this self-anchoring as a "first-person point of view" (p. 158). While there are few validation studies of the scale, Mazur et al. (2018) stated that "for 50 years the Cantril Scale (CS) has been cited as being an effective tool for measuring general well-being, mental health and happiness" (p. 182).

Burckhardt and Anderson (2003) considered the Cantril Ladder to be a commonly circulated measure that showed the most attention to individual perspective and diversity.

Also, a part of the survey was the Grit-S is an 8-item scale that “measures trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009, p. 166). Grit is comprised of two distinct facets of sustained stamina and effort (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). Duckworth and Quinn (2009) found that Grit-S significantly predicted less lifetime career changes. Resilience is an inherent aspect of grit (Stoffel & Cain, 2018), making grit an interesting aspect of consideration. There are many articles published that use grit scales, dominantly in studies with high school and college students. Grit has also been measure among diverse ethnic populations such as Filipino (Datu, Valdez, Jana Patricia, & King, 2016), Chinese (Li et al., 2018), African American (Strayhorn, 2014), Japanese (Suzuki, Tamesue, Asahi, & Ishikawa, 2015), and Turkish (Arslan, Akin, & Çitemel, 2013). Grit scales have been used to predict retention with the military, workplace sales, and marriage (Eskreis-Winkler, Shulman, Beal, & Duckworth, 2014), exercise behaviour (Reed, 2014), metacognition (Arslan et al., 2013), academic success (Strayhorn, 2014), work performance, (Suzuki et al., 2015) medical residents (Salles, Cohen, & Mueller, 2014). Credé, Tynan, and Harms (2017) completed a meta-analytic analysis of grit literature and found that it is moderately correlated with retention and performance.

The Ego-Resiliency Scale (ER 89) was also used and is a 14-item self-report scale for ego-control and ego-resiliency using 5-point scale (Prince-Embury, Saklofske, & Vesely, 2015). Resiliency, rather than resilience, refers to an individual’s personal qualities that allow them to bounce back from adversity (Prince-Embury et al., 2015). In comparison, resilience is the interactions between the environment and the individual, resulting in a resilient outcome (Luthar et al., 2000). Ego-resiliency was defined by Block & Kremen (1996) as a personality trait that enables adults to adapt effectively to circumstances through flexibility to maintain or enhance equilibrium. Ego-resiliency is defined as the ability to control responses to fit the situational context (Prince-Embury et al., 2015). There is no specific clinical application recommended for the ER 89, and Windle et al. (2011) stated that “ego-resiliency may be one of the protective factors implicated in a resilient outcome, but it would be incorrect to use this measure on its own as an indicator of resilience” (p. 8). The ER 89 has been used predominately in personality (Miloni et al., 2015; Vecchione, Alessandri, Barbaranelli, & Gerbino, 2010; Waugh, Fredrickson, & Taylor, 2008) and psychology studies (Baldwin, Jackson III, Okoh, & Cannon,

2011; Greeff & Ritman, 2005; Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, & Stanard, 2008; Utsey, Hook, Fischer, & Belvet, 2008; Vulpe & Dafinoiu, 2012).

Use of the ER 89 combined with other findings provided insight into the respondent's personal qualities that act as protective factors, helping them adapt to adversity. The GRIT-S scale, Ego Resiliency scale, and some of the survey's open-ended questions inquired about individual mechanisms related to respondent's resilience. The other survey scales and other open-ended questions relate to barriers and supports and provide a more holistic view of resilience and well-being, considering contextual mechanisms.

Finally, the survey instrument included demographic and open-ended questions customized for the clergy population. Demographic questions inquired about the nature of the respondent and also the nature of the context and congregation in which they serve. Personal questions inquired about age, type of current clergy role, current full or part-time status, years in vocational ministry, the number of congregations that cleric has worked in, proximity to family and social supports, engagement with a mentor(s) or like-minded colleagues, clergy income, and household income. Congregational questions inquired about the community, type of current congregation, average attendance of current congregation, level of conflict in congregation, and level of congregational flourishing. Demographic questions aligned with the Flourishing Congregations National Congregational Survey, which had been piloted and validated through the Flourishing Congregations Institute.

Open-ended questions inquired about what adversity clergy face and variables clergy attribute to enabling resilience in response to role-related adversity. Specific questions inquired about individual variables, inter-personal variables, and contextual variables that clergy identify as contributing to resilience. These open-ended questions sought insight into adversity and barriers and supports to clergy resilience and well-being. The open-ended questions were a qualitative method (Ponto, 2015) as they do not suggest possible answers, allowing the respondent to answer in their own words (Popping, 2015). In formulating open-ended questions, attention was given to the questions being specific but neutral, inviting an answer from the respondent (Popping, 2015). Too little framing of a question may make it difficult for a respondent to form an answer (Roberts et al., 2014). Collection of demographics allowed for cross-tabulation of findings to see if there are any correlations and variances in findings based on demographic variables (Cohen et al., 2017). Both the demographic and open-ended questions

had content validity as they have been informed by literature on the subject and the theoretical framework. Also, as detailed earlier, the survey was piloted to receive feedback on the content.

Interviews

Non-probability maximal variation purposive sampling was used for interviews with 13 clerics. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select a sample where the most can be learned based on their experiences (Merriam, 2009). My purposive sampling recruited clergy participants who had experienced adversity in their role and could provide insight into the phenomenon of resilience (Creswell, 2015). Maximal variation sampling is a form of purposive sampling that selects participants with diverse perspectives (Creswell, 2015). To gain diverse perspectives, interview participants were recruited from various faith traditions, types of clergy roles, length in ministry, ages, and genders. The Flourishing Congregations Institute research group recommended potential participants. Interviews ceased when saturation was reached due to no new codes or themes being gained from new participants (Creswell, 2015).

This study's interviews occurred by telephone and online video conferencing format and were approximately one and a half-hour in length (Edwards & Holland, 2013). A semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B) with a list of questions or topics to address in the interview was used with flexibility with when these were addressed (Edwards & Holland, 2013). The interview guide's development was informed by the theoretical model being used in my study while seeking narrative descriptions. Interpretative questions were asked to confirm what had been said in the interview (Merriam, 2009). Interview questions focused primarily on participants experiences, opinions, and feelings. Tools used in the interviews included consideration of questions ahead of the interview, writing, and talking (Edwards & Holland, 2013) while focusing on the theme of mutual interest (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A worksheet with the interview topics was given to participants (Appendix C) one week before the interview on which participants were invited to write their insights into the topics. Participants were invited to reference their worksheet during the interview. Some, but not all, submitted them before the interview for the researcher's reference. Some other interviewees submitted them following the interview. Submitted worksheets were reviewed to see if any additional insights were shared and not captured in the interviews.

Interviewing is necessary when the phenomenon cannot be observed (Merriam, 2009), as is the case with clergy resilience. Interviews seek to understand the interviewee's perspective and comprehend the meaning of their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviewee

descriptions are obtained to interpret the studied phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). From a critical realist perspective, interviews attempt to comprehend “the objective structuring of reality” by working with the interviewees’ accounts (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 22).

Interviewers seek to understand how people make sense of their world and the phenomenon of focus from their emic insider's perspective (Merriam, 2009).

Knowledge obtained through interviewing may be regarded as either knowledge collection or knowledge construction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). A knowledge collection perspective considers interviewing as data mining in which knowledge is extracted by the researcher. However, a knowledge construction perspective considers interviewing and analysis as intertwined (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). According to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), knowledge arising from interviews is co-produced by the interviewer and interviewee through the interchange of questions and answers.

There are many skills and processes required for qualitative interviewing. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) described the seven stages of interviewing as (a) thematizing referring to clarity of research purpose; (b) designing the study; (c) interviewing; (d) transcribing; (e) analyzing; (f) verifying the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings; and (g) reporting. Skills in qualitative interviewing include gaining site permission, participant recruitment, sampling approach, protocols to record data, preparing transcripts, general procedures for analysis, specifics of coding, use of NVivo software, validity strategies, and understanding how the researcher impacts interpretations (Creswell, 2015). Also, procedures and tools required for interviews include an invitation and information letter about the research, consent form, recording equipment, interview guide (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Further, it is important to consider the interview setting, considering factors such as convenience, privacy, comfort for the interviewee, absence of interruptions, and ability to record (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Before the interviews, my participants reviewed the informed consent form (Appendix D), had the opportunity to ask questions, and sign the consent. The interviews began with a brief description of the subject being discussed, the purpose of the interview, the interview recording, and allowed for questions from the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I created an atmosphere where interviewees felt safe to talk openly about their experiences and perspectives by attending to power dynamics myself and the interviewee (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Power differentials between the researcher and interviewee may arise from aspects such as social status

and class, gender, age, and race will be considered in the interview process (Edwards & Holland, 2013). My skill as a professional therapist in recognizing power differentials was helpful in my research role. Allowing interviewees to ask any questions that they might have about me helped them to feel comfortable in our interview. Also, clearly outlining confidentiality, the anonymity of reporting, and the opportunity for participants to review and edit their transcripts following the interview helped create a comfortable atmosphere. Interviews concluded with an opportunity for the interviewee to talk about their experience of the interview.

Due to my profession as a therapist, it is important to note the difference between research interviewing and therapeutic interviewing. Therapeutic interviews are focused on change through the interaction of the client and therapist. While both research and therapeutic interviews focus on understanding, the purpose of research interviews is knowledge production (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Despite these differences in purpose, research interviewing draws on the skills used in therapeutic interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Emotions in research interviews must be attended as they provide important information and make the interview process intensely personal for the researcher (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Psychotherapeutic researchers may have been able to go further than academic interview researchers to inquire about human phenomena and manage the emotional impact due to their professional skills (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The professional skills I have honed for therapeutic interviewing were valuable in my research interviews.

To review, the process for the interview was: (a) review of informed consent, an overview of the research project, and opportunity for interviewee questions, (b) opportunity for the interviewee to introduce themselves, (c) interview guide questions, and (d) debrief and next steps. Interviews were transcribed by me using online transcription software. Transcripts were cleaned for clarity without changing any interviewee meaning. Interviewees reviewed their transcripts as a member check and had the opportunity to edit and delete any content before signing a transcript release form (Appendix H). As stated in the consent form, participants could withdraw their consent to participate at any point prior to completing their transcript release form. Once interviewees confirmed and released their transcript and preliminary data analysis began, they could no longer withdraw consent.

Interpretation Panel

The inclusion of interpretation panels was both a data collection and analysis process. The interpretation panel participants were treated as research participants from whom data were

collected and were required to complete an informed consent form (Appendix E). However, the panels were also a key aspect of data analysis in this study. Panel members provided collaborative analysis by integrating the quantitative and qualitative data, especially to answer research question three regarding aspects of pre-service training and professional development that foster clergy resilience. The interpretation panels were similar to focus groups but had an alternate purpose (Noonan, 2002). Focus groups are used for data collection; whereas, Noonan (2002) described interpretation panels as occurring after data collection and preliminary analysis and as a further aspect of the analysis process. The interpretation panels in my study were a key instrument of triangulation both in data collection and analysis.

I used purposive maximal variation sampling to recruit ten panel members from those with experience as clergy, in educating clergy, in denominational leaders, and in providing psychosocial support to the clergy. The Flourishing Congregations Institute research group recommended panel members. There were two interpretation panel meetings of five members each which met for two hours online. The interpretation panel agenda (Appendix F) included a presentation of the survey and interview findings (Appendix G), with the exclusion of the ProQOL scale findings due to challenges in interpreting the results provided by the lab. The interpretation panels had an important focus on research question three related to pre-service training and professional development. The panels' process included a presentation of the preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data allowing for members feedback and discussion on how these findings fit or did not fit with their own experience. The interpretation panels provided key input for research question three. The interpretation panel meetings were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the national survey were analyzed using SPSS software. Skills required for analyzing the survey data include data cleaning procedure, return rate analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis, effect size and confidence intervals, and table type to convey statistics (Creswell, 2015). The analysis considered missing data; frequencies, and percentages; cross-tabulation of relationships among variables; measures of central tendency; and correlations and associations among variables. Stratifying regional responses from a national survey allowed for consideration of regional and national outcomes (Gideon, 2012). Survey results were also examined for associations between demographics. Reporting on survey findings must include a balanced view and not be biased toward the researcher's hypothesis or theory

(Gideon, 2012). The Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research (formerly called the Social Science Research Lab) at the University of Saskatchewan was used to analyze the data.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and interviews were analyzed by me using NVivo software for thematic analysis (TA). TA is a theoretically flexible analytic method that involves finding and analyzing patterns across the data set through the researcher taking an active role (Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA allows for data to be described in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research's theoretical approach and values affect their analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While TA is theoretically neutral, it is important for the theory or philosophy of the researcher to be made explicit to understand the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The six phases of TA include: (a) immersion in the data, (b) coding, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Analysis of the interview data involved consolidating, reducing, and interpreting and then organized by codes and themes that explain the data (Merriam, 2009). Analysis can be approached from an inductive or theoretical approach; when using a theoretical approach, the theory impacts coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As I used a theoretical framework to guide my study, some codes or themes were determined in advance from the literature; however, TA allowed other codes and themes to emerge (Merriam, 2009). Initial data analysis began with coding each transcript, noting potentially relevant answers to the research question, leading to the inductive construction of additional themes and subthemes, representing recurring patterns in the data (Merriam, 2009). However, as data analysis progressed, the process became more deductive. The analysis involved reviewing the data for themes to confirm the themes from the theoretical framework, and the themes discovered earlier in the analysis (Merriam, 2009). In this way, coding was both deductive and inductive at the beginning stages and became increasingly deductive as the analysis progressed.

Data memos were a tool used to identify conceptual themes that underlie various codes and then by returning to the transcript data to analyze where else it occurs (Harding, 2013). Following this, sub-categories were established for the conceptual theme to capture different aspects of it (Harding, 2013). Conceptual themes may be used to explain the differences between the data (Harding, 2013). In determining themes, variables related to the importance of the element and prevalence in the data were considered (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the analysis, the researcher must consider if they are analyzing the whole data set or only one aspect (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). As clergy resilience is an under-researched area, analysis of the whole data set was particularly useful (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Identifying conceptual themes was a research finding in its own right and involved a creative process in which the researcher interpreted what lies beneath the data's surface. Themes can arise from commonality seen across different sections of interviews and codes (Harding, 2013). Conceptual themes may not be referred to directly in the data. Still, they may be an underlying aspect that the researcher draws out through ongoing review of transcripts and analysis focused on the relationship of different elements (Harding, 2013). Following categorization of themes, another level of analysis may include theory generation in which links are made between the themes (Merriam, 2009). Theory building in qualitative research is most often focused on micro-theory, which identifies common elements of a phenomenon (Harding, 2013).

As discussed earlier, a key aspect of data analysis in this study was the use of thematic analysis and also interpretation panels to provide collaborative analysis through the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data, especially to answer research question three regarding aspects of pre-service training and professional development that foster clergy resilience. As the researcher, I was the primary instrument for collecting the interview data and preliminary analysis, which resulted in my study having a distinct contribution to knowledge on the subject (Merriam, 2009). However, a danger of analysis is that the researcher is the dominant figure in determining the meaning and may shape it to fit with their theoretical view (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The inclusion of interpretation panels incorporated interpretation of the survey and interview analysis adding collaborative interpretation, leading to richer findings. Following the interpretation panel, I further analyzed the data from the panels using TA. The data from the interpretation panel was key in answering research question three and was also important for data triangulation for all research questions.

As I wanted clerics from across Canada to find points of identification in my study, I have presented the data in a more inclusive rather than less inclusive fashion. I have been intentional in providing thick descriptions in reporting the findings. The intent of this inclusive and comprehensive description of the data is so that more clerics may relate to the findings. The consequence of this is a longer dissertation document, but this is a deliberate choice I have made.

Theoretical Framework and Data Analyses

A theoretical framework is a researcher's stance to the study, including expectations, theories, and beliefs that inform the research (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) emphasized that research is never atheoretical. It is important to identify the theory informing a study as it informs the questions asked, the data attended to, and the interpretations made. A theoretical framework, referred to as the Adaptive Resilience Model (Figure 2.2), was used in this study. Several existing theoretical frameworks provided insight into resilience as a process, including Patterson's (2002) ABC-X model, Meichenbaum's (2005) stress inoculation theory, Liu et al.'s (2017) Multi-System Model of Resilience, and Richardson's (2002) Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency. However, individually none of these theories was complete. The Adaptive Resilience Model (ARM) integrated aspects of these models. I formed this theoretical framework earlier in the research process through an iterative process of reviewing relevant literature and considering the problem being studied (Merriam, 2009).

Incorporating the multisystem perspective of resources from Liu et al.'s (2017) MSMR into Patterson's (2002) B-factor allows for a holistic view of resources. The inclusion of Richardson's (2002) four categories of reintegration into Patterson's (2002) ABC-X model provides for a more nuanced view of the adaptive outcome. While not illustrated in the diagram, Meichenbaum's (2005) stress inoculation perspective highlighted that the balance of A-variables, B-variables, and C-variables is not a simple equation due to the potential curvilinear relationship between adversity and resilience.

When using a theoretical framework, it is important to describe how the theory will inform the MM phases (Creswell, 2015). In this study, the A, B, C, and X variables from the ARM guided the development of research questions, the open-ended survey questions, and the interview guide. Also, the A, B, C, and X variables were themes of consideration when analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative data. While using the ARM as a theoretical framework, priority was given to allow the data to speak, not force categorization of themes, and allow for divergent, contradictory, or new findings to emerge.

Triangulation and Integration of Findings

Triangulation of both the data collection and analysis was used in this study. Data triangulation occurred as data was drawn from several sources, thereby building evidence for codes and themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Data triangulation occurred through member

checks of interview transcripts. Interview participants confirmed that the transcript accurately reflected their meaning and provided an opportunity for them to clarify if needed.

In addition to data collection triangulation, triangulation was used in data analysis through the interpretation panels. First, the panels provided triangulation of data, as panel members considered both the survey and interview findings and how they confirmed or contradicted their own experience. The interpretation panels were also involved in the triangulation of analysis as they help answer research question three related to pre-service training and professional development.

Integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a MM study can occur in data collection or analysis or both (Creswell, 2015). In this study, integration occurred at data collection by including open-ended qualitative questions in the national survey. The interpretation panels also played a key role in an integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

The interpretation panels were presented a preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data and invited to interpret these findings further. The panel process was first focused on the panels' perspectives on how the findings confirm or deviate from their understanding of the clergy resilience. Next, the panels were invited to provide insight into research question three based on the findings and their experiences. Panel members were queried about their vision for pre-service training and professional development that will best foster clergy resilience.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

With a mixed-method study, it was important to consider validity from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. With both, I considered pragmatic validation an overarching consideration of this study. A pragmatic approach to validity focuses on the practical consequences of the knowledge produced (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Pragmatic validation focuses on the knowledge's ability to instigate change (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) stated, "a pragmatic approach implies that truth is whatever assists us to take actions that produce the desired results" (p. 259). This study sought to improve organizational practices that impact clergy resilience by influencing leaders and decision-makers (Merriam, 2009). I consider *helpfulness* the rational basis for determining if knowledge from this study is valid. Whether the knowledge is helpful for the clergy's lived experience will be a central factor in determining its ultimate validity. Further, as the researcher, I must have credibility with the knowledge users if the research report stimulates action and if there is to be audience validation

(Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The ultimate test of the legitimacy of knowledge is its application to address problems and improve lived experience.

Quantitative Considerations

With MM research, it is important to address validity checks for both the quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure strategies that allow for accurate assessment of the combined data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Construct validity is crucial for quantitative data ensuring that the construct being measured is meaningfully reflected in the instrument scores and that there is a consistency of scores over time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A poorly designed survey can result in low reliability and validity (Gideon, 2012). Poorly designed instruments that fail to consider social desirability, sensitive questions, or question construction can affect non-response errors for the entire survey or specific questions (Gideon, 2012). While statistical adjustments can counteract non-response (Gideon, 2012), it is best to ensure a well-designed instrument. This study used an adapted version of the Nursing Well-being and Resilience Survey (Spurr et al., 2021), which includes (a) demographics, (b) health status, (c) professional quality of life measure, (d) Cantril scale, (e) Grit scale, and (f) open-ended questions. As discussed earlier, the scales used in this instrument have been shown to be reliable and valid. Adapting an instrument that has been previously used, ensured consistency and piloting it with the specific population for this study also ensured reliability in question construction.

Qualitative Considerations

Craftsmanship validation is central for qualitative data and scrutinizes the quality of the study and the soundness of the theory underlying the study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The validity of the qualitative data must consider whether the method chosen investigated the research question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Validation considers study methods, theorizing, and every stage of knowledge production (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The stated methodology and method of a study are important for assessing validity (Harding, 2013). For validity, studies must consider findings that do not fit with the patterns identified and consider alternate explanations (Harding, 2013). Findings can be further validated by triangulating data by including multiple data sources that confirm emerging findings and give credibility to a study (Merriam, 2009). Quality craftsmanship that is transparent allows the conclusions to speak for themselves regarding their inherent truth (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Further, it is important to consider Lincoln and Guba's (1986) criteria for the trustworthiness of qualitative research, which include credibility, transferability, dependability,

and confirmability. The credibility of the qualitative data will involve check finding through a critical look for potential biased interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Objectivity can be viewed as knowledge free from personal bias through reflexivity of researcher prejudices, checked through communication validation between interviewer and interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Keeping a research diary with research memos throughout the process enables a researcher to be reflexive about key decisions and rationale made throughout analysis (Harding, 2013).

Reliability arises from consistency and trustworthiness throughout the data collect and analysis process (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Reliability for qualitative findings is not concerned with whether the findings can be replicated but rather “whether the results are consistent with the data collected,” which is determined through triangulation, peer review, researcher position, and audit trail detailing the research journey, including collection, analysis, and decision-making process (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). Interview participants were provided member checks of their transcripts as a means to increase reliability. The interpretation panels provided further reliability through triangulation of data and analysis and as an aspect of member checking. Some of the panel members also had experience as clergy, thereby increasing credibility. Also, thorough referencing of all study data-enhanced reliability. Finally, a rigorous academic process involving a supervisor and committee ensured dependability and confirmability of the findings.

Interviews are limited in generalizability; however, the trustworthiness of the findings was increased by an interpretation panel. Transferability of findings, especially the qualitative findings, was enhanced by providing a detailed description of interviewees and maximum variation in the sample, allowing for a greater application to readers (Merriam, 2009). The contextual nature of interview knowledge means that it is not automatically generalizable (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, knowledge from interviews may be transferrable to other relevant situations through naturalistic generalization or analytical generalization, rather than statistical generalization (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). With naturalistic generalization, experience informs a person about what they might expect (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In analytical generalization, the reader determines if the interview studies generalize to other situations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Due to the quantitative nature, the national survey findings are generalizable due to the number of respondents.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent and confidentiality were key ethical issues that were considered for all aspects of this MM study. In addition to these, consequences for interviewees and the interviewer's role in ensuring morally responsible research were considered for the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). My completion of the TCPS:2 course (Appendix L) provided a foundation for this study's ethical understanding. Protection of participant confidentiality was discussed previously in this chapter under data collection and storage. Participants in this study were not compensated by any means, although all were offered a copy of the final report.

Informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the online survey when participants read the consent. At the start of the survey, participants were informed about the nature of the research, that their responses were anonymous, and that they could exit the survey at any point if they do not wish to participate. Participants could withdraw by exiting the survey until the last question, when "submit" was selected.

Informed consent for interview participants was obtained in writing before beginning the interview. The consent form was shared with participants in the screening process to aid in their decision making about participating in the interview. Before the actual interview, participants signed and returned the consent form. Similarly, interpretation panel members had the opportunity to review the consent form and ask questions. Once the potential panel member indicated their understanding of the interpretation panel process and their desire to participate, they signed and returned the consent form.

Data were accessed on my password-protected personal computer and stored on my USask cloud storage. Interview and interpretation panel data were digitally recorded and then moved to USask cloud storage and identified by participant code rather than name. Data will be retained for five years, after which it will be deleted following university procedure.

As the researcher, I have the names and contact information for interview and interpretation panel participants and any survey participants who requested the final report. Personal information was not linked to participant data, and I have kept all participant identities confidential. Raw data was accessible by myself and my dissertation supervisor, Dr Keith Walker.

My insider status as a clergy spouse was an area of ethical consideration. While my insider status afforded me trust and credibility with participants and knowledge users, it also necessitated that I am aware of my biases (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). As Dwyer and Buckle

(2009) suggested, such bias can be overcome by closely monitoring personal perspectives through bracketing and a genuine curiosity about participants' experience and commitment to represent it. The inclusion of interpretation panels in my MM design further helped to expose and mitigate my personal biases in the findings. Consideration of my insider status causing any power imbalance or threats to confidentiality were considered in the recruitment process, especially for interview and interpretation panel participants.

Summary of Chapter Three

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the methodology and methods used to investigate my study of clergy resilience, including details on how the study was conducted. This chapter began with an overview of the philosophy of critical realism and how it impacts my epistemological stance as a researcher and the decision to use mixed-methods methodology. Following this, I addressed the specifics of my MM design, including quantitative and qualitative methods used for data collection, sampling strategies, analysis plan, and a visual model of the design. Next, validity, reliability, credibility, and transferability were discussed. Following this was a summary of my theoretical framework that informed the study. Finally, the chapter concluded with a synopsis of ethical considerations for this study. This chapter's intended outcome was to provide a thorough understanding of the MM convergent design used in my study, including data collection through a national survey and interview, with the inclusion of interpretation panels in the collection and analysis phases.

Data collection through the national survey occurred in June-July 2020, and individual interviews occurred June-August 2020. Preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data occurred during September-November 2020. The interpretation panel meetings occurred in December 2020, with the final data analysis being completed in December 2020. The next three chapters report the study findings, beginning with Chapter Four: Survey Findings.

Chapter Four: Survey Findings

I begin this chapter by reviewing my research purpose and questions. Following this will be (a) a review of survey data collection, (b) description of survey and interview participants, (c) quantitative scale findings related to status of clergy wellness and resilience, (d) survey open-ended question thematic findings about adversity experienced, (e) survey open-ended question thematic findings related to supportive resources, (f) survey open-ended question thematic findings about desired initiatives, (g) survey open-ended question COVID-19 findings, and (h) chapter summary.

To ensure the credibility of this research direct quotes from survey data are used. Every quote is followed by parenthesized information that relays transcript information. For example, a quote from a survey participant would be indicated by (S, Q2, line 13). The S indicates it is a survey quote, Q2 indicates it comes from survey question two, and line 13 indicates where it can be found in the survey data document (transcript).

Review of Research Purpose and Questions

As indicated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada in order to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. This mixed methods study explored three main research questions:

1. What is the current nature of Christian clergy resilience and well-being in Canada, including what types of adversity do clergy perceive as impacting their levels of stress and burnout?
2. What variables, individual, social and relational, or contextual and organizational, do clergy perceive impact their professional resilience?
3. What aspects of pre-service training and professional development are described as best helping to foster clergy resilience?

For this study three methods were used to engage participants about these questions and collect data including a survey, interviews, and interpretation panels. As mentioned in chapter one under delimitations, this study occurred during COVID-19 and the impact of this on the survey findings must be considered all encompassing.

Description of Survey Data Collection and Participants

Data collection involved a national survey and included participants from Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative Protestant traditions in Canada. The survey questionnaire was piloted prior to use and feedback was incorporated into the final versions. The self-report online survey (Appendix A) was used and data collection occurred from June 5, 2020 until July 31, 2020. The survey included questions about (a) demographic information; (b) health status; (c) professional quality of life; (d) Cantril wellbeing scale; (e) Ego-resiliency Scale, (f) GRIT scale; and (g) open-ended questions.

The survey was distributed to a purposive sample of Canadian Christian clergy in collaboration with the Flourishing Congregations Institute through their website, social media, and emails. I also collaborated with four of the Christian and Missionary Alliance districts and the Church of God (Indiana) to have the survey link shared by the denomination with their clerics. Finally, after approximately one month of the survey administration the denominations of participants were reviewed. Several denominations with lower participation rates were targeted by harvesting publicly available contacts. The targeted denominations were Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Canada, and Orthodox Church of America, in order to further ensure wider denominational participation.

There were 519 completed surveys submitted. Female participants represented 25.2% and male 74.2%. Of those who responded 17.4% were under 39 years old, 50.3% were 40-59, and 32.2% were over 60. For marital status 76.9% indicated married, 16.4% indicated single, 5% indicated separated or divorced, and 0.8% indicated common-law or other. There were 24.3% of respondents who indicated that they have no children, 35.4% who have one or two children, 35.3% who have three or four children, and 3.3% who had more than four children. The largest percentage of participants were from Ontario with 36.2%, followed by Alberta at 19.1%, Saskatchewan at 16.2%, BC at 14.5, Manitoba at 3.9%, Quebec at 3.5%, Newfoundland/Labrador at 2.5%, New Brunswick at 1.7%, Nova Scotia at 1.5%, and Treaty area at 1.0%.

Participants were asked about the distance they lived from family supports. The table below indicates the distance lived from family supports.

Table 4.1 Distance Lived from Family Support

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Under 25 km	169	32.6
25-99 km	71	13.7

100-299 km	77	14.8
300-499 km	46	8.9
500-699 km	25	4.8
Over 700 km	127	24.5
I'd prefer not to answer	4	0.8
Total	519	100

The largest group of participants (32.6%) lived under 25 km from family supports. Whereas, the second largest group (24.5 %) lived over 700 km from family supports. The extremes of these two groups is interesting to note.

Participants were also asked about the distance they lived from personal support. The table below indicate the distance lived from personal support. The highest group was under 25 km with over half of the participants indicating that they have nearby personal supports.

Table 4.2 Distance Lived from Personal Support

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Under 25 km	286	55.1
25-99 km	85	16.4
100-299 km	49	9.4
300-499 km	21	4.0
500-699 km	10	1.9
Over 700 km	62	11.9
I'd prefer not to answer	6	1.2
Total	519	100

For both family support and personal support, the highest response was under 25 km.

Participants overall indicated closer physical distance to personal supports than to family supports.

For highest level of education, the most common reported was a master's degree at 54.7%. A bachelor's degree was reported by 16.6% and a doctoral degree was 14.3% of participants. Below is a table of total years worked in vocational ministry.

Table 4.3 Total Years in Vocational Ministry

	Frequency	Valid percent
Less than 1 year	3	0.6
1-5 years	46	8.9
6-10 years	69	13.3
11-20 years	143	27.6
21-30 years	120	23.1
Over 30 years	138	26.6

Total	519	100
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Participants tended to have more years in ministry with the over 30 years being indicated by 26.6% of clergy respondents.

Those working full-time was indicated by 77.3%, half-time or greater 14.5%, less than half-time 7.5%. There were 28.9% of participants who indicated that they were bi-vocal and are also employed in a non-ministry role. Participants indicated the following contexts for ministry: congregational (67.8%), multiple contexts (11.2%), denominational (10.4%), chaplaincy (4.4%), and parachurch (2.3%). Of those who worked in a congregational context 78.1% of participants indicated they were in a senior pastoral role. When asked about whether their congregation is flourishing 50% indicated strong agreement or agreement, 31.2% were neutral or unsure, and 17.9% indicated strong disagreement or disagreement.

Participants indicated the following average attendance of their congregations: 0-50 (23.1%), 51-100 (28.3%), 101-250 (27.4%), 251-500 (8.7%), 501-750 (3.5%), 751-1200 (1.5%), and over 1200 (3.5%). When further asked about average weekly attendance at worship services 29.5% indicated growing attendance, 15.3% indicated declining, and 54.0% indicated it was staying the same.

Participants were also asked “to what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement: generally, my congregation is flourishing.” Of the 519 surveys submitted 352 participants responded to this question for a response rate of 67.8%. Of those who responded to the question 50.9% indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed. There were 29.8% who neither agreed nor disagreed and 1.4% who were unsure. There were 17.9% who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their congregation was flourishing.

The following table indicates the breakdown of denominations participants indicated.

Table 4.4 Denomination or Tradition of Participants

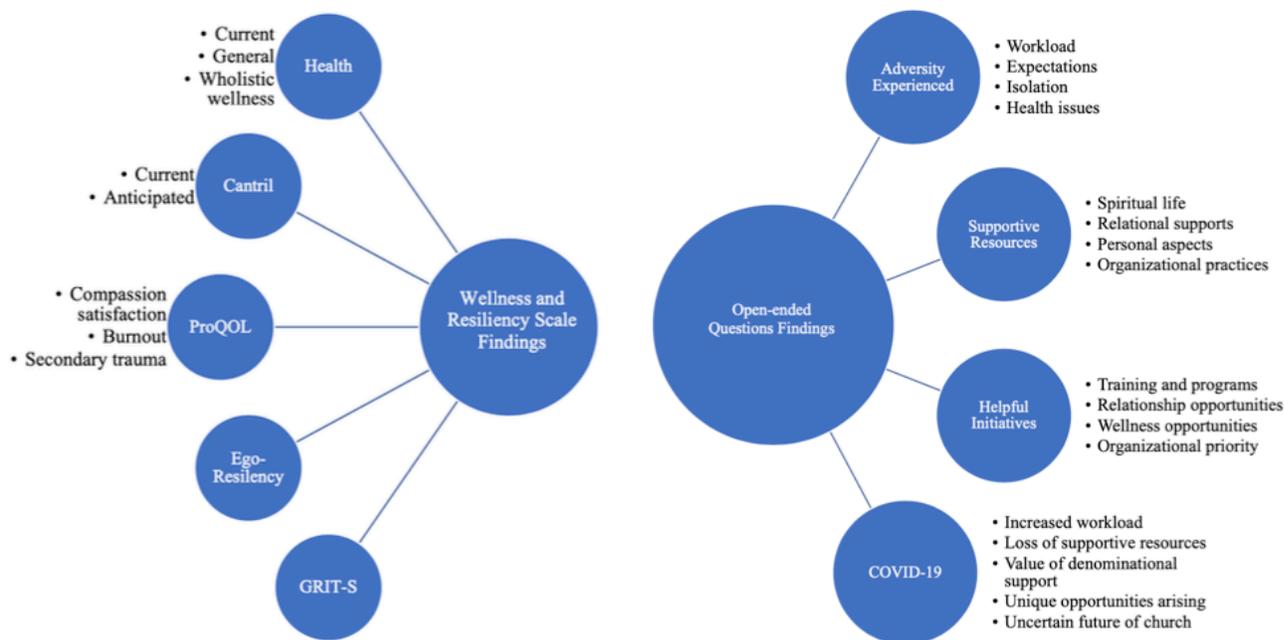
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Anglican	72	13.9
Baptist	95	18.3
Catholic	63	12.1
Charismatic	1	0.2
Christian Missionary Alliance	67	12.9
Church of God	5	1.0
Church of the Nazarene	14	2.7
Covenant	1	0.2
Evangelical Free Church	2	0.4
Evangelical Missionary	2	0.4

Free Methodist	2	0.4
Full Gospel	2	0.4
Mennonite	2	0.4
Mennonite Brethren	2	0.4
Lutheran	49	9.4
Non-denominational	11	2.1
Orthodox	11	2.1
Pentecostal	12	2.7
Presbyterian	17	3.3
Reformed	4	0.8
Salvation Army	21	4.0
United Church of Canada	32	6.2
Other	15	2.9
Other: Church of God - Indiana	12	2.3
Unsure	2	0.4
I'd prefer not to answer	2	0.4
Total	519	100

Overview of Findings Presentation

The survey findings will be presented in this chapter. First, the scale findings related to clergy wellness and resiliency will be presented. Following this the findings arising from the survey open-ended questions will be presented. The figure below illustrates the two data sources arising from the survey.

Figure 4.1 Overview of Survey Findings



The wellness and resiliency findings are reported according to the various scale and subscale results from the survey. The open-ended questions will be reported according to the nature of four categories of adversity, supportive resources, helpful initiatives, and COVID-19. These categories will be based on themes and sub-themes reported by survey participants. As mentioned previously, I wanted clerics from across Canada to find points of identification in my study, as such the data are presented in an inclusive and comprehensive manner in the hope that more clerics will relate to the findings.

Wellness and Resiliency Scale Findings

Survey participants provided insight into their status of well-being and resilience by answering scales in five areas. Health status, professional quality of life, ego resiliency, GRIT, and the Cantril scales all revealed different aspects of clergy wellness. Findings related to each of these is reviewed below. Table 4.5 outlines the scales and subscales used in the survey including the number of items for each, possible range of responses, and Cronbach’s Alpha.

Table 4.5 Description of Scales and Subscales

Variable	Number of Items	Possible Range	Cronbach’s Alpha
Health Current	1	0-100	NA
Health General	5	1-5	.775
Wellness Satisfaction	8	1-5	.809
Professional Quality of Life			
Compassion Satisfaction	10	1-5	.842
Burnout	10	1-5	.814
Secondary Trauma	10	1-5	.780
Ego Resiliency	14	1-5	.747
GRIT-S	8	1-5	.801
Cantril Ladder			
Current	1	0-10	NA
Future	1	0-10	NA

The reliability for all of the scales used in the survey were considered good to very good reliability based on their Cronbach’s Alpha.

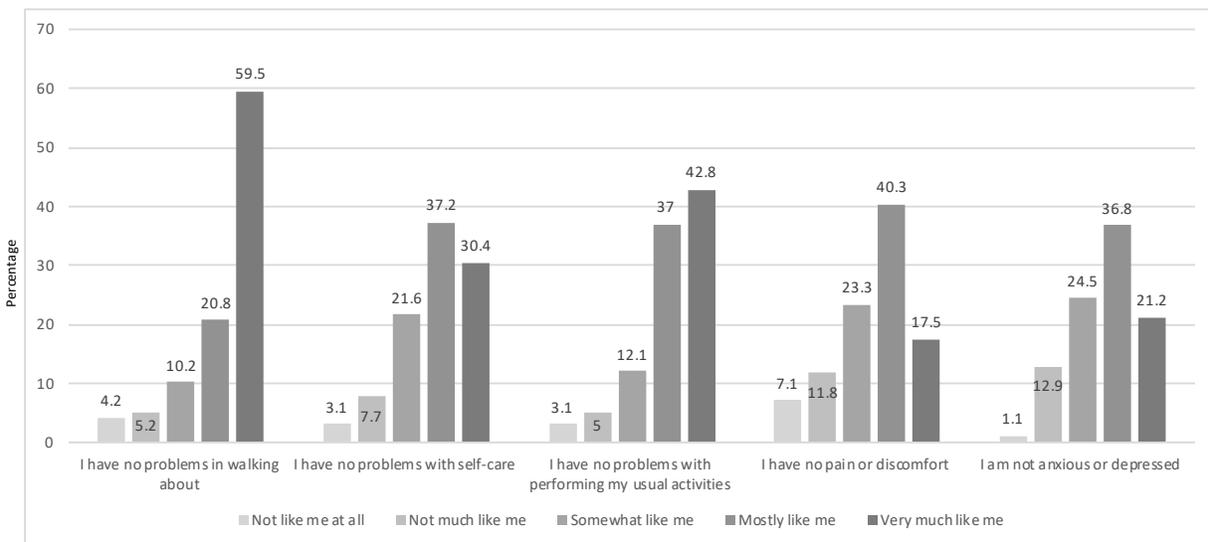
Health Status Scales

The survey instrument used three scales to have participants rate their health and well-being. These included a one question scale about current health today. Second, was a five-question scale about health in general. Finally, there was eight questions scale about wholistic health.

The first scale about health asked participants to rate their current state of health or unhealth. The rating was a scale of zero to 100, with 100 indicating the best state and 0 indicating the worst state. The mean response for this scale was 75.6 with a standard deviation of 16.5.

Following the rating their current state of health there were another five questions asked participants about their health in general. These five questions were adapted from the EQ-5D-5L (EuroQol Research Foundation, 2019) and were rated on a five-point scale of: 1= not like me at all, 2= not much like me, 3=somewhat like me, 4= mostly like me, 5= very much like me. The five questions included: (a) I have no problems in walking about (mobility), (b) I have no problems with self-care (self-care), (c) I have no problems with performing my usual activities (Usual activities: work, study, housework family, leisure), (d) I have no pain or discomfort (Pain discomfort), and (e) I am not anxious or depressed (Anxiety/depression). Possible cumulative scores for this scale could range from five to 25. The mean response for this scale was 19.3 with a standard deviation of 3.9. Figure 4.2 illustrates the breakdown of response for the five questions.

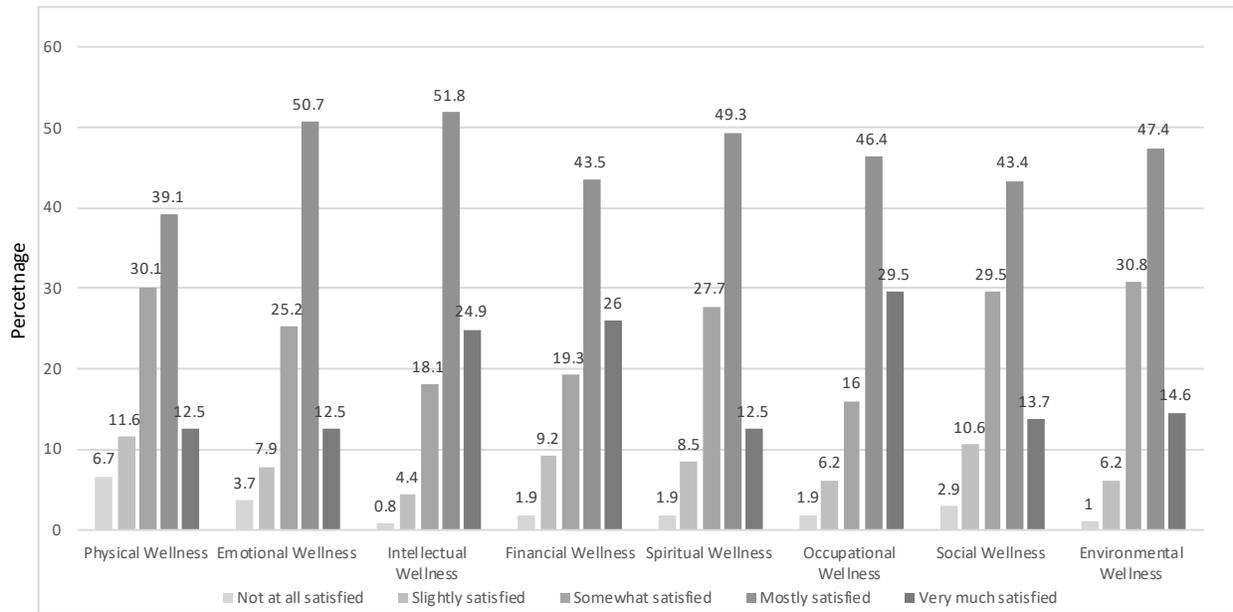
Figure 4.2 Health General Scale Responses



Following the scales about respondent's current health there as a scale about wholistic wellness that included eight questions related to participants satisfaction with their wellness across various domains of physical, emotional, intellectual, financial, spiritual, occupational, social, and environmental. Participants rated their satisfaction of each of these domains based on a five-point scale of: 1= not at all satisfied, 2= often dissatisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 4=

mostly satisfied, 5= very much satisfied. Possible cumulative scores for this scale could range from eight to 40. The mean response for this scale was 29.6 with a standard deviation of 4.9. Figure 4.3 illustrates the breakdown of response for the eight domains in the wellness satisfactions scale.

Figure 4.3 Wellness Satisfaction Scale Responses



MANOVA analysis and Wilks’ Lambda and Pillai’s multivariate tests were conducted to compare the health scales and the personal and congregational demographics. There were three areas of statistical difference in scale responses based two personal demographics and one congregational demographic. First, univariate test ($F(2, 344) = 5.8, p = .003$) and Tukey Post Hoc test ($p = .002$) found statistical difference related to congregational flourishing and overall rating of current health. Those respondents who disagreed with the statement “generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing” reported a lower level of current health (mean 69.7, SD 19.5) than those who agreed with the statement (mean 77.7, SD15.3).

Second, univariate test ($F(3, 515) = 3.4, p = .018$) and Tukey post hoc test ($p = .008$) found statistical difference was related to the wellness satisfaction scale and total years in ministry. Those who reported over 30 years of ministry experience had significantly lower wellness satisfaction scores (mean 28.6, SD 5.2) than those who had 11-20 years of ministry experience (mean 30.5, SD 4.4). Third, univariate test ($F(4, 513) = 4.1, p = .003$) Tukey post hoc tests found statically different responses for those who were 60-69 (mean 28.3, SD 5.0) and those 40-49 ($p = .002$, mean 30.8, SD 5.1) and also those under 40 ($p = .047$, mean 30.2, SD 4.4).

Further regression analysis of age ($F(10, 507) = 11.6, p < .001$) and years in ministry ($F(10, 508) = 6.5, p < .001$) revealed that age (14.5%) had a more significant impact on health status than years of ministry (9.5%).

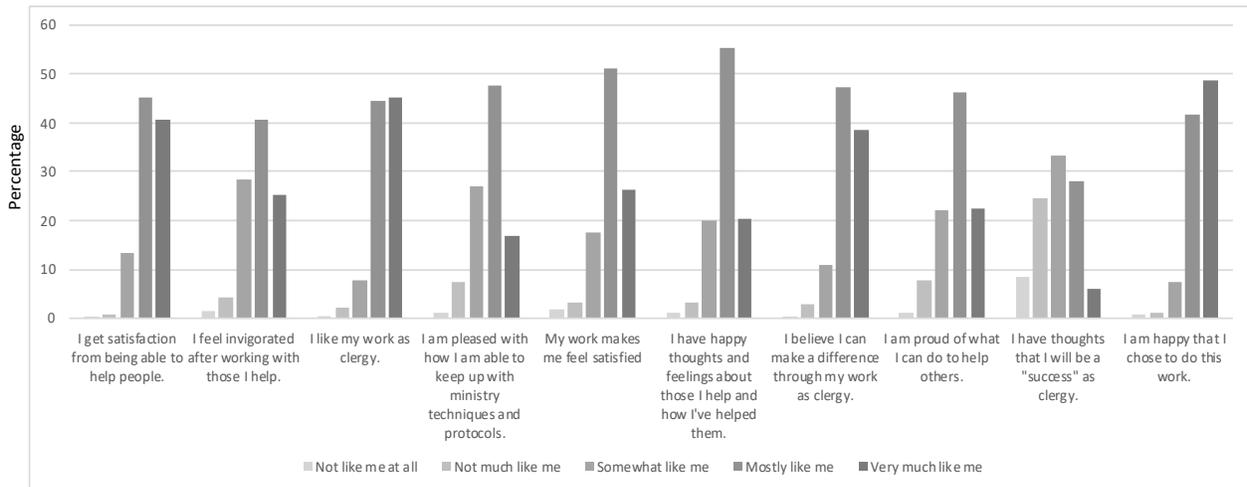
Professional Quality of Life Scale

The clergy well-being and resilience survey used an adaptation of the previously validated 30-item Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) scale which measures the dimensions of compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue (Stamm, 2010). The alpha scale reliability of the ProQOL is .88 (Stamm, 2010). The scale was adapted for clergy participants by using the following introductory phrase for each statement: “to help us understand the impact of your helping work as clergy, please answer the following questions. In your role as a clergy...”. Also, questions that used the word “helper” to were changed to “clergy.”

Compassion satisfaction measures the pleasure found in doing work. Compassion fatigue is broken down into two subscales of burnout and secondary trauma. The burnout subscale considered factors of exhaustion, anger, and depression and the secondary trauma scale considered negative feelings and fear associated with secondary trauma (Stamm, 2010). Participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how much each statement was like them, with 1 meaning ‘not like me at all’ and 5 meaning ‘very much like me.’ Of the 30 statements, scores from ten of the statements used for each of the subscales of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary trauma.

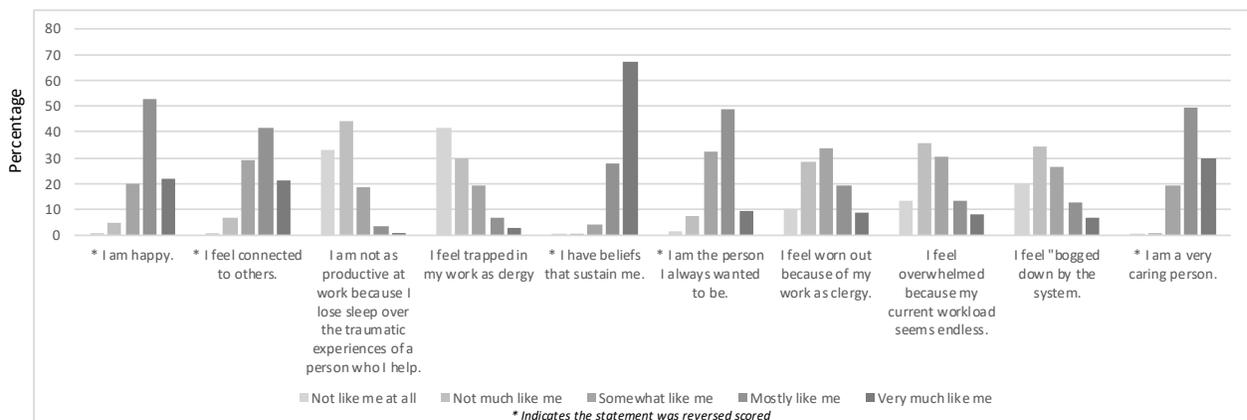
A number of ProQOL statements received high ratings indicating that clergy respondents considered it to be like them. For example, many clergy respondents supported the following statements indicating ‘mostly like me’ or ‘very much like me’: “I believe I can make a difference through my work as clergy” (85.9%); “I get satisfaction from being able to help people” (85.8%); “I like my work as clergy” (89.6%); and “I am happy that I chose to do this work” (90.4%). All of these questions contributed toward the compassion satisfaction scale. These questions are all part of the compassion satisfaction subscale. Responses to all statements used in the compassion satisfaction subscale are illustrated in Figures 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 ProQOL Compassion Satisfaction Statement Responses



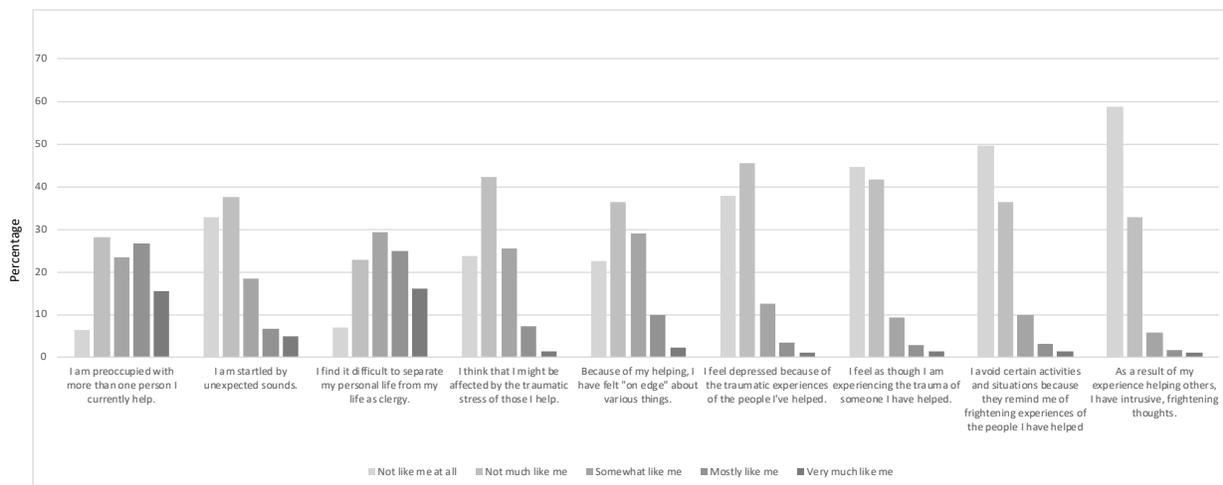
The statement with the highest support was “I have beliefs that sustain me” (94.8%). This statement is reverse scored as part of the burnout subscale. Responses to all statements used in the burnout subscale are illustrated in Figures 4.5 below. Half of the burnout subscale includes positive statements that are reverse scored. The other half of the statements reveal negative aspects of burnout.

Figure 4.5 ProQOL Burnout Statement Responses



In addition, few clergy respondents supported the following statements and indicated that it was ‘not much like me’ or ‘not like me at all’: “as a result of my experience helping others, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts” (91.6%); “I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have helped” (86.3%); “I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of the frightening experiences of the people I have helped” (85.9%); “I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I’ve helped” (83.3%); and “I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims” (80.3%). These questions were five of the ten questions that compose the secondary trauma scale. Responses to all statements used in secondary traumatic stress subscale are illustrated in Figures 4.6 below.

Figure 4.6 ProQOL Secondary Traumatic Stress Statement Responses



The ProQOL scores were converted from “Z scores to t-scores with raw score mean = 50 and the raw score standard deviation = 10” (Stamm, 2010, p. 16). The ProQOL scoring manual also provided cut scores at the 25th and 75th percentile to indicate risk or protective factors for each of the subscales. MANOVA analysis of the ProQOL results based on the personal and congregational demographics did not reveal any statistical differences among groupings. There were small variances in ProQOL transformed means based on demographic variables; however, none were above or below the cut scores to indicate high or low compassion satisfaction, burnout, or secondary trauma. Multivariate tests were conducted on ProQOL scores and no areas of statistical difference were found.

Ego Resiliency Scale

The Ego-Resiliency Scale (ER 89) is a 14-item self-report scale for ego-control and ego-resiliency using 5-point scale (copyright@1996 American Psychological Association. Reproduced with permission). Possible cumulative scores for this scale could range from zero to

56. Score interpretation is as followings: Very Low Resiliency Trait (0-10), Low Resiliency Trait (11-22), Undetermined Trait (23-24), High Resiliency Trait (35-46), and Very High Resiliency Trait (47-56). The mean response from respondents for the ER 89 scale was 45.0 with a standard deviation of 4.9. The mean score indicated High Resiliency Trait.

There were there number of demographics that yielded a significant difference on ER89 scores with MANOVA analysis. First, Pillai's trace ($F(7, 511) = 2.7, p = .011$) and univariate tests $F(1, 517) = 14.0, p < .001$ found statistical difference in respondents who indicated that they had a current mentor had higher scores (mean 46.0, SD 4.8) than those who indicated that they did not have a mentor (mean 44.4, SD 4.8). Second, Wilks' Lambda ($F(14, 1008) = 1.8, p = .034$) and univariate test ($F(2, 510) = 4.0, p = .019$) showed the impact of mentoring on scores was related to respondents' marital status. A follow-up t-test ($t(398) = -4.4, p < .001$) revealed that those who were married or common-law and had a mentor having higher ER89 scores (mean 46.4, SD 4.8) than those married or common-law and who did not have mentor (mean 44.1, SD 4.8). Finally, univariate ($F(2,344) = 5.9, p = .003$) and Tukey post hoc tests ($p = .002$) showed ER89 scores were related to congregational flourishing. Respondents who agreed that their congregation was flourishing (mean 45.4, SD 4.7) had statistically higher ER 89 scores than those who disagreed (mean 42.9, SD 5.2).

Grit-S Scale

The Grit-S is an 8-item scale that “measures trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals” and is comprised of two distinct facets of sustained stamina and effort (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009, p. 166). Survey respondents' mean score on the GRIT-S scale was 3.6 with a standard deviation of 0.60. Interpretation of this scale indicates that a score of 5 indicates “extremely gritty” while a score of 1 means “not gritty at all” (<http://www.sjdm.org/dmidi/files/Grit-8-item.pdf>). Clergy participants' mean response indicated their respective levels of grit.

MANOVA analysis and Pillai's multivariate tests were conducted to compare the GRIT-S scores and the personal and congregational demographics. There were several areas to note of statistical difference in relation to the GRIT-S scores. First, univariate ($F(2, 344) = 6.3, p = .002$) and Tukey post hoc tests ($p = .002$) found respondents who agreed with the statement that their congregation was flourishing had significantly higher scores (mean 3.7, SD .6) than those who disagreed with the statement (mean 3.4, SD .6). Second, univariate test ($F(1, 511) = 6.2, p = .013$) and follow t-test ($t(167) = 2.5, p = .014$) found respondents who live less than 25 km from

family support had significantly higher GRIT scores when they do not currently have a mentor (mean 3.7, SD .6) as compared to those who do currently have a mentor (mean 3.5, SD .6).

Third, univariate ($F(3, 515) = 7.0, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found significantly higher GRIT-S scores were related to years in ministry. Respondents reporting 30+ years in ministry having higher GRIT-S scores (mean 3.8, SD .5) than all other groups. Those with those less than 10 years ($p < .001$, mean 3.5, SD .7) had the lowest mean. Those 11-20 years ($p = .013$, mean 3.6, SD .6) and 21-30 years ($p = .010$, mean 3.5, SD .6) had very similar GRIT mean scores, but 11-20 years was slightly above.

Finally, univariate ($F(4, 513) = 7.1, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found age was also a factor that was related to GRIT-S scores. Respondents 70+ had statistically higher GRIT-S scores (mean 3.9, SD .5) than under 40 ($p < .001$, mean 3.4, SD .7), 40-49 ($p < .001$, mean 3.47, SD .688), and those 50-59 ($p = .032$, mean 3.61, SD .573) Tukey post hoc test ($p = .011$) also found that those respondents age 60-69 had significantly higher scores (mean 3.7, SD .5) than those under 40 years old (mean 3.4, SD .7). Further regression analysis of age ($F(10, 507) = 11.6, p < .001$) and years in ministry ($F(10, 508) = 6.5, p < .001$) revealed that age (18.0%) had a more significant impact on GRIT-S than years of ministry (14.3%).

Cantril Ladder

The survey instrument included the Cantril Ladder which is a self-anchoring ladder that uses 11-point scale (0-10) for respondents to self-report (OECD, 2013). The first Cantril question focused on respondents' current sense of life satisfaction and the second focused on their anticipation of where they will be in five years. The possible scores ranged from zero which represented the worst possible life and ten which represented the best possible life. There was a mean response of 8.3 (standard deviation of 1.6) for the current satisfaction. There was a mean response of 9.1 (standard deviation of 1.6) for their sense of future satisfaction. These responses indicate that currently respondents see themselves near their best possible life and that they anticipate this will improve even more in the next five years. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate the responses to the two Cantril questions.

Figure 4.7 Cantril Current Percentage of Responses

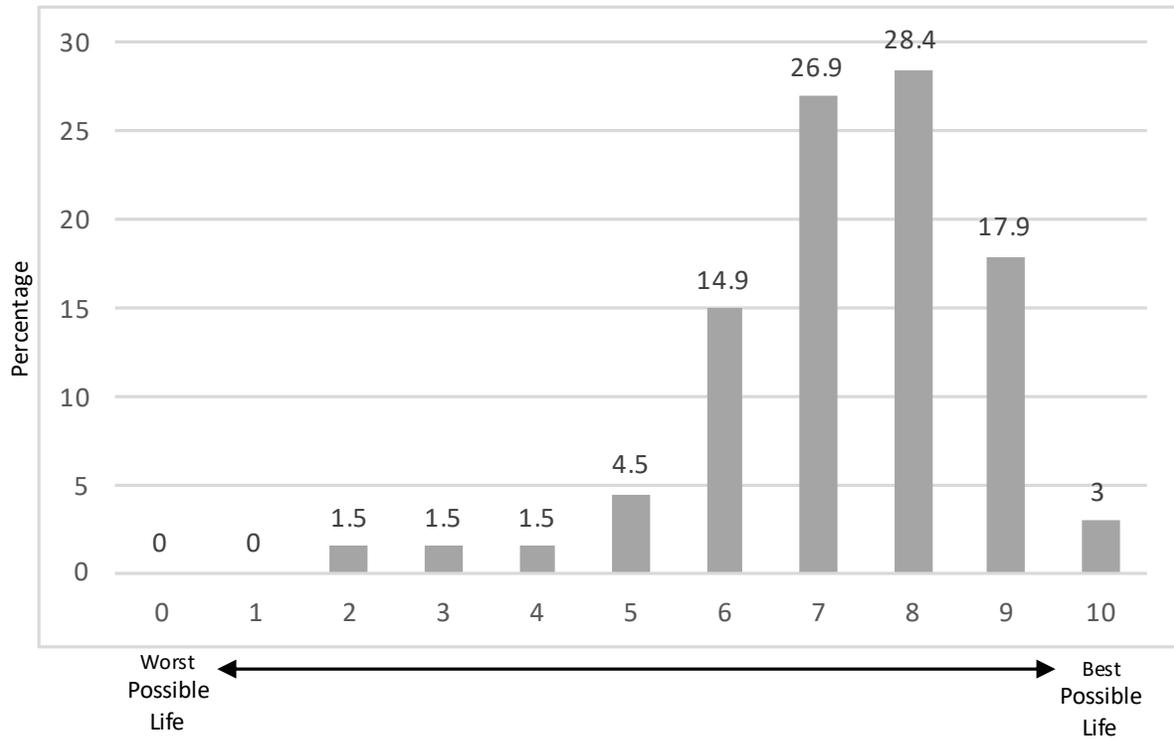
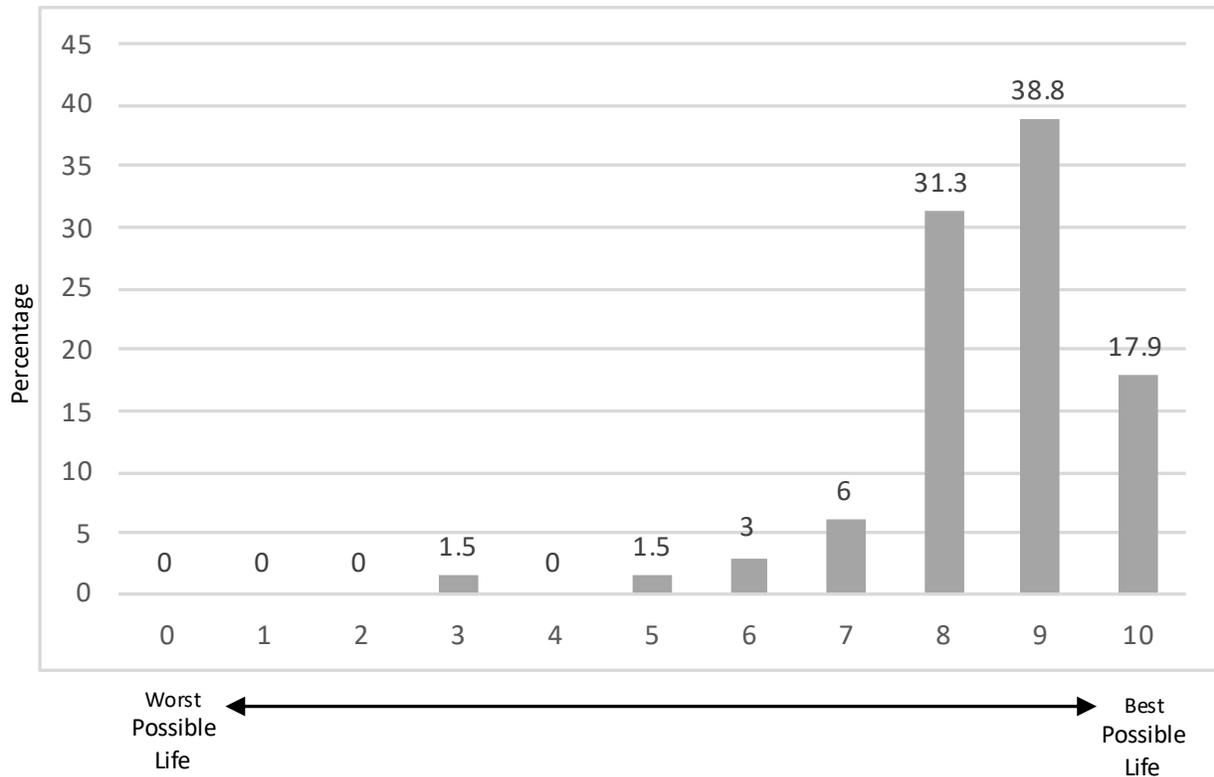


Figure 4.8 Cantril Future Responses



MANOVA analysis and Wilks' Lambda and Pillai's multivariate tests were conducted to compare the Cantril scores and the personal and congregational demographics. There were several areas to note of statistical difference in relation to the Cantril scores. First, univariate test ($F(1, 511) = 8.5, p = .004$) found respondents who live more than 25 km from their personal supports reported significantly lower on the Cantril question about current satisfaction (mean 8.0, SD 1.7) than those who lived under 25 km (mean 8.4, SD 1.5).

Second, univariate ($F(3, 515) = 6.3, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found that respondents who had over 30 years of ministry experience reported higher scores on current satisfaction (mean 8.7, SD 1.5) than those ten years or less experience ($p < .001$, mean 7.9, SD 1.8), those 11-20 years in ministry ($p = .006$, mean 8.1, SD 1.6), and those with 21-30 years of ministry experience ($p = .041$, mean 8.2, SD 1.3). Those with over 30 years of ministry experience felt significantly more positive about their life currently than all other groups.

Third, univariate ($F(4, 513) = 10.3, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found that respondents who were 60 years old or older reported significantly higher scores on the Cantril question about current satisfaction than those younger than 60. Table 4.7 shows the different comparisons among the age groupings.

Table 4.6 Cantril Current: Statistical Difference Based on Age Variable

Tukey Post Hoc Test	Variable: Mean (SD)
$p < .001$	Under 40: 7.7 (1.7) 60-69: 8.8 (1.4)
$p < .001$	Under 40: 7.7 (1.7) 70+: 9.0 (1.5)
$p = .001$	40-49: 7.9 (1.6) 60-69: 8.8 (1.4)
$p < .001$	40-49: 7.9 (1.6) 70+: 9.0 (1.5)
$p = .012$	50-59: 8.2 (1.5) 60-69: 8.8 (1.4)
$p = .005$	50-59: 8.2 (1.5) 70+: 9.0 (1.5)

Further regression analysis of age ($F(10, 507) = 11.6, p < .001$) and years in ministry ($F(10, 508) = 6.5, p < .001$) revealed that age (32.1%) had a more significant impact on current Cantril scores than years in ministry (22.1%).

Fourth, univariate ($F(2, 344) = 12.4, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found that scores for Cantril question about current satisfaction were significantly lower for those who disagreed ($p < .001$, mean 7.38, SD 1.84) with the statement that their congregation was flourishing that for those who agreed ($p < .001$, mean 8.5, SD 1.4) or neither agreed nor disagreed that their congregation was flourishing ($p = .004$, mean 8.3, SD 1.3). Those who agreed that their congregation was flourishing were significantly more positive about their future lives, as were those who neither agreed nor disagreed when compared those who disagreed that their congregation as flourishing.

Fifth, univariate ($F(2, 344) = 12.9, p < .001$) and Tukey post hoc tests found that scores for the future Cantril question about anticipated satisfaction five years from now were significantly lower for those who disagreed ($p < .001$, mean 8.3, SD 1.8) with the statement that their congregation was flourishing that for those who agreed ($p < .001$, mean 9.4, SD 1.4) or neither agreed nor disagreed that their congregation was flourishing ($p = .004$, mean 9.0, SD 1.8). Those who agreed that their congregation was flourishing were significantly more positive

about their future lives, as were those who neither agreed nor disagreed when compared those who disagreed that their congregation as flourishing.

Correlation Scores

There were a number of correlations between the scales, as indicated in Table 4.7. Most scales were intercorrelated. The direction of the variables was as expected with higher scores related to better well-being and resilience. Negative correlations were noted between of the ProQOL the subscales which was also as expected as the compassion satisfaction (QoL_C) measured positive aspects; whereas the burnout (QoL_B) and secondary trauma subscales measured negative aspects.

Table 4.7 Correlations between Scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.QoL_C	-									
2.QoL_B	-.651**	-								
3.QoL_S	-.219**	.539**	-							
4.Ego_C	.027	-.041	.037	-						
5.Grit	-.064	-.048	-.022	.213**	-					
6.Can_P	.022	-.056	-.013	.263**	.253**	-				
7.Can_F	-.020	-.019	.049	.201**	.166**	.584**	-			
8.Health_T	-.007	-.045	-.040	.214**	.260**	.518**	.404**	-		
9.Health_G	-.096*	.030	-.010	.174**	.245**	.372**	.284**	.502**	-	
10.Health_S	.042	-.063	-.020	.315**	.362**	.645**	.399*	.532**	.472**	-

* < .05

** < .001

Of note, both Cantril scores, present and future, were correlated with all of the health status scores. Also, there were statistically significant correlations of the GRIT-S scores with the Cantril scores and health status scores. Strong relationships between the scales used in this instrument would benefit from testing to determining reliability.

Other correlates of note, is the correlations between the GRIT and ProQOL compassion satisfaction and number of congregations that participants reported having worked in. A greater number of congregations worked in was associated with higher compassion and GRIT scores. Also, there were statistically significant correlations between the number of relocations participants reported. Those who reported more relocations were associated with higher ego resiliency and GRIT scores.

The scales used in the survey provide insight into the current status of clergy wellness. Health status, professional quality of life, ego resiliency, GRIT, and the Cantril scales each

revealed different aspects of clergy wellness. There were several notable statistically different responses based on factors, especially age and congregational flourishing.

Adversity Clergy Experienced: Open-ended Survey Question Findings

The survey included seven open-ended questions. These questions related to adversity, resources, initiative, and one question for concluding comments. Open-ended questions related to adversity and resources were alternated so that half of the participants were asked about adversity and the other about resources. The open-ended questions in the survey were the same or similar as those used in the semi-structured interview guide so there is a parallel between the findings reported in this chapter from the survey and Chapter Five where the interview findings are reported.

As adversity and resilience are related, an inquiry was undertaken to understand what adversity, challenges, or problems Canadian Christian clergy perceive as hindering their resilience and well-being. Based on the open-ended survey question data there are several themes with subthemes that emerged. Adversity themes included (a) workload, (b) expectations, (c) isolation, and (d) personal challenges.

Workload

Workload was a significant area of adversity that survey participants referenced. Facets of workload included time demands, emotional and spiritual needs, role complexity, unexpected and changing nature of role, and relational dynamics and conflict.

Time demands. Survey participants described their workload as “relentless”(S, Q1, line 324), “24-7, 365-days a year”(S, Q1, line 134), “not enough time in my day” (S, Q2, line 227), “too many job responsibilities” (S, Q2, line 236), “literally no end to the strain” (S, Q2, line 324), and “overwork[ed] and wearing too many ‘hats’” (S, Q1, line 339). Workload was referenced as a problem for work-life balance and a number of participants connected it with straining their marriage and family life. One survey participant disclosed:

Work-life balance is skewed, requiring a much higher level of personal and family sacrifice than is required upon any volunteers in my congregation. An average workload of 50-55 hours per week leaves little time for hobbies and social activities...Having young children while in a role where most of my peers have children who are much older or have spouses who are able to stay home has caused me to often think of looking for a non-lead Pastor role until my children are older, but this would require relocating the

family and the associated stress with that. Ongoing marriage stress as a result of workload and the state of my mental health. (S, Q1, line 25)

A lack of clerics to fill postings can further increase the workload on those in existing roles, as highlighted by one survey participant who revealed “there are numerous congregations without ministers, it is more and more difficult for the remaining clergy to get the basic work done, plus offer support to each other” (S, Q2, line 101).

Some participants placed the responsibility for workload on themselves, such as one survey participant who stated, “probably my own need to keep working and staying busy” (S, Q2, line 4). A survey participant revealed another facet:

I enjoy the ministry work I do so much that I often don't think of it as "work." Sometimes this can affect my life with my family, however, in a negative way. I am happy to keep on working, and I have to sometimes be very intentional about prioritizing quality time with my family. (S, Q7, line 19)

Likewise, another survey participant talked about loving their work but that it can take a toll if helping too many at the same time and being “spread too thin” (S, Q7, line 126). However, many other participants emphasized that there is not sufficient time to meet the needs to the role. Time requirements and demands was a facet of workload that clergy experienced as a challenge in their role.

Emotional and Spiritual Needs. Clergy workload is not only time demands but also spiritual and emotional demands. One survey participant underscored this aspect and reported, spiritual and emotional "lifting" is not limited to work hours. I am not able to turn off burden bearing whether it's preparing a sermon that is weighing heavily or a relationship strain. Unlike manual labour, which you go home from, there is no "punch clock" for the heart. (S, Q1, line 78)

Ministry can involve working with those who may be suicidal and are experiencing mental health issues. A survey participant disclosed feeling “exhausted from pouring into others- I have little time left to nurture my own well-being” (S, Q1, line 147). Another survey participant described “care demands from multiple situations which demand our attention and draw on our time and energy” (S, Q2, line 396). Further, the nature of ministry tasks can lead to intense workload, as one survey participant revealed, “the sense that ministry tasks are rarely being truly completed...this is an ongoing struggle in terms of measuring progress and measuring results”

(S, Q7, line 112). The intensity of the spiritual and emotional needs being met by clergy impacts their well-being.

The intensity of needs can also impact sleep causing fatigue (S, Q1, line 34) and guilt about self-care (S, Q1, line 33). One chaplain participant identified the need to “care less” in order to be less reactive to the various demands they face in their role (S, Q5, line 473). Meeting the emotional and spiritual needs was a facet of workload that clergy experienced as challenging.

Role Complexity. Another facet of workload referenced by survey participants was the complexity of the clergy role. One survey participant described their role as “wearing many hats” (S, Q1, line 335) and another described it as “being a jack of all trades” (S, Q1, line 385).

However, the various aspects of the role are not always clear. A survey participant indicated that there is a “lack of definition in terms of role and function” (S, Q1, line 47). Another expressed “the lack of clarity in navigating role-changes and various expectations for those roles - family, church, friendship, networking” as the greatest hinderance to their resilience (S, Q2, line 177).

Further to this, the variety of tasks clergy engage with can require diverse skills. Some clergy gifts and skill sets may be held in higher regard than others. A survey participant critiqued that “it seems like the "successful" pastor will be gifted in leadership and teaching. Those gifted in shepherding and gifts of mercy, rightly or wrongly, take a secondary role in decision making it seems” (S, Q1, line 58). Despite the need for diverse skills to meet the needs of the various tasks, not all gifts are held in equal regard with the church.

Issues clergy may be expected to help with diverse issues, for example suicide, mental health issues, or natural disasters. As one survey participant entrusted, “I was minister in my current position through the flood of 2013...and now through this pandemic. Going through two disasters...is starting to wear on how much energy I have to give” (S, Q1, line 96). Another shared, “working with students who have high needs...Working with families who have students who are suicidal, it can take a toll on my own well-being if I do not learn to manage boundaries” (S, Q1, line 130). Role complexity was a facet of workload that clergy identified as adversity.

Changing Nature of Ministry. Constant change and the unexpected nature of ministry was a particular facet of adversity also referenced. A survey participant elaborated on the diversity of issues they faced. They shared,

there is no preparing for funerals or what a phone call will include. There seems to be many instances of being "blindsided" by people or events. The state of preparedness is

elusive and taunting. I work in the realm of people's intimacy. Faith is deeply personal so there are many conversations that turn personal, even if the other side does not intend it that way. [People] critiquing sermons or events that took a lot of planning. Or even walking through the lobby; having a civil engaging conversation, walking 3 feet having a talk about some difficulty or death in someone's life, and then walking another 3 feet and having someone who is upset because of something said in the service or not said or just hinted at. (S, Q1, line 98)

The unexpected and changing nature of ministry was highlighted by this survey participant included meeting congregants emotional and spiritual needs, planning events and sermons, and responding to upset and criticism of congregants. Additional change highlighted by a participant included changes to board members (S, Q1, line 267).

A survey participant even expressed concern about the survey question that inquired about new initiatives to support resilience warning, "'new' anything can be part of the overwhelm! Whether it is denominational or ecumenical opportunities, always needing to process, integrate and act upon new initiatives does not seem to truly support growth or lasting change" (S, Q6, line 283). The unexpected and changing nature of the clergy role was a facet of workload that was reported as problematic by survey participants.

Relational Dynamics and Conflict. The relational aspect of clergy workload was identified as another facet of adversity, especially with respect to interpersonal dynamics and conflict. This set of relational challenges was said to come from the congregation or from within staff teams.

Participants identified the health of their team and staff relationships as an important aspect of their work and challenging relationships as a hinderance to their resilience. Communication among staff and in general was also marked as an issue with one survey participant calling for "better honesty - sharing concerns directly and constructively" (S, Q1, line 155). One survey participant identified a lack of co-accountability (S, Q1, line 61) as a challenge. Another flagged that "oftentimes there are always some who are not able to get along or who do not follow along" (S, Q1, line 130). Dynamics between clergy and lay leadership was also identified as a challenge by one survey participant as related to "stagnant lay leadership resentful of paid clergy" and "attitude of resentment by volunteers towards paid staff" (S, Q1/Q2, line 478).

A participant flagged “difficulties in working together with my team” (S, Q1, line 419) as a hinderance to resilience. Still another survey participant identified a “mercurial colleague” as adversity (S, Q1, line 267). Another shared “conflict with some pastoral colleagues” as adverse (S, Q1, line 382) and another “occasional hostility from other clergy in my role representing the diocese” (S, Q1, line 420). Conflict with colleagues or team members is a challenge clergy may face.

Another problem related to interpersonal dynamics was identified by a survey participant who shared, “individuals thinking they "own" God's Church and “individuals being nasty within the church without any real discipline structures” as a problem (S, Q1/Q2, line 310). Another participant indicated a need to “surviv[e] congregational politics and conflict. This is what pastors need!” (S, Q6, line 142). Sometimes conflict and powerplays are directed at the cleric. Similarly, another survey participant confided, “I lost my position due to a powerplay” (S, Q7, line 17). Another person identified as adverse, “those who attribute motives to my actions that are not true...dealing with these assumptions is painful” (S, Q2, line 3).

Still another person shared about “the negative impact of clergy being bullied by their congregants, which can be hugely detrimental to mental health and well-being” (S, Q7, line 88). Another flagged “the negative impact of toxic people” as an important aspect to consider for clergy wellness and resilience (S, Q7, line 153). Going further one survey participant identified “abusive people” as a source of adversity in the role (S, Q1, p. 160). Another survey participant contributed “I have two congregation members that actively try to sabotage what I do” (S, Q3, line 430). One other survey participant expressed “Sticking my neck out and going above-and-beyond to help members only to have them react indifferently to my assistance at best, or to create discord and gossip at worst” (S, Q2, line 385). Clergy can experience controlling, politically motivated, or hostile interactions from congregants.

Another aspect of relational dynamics that clergy face was expressed by one survey participant as “gossip and disunity in the congregation” (S, Q1, line 99). Another survey participant described “difficult, controversial members of the community” (S, Q1, line 80) and another “contentious and difficult members of congregation” (S, Q2, line 341). Still another divulged “dealing with someone who is narcissistic” (S, Q1, line 194). Another described the impact as “what drains me is loss and betrayal, broken relationships, church conflict and splits” (S, Q7, line 37).

At times the work of clergy may be in mediating conflict between congregational members. The role of mediator was also identified as a source of adversity by one survey participant who voiced, “mediation in relational conflicts and crisis” (S, Q2, line 262). Further, multiple role relationships are another aspect of relational dynamics that can be a challenge for clergy. One survey participant shared about adversity from “the complexity of relationships. It is difficult or almost impossible not to have multiple roles with people” (S, Q1, line 437). Congregational disunity, gossip, or conflict is challenging for clergy whether it is directed at them directly or they are involved in a mediator role. Relational dynamics and conflict were a facet of workload that clergy experienced as adverse.

Summary of Workload Theme from Survey. As discussed in this section, facets of workload included time demands, emotional and spiritual needs, role complexity, unexpected and changing nature of role, and relational dynamics and conflict. Clergy had a sense that there is not sufficient time to meet the demands of their roles. The emotional and spiritual care demands on clergy felt burdensome without a sense of progress or results from their clergy work. Some clergy were required to engage in diverse types of work that resulted in role complexity that required diverse skill sets. The changing and nature of the church and the unexpected needs clergy were required to address was another challenge clergy face. The relational dimension of clergy workload was quite challenging both within the staff teams and the congregation due to interpersonal struggles and conflict. These facets of workload were a significant area of adversity that survey participants identified.

Workload for many participants was increased by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic further increased the complexity and demand on clergy, while also restricting access to supportive resources. Findings related to COVID-19 are discussed in a separate section.

Expectations

Overlapping with workload, expectations was another adversity theme reported by survey participants. Expectations related to areas such as caregiving, leadership, programs, finances, and operations of the church. There were a number of sources of expectations including societal, denominational, congregational, financial pressure, and self-expectations.

Societal Expectations. Societal expectations and perceptions were identified by clergy participants as an adversity, challenge or problem that impacts their resilience. Cultural apathy, disrespect, or hostility was identified in the survey as a form of adversity. Canadian society was viewed by some participants as indifferent to spiritual matters and organized religion, and that

society is not oriented towards church. A lack of community support for various ministries, such as an example given about a homeless shelter, and such indifference was perceived as beyond the influence of the clergy (S, Q1, line 203). One survey participant highlighted the discouragement of this in saying “the loss of faith in our world really drags me down” (S, Q7, line 91). Another highlighted hopelessness in their statement, “if Canada chooses to reject God; there is no way to save clergy (S, Q6, line 226).

Beyond apathy, there is a sense of disrespect or hostility toward the church. One survey participant stated that there is “an increasing disdain for religion in society in general. The complexities associated with a changing cultural milieu from Christendom to post-Christendom and ever-increasing secularism” (S, Q1, line 169). This participant further identified little reprieve from the pressure to “give in to the growing cultural secularism” (S, Q2, line 169). Another survey participant described it as “diminishing interest and even increasing hostility or indifference of our society toward the Church and ‘organized religion’” (S, Q2, line 411).

Canadian’s view of the church and clergy was described as a social challenge with the role of clerics not understood in Canadian society and that what is understood is viewed skeptically. One survey participant described “you are sometimes looked at skeptically, because the church has done a lot of harm in the past, so some people are wary of trusting the church or of trusting a pastor” (S, Q1, line 244). Media presentation of information related to the church was identified by a survey participant as “skewed” and that viewers fail to critique the presented information (S, Q1/2, line 232). Another survey participant identified some of the issue as political and indicated “the increasing amount of State meddling in religious freedom is troubling” (S, Q7, line 135). Further, a survey participant identified the challenge of “maintaining a clearly Christ-centred/gospel orientated ministry at all levels being very clear on the difference between inculturation and syncretism daring to present the challenge of being Christian in a world that thrives on personal rights” (S, Q1, line 261). There are many facets to societal expectations that clergy find as a problem.

Denominational Expectations. Denominational expectations were another subtheme of expectations. A survey participant pointed to the demands and expectations from “the many offices in the central administration” (S, Q1, line 261). Another pointed to “unreasonable expectations of diocesan leadership. Burdensome rules and regulations that don't always work in reality, messaging that is inconsistent with congregational goals, or not adaptable to congregational context” as a source of adversity (S, Q1, line 368). Another survey comment

indicated, “get the denomination out of my hair. It does not help the congregation or myself. It just wants more and more financial resources with little to no return” (S, Q6, line 141).

Further, denominational or diocesan priorities to fill empty churches can present a challenge for clergy. A survey participant indicated that unknown to them it was common knowledge that the parish they went to was a “clergy killer” and yet their Diocese did not intervene (S, Q7, line 61). Participants also identified being “treated like a child” (S, Q7, line 134) and “micromanagement” (S, Q7, line 46) from the denomination as forms of adversity. There are many facets to denominational expectations that clergy find as adverse.

Congregational Expectations. Congregational expectations were a third subtheme reported by participants. Expectations from the congregation were described as “unrealistic” (S, Q1, line 487), “too high” (S, Q1, line 71), “conflicting” (S, Q1, line 91), and “demanding” (S, Q7, line 57). Church members were described as “complaining or uncooperative” (S, Q1, line 10) and as giving “anonymous and unwarranted criticism” (S, Q1, line 273).

Consumerism in the church was a challenge identified by survey participants related to congregational expectations. One survey participant described congregants as treating church as a commodity and shopping around for a church community and expectation that their agenda will be met (S, Q2, line 498). With COVID-19 and the move to online programs this participant feared that this sense of consumerism will grow further in the church. Further, another survey participant described consumer culture in the church as “people leave if they don’t like what they hear” (S, Q6, line 84).

Congregational apathy was related to congregational expectations and was also reported as a challenge that clergy participants faced. Another survey participant identified apathy and indifference in the congregation as their biggest obstacle (S, Q1, line 382). Apathy was related to both involvement in the life of the church and also toward the “Gospel and the salvation of souls” (S, Q1, line 403). One survey participant identified that congregants are ignorant of scripture and discipleship (S, Q1, line 37). Irregular attendance at worship services, lack of interest in reading or learning was connected by one participant to the issue of apathy (S, Q1, line 159).

Beyond the worship service there can be a lack of active engagement in church activity (S, Q1, line 484). In revealing aspects of apathy and commitment one survey participant indicated “ministers are typically more committed to the congregation than the congregation is committed to them” (S, Q1, line 20). Another survey participant expressed concern about

congregants “minimal and inconsistent participation in the vision of the church” (S, Q2, line159). Clergy survey participants highlighted the expectation for change that can come from the congregation but an unwillingness to get participate in the change (S, Q1, line 246).

Another survey participant identified the whole model of modern church that clergy have been educated in as feeding this and stated:

I feel that most clergy members have been educated, groomed, or have learned by osmosis (observation) to serve a model of Churchianity, where the expansion of the church, it's membership, and its programs, are the goal... Thus, the burden of evangelism, teaching, leading, and guiding the congregation falls mainly upon the shoulders of the lead pastor, associate clergy, and a few exceptional congregants. This is a self-defeating, unsustainable task. Pastors have increasingly been required to be and do everything else in addition to preaching the gospel and caring for people's souls. (S, Q6, line 483)

This participant revealed the unsustainable burden that clergy can bear in their roles due to the expectations placed on them.

There was a feeling expressed that there are insufficient staff and volunteers to meet the needs within the church. Congregants may be focused on their own situations and not aware of the demands on leadership. When congregants are encouraged to volunteer and lead, some congregants believe that leadership is “the pastor’s job” can become upset (S, Q2, line 259). Related to this issue was a sense of stagnation of those who serve in lay leadership and resentment toward paid clergy (S, Q1/2, line 478). One survey participant highlighted a “lack of congregational involvement in ministries as co-labourers” (S, Q1, line 159). Lack of involvement and difficulty motivating congregants to get involved in the work of the church is a pressure that clerics reported.

One survey participant stated that there was too great a demand on their time and they were not able to find help. They stated, “people expect their pastor to do all the work and do not respond to requests for help” (S, Q1, line 85). Further, there was a sense that people do not understand the role of clergy. This gap in understanding of congregants about clerics roles results in “invisibility of the multi-faceted demands” of their time and energy (S, Q1, line 511). The inability to motivate was reported as causing feelings of inadequacy (S, Q1/2, line 85). Apathy of the congregation was also reported as a cause of discouragement (S, Q1, line 382).

Expectations was also connected to declining church numbers and changing demographics, as some churches are composed of an aging church body primarily of seniors (S,

Q1, line 443, 488, Q2, line 507). Church decline not only led to pressure on clerics, but it also was identified as a source of conflict (S, Q2, line 488). The sense of “not knowing what our future is in our Churches” weighs on clergy (S, Q2, line 495). Another survey participant identified that the issues related to the Canadian Church in crisis needed to be honestly admitted (S, Q1, line 507).

One participant shared that they did not see interest in change in their aging congregations. They divulged, the greatest hindrance is a resistance to change, a resistance to trying new things, or having new opinions. It’s a lot of effort to not only try and change things, but also have to fight stubborn congregants, and stubborn clergy as well. When that change works out, they are all begging for help to replicate and copy it, but while you’re doing the change, they constantly try to stop it. (S, Q2, line 244)

Expectations for change yet resistance to change can be a challenging dilemma that clergy face. Another participant also saw people’s ability or inability to change as a central challenge and that there are many factors, such as mindsets, religious strongholds, and a person’s relationships that affect this (S, Q1, line 512).

Further, a lack of respect by church members towards the pastor was also reported as adversity (S, Q1, line 385, 521). A survey participant reported that congregants assume the worst about leadership actions and focus blame on the pastor when decisions have been made as a team (S, Q1, line 3). Not being trusted or respected was also reported by a participant as a challenge (S, Q1, line 521). One participant described, “I believe a great deal is expected of clergy, with less and less respect and recognition being given for their work” (S, Q7, line 25). Another participant identified having a “very picky person” in the congregation as a source of adversity and hinderance to their resilience (S, Q7, line 101). Still another survey participant identified distrust of priests, due to sexual abuse scandals, as a challenge they face (S, Q1, line 443).

Another survey participant described diverse and unrealistic expectations in their rural parish arising from newcomers from the city (S, Q7, line 136). Trying to meet diverse expectations and make everyone content or happy is a pressure that one survey participant reported (S, Q1, line 95). Diverse expectations not only come from within the church but can also come from conflicting priorities between the congregation and the community (S, Q1, line 91).

There were high expectations for numerical growth and for the type of programs offered. One younger survey participant indicated expectations that because they were young, that they would draw people back to church (S, Q2, line 71). Another highlighted an expectation to get students to come to church and to engage (S, Q1, line 130). A survey participant stated, “there are lots of experts who think they know my role better than I do, but they often disappear when the work needs to be done” (S, Q1, line 246). Another survey participant indicated that criticism fed their lack of confidence (S, Q2, line 273).

Congregational expectations were not only directed at the cleric but also extended to the family. One survey participant stated, “my spouse and my adult children are often expected to contribute to the life of the church almost as an extension of my ministry” (S, Q1, line 437).

Similar to reduced laity and volunteer engagement, reduced funds were identified as a challenge for participants. Expectations of maintaining an older building and needing to raise funds for this was identified as a pressure (S, Q1, line 198). Further, another survey participant identified being a young priest who was “continually placed in financially struggling and rapidly declining parishes with no mentorship or guidance as to a Diocesan vision for the future of these rural, remote places” (S, Q1, line 445). Pressure can increase due to cleric’s feeling responsible to fix congregational finances, especially if there is no message alleviating the cleric of this responsibility. Further, concerns about finances can arise when considering changing away from a “business/church model” and whether congregants, who appreciate that model, will continue to give (S, Q2, line 58). There are many facets to congregational expectations that clergy find as a challenge.

Financial Pressure. Participants also reported pressure and anxiety about church and personal finances and the interdependent nature of the two. One survey participant indicated that they had anxiety about the financial stability of the parish as their personal finances were dependent upon it (S, Q, line 505). Further, when a struggling parish can only afford to pay a diminishing amount of the cleric’s stipend, one survey participant identified feeling responsible for this (S, Q2, line 445). Inner city ministry (S, Q3, line 430) and small parishes (S, Q1, line 389) were identified as two areas where finances can be especially limited, which impacts what they can offer for clergy compensation.

Personal finances, low pay and “terrible financial compensation” (S, Q1, line 14) were mentioned by a number of survey participants as an area of adversity. Concern about personal finances was not only for the present but also about future financial well-being. A survey

participant expressed concern about their future finances “my concern about my finances, living pretty much from paycheque to paycheque and contributing little to any savings. A large, sudden, unexpected expense would be difficult to manage” (S, Q2, line 463). Transitions and moves between ministries can also diminish savings and lead to more financial concerns, as one participant highlighted the need to take an unpaid leave to “recalibrate” but that resulted in increased financial stress (S, Q2, line 174).

Some participants indicated that limited church finances and low pay required them to get secondary employment, leading to increased time pressure and inability to focus on pastoral duties. One revealed as a problem the “inability to focus properly on pastoral duties because it does not pay enough to make a living. [I] must work outside of the pastoral role” (S, Q1, line 246). Another affirmed “low pay requir[ing]...secondary employment” as adverse (S, Q1, line 111). While another participant indicated that they are paid half time but work full time (S, Q1, line 346).

There were several personal aspects that were identified by survey participants related to financial pressure. One survey participant identified managing student loan payments on a ministry salary as a challenge (S, Q1, line 171). Another revealed financial pressure being complicated by divorce and responsibility for family support (S, Q1, line 366).

Systemic issues were highlighted as contributing the problem of financial pressure. In speaking about finances a survey participant identified a “culture of silence” around clergy compensation due to it being considered “‘bad form’ to discuss money” (S, Q1, line 351). Guidelines for clergy compensation were identified as a need rather than leaving it to the discretion of individual congregations (S, Q1, line 351). Financial pressures, both personally and congregationally are a source of adversity for clergy.

Self-expectations. The fourth subtheme of expectations were self-expectations. Participants acknowledged internal expectations as a significant aspect that hinders their resilience. “Pleasing people” (S, Q2, line 8) and a “need to keep others happy” (S, Q1, line 51) were aspects highlighted by survey participants. Another participant described “the pressure of feeling I have to perform to earn my salary” (S, Q2, line 121). Still another shared “I just don't feel I have done enough ... ever” (S, Q7, line 30).

Self-expectations were referenced alongside congregational expectations, as one survey participant articulated “unreasonable expectations ... both from myself and from congregants” (S, Q1, line 316) and still another revealed that they saw high expectations arising from both

themselves and the congregation (S, Q1, line 434). However, a survey participant also questioned if congregational expectations are “real or imagined” (S, Q1, line 177).

Self-expectations are a facet of expectations that clergy find as a challenge to their resilience.

Summary of Expectation Theme from Survey. As discussed in this section, expectation subthemes included societal, denominational, congregational, financial pressure, and self-expectations. Such expectations were a significant source of adversity identified by survey participants. Canadian society was viewed as being apathetic, skeptical, or hostile towards spiritual matters and organized religion. Further, expectations from denominations may be viewed as burdensome as they may not be aligned with the cleric’s or congregation’s priorities resulting in conflict.

Clergy faced varied and opposing expectations from congregants. These expectations were sometimes experienced as unrealistic in terms of expecting perfection and holiness from clergy while also expressing indifference and apathy to the ministry priorities of clergy. A further facet of expectations clergy experience was financial pressure due to interdependence of congregational finances and personal finances, low salaries, need for secondary employment, or uncertain financial future. Systemic beliefs within the church about money and compensation were viewed as a barrier to talking openly about the subject and the pressures associated with it.

Self-expectation was the final facet of the expectation theme. Internal expectations that clergy place on themselves arose from having high standard in what it means to serve God and the spiritual importance of ministry. Clergy may have had self-expectations of perfection and excellence and also the need to please congregants or earn their salary. It was challenging for clergy to differentiate between what are self-expectations and expectations that came from others.

Isolation

Isolation is another theme that clerics referenced as a form of adversity related to their role. Subthemes of isolation include geographic isolation, peer competition, theological and cultural differences, barriers to making friends, and decreased energy. These subthemes are described below.

Geographic Isolation. The challenges that came from geographic isolation included limited resources in small or remote communities. Some participants indicating that it effects their ability to find a medical doctor (S, Q1, line 56) or mental health supports (S, Q1, line 68).

Rural contexts were also cited as challenge for attending specialized medical appointments (S, Q1, line 504). An absence of social venues, like theatres and gyms, were also an issue in rural communities (S, Q7, line 133). One survey participant also reported living in two different places due to their role and being away from their immediate family during their work week and only having time with them on time off (S, Q1, line 462).

Remote communities were also a challenging context for doing ministry. Those in remote ministry locations may also feel forgotten as one survey participant highlighted, “Being in rural, somewhat remote ministry, means that programming is often inaccessible, but also the informal stuff that central clergy do for and with each other. I need to be not forgotten” (S, Q6, line 225). Care and continuing education may also be hindered by geographically rural or remote communities (S, Q6, line 517). Geography is a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Peer Competition. Another form of isolation that participants noted was peer isolation due to a sense of competition with other clergy or inter-congregational competition. One survey participant described it this way,

pastors very often view other churches or pastors as competing. We like to say we are on the same team, but we sub-consciously compete for members, budget, market impact, etc. We don’t truly celebrate with others in their success, and sometimes we even celebrate when they fail, saying things like ‘I told you so.’ (S, Q1, line 244)

The pressure to compete with other churches and a sense of peer competition can isolate clergy from their clergy peers, which is discussed later as a supportive resource. Comparison, judgement, negativity, and a lack of trust were shared as a “critical spirit” that can exist between ministry colleagues, church leaders, and denominations (S, Q1, line 411). Peer competition is a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Theological and Cultural Differences. Another factor that can increase cleric’s sense of isolation arises from theological or cultural differences. These differences may arise due to context, in interactions with colleagues, and also on a systemic level. One survey participant described a contextual situation of being of a different ethnicity and language group from his congregation as challenging. He imparted,

I am often facing varying degrees of culture shock, and at times it feels bit lonely in ministry as I have not made deep relationships with the congregation--there is always

some degree of language or cultural barrier. There is also no one my age nor in my life stage at this church. (S, Q1, line 280)

A variety of cultural differences, such as differences in language or age of congregation, can have an isolating effect on clergy.

For other clerics theological differences were cited as a problem. Views related to divorce and women in ministry were also cited by participants as a source of adversity. One survey participant shared, “as a divorced and remarried person in an evangelical context I have experienced dismissal and ongoing and significant marginalization” (S, Q1, line 365). A female survey participant highlighted the challenge of,

gender discrimination which is subtle and often goes unchallenged and undetected. The average church community have men giving sermons, leading to exegetical interpretations of scripture that tend to underrepresent or present stereotypical of

women.... I am not a liberal and am not a hard-core feminist in my views. (S, Q1, line 31)

Beliefs about gender, whether explicitly stated or implicitly revealed through practices can be a theological difference that is isolating for female clergy. Another survey participant indicated, “I find little clerical fellowship because I am a woman and the roles for women in ministry are usually carefully controlled and defined and upheld by unquestioning tired old exegetical interpretations of a few passages” (S, Q5, line 31). A survey participant described “priestly fellowship” being hindered by the alienating aspect of theological differences (S, Q5, line 294). Theological or cultural differences can have an isolating effect on clergy.

Barriers to Making Friends. Relational isolation was a central theme referenced by survey participants. Making and having friends was referenced as a challenge. One survey participant stated, “people not wanting to be friends with a priest” (S, Q1, line 230) Another shared, “at times it feels bit lonely in ministry as I have not made deep relationships with the congregation” (S, Q1, line 280) and another “a lack of deep and honest friendships with members of the congregation” (S, Q1, line 319). Still another survey participant confided,

trust, honour, loyalty, commitment are big words and MOST people have superficial relationships. As a pastor one of my greatest desires is to be treated as a friend, as a regular human! I sometimes feel that people respect the title, but they struggle to want to develop a relationship with the person! (S, Q2, line 512)

Due to the roles that clergy hold, some people may be hesitant to develop authentic friendships with clergy.

Female clerics and single or celibate clerics may experience some unique aspects of relational isolation. Despite participating in clergy groups or gatherings one survey participant described still feeling isolated, “my difficulties and heartbreaks ironically come from having few women colleagues in ministry and few male pastors that consider gifting more of a priority than gender” (S, Q2, line 31). Another female survey participant described, “You can't socialize with your parishioners, especially if you are single female, as you learn very quickly” (S, Q1, line 460). One survey participant talked about the need to come alongside and support their single peers and stated, “isolation is a major cause of clergy dysfunction” (S, Q7, line 104).

The nature of cleric's roles may impact this isolation, especially for those in congregational settings. A survey participant conveyed it this way, the role of pastor can be difficult insofar as it limits our relationships. People can define us by our role. There's the suggestion, also, that we shouldn't form friendships with our church members. (S, Q7, line 144)

This participant highlighted several factors that hinder friends including clerics own hesitancy to form friendships with congregants and how congregants view of the cleric role can be a barrier.

Concerns about safety, trust, and confidentiality were all aspect clergy have to consider when determining whether to share issues and challenges in ministry (S, Q1, line 245). One survey participant expressed concern about the lack of a safe space for emotional expression due to being concerned about being labeled within their diocese (S, Q1, line 353). Those in denominational roles also face similar challenges as revealed by one survey participant:

There were more supports for me in a traditional clergy role at a church than there are in a denominational role. There are opportunities for spiritual help but there are few people that understand the role of denominational leadership that make it possible or easy just to talk things through. (S, Q1, line 124).

Another survey participant exposed the isolation in their cleric role. They shared,

In my first career, I was able to make friends at work very easily. I miss that camaraderie. This is lonely work, filled with power struggles and the type of behaviour that would not be tolerated in other workplaces... boundaries that keep us safe also keep us lonely, if [we have] no family nearby. (S, Q1, line 460)

Boundaries were understood to be necessary for clergy in their roles, but they were also perceived to create barriers to making friends.

Clergy can feel the need to keep how they are feeling hidden from their congregants. As one survey participant highlighted this pressure and stated, “the need to be “up” and keep problems hidden” (S, Q1, line 460) and another described it as “having to put up a front” (S, Q1, line 27). Challenges and barriers to making friends was a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Decreased Energy. Due to the demanding nature of the role, one clergy described limited social energy as a hindrance to connecting with supportive friends and it being challenging to find people who will minister to them (S, Q1, line 55). Further, this relational isolation may be due to peers being “too busy” and who may also lack social energy needed for relationships (S, Q2, line 284). Another person expressed, “since many clergy spend so much time working as clergy, this all limits the ability to have friendships. (S, Q7, line 144). Another participant survey participant described isolation from his peers due to “everyone want[ing] to do their own thing” (S, Q2, line 443).

Summary of Isolation Theme from Survey. As discussed in this section, isolation subthemes included geographic isolation, peer competition, theological or cultural differences, barriers to making friends, and decreased energy. Geographic isolation was a challenge for clergy ministering in rural or remote locations. Rural or remote locations limited medical supports, social opportunities, contact with family and peers, and can also limited ministry opportunities.

Peer competition related to comparison and judgment among churches and clergy was perceived as isolating clergy. Theological and cultural differences arose between some clergy and their congregation or community, in interactions with clergy peers, or on a denominational level. Such differences isolated some clergy from meaningful relationships in their ministry context, from their peers, or denomination.

Relocations and ministry schedule were other facets of isolation. Many clerics relocated for ministry. For some clergy such relocations disrupted personal supports and required time to establish new supports. Ministry schedules, such as working weekends and most major holidays, lead to isolation for some clergy and hindered these clergy from connecting with family or friends who do not have the same schedule.

Ministry roles also created barriers for some clergy to make friends, especially in their congregation. Clergy were cautious about developing friendships, and likewise people may be hesitant to develop friendships with clergy due to their role. For a variety of reasons, some clergy

lacked deep friendships and felt isolated. Finally, decreased energy due to clergy investing all of their time and energy into their ministry duties was isolating. Some clergy lacked social energy to invest in developing supportive relationships.

Health Issues

Physical health issues and aging were referenced as a challenge by over 40 survey participants. Aging was mentioned in a number of survey responses, with one stating, “functionally just developing health issues as a product of age and genetics” (S, Q1, line 115). Another informed, “I am 70 and beginning to realize the natural aging process. Cannot sustain my work effort as long as I use to. At 70 I tire faster” (S, Q1, line 320).

Tiring due to aging is a factor that impacted this cleric’s ability to sustain their workload.

Health issues included chronic diseases, like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Huntington Disease, chronic pain, and sleep apnea were mentioned, as well as cancer, stroke, and injuries (S, Q1). A lack of exercise was identified by some survey participants as a challenge they face (S, Q1, line 366, 449). Also, poor quality sleep was mentioned by a number of survey participants as a challenge they face (S, Q1, line 34, 155, 283).

Mental health issues were also referenced in survey responses. A survey participant flagged the adversity of:

lack of acceptance that clergy can have mental health issues/problems. Disparaging attitudes and prejudices against those clergy with mental health issues. The cleric who is depressed or anxious is viewed as incompetent. Frequently, mental/emotional disorders amongst clerics are viewed as life choices--one should just “get over it, princess.” (S, Q1, line 249)

This comment spotlighted the challenge clergy can face due to negative perceptions of mental health problems as a choice, rather than as a legitimate health concern. Different health issues mentioned that negatively impacted clergy were aging, chronic disease and illness, and poor sleep.

Summary of Health Issues Theme from Survey. As discussed, health issues were reported as a challenge for clergy resilience. Issues identified included aspects of aging and decreased energy. Also identified as health issues were chronic diseases and problems related to exercise and sleep. Finally, negative perception of mental health issue was a challenge clergy may face.

Conclusion of Adversity Themes from Survey Section

This section has provided the findings related to adversity that clergy face as reported by survey participants. As discussed, the themes of workload, expectations, isolation, and health issues were challenges that clergy encountered in their role. Each of these themes had a number of unique facets that were described. The next section will describe the survey findings related to resources that participants identified as helping their resilience.

Supportive Resources for Clergy Resilience: Open-ended Survey Question Findings

Clergy identified a number of themes related to resources that support their resilience. These themes are (a) spiritual life, (b), relational supports (c) personal aspects, and (d) organizational practices. Each of these themes consist of subthemes that are discussed below.

Spiritual Life

Clergy identified their spiritual life and relationship with God on this as a central part of their resilience. These elements included the subthemes of partnership with God, communal faith, and spiritual practices.

Partnership with God. Clergy considered ministry to be a partnership of God working through them and guiding them. A survey participant described this aspect as central to resilience and declared, “without a grounding in the divine being a successful minister would be impossible. When I have been the closest to zero in life it was my relationship with God that saw me through...a big element of clergy resilience, God” (S, Q7, line 102). Another survey participant identified “spiritual relationship with the living God strengthens me each day and through difficult seasons” as important to resilience (S, Q3, line 175). Another revealed, “the Holy Spirit equips and encourages me as I pray and seek his guidance in many, many issues” (S, Q3, line 291).

A sense of partnership and trust in God provided relief from the stress encountered in ministry for some clergy. A survey participant shared:

[I] have learned to walk with God, moment by moment, knowing he is all loving, all powerful, all knowing, and I have nothing to fear or dread in following His will. He will always bring about the best for me or work out what happens to me for my best. (S, Q3, line 116)

Trust in God’s care provided clergy with a sense of confidence in their circumstances. A survey participant also expressed, “trusting in God to guide our steps and show us the way!” (S, Q7, line 137). Another survey participant disclosed aspects of trust:

I am reminded through this that I am not defined by my role or career but by Christ.... He is always present and active and has invited us to be with Him in work and that is a gift. He does not need us to do anything because He has accomplished all that needs to be done. (S, Q7, line 27)

Partnership with God and surrender to his guiding and working through them was an important facet of spiritual life that was identified as supporting clergy to be resilient.

Communal Faith. The communal nature of faith was important for many clergy in their resilience. A survey participant shared, “external Bible Study this past year with members outside of our congregation” as helpful (S, Q3, line 63). Another participant expressed, about 2 years ago we started a men's group...of 10 guys who meet weekly and journey together through life. I really needed this ... the personal outlet, the confidentiality, the feeling like a group of guys has "my back".... it has been life giving. (S, Q3, line 205)

Still another survey participant highlighted,

I attend a morning prayer group that does not ask me to do anything in it. I am able to be a participate without obligation... It allows me to step out of a leadership role and the mantle that leadership carries, to be cared for and (in the form of discussion) taught, which is renewing and therefore leads to resilience. (S, Q5, line 353)

Both of these participants revealed the interrelated resources of relational support and communal faith and the value for clergy resilience. The communal aspect of faith practices was an important facet of spiritual life for clergy and was identified as a resource for their resilience.

Spiritual Practices. A large number of spiritual practices were mentioned by participants. The importance of this facet brought a critique about the lack of spiritual specific questions in the survey from one participant. They advised, “investment into our personal relationship with God are key factors. I'm a little surprised that questions regarding spiritual disciplines of clergy weren't included in this survey, as I feel this is a key aspect to resiliency” (S, Q7, line 159). Spiritual practices mentioned included sacraments (S, Q3, line 429), confession (S, Q3, line 2), creation (S, Q3, lines 42, 60, 182, 184, 211), gratitude (S, Q3, line 171), patience and practicing selflessness (S, Q3, line 125), and worship music (S, Q3, line 125, 145, 171). Sermons were also mentioned as being a spiritual resource (S, Q3, line 281).

Prayer was another practice raised by survey participants. A survey participant said, “I pray through anything that seems to be creating disturbance in my life and commit the problem to the Lord, believing that He will see me through” (S, Q3, line 8). Another participant divulged,

“fear that I don't know what I'm doing -- and it drives me to prayer” (S, Q7, line 87). Journaling and reflection were also practices mentioned by some clergy and may overlap with prayer. (S, Q3, lines 5, 16, 34, 207).

Scripture and reading spiritual writings were other significant practices mentioned by participants. Some referred to “personal devotional practice” (S, Q3, line 373). A survey participant said, “regular engagement and application of the sacred texts” was a support for resilience (S, Q3, line 226). Another revealed, “spiritual strength from devotional life” (S, Q3, line 209). Guidance and insight were connected to the value of scripture. One survey participant said, “knowing and applying the principles of God’s word in all things pertaining to life and godliness” (S, Q3, line 164).

Retreats and silence and solitude were other disciplines valued by participants and were often connected. A survey participant identified “silent retreat at a Jesuit retreat centre” as a support for their resilience (S, Q3, line 263). Silence and solitude were sometimes referenced with retreat but also on their own. A survey participant shared, “focus on spiritual health. Relationship with God which includes Sabbath and quiet” (S, Q3, line 2). Another said, “I take more quiet time for myself and like to spend the quiet time talking to God- very peaceful” (S, Q3, line 196).

There are many spiritual practices that clergy engage in and find to be helpful in nurturing their spiritual life and resilience.

Summary of Spiritual Life Theme from Survey. As discussed, important facets of spiritual life included partnership with God, communal faith, and spiritual practices. Partnership with God was a core resource for clergy resilience that brought grounding and strengthened clergy in difficult times. Trust in God’s good guidance and care brought relief from the burdens and adversity associated with the ministry when surrendered in prayer. The communal nature of faith was another resource that was helpful to resilience in providing relational and spiritual support and care for clergy.

Spiritual practices are the final subtheme of spiritual life and included a large number of spiritual practices such as prayer, scripture, spiritual writing, retreats, silence, and solitude. The survey scales and the open-ended questions did not ask any questions specific to spiritual life and this was noted by participants as a missing dimension that is central to clergy resilience. Clergy spiritual life and the subthemes discussed were central resources for clergy resilience.

Relational Support

Relational support was a key theme that emerged related to resources that help clergy to be resilient and positively adapt to the adversity they face. This theme has seven sub-themes: (a) spouse/family, (b) friendships, (c) peers, (d) mentors, (e) leadership support, (f) congregational support, and (g) professionals. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

Spouse and Family Support. The support of a spouse and family was a resource referenced frequently by survey participants to help their resilience. Family or spousal support was mentioned 105 times by survey participants as a resource that helped clerics to positively adapt to the adversity they faced in their role. Strong sentiments about spousal support were shared by the survey participants. One survey participant expressed “my marriage partner has a huge influence on my resilience and...encouragement” (S, Q7, line 18). Further, a comment from a survey participant also reveals that a supportive marriage relationship may require intentional effort. He shared, “a healthy and mutually supportive marriage, which was made possible by receiving marriage counseling in about year four” (S, Q3, line 306). The following are a sampling of the strong declarations shared by survey participants about spousal support:

My wife...is a rock which I am able to cling to. She is much like a reset button as she helps me process and un-attach from days that bring me stress. (S, Q3, line 332)

In my personal life, I have a wife who is a good balance for me and who has been a major co-worker in Christ's vineyard. (S, Q7, line 104).

My husband is my best friend and spiritual partner, engaged somewhat in the work, and very engaged in our relationship. He supports me in many ways and encourages me to take time for me and for us. (S, Q3, line 291).

I am married to a woman who is also called to ministry. Without her by my side, I would have given up years ago. (S, Q7, line 30).

My marriage! I have a great wife who is both my best friend and partner in everything. She...loves Jesus and challenges me to be the best version of myself I can be. (S, Q3, line 205).

I am also appreciative of a long-time relationship in which my partner anticipates what I need to cope or decompress. (S, Q3, line 465)

I use my wife as a sound board.... she is a rock, good at providing alternative perspectives. (S, Q3, line 379)

A very supportive spouse, who is also a stickler for boundaries. (S, Q3, line 431).

My husband is very supportive in ministry. Although I am the lead pastor, we very much co-lead in everything we do from rebuilding a church destroyed by arson, to preaching and leading small groups. In the yoke, pulling together with the same intensity... in the same direction... at the same time. (S, Q3, line 483).

Having a supportive partner who is not afraid to remind me of agreed boundaries between work/and personal life is a great blessing. (S, Q3, line 513)

My wife - I can talk to her about anything. She is also an incredible problem solver. (S, Q3, line 335)

A great partner who I can talk to, find support, and who affirms me often. (S, Q3, line 466).

The above insights reveal spouses provided support through maintaining boundaries, being a sounding board, sharing alternate perspectives, providing encouragement and affirmation, sharing ministry load, problem-solving, or helping with stress management.

Conversely, marital conflict was mentioned as a form of adversity by survey participants (S, Q1, line 311, 359). Given the prominence of spousal support as a resource for participant's resilience, its absence and the presence of discord may be particularly adverse. A survey participant disclosed,

marriage joy and passion are not flourishing. [This] may be the biggest emotional drain of my energy. When it is good, I can endure much in ministry. When it is not well, I cannot sacrifice for the ministry, and feel torn between the two. A number of clergy friends have struggling marriages but have to "keep up appearances" and grind through ministry and home life. (S, Q7, line 118)

Another revealed, "I also had a husband that left the faith so didn't support my calling and who I have separated from in the last year" (S, Q7, line 80). Issues and conflict in the marriage relationship was cited by a number of survey participants as a challenge to their resilience.

Survey participants also revealed family support as important. One survey participant indicated, "a family who supports me in my work" (S, Q3, line 16) and another "strong family life and good communication with my wife and daughter" (S, Q3, line 40). Another participant relayed, "my in-laws live in the same city, but do not attend the same church, and they are very supportive. My own family lives within a 3-hour drive" (S, Q3, line 63). Still another participant said, "my immediate family, my spouse and my son, are very supportive of my ministry role" (S, Q3, line 67). Yet another expressed "I have a strong family relationship with a sibling and with

my children and these are people I can talk to” (S, Q3, line 180). This survey participant described being connected with family who are physically distant yet described as “very close family. We chat almost every day [even though] they live out of the Province” (S, Q3, line 196). Similar to spousal conflict, family challenges also had a negative impact on clergy, as one survey participant indicated “challenges with teenagers” as adverse (S, Q1, line 404).

As discussed, support of a spouse and family was an important resource for resilience that survey participants identified.

Friend Support. Friendship was another sub-theme of relational support and was mentioned by 66 survey participants as a resource for their resilience. One survey participant described, “I have a great group of people that I connect with to help them grow but also to receive from them and grow. I also have a group of people that I can go deep with but also just have fun with from time to time” (S, Q3, line 136). Another described the importance of friendship as “a few trusted friends with whom I can be ‘myself’ and not be ‘a cleric’” (S, Q3, line 302).

Friends, both those who are not in ministry and outside of their church, were valued by participants. A survey participant also highlighted the separation and said, “friends who are not tied to the ministry role, who are ‘in my corner’ and help me to relax” (S, Q3, line 152). Still another shared, “I have a good friend outside my congregation in whom I can confide, and with whom I can pray as needed” (S, Q3, line 291). Yet another stated, “I have close friend who I meet with weekly who doesn’t attend our church. I can share with him any of my frustrations or difficulties and not have to worry about him needing to engage with it in any way” (S, Q3, line 344). A survey participant identified, “close friends outside of ministry and professional circles! Being free or relatively autonomous from systems” as a resilience resource (S, Q3, line 57).

Friends in ministry or inside their church were also referenced by one participant. A survey participant revealed, “I find personal relationships with local friends in the church, my workplace, and other Christian leaders to be of great help - relationships where mutual care and vulnerability are expressed in healthy, graceful ways” (S, Q3, line 489). Friends in a variety of forms were another facet of relational support for clergy resilience.

Peer Support. Peers are another facet of relational support for clergy resilience. While peers were often also considered friends, they were differentiated for other types of friendship. The common ground of understanding ministry was a distinguishing aspect of peer support. The blend of friendship and peer support was expressed by a survey participant who said, “an

informal coffee time with some colleagues who have become friends. I love that we can talk about church activities if we need to, but mostly we can just be ourselves and enjoy each other's company" (S, Q5, line 52). This aspect was further described by a survey participant who said, "I always want to have someone that is in [the] profession that I can bounce things off of, [to] talk to about problems [and] get ideas from" (S, Q3, line 323). Peers or team members was referenced by over 70 survey participants as a support for their resilience.

Sharing of ideas and resources is important for peer relationships. A survey participant highlighted "shared information (articles, books, etc.)" as valuable with colleagues (S, Q3, line 129). Another survey participant highlighted some other aspects, "I have a staff team that I get along with [and] that values my input as we adapt to the changes. Being part of a FaceBook group that asks questions that I am also asking" (S, Q3, line 218). Sharing and receiving of resources with other peers is supportive.

Another survey participant expressed, "having a couple of clergy friends to bounce off things bugging me or distressing me" (S, Q3, line 466). The desire for commonality also extended beyond ministry and included gender, for this participant. She shared, "a good network of people who face similar challenges. For me it is contact with other pastors, but especially other female pastors. (S, Q3, line 152).

For some clergy having relationships with local peers was referenced. One survey participant shared, "one good geographically close colleague (S, Q3, line 345). Participation in a "local Ministerial Committee" was also shared by a survey participant (S, Q3, line 415). While another survey participant stated the value of a, "local church leader to confide in, share ministry stresses and positives with" (S, Q3, line, 386) and another "connecting with local ministerial and having colleagues I can talk to" (S, Q3, line 395). A survey participant also shared, "weekly prayer meeting with other ministers in my area allows for prayer and sharing of ideas, concerns and advice" (S, Q3, line 26).

For some clergy, peer relationships were long-term and deeply intimate, even beginning during ministry preparation and training. A survey response indicated, "a regular (weekly) phone call with a clergy friend from seminary who is in another diocese. The chance to share struggles and questions, talk through discernment" (S, Q3, line 510). And another said, "having many pastors, those I went to school with and those I have met since, to discuss issues with and receive intellectual, spiritual, and emotional support from" (S, Q3, line 332).

Institutionally organized peer groupings were to also meaningful for some clergy. A survey participant contributed, “I participate monthly with a peer mentorship group of seven pastors from across the country in my denomination” (S, Q3, line 291). Another participant highlighted as helpful, “regular meetings with peers that are focused on ministry responsibilities are helpful, annual gatherings for professional development, and encouragement of Priest Support Groups” (S, Q3, line 343). Peer support as discussed is a facet of relational support for clergy resilience.

Mentor Support. Mentors were another important facet of relational support for clergy resilience. Mentors might be formal or informal and were marked by relationships with those who offer guidance and wisdom. A survey participant related, “hearing the ministry stories and wisdom of other older church leaders has also always been a high priority for me” (S, Q3, line 515). Another expressed, “I have always made sure to seek out a mentor who has gone before me, shown to be wise and has had more experience in leading and managing a congregation through growth and conflict” (S, Q5, line 289). A survey participant divulged, “mentorship and positive input from people from varied backgrounds including, but not limited to, clergy” (S, Q3, line 63). Mentor support was another facet of relational support for clergy resilience.

Leadership Support. The care of denominational or diocese leadership and being valued by the local church leadership was a resource for clergy resilience. A survey participant confided,

one of the best emails I received, several years ago, from my bishop, was a reminder to care for my vocation. It is important to me that my bishop not forget that they are my pastor and not just my employer. (S, Q5, line 277)

Another survey participant reported, “a caring and involved Board” as helpful (S, Q3, line 184). Another expressed, “denominational leadership engaged in caring for local pastors” (S, Q3, line 386). Still another survey response indicated, “If you have a good boss (bishop) you're ok. I do have the best bishop ever, thank God!” (S, Q3, line 393). A survey response also spoke to this need:

The Bishop of the diocese needs to visit each of the clergy of every parish at least once a year, not just for the pomp and circumstance of a hierarchal church service, but to spend one or two days with the clergy and develop a personal relationship with each cleric. It is ONLY in this way that the local cleric feels he is part of the whole Church, but also, it gives opportunity for the bishop to understand the personal state of each of the clergy and

to help those who are struggling. This is particularly important for younger clergy who are still finding their way. (S, Q6, line 328).

The care and support by leaders, like a Bishop, who oversee clergy is an important resource for clergy resilience. As discussed, care of clergy from denominational or diocese leadership was a facet of relational resource that supported clergy resilience.

Congregational Support. The church culture and support from the congregation and the people clergy minister to emerged as a theme identified by participants as an important resource that supports their resilience. An eagerness to grow, welcoming, joyful (S, Q3, line 131), appreciative, respectful (S, Q3, line 182), harmonious (S, Q3, line 172), and accepting were characteristics of congregations identified by participants as supportive. Encouragement, regular affirmation (S, Q3, line 96), recognition of work (S, Q3, line 206), and positive feedback from the congregation (S, Q3, line 4) were also referenced as important. Further descriptors of supportive congregations included loving (S, Q3, line 231), caring (S, Q3, line 142), kind (I10, p. 15), compassionate (S, Q3, line 204), and concerned for the cleric's well-being (S, Q3, line 175). Congregational expressions of care and a positive congregational culture were a facet of relational support that supports clergy resilience.

Professional Support. Professional supports, especially including spiritual direction and counselling, were referenced as supports for clergy. Both supports were referenced in providing support for personal and professional issues. A survey participant mused, "perhaps it is better to look outside of clergy circles for help and counselling" (S, Q7, line 113). Survey participants indicated counselling as a resource clergy need to support their resilience. Participants indicated that they accessed counselling through their health benefits, Employee Assistance Programs, organizational counselling centre or by engaging in private counselling. A few other participants indicated using public mental health services for counselling (S, Q3, line 96, 117) and programs like a CBT workshop (S, Q3, line 30).

Spiritual direction was also an important resource reported by some survey participants. One survey participant described spiritual direction as "talking with someone about the whole of my life and receiving their feedback - what they have heard me say" (S, Q3, line 336). In addition to counsellors and spiritual directors, doctors (S, Q3, line 162, 173, 275, 376), and paramedical services, such as massage and chiropractic care (S, Q3, line 306) were also referenced as professional supports. Doctors and medication were a professional support referenced by participants for things such as treating depression (S, Q3, line 4, 62, 376),

dysthymia (S, Q1, line 68), and other health issues (S, Q2, line 66). Celebrate Recovery, a peer support group, was also mentioned by a survey participant as helpful (S, Q3, line 165).

Summary of Relational Supports Theme from Survey. As discussed, the seven facets of relational support included spouse and family, friends, peers, mentors, leadership, congregation, and professional supports. Spouse and family support were a key resource for resilience, especially spousal support. Spouses often had a joint sense of calling and a spouse was an important source of grounding, balance, boundaries, a sounding board, problem solving, and sharing of the ministry load with the clergy person. Family was also a support and provided clergy with a place to talk. Conversely, spouse or family conflict can be adverse for clergy

Trusted friends, whether outside or inside of the church, were another relational resource which allowed clergy to be honest. Friends outside of the church enabled clergy to engage with non-church things and engage in the world outside of work that facilitated a level of freedom, as the clergy person did not have to consider any dual role aspects. Peer relationships, some of whom might also have been friends, were also an important resource for clergy resilience. The common understanding of ministry and being able to talk through ministry issues with peers was valuable for clergy.

Mentors were another resource for clergy resilience identified, as those who offered guidance and wisdom that clergy applied to their ministry. Supervisor care was another resource of resilience identified by clergy. The care of a denominational leader was valued by clergy. Congregational care and support were aspects that clergy identified as supportive, including a positive church culture, expressions of encouragement, care, concern, affirmation, and recognition of work by congregants toward the cleric.

Professional supports were the final resource identified as a relational support for clergy resilience. The two central professions for relational support were counsellors and spiritual directors, who offered clergy a safe opportunity to process issues and consider them from a more objective stance. These facets of relational support are important for clergy resilience.

Personal Aspects that Support Resilience

There were several themes that emerged as personal resources for clergy resilience. As discussed below, these themes and their facets included: (a) balance, (b) caring for health, (c) boundaries, (d) clear calling, (e) identity and self-awareness, (f) institutional alignment, and (g) personal attributes.

Balance. Balance between work and personal life was a resource that clergy identified as important to their resilience. One survey participant described, “an ability to compartmentalize work and home life” (S, Q3, line 360). Another shared, “I keep my ministry-related work hours to between 45 and 55 hours per week and the church has been fully supportive of this. I also regularly take Mondays as days off, as well as most Saturdays” (S, Q3, line 515). A survey participant shared, “I find its crucial to balance my work with other pursuits and I make weekly goals to achieve this” (S, Q7, line 127).

Some participants experienced burnout and related this to the importance of boundaries and balance. A survey participant shared:

I have experienced burnout and it is not a nice space to be in.... I am still learning [that] I must intentionally care for myself if I am to stay in a good space. It is a constant struggle to maintain balance but a necessity. I am learning boundaries, the importance of self-care and family/ministry balance. (S, Q7, line 43)

This participant highlighted the importance but challenge of balance and the overlap between it and boundaries. Another participant disclosed, “after crashing and burning (burnout) last year, I now am beginning to take care of myself - food, diet, exercise, cats of Instagram, and humour helps” (S, Q7, line 79). Balance between ministry work and taking care of family and personal needs was an important resource for clergy resilience.

Caring for Health. Physical health was an aspect of balance and many participants referenced diet, exercise, and rest as important for their resilience. A survey participant shared that “solid routines around mealtime” are a resource for their resilience (S, Q3, line 330).

Exercise was also important for participant’s resilience and mentioned by many survey participants. A survey participant elaborated on how exercise and relational support can be intermingled:

I love to go to my gym. There is a real community of others exercising there...I do a water aerobics class with a bunch of great ladies...Also, I joined a ladies golfing league and made some wonderful friends who support me but don't treat me with reticence because I am a minister. They say they admire me, and they are not #%@\$3 afraid to say it just like that. These two things take me away from the worry and stress and sometimes sadness of the job I do, and I feel blessed to have them in my life. (S, Q3, line 253)

For this participant the relational support and exercise were woven together and both beneficial. Another survey participant pointed to the benefit of exercise, “I also feel that regular exercise is really important for me to deal with stress and other issues” (S, Q3, line 370).

Rest was another aspect of physical health mentioned by participants. Some survey participants highlighted “rising and going to bed, regular sleep habits” (S, Q3, line 330) and a “good night’s rest” (S, Q3, line 243) as helping their resilience. While other responses identified the importance of vacations and sabbath. A survey participant articulated, “I take one day each week for Sabbath rest and family time. I take all my allotted holidays (6 weeks annually) and most of my allotted study leave time (2 weeks annually)” (S, Q3, line 291).

Recreation and fun were associated with both exercise and rest and a resource for resilience flagged by participants. A survey participant disclosed, “activities that I enjoy outside of my ministry role, such as cooking and hiking, has provided healthy recreation for me” (S, Q7, line 19). The intermingling of resources like recreation, peer support, and spiritual practices was expressed by a survey participant who shared the value of, “six or eight colleagues across the last three decades. Meet for lunch, retreat to my cottage, play golf, talk shop, sample ‘single malts’ and wines, and occasional morning prayers together” (S, Q7, line 125). Another responded, “maintaining wellness activities that interest me and contribute to my sense of self-worth and relaxation. Nurturing my sense of humor. Reading for my work and my enjoyment” (S, Q3, line 16).

A sample of hobbies or fun activities mentioned by survey participants included: walking, hiking, golf, football, basketball, floor hockey, reading, writing, woodwork, music, cooking, puzzles, gardening, birdwatching, stargazing, knitting, yoga, and artistic endeavours (S, Q3). Diet, exercise, rest, recreation, and humour were key facets of caring for health that were identified as important in responding positively to adversity.

Boundaries. Having boundaries was a resource that survey participants identified as helping them to positively adapt to the adversity they encounter in their roles. A survey participant emphasized the importance of this in answering, “boundaries, boundaries, boundaries” (S, Q3, line 473). Boundaries was reported as necessary to respond to the challenge of workload and learning to say “no” was a boundary that one survey participant identified (S, Q1, line 162). Boundaries were a resource for participants that helped them to adapt positively to the adversity they faced.

Clear Calling to Ministry. Having a clear sense of calling to ministry and meaning in the work they are doing was another resource for resilience that participants identified. One survey participant shared, “it is all about ‘calling.’ when things are not at the best, it is the call of God on our lives that moves, motivates, and encourages clergy” (S, Q7, line 57). Another described, “I do not see being a member of the clergy as a job or something that I do to be happy, but as a calling from God. As such, life can be both difficult and rewarding, discouraging yet possessing hope” (S, Q7, line 68). Yet another imparted,

I feel the most important aspect of ministry is whether the person is called by God to it or is pursuing it as a job. If it is not a calling, then the day-to-day grind will wear you out. If it is a calling, then one is sustained by God through the hard times and becomes a much more effective minister. (S, Q7, line 71)

A clear calling had a sustaining power in it that helped clergy to weather challenging times.

A survey participant also shared, “confidence in the calling of God. He provides the resources, abilities, graces and peace required” (S, Q3, line 481). Still another expressed, resilience is not happiness nor contentment, it is the ability to recover from hurt or setbacks [and] to continue God's call in my life. Remember the end of 'the rhyme of the ancient mariner, ‘a sadder and a wiser man, he rose the morrow morn.’ (S, Q7, line 109) The sustaining power of calling is something that enables clergy to continue in their ministry despite adversity. Clergy acknowledged that adversity will be present in their ministry work they felt called by God to do.

Meaning and a sense of God’s presence was also found for clergy in the midst of adversity and challenges. A survey participant expressed:

ensuring that a happy-go-lucky, or even "flourishing" place in life is not the norm or the goal necessarily. The church and her clergy deal with issues in the trenches, and that is where Christ meets us; it's okay to be here, but we need support to keep going. (S, Q7, line 101)

Clergy make meaning of the adversity they faced based on their theological understanding of calling and suffering. A participant relayed:

I experienced what could have been devastating betrayal and wounding. My connection to God...enabled me to trust that God was somehow at work in the midst of the pain and disillusionment... that He would use what the devil meant for a stumbling block and turn it into a stepping-stone to eventually bring me out into wider pastures...a greater sphere of

responsibility and influence. God has never failed me yet!... If the Lord had not been on our side... we would have been overcome...and yet, by His great grace, He faithfully shows us the next step and gives us the courage and strength to take it. (S, Q7, line 149)

Theologically clergy anticipated adversity and trusted in God to redeem it for good. Another participant also shared, “Recognition that life isn't nor should be easy...Conviction that my work matters beyond the merely human realm, but that it will matter into eternity (S, Q3, line 226).

Clergy often considered an eternal perspective on their ministry work.

Uncertainty about calling arose for some clerics. A survey participant disclosed, “I am in my 20th year in my current congregation. I would say that every year I have doubted or questioned whether I would be there this time next year” (S, Q7, line 82). Another survey participant shared as challenging, “a lack of clarity in calling; all are meant to serve, but not all as clergy. [A] lack of clarity in giftedness and not knowing what strengths one brings to a role breeds insecurity and ineffectiveness” (S, Q1, line 53). Another highlighted as a problem a “lack of confidence, lack of commitment, and ambivalence about gaining a full-time role” (S, Q1, line 270). A clear sense of calling to ministry and meaning in the challenges of ministry was a resource that helped clergy to positively adapt to the adversity they encounter.

Firm Identity and Self-awareness. Self-awareness and firm identity were another resource that participants identified as helping clergy resilience. A survey participant highlighted the need for clergy to, “process past pain and trauma. Feel loved by God. [Have] confidence in my strengths and weaknesses” (S, Q3, line 24). Another emphasized as a resource for resilience, “I understand my strengths and weaknesses” (S, Q3, line 433). Still another said, “know your limitations and your ability to overcome adversity. Do not over or underestimate yourself and always reach out if help is needed” (S, Q3, line 388). Self-awareness about strengths, abilities, weaknesses, limits, and emotional wounds and needs was identified as a resource for resilience.

Lack self-awareness in clerics of their own personal issues can exacerbate the relational challenges of ministry. One survey participant expressed “being unaware of personal tendencies and core individual needs, often results in collateral relational damage for both the clergy member and their parish” (S, Q1, line 53). A survey participant recommended:

I think that clergy should do serious emotional, spiritual, and mental health work one-on-one during their training or in their first couple of years of ministry...they often wound people because of a lack of self-awareness, don't understand projection, and are often

burning out because of the emotional vulnerability that is so much a part of healthy ministry. (S, Q6, line 364)

Another survey participant shared as challenging “ambiguous self-relationship: personal goals, expectations, and their effect on core relationships and role” (S, Q1, line 177). A survey participant also critiqued, “my own observation over 25+ years in ministry is that I am sometimes astonished by my colleagues' emotional immaturity” (S, Q7, line 92). Yet another assessed, “the screening processes for clergy psychological fitness do not seem to me to be as effective as one would expect them to be” (S, Q7, line 154). Self-awareness and identity were identified as a resource that helps clergy be resilient.

Institutional Alignment. Alignment of the cleric with the denominational values and vision was important for resilience, as was alignment with the specific vision for the congregation or parish. A survey participant reflected this aspect, “I serve with a team that is fairly well aligned towards the same goals” (S, Q3, line 33). Another survey participant also reflected on cultural alignment being important and said, “contextually with a farm background I relate to the rural church well, I understand them and their ‘lingo’” (S, Q3, line 379). For another, “we are a same sex couple and could not ask for a more supportive congregation” (S, Q3, line 456). Alignment between personal values and vision and denominational or congregational values and vision was identified as helpful for clergy resilience.

Personal Attributes. There were some personal characteristics that were identified by participants as either a resource for responding to adversity or as assisting them in accessing helpful resources. Adaptability was highlighted as being beneficial to participants. For example, one survey participant proposed, “being flexible and adaptable is very helpful. Landing somewhere in the middle between naive optimism and cynical realism” (S, Q7, line 34). Another highlighted, “my personality - I adapt fairly well to change and can process emotions/verbalize how I'm feeling well (and often!)” (S, Q3, line 149). Similarly, another shared, “good personality which allows me to be adaptable to my context” (S, Q3, line 452).

Attitude and perspective were also highlighted as helpful to resilience by a number of participants and illustrated in this survey comment, “gift of a positive attitude by God and cultivated throughout life” (S, Q3, line 373). Another participant emphasized “healthy perspective [and] realistic outlook” as resources (S, Q3, line 135). Another stated, “being able to see the glass is half full” (S, Q3, line 293). Another participant shared, “I have fun...enjoy life most of the time...I'm upbeat and make people laugh and think” (S, Q3, line 433).

Optimism and compassion were also identified as helpful. One survey participant shared, “I tend to be very optimistic, happy and content. I am compassionate/empathetic which enables me to see things from others' perspectives and work toward mutually beneficial solutions” (S, Q3, line 483). Another survey comment identified,

[I] am not type A personality, tend to be more relaxed, [have the] ability to not take offense, [and] listen more than I speak. [I] know how to be diplomatic in the work environment. [I] know when to keep my nose out of other areas of ministry. [I] do not get overly fussed about issues and personalities... I am perceived as a "peace" maker. (S, Q3, line 32)

This participant's comment provided an example of how their personality was beneficial. Various personal attributes, such as being extroverted, optimistic, diplomatic, and adaptable were seen as important facets of clergy resilience.

Summary of Personal Aspects that Support Resilience Theme from Survey. As discussed, personal aspects that supported resilience included facets of balance, health, boundaries, clear calling, identity and self-awareness, institutional alignment, and personal attributes have been discussed. Balance involved a restriction on how much time and energy was dedicated to ministry and ensuring sustainable rhythms that prioritized spiritual, mental, physical, social well-being, as well as recreation and fun.

Caring for health was related to balance, and involved prioritization of diet, exercise, and rest. Boundaries also overlapped with balance and self-care and involved the ability to say ‘no’ to expectations and pressures. Boundaries enabled the clergy to maintain the balance of time and energy between personal and ministry needs. Self-awareness was a resource that involved personal insight and healing of emotional wounds. Self-awareness also included understanding of one's abilities and limitations.

Institutional alignment was also a resource for clergy resilience identified. Alignment of the cleric's values and vision with their denomination, congregation, and team seemed to decrease friction and conflict and led to a sense of personal and relational congruence. Personal attributes were the final resource in the personal aspects theme. Personality characteristics like extroversion, optimism, realism, flexibility, compassion, and diplomacy were considered resources for adapting to adversity. These are important facets of personal resources that have been identified as supporting clergy resilience.

Organizational Practices

There were several sub-themes and their facets that emerged as organizational practices that are resources for clergy resilience. These organizational sub-themes are (a) provision, (b) role flexibility, and (c) institutional support. These will be discussed below.

Provision. Provision was a facet of organizational practices that was identified as a resource for resilience. Financial compensation was one aspect of this as a survey participant commented, “well cared for financially” (S, Q3, line 237). Another mentioned, “making enough money to no longer be in poverty” (S, Q3, line 269) and another “financial stability” as a resource for their resilience (S, Q3, line 342).

Beyond finances, provision also included housing. A survey participant reflected, “A very nice rectory in a lovely neighborhood” (S, Q3, line 429). Another shared, “Living in a beautiful place” was a support to their resilience (S, Q3, line 294).

Provision of educational opportunities was an aspect referenced by other participants as well. Resources identified in the survey included: “continuing education time” (S, Q3, line 395), “positive professional development opportunities,” “educational endeavors/studies” (S, Q3, line 386), and “ongoing pursuit of higher education in a theological/spiritual context” (S, Q3, line 289). A survey participant elaborated, “I have a professional development budget to spend as I see fit in professional development” (S, Q5, line 237). Provision like compensation, housing, or education are a facet of organizational practice that was identified as supportive of clergy resilience.

Role Flexibility. Role flexibility was another facet of organizational practice that participants reported as a resource. A survey participant identified, “flexibility of lifestyle; varied opportunities to learn and live out my giftings” as a resource (S, Q3, line 266). Another related, “freedom to make own decisions” (S, Q3, line 413) and “flexible schedule” as being helpful (S, Q3, line 148).

Micromanagement was flagged as a concern by one survey participant, who said, “I am curious how abuse against pastors and micromanagement affects mental health outcomes. Micromanagement diverts self-care needs and drives a workaholic mentality with undertones of shame” (S, Q7, line 46). Role flexibility is an organizational practice that clergy considered helpful, while micromanagement was viewed negatively.

Institutional Support. In addition to leadership support and care which was discussed under relational supports, institutional support involves practical aspects like communication and

clarity. Good communication with some type of supervisor, either at a denominational or congregational level, depending on the structure was helpful to clergy. A survey participant shared, “having supervision for professional support and ongoing growth’ as a resource for their resilience (S, Q3, line 16). Another identified the need for, “clarity and communication from our denomination. At present the impetus for reacting or planning is at the grass roots, and the denomination is reacting to us vs. giving direction and resources” (S, Q3, line 221). Another identified the importance of “support from my hierarchy. An ability to communicate freely” (S, Q3, line 371). Institutional support was a facet of organizational practices that are a resource for clergy resilience.

Summary of Organizational Practices that Support Resilience Theme from Survey.

As discussed, provision, role flexibility, and institutional support were organizational practices that clergy considered as helpful for resilience. Provision was a resource that clergy found beneficial to their resilience and involved being cared for financially, as well as aspects like health care plans, professional development opportunities, and housing.

Role flexibility was another resource that clergy identified as supportive of their resilience. The freedom of being trusted to minister based on the cleric’s sense of God’s calling and being able to make their own decisions was beneficial; whereas micromanagement was flagged as a concern. Organizational practices, such as denominational communication and clarity regarding work related issues were resources in the organizational practices theme.

Conclusion of Resource Themes from Survey

This section has provided the findings related to resources that clergy reported in the survey as helping their resilience. As discussed, the themes of relational supports, spiritual life, personal aspects, and organizational practices are categories of resources that participants identified as helpful for resilience. Each of these themes had a number of subthemes and facets that were described. The next section will describe the survey findings related to initiatives, training, or professional development that participants identified as helping their resilience.

Initiatives Helpful for Resilience: Open-ended Survey Question Findings

Participants were also asked to identify any existing formal or informal initiatives, programs and supports that they felt had been helpful in sustaining their resilience and well-being in their clergy role. They also had the opportunity to share idea for new initiatives, programs and supports. Themes identified were (a) training and programs, (b), relationship building opportunities (c) wellness opportunities, and (d) organizational priority.

Training and Programs

Training and programs were the first theme identified under initiatives, programs, or professional development that is helpful for clergy resilience. This theme included the facets of pre-service discernment and preparation, early ministry support, specific skill development, and lifelong learning.

Discernment Process and Pre-Service Training. The importance of discerning fit for ministry pre-service training was identified as an important facet of clergy resilience. Focusing on screening a survey participant appraised, “some clergy ought not to be clergy - they are clergy for themselves and not for the common good of the people they serve” (S, Q6, line 336). Suggestions for improving ministry preparation included screening for ministry (S, Q6, line 224), training on resilience (S, Q6, line 23), equipping in self-care (S, Q6, line 395), development of people skills (S, Q6, line 438), and increased internship experience and mentoring (S, Q6, line 300). Another suggested, “pastoral training that focuses on core competencies and develops realistic expectations regarding the role of clergy and the complexity of leadership. Know what you're getting into” (S, Q6, line 115).

Increased experiential learning was recommended by some participants. A survey participant recommended,

ministry preparation . . . more apprenticeship model based, mentor-mentee . . . ways to help younger leaders feel and know “the feeling of leadership.” . . . I would suggest a more relational, safety-based experience for younger leaders who are entering ministry. Emotional intelligence coaching, self-awareness, stress management, self-management practices would also be of great benefit. (S, Q6, line 78)

Another participant shared along similar lines when they said,

hands on experience.... less books and more real people involvement. I spent 5 years on reserves and three years in the Caribbean...in some ways I got more out of those than I did out of a lot of what the seminary taught. Hands on stuff!” (S, Q6, line 433)

Other suggestions for pre-service preparation focused on assessment tools and self-awareness. A survey participant suggested the need for “emotional intelligence testing, feedback and follow-up” (S, Q6, line 209). Another survey participant advocated,

mandatory personality testing and follow up coaching. A significant change in my ministry was when an individual [had] identified areas that I lacked in self-awareness, and then gave me tools to help me identify and manage my tendencies. It was initially

both uncomfortable and humbling but...the result has been that I feel confident in my strengths, aware of my limitations, I delegate without guilt, I empower more congregants, and I create less drama and therefore trauma for others. (S, Q6, line 53)

This participant highlighted their personal experience in growing in self-awareness of their abilities and limitations and the way in which it has benefitted their ministry. The comment also highlighted that there can be short-term discomfort in the process but that it has many ongoing benefits.

While some saw room for improvement in ministry preparation, other participants spoke positively of their preparation. Below are comments from survey:

The theological education I received positively formed me for a lifetime of ministry. (S, Q5, line 67)

Both my undergraduate and masters were both very helpful. Also, my internships during that time. (S, Q5, line 114)

The internship and CPE were important programs that helped me prepare for ministry because they taught me how to create boundaries. (S, Q5, line 376)

Discernment and pre-service preparation an important facet of the training and programs that clergy desire to support their resilience.

Early Ministry Support. Those new to ministry were identified as needing extra support. A survey participant highlighted the need for, “concrete support explicitly for young and new priests” (S, Q6, line 302). Another survey participant also expressed concern for those new in ministry saying, “I was fortunate early in my ministry career to have had good mentoring that helped me create and maintain healthy boundaries. [This is] something I see missing in a new generation of clergy” (S, Q7, line 33). Another participant revealed,

My denomination had a program...for pastors in their first two years of vocational ministry. This involved having a mentor, a peer support group, a group coach, and meeting for retreats twice each year. This was a huge blessing for helping me to transition into life as a pastor. (S, Q5, line 515)

Still another participant shared that a “mentoring program in my first years as a clergy” was valuable to their resilience (S, Q5, line 47). Mentoring and additional support for those in early ministry is an important initiative identified as beneficial to clergy resilience.

In addition to providing structured mentoring and support for those in early ministry, recommendations were also made about some specific training needs for those new in ministry.

A survey participant suggested the need for “mandatory courses on boundary setting for clergy as they begin” (S, Q6, line 16). Another wondered if, “better social skills and assertiveness skills” training might be helpful (S, Q6, line 484). These suggested trainings seek to enhance the resources of boundaries. Early ministry support is an important facet of the training and programs that clergy desire to support their resilience.

Specific Skill Development. Another facet of training identified was the need for specific skill development to address the complex needs of the role. A survey participant mused about leadership skills and said, “lack of ministers with leadership qualities... I note this in society as well. I wonder if there is a connection between resiliency and leadership...if one is not resilient then one cannot lead” (S, Q7, line 115). Another highlighted the need for “courses that are helpful to the work of clergy: i.e., stress management, dealing with difficult people and handling conflicts, etc. Courses on professional development to keep up competencies” (S, Q6, line 16). Training in technology was another area of need highlighted, especially in light of COVID-19 (S, Q6, line 362). Another participant recommended:

conflict management, especially when embroiled in conflict. ...I can't believe that these courses are not mandatory in seminary, especially given how many clergy burn out or change ministry because of conflict within the church, how many churches split over conflict. (S, Q6, line 165)

Relational and interpersonal skills were also identified as a training need

Skills related to crisis and mental health were flagged as a need. A survey participant recommended, “every pastor, chaplain should have to take at least one Clinical Pastoral Education unit (CPE) and Mental Health First Aid training” (S, Q6, line 64). Another comment highlighted the need for “trauma response training” (S, Q6, line 72). Another shared, “I have yearly gone on courses for youth ministry, to learn how to help people with mental illness and eating disorders” (S, Q5, line 97). Still another emphasised, “professional development in the areas of crisis intervention, mental health, and practical tools to help those in crisis is needed” (S, Q6, line 130). Another reflected on the value to them of “The ASIST suicide prevention course through Living Works” (S, Q5, line 98). Specific skill development was viewed as equipping clerics to address some the challenges they face in their roles was an important facet of training and programs that participants indicated that they desire.

Lifelong Learning. Lifelong learning was another facet of the training and development theme. The process of ongoing learning and growth was identified as valuable by survey

participants. One shared, “clergy should learn the awesomeness of learning new skills, new models, new mindset.... continue learning and asking questions.... not becoming cynical!” (S, Q7, line 158). Another indicated as a resource, “I am well-read, a life-long learner” (S, Q3, line 483) and similarly, “life-long learning is a personal value I read a lot” (S, Q35, line 237).

Participants also identified ongoing formal education, such as completing a master’s degree or doctorate as a resource for resilience (S, Q5, line 3, 17, 118, 200). Continuing education, professional development, and course were frequently cited as sustaining resilience (S, Q5). Lifelong learning opportunities are an important facet of the training and development that clergy indicated is desired.

Summary of Training and Development Theme from Survey. As discussed, training and development were identified as initiatives that were supportive of their resilience. This included aspects of pre-service discernment and preparation, early ministry support, specific skill development, and life-long learning. Pre-service discernment that involved thorough screening of clergy candidates, such as aspects like self-awareness, was recommended. Pre-service preparation provided foundational training that clergy connected to their resilience. Additional support, like mentoring, for those in early ministry was identified as important for resilience. Specific skill development was a resilience resource as it enabled clerics to develop their skills to address the diversity of work that they were engaged in. Lifelong learning in general was also seen as a resource for resilience as it enabled clergy to grow and develop.

Relationship Building Opportunities

The second theme of relationship building opportunities was identified when survey participants had the opportunity to identify initiatives, training, or professional development that they found helpful or believed would be helpful for resilience. A number of facets of the relationship building opportunities were identified by participants as initiatives helpful for resilience. Structured programs, such as conferences and events, were identified as helpful. As discussed at length below in the theme of denominational priorities, denominational events were seen as contributing to clergy resilience. In addition to denominational events and programs, other para-church or inter-denominational conferences and programs, like Global Leadership Summit (S, Q5, line 20, 103, 114, 237) and Focus on the Family Canada’s pastoral supports and Kerith retreat were identified as beneficial (S, Q5, line 3).

However, one survey response identified a current need in Canada for more inter-denominational training and events saying:

there could be an interdenominational program or organization that would be endorsed and used by 5 or more denominations... and its purpose was nurture, renewal, education, for clergy....in the Canadian context....This proposed organization would be for spiritual nurture and professional development [of clergy]. (S, Q6, line 411)

This participant's comments highlighted the desire for Canadian inter-denominational events where clerics have opportunities to connect and be trained.

Structured mentoring programs, such as Church Renewal and Arrow, were also highlighted as relational opportunities (S, Q5, lines 3, 99, 140, 250, 399). One survey participant shared, "I have been part of a weekly online mentoring group for 3.5 years during the school months and it has been a great help to me" (S, Q5, line 424). Another conveyed that "having a formal mentor for three years" assisted their resilience (S, Q5, line 501).

There were a variety of focuses for mentoring shared. A survey participant expressed a need for "marriage mentorship program" (S, Q6, line 392). As discussed previously, mentoring programs for new clergy are also considered important. Leadership mentoring was also identified (S, Q6, line 511). In addition to helping the mentee, there also seemed to be value for clergy acting as mentors, as expressed by this survey participant, "mentoring younger pastors breathes life into me" (S, Q5, line 399). A survey participant captured the value of structured programs in facilitating relationship. He said, "professional development can be helpful, but its most useful in the relationships it brings, and those relationships, stories, encouragements, anecdotes, and shared wisdom are the most helpful" (S, Q5, line 19). Relational opportunities interwoven with opportunities for training and growth are initiatives that clergy consider beneficial for their resilience.

Summary of Relational Opportunities Theme from Survey. As discussed, conferences, events, and structured programs provided clergy opportunities to develop relationships with their peers. Inter-denominational and denominational events were both valued and provided important peer connections. There were a number of programs running that were appreciated and there was also a desire for additional for Canadian inter-denominational events.

Wellness Opportunities

The third theme related to initiatives considered helpful for resilience is clergy wellness opportunities. This included the sub-themes related to spiritual and emotional self-care identified by participants. Opportunities that foster the spiritual life of clergy were recommended by

participants, such as sabbatical and retreats and regular spiritual direction. Counselling was also recommended as a support for clergy emotional wellness.

Sabbaticals and Retreats. Sabbaticals were referenced by seven survey participants as influential on resilience (S, Q5, line 65, 98, 210, 237; S, Q6, line 158, 203, 295). Retreats were another initiative that was prioritized by participants. A desire for provision in this area included the recommendation of “access to retreat space at free or greatly reduced rates to allow for personal retreat” (S, Q6, line 287). Another suggested “meditation retreats, education on meditation, mandatory days of silence and retreats in a year” (S, Q6, line 64).

Spiritual Direction. Accessible spiritual direction was another initiative recommended by participants. One survey participant suggested, “offering all clergy spiritual direction for free and mandatory for all pastors to attend once a month” (S, Q5, line 130). Another expressed, “clergy need to recognize the importance of spiritual direction and someone to journey with, someone they can open up to” (S, Q5, line 227). Another suggested, “spiritual directors for every pastor” (S, Q5, line 288). Yet another stated, “more support in providing spiritual directors for clergy” (S, Q5, line 16). Another recommended “Free therapy or spiritual direction” (S, Q5, line 470).

Counselling. Making counselling therapy available to clergy was another frequent recommendation by participants. One survey participant lamented their decreased access to counselling and disclosed:

In the last year or so our EA programme for counselling was cut in half, at a time when I keep reading that all the indications are that clergy work is more stressful, we actually get less support. We are now allowed four sessions with no extension...This is a joke. If our churches really want to believe that our mental health is important, [then] I'd say that this needs to be revisited. (S, Q7, line 78)

Another participant shared their valuable experience with counselling:

Regular everyday counseling outside of the church. Just a regular counsellor did wonders for me when I had hit burn out, the church paid for four sessions and I only needed three, I just needed a good re-grouping and I was back on top. (S, Q5, line 77)

Yet another recommended the need for, “counselling by a qualified professional who understands churches and pastors. I've had two such helpers. Without them I wouldn't have continued to the end” (S, Q5, line 121). Further still another survey participant shared:

I was greatly helped early in my ministry, by access to a psychologist through a diocesan clergy wellness program, without cost, to assist me after I had to respond pastorally with a murder-suicide and 2 other suicides in a short period of time. Such a program is not available in my current setting. (S, Q5, line 368).

A survey participant pondered the potential value of increasing counselling availability. They speculated,

I haven't experienced this, but I wonder if having a system in which pastors receive counselling on a regular basis, such as once a month, would help us to have someone objective to talk to and help us identify if we are declining mentally or emotionally....the counselling I have received in the past has not been covered by our benefits, which is hard to afford on a regular basis, so I stopped going. (S, Q5, line 15)

This participant also highlighted that cost can be a barrier for clergy to engage with counselling, if it is not covered.

Another participant conveyed the benefit and protection they see arising from counselling. They said,

it would be great if clergy were provided with counsellors outside of their denominations that they could go to and talk with. I feel like so many problems with burnout, sexual misconduct, etc. happen because senior leaders especially have no one to talk to about their struggles. (S, Q6, line 21)

Further, a participant also emphasized the value of counselling and said, "there needs to be a space outside of the church walls where pastors can safely share their stress and concerns without fear of judgment" (S, Q6, line 130). Counselling was a wellness opportunity that was highlighted by participants.

Summary of Wellness Opportunities Theme from Survey. As discussed, clergy expressed a need for wellness opportunities of sabbaticals and retreats, spiritual direction, and counselling to enhance their resilience. Sabbaticals and retreats were activities that were viewed as increasing spiritual, emotional, and physical self-care and guarding against the workload demands. Professional counselling provided emotional care for clergy and also supported self-awareness, healthy balance, and boundaries to address expectations and workload. Spiritual direction provided spiritual care to clergy and opportunities for self-reflection and to strength their spiritual resources and meaning. These wellness opportunities were considered valuable and desired by clergy.

Organizational Priority

Organizational prioritizing of clergy resilience was the final theme related to the initiatives, programs or supports considered helpful for resilience. This aspect focused on standards for clergy wellness and resilience and financial support. A survey participant highlighted the group effort necessary to address clergy resilience and shared:

I strongly believe clergy resilience and wellness is, as with nearly everything the Church does, a group effort. No one person can do everything, let alone care for themselves in every necessary way, alone. The dismissive argument that “with Christ all things are possible” is harmful and abusive when we fail to realize Christ works through us to love one another as Christ has loved us. I pray this survey may bring about some real change in the way clergy are prepared, cared for, and better equipped to care for all God's beloved children. (S, Q7, line 138)

Another comment highlighted the systemic nature of clergy health, “clergy are sick because the system is poorly considered and under-resourced” (S, Q6, line 92).

Further, there is a need to equip denominational leaders and congregational leaders to support clergy well-being, as this response indicated, “training for judicatory staff, to frame clergy well-being as a named part of their responsibilities” (S, Q6, line 228). Along a similar line, another participant shared, “I think support systems within a congregation need better understanding of how to support their ministry staff” (S, Q6, line 434). Another participant recommended, “I think a board training/church initiative "What it takes to care for your pastor" would be a helpful thing for denominations/ churches to do (S, Q6, line 78).

Standards for Clergy Well-being. Clergy identified that dioceses and denominations have a role to play in setting standards and expectations for clergy in having resources in their life to support their resilience. A survey participant recommended setting denominational standards for self-care. They said, “self-care protocols around cell phones and being on call all the time; but also protocols for helping to respond to requests in a timely fashion: (S, Q6, line 232). Also recommended “appropriate sabbatical policies” (S, Q3, line 521). Another recommended, “encouragement of regular spiritual direction and/or counselling; encouraging clergy to take all vacation and continuing education; regular mandatory retreats with other clergy (don't get rid of regional gatherings or annual meetings)” (S, Q6, line 395). Setting standards related to clergy health and resources to support this were recommended for the larger organizational bodies.

A survey participant advocated for “some kind of accountability for personal and professional development to the greater church such as a bishop, regular (like annual) mandatory clergy gatherings, follow up with clergy not complying” (S, Q6, line 275). Further, setting denominational standards related to how to respond to ministry expectations was also recommended. One survey participant suggested,

a way of helping congregations and pastors meet in the middle and have clear expectations (while still giving clergy freedom because the work is usually unpredictable) would give peace of mind to many clergy as they often beat themselves up over what they think the congregation wants done but they don't have time for. (S, Q6, line 332)

Another suggested,

a survey...provided by the local dioceses or church districts to check on the well-being of priests and ministers every five years or so...Unwell ministers are often not removed from ministry because no one checks on their well-being. It's very important for local Church leaders to check on the health of mind and body of their ministers for their good of the good the people they serve. (S, Q6, line 405)

Denominational opportunities for clergy support networks were valued by some participants. A survey participant shared, “denominations need to be deliberate in establishing networks of support for their clergy” (S, Q7, line 141). A survey participant affirmed their denominational retreat saying, “my denomination offers an annual "Bishop's Retreat for Clergy" which I find very refreshing, sustaining me in my ministry” (S, Q5, line 513). Another shared appreciation for two annual clergy gatherings in their denomination (S, Q5, line 419). The importance of denominational standards and accountability for clergy wellness and denominational networking of clergy was flagged by participants.

Financial Support. Denominational or congregational financial support for clergy well-being and resilience was also recommended by participants. One survey participant suggested, “more funds for retreat [and] not having to use continuing education funds for retreats. Diocese should completely foot the bill” (S, Q6, line 276). Another recommended:

I moved from the US two years ago where the Episcopal Church's Clergy Pension Fund has a retreat program called CREDO that is explicitly designed to support clergy wellness. Something like that would be great. As would more continuing education resources, especially for sabbaticals. (S, Q6, line 451)

Another shared, “conferences, and courses when funds have been made available to me to do such things” as something helpful for their resilience (S, Q5, line 366). Further, guidelines for clergy compensation were identified as a need rather than leaving it to the discretion of individual congregations (S, Q1, line 351).

Summary of Organizational Priority Theme from Survey. As discussed, the theme of organizational prioritizing of clergy resilience included facets of setting standards for clergy wellness and resilience and financial support. Survey participants identified the setting of denominational standards for clergy wellness as important. Alongside of this was highlighted the importance of accountability for wellness and ongoing development. As well, opportunities for clergy networking, denominational wellness tools, and financial support for wellness opportunities, such as retreats or counselling, was desired from denominations.

Conclusion of Helpful Initiatives Themes from Survey

In this section the themes of initiatives considered to be helpful for clergy resilience were discussed. These themes included (a) training and development, (b), relationship building opportunities (c) wellness opportunities, and (d) organizational priority. Facets of each of these themes were discussed. The next section will describe the survey findings related COVID-19.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Open-ended Survey Question Findings

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, with survey responses submitted in June and July 2020. While the pandemic was not the focus of the study many participants mentioned the topic. The impact of the pandemic on their survey responses was noted by many participants. The themes described by participants related to COVID-19 were: (a) increased workload, (b) value of denominational support, (c) restriction of supportive resources, (d) unique opportunities arising, and (e) uncertainty about the future of the church.

Increased Workload

Comments made by participants often focused on increased workload or stress, such as the pace of transitions, not being able to return to in-person services concern for congregants being impacted by COVID-19, working from home, and the financial impact of the pandemic (S, Q1). One survey participant highlighted COVID-19 as an exacerbating factor and said, “the increasing (pandemic-exacerbated) invisibility of the multi-faceted demands on my time and energy” (S, Q1, line 511). Another survey participant highlighted the profound impact of the pandemic on them saying,

I'm filling this out during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The past month has been the worst of my 16-years of ministry as the church leadership struggles with questions about resuming in-person worship services. This has been a huge challenge to my resilience and sense of call to ministry. (S, Q6, line 45)

Further, another survey participant reflected,

The COVID-19 pandemic has stretched my resilience and wellness, mainly because of the extra work that has resulted and the many changes that have had to be made. We have pivoted to online recording of our services on several different platforms, plus I have been spending more time one-on-one with congregants. My workload has definitely not diminished. (S, Q6, line 137)

This participant spotlighted increased workload due to online services and needs of congregants. Still another participant stated, "COVID-19 has weakened my resilience that I had been intentionally developing" (S, Q1, line 162). COVID-19 increased workload for many clergy, requiring new skills of clergy while at the same time limiting ministry options in a way that may be hindering their sense of resilience.

New Skills Required. The pandemic stretched clerics skills requiring an even more diverse skillset than normal. A survey participant expressed the "extra effort, mentally, physically of this COVID-19 time is quite different from my normal work and ministry rhythms. (S, Q1, line 123). Another survey participant shared, "nothing in my training ever prepared me for pastoring through a global pandemic and having to become a YouTube content creator overnight" (S, Q6, line 25). Another survey participant indicated "I need to figure out social media and technology better. This is one of my biggest COVID-19 hurdles" (S, Q6, line 362). The new skills required of clergy to meet needs during COVID-19 were significant, especially technological skills.

Ministry Limitations. Clergy workload has also been impacted by the pandemic restrictions causing ministry limitations. One survey participant described, the pandemic has seriously limited my ability to support hurting and lonely people in my congregation. Also, it has meant that I get less feedback. Seeing comfort or joy in someone's eyes when praying with them is much more difficult online. Having the immediate response of offering sermons to a congregation whose faces I can see as I talk is lost when the services are recorded. I am missing that personal interaction and feedback. Then I feel guilty that the feedback should be so important to me. I miss the

singing. Our congregation loves to sing, and music is very important to me. (S, Q1, line 118)

Highlighted in this comment is the missing personal feedback to clergy, as well as the communal expression of faith. Another survey participant also articulated the loss of communal faith,

it is difficult to satisfactorily visit with congregation by phone. You can't see their facial expressions to read between the lines when they say everything is "fine." Not being able to hold funeral services is very distressing. Online services seem rather cold in comparison to being able to greet people personally and listen to their concerns. (S, Q1, line 219)

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations of online or telephone ministry due to lack of intimacy.

A survey participant further highlighted an increased sense of consumerism with the move to online formats. They said,

producing a high-quality worship experience weekly is very challenging. The online situation has definitely led to a sense of "shopping" from several households who were regular attenders. This leads to a sense of disconnection with our missional projects, prayer needs, etc. (S, Q2, line 498)

Another survey participant shared "Transition to online is ever improving but we have several families who refuse to engage in our online (or attend in our distanced sanctuary) and I wonder if they are any longer part of us or not" (S, Q1, line 498). The disconnect and questions about losing congregants was a concern for some clergy.

Survey participants expressed concern for the impact of the pandemic on congregants. A survey participant stated, "many of my members are elderly and not comfortable with Zoom, YouTube and live streaming" (S, Q1, line 214). Another survey participant indicated:

I find that there is a lot of unsettledness surrounding the opening of the churches at this time, some people are quite comfortable to stay at home and watch the services online but there are some elderly [persons] who would benefit from getting together at church for the companionship. Unfortunately, due to health issues they are concerned about being out and about and are not able to afford or use computers. (S, Q7, line 56)

Safety was another aspect identified as a concern for clergy. A survey participant indicated:

I am answering this during the “re-opening phase” of COVID-19. Managing the safety of the people I serve, to have or not to have gatherings, and what they might look like, has been a significant source of stress over the last 30 days. (S, Q7, line 103)

Summary of Increased Workload Theme from Survey. As discussed, increased workload occurred due to COVID-19. With this workload came increased stress. Clergy required new skills, such as technology, to continue to minister in the midst of restrictions. Pandemic restrictions limited ministry opportunities. These limitations hindered clergy from expressing faith in a communal way and also restricted the personal feedback they get. The increased workload and stress associated with COVID-19 impacted clergy.

Loss of Supportive Resources

COVID-19 disrupted many supportive resources for clergy participants. The disruption, loss of rhythms, disorientation, uncertainty, and isolation of COVID-19 were elements that participants identified as adverse. Further impacts of COVID-19 identified by survey participants were similar to what many people in general may experience due to the pandemic, such as delayed surgeries, working from home with kids, limited continuing education opportunities, limited opportunities for exercise, and Zoom fatigue (S, Q1). A survey participant also indicated the loss of formal and informal clergy gatherings due to COVID-19 (S, Q5, line 443).

The importance of caring for oneself in the midst of the disruption and increased stress of the pandemic was expressed by one survey participant. They said, “I’m aware that the load is very heavy right now...I’m feeling that [load] and getting weary. [I am] trying to practice additional self-care for that reason, because I want to stay healthy long-term” (S, Q7, line 24). A survey participant also shared about the increased support to counteract the impact of COVID-19. They said, “after a month of intensive productivity coaching...I’m in a good place today because I have worked hard to overcome the setbacks of COVID-19 isolation. But I was an exhausted mess a month ago” (S, Q7, line 128). In order to cope with the increased workload and stress caused by the pandemic self-care was important. However, some supportive resources were limited by the pandemic restrictions. A survey participant indicated a loss of seeing their spiritual director, as it was not been possible due to pandemic restrictions (S, Q5, line 212). This participant’s theological understanding of suffering influenced them in their response to COVID-19. They expressed “In the time of COVID-19, theology of trauma has been very helpful to me. Being reminded to be gentle with ourselves is also important in these unprecedented times” (S, Q6, line 247).

Summary of Loss of Supportive Resources Theme from Survey. As discussed, resources that clergy access to support their well-being and resilience have been hindered or lost due to COVID-19. Participants expressed a need for increased resources and self-care to manage the additional load clergy are faced with in the pandemic. However, the ability to continue to engage with resources or access new resources was also be hindered by COVID-19.

Value of Denominational Support During the Pandemic

Denominational support during the pandemic was mentioned as valuable by participants. A survey participant shared “I am part of groups with my denomination to address specific issues with COVID-19 for our church and for children's ministry. I have people I can call at our denomination's head office for support” (S, Q3, line 218). Another survey participant indicated “we have had excellent pastoral support; and increasingly so from our regional-office. Especially in the recent pandemic” (S, Q3, line 483).

Another survey participant identified weekly webinars the Centre for Missional Leadership (at St. Andrew's Hall in Vancouver) as valuable (S, Q5, line 101). Still another survey participant indicated “Right now, during COVID-19 I appreciate regular collegial check ins and the close care of our synodical bishop” (S, Q5, line 465). Still another talked about the new support available due to the pandemic and shared,

during this pandemic, we have for the first time initiated regular Zoom meetings with all the ministers in our region with excellent teaching, guidance from our Executive Director, but also allowing time for clergy to share personally in smaller break out groups and pray for one another. It helps greatly to know that you are not alone in what you are facing and that others care and support in whatever ways they can - with prayer and at times, even practical support. (S, Q6, line 483)

Another survey participant described a daily Zoom prayer meeting lead by their denominational moderator as “sustaining” (S, Q6, line 504). However, a survey participant critiqued that rural clergy may not receive the same support. They said, “rural churches are seen as 'less than' and it is reflected in the way our needs are largely ignored. This is a Canadian experience, I recognize, but the urban/rural divide has been felt very keenly during the pandemic” (S, Q6, line 437).

Summary of Value of Denominational Support Theme from Survey. As discussed, some denominations increased supports for clergy during the pandemic. This support included specific support for COVID-19, emotional support, and connection to peers. While there are

some gaps in denominational support, many participants reported finding value in denominational support during the pandemic.

Unique Opportunities Arising During Pandemic

While COVID-19 was referenced in relationship to increased workload and stress, it was also referenced as an opportunity. Some participants indicated that the pandemic brought unique opportunities, such as re-evaluation of priorities. A survey participant disclosed,

COVID-19 has brought some challenges that have changed my perspective on my priorities. I take more quiet time for myself and like to spend the quiet time talking to God; very peaceful. [I] spend more FaceTime with family. I miss them and usually see them once a year in person. (S, Q3, line 196).

Despite being challenging it also resulted in an opportunity to prioritize time with God and connecting with family. Another survey participant further expressed,

seeing [COVID-19] time as a huge opportunity for the Church to be all the Lord has called us to be...so I cold-call neighbours, give telephone Bible studies, [and] driveway concerts...for me personally I get huge time with the Lord for prayer and study...I say this cautiously but I'm thriving. (S, Q2, line 31)

This participant highlighted the ministry opportunities that they have taken as well as increased time with God. Still another shared "COVID-19 helped me return to the essentials of being a man of prayer...it ignited a new level of leadership for me and some of my team members" (S, Q6, line 259).

Summary of Unique Opportunities Arising Theme from Survey. As discussed, there were valuable opportunities in the midst of the pandemic and the challenges it brought. For some clergy the pandemic was a time of evaluation priorities, such as increasing contact with family. Increased time with God was an opportunity found by some clergy. New ministry opportunities were also taken by some clergy.

Uncertain Future of the Church After the Pandemic

The impact of the pandemic restrictions on the church is a source of uncertainty and concern for clergy. One survey participant reflected on the increased contact and interest they have seen from their community during the pandemic but wondered if it would continue following the pandemic (S, Q7, line 25). The impact of COVID-19 was also expressed by another survey participant:

I answered that our congregation is “growing.” This was true up until COVID-19. Frankly, we don't know what the result will be following COVID-19. Our prayer, of course, is that people...will welcome the opportunity of worshipping collectively again. However, this remains to be experienced. (S, Q7, line 52)

There is uncertainty about whether in-person worship attendance will be a priority and become a habit again after the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Another survey participant reflected, “addressing the changing parish and the reduced number of people coming to church post COVID-19 will need to be addressed - so clergy don't feel it's their fault” (S, Q6, line 343). The burden of decreased church attendance and the uncertainty of the future of the church is one that clergy feel. There was also concern about a growing generational divide with younger people being less likely to return to in-person service. One survey participant expressed:

The biggest question for me is “how will the church look” in the months to come. This COVID-19 time has solidified my understanding that the “next generation” is not interested in “gathering in a church building.” Yet the older generation leans on this heavily (S, Q6, line 357)

The impact of the pandemic on the church is unknown.

Summary of Uncertain Future of the Church Theme from Survey. As discussed, uncertainty about the future of the church following the pandemic was a concern for clergy. There was an uncertainty about whether congregants will return to in-person services. Questions arose for clergy about how older and younger congregants will approach in-person and online services and raised concerns about a growing generational divide.

Conclusion of COVID-19 Findings from Survey

In this section the themes arising for findings related to COVID-19 were discussed. These themes included (a) increased workload, (b), value of denominational support, (c) restriction of supportive resources, (d) unique opportunities arising, and (e) uncertainty about the future of the church. The pandemic impacted clergy in a variety of ways. Increased workload, loss of supportive resources, and uncertainty about the impact of this on the church in the future were sources of adversity and concern. Denominational support and unique opportunities were two aspects of the pandemic that clergy found as valuable in the face of the challenges.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided detailed findings from the survey that was employed for this study. These findings included scale findings related to the current status of clergy wellness and

resilience. It also included survey open-ended question findings related to adversity experienced, supportive resources, desired initiatives, and COVID-19 impact. The table below reviews the findings for each of the categories.

Table 4.8 Review of Survey Findings

	Focus	Scale or Theme	Subscales or Subthemes
Wellness and Resiliency Scales	Health	Health Scales	Current health mean 75.6 (out of possible 100) General health mean 19.3 (out of possible 25) Wholistic wellness mean 29.6 (out of possible 40)
	Life satisfaction	Cantril Scale	Current satisfaction mean 8.3 (out of possible 10) Anticipated satisfaction mean 9.1 (out of possible 10)
	Professional quality of life	ProQOL Scale	Compassion satisfaction mean 'average' Burnout mean 'average' Secondary trauma mean 'average'
	Trait resiliency	Ego-Resiliency Scale	Mean 45.0 (out of possible 56) 'high trait resiliency'
	Perseverance	GRIT-S scale	Mean 3.6 (out of possible 5)
Open-ended Questions	Adversity	Workload	Time demands, emotional/spiritual needs, role complexity, changing nature of ministry, relational dynamics and conflict
		Expectations	Societal, denominational, congregational, financial pressure, self-expectations
		Isolation	Geographic isolation, peer competition, theological and cultural differences, barriers to making friends, decreased energy
		Health issues	Aging, disease and illness, poor sleep
	Supportive Resources	Spiritual life	Partnership with God, communal faith, spiritual practices
		Relational supports	Spouse/family, friend, peer, mentor, leadership, congregational, professional
		Personal aspects	Balance, caring for health, boundaries, clear calling to ministry, firm identity and self-awareness, institutional alignment, personal attributes
		Organizational practices	Provision, role flexibility, institutional support
	Helpful Initiatives	Training and programs	Discernment and preparation, early ministry support, specific skill development, lifelong learning
		Relationship building opportunities	Conferences/events, denominational/inter-denominational, mentoring
		Wellness opportunities	Sabbaticals and retreats, spiritual direction, counselling
		Organizational priority	Setting standards, financial support

COVID-19	Increased workload	New skills required, ministry limitations due to restrictions
	Loss of supportive resources	
	Value of denominational support	
	Unique opportunities arising	
	Uncertain future of the church	

The wellness and resiliency scale findings indicated that participants had a moderate level of grit, high ego resiliency, low secondary traumatic stress, average burnout, average compassion satisfaction, high current and future life satisfaction, and moderate overall health.

The open-ended questions revealed a number of areas of adversity that clergy experience categorized as workload, expectations, isolation, and health issues with each including nuanced sub-themes. Questions about resources that participants attributed to helping them to positively adapt to the adversity and challenges they face in their roles yielded the themes of spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices; each also having unique subthemes. Initiatives that have helped or are believed will help resilience were also inquired about in the survey and yielded the themes of training and programs, relationship building opportunities, wellness opportunities, and organizational priority. The survey occurred during COVID-19 and although there were no specific questions that inquired about this aspect participants shared in the open-ended questions about its impact. The themes of increased workload, loss of supportive resources, value of denominational support, unique opportunities arising in the pandemic, and uncertain future of the church were reported connected to COVID-19.

The next chapter will consider interview findings related to adversity experienced, supportive resources, desired initiatives, and COVID-19 impact.

Chapter Five: Interview Findings

This chapter reports findings from the interviews as well as preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data themes and sub-themes used for presentation to the interpretation panel. This chapter includes (a) a review of interview data collection and description of interview participants, (b) thematic interview findings related to adversity experienced, (c) thematic interview findings related to supportive resources, (d) thematic interview findings about desired initiatives, (e) thematic interview findings COVID-19 findings, (f) preliminary analysis of themes and sub-themes for adversity, resources, initiatives, and COVID-19, and (g) chapter summary. Again, as mentioned in chapter one under delimitations, this study occurred during COVID-19 and the impact of this on the interview findings must be considered all encompassing.

To ensure the credibility of this research direct quotes from interview transcripts are used. Every quote is followed by parenthesized information that relays transcript information. For an interview quote example - (I2, p. 4) I2 means that the quote was taken from Interview #2, on page 4.

Description of Interview Data Collection and Participants

A non-probability maximal variation purposive sampling strategy was used for 13 interviews. Interview participants were recruited from a variety of faith traditions, types of clergy roles, and genders. Interviews were by telephone or video conferencing and were approximately one and a half hour in length and followed a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix B). Interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the interviewees reviewing the transcript and releasing them for use in the study. Transcripts were cleaned and then coded for thematic analysis using NVivo 12 software.

Table 5.1 Overview of Interview Participants

Interviewee	Gender	Current Faith Tradition	Current Role	Pseudonym
1.	Male	Mainline Protestant	Congregational	Adam
2.	Female	Catholic	Non-congregational	Barb
3.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Congregational	Carl
4.	Female	Mainline Protestant	Denominational	Debra
5.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Congregational	Ed
6.	Male	Mainline Protestant	Retired	Fred
7.	Male	Catholic	Congregational	Greg
8.	Male	Mainline Protestant	Congregational	Harry

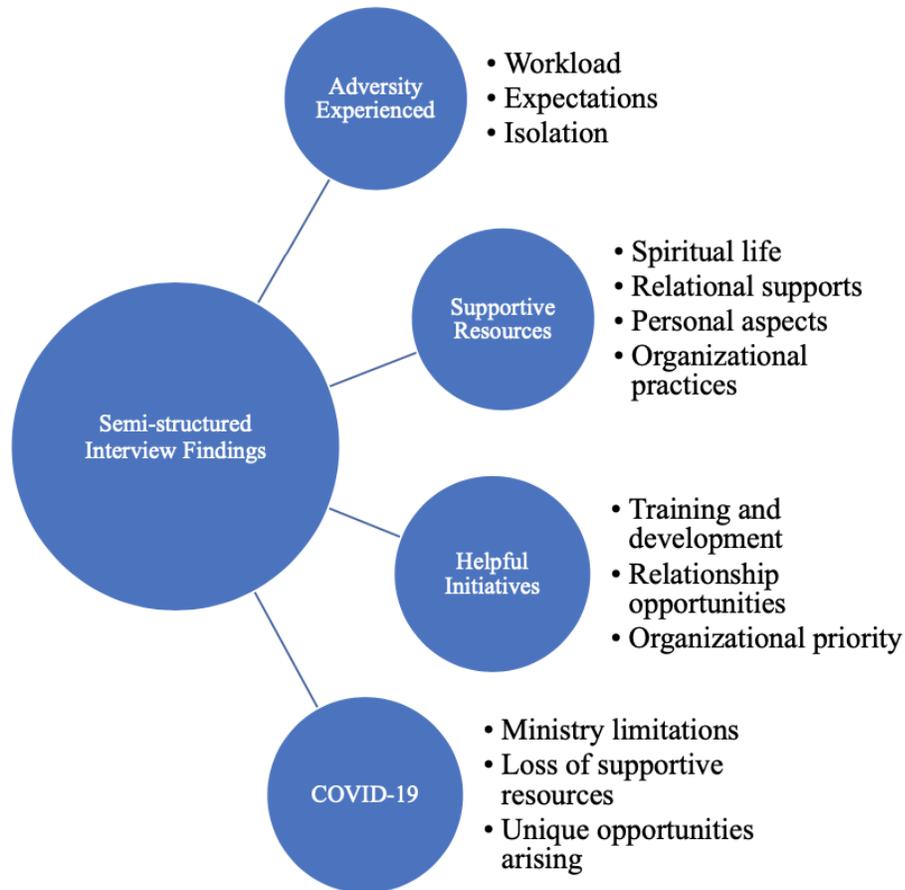
9.	Male	Mainline Protestant	Congregational	Ian
10.	Male	Catholic	Congregational	John
11.	Female	Conservative Protestant	Congregational	Kate
12.	Female	Conservative Protestant	Congregational	Lois
13.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Congregational	Martin

There were four female interviewees and nine males. Interviewees resided in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nunavut, New Brunswick, Ontario, and Saskatchewan. Interviewees identified currently worked in the following denominations or traditions: Associated Gospel Church of Canada, Anglican, Catholic, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Mennonite Church of Canada, Orthodox, and United Church of Canada. Some interviewees had also trained or worked in a different denomination from the one they currently work with and due to this experience was also shared about Nazarene, Pentecostal, and Presbyterian influences. Interviewees ranged in years of experience from eight to 40 years in ministry. A variety of roles were held by interviewees including senior pastor, solo pastor, associate or assistant pastor, denominational leader, chaplain, and recently retired pastor.

Overview of Findings Presentation

The findings from the semi-structured interviews will be presented in this chapter. These findings parallel the findings from the survey open-ended question findings as the same or similar questions were used in the semi-structured interview guide as those in the survey. The figure below illustrates categories and themes and subthemes related to each. As mentioned with the survey findings, the interview data are presented in an inclusive and comprehensive manner in the hope that more clerics will relate to the findings.

Figure 5.1 *Overview of Semi-structured Interview Findings*



The interviewees were asked probing questions about adversity, supportive resources, and helpful initiatives, which form the first three categories. As the interviews occurred during June - August 2020, comments about COVID-19 arose in interviews and these are also reported as a final category of findings.

Adversity Clergy Experienced: Interview Findings

As adversity and resilience are related, inquiry was made to understand what adversity, challenges, or problems Canadian Christian clergy perceive as hindering their resilience and well-being. Based on the interview transcript data there were several themes with subthemes that emerged. Adversity themes included (a) workload, (b) expectations, (c) and isolation.

Workload

Workload was a significant area of adversity that interview participants referenced. Facets of workload include time demands, role complexity, the unexpected and changing nature of role, and relational dynamics and conflict.

Time demands.

A facet of workload was the demand on clergy time. Having to address so many diverse and pressing needs requires time to know when and how to refer to specialists. Time demands can be high for clergy who service multiple congregations, as Greg described “my last placement. I had four churches and 130-kilometer drive on Sunday morning” (I7, p. 8). For Ian, who was bi-vocational, workload was increased due to needing to balance the demands of two jobs.

In some contexts, like the small remote community that Ed served in, congregational expectations of his accessibility made finding places for private family time challenging. He disclosed, “we’ve had trouble trying to find a place where we can go to hang out...people know what [car] we drive and where we are...If they need us, they know where we are” (I5, p. 8). Time requirements and demands was a facet of workload that clergy experienced as a challenge in their role.

Role Complexity. Another facet of workload referenced by participants was the complexity of the clergy role and the diverse skills needed to address this role complexity. Fred expressed it this way:

You need to be multi-talented. Some of us are good at communication and preaching and upfront leadership and others of us are really strong at pastoral presence and care. Others are great at vision casting and administration and organizing. But to get all of the needs, that the whole list, a package, it's just almost impossible to get one person who is skilled enough to do everything well in the complex challenge of the local church. (I6, p. 7)

The complexity encountered by clergy makes it difficult for anyone person to possess the skills needed to address these needs. Ian expressed it this way:

the variability of tasks, actions, or activities that you can be involved in a single day, or a single afternoon, or a single week has very many different elements...particularly when you are a local church pastor or parish priest...Particularly, if you're ministering in a solo clergy context that has unique elements rather than in a team of clergy, whereby some might have specialized roles....I may have administrative roles that I'm doing, I may be filling out a report for our society registration. Or I may be filling out something for the diocese to report for the archdiocese. Or I may be doing some things related to renting our church building from another church here in the city. Then I may be doing crisis ministry, like caring for someone in bereavement. Or dealing with certain kinds of emotional intensity in that light around grief...And then I'll have....be doing marriage

preparation with a newlywed or to be married couple. I think this is one of the challenges that I find... the diversity and complexity of clergy roles these days is probably one of my greatest challenges. (19, p. 7)

Clergy have to transition to address the different needs they face in their roles.

While the complexity of the role may be demanding Ed also highlighted a benefit to the diversity saying:

That [diversity] is what makes it more interesting because there's something new every day, or something different every day. It's not the same old monotony of sermons and counselling but all these other things are in there. Helping interpret what medicine the centers given to people. Helping people with the bank and their taxes...Having all these different things that we can help people [with] has been nice. (15, p. 11)

While the complexity and diversity clergy face in their roles may be challenging for them, it may also be something they appreciate.

While some clergy can specialize in their role, others such as Ian, a bi-vocational Orthodox solo priest, have to be generalists. He verbalized that,

getting the call that a window in the church has been broken. And we don't have a church custodian. I've got to go; my parish Council is not necessarily available at two o'clock in the afternoon to go cover up that window with plywood....You do have to be a generalist.... our congregation is fairly small, we have about 80 people. I don't have somebody who's thinking about children's ministry all the time, or somebody who's thinking about teenagers and youth or elderly. I do all of that...you've got to be the jack of all trades. (19, p. 8)

The sense of diversity and complexity of the role may be more pronounced for clergy in solo roles. Clergy roles can require skill in leadership, teamwork, communication, HR, finances, delegation teaching/preaching, shepherding, congregational care, counselling, and, as COVID-19 has highlighted, technology. However, the various expectations of these are not always clear.

Given the workload, knowing what can be delegated to others can also be a challenge. This was expressed by Ian who pondered,

what are the things that other people can do? [How do I] focus more of my energies on the things that I can only do...[How can I] raise people up and encourage others to do the other aspects of ministry and life in the church? I actually really struggle with this. How

to delegate effectively. How to properly model, mentor in a healthy way. I'm probably tempted to do too much myself. (I9, p. 9)

This interviewee highlighted key questions that clergy may wrestle with in delegating, which is another skillset required of them.

In the complexity of issues clergy are faced with understanding their limitations and how to refer to others is another skill they require. Ian shared,

I do not have specialized training in the field of counselling... I'm discovering with my peers is that we need to know when to refer to specialists... to know my own limitations and to know my own boundaries and abilities to be aware of them, is also part of the challenge, I guess of ministry in 2020. (I9, p.8)

Understanding limitations may require baseline knowledge of the area, such as mental health symptoms and of services in the area, in order for the cleric to refer. This is a skillset in itself.

In addition to issues like mental health, clergy may feel the needs related to issues, such as housing or homelessness. Ed, who ministers in an isolated northern community shared,

I can't tell the government, [well] I can tell the government, but they don't listen to me, about [the need to] build more houses for people because 800 people need a house. The government isn't going to listen to my little letter about sending 800 units up here... But [I] see the big problems and know that I can't do anything. (I5, p. 14)

Clergy may also be aware of problems that are beyond their sphere of influence or areas of expertise yet are connected to their role. Related to this Greg shared about supporting a parishioner's mental health needs,

Currently there is a parishioner who has psychotic episodes. She appears by herself, so I don't know if there is family support. She's very private, protected because of her illness. So, trying to engage with her in a healthy manner, not trying to deny reality, but to try to keep her safe. Making accommodations for that as well. (I7, p. 18)

As this interviewee illustrated, there may be some steps that they can take to help; however, as the previous interviewee revealed there are also times where clergy feel powerless to address the need.

The complexity of role can also involve social, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects. For one interviewee who worked in a chaplain role the workload involved physical danger due to working in a hospital (I2, p.3) and was also emotionally challenging in working with people who have been wounded (I2, p. 5). There was further complexity for this chaplain interviewee due to

working in a hospital with staff that did not understand chaplaincy, working with chaplains of other faith traditions, and also working with other clergy who work in a congregational setting and do not understand the nature or context of chaplaincy work was challenging (I2, p. 6). Lois, an associate pastor who also works in care ministry, shared that this type of role comes with increased complexity and stress. Role complexity due to the diverse organizational, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs faced by clergy was a facet of workload that clergy identified as adversity.

Changing Nature. Constant change and the unexpected nature of ministry was a particular facet of adversity referenced by interviewees as challenging. Changes within organizational structure or practices impacted clergy workload. Organizational change was identified by Lois, a female associate pastor, as increasing workload. She relayed,

sometimes when there's been organizational change, or a staff member has left we all have to kind of regroup and maybe take on more. Sometimes the workload has just been unrealistic. That has definitely been a pressure. Changes in the organization, not just when someone leaves, but when someone comes on, then all of a sudden someone new is in operations and they're doing things different. (I12, p. 7)

This interviewee illustrated how workload can increase due to missing team members or due to changes in ministry practices that required the cleric to do things differently. Changes in team composition or in organizational structure can be a facet of workload that can be problematic.

Relational Dynamics and Conflict. The relational aspect of clergy workload was identified as another facet of adversity by interviewees and was similar to what survey participants identified. Barb shared, “it’s the people aspect I would have to say the one that first comes to mind [as a challenge]. It is the personnel and the things you just have to get through” (I2, p. 4). Kate shared, “it’s never easy to navigate the relational piece within the church” (I11, p 10). This relational challenge can come from people outside the faith, from the congregation, within staff teams, or within denomination or clergy groups.

Interviewees identified staff relationships as an important aspect of their work and challenging relationships as a hinderance to their resilience. John described a challenging supervisor situation from his past:

I was in a parish for a year. I was with this arch conservative...we didn't see eye to eye... It wasn't a great year. The priest who did the assignments to parishes, I complained about

this priest...And he [the priest who did the assignments] said, I never thought you'd last this long. I was like, 'what the hell, you trying to break me or something?' (I10, pp. 3-4)

Conflict with a supervising priest was challenging for this interviewee, who also felt they were not supported by leadership who were aware of the challenge.

Dealing with interpersonal conflict and congregational dysfunction was a part of the workload of clergy referenced as a source of adversity. Kate shared:

the church really does function like a large family, and every family is dysfunctional. I think in every church, with every church conflict, you're looking at relationally where are we dysfunctional? And how can we become healthier? What kinds of patterns are we in as a family and what needs to shift? (I11, pp.10-11)

Understanding congregational dynamics is an important consideration for clergy and some may see it as part of their role to change dysfunctional patterns. Greg shared about being in a new context and having to be watchful for congregational dynamics and for "people who think that they run the parish" (I10, p. 14). Clergy were aware and have some influence over the congregational dynamics and at the same they were also affected by these dynamics and part of them.

Clergy often serve alongside lay leaders and this relational dynamic can be challenging as well. Lois expressed:

[It's challenging] when I'm dealing with a leader that's not in a good place, and they're not handling things very well. I have to have those tough conversations, and sometimes getting pushed back. Those kinds of challenges where you're trying to sort of be a peacemaker among a few people. Some of those have been pretty tough. (I12, p. 8)

At times clergy are involved in congregational conflict as a mediator between other parties; however, there are times when conflict is also directed at the clergy person.

At times conflict can be projected onto clergy or inadvertently reinforced by clergy. Martin shared about an experience he had. He recalled,

the congregation was divided on that, almost in half. What that meant, unfortunately was that it was assumed I was the pastor to half the congregation but not to the other half. I hadn't ever intended that, and I did my best to not do that. (I13, p. 9)

Clergy are part of the relational dynamics of the congregation and may influence the dynamics due to their leadership role, yet at the same time are also influenced by the dynamics.

Multiple role relationships are a further aspect of relational dynamics that can be a challenge for clergy. Kate shared,

If something happens within the church that causes conflict, those relationships that are personal relationships sometimes become casualties. I had close friends that I'd grown up with, who experienced some personal crisis, and it involved the church and the way it was handled was not how they hoped. Because of my role, there were places I couldn't go with them as a friend for a season. That friendship definitely shifted far more to we're cordial with each other and there's been forgiveness on both sides as far as it's possible.

But the relationship of growing up in each other's homes that has been severed. (I11, p. 8)

This interviewee illustrated how clergy are a part of the congregational system and how their personal relationships are affected by relational conflict that occurs within churches.

Relational dynamics and conflict were a facet of workload that clergy experienced as adverse. Congregational dysfunction and conflict affect clergy both directly and indirectly. Also, conflict and interpersonal dynamics can affect clergy both in their professional and personal relationships.

Summary of Workload Theme from Interviews. As discussed in this section, facets of workload included time demands, role complexity, changing nature of role, and relational dynamics and conflict. Clergy may not have had the time needed to meet the demands of their roles. Clergy were required to engage in diverse types of work that results in role complexity that required diverse skill sets. Changes in staff teams or organizational practice increased workload for some clergy. The relational dimension of clergy workload was quite challenging both within the staff teams and the congregation due to interpersonal struggles and conflict. Workload was a significant area of adversity that interviewees identified.

Workload for many participants was increased by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic further increased the complexity and demand on clergy, while also restricting access to supportive resources. Findings related to COVID-19 are discussed in a separate section.

Expectations

The second theme related to adversity that clergy experience is expectations. Overlapping with workload, expectations was another adversity theme identified by interviewees similar to survey participants. Expectations related to areas such as caregiving, leadership, programs, finances, and operations of the church. There were a number of sources of expectations including societal, congregation, self, and finances

Societal Expectations. Societal expectations and perceptions were identified by clergy participants as an adversity, challenge or problem that impacts their resilience. Societal disrespect or hostility was identified in the interviews as a form of adversity. Fred described this as a trend toward “secular materialism” (I6, p. 6).

For clergy who engage in work outside of a congregational setting the differences in culture may be more pronounced and can put them at odds with the non-clergy that they work alongside and also with clergy working primarily in church settings. Barb, a chaplain working in a hospital setting, identified that there can be a lack of understanding of what it means to be the culture of the Church in a different setting. This interviewee identified that spiritual care is acknowledged as part of holistic care in the health care system but at the same time those within the health care system do not always respect chaplain work and there was a sense of “constantly having to defend ourselves” and a sense that spiritual matters should be compartmentalized within a faith community (I2, p. 6).

Fred further described legitimate animosity of individuals he encountered as caused by “bad religious experiences” (I6, p. 8). There was understanding by this interviewee that such people are non-church and hostile for legitimate reasons. Another interviewee felt that there are many contributing factors for the church in decline, including society, but that the church also has some responsibility (I7, p. 8). One Catholic interviewee identified experiencing a sense of societal hostility arising from perceptions of the clergy sex abuse scandals, and also disrespect from clergy from different faith traditions. These perceptions made it more difficult for Catholic clergy as they too are hurt and wounded by the scandal (I2, p. 4). The facets of societal expectations of hostility or disrespect toward clergy and the church were reported by interviewees.

Congregational Expectations. Congregational expectations were a second subtheme reported by interviewees. Clergy face diverse and demanding expectations from congregants. Trying to meet these expectations can lead clerics to “let people give you your job description” and to try and meet these expectations (I1, p. 8). A retired UCC pastor stated, “the local congregation wants every pastor to be a combination of St. Paul, Mother Teresa” (I6, p. 6). For Martin, an MCC pastor who described himself as an introvert, congregational expectations left him feeling like he needed to be perfect and that he was in a fishbowl (I13, p. 9). In speaking about expectations Adam, an Anglican priest, indicated that “people want you to be God for

them or be Jesus for them” (I1, p. 8). The expectations of clergy perfection and spirituality can be quite adverse for clergy.

Still another interviewee described having to “fight against expectations” especially related to time dedicated to work. Kate, a C&MA associate pastor, who had health issues and was clear upon hiring what the church could expect regarding her time still felt an expectation to work an 80-hour week (I11, p. 8). An AGC associate pastor described helpful guidance that was provided to her early on by her senior pastor who said, “if you don’t manage your schedule, other people will manage it for you” (I12, p. 4). Unrealistic expectations were described as related to “building, bodies, budgets” (I1, p. 9). Expectations of how clergy minister can lead to excessive demands. Congregational expectations were not only directed at the cleric but also extended to the cleric’s family. Adam described expectations about spousal involvement as “a two for one” and that this was common in their faith tradition at the time (I1, p. 9).

Expectations from congregants might be conflicting, creating further challenge for clergy. Greg, a Catholic priest, reflected on the diversity within congregations and how differing expectations can result in disunity. In trying to consider diverse expectations he indicated, trying to minister to a very eclectic group of the faithful. There's definitely wants... we want you to celebrate this way [or] we want you to preach this way...If I listened to everybody the homily would be very, very long on Sunday. (I7, p. 8)

This interviewee revealed the pressure experienced in responding to all the diverse expectations encountered. Diverse expectations of congregants can lead to “nagging” and pressuring a cleric to do things in certain ways that may be contrary to the minister’s own perspectives or other congregants (I7, p. 5). However, expectations from congregants expressed a polite and non-aggressive manner that allowed for consideration by the cleric as to the reasonableness of the request were appreciated. John, a Catholic priest explained, “I remember one had a son who was anaphylactic with nuts and very strong about how we handle nuts... [they] allowed me to realize that they were reasonable expectations” (I10, p. 15).

Congregational apathy alongside of expectations can be frustrating for clergy. Harry described frustration at congregational apathy as,

babysitting adult children who don't want to grow in their own emotional and spiritual journey.... If they genuinely don't want to make progress on their journey, but just want to stay stuck in the yearning and the problem, that's where my frustration comes in. (I8, p. 7)

Clergy are motivated to help people grow and a difference in expectations of the role of congregants in their own growth can be frustrating.

Clergy newer to ministry had more of a challenge in responding to expectations. Greg highlighted that being newer in ministry can make one more susceptible to expectations. He disclosed, ‘if there was a need that came up, I felt that I needed to meet that need. There's really a bit of a savior complex, involved early on’ (I7, p. 9). While another interviewee highlighted hurting people can have unrealistic expectations that clerics will fix their problems and with this place demands on the cleric (I12, p. 4).

There are many facets to congregational expectations that clergy find as a challenge, including expectations that clergy and their family be perfect. Clergy can be expected to fix congregants’ problems, but at the same time congregants may be apathetic towards their own growth. Clergy face diverse and competing expectations from congregants that make it impossible for clergy to satisfy everyone. Clergy newer to ministry may be more susceptible to attempting to meet unreasonable expectations.

Self-expectations. The third subtheme of expectations were self-expectations. Participants acknowledged internal expectations as a significant aspect that hindered their resilience. Carl, a C&MA associate pastor, shared:

I so longed to impress my colleagues and in particular...our senior pastor and my boss, that when I did something that either didn't live up to their expectations or live up to my own expectations...the shame of not being enough. It just played constantly in my mind. (I3, p. 16)

Failing to meet self-expectations or the expectations of others can lead to a sense of shame.

Self-expectations of perfection can be detrimental to clergy well-being. Greg, a Catholic interviewee, reflected on self-expectations about serving in ministry. He shared:

I think in any profession or any new role, like we're going to take on the world. I have to do everything perfectly. So, neglecting my own personal health, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, almost seemed kind of stoic or laudable. I've worked 18 hours today. (I7, p. 9)

This interviewee illustrated how self-expectations of perfection can lead to overworking and the neglect of one’s own well-being.

Self-expectations can have a powerful impact on clergy due to the spiritual importance given to their role. Fred, a UCC retired pastor, revealed a source of self-expectations coming

from the “feeling we’re serving the God of the eternal Almighty Holy One. We put a lot of expectations on ourselves” (I6, p. 6). Ian also revealed another aspect of internal expectations related to high standards that may deter others from getting involved. He shared,

[the] whole notion of what I call quality control....a certain level of excellence that I feel is kind of fitting or right. I often wonder am I setting the bar at a place where nobody else can do that or where I'm going to actually have an inverse effect, where nobody's going to even want to try to do that? [Am I] actually scaring people away from involvement or participation by my own perfectionism? ...[But] I've also had the experience where I have passed on things and it hasn't really gone all that well. I have shared the load...passed on things and those balls have been dropped. On the one hand, certain balls can be dropped....[but] others cannot, in order to sustain the work of the church. (I9, p. 9)

High standards for ministry, both by self and others, can be important for the well-being of the church; however, expectations of perfection can be problematic.

Self-expectations are a facet of expectations that clergy find as a challenge to their resilience. Clergy can have high expectations of ministry due to its spiritual importance. These high expectations can lead to perfectionism which lead to overwork, hindering clergy well-being, and deterring others from sharing the ministry load.

Financial Pressure. The final subtheme of expectations is financial pressure, which overlaps with other aspects of congregational expectations and self-expectations. Participants reported expectations and pressure about church and personal finances and the interdependent nature of the two. An Anglican denominational leader indicated that there is pressure on clergy due to depending on people in the congregation for compensation (I4, p. 14). This connection between congregation giving and payroll was a pressure reported by participants (I10, p. 11).

Low salaries also were an aspect of financial pressure on clergy. Fred, a retired UCC pastor, identified low salaries of clergy as a real problem, even though he was part of a faith tradition that had minimum salary requirements. His perspective was informed by two family members who were ministers in a tradition that did not have minimums and resulted in them living “almost in poverty much of their ministries” (I6, p. 6). He expressed gratitude for his tradition’s compensation guidelines but acknowledged that for some of his colleagues and clergy family members finances were a significant hardship. He opined, “the lack of adequate salary is a real pinch on their existence, not their lifestyle, just making ends meet” (I6, p. 6). Financial pressures, both personally and congregationally, are a source of adversity for clergy.

Summary of Expectation Theme from Interviews. As discussed in this section, expectation subthemes included societal, congregational, self-expectations, and financial pressure. A skeptical or hostile view of clergy and the church by society was challenging for clergy. Diverse and opposing expectations from congregants could be challenging for clergy to navigate. Congregants' indifference and apathy to their own spiritual growth was frustrating for clergy.

Expectations of clergy spirituality and perfection arose from congregants but also from self-expectations. Some clergy had high internal expectations for themselves due to beliefs about serving God and the spiritual importance of ministry. Self-expectations and expectations from others of perfection compounded and caused difficulty for clergy. It was not only clergy but also their families that face or are impacted by congregational expectations.

The final facet of expectations clergy experience was financial pressure due to interdependence of congregational finances and personal finances. Low salaries placed a pressure on clergy in struggling to meet their basic needs.

Isolation

Isolation is the third theme arising as a form of adversity for clergy. Isolation was connected to geographic location, theological differences, peer competition, relocations and schedules, barriers and guards, and decreased energy. These subthemes are described below.

Geographic Isolation. Some clergy ministered in locations that are geographically isolated, and this was challenging. Going to a rural or remote ministry was a choice for some clerics but was not for others. Some denominations determined where clergy are placed and one UCC interviewee described being "sent to the bush" (I6, p. 2). However, for Ed, a solo pastor, it was a choice involving a thoughtful discernment process to go to a remote community (I5, p 1).

A Catholic interviewee shared the challenges of moving parishes, due to geographic distance, even though the moves were within the same diocese (I7, p. 11). An Anglican interviewee, whose father was also a cleric, reflected on how geographic distance from family and friends impacted her father and also their family (I4, p. 6).

Remote communities that are geographically isolated also presented a challenging context for doing ministry. Ed disclosed frustrations in trying to organize a ministry event in his remote community accessible only by plane:

The last straw was the weather turned horrible and [the special guest] couldn't fly in. So, everything was canceled, and it was pretty depressing that happened. All that work to

organize everything. If we had a road [to access where we live] the guy could have drove, but he had to deal with the weather. Because we're a small town and only have a limited number of venues it made it really difficult and when it all failed it was really depressing. (I5, p. 5)

This interviewee's remote community also had high social needs and suicide rates, yet a lack of resources causing more to fall on the cleric (I5, p. 5). Geography is a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Peer Competition. Another form of isolation that participants noted is peer isolation due to competition. An Anglican denomination leader reflected, "what I've realized is that clergy don't necessarily feel safe with each other" (I4, p. 14). An underlying lack of confidence and sense of competition among clergy was also referenced by a UCC interviewee as an isolating factor that hindered clergy from seeking peer support (I6, pp. 7-8), which is discussed later as a factor that supports resilience. Peer competition is a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Theological and Cultural Differences. Another factor that can increase a cleric's sense of isolation was related to theological or cultural differences. These differences may arise due to context, interactions with colleagues, or systemic level issues.

Cultural differences can exist within congregations and impact clergy. John, a Catholic priest, described having to navigate this,

Trying to bring the rest of the parish up to speed with the Portuguese traditions because the rest of the parish didn't understand these festivals....They didn't understand anything behind them and how they were directed at feeding the poor, caring for the community, reaching out to those in need. They didn't understand that these were the main components of these Holy Spirit festivals that happened. (I10, p 6)

The cultural differences among the congregation were an aspect that this priest indicated that he had to navigate.

Cultural and theological differences can also exist between the clergy person and the dominant congregational or community ethos. An MCC interviewee, Martin, described theological differences between himself and the culture of the Mennonite town in which he served. Despite his actual congregation being supportive of him, the cultural and theological differences with the town ultimately lead to his departure from his position. He stated, "so for the community, it was very frustrating because my theology wasn't oriented with the inherited

construct that they had. I spoke in ways that they didn't feel represented them at all" (I13, p. 6). Friction occurred for this interviewee due to the theological and cultural differences with his community.

Some of these cultural or theological differences can manifest in areas of racism or sexism. A Catholic priest described having to work with a challenging supervisor, "I complained about this priest, he was racist, misogynist" (I10, p. 4) A C&MA interviewee, Kate, shared the challenge of being limited in her internship options to only serve with women and children, despite this not being her gifting (I11, p. 1).

The challenge of theological differences within one's faith tradition were mentioned by interviewees from all three groups of Catholic, mainline Protestant, and conservative Protestant. An Anglican interviewee, Adam, highlighted the challenge of "being theologically traditional in a progressive Anglican Church of Canada" (I1, p.10). This interviewee experienced criticism from clergy of more conservative traditions for being part of a more liberal tradition and also experienced criticism from his more liberal colleagues for being too conservative. A UCC interviewee, Fred, who also had more conservative beliefs than his tradition also described feeling pressure from colleagues on the more liberal side (I6, p. 5).

Theological differences can be a reason for clergy to switch faith traditions. Four of the interviewees began their ministry preparation or served in ministry of one denomination but then switched to another. One male UCC interviewee described switching from a different mainline denomination due to "theological friction points" and feeling like he was "butting my head against that wall" (I8, p. 4) He described feeling more "theologically at home" in the UCC denomination (I8, p. 18). An MCC male interviewee described feeling like a "heretic" and "socially unfit" due to theological differences and stated, "when you're on a spiritual journey that's not endorsed by the dominant culture that you are a part of...you feel naked and alone" (I13, p. 6). Theological and cultural differences is a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy. These differences arose between clerics and their congregation, the community where they live, or within their denomination.

Relocations and Rhythms. Relocations and different work rhythm were other factors that caused clergy isolation. Working weekends and major holidays isolated clerics from connecting with family for milestones, like birthdays, or for celebrations like Christmas and Easter (I, p. 10). Also, for clerics who follow the liturgical year, this put them in a different

rhythm to others around them (I4, p. 8). Different days off, such as the stereotypical Monday day off for pastors, can further isolate clergy (I4, p. 12).

Moving for new ministry roles can also be a factor that impacts isolation. Saying good-bye to established supports and entering a new context is challenging. One Catholic interviewee, Greg, reflected on the time it took to establish new supports saying, “gradually learning how to trust and finding out who’s genuine and who’s there to support me and challenge me” (I7, p. 10). Processing the transition of a ministry move, leaving friends behind, and establishing new supports can be significant for clerics. Clergy relocations and schedules are a facet of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Making Friends. Relational isolation was a central theme referenced by interview participants. Making and having friends was referenced as a challenge due to the clergy role, especially for those in congregational settings. Carl shared his belief about the nature of pastor-congregant relationships. He conveyed,

there also isn’t the same role relationship between a congregant and a pastor. I wouldn’t ask a congregant to pastor me.... I remind myself [that] I’m actually not their friend. I may friendship with them, but my primary role is not to be their friend. (I3, p. 14)

This interviewee highlighted how his role impacted his relationships with congregants.

Debra, an Anglican interviewee, also reflected on the unique nature of pastor-congregant relationships saying, “I thought I should not have friends among my parishioners. So, for me I had to learn what friendship in ministry was. I [now] consider people my friends but in a somewhat guarded way” (I4, p. 7). Kate described, “you can have friends to a degree within your church but there’s always that wall of separation” and also expressed that she never felt like she belonged in her local church (I11, p.6). However, Ian, an Orthodox priest reflected on the lack of clergy friendships and wondered if this was unique to clergy due to their role, or whether it was also something going on in the larger population, especially for people in their 40’s (I9, p. 17).

Challenges in finding relationships can also affect the spouse of a clergy member as they too have to consider issues of safety and trustworthiness in being vulnerable. Kate, who married in recent years, elaborated,

that was a big challenge for us. Something we’re still working through feeling like we’re not connected in community as a couple. For him, he’s like, ‘I’d like to get to know this

person and could we spend time with this couple.’ I’m like, ‘that’s work for me because of these reasons and this history.’ (I11, pp. 9-10)

Kate pointed to how ministry issues had to be considered in forming friendships and affected both her and her husband’s relationships within the church.

Relational isolation also occurred due to church conflict that results in a loss of relationship and sense of betrayal for a cleric. Kate entrusted,

It’s almost inevitable that you will experience betrayal from people that you love. In large part because you get really close to your congregation, and they become close friends.

But if something happens within the church that causes conflict, those relationships that are personal relationships sometimes become casualties. (I11, p. 8)

Loss of relationship due to church conflict may make clergy hesitant to engage in close relationships within their congregation.

Another aspect that can hinder clergy from making friends can be the pressure to be perfect, as discussed earlier. Clergy can feel the need to keep how they are feeling hidden from their congregants. Despite having personal friendships in his congregation, Greg, a Catholic priest described being guarded, especially with personal sharing, with the wider congregation (I7, p. 15). A female interviewee expressed this isolation can come from the thought [that] “if people really knew what was inside you, they would not love you” (I11, p. 6) However, being cautious in what is shared with those in the congregation can also be a way of cleric’s being kind to others so as to not put the person in a position in knowing details (I11, p. 6). There can be a number of barriers to clergy making friends. Role boundaries between clergy-congregant and concern for the impact of congregational conflict on personal relationships are facets of isolation that can be a source of adversity for clergy.

Summary of Isolation Theme from Interviews. As discussed in this section, isolation subthemes included geographic isolation, peer competition, theological or cultural differences, and barriers to making friends. Geographic isolation was a challenge for clergy ministering in rural or remote locations, due to geographic limits on contact with family and supports. Rural or remote locations also limited ministry opportunities.

Peer competition related to insecurity and comparison among clergy was isolating. Theological and cultural differences arose between the clergy and the congregational or community, in interactions with clergy peers, or on a denominational level. Such differences

caused friction and isolated clergy from meaningful relationships in their ministry context or from their peers or denomination.

Relocations and ministry schedule were other facets of isolation. Many clergy relocated for ministry, which disrupted personal supports while new supports took time to establish, leading to a period of relational isolation. Ministry schedules also lead to isolation due to clergy working weekends and most major holidays and hindering them from connecting with family or friends who do not have the same schedule.

Ministry roles created barriers for clergy to make friends, especially in their congregation. Clergy were cautious about developing friendships in their congregations due to concern for how the congregant might be impacted by what they shared and also how congregational conflict impacted personal relationships. Isolation due to these variety of reasons was a significant form of adversity that clerics referenced as a related to their role.

Conclusion of Adversity Themes from Interviews

This section has provided the findings related to adversity that clergy face as reported by interviewees. As discussed, the themes of workload, expectations, and isolation were forms of adversity that clergy encounter in their role. Each of these themes had a number of unique facets that were described. The next section will describe the findings related to resources that interviewees identified as helping their resilience.

Supportive Resources for Clergy Resilience: Interview Findings

A central question posed in interviews was regarding what resources they found helpful to their resilience. Survey participants were asked a similar open-ended question and has such the resource themes are parallel between the survey and interviews. Interviewees identified a number of themes related to resources that support their resilience. These themes are (a) spiritual life, (b) relational supports, (c) personal aspects, and (d) organizational practices. Each of these themes had sub-themes and are discussed below.

Spiritual Life

Clergy identified that their spiritual life and relationship with God was a central part of their resilience. This included facets of partnership with God, communal gatherings, and spiritual practices.

A sense of identity as someone loved by God is key to a relationship with God. Carl, a male C&MA associate pastor enlightened,

one thing that has been unchanging is Christ's deep love for me and the unswerving sense of that love and sacrifice. There's not anything that I could do that would truly separate me from that love. That [is] the bedrock of my identity.... It's not my job. It's not my career. It's not my marriage....It's not my family. It's not my friends. Ultimately, all of those things really helped to support [me] but the center of my identity is my relationship with Christ. (I3, p. 17)

Another interviewee, Debra who is Anglican, expressed the importance of a relationship with God. She said, "[A life that's rooted] in a relationship with Jesus Christ. So, I do [spiritual disciplines] that feed that relationship (I4, p. 13). Fred, a UCC interviewee also described the importance of a relationship with God. He shared,

when God is the center of my interest, when all my prayers, my reading, my studying, my speaking and writing, serve only to know God better and to make Him known better, than there's no basis for anxiety or stage fright or exhaustion... Seek ye first the kingdom of God, everything else if you seek the kingdom of God only, everything else will fall into place. Your vocational clarity, your relational purity, it will all, if you seek the kingdom of God. (I6, p. 10)

An intimate relationship with God can sustain and strengthen clergy and their resilience.

However, the clergy role and the spiritual work it involves created challenges for clerics' own relationship with God. Kate entrusted:

But maybe even more of a challenge is when your work life is centered on your relationship with Jesus, your relationship with Jesus sometimes becomes your work life. That has been a journey for me of really wanting to preserve my relationship with Jesus, as this is the person [that] I love the most. He is a constant part of my life. Our personal relationship is actually far more important than our working relationship. I guess our working relationship doesn't work unless our personal relationship is strong. (I11, p. 8)

Lois, a female AGC associate pastor also reflected related elements:

I would say the most important [for my resilience] is my spiritual health. Making sure that I'm in a good place with God and my priority is putting him first and all of those spiritual disciplines that helped me to stay strong and healthy spiritually especially....I know that I need...to stay healthy and strong and growing spiritually ongoing to stay in a healthy place. (I12, p. 10)

A sense of partnering with God and engaging in various spiritual practices to sustain the relationship, both of which are discussed more below, were considered by interviewees as valuable for their resilience.

Partnership with God. Clergy often considered ministry to be a partnership of God working through them and guiding them. This was expressed by Greg, a Catholic priest, who ideally considered ministry, “nothing that I’m doing, that it’s God who’s working through me, again if I let him do that” (I7, p. 9). Ed described this partnership as:

having the Holy Spirit lead me in talking to [a congregant] and trusting that’s all I can do, and the Holy Spirit can work in her and me to do even more and help her in life... It’s trusting that God has more power and authority and knowledge about them and what’s going on in their lives than I do...[I’m] helping that person to be more at peace in that situation and point them to Jesus and the Holy Spirit can keep working in their lives. (I5, p. 13)

Trust in God’s empowerment for ministry gave this interviewee confidence and peace in their ministry.

Surrender was another aspect that interviewees connected to their relationship with God and resilience. This partnership and trust in God relieved stress encountered in ministry as issues encountered were surrendered to God. Ed, a solo pastor who serves in a remote location with limited social services disclosed:

It takes the burden out of people’s problems off my shoulders. I don’t have to deal with all of people’s problems and all of what’s going on with their lives...But seeing the big problems and knowing that I can’t do anything, but I know that God can. It just takes the weight of a lot of the issues that we’re facing here off my shoulders to trust [God]. (I5, p. 14)

Trusting God to meet the needs beyond his capacity enabled this interviewee to release the burden that was associated.

However, partnering with God and surrendering also includes aspect of letting go of personal agendas and making sacrifices. Carl, a male associate pastor illuminated,

I’m a planner. I love to be in control. The journey that God has had me on so far, many times I feel deeply out of control and the things that I would naturally want, God sometimes makes those things happen. There’s also opening my eyes to that the walk of

faith is not a me-first walk but really is a self-surrendering walk. Seeking the well-being of others, self-giving, is a cross shaped life. (I3, p. 8)

Surrender involved putting others needs first as Debra, an Anglican denominational leader, further expressed:

That was part of God's call, [to] give up. I avoid doing socializing on a Saturday night. It is something that I could not do. [It is] a night when many people socialize but I need to be in a different space mentally and spiritually. (I4, p. 7)

Kate, an associate pastor, also expressed aspects of surrender in her ministry partnership with God. She confided,

one of the phrases that God gave me in terms of serving as a female pastor was that it was not my job to make a place for myself at the table, that he would set a place. If it looked like there wasn't [a place to serve], then I was not to do anything to force it. That was always his job to go before me... I just focused on [the question] 'am I honoring Jesus and loving others well,' he would work by His Spirit to change hearts where they needed changing. (I11, p. 3)

For this interviewee partnership with God involved her surrender as she trusted God to make the way for her as a woman in ministry. Partnership with God and surrender to His guiding and working through them was an important facet of spiritual life that was identified as supporting clergy to be resilient.

Communal Faith. The communal nature of faith was important for many clergy. Carl, a C&MA pastor, described this as an important element of his faith. He explained,

faith is not something that we strictly do alone. It's not just *my* relationship with God, but it's actually *our* relationship with God. The Catholic Church has a much stronger sense that faith is connected to the church body... for me, faith, hope, and love are not something that we carry on our own, especially faith. It's not something that we carry on our own. There's something extra that we carry with and for one another. (I3, p. 12)

This interviewee emphasized that a relationship with God is not an individual enterprise but a communal one, where faith, hope, and love are carried for one another.

This communal dimension was experienced for some clerics in spiritual practices. Adam, an Anglican priest, highlighted the importance of praying the daily offices with others (I1, p. 14). Barb, a Catholic chaplain valued small group opportunities to study scripture (I2, p. 11). Additionally, Greg, a Catholic priest described,

being involved with different groups who engage in prayer, communal prayer outside of the formal liturgies that we do. I'm involved in a men's group, we meet once a month. We eat together, we pray together, and then we usually have a topic or a resource that we've looked at and we discuss it. (I7, p. 14)

Gathering and engaging in practices of prayer and study were important communal aspects of faith that this interviewee identified as helpful for his resilience.

For Martin, a Mennonite pastor, communal engagement was not only with those inside of the church. He explained,

one of my favorite life experiences that gives me life are live events in a small group. To gather...number of artists and musicians and storytellers who were gathering for a monthly sitting around the fire...The kingdom of God is bigger than the church...to connect with people outside of the church and to find in them the presence of our Creator is a real blessing. (I13, pp. 11-12)

This interviewee highlighted that his spiritual life involved a communal aspect beyond the church. The communal aspect of faith practices were important facets of spiritual life for clergy and was identified as a resource for their resilience.

Spiritual Practices. A large number of spiritual practices were mentioned by interviewees. Spiritual practices mentioned included confession (I6, p. 10), engaging with creation (I13, p. 10), worship music (I11, p. 11), and sermons. (I4, p. 13). Interviewees emphasized central spiritual practices of: (a) prayer, (b) scripture and spiritual writings, and (c) retreats, silence and solitude.

Prayer. Prayer was a common practice raised by interviewees. For some, like Adam the daily offices and prayer were closely linked (I1, p. 14). Debra, an Anglican in a denominational role, she engaged in prayer regularly with others and shared:

[I] have two friends in particular who are prayer partners, having someone to pray with, who would be aligned in spirit, as friends, who I can pray with about things with church, things that are personal. That's a great resource. I pray with many people but the ones with whom I do so on a regular basis, that is deep and rich. (I4, p. 12)

For Greg, a Catholic priest who made a vow of prayer elaborated, "[prayer] is extremely beneficial to staying grounded, to be inspired as well, because we pray the Psalms. Then there's a scripture reading, intercessory prayer" (I7, p. 14). Journaling and reflection were also practices mentioned by an interviewee and may overlap with prayer (I2, p. 9).

Scripture and Spiritual Writings. Scripture and reading spiritual writings were other significant practices mentioned by participants. Guidance and insight were connected to the value of scripture. In speaking about the value of the Psalms Adam, an Anglican priest illuminated:

They name what a lot of us feel. I think what a lot of us fundamentally feel, not just clergy, is shame. Scripture is very attuned to shame. Shame and honor are big things. [The Psalms] actually gives language to actually embracing shame. [I think this] is an important aspect of resilience. Scripture actually acknowledges feeling ashamed because there's something wrong inside...the scriptures help name that, attend to it and get it where it needs to go. (I1, p. 15)

This interviewee highlighted the emotional insight found through scripture by helping to identify feelings, especially shame.

Clergy engaged with scripture in a variety of ways. For Lois memorizing scripture was valuable, she revealed, "God clearly spoke to me many years ago when I was struggling severely with anxiety and coming out of depression. It just kept coming to me 'memorize scripture' ... it has made such a difference to my renewing my mind and having greater insight into the truth of God's Word" (I12, p. 11). Martin engaged with scripture stories from memory and relayed his practice of "to walk in the forest...and to tell creation stories without holding a book in front of me but being able to smell and hear and see and feel that creation, is incredible" (I13, p. 10). Engagement with scripture in a variety of manners is a practice that interviewees considered to help their resilience.

Devotional writings were also valued by some interviewees, both ancient and contemporary materials being appreciated. Lois shared, "different thematic devotionals that are based on something particular that maybe I'm struggling with or wanting to grow in...I really love reading biographies, stories of people who faced challenges...I learn a lot from that" (I12, p. 11).

Stories of other Christians, whether testimonies, biographies, or in scripture were also meaningful to clergy. Lois reported, reading stories in the Bible, like Paul for example, who he faced quite a few challenges. I read something like that, and I think, 'okay, if God is able to empower that person who is just an ordinary person, it gives me hope.' It builds my faith to believe that I can also be

resilient if I turn to God, if I stay close to God, and I trust him. God can empower me to get through when I'm going through. (I12, p. 11)

This interviewee illustrated how scripture and spiritual writings can encourage and inspire clergy to persevere. Fred referred to this as, "immersing myself in what I call the heroes of the faith" (I6, p. 15). Elaborating he said,

they restore my confidence in that I know I'm not alone. Yancey went through terrible church experiences in his early years and worked it out, thought it through. Luther went through terrible depression and moments of doubt. I'm not alone. The other thing is I can learn from them. I take much of what they've experienced and transpose it to what are the folks in the pews out there, they've got to be experiencing some of these same doubts or anxieties or discouragements. I preach the problems, and that helps me both restore my faith, but also the faith of those listening to me. (I6, p. 16)

Stories from the heroes of the faith and the wisdom they share in spiritual writings can inspire and faith. Kate also shared appreciation for this aspect:

I really do appreciate the ancients, like early church fathers and mothers, the lives of people who have loved Jesus deeply in the past....it's probably one of the biggest things for battling isolation for me. I'm able to feel connected to somebody who went through something similar to what I'm experiencing. I can see how they came through it. (I11, pp. 15-16)

Engagement with scripture and other spiritual writings were key spiritual practices reported by interviewees as helpful for their resilience.

Retreats, Silence, and Solitude. Retreats, silence, and solitude were other spiritual disciplines valued by participants and were often interconnected to one another. Fred, a UCC interviewee shared, "I usually tried to get away alone...with God. That was really helpful, that built a rhythm into me" (I6, p. 11). Time away in retreat with God, often alone, is a practice that interviewees valued. Lois, an AGC interviewee, reflected on her practices of taking retreats. She said,

a personal spiritual retreat... I have tried to build that into my schedule and just myself where whether it's monthly or quarterly...Once a year I would go away for four or five days just on personal retreat. Having some of those things built in where you are going to get renewed. You are going to get built up. You're going to have a break from the pressure and from people. (I12, p. 16)

Retreats provide time with God and also time away from the pressures of ministry. Barb, a Catholic interviewee, talked about both silent and group retreats as occasional spiritual practices she benefitted from (I2, p. 11).

Silence and solitude were sometimes referenced alongside retreats but were also mentioned on their own. Kate indicated, “silence and solitude. I need time to sit [and to] hear what [God] might be saying. I need time to reflect on him on scripture” (I11, p. 11). Time with God in silence a spiritual practice that enhanced cleric’s relationship with God.

Summary of Spiritual Life Theme from Survey. As discussed, important facets of spiritual life included partnership with God, communal faith, and spiritual practices. Partnership with God was a core resource for clergy resilience that empowered clergy for ministry. Trust in God brought relief from the burdens that clergy face in ministry. Partnership with God also involved surrender of control and personal agendas.

The communal nature of faith was another resource for clergy resilience in providing spiritual encouragement and nourishment to clergy. Activities such as praying with others and studying scripture are communal facets that were identified as supporting clergy resilience. Spiritual practices were the final subtheme of spiritual life and included a large number of spiritual practices. Key practices mentioned were prayer, scripture, spiritual writing, retreats, silence, and solitude. A relationship with God and clerics’ spiritual life was a central resource for clergy resilience.

Relational Support

Relational support was a key theme that emerged related to resources that help clergy to be resilient and positively adapt to the adversity they face. This theme has seven sub-themes: (a) spouse and family, (b) friendships, (c) peers, (d) mentors, (e) leadership support, and (f) professional. Each sub-theme is discussed below.

Spouse and Family Support. The support of a spouse and family was a resource referenced frequently by interviewees as facilitating their resilience. Spouse was a top relationship referenced by participants as a support. Carl stated, “my marriage definitely been one of the strongest resources that I've had” (I3, p.11). Ed, also shared,

one of the most important things is having my wife here and our kids and being able to sometimes leave people’s problems outside the door when we come in. Just to enjoy time with the family and talk about the issues with my wife later, has been extremely important. (I5, p. 9)

For Ed, his wife helped him to establish boundaries between his ministry work and his personal life and family time.

Ian, an Orthodox priest, also described his wife's support in his recovery from an intense season of personal and ministry grief. He shared, "I began to recover and one of the key ingredients was support for my spouse and togetherness in the context of our marriage, [this] helped a great deal" (I9, p.11). Kate also revealed the importance of her husband's support saying, "I married a man who is extremely gifted at shepherding my heart and is [very kind in helping to reframe what I was going through]" (I11, p. 12). Interviewees, both male and female, valued the support they receive from their spouses and considered it vital to their resilience.

However, while spouses were a key support to interviewees, were not their only relational support. Adam revealed, "I've had my wife. I have a good relationship with her, but I don't expect her to be everything for me" (I1, p. 24). This interviewee points to the importance of spousal support and also for the need for other relational supports.

Other family members were also mentioned as important relational supports for resilience. Carl shared the following about his sister's support during a difficult time. He remembered, "in a time when I have very little faith and very little hope, my sister carried that for me... my sister really walked with me through that. (I3, p.5)

This interviewee's sister provided hope and strengthened faith during his season of struggle.

Family members also provided guidance to interviewees. Fred, who had a father in ministry expressed,

I'd phone My dad say, 'Dad, this guy is just grinding my gears on our board, what do I do with them?' And my dad would coach me through. 'Why you gotta love him and find out what his backstory is. Why is he cranked?' (I6, p. 15)

In this case, this interviewee's father was also a mentor who could provide ministry guidance in the context of their relationship. Greg, a Catholic priest, talked about the importance of his family as a support and staying connected through phone and video calls despite being physically separated (I7, p. 14).

Even when there are some theological differences family was still a support to clergy. Kate, an associate pastor, talked about the importance of her family to her resilience and conveyed,

My parents both came from Mennonite backgrounds...But for them, they watched me growing up and could see where my heart was and really had to wrestle through this is

what we've been taught, they came from a strong 'men only' [in ministry] background. But both of them would say and have said to me and to others, part of why we had to re-evaluate that was because we clearly saw the call on my life and they clearly saw the fruit [in me]. They are, next to my husband, are probably my biggest champions. (I11, p. 12)

However, Kate's parents were also part of the church she ministered in and this created some limitations in what she could share with them about church issues, both due to confidentiality and concern not put them in a position of feeling they needed to defend her (I11, p. 6). This interviewee appreciated her parents support but also recognized the boundaries that limited it due to her role in the church they were part of.

As discussed, support of a spouse and family was an important resource for resilience that participants identified. Support from a spouse was very important to clergy but recognized that it cannot be the only support. Clergy may also have family members who provide relational support.

Friend Support. Friendship was another sub-theme of relational support that was reported by interviewees as a resource for their resilience. For some clergy, friendship outside of their church was highlighted. Carl highlighted the importance of "hav[ing] community that's outside your church and to have friendships who are outside your church. You can speak honestly with" (I3, p. 8) and to "talk about church things or non-church things and to have a world outside of my work (I3, p.11) He cautioned further:

if your community is only your church congregation, and you're only ever pastoring them, and no one is actually sitting down with you [where] you can say, 'my soul is not doing well today and I'm deeply sad.' Or I had a difficult conversation with a congregant today and it left me very disappointed. To know that they're going to love you and that that conversation may not lead to the board coming to your office and having a difficult conversation with you, but to have a place of safety and security with friends, I think is important for anyone. (I3, p.14)

There is a sense of safety for clergy in having friendships outside of their congregation with whom they can process their experiences. Debra also valued friendships outside of her parish. She shared, "I've remained close to people from home and that takes an investment of time and emotional energy. Specifically having folks out of the parish is something...That is extremely important" (I4, p. 7) Kate also revealed the importance of friendship outside of her church and shared,

in terms of people that if my husband and I were wanting to work through a decision or trying to work through something that had happened to us, we have people that we can call who aren't [from our congregation]. They're not going to get upset at the people who are here in the same way. They're just able to come under something with us, but it's not their burden...there is a freedom that we have with people who don't live here, who just don't have skin in the game other than they love us and they love the Church [in general]. (I11, p. 14-15)

Friendships with those outside of a congregation provides support for clergy without the enmeshment of the friend in the issues.

Friends who are not in ministry were also highlighted as important by participants. However, for Debra, who is a single woman, like-minded women who are also in ministry are some of her closest friends, due to a common calling and understanding of the church. She elaborated, "I can feel safe in sharing. An understanding of being single in ministry. We provide a particular kind of support; we do day trips together and things that people would do if they had a spouse and children" (I4, p. 11). The common ground of being single and in ministry was an important dimension of this interviewee's friendships

Supportive friendships were described as loving, safe, mutual, vulnerable, and accountable thereby allowing the cleric to open-up, be honest, and be urged to grow. John, a Catholic priest shared his value for "a friend from high school...I've been friends with for 40 years...She never lets me get away with a bullshit line... She'll call me on something that she thinks I'm not being forthright on. She calls me to authenticity" (I10, p.12). Lois also expressed the importance of trust, honesty, and integrity in her friendships. She revealed,

someone who I can trust because I know that they're being honest with me. They're being appropriately vulnerable. They're being real. They're living out what they say....I want someone with integrity. Someone who's growing in their faith....Someone who's going to build me up and give me hope. But someone who loves me enough to speak the truth to me and isn't afraid to challenge me on things. (I12, p. 12)

Interviewees also had a number of perspectives on the unique dimension of friendship within their church, with some being more comfortable and some being more cautious. John spoke about caution in his new parish in who he might become close to and said:

I'm still in the watch and observe kind of mode. Because I don't want to fall into validating the people who think that they run the parish [and think that they] are going to

have exclusive access [to me]. In my previous Parish after a number of years, some people rose to the surface, families, that I became very close, with a number of them. (I10, p. 14)

This interviewee highlighted that while there is caution in developing friendships with congregants that over time these can develop.

For Greg, a Catholic priest, he valued friendships within his congregation and described one such friendship:

we've definitely gotten extremely deep on things like where God's calling us and our challenges. He is a father and husband and as a secular man in the world, and, myself, as a priest. But our relationship with God as a Christian doesn't vary just because of our vocation or role. (I7, p. 15)

For this interviewee, the common ground of their relationship with God was a key factor in his friendship and the role differentiation did not matter.

Ian shared another insight into ministry and the necessity of spiritual friendship with congregants. He mused,

I don't know if it's balance or if it's a tension, perhaps, between self-differentiation for clergy and spiritual friendship. Because there is the whole philosophy for clergy, you must not make friends with your parishioners as a sort of healthy boundary, and I really actually respect that. On the other hand, it seems to me that very little depth can be accomplished in ministry without a certain dimension of spiritual friendship. There is a sort of a kind of creative tension on the part on the part of the minister, the pastor, the priest to find that. (I9, p. 19)

This dimension of spiritual friendship was considered necessary for effective ministry with spiritual friendship focused on the other person's well-being, rather than the cleric's well-being.

Kate shared some related thoughts on how she differentiated relationships:

I think for many people in vocational ministry, because there's such a closeness, you're walking with people in very personal and painful experiences, there is an intimacy that's created. You do share your heart and so, for some, they think, well, now we're very close friends. I have to say, there is deep affection and love for you, but this is a pastoral relationship. It's not a friendship relationship, it's not just friends meeting for coffee, it's a pastoral visit. Those are difficult conversations to have with people. But I found it's been a learning thing for me to go to people that I want a personal relationship with and

to say to them, ‘Okay, so I serve in a pastoral role, but I want to get to know you as a friend. What does that look like? And how do we do this?’ (I11, p. 9)

For this interviewee differentiating between intimate relationships due to ministry and those of personal friends was important.

Carl also revealed aspects of how the power differential due to his role impacts his friendships with congregants. He shared,

I have friends in the church, however, I also realized that my role within the church is different. There’s not an equal power relationship between a pastor and a congregant. There also isn’t the same role relationship between a congregant and a pastor. I wouldn’t ask a congregant to pastor me. They might offer certain areas of pastoring. They may pray with me, they might offer me advice, as they do. So, at least within a pastoral relationship, I wouldn’t say that it’s necessarily two ways... it’s one way, me pastoring them, like in a pastoral meeting. They may ask me how I’m doing. But I’m not going to take up the majority of the pastoral coffee...I’m really there to serve them and to focus on them in that time. (I3, p. 13)

Awareness of his desire to minister to his congregants keeps this interviewee cognizant of the dimension of the clergy-congregant relationship being essentially a one-way relationship.

Friends, in a variety of forms, were another facet of relational support for clergy resilience. For some clergy having friends outside of their congregation was important to them. Friendships with those who do not work in ministry were also appreciated by some interviewees. The dimension of friendships with congregants had varying perspectives as clergy are aware of their role and how this affects personal friendships.

Peer Support. Peers are another facet of relational support for clergy resilience. While peers were often also considered friends, they were differentiated for other types of friendship. The common ground of understanding ministry was a distinguishing aspect of peer support. Kate expressed:

I think with [peers] it’s easier to be able to say, so this happened, and I don’t have to give background about how I feel and why I would feel that way because there’s just an understanding of “Oh, so this, this, this and this are going on for you right now. (I11, p. 15)

For Adam, an Anglican priest, it was important of being able to talk through ministry issues with peers and he used the term “older brother” to refer a significant peer in his life (I1, p. 5). He also shared about the value of peers and said:

I’ve had to cultivate those relationships because not only do I like these people...I need them. I need friends. I need colleagues. Some that are younger, some that are older, some that are men or women. I need healthy relationships to maintain health. (I1, p. 21)

He went on later to also express, “I don’t have to get everything from one or two people like that, the body of Christ feeds me... multiple deep relationships are really important (I1, p. 25). His comments highlighted the need for multiple relational supports.

For Barb, a hospital chaplain, peer support was a more formal opportunity to talk about work related issues. She disclosed, “it’s a way to air them, bring them out. It's done in safety. It's done in absolute confidentiality” (I2, p. 9). This interviewee also shared about having more informal friendships with peers as well (I2, p. 9). For Lois, an associate pastor working in a care ministry, being able to debrief with her peers was also important. She clarified:

for my own accountability to say, ‘look, this is what's happened, this is how I'm handling it’ ...just to say, ‘this is a lot of graphic information details that I'm listening to and this is really hard. You need to know what I'm dealing with.’ That has continued to be a support for me that whenever I'm handling something that's really intense. (I12, p. 6)

Peers provide support in allowing clergy to debrief situations they are facing with someone who relates and can understand their work.

For some clergy having relationships with local peers was referenced. Debra, an Anglican interviewee, shared that ministerial groups have been a significant place where she has developed supportive peer relationships. She articulated, “the ministerial where people kind of support each other and can be a place of trust. That is a wonderful resource” (I4, p. 13).

For some clergy, peer relationships might be long-term and deeply intimate. Fred, a recently retired minister, shared about a long-term group of peers that he met with. He honoured these peers saying,

I have what I call a posse...we meet and have for 28 years at my cottage at least twice a year, spring/fall over usually three days... we’ve gone through two divorces, two remarriages, a mother killed by a drunk driver. We just gathered at the funeral. Four or five of us gathered around [our peer] whose mom had been killed and just cried together. But that group of colleagues has been a foundational, seminal, essential for me. (I6, p. 11)

In talking more about his 'posse' he conveyed:

We're all serving churches with similar challenges. Whether it's budget, or whether it's cranky deacons, elders, we know each other's world. There doesn't have to be a great deal of explanation. You just described the problem, and everybody can fill in the boundary periphery stuff in the background. (I6, p. 12)

Having the common ground of similar ministries and longevity were key aspects of this interviewee's peer support.

Interviewees recognized that some of their peers were isolated and it was an area of concern. Greg, a Catholic priest who was moving into a diocesan role, pondered how he might support these peers. He contemplated,

one of the challenges that we face in our diocese is that we have a number of priests who have become islands. So, to actually reach out and develop a relationship without any motive. Just to befriend them, to give them a comfortable place or listen. [To offer to them], 'you haven't had vacation, how about you and I go for a day trip.' To humanize people who may have put on the fringes. (I7, p. 19)

Debra, an Anglican interviewee whose role is at the diocesan level, also prioritized peer support. She shared about using denominational gatherings to provide opportunity for clergy to pray together and develop peer relationships (I4, p. 15).

Harry, a UCC minister spoke about healthy peer relationships and what he considered important. He declared,

number one would be trustworthiness. Number two would be wisdom... They are people that have a depth of understanding of themselves and their personal relationship with God that they own fully. When they meet with me, they share it without projecting it on me. They allow me and my call to be fully self-defined, and to share that with them, and then we can learn and grow together. And not by putting anything on each other, that's where the trust comes for me. And then, wisdom, most of the time comes with age. So, I generally will seek out people that have been in ministry longer than me. That have more experience that I can draw upon and that they've been through the crap that I'm going through. So, they can have helpful things to say. But there are always exceptions to that, God blesses some people with less life experience with incredible wisdom... the healthiest relationships are where we come together as equals and share equally and learn

from each other and share with each other. That's where synergy happens. That's where when two or three are gathered, the spirit is genuinely with us. (I8, p. 14)

This interviewee highlighted how healthy peers who come together as equals can be a support in offering wisdom and openness to learning from each other. He also shared the importance of having peer relationships within his denomination but also with those of other traditions. He highlighted the value of peers from other theological traditions “because they can challenge me in places I need to be challenged and not get complacent” (I8, p. 17).

Additionally, Ian, an Orthodox priest shared about an informal group of peers that he had met with regularly for the last two years to study the lectionary texts. About this group he reflected,

I had never done anything like that prior to that in the context of my ministry, and now looking back, I don't know how I survived without it. I don't know how I could have continued on in ministry, in the context of dealing with all of those [compound grief] challenges without that kind of peer support. (I9, p. 11)

In sharing further about how this helped he suggested,

It's basically the common time and place that we're together. It's just being together... Common focus... we get together we study the Bible and each of us is very sort of passionate about that. We love it...But we're all in our 40s now...I would say common focus. I would say that enabled me to bounce back... I don't know if there's anything other than that kind of peer support that would have done that. (I9, p. 13)

For this interviewee, the common ground of ministry, interest in studying scripture, and being at a similar age was helpful in providing a common focus that united the group.

John, a Catholic priest, also talked about the importance of peers on his resilience. He described sharing “war stories with each other” and talked about some long-term peer friendships (I10, p. 12). About one long-term relationship he shared,

[he] will challenge me on my liturgical ideas. I think about the importance of liturgy and liturgy done right and done well. [He's] like, who gives a damn, get it done. Who cares about whether the words or this or that? He challenges you to figure out why do you think what. But he's also supportive and he'll be one of the first ones [who] will say, well, you're so good and you work so hard to do that. So, he's always, always encouraging and challenging. (I10, p. 13)

This comment emphasized the value peers bring in challenging and stretching each other and in encouraging each other. This priest also shared about how institutional peer gatherings can also be meaningful, even though the peer relationships might not be as close. He explained,

we met maybe five, six times a year. And so that was sort of an institutional way of bringing together colleagues. Even if you didn't get along with some of the other guys, if you don't have the same view of church and ministry it was still an encouragement to be together, as fellow labourers in the vineyard. (I10, p. 13)

Gathering with other like-minded peers was encouraging for this cleric.

Peer support, as discussed, is a facet of relational support for clergy resilience. Peer relationships both close and more casual can be encouraging to clergy. Common ground and understand of ministry and the challenges faced is an aspect that clergy value in peer support. Peers also help clergy to grow as they offer different perspectives or ideas for ministry.

Mentor Support. Mentors were another important facet of relational support for clergy resilience. Mentors were both formal or informal and were marked by relationships with those who offer guidance and wisdom. Many participants identified and used the term 'mentor'; however, Adam, an Anglican priest explained, "I don't use the word mentor. Mostly, I just don't like it. It's a Greek category and I want to keep biblical language - mothers and fathers" (I1, p. 24).

Mentors provide guidance for clergy in their role. Ed, a solo pastor in a conservative protestant denomination, shared how he valued the experience of pastoral mentors:

I can talk to the pastors there and bounce certain ideas of them and say, 'what should I do in this situation with this person?' All those pastors that I've talked to have been in ministry many years and have experienced quite a bit different thing over their years, so that helps. They're not just out of Bible school and figuring things out for themselves. (I5, p. 10).

Clergy tend to choose mentors who have ministry experience. Barb also shared the value of mentor guidance, "I've had mentors that have suggested things that I didn't get when they suggested it....I finally get it later" (I2, p. 14). The guidance offered from mentors is a valued facet of their support.

Along with guidance there is a sense of care from mentors. Carl, a younger associate pastor pointed to this and said:

I've been really grateful to have a number of mentors in my life. Older Christians. Two of them had been my supervisors. My senior pastors technically, also my boss, but has become a friend over the years. The leadership program [allowed me to have] mentors beside me from other Christian denominations. Even certain pastors in the city who intentionally meet with me over coffee and actually want to hear if you care about me. But not because of how many times I preach, or how well my church is doing. They actually really care about me and they want to know me, and they want to speak into my life. They want to help me know Jesus better. Those have been incredible for me. That someone cares enough to meet with you, who you look up to, speaks so much. (I3, p. 14)

An experience of care on the part of the mentor seems to be an important facet of this resource.

Some mentorship is more formal or institutionally organized. Ed, a solo pastor serving in a remote community described a formal program he was involved with. He shared, when you first come into ministry, the ordination process you're partnered up with another older pastor, a more seasoned pastor and that was really helpful. Because coming here we faced a lot of issues we'd never done before. So, being able to reach out to that person, almost anytime, anywhere and receiving feedback within a few hours or at least 24 hours was very helpful in dealing with a lot of things that we were new to. (I5, p. 15)

Those new to ministry can benefit from guidance from a formal ministry mentor. However, match of relationship and the quality of such mentoring is essential. This was illuminated further by Ed:

I know other pastors didn't have the same quality of relationship that I had with my [ordination mentor] and that was a hindrance to them in their ministries. Having a good quality relationship with that guy was super helpful for us in stay here... The trust, feeling safe with him and the ability to ask him anything and talk about anything that was happening... It was more of a friendship and not like a boss and employee kind of thing....It was a more a cheering me on and that was very helpful. (I5, pp. 15-16)

Responsiveness, genuine care, trust, and safety are important aspect this interviewee highlighted about supportive mentor relationships.

Some participants preferred more informal, affinity-based mentor relationships. Kate, an associate pastor presented this perspective:

As a general rule, I think in my life I have found less helpful the really structured or goal oriented mentoring relationships and far more helpful, I really, really like being around you and we really want to go the same direction relationships. (I11, p. 13)

She elaborated that her denomination does provide more formal opportunities but also times for relational connecting that can allow informal mentor relationships to develop. She articulated, for those who are really looking for a targeted, like, I want a mentor, these are the areas I want to grow in, these are my goals. They're really strong at providing opportunities for that. For someone like me, who is hugely relational... there's also a lot of opportunity to just connect well with people who are like minded. (I11, p. 13)

Clergy may prefer different types of mentor opportunities and providing some options was valued by this interviewee.

Professors and supervisors during ministry preparation training often become significant mentors to clergy. Adam reminisced about his time in seminary and "great professors who became many of them really formative for me personally" (I1, p. 2). He further elaborated:

I became friends with [the professor] ... and we maintained a very close relationship... even more so when I became an incumbent priest... [we talked] least once a month, and we had long conversations, we would visit them often at least once or twice a year. (I1, p. 5)

Martin, an MCC pastor also shared about enduring mentor relationships with professors. He disclosed, "good mentors would be one of those social relational resources that one needs in life where you can go and check in and say, 'am I crazy or is there some validity to this? Has this been discussed before?'" (I13, p. 4). The relationship that began in seminary between student and professor became an ongoing mentoring relationship for these interviewees.

Mentors may be sought from differing denominational traditions. Harry, a UCC minister explained:

One of my closest spiritual mentors, is an Anglican priest. Liturgically [he's] way different from where we're at. Theologically we're on the same page, and that's helpful. But it's also helpful for me to develop relationships with people who are extremely conservative in their theology because they can challenge me. (I8, p. 17)

He further relayed how his value of engaging with different perspectives was shaped by an early mentor, his home minister. He relayed,

[my home minister] said, ‘you always need to listen to both [liberal and conservative perspectives]’. And he's absolutely right... We need to learn how to have tough conversations on things we don't see eye to eye on, without demonizing the other person. That's where I think that that seed was planted for me to say, ‘even if I see the world different than you, God's going to teach me something about the world if I listen to you.’ (I8, p. 18)

Mentorship from someone of a different tradition was valued by this interviewee and considered an opportunity for God to teach him.

Mentors are not always those who are more experienced, older, or in a formal clergy role. Ian, an Orthodox priest elucidated,

I did have some excellent support within our parish as well, from some very mature leaders in the church that I have an immense amount of respect and trust for sure. I feel like oftentimes they're ministering to me and mentoring me. And even though I'm the pastor, I'm the priest, they're doing as much giving as much to me as I have to them. (I9, p. 13)

For Ian, mentors were lay leaders within the church who provided him with wisdom, guidance, and support.

Martin, an MCC pastor, in speaking about a younger colleague, he described their relationship as a, “trusting collegial relationship and it is a reminder to me that mentorship comes to me, not just from people who are older than me” (I13, p. 17). Wisdom and guidance can come for those who might not typically considered to be mentors.

While participants of all lengths in ministry highlighted the value of mentors, early ministry was also emphasized as a season of particular need for mentors. John, a Catholic priest, stated:

I can't comprehend how one can go from seminary to ministry without having a good close mentor. Maybe other ecclesial communities figured out how to do that with colleagues physically close to you or mentor type people. But I couldn't have imagined being a pastor in my first year. (I10, p. 7)

He further shared about the mentorship of his first lead priest he served under and described, he wasn't pie in the sky. He was practical. He was loved by the people. And he was starting a brand-new parish....I learned early on as much as the funds were important, the more important part was raising the community....He had some great ideas. He knew

how to execute them. He appreciated my gifts and talents and he helped cultivate those in me. (I10, p. 7)

Mentoring relationships early in ministry can support clergy in guiding them in their role and also in encouraging and supporting them.

Mentors' support was another important facet of relational support for clergy resilience. Mentoring relationships offer clergy guidance in their ministry role. Often mentors were those with experience in ministry, but mentorship can also come from those who with less experience or who are not in ministry. The quality of the mentor relationship was essential, and care, trust, and safety were important for this relationship to be supportive.

Leadership Support. The care of denominational leadership was a resource for clergy resilience. Being valued by the local church leadership was also a support to clergy. Carl, a C&MA associate pastor said:

to work for a church and an organization that really values me and has a holistic sense of care for me...they're my employer and there's certain dynamics around that that aren't the same. But I think they also really want to care for me. And they want good for me. (I3, p, 11)

This interviewee highlighted that clergy find care and support of their employer valuable. Debra, an Anglican interviewee who works in a denominational role echoed this, "I think it's important for clergy to know that they're supported" (I4, p. 14). Later she advised,

if something happens at the personal level, it's important for us to remember that clergy are not just the role, isn't just functional and not functional. Things happen in personal life and things happen with family. As we know these things, to reach out where the person is. Sure, things need to continue to happen in the parish. But there is a person that needs care. (I4, p. 15)

Leadership care and support for clerics on a personal level was an important resource.

Ed, who is a solo pastor in a remote community, shared about the importance of both denominational and local leadership support. He explained, "support that we've had from the district and other churches has been really important. Our board is working well together, and I feel supported by them. So that's been important to continuing to stay and work here" (I5, p. 9). Greg, a Catholic priest, also shared,

it helps that I have a bishop who I know he loves me, and he wants the best for me. He's a man of prayer. So, anything that he's ever asked me to do, I know that he's already taken into prayer. He's willing to pray with me to give me time to pray about it. (I7, p. 11)

He further elaborated, "having a bishop who I can approach and be honest and transparent with the struggles and not fear, the consequences or being seen less than, that's extremely supportive" (I7, p.12). Still more he said,

[the bishop] came for a visit and he gave us a cell phone number. Being accessible, not necessarily always available, but being accessible. We can call him, it's not that you have to write a secretary, or try to email. It's call him, send him a text. So being accessible, and then also availing himself to us...gives up himself to the situation that he's in... He also has called each one of us, especially during the pandemic, just to check in... But he's definitely more of a brother than a superior. I do respect him as my superior, but he's definitely like a brother. So being able to speak openly with him, and no judgement... he is a priest himself. So, he understands the journey and the process and the frustrations. (I7, p. 13)

This interviewee emphasized the value of having a leader who understood ministry, showed care, was accessible, non-judgemental, and understanding.

The absence of leadership care was noticed by participants. Adam, an Anglican priest, had experience with a leader who would contact him only when needing him to do something (I1, p. 20). John, a Catholic priest also divulged,

a lack of a sense of support from [the bishop]. I am not his flavour. I've got progressive idea of church. My style of being a priest, is not his....I feel like I have a lack of support. We would be walking down and crossing each other at one of our conferences, and he'd be all about talking to the newly ordained kid and not acknowledging the 50-year-old veteran. It's clear, who he likes. (I10, p. 8)

This comment highlighted how a lack of leadership support is noticed by clergy. Further, Harry, a UCC minister, reflected that denominational support can be negatively impacted by the individuals serving in the role and stated:

some people are drawn to helping professions because they have a genuine heart and calling to be helpful. Other people are drawn to helping professions because it allows them to manipulate people....that's true in ministry and so I have to be discerning in who I open myself up to, who I trust. (I8, p. 13)

As discussed, care of clergy from denominational leadership, when provided, was a facet of relational resource that supported clergy resilience. Leaders who provide care and understanding for clergy on a personal level were a resource for resilience.

Professional Support. Two key professionals, spiritual directors and counsellors, were referenced as supports for clergy's spiritual and emotional health. Both supports were referenced in providing support for personal and professional issues. Barb, a Catholic chaplain, described her long-term relationship with a psychologist as a neutral person to work things out as they are not in the same field (I2, pp. 12-13). Harry also referenced accessing a productivity coach to help with executive functioning deficits (I8, p. 12). Profession counselling can support clergy emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

The importance of spiritual direction was another professional support referenced by interviewees. In describing the importance of spiritual direction Barb stated, "this work can also be spiritually dangerous. You can lose your faith" (I2, p. 13). Similar to a counsellor, a spiritual director was considered to be a neutral person with a more objective viewpoint. The spiritual director's "fresh eyes" allows them to notice and highlight areas (I7, p. 10). When reflecting on spiritual direction as one of several resources he can chose to access when he faces adversity, A Catholic priest pondered,

I can't sit at home if a parishioner yelled at me and go back to the rectory and wallow in my own self-pity. I can call my spiritual director, [or] go for bite to eat with a friend of mine and vent and tell them how it has affected me. (I7, p 21)

This comment revealed how spiritual directors can be a support for clergy in processing the adversity they face.

The spiritual focus of spiritual direction differentiated it from counselling. A male C&MA interviewee described the benefit of a spiritual director was having "someone who I meet with and who wants to know what's going on in my soul" (I3, pp. 17-18). Finding a fit with a spiritual director can take time. Carl described being part of a church culture where spiritual direction is encouraged but that it was not until his third spiritual director that he found a fit (I3, p. 18). Greg and John, both Catholic priests, where required to engage in spiritual direction as part of their preparation for ministry and saw it as a wonderful resource and helpful in discerning a call to ministry. The requirement also helped them learn the value of spiritual direction and was something they either continued with during their ministry or returned to during challenging times.

Both Barb and Greg reported long-term relationships with their spiritual directors. Greg had the same spiritual director for 19 years and considered them key in helping him catch some ongoing issues (I7, p 5,9). Carl, a C&MA pastor; Debra, an Anglican priest; and John, a Catholic priest, indicated that they had been off and on with spiritual direction and had found it valuable during challenging sessions.

In addition to helping discern a call to ministry in the preparation period, spiritual direction also helped participants to be reminded of their calling in the midst of challenging circumstances. Spiritual direction was described by John as helping him:

To regularly view the ways in which I've seen God at work in my life in the last month.

How have I seen God, where have I missed God, where do I wish God would enter into a situation, where have I recognized God? (I10, p. 16)

John also connected spiritual direction to gratitude and inviting God to provide direction to difficult situations (I10, p. 16). Greg described his spiritual director as someone who would “challenge me both on the positive and the negative or the weaknesses and areas of growth” (I7, p. 7). Spiritual direction was a chance for clergy to intentionally reflect on their spiritual life and relationship with God.

As discussed, the professional supports of counselling and spiritual direction were resources for clergy resilience. Counselling provided clergy with emotional, psychological, or social support. Whereas spiritual direction focused more so on spiritual well-being and clerics' relationship with God.

Summary of Relational Supports Theme from Interviews. As discussed, the seven facets of relational support included spouse and family, friends, peers, mentors, leadership, and professional supports. Spouse and family support were a key resource for resilience. Spouses were often a sounding board and share the ministry burden with the clergy person. Family members were also a support and that provided clergy safe place to talk and be honest.

Friends were another relational resource which allowed clergy to be honest. Friends outside of the congregation were appreciated for their ministry neutrality. Clergy were often cognizant of friendships with congregants due to the dual role nature of the relationship. Peer relationships often overlapped with friends and were also an important resource for clergy resilience. Having a common ground of ministry and the challenges associated with it was a valuable aspect of peer relationships for clergy.

Mentors who offered guidance and wisdom that clergy can apply to their ministry was another relational support for resilience. Also, leadership support, such as the care of a denominational leader, was valued by clergy and considered a resource for resilience. Professional supports were the final resource identified as a relational support for clergy resilience. The two central professions for relational support were counsellors and spiritual directors. Counsellors and spiritual directors offered clergy a safe and confidential opportunity to process issues and consider them from a more objective stance. Counselling tended to focus on emotional and social aspects; whereas, spiritual direction tended to focus on spiritual life and relationship with God.

The six facets of relational support, spouse and family, friends, peers, mentors, leadership, and professional support have been discussed. These facets of relational support are important for clergy resilience.

Personal Aspects that Support Resilience

There were several themes that emerged as personal resources for clergy resilience. These themes are (a) balance, (b) caring for health, (c) boundaries, (d) clear calling, (e) identity and self-awareness, (f) institutional alignment, and (g) personal attributes. These themes and their facets will be discussed below.

Balance. Balance between work and personal life was a resource that clergy identified as important to their resilience. Lois, an AGC associate pastor, shared the importance of balance in her scheduling. She expressed,

... talking about my schedule, make sure that things are in balance. I remember [my supervising pastor] saying, if you don't manage your schedule, other people will manage it for you... I honestly didn't take it to heart. I think I had never experienced what it meant to be working full time and to be dealing with the cares of people full time. I did in the beginning, I started to experience some burnout. Things were not in balance. (I12, p. 4)

Ed, a solo pastor in a remote community, also talked about balance in his work schedule. He recommended,

... more training for how to deal with stress and how to take time off when you feel you can't have time off. One pastor talked to us about having your schedule in blocks of time because he worked in a place where he couldn't always get away either. So, even though you can't take your whole one day off, you take two or three hours on your day off and

then you have to do some ministry. Well, you have to move that time off to somewhere else and organize your schedule, so that you do have that time for yourself and for your family. That needs to happen and how to create that kind of balance so you're not go-go and burnout. (I5, p. 18)

These comments highlighted how managing workload by intentional scheduling was important for these clergy.

Rhythms were another aspect of balance. Carl, a C&MA associate pastor shared his perspective on balance:

I don't think pastors necessarily need to have, 'work-life balance', but they do need to have spiritually sustainable rhythms... a healthy rhythm of life for pastoral ministry.

That's something that people who I work with have really fostered, to establish a rhythm of life that is... really sustainable for the long run of pastoral ministry. (I3, p. 6)

He further shared that this healthy rhythm involves attending to his spiritual, mental, physical and also recreation needs (I3, p. 6). Ian, an Orthodox priest articulated balance in ministry as, "approach it like a marathon rather than a sprint" (I9, p. 13). These comments highlighted the sense of sustainability and longevity as an important part of balance.

Balance involved taking care of both personal needs and others' needs. Greg, a Catholic priest, expressed the importance of balancing ministry with his own needs. He shared:

It's much easier to skip a meal and meet with somebody than it is to defer that meeting or not be available. So, trying to care for others, but also care for myself, and not feeling guilty over that....My prayer life and my physical well-being is part of my call. If I'm not taking care of those areas of my life, I can't take care of my ministry and my pastoral duties. (I7, p. 8)

Later he also highlighted the value of balancing downtime, like going to the beach or playing guitar (I7, p. 9, 10). Lois, a female AGC interviewee, also spoke about the importance of overall balance in life, including downtime and said:

having really good discipline and self-control in the areas of exercise and eating properly and getting enough sleep and having enough downtime. Some of those general disciplines with my schedule. Just keeping myself healthy and strong. (I12, p. 10)

These comments emphasize how meeting personal needs is essential for ministering to other people's needs.

The importance of balance and the negative effect of not attending to personal needs was reinforced by an interviewee who experienced burnout. Greg, a Catholic priest, experienced burnout and confided,

[clinical burnout] was a wakeup call. Very early on before I was ordained, I started clinical burnout in 2008. So, I went from 185 to 123 [pounds] in two and a half months, I developed fluid around my heart and was put on bed rest because I was nearing cardiac arrest. I was able to finish my last exam that academic year. The doctor that I was working with kind of got me back on my feet, worked on proper diet and exercise. But also, the need to take downtime. Go to the beach for a day, you can take a day off and realizing that the world is not going to stop, or the parish is not going to stop without me being there for a day. (I7, p, 9)

Balance between ministry needs and personal needs was an important resource for clergy resilience. Eating healthy, exercise, rest, recreation, spiritual life, and time with family were all personal needs that clergy interviewees highlighted as needing balanced attention.

Caring for Health. Overlapping with balance was the importance of caring for physical health. Interviewees referenced diet, exercise, and rest as important for their resilience. Weight issues, both being overweight and underweight, was referenced as a challenge. Greg, a Catholic priest, shared about challenges with his weight loss due to being busy and neglecting to eat and he emphasized the importance of stopping for meals (I7, p. 9). While John, also a Catholic priest struggled with being overweight and eating healthy food. He entrusted,

I had my doctor [say] I need to lose weight... [I] lost about 35-40 pounds. Then I hit one of these parent meetings where they were attacking me in the middle of, it was not pretty. And I was un-resilient. I bounced back up in my weight. I turned back to food as a psychological crutch. (I10, p. 5)

Healthy eating was an important need that clergy considered important for responding positively to the adversity they face.

Exercise was also important for participant's resilience and mentioned by interview participants. Carl, a C&MA interviewee, shared a spiritual perspective on this. He relayed, emphasis [by my senior pastor] on taking care, not just yourself on the inside, also taking care of yourself on the outside as well. God has created us, not just with brains and with hearts, but also with bodies and to be mindful of those. (I3, p. 6)

Lois shared that her practice since the pandemic was “getting up really early in the morning going for walks anywhere 30 minutes to 45 minutes to an hour and walking” and combining this with prayer and scripture (I12, p. 11). Exercising is an aspect of taking care of one’s physical body that these interviewees considered helpful to their resilience.

Rest was another aspect of physical health mentioned by participants and was related to exercise. Adam, an Anglican priest, talked about the sleep benefits of swimming, although he felt the loss of this resource due to COVID-19 restrictions (I1, p. 14). He described the benefits as “really positive. sleep better...I felt physically good and it helped my emotional well-being” (I1, pp. 14-15).

Maintaining good mental health was also important for some participants. Harry spoke about having ADHD and Bipolar disorder. He shared the importance of developing, “a lot of good external habits and support systems and routines that helped me manage that on a daily basis in a good way” (I8, p. 13). Caring for health involves aspects of both physical and mental health.

Recreation and fun were associated with both exercise and rest and were a resource recognized by participants. For Adam poetry was a central part of his recreation (I1, p. 16). Ian, a bi-vocational Orthodox priest, reflected on a recreation time with his colleagues. He reminisced, we spent time on the basketball court, playing basketball... and went swimming at the beach. It was nice... for a lot of clergy, particularly orthodox priests, who many are bi-vocational and have incredible things going on in their lives. To get to have some fun, to have true recreation, like not wasting time, but real recreation. (I9, p. 17)

Humour was also mentioned as a resource. Greg, a Catholic priest proposed, a sense of humor has to be there. I think funeral directors and clergy have a very similar personality and sense of humor because we deal with some of the most difficult situations in people’s lives. If we can't joke and we can't laugh, then we would only be kind of bombarded by the negative or the harder aspects to go through. (I7, p. 14)

Humour and recreation can help clergy to deal with the challenges and difficulties they encounter in their ministry and is an aspect of caring for their health.

Caring for personal health needs was a resource identified by clergy that helps their resilience. Diet, exercise, rest, recreation, and humour were key facets of caring for health that were identified as important.

Boundaries. Boundaries were another resource that interviewees identified as helping them to positively adapt to the adversity they encounter in their roles. For some interviewees boundaries were placed around the nature of their relationships with congregants, as touched on earlier in relational supports. For Carl, a C&MA interviewee, expectations of receiving from his congregants was a mental boundary. He declared,

I don't need to be accepted by my congregants. I actually need to pastor them... I think to not have some of that exterior support of spouse and friends and family, but to come into your work being profoundly lonely. I think it'd be very difficult to do that in a healthy way because you'd be looking for those relationships and that affirmation from somewhere else. (I3, p. 8)

Debra, an Anglican interviewee, also talked about being "somewhat guarded" in church friendships (I4, p. 7). Boundaries around relationships with congregants and finding supportive relationships outside of the ministry context is a boundary for some clergy.

Boundaries also involved physical markers to create distinction between ministry and personal life. Ed talked about the necessity of a physical boundary to help with the boundary between church and home, as their church and house are attached. He revealed, "we've had to make that barrier between the two doors, between the two places, we've had to make it stronger...we've had to have that metaphysical barrier, it's had to become stronger over the years" (I5, p. 15). He further explained,

there's one door to come in [the church] and then there's another to our house. So, we can lock the one door and have people outside we can go out of our house and address them in the church. But they feel welcome because they can just walk in and they can see us. We open our door to them. (I5, p. 13)

Ed illustrated how a physical boundary is important in his context and how boundaries also helped with mental separation between ministry and his family life.

Emotional boundaries are another aspect that supports clergy in being resilient. Harry, a UCC minister, revealed aspects of emotional boundaries. He declared,

I have good boundaries. I don't take on other people's emotional issues. I don't take responsibility for other people's emotional issues. Because they're their issues. My job is to be a shepherd and a supporter of them in their journey, but I can't walk their journey for them. So, I have to leave that energy with them and not take responsibility for it. So, therefore, I can sleep peacefully. Being the one exception to that is when I'm preparing a

funeral. And I'm meeting with a family that's in the midst of deep grief. They're right in the middle of it. I will choose to consciously relax my boundaries and let myself feel their grief...then when I'm preaching at the funeral, I can better articulate where their deep yearning is and what they need to hear from God in terms of healing in that moment. And then when the funeral process is over, the boundaries go back in place. (I8, p. 11)

He shared further about the impact of the absence of boundaries. He warned,

[boundaries are] essential, more than key, it's essential. I don't know how people survive in ministry without good boundaries. I see it in my colleagues that are struggling and suffering and falling down. I see one of the common threads is poor boundaries. (I8, p. 12)

Lois, an AGC interviewee, also spoke about the importance of emotional boundaries in her role. She related,

the need to have healthy boundaries because very often when people have been in a bad place for a long time...people don't have good boundaries. If I don't have good boundaries, we're going to be in a mess, codependency and so on. One verse in the Bible that has really helped me is Galatians 6 where it talks about carrying each other's burdens. But then it goes on to talk about each person has to carry their own load. A burden by definition is something that is weighing down so heavily on someone that if they don't have help they're going to go under. A burden is something that, we all have at times. But a load on the other hand is something that we all need to be responsible for ourselves. So, making sure that I'm helping to carry people's burdens but not to carry their load. When somebody wants me to take on their responsibility, their load, having that clear boundary and that definition to say, 'No, you need to do this. I'm not going to fix this for you.' Because I want people to grow. I want people to heal. I don't want people to be dependent on me. I want people to be dependent on God. So that is one boundary that it requires ongoing evaluation... I'm not always good at this, having good work boundaries. (I12, p. 9)

Emotional boundaries protect clergy from taking on responsibility that belong to those they minister to while still supporting them.

Boundaries, relational, emotional, and even physical, were important resources for participants that helped them to adapt positively to the adversity they faced. Relational boundaries provided health separation for some clergy around clergy-congregant relationships.

Physical boundaries were also helpful for some clergy in creating separation between work and ministry. Emotional boundaries protected clergy from taking on the responsibilities and emotions of those they minister to.

Clear calling. Having a clear sense of calling to ministry and meaning in the work they are doing was another resource for resilience that participants identified. Carl, a C&MA associated pastor, articulated,

I think to have the genuine sense that Christ has called me here, that I'm going there for him and that there's real meaning in the work that I'm doing. Even if my church is 20 people, that there's a real sense that I'm doing this for God. I'm changing lives and I'm impacting his kingdom, no matter how big or how small I think it is. I think that's really key [for resilience] to have a sense of genuineness to your calling. (I3, p. 15)

Debra described herself as coming to ministry reluctantly but then had a clear calling. She shared how it was helpful because, “at the core of my being, I know that God has brought me here” (I4, p. 5). In relaying a story John, a Catholic priest, also spoke about confidence in his calling. He re-counted:

I remember my spiritual director in the seminary saying, ‘many guys in the seminary who would give their eye teeth for the confidence that you have in your vocation’. I've always had a strong sense of this is what God wanted for me and this is where I should be. (I10, p. 3)

A clear sense of calling can provide a foundation for clergy and confidence in the importance to God of what they are doing.

Discernment and affirmation of calling was an important aspect of clear calling. Harry, an UCC interviewee, added that the rigorous testing of his calling in the process of becoming a minister was also helpful for his resilience. He explained,

I think [the rigorous process] is critically important [to resilience]. In terms of my ability to have confidence in my calling, to know it's been that rigorously tested....To have them all say to me, “we affirm your call,” gives me incredible confidence to face the difficulties that come with that call when those difficulties happen. To know that other people believe my call is legitimate. It's not just simply me. The process can feel incredibly invasive because there is no question that's out of bounds....Going through it feels icky at points, but after it's done, it feels like I have a really solid base to stand on claiming my call. (I8, p. 6)

For this interviewee his rigorous discernment process was challenging to go through at the time but later provided him a solid foundation for his ministry.

Confidence in calling can help clergy face challenging situations. John, a Catholic priest, was asked by his personnel director to go to a congregation where the previous priest had experienced challenges. He relayed,

[the personnel director] said, ‘this is brilliant, you will be able to come in, you'll be able to handle things.’ So, either because of my strong sense of who I am, or whatever. There were challenges. There were conflicts. There were difficulties, but I kept on and we did magnificent work. (I10, p. 11)

In his ministry he associated the firm foundation of his calling for helping him to “not get derailed or make [challenges] all personal” (I10, p. 11).

For Kate, an associate pastor, she revealed how her clear calling was significant in addressing the theological challenge of her gender. She entrusted, “I had a sense from Jesus, a really clear sense when I was 13 that was called to vocational pastoral ministry. Then realized in my context that wasn’t possible for women” (I11, p. 1). She shared more,

there was definitely affirmation towards ministry for me, but the [local] context I was in, it’s the same local church that I now serve in, at that point women in a pastoral role was not something theologically that we were aligned with. There was an openness to encourage me to learn to use the gifts they thought Jesus had given... But at the same time, there wasn’t really a role for women in pastoral ministry. (I11, p. 3)

Additionally, she shared,

the sense I had always going in with was that was never my battle to fight. That it was a secondary issue that would cause me pain, but that pain was always a gateway of intimacy with Jesus...one of the phrases that God gave me in terms of serving as a female pastor was that it was not my job to make a place for myself at the table, that he would set a place. If it looked like there wasn't one, then I was not to do anything to force it.

And yeah, that that was always his job to go before me. (I11, p. 3)

Confidence in her calling provided this interviewee with a foundation of patience that allowed God to open doors for her ministry.

Uncertainty about calling can arise for clergy during the course of their preparation or ministry. Lois, a female AGC associate pastor confided about questioning her call during her preparation. She shared, “there were times where it was such a battle spiritually, ‘what am I

doing?’ Feeling insecure, feeling fearful and anxious?’ (I12, p. 3). Uncertainty about calling may come from a lack of opportunity. Carl reflected on questioning his calling when he perceived a lack of opportunities where he desired to minister. He explained,

[I] also realize that sometimes within myself there’s a desire to even do more [preaching]. At times [this] has been actually very confusing and discouraging. So, wonder, ‘God am I supposed to do more of this? Am I being...authentic to my calling?’... that’s been one thing for me that has been quite confusing for the last three years in particular. (I3, p. 7)

At times when participants questioned their calling, they felt insecure, confused, and discouraged.

A clear sense of calling to ministry and meaning in the challenges of ministry was a resource that helped clergy to positively adapt to the adversity they encounter. Confidence in calling helped clergy to face difficulties. A rigorous discernment process built a solid foundation for calling for those who go through such a process. Discouragement and confusion arose for clergy when they are questioning their calling.

Firm Identity and Self-awareness. Self-awareness and firm identity were another resource theme that participants identified as helping clergy resilience. Harry, a UCC interviewee highlighted self-awareness as crucial for healthy clergy functioning in a congregational system. He shared,

being able to see congregations as more than just a collection of individuals, but as a whole, interconnected emotional spiritual system, and understand the concept of symptom-bearers and triangulation, in terms of a congregational dynamic... I’m always asking the big picture question around what is it about the congregational culture as a whole that is allowing this kind of behavior to continue unchecked? Having that kind of high-level view on congregational life has saved my butt so many times. I cannot count how many times those skill sets have allowed me to be able to disengage from congregational systemic anxiety before it becomes a conflict. (I8, p. 13)

Understanding congregational systems is an important awareness for clergy.

Also understanding one’s own personal issues and having self-awareness about how these have impacted the congregation is important. Kate highlighted the importance of addressing personal issues and recommended:

I would say in my opinion, anyone who’s entering into vocational ministry needs to receive counseling to deal with their emotional crap... it would also be really helpful for

anyone entering ministry to go through a process with someone who is gifted in discerning spirits to see what kind of activity might be going on in their life. (I11, p. 17)

Barb, a Catholic chaplain, highlighted self-awareness in the sense of understanding her uniqueness as a gift to her clergy role and being accepting of her own growth and development. She described,

being okay with your maturing self. Knowing that we don't start out mature, we start all our lives, it's all about stages and phases and that includes our professional. If I understood that more, what stages and phases are in the work, so that I can also accept the fact that yeah, at an early stage this is as far as I go. So, forgiveness of your mistakes, or knowing that you're actually learning. Your mistakes, the falls that you take when you're learning to walk are what helps you to walk. Not the standing upright, it's the falling down first, because it helps you to find out where oh, there's my balances, I won't do that again. (I2, p. 16)

Self-awareness is important for clergy in their own relationship with themselves and acceptance of their imperfections. It is also important to that clergy have self-awareness of their emotional and spiritual issues.

A firm identity is an important part of self-awareness. For Carl identity and being rooted in an understanding of himself as a child of God was crucial to his resilience. He emphasized, knowing that I am enough, strictly because of who I am in God... To know that I am God's child and to know that I am loved....For me, it's actually the greatest resource...it's helped me through the dark night of the soul. It's helped me through incredible discouragement...to know that I am first and foremost God's child and that I'm called to follow him in my work wherever that leads me.... That leads to a much stronger sense of personhood and identity and safety and security...For me, having a very solid sense of my identity in Christ, and that I'm his child, and I'm deeply loved, and I'm delighted in, has helped me to face adversity. (I3, pp. 10-11)

This interviewee highlighted how an identity as God's child and deeply loved is a resource for his resilience.

Self-awareness and identity were identified as a resource that helps clergy be resilient. Awareness of the congregational system and self-awareness of one's own emotional and spiritual issues was considered important for clergy resilience. Acceptance of imperfections and an identity as one loved by God was also a resource for clergy resilience.

Institutional Alignment. Alignment of the cleric with the denominational values and vision was an important resource, as was alignment with the specific vision for the congregation or parish. Alignment seemed to decrease friction and conflict. A lack of alignment, either theologically or culturally differences was identified by participants as a form of adversity and discussed earlier. John, a Catholic priest relayed his experience of having alignment. He imparted,

the best part of that [associate pastor experience] was the pastor that I had, he and I had a similar vision of church. Very similar and it was cultivated in me. He helped cultivate that in me, strengthen that in me. If you thought that the parish was a bus, there was no argument about how to drive the bus and where to go. That was a fantastic thing. (I10, p. 6)

Kate shared about a practice in her C&MA denomination that she found helpful in ensuring alignment at a congregational level. She described,

we sign a call to excellence that basically says if at some point, we find that the general or specific mission of the church and what the lead pastor and elders have decided, if we're not aligned with that, our job now is to resign. So, it's nice to have that kind of clarity. (I11, p. 7)

Martin, an MCC pastor, reflected on the alignment between himself and his congregation of 16 years and said, "we fit together as well as any I would ever have thought was possible...It's been a real blessing" (I13, p. 9). Alignment between personal values and vision and denominational or congregational values and vision was identified as helpful for clergy resilience.

Personal Attributes. There were some personal characteristics that were identified by interviewees as either a resource for responding to adversity or as assisting them in accessing helpful resources. Debra, an Anglican interviewee, shared the importance of "personality, the human aspect" (I4, p. 2). Fred, an UCC interviewee, identified his attributes of being an extrovert and growing up in a family that instilled confidence in him as helpful to his resilience (I6, p. 7). John, a Catholic priest revealed as helpful "my positive attitude. I'm an extrovert. I think outside the box" as resources (I10, p. 17). He also shared,

I could let that other crap go under the bridge... I think this is maybe an actual personality thing. If you're going to talk about personal resources, I don't hold a grudge. I'm not a person that holds a grudge... That's one of my resilience resources. (I10, p. 4)

Attributes such as being extroverted, positive, flexible, and forgiving were considered to be helpful for resilience.

Adam, an Anglican priest, reflected on being introverted and his resilience. He shared, as a self-defined introvert in terms of how where I get my energy. I really like people, but a Sunday where we're at two services, a lot of interaction preaching, presiding, lots of interaction with various groups of people after services. (I1, p. 5)

For this interviewee who identified as introverted the relational nature of ministry took a high level of energy. Various personal attributes, such as being extroverted, optimistic, and adaptable were seen as important facets of clergy resilience.

Summary of Personal Aspects that Support Resilience Theme from Interviews. As discussed, personal aspects that support resilience included facets of balance, health, boundaries, clear calling, identity and self-awareness, institutional alignment, and personal attributes. Balance involved a prioritization of personal needs alongside of ministry needs. Caring for health was related to balance, an involved ensuring good diet, exercise, rest, and recreation.

Boundaries were also overlapping with balance included relational, physical boundaries that helped clergy differentiate between ministry and personal life. Self-awareness was a resource that involves insight into emotional and spiritual issues as well as acceptance of one's imperfections and identity as loved by God. Institutional alignment was another resource for clergy resilience identified. Alignment of the cleric's values and vision with their team or congregation lead to a sense of personal and relational congruence.

Personal attributes were the final resource in the personal aspects theme. Personality characteristics like extroversion, optimism, flexibility, and forgiveness were considered resources for adapting to adversity. These are important facets of personal resources that have been identified as supporting clergy resilience.

Organizational Practices

There were several sub-themes that emerged as organizational practices for clergy resilience. These organizational sub-themes are (a) provision, (b) role flexibility, and (c) institutional support. These will be discussed below.

Provision. Provision was a subtheme of organizational practices that was identified as a resource for resilience. Greg, a Catholic priest described,

I live like a king, compared to a lot of my brothers who are missionaries or even some of my parishioners that I minister to. I have a roof over my head. I have the opportunity... to

eat three square meals a day. I drive a car that I just bought a couple years ago. I have a lot of privileges that are not extended to a lot of people. So that helps me, creature comforts... Also, academics, being privileged to study in university and to travel internationally to study and continue my studies and the freedom to do that. (I7, p. 17)

This interviewee expressed gratitude for provision that allowed him nice housing, food, a car, and access to education.

Provision of sabbatical was another area of provision. Adam, an Anglican priest identified, "I was given a four-month sabbatical last year... that was one thing that the diocese did, provide funding so that I could go away...it was a sabbatical for just rest" (I1, p. 14). Provision through aspects such as housing, education, or sabbaticals were a facet of organizational practices that was identified as supportive of clergy resilience.

Role Flexibility. Role flexibility was another facet of organizational practice that interviewees identified as supportive of their resilience. Harry, UCC interviewee shared, "I have incredible freedom to do what I feel God is calling me to do in any given moment, in any given aspect of my ministry. When people trust me, then I can go a long way with that" (I8, p. 9). Ed, a C&MA solo pastor, valued the flexibility of his role in how it allowed him to meet his family needs. He reflected,

if the kids need something at school, I can run and help them because the schools across the street... I don't have a set schedule where I'm in office for nine to five. I'm around the office, the office is there but I can be where I need to be when I need to be there. (I5, p. 12)

Role flexibility was an organizational practice that participants considered to be a resource for their resilience

Institutional Support. In addition to leadership care, which was discussed under relational supports, institutional support includes practical aspects like communication, accessibility, practical support, disciplinary support, and technical support. Good communication with some type of supervisor, either at a denominational or congregational level, depending on the structure, was helpful to clergy. Contact with a supervisor to discuss work related issues was important (I2, p. 9).

For Ed, a solo pastor in a remote community, institutional support involved practical backing for his work in a remote community. He shared, "the district... sen[t] us down south twice a year, to get a break from here and to drum up support" (I5, p. 3). Also, he elaborated,

“the physical things [that have been supportive] have been the district and different churches sending up missions’ groups to do kids ministry or work on the building. We had a group coming up to do women's ministry” (I5, p. 11). Further, Ed said, “the district helped us go to the missions training” (I5, p. 15).

Fred, a UCC interviewee reflected on the support of his denomination in disciplinary matters. He shared a story of when he was an associate minister and there was a problem with his supervising minister. He related,

The conference personnel officer at that time... He was tough and odd, and he was very smart, trained in clinical psychology and took no crap from anybody. But he loved Jesus and he loved the church. I handed it off to [the personnel officer] and he dealt with it... Similar when I was chair of presbytery three different times again the conference or presbytery committees or the conference staff handled things quite professionally quite well. (I6, p. 11)

Speaking about the value of this institutional support he said, “the system was working then and the players within the system were doing their job” (I6, p. 15). Institutional support was flagged as an important to clergy resilience and involves aspects like communication, practical support and disciplinary functions.

Summary of Organizational Practices that Support Resilience Theme from Interviewees. As discussed, provision, role flexibility, and institutional support were organizational practices that clergy considered as helpful for resilience. Provision was a resource for clergy and involved being cared for through housing, education, sabbaticals.

Role flexibility was another resource that clergy identified as supportive of resilience. The freedom of being able to minister based on the cleric’s sense of God’s calling and to make their own decisions was beneficial. Also, flexibility in schedule to attend to family needs was also beneficial. Institutional support included good communication, providing practical support, such as attending to disciplinary matters, and support to attend denominational events was appreciated by interviewees.

Conclusion of Resource Themes from Interviews

This section has provided the findings related to resources that clergy reported in the survey as helping their resilience. As discussed, the themes of spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices were categories of resources that participants identified as helpful for resilience. Each of these themes had a number of subthemes and facets

that were described. The next section will describe the interview findings related to initiatives, training, or professional development that participants identified as helping their resilience.

Helpful Initiatives for Resilience: Interview Findings

Participants were also asked to identify any existing formal or informal initiatives, programs and supports that they felt had been helpful in sustaining their resilience and well-being in their clergy role. They also had the opportunity to share idea for new initiatives, programs and supports. Interview questions related to this were similar to the survey questions so the themes arising were parallel to the survey findings of: (a) training, (b), relationship building opportunities, (c) and organizational priority.

Training and Development

Various aspects of training were identified as helpful for resilience. This included the facets of the discernment process and pre-service preparation, early ministry support, ongoing skill development, and lifelong learning.

Discernment Process and Pre-Service Training. The importance of a process to discern ministry calling and pre-service training was identified as an important facet of clergy resilience. Adam, an Anglican priest, shared his belief that “there's wisdom in preparing leaders slowly” (I1, p. 17). Further, he valued the rigorous process of his tradition, saying “it’s a pretty rigorous, lengthy process that actually is a good quality control in terms of protecting people, protecting from being thrown into something that they’re just not suited for” (I1, p.19). For Ian, an Orthodox priest, he also saw the importance of rigorous preparation and vetting. He warned, within our archdiocese, in some cases, [the lack of early vetting] is actually, contributed to significant problems for clergy down the road in their in their ministry life because they maybe didn’t get the preparatory type of formation along the way. Then they may find themselves really ill prepared for the demands of clergy life. (I9, line 15).

Thorough discernment of ministry calling can be a protection of those not well suited to the challenges of ministry.

A rigorous process was valued at the time and also for the benefits later. Fred, a UCC interviewee also reflected on a rigorous preparation process in the UCC and shared:

I definitely saw it as supportive and helpful and even at that time, I never felt any animosity or judgmental critique. I felt only discerning appraisal and the church was very fair and very good to me in their process. (I6, line 5)

He further related the trust and networks within his denomination that were built because of the good preparation process. He revealed,

part of it is because I had a good starting experience. I always felt a pretty good rapport with various colleagues or committees as I was moving across the decades and the miles. I always had an initial trust and comfort zone and never really felt under the gun or under adverse critique. (I6, line 17)

A thorough discernment and preparation period was viewed as equipping clergy to meet the demands of ministry life.

Kate, a C&MA interviewee, also flagged some aspects she considered important for equipping clergy to meet the demands of the role. She pondered,

Are we helping people to enter into what is a very challenging emotionally, spiritually and sometimes physically challenging job? Are they coming in with tools like they know how to care for their body well? Do they have good community support? Do they understand that those relationships, if they're going to a home church to serve, that they're probably going to shift? Do they know how to deal with loneliness? What is their current practice of dealing with anger and frustration and loneliness? (I11, p. 17)

She further expressed,

I think one thing that would be really helpful, if we were doing holistic training of some kinds would be to say, is there an area of your life you don't want to talk about? That's probably a good indicator of an area that's not open. (I11, p. 18)

Martin, an MCC pastor also critiqued preparation saying,

unfortunately, a lot of Bible schools...functioned with too much influence of the notion that God will equip the call, rather than call the equipped. In Bible school they gave you some of what they thought were the basics, and unfortunately, where I was, I don't think they gave them very well. (I13, p. 9)

Equipping of new clergy was viewed as requiring training beyond basic aspects and needs to enhance self-awareness, prepare for the challenges of ministry, and also equip with resources for holistic well-being.

Discernment and pre-service preparation was an important facet of the training and programs that clergy desire to support their resilience. A thorough discernment process considered calling and if the candidate is suited for ministry. The discernment and preparation

period was viewed as the starting point for a strong support system. Pre-service training that goes beyond the basics and considers holistic equipping for ministry was considered helpful.

Early Ministry Support. Those new to ministry were identified as needing extra support. Debra, an Anglican diocesan leader shared about a program of their diocese:

We in the diocese have introduced post ordination training. We gather our newly ordained for the first three years. They meet and they form a cohort. We tell them it's to be a safe place... [We are] vulnerable ourselves to show that this needs to be a safe place. We gather them a few times a year for some teaching, but primarily to develop fellowship, bearing of ideas and experience. (I4, p. 5)

Later, she revealed a relational support that arises from this program:

When we gather at clergy gatherings, they have their own cohort. There are people there that they know, that they consider friends, it eases them into the larger fellowship of clergy. Rather than being the new people who don't know anybody and everybody else knows each other, they come in and they know each other. (I4, p. 16).

As discussed earlier, Ed also shared about the value he found in his denomination's mentorship program, which was required for those new to ministry and going through the ordination process (I5, p. 10). Early ministry support was a facet of the training and programs that clergy desire to support their resilience. Mentorship, peer cohort groups, and teaching are some ways in which interviewees reported support for clergy new to ministry.

Specific Skill Development. Another facet of training expressed was the need for specific skill development to address the complex needs of the role. Barb, a Catholic chaplain, reflected on the importance of sound theology but also skills beyond that (I2, p. 15). Debra highlighted leadership and conflict management skills as important (I4, p. 2). Skills related to crisis and mental health was also flagged as a need. Greg, a Catholic priest, reflected that knowledge of psychology and mental health was needed for his ministry (I7, p. 17). Greg also identified need for skills in HR and finances He pondered:

I'm responsible for a half a million-dollar organization. I can barely balance my own check book. Also, how to deal with human resources. So, if there is an employee who, may need disciplinary action, what does that look like in a church? So, having those skills passed down or offered to us, that would be great. (I7, p. 20)

Relational and interpersonal skills were also identified as a training need. Harry, a UCC interviewee, highlighted family systems theory to understand congregations as a system as

essential (I8, p. 17). Related, Ian, an Orthodox interviewee, flagged the importance of self-differentiation. Martin, an MCC interviewee, also expressed the value of self-awareness training, “the process helps you to start to own up to some of the shit you carry that you cannot afford not to do business with...you cannot go into a congregation and unknowingly inflict it on those people (I13, p. 10). Ian critiqued the lack of interpersonal skill training in his preparation. He cautioned,

you can come out of seminary brilliantly prepared theologically, you can know all your Greek and Hebrew and theology and everything and not know how to relate to people or know how to listen to people. That’s a recipe for disaster in ministry but that has happened. (I9, p. 15)

Due to the relational nature of clergy work the need for interpersonal skills was considered critical for clergy preparation.

Other training flagged as needed included more technical knowledge like cross-cultural training or technology skills. For Ed, a pastor in a remote northern community, training in cross-cultural ministry was important for him (I5, p. 15). Specific skill development is an important facet of the training and programs that clergy indicated that they desire. Interpersonal skills, skills in mental health, conflict management were viewed as lacking in pre-service training and an ongoing need for development.

Lifelong Learning. Lifelong learning was another facet of the training and development theme as the process of ongoing learning and growth was identified as valuable. Debra, an Anglican diocesan leader shared,

lifelong learning...Find that which interests you and continue to learn, continue to explore. I think therein is life....keep learning, keep growing...just by learning, it's going to keep them more resilient...ministry related and otherwise. (I4, p. 16)

The ongoing process of learning was viewed by this interviewee as a source of life and resilience.

Greg, a Catholic priest, also identified ongoing learning in a variety of disciplines like theology and psychology, as a support for resilience. He declared,

it definitely helps strengthens my ministry but also aids my reflection. I don’t think I’ve ever read anything that hasn’t caused me to reflect. There’s always a deeper, deeper goal, I guess when I’m studying, to internalize it and learn from. (I7, p. 18)

The connection of learning and reflection was important to this interviewee and considered valuable for his resilience.

Life-long learning was an important facet of the training and development that clergy indicated is desired. Life-long learning aided in reflection and growth in a way that is life-giving.

Summary of Training and Development Theme from Interviews. As discussed, the training and development theme were identified as initiatives that were supportive of clergy resilience. This included aspects of pre-service discernment and preparation, early ministry support, specific skill development, and life-long learning. Pre-service discernment was recommended both as a protection to ensure people are suited to ministry and also as a means to establishing relationships in the denomination. Pre-service preparation that holistically equips clergy for ministry was desired. For those in early ministry extra supports like mentorship, peer cohorts, and extra teaching were considered valuable. Specific skill development was another need and supported resilience as it better enabled clergy to address the diversity of work that they were engaged in. In general, lifelong learning in general was also seen as a resource for resilience as it enabled clergy to grow and reflect in a way that is healthy.

Relationship Building Opportunities

Relationship building opportunities were considered helpful for resilience by interviewees. Clergy desire genuine connections and structured programs allowed for organic relationships to emerge. Structured programs were also identified as helpful in themselves. As will be discussed below in the theme of denominational priorities, denominational events are seen as contributing to clergy resilience. In addition to denominational events and programs, other para-church or inter-denominational conferences and programs, like Global Leadership Summit, were identified as beneficial (I6, p. 17).

However, structured programs, like a conference, were also valued in how it can facilitate opportunities for organic relationships to emerge. Ian, an Orthodox priest, described this interface. He shared,

I'm emphasizing the value of informal resources over formal, I think, because that's just been my experience of what has benefited. Or maybe it's sort of like, using the formal thing to actually get to the informal thing, which actually helps you. (I9, p. 15)

Also, he shared how he prefers more informal but how structured events also lead to relational connection. He said,

we have these sorts of amazing times just sharing meals together and just talking and sharing stories, some really beneficial aspect of it. So, I often think like, well, why don't you just bring together but not have any formal sessions. I've always put this on my comment form or whatever, less formal, more informal. That has been...very beneficial. I know it is different, people are different. Some people probably really benefit from the formal aspects. (I9, p. 18)

Both structured programs and informal openings can be opportunities for clergy to develop peer relationships which support their resilience.

Denominational events provide opportunity for those of the same tradition to connect. Fred, a UCC interviewee elaborated, "I think every denomination needs to have some kind of connecting system, so that colleagues can work and learn together. Because every tribe is a little different. Every denomination is a little different" (I6, p. 17). Kate, a C&MA interviewee valued the denominational events she participated in. She affirmed,

every year they do what's called prayer retreat. All the clergy in the [region] are invited to come...They feed us incredibly well and there are sessions, but it's really all geared around us having space to connect with others but primarily to rest and to be poured into by the district staff. (I11, p. 14)

Denominational events were welcomed as an opportunity for connecting and building relationships with peers.

In summary, structured programs, like conferences and events, provided clergy opportunities to develop relationships with their peers. Inter-denominational and denominational events were both valued and provided important peer connections. There were a number of programs operating that were appreciated and there was also a desire for additional for Canadian inter-denominational events.

Organizational Priority

Organizational prioritizing of clergy resilience was the final theme related to initiatives, programs or supports considered helpful by interviewees. This aspect focused on standards for clergy wellness and resilience and honouring clergy autonomy.

Setting Standards for Clergy Well-being. Interviewees identified that denominations have a role to play in setting standards and expectations regarding clerics having resources in their life to support their resilience, providing finances to support such, and at the same time honouring cleric's autonomy and wisdom in determining which resources fit best for them.

Interviewees expressed a desire for denominations to have expectations and standards for clergy well-being. Adam, an Anglican priest recommended, we're not telling you who, but we will keep bugging you until you find different layers of connection that are going to help you to speak honestly, pray honestly and, and have people connecting to your life. Friends that are contemporaries, fathers and mothers who are older. That you would have a spiritual director. You have to see, a trained spiritual director... I wish they would demand that you actually care for your health and [that] for the health of their clergy that they would demand that you have healthy relationships at a variety of levels. (I1, p. 27)

Setting standards related to clergy health and involvement with resources to support this were recommended for denominations. Lois, an AGC interviewee, also speculated that a standard expectation of taking spiritual retreats might be valuable to clergy resilience. She suggested,

I think having some things more built into, I don't know if you call it your job description. I don't know if that's the right way of looking at it, whether it's at a denominational level or at a church level. (I12, p. 16)

This interviewee highlighted the uncertainty about who should set standards and how accountability might happen.

Debra, an Anglican denominational leader explained a process they have in place for supporting clergy to take sabbaticals that involved a commitment to return to their congregation after the sabbatical. She explained,

[in agreeing to return] you have to think about the present context, whether you want to be there, whether you want to stay there. So, it makes you reflect on ministry paths. That helps you vision for ministry to come. Then stepping away. Not even to study something, that's even secondary, but to be away from what has become routine for so long. To again, reflect and vision away from ministry contexts... we can get really, really caught up in the microcosm and forget....But a stepping back and gaining perspective and the importance of rest. (I4, p. 19)

This interviewee shared an example of a denominational support for clergy wellness.

Interviewees expressed a need to for more denominational clergy wellness standards and accountability.

However, it is important to recognize that there can be barriers that hinder engagement with denominational opportunities. Greg, a Catholic priest, shared a challenge to institutionally organized events. He warned,

to hold like a clergy conference, like those things are great and allows us to network. But without that individual personal relationship with somebody that you trust, and you can dialogue with, be vulnerable with, it might not go anywhere. (17, p. 20)

Helping create safety and trust with clergy is an important part of denominations setting standards.

Honouring Clergy Choice. Clergy choice in how to support their own well-being and resilience was also identified as important in considering standards for clergy wellness. While there was a desire for denominational standards and opportunities related to wellness, enforcing how such standards are individually fulfilled was flagged as a concern. For example, assigning clergy to specific peer groups was not necessarily successful in developing supportive relationships. Ian, an Orthodox priest, recounted his experience. He reminisced,

we've all sort of been put together [by the denomination]. I would have to say it feels really awkward, because it is kind of like a forced fellowship thing...[the facilitator has] been bringing a lot...of good stuff in it and valuable stuff around, vulnerability and trust and all this stuff... it's very funny because the older priest is doing all this [vulnerability] stuff, and the younger two guys are totally rolling their eyes at it, and don't like it. Don't like this sort of forced vulnerability and I think that the older guy wants to create this sort of emotional bond, and the other two are mildly cynical about this. It's been kind of interesting to observe because it's that more formal dimension just doesn't seem to be working as well... it's feels like a bit of an obligation because we're supposed to do this. Just an observation because the other thing that I do week by week, totally informal, just friends gathered with a common focus. It's totally voluntary. I come out of that meeting every week, and my wife just knows, like, she's like, 'you look alive', coming out of it. Whereas the other one is a little bit more like pulling teeth sometimes. (19, p. 18)

While programs or initiatives might be created to facilitate supports it is important to be aware of obligation that can hinder it being successful.

Organizing events that meet the needs of every cleric can be challenging. Adam, an Anglican interviewee pointed to a challenge of diocese organized events. He shared, "the stuff that's organized by the diocese just they're trying to hit so many different types of personalities.

Maybe that's the problem, that no one's happy" (I1, p. 20). He also highlighted another challenge to denominations, "I wish there would be a little bit more modesty and maybe humility from an organizational level when it comes to pronouncing this is going to be helpful for you clergy" (I1, p. 27). Recognition of the importance of clergy choice in knowing what will be most helpful for them, rather than determining for individuals what is required was highlighted. Balancing denomination standards and accountability with clergy choice was flagged by interviewees as important.

In summary, organizational prioritizing of clergy resilience by denominations included both setting standards for clergy wellness and also accountability to these standards. However, alongside of this was highlighted the need to recognize the importance of clergy choice in determining how to take care of their wellness rather than denominations pre-determining and imposing obligations meant to help on clergy.

Conclusion of Helpful Initiatives Themes from Interviews

In this section the themes of initiatives considered to be helpful for clergy resilience were discussed. These themes included (a) training and development, (b), relationship building opportunities, (c) and, organizational priority, and facets of each were discussed. The next section will describe the findings related COVID-19 that arose in the interviews.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Interview Findings

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and while the pandemic was not the focus of the study many participants mentioned the topic. The impact of the pandemic was spontaneously noted by many interviewees. The themes described by participants related to COVID-19 were: (a) ministry limitations (b) loss of supportive resources, and (c) unique opportunities in the pandemic.

Ministry Limitations

Clergy have been impacted by the pandemic restrictions causing ministry limitations. The communal nature of faith was identified as suffering from the pandemic. Adam, an Anglican priest expressed,

you can do Zoom, you can pray with over Zoom. There's no substitute to praying with others in person, worshipping with others in person, to studying and listening to Scripture together in person. That I mean, there was a reason Jesus was incarnate. (I1, p. 7)

Further, Adam also reflected on social distancing stated, "and that's been stressful for me to know, how do you help, when you can't be present?" (I1, p.9). Ian, an Orthodox priest also

expressed, “I couldn’t come during the COVID-19 pandemic and serve...the divine liturgy [which] is our communion service, our regular Sunday service, I couldn't serve that by myself. I require the people of God” (I9, p.13).

Debra, an Anglican interviewee who works currently in a denominational role sees the impact of the pandemic on the clergy she oversees. She verbalized, “they’re all dealing with not doing what most like doing, which is being with people, being with the gathered community” (I4, p. 3). Being physically present with people is important to clergy as they minister to spiritual needs and the pandemic restrictions have limited cleric’s ability to minister in this way.

The pandemic is not only hindering ministering to spiritual needs but also social and physical needs. Ed identified the pandemic limitations as impactful on his northern community. He divulged,

it’s been quite different, especially for our community. The culture here is if your door is open it’s okay to come and visit. So, having everyone's doors closed seems like you can’t visit anybody. People need that connection here, being focused on family instead of focused on individualistic society... 55% of the people in town are on social assistance. People come visit, sometimes they come to borrow food or sugar or something else they need. Having everyone's doors closed and not seeing each other has prevented that. (I5, p. 4)

This interviewee saw the limitations due to COVID-19 on his ability to meet the social needs and the physical needs of his remote community.

The outcome of the restrictions and the lack of communal gathering carried a longer-term concern. John, a Catholic priest expressed a fear of the impact of COVID-19:

I fear that [treating church as a commodity] is being reinforced by something like COVID-19 where more and more dioceses and church communities are flipping to some sort of online preparation program. It's going to may end up being non-relational in the way that I think essentially as church we're meant to be. (I10, p. 5)

Interview participants expressed short-term concern for the impact of the pandemic on congregants. COVID-19 restrictions also caused concerns related to how to navigate reopening, as well as facing financial concerns (I4, p.3).

In summary, pandemic restrictions have resulted in ministry limitations. These limitations hindered the ability of clergy to be physically present to their congregation and minister to their

spiritual, social, and physical needs. COVID-19 restrictions and the ministry limitations they caused were a source of both short-term and long-term concern for clergy.

Loss of Supportive Resources

COVID-19 disrupted many supportive resources for interviewees. The disruption, loss of rhythms, disorientation, uncertainty, monotony, and isolation of COVID-19 were other elements that participants identified as adverse. For Harry the loss of his supports for his mental health and the increased stress due to COVID-19 resulted in declining health that required him to actively find new resources (I8, p, 13). Adam also expressed a loss of exercise, in addition to relational isolation, as negatively impacting his resilience (I1, p. 9). Barb shared that the pandemic has disrupted some of her spiritual practices (I2, p.10). Ed who ministers in an isolated community lost the ability to travel and attend peer gatherings, which was a key resource for his resilience (I5, p. 3).

However, not all supports were lost. John indicated that he did not lose an important resilience support as he was able to move his spiritual direction meetings to telephone (I10, p. 17). The loss of supportive resources due to COVID-19 is an element highlighted by some interviewees.

In summary, COVID-19 restrictions hindered the ability of interviewees to engage with many resources that support their resilience, at a time when their stress was increased. Lost resources included exercise, relational supports, travel to clergy events, and mental health supports. While some spiritual supports were able to continue, other spiritual practices were also disrupted. Loss of supportive resources was an impact of COVID-19 reported by interviewees.

Unique Opportunities

While negative aspects of COVID-19 were referenced, there were also perspectives on the pandemic bringing unique opportunities, such as re-evaluation of ministry priorities. Aspects of the pandemic revealed areas for growth for some participants. Greg, a Catholic priest indicated,

It was a learning curve for us because it identified a lot of the cracks that had been present that we just weren't aware of. Like communication and how we communicate to our parishioners, and especially the most vulnerable among us who probably aren't online and so we realized we didn't have phone numbers for a group of people. We didn't have mailing addresses for people, who are faithful, it's just that they never needed to have that right. (I7, p. 3)

Carl, a C&MA interviewee also expressed some positive opportunities to serve due to the pandemic and social isolation (I3, p. 8).

Opportunities to connect with relational supports was also noted as an opportunity arising due to COVID-19. John, a Catholic priest, identified an opportunity to connect with his peers in new ways. He shared,

having some simple conversations with them and even if they're guys that you might not have been friends with before, you know them....Some are classmates, but you are hearing some of their stories and their COVID-19 stories. You can be a sense support for them and they're a sense of support for you. (I10, p.14)

Greg shared about the support offered through check-in calls from his Bishop as meaningful (I7, p. 12). Increased relational support with peers or leadership was an appreciated opportunity.

The opportunity to connect with friends through increased use of technology was also appreciated. Martin, an MCC interviewee said,

one of the blessings of pandemic has been we're all becoming adept at Zoom. I am now able to Zoom converse with friends I didn't get to see but once every few years because it costs a lot of money to go to an event in the US. Now we can reconnect on a monthly basis and it's remarkable. (I13, p. 11).

The increased use of Zoom has been an opportunity to connect with friends who are physically distant.

In summary, for some there were valuable opportunities in the midst of the pandemic, as well as the challenges it brought. Increased relational connections with peers or leadership was appreciated. Also, COVID-19 revealed gaps in ministry that resulted in re-prioritizing as well as seeing taking new ministry opportunities. Finally, increased use of technology and comfort connecting via video conferencing expanded the ability to connect with social supports who are physically distant.

Conclusion of COVID-19 Themes from Interviews

The pandemic impacted clergy in a variety of ways. Ministry limitations and the loss of supportive resources due to pandemic restrictions were concerns for interviewees. Ministry limitations hindered cleric's ability to be psychically present with people and attend to their spiritual, social, and psychical needs. These limitations raised both short-term and long-term concerns about the well-being of congregants and the impact on the church. Pandemic restrictions resulted in loss of engagement with resources that support clergy resilience and well-

being. Exercise, relational supports, travel to clergy events, mental health supports, and spiritual practices were some of the resources disrupted by the pandemic.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, interviewees saw some unique opportunities in the midst of the pandemic challenges. Opportunities to re-prioritize ministry needs or engage in new ministries were noted. Also, new ways of connecting with peers or leaders was also appreciated. Finally, increase comfort with Zoom was an opportunity to engage with relational supports in a new manner. There were many challenges associated with COVID-19 as well as some unique opportunities arising.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided detailed findings from interviews related to the categories of adversity experienced, supportive resources, desired initiatives, and COVID-19 impact. Many of the interview finding themes and subthemes are parallel to the survey findings reported in chapter four due to the similar questions used in both; however, not all themes and subthemes were found in both. The table below provides a review of the interview themes and subthemes that have be detailed in this chapter.

Table 5.2 Review of Interview Findings

Interview Question Focus	Theme	Subthemes
Adversity	Workload	Time demands, role complexity, change in ministry, relational dynamics and conflict
	Expectations	Societal, congregational, financial pressure, self-expectations
	Isolation	Geographic isolation, peer competition, theological and cultural differences, relocations and rhythms, barriers to making friends,
Supportive Resources	Spiritual life	Partnership with God, communal faith, spiritual practices
	Relational supports	Spouse/family, friend, peer, mentor, leadership, congregational, professional
	Personal aspects	Balance, caring for health, boundaries, clear calling to ministry, firm identity and self-awareness, institutional alignment, personal attributes
	Organizational practices	Provision, role flexibility, institutional support
Helpful Initiatives	Training and development	Discernment and preparation, early ministry support, specific skill development, lifelong learning

	Relationship building opportunities	Conferences/events, denominational/inter-denominational, mentoring
	Organizational priority	Setting standards, honouring clergy choice
COVID-19	Ministry limitations	
	Loss of supportive resources	
	Unique opportunities arising	

The interview questions revealed a number of areas of adversity that clergy experience which were categorized as workload, expectations, and isolation, with each including sub-themes. The three themes identified by interview responses overlapped with the survey themes, although the survey also had an additional theme and a few differences in subthemes.

Following a discussion about adversity, challenges, or problems clergy face, interviewees were asked about what helped them to positively adapt to this adversity. The themes identified in interviewee responses were spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices which were the same as the survey themes and subthemes. These findings identified a wide range of spiritual, social, personal, and organizational resources that were considered to support resilience.

Following the discussion about adversity and resources, interviewees were asked about initiatives, programs, or professional development that has helped or they believed would help clergy resilience. Themes arising from interview responses of training and programs, relationship building opportunities, and organizational priority were the same as the survey, although it also included another theme that was not shared by interviewees.

Interviews occurred in June to August 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. This time period was at a point in the pandemic after the first wave and when some restrictions were being lifted allowing some limited church re-opening. Although there were no specific questions inquiring about COVID-19 impact interviewees shared about its impact in discussing adversity and at other times in the interviews. From interview transcripts the themes of ministry limitations loss of supportive resources, and unique opportunities arising in the pandemic were reported about COVID-19. These findings are parallel with the survey findings, but fewer themes and subthemes were identified.

The next chapter will report on the findings from the interpretation panels and the final data triangulation and analysis.

Chapter Six: Interpretation Panels Findings and Final Analysis

This chapter reports the findings from the interpretation panels and also final triangulation and analysis of all of the study data in the form of themes and sub-themes. I begin this chapter by reviewing the purpose of an interpretation panels. Following this will be (a) description of the interpretation panels data collection process and participants, (b) response to thematic findings about adversity experienced and to COVID-19 findings, (c) response to quantitative scale findings related to status of clergy wellness and resilience, (d) response to thematic findings related to supportive resources, (f) response to thematic findings about desired initiatives, and (g) chapter summary.

The interpretation panels served as both a source for data collection and partners in the analysis process. The interpretation panels provided a key aspect of data analysis in this study as they provided collaborative analysis through the integration of the survey and interview data. The interpretation panels were also key contributors to the data collection, especially in their role to answer research question three regarding aspects of pre-service training and professional development that foster clergy resilience. Finally, the interpretation panels were key contributors to the work of triangulation, at both data collection and analysis levels (discussed later in this chapter).

As in previous chapters, to ensure the credibility of this research direct quotes from interpretation panel members are used. Every quote is followed by parenthesized information that relays transcript information. For an interpretation panel quote example - (IP2, p. 4). IP2 means that the quote was taken from interpretation panel #2, on page 4.

Description of Interpretation Panel Data Collection and Participants

Two interpretation panel meetings with five panel members each were conducted via Zoom at the beginning of December 2020 and each meeting lasted for two hours. Preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data was completed. These findings were presented to the interpretation panel members in two forms. Prior to the panel meetings panel members were sent an infographic summary of the findings (Appendix G). During the Zoom meetings a PowerPoint presentation was used, and I gave an oral presentation to the members. This presentation included an overview of the study and then three to four sections summarizing the themes and subthemes in each. After each section, these questions were posed: In what ways to your perspectives confirm these findings? In what ways do these findings contradict your

perspectives? How do you think these findings will be received? Any critiques? The interpretation panel meetings were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Purposive maximal variation sampling was used to recruit ten panel members. There were four female panel members and six male panel members. The Flourishing Congregations Institute research team nominated most panel members, with several others identified through researcher contacts. Panel members were from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia. The denominations that the panel members currently worked for included Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, United Church of Canada, Salvation Army, Free Methodist, and Christian and Missionary Alliance. There were also panel members who worked for parachurch organizations or who had experience working for multiple denominations or parachurch organizations. Panel members' experience encompassed work as clergy, educating clergy, denominational leaders, para-church providers of psychosocial-spiritual support to clergy, and researchers on topics related to clergy and the church. Table 6.1 and 6.2 outline the members of the two interpretation panels.

Table 6.1 Overview of Interpretation Panel 1 Members

Member	Gender	Current Faith Tradition	Current Role	Pseudonym
1.	Male	Mainline Protestant	Educational	Noah
2.	Female	Conservative Protestant	Para-church	Olivia
3.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Educational	Patrick
4.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Denominational	Quincy
5.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Denominational/research	Rhett

The two interpretation panel meetings were primarily organized to accommodate differing time zones with those from Manitoba and west attending the first meeting. Those attending the second meeting were primarily from Ontario and east, although one member from the west attended the second meeting due to their schedule.

Table 6.2 Overview of Interpretation Panel 2 Members

Member	Gender	Current Faith Tradition	Current Role	Pseudonym
1.	Female	Mainline Protestant	Educational/research	Samantha
2.	Female	Mainline Protestant	Denominational	Tessa
3.	Male	Catholic	Denominational	Ulysses
4.	Male	Conservative Protestant	Denominational/research	Vern
5.	Female	Mainline Protestant	Denominational	Wyonna

The interpretation panels conversations are presented based the categories from the survey and interview findings of sections (a) adversity and COVID-19 findings, (b) scale findings, (c) resource findings, and (d) desired initiative findings.

Response to Adversity and COVID-19 Findings

Panel members were presented the following themes and subthemes related to adversity identified through the interviews and open-ended survey questions.

Table 6.3 Adversity Themes and Sub-themes.

Workload	Expectations	Isolation
Needs	Societal	Geographic
Time	Financial	Theological or cultural
Complexity	Denominational	Relocations and schedules
Change	Congregational	Guarded
Relational dynamics	Self-expectations	Decreased energy
		Peer competition

Panel members response to the presentation of these findings was affirming of the themes and sub-themes. Rhett said “[I] commend you on a very helpful grid here. This is very helpful” (IP1, p. 8). Quincy concurred, “the grid is excellent. I love the way it's laid out” (IP1, p. 9). Olivia who is involved in clergy care affirmed the themes and sub-themes and said:

I think this is very, very helpful. I would say as I think about the things that we hear from pastors, both in our retreats and on our call line you've nailed, particularly the first couple of columns, I think you really nailed the things that we hear. (IP1, p. 9)

Also, Patrick expressed, “you’ve done a lot of really clear work here and have certainly laid out a lot of these mitigating factors” (IP1, p. 11). In the second meeting the adversity themes and sub-themes were also affirmed. Ulysses stated, “I totally agree with these findings here” (IP2, p. 11) and “I think you're doing a wonderful job of picking up on major themes that resonate with both my research and my conversations with clergy” (IP2, p. 12).

Panel members offered some additional thoughts about some of the sub-themes related to adversity. Rhett expanded on the aspect of societal expectations and shared about research that showed that theological perspective affects how at home people feel in society. He further shared, “more conservative traditions have a more adversarial relationship with society. And so that feeling is often more pronounced among evangelical and fundamentalist traditions, regardless, literally of the religion as well” (IP1, p.8). This could be a facet of societal expectations, self-expectations, and theological isolation.

Also, related to the theme of isolation and the sub-theme of guarded, Rhett suggested that the term “role separation” might be more appropriate (IP1, p.8). However, Quincy appreciated the term guarded as he felt that clerics do have to keep themselves guarded at times to take care of themselves.

One aspect that Olivia raised as missing was spousal conflict, due to her connection with a clergy care ministry. She said,

surprisingly, emotional and verbal abuse is very high in our call topics. And a lot of that coming from pastors’ wives. So that's definitely something that's very concerning to us. I do think that some of the things that you’re identifying in these lists probably are contributing factors to some of those behaviors that are going on in clergy marriages that are really difficult. (IP1, p. 9)

Since study participants were only clerics, and not spouses, this is perhaps why this was not a prominent sub-theme under adversity. However, spousal and family conflict was an aspect referenced by survey participants as a challenge but was initially discussed only as a missing aspect of the spousal support resource, rather than as an adversity

Clear calling, a personal aspects resource sub-theme, was also referenced in a similar way, in that its absence can be a threat to resilience. Samantha who does research with clergy shared:

[W]hen one's sense of vocational calling becomes jeopardized, or threatened or challenged, it almost always is going to be accompanied by signs of burnout. It's a correlation, is burnout what threatens vocational calling? Or does a threat to vocational calling start to push the person into a state of burnout? But we found that's a really important factor. It's both a resource as you’ve named it, but it's also a threat when it’s not there. (IP2, p. 17)

Clearing calling is a resource and questioning calling is also an important aspect of adversity.

Further, Rhett who has been involved in research discussed his knowledge of the twinning affect that can occur with some of the adversity and resource themes. In speaking about the complexity sub-theme, he shared,

a twinning effect, let's just say complexity [as a form of adversity], so certain people, that’s actually a gift to them...The twinning of some of these could be an interesting piece to explore... The idea of complexity and change, being an ADHD personality

myself, those are my favorite things. [They're] not adversity, they're the wind beneath my wings. (IP1, p. 10)

In the second meeting this twinning effect was also discussed by Samantha, who is involved in research. She expounded on how an aspect, such as complexity, can be both negative and positive for the same person. She said, "it is both one of the most rewarding aspects of ministry life and one of the most stressful, which goes to that complexity factor" (IP2, p. 17).

Further, Vern shared, "for some, there can be strong positive connotation and for others, there can be strong negative connotations...some of these things came up as things that people either emphasized as being positive, or emphasized as being challenging" (IP2, p. 16). It is important to acknowledge the positive and negative response to the same experience both between different clerics and also within the same individual.

Noah, a Lutheran panel member highlighted gender differences he has seen in ministry challenges. He shared,

There's no question for me that gender was a very significant factor in both satisfaction, ministry satisfaction and, and also adversity. I would say, there was a study done by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada after 25 years of women's ordination, so about the year 2000, or a little just after came out. A large number of interviews with women, and many of them were going into parishes that were having a woman in ministry for the first time. So, they would move from one parish to another, being the first, being kind of the icebreaker in every situation. It took a pretty heavy toll. Whereas the men were, for the most part sliding into pre-molded places, and women were always having to make a place for themselves. So that the stresses around that were significant. (IP1, p. 10)

The aspect of gender differences was also declared by Rhett, a Free Methodist panel member. He described,

we did an internal study of women in ministry in our denomination, we've been ordaining women for decades. But only 25% of our pastors are women, and there are so many factors that are at work there. On the books, in the roles, in the theology, in the statements of faith, it's all there for their support. But there's a higher attrition rate. It's exactly what [the other panel member] said it's a placement thing. It's like, what are you doing, by sending people here? It's [also] an education requirements thing. It's a division of labor in the home thing. I can't go to school, because I've got kids to raise which no

man in the world has ever had to say. But most women in ministry have had to ask that question. (IP1, p. 12)

Different experiences of adversity arising for female participants arose in the survey and interview findings but was originally captured under the theological isolation sub-theme but was not presented in the summary of themes and sub-themes to the interpretation panel members.

Connected to the theme of isolation and sub-theme of theological or cultural differences race was another facet that was raised by Noah as related. He expressed,

Catholics, for example, have a large number of their parishes, because they're having trouble recruiting North American men for the priesthood, they've imported quite a number [of priests] from other countries around the world. In my conversation with them, the sense of tension around cultural expectations about the role of the priesthood in Canadian culture, Canadian urban culture versus Canadian rural culture, and Canadian versus wherever they came from, were quite dramatic. (IP1, p. 10)

These insights seem to fit within the cultural isolation sub-theme. Another aspect that was queried was sexual orientation and how it might impact adversity. This would seem to overlap with aspects of theological and cultural differences but possibly also aspects of the expectation theme, such as congregational expectations.

In relationship to self-expectations Noah, a Lutheran panel member, relayed the importance of “ministering by grace” and “the readiness to disappoint and to experiment and to fail repeatedly but learn some things from it without feeling that one's own sense of value as a person is fundamentally at risk” (IP1, p. 11). His perspective aligned with the resource sub-theme of firm identity. Patrick, a panel member with multiple denomination experience reflected on this as well and wondered about an underlying cause for a lack of resilience. He speculated,

I tend to find spiritual issues, a lack of prayerfulness, lack of rest in God, a lack of experiencing his presence, a lack of surrender, a lack of the Spirit's empowering competencies in the lives of leaders, which also has a theological sort of framework to it....[Pastors] that are trying to walk out their calling with an identity that tends to often reflect upon what they can achieve and accomplish and they're not practicing the spiritual priesthood. They're not empowering others, they're not equipping the saints. (IP1, p. 11)

These insights seem connected to the resource theme of spiritual life and touch on aspects of partnership with God and identity.

Another dimension added by a panel member related to denominational and

congregational expectations. Rhett identified a gap between the preparation clergy receive in Bible college or seminary and the actual role. He proposed,

there is a significant gap to the description of the role of pastor that we develop at the Bible college level, at the seminary level. Then there's the what happens when you open the front door of that church, you sit in your office, and you try to do the job. I think there's there there's something in between those two layers of what I thought I was going to get, and then what I actually experienced when I tried to do it. (IP1, p. 13)

This gap in expectations related to the role may be contributing to conflicting expectations, both theologically and practically, related to the clergy role. This conflict could be related to the expectation sub-themes of congregational, denominational, and self-expectations.

In speaking to the theme of isolation Ulysses, a Catholic panel member, affirmed the theme of isolation and spoke to the sub-theme of relocations:

[W]e're moved around, especially because the fact of celibacy, it's very easy to move someone from India to Canada and so the uprooting that happens with that. I think always the fallback is the brotherhood of the priesthood. If somebody has moved from India to Canada, there's sort of a duty amongst the priests to come around them. But again, that doesn't always happen....They are new to the culture and so there's a lot of difficulties that come with that. (IP2, p. 11)

Despite having positive supports like the brotherhood of the priesthood, relocations can still impact priests.

In speaking to the overall approach of providing summarized themes and sub-themes of the study findings Vern had a useful caution. He cautioned,

I'm hoping, and this is me now as a denominational staff person speaking selfishly, that you're able to sort of play out some of that diversity within these broad categories. This is because I'm finding repeatedly in my interdenominational conversations that's one of the things, we're struggling with in understanding clergy experience, is because it can be relatively different for different people in different contexts. And so, it's hard to envision or to describe something in general, that is the clergy experience. (IP2, p. 12)

Vern highlighted the importance of recognition of diversity of experience among clergy.

Tessa, an Anglican panel member, spoke to the sub-theme of complexity and speculated further about diversity wondering if there may be a difference with older and younger clergy. She wondered, "my hunch is that for your older clergy, life is much less complex. It's about

keeping something good going and not about what will we need to do next in order to grow or sustain the future” (IP2, p. 11). This speaks to the diversity of experiences among clerics. Balancing the usefulness of summarized themes and sub-themes needs to be done in conjunction with emphasizing the diversity of clergy experience.

Diversity of perception and experiences of clergy was also emphasized by Wyonna, a UCC panel member, in speaking about denominational expectations. She expressed:

[M]y church, we just declared ourselves an anti-racist church. Well, it's great to be aspirational. But what does that actually mean for the grassroots, right? For some clergy, they see that while here we go again, that denomination is creating another burden. The other perspective is that isn't that our mission to be inclusive, hospitable, diverse, and so on. I'm echoing but with a different measure in the adversity piece around the denominational expectation. (IP2, p. 12)

Some clergy may welcome denominational initiatives while others may experience them as burdensome expectations, revealing the diversity of clergy experiences.

In the same section as the adversity findings, panel members were presented the following themes and subthemes related to COVID-19 identified through the interviews and open-ended survey questions.

Table 6.4 COVID-19 Themes and Sub-themes.

Challenges	Positives
Increased workload	Unique opportunities
Loss of resources	Denominational support
Uncertainty about future of the church	

Quincy, a denominational leader with the C&MA, affirmed that they had done a survey recently of their district pastors that had alignment with the resource themes and sub-themes. He shared, COVID-19 has proven or shown that there's cracks here. We did a quick survey. We had 84 responses. The question was, how are you doing? Twenty-five percent said that they were flourishing during the season. Twenty-nine percent said they were coping. And 46% said they were struggling. Very, very interesting. Words used were stress, anxiety, discouraged, fatigue, uncertainty, grief, loneliness, stress, anxiety, those are the some of the key words. Other words that were used were thriving, excited, rested, anticipation. The question was asked... if you're thriving, why are you thriving? Here's three reasons why people are thriving. One, is prioritizing time with the Lord seeking his face in his adequacy, holding to his promises and practicing spiritual disciplines. Second, is

identifying a mentor or another pastor to when we can talk and be accountable creating community to the extent that we can experience it, given the restrictions with which we are living in. Third, is investing in physical health, exercise, and movement. Walking outdoors has become a daily discipline for many....So those who were thriving, were pastors that we're going, I'm working on all these different things in my life. Other ones where I'm struggling, I'm falling apart, I can't do this, I'm alone, I'm isolated, I need help. (IP1, p. 25).

Quincy confirmed the resources of relationship with God, peer and mentor support, and caring for health as helping their pastors. He went on to add that they are seeing more retirements due to the pressures of COVID-19. He said, “the guys who are in their early to mid 60s ...There's too much change going on. Too many things happening here. I'm just out. I can't do this anymore. And so COVID-19 is really revealing and speeding up the process for some pastors” (IP1, p. 26).

Noah wondered about an underlying difference in theological perspective that affects how pastors are dealing with COVID-19. He speculated:

I see a difference between those who see that a role is performative and those who see their role as equipping...So [one rural pastor] moved into a strong kind of equipping role that felt much more purposeful at during COVID-19 than it had when he was serving this very scattered rural community where people could hardly come in for Sunday mornings. Whereas others have said to me, I see myself in this urban church kind of doing the religious things on the mornings, and, and now I just don't feel like I've got a purpose anymore. There's nobody out there to see me. Or if they do, I can't really see them. There's a theological piece around what is the role of the clergy, is it to equip the saints? Or is it to put on a good, good spiritual performance? (IP1, p. 26)

This comment points to the importance of theological meaning and partnership with God for clergy.

Wyonna, who works in a denominational role affirmed the findings related to COVID-19. She shared,

[Coping with COVID-19] connects into your personal piece around balance...I think one of the impacts of COVID-19 is been having to recalibrate the balance. So, the balance between workload for sure, heavier workloads and exhaustion around that and because of working from home less downtime, and it's taken some clergy longer to recalibrate balance than others. (IP2, p. 16)

Her comments highlight the interplay of adversity and resources and how their relationship between the two is a balance requiring adjustment as aspects change on either side.

Relational connections and being physically present with people were important to clergy. Wyonna shared her thoughts about the COVID-19 disruption to relational connection. She articulated,

people are missing the incarnational aspect of ministry.... it's about how you accompany people through grief, how you're present to people. For a lot of our ministry personnel, they're calling us related to that ministry of presence. It isn't just a technical thing about 'how can I be present to people, oh, I can do it on Zoom or phone or something like that,' it goes to their calling and their identity as a pastor. (IP2, p. 16)

From her perspective COVID-19 has disrupted a key aspect of what it means to be a pastor in being physically present in ministering to people.

The diversity of experiences of clergy discussed earlier was also expressed by Tessa, an Anglican denominational leader, regarding COVID-19 impact. She identified,

being kicked out of our buildings has provided some relief for some of our leaders. There's been more flexibility, they've had more balance, because they're working from home, and they with their kids and their family, and that's just been life giving. And 'thank God, I don't have to go back to that moldy cold building.' But that will return.... Some of them are really enjoying balance, and that kind of thing, and some flexibility, and some are feeling pressure. (IP2, p. 17).

Ministry limitations was an aspect described in the survey and interview findings and placed under the increased workload sub-theme in the presentation to the interpretation panels.

However, based on the interpretation panels input and review of the data this would seem to be a standalone theme.

Summary of Interpretation Panels Response to Adversity and COVID-19 Findings

Input from the interpretation panels overall affirmed many of the adversity and COVID-19 themes and sub-themes. Additional insight into adversity included the importance of barriers for women, spousal conflict, and questioning calling as sub-themes. The twinning effect of some the adversity and resources themes or subthemes was also added. Appreciating the diversity and uniqueness of clerics' experiences was also noted.

COVID-19 findings were affirmed in a number of ways by panel members. Ministry limitations was noted as having more prominence than was revealed as a subtheme. The impact

of COVID-19 increased workload and stress was noted as a factor prompting older clergy to consider retiring. Panel members noted that differing perceptions of ministry and engagement with supportive resources seemed to be a factor in how clergy were impacted by the pandemic.

Response to Scale Findings

Following the presentation on adversity and COVID-19 findings, panel members were presented the following scale findings from the survey responses. The first panel meeting the scale findings were presented as a stand-alone section. In the second panel meeting they were combined with the adversity and COVID-19 findings due to time. As mentioned in chapter three findings for the ProQOL scale were not shared with the panels due to challenges with interpretation.

Table 6.5 Scale Scores and Statistical Differences.

	Ego Resiliency	GRIT-S	Cantril Ladder	Health Current	Health General	Wellness Satisfaction
Mean score	44.96/56 (SD 4.86)	3.59/5 (SD 0.60)	Current satisfaction 8.27/10 (SD 1.58)	75.57/100 (SD 16.52)	19.28/25 (SD 3.90)	29.58/40 (SD 4.86)
			Anticipated satisfaction 9.12/10 (SD 1.59)			
Interpretation	'High Resiliency Trait' (35-46)	1= 'not gritty at all' 5 = 'extremely gritty'	0 = worst possible life 10 = best possible life	0 = worst state 100 = best state	5 = more health concerns 25 = less health concerns	8 = not at all satisfied 40 = very much satisfied
Statistical differences	Higher ER scores for those participants who had a current mentor and those who agreed with statement "generally, your congregation /parish is flourishing."	Higher GRIT scores for older participants, for those who saw their congregation flourishing, and who lived further than 25 km from family.	Higher current satisfaction for older participants. But those who lived more than 25 km from personal supports had lower scores. Higher anticipated satisfaction for those who saw their congregation flourishing	Lower health current state scores for those who disagreed with the statement "generally, your congregation/p arish is flourishing" than for those who agreed.		Lower wellness satisfaction for participants 60-69 and 70+ years old than those under 40 and 40-49 years of age.

During the first meeting panel members response to these scale scores were surprise at the positive numbers. Olivia said, “it's actually feeling pretty encouraged. I feel like these scores are actually not very alarming. People actually seem to be functioning pretty well” (IP1, p. 14) and “I’m pleasantly surprised. I would say I was a little bit surprised. And like I said, more than anything encouraged to see that overall, people are doing pretty well” (IP1, p.14). Quincy also expressed, “It's a little bit surprising to me that these numbers are so high” (IP1, p. 16). Patrick was also surprised saying:

[it] is a bit surprising, I probably would have tagged it a bit lower. But maybe they felt good when they were doing the survey at the time. And the next day their worlds came apart, there's always contextual factors. Right. But I think, generally, it's pretty interesting, actually, I would say encouraging. (IP1, p. 15)

However, Noah wondered if shame and self-selection might have caused higher numbers. He cautioned,

taking into account the shame factor, which is, ‘it's not easy for me. I'm responsible for the well-being of a congregation, it's not easy for me to admit that it's not going well.’ Then there'd be a self-selection process just in who's willing to fill out the surveys. Those who are feeling a little better about themselves and their ministry are more likely...there's all those that that have fallen away along the way that of course, couldn't be part of the survey. (IP1, p. 16)

While the panel members at the first meeting were overall surprised and encouraged by the scale responses, the above caution of social acceptability was noted.

The second panel meeting tended to focus more so on the statistical differences in the scale responses. There were a number of questions about why specific demographics might impact responses, such as mentors and geographic distance from family or personal supports.

Wyonna raised an assumption about the impact of distance. She pondered,

what assumptions are we making about the geographic distance, because it may be that people can access them easily, even if they're serving a distance away. I think COVID-19 is kind of helpful in that, but we're all accessing support in very, very different ways. (IP2, p. 10)

A Salvation Army panel member involved in research furthered this query saying:

the nature of personal support, and geographic distance. That's something that we're working currently on a case study...to see if we can work with a social network analysis

approach of what is flowing through the relationships as opposed to whether or not it's a physical interaction or an electronically mediated interaction. And that's partly coming out of like, transnational research to where people are maintaining family and political and economic ties to other countries because of what communication technology can provide...how does physical distance make a difference? and to what degree is there support even in the midst of physical distance? (IP2, p. 10)

Differences in scale responses due to geographic distance from family or personal supports was an aspect of discussion. Following COVID-19 geographic distance from relational supports may no longer be considered a barrier due to increased electronic connections.

The impact of agreement with the statement that one's congregation was flourishing was affirmed by a number of panel members. Wyonna, a UCC panel member, shared, "the study that we did about 15 years ago showed quite clearly that ministry personnel see their own congregations as their spiritual community. Therefore, thinking it's flourishing, they flourish. So, there's some alignment there" (IP2, p. 9). Tessa, an Anglican panel member shared another perspective on the impact of flourishing as it relates to age and expectations. She wondered:

[older clergy] would say that their congregations are flourishing, because they're doing the old school stuff and they're meeting the expectations of their older congregation members, which is having lots of visits and liturgy, home communions, things like that. I'm noticing with our younger, or more newly ordained clergy, they might be saying their congregations are flourishing for different reasons, because they're doing a more missional approach... Also struggling though, with expectations of those older members who want traditional ministry and not that outward facing missional kind of church planting kind of ministries that are quite unusual for us, but that's the direction we're heading. They would have probably less satisfaction, health, that kind of thing, because there's so much pushback. (IP2, p. 10)

Perception of how clergy define flourishing may be diverse due to differing perceptions of both clergy and congregations.

The impact of age on the scale responses was discussed at both the first and second meeting. Noah said, "certainly, if somebody hangs in there for 35 years of ministry, the grit levels are high. So that correlation is kind of an unnecessary one" (IP1, p. 16). Rhett, a Free Methodist panel member speculated,

if you get somebody who is 65, and is still in the ministry, it means that a lot of things have already happened, that someone who's 25 or 35 has not experienced, has not fought through. They just don't exist because they drop out. That is generally my experience. I'm 46 myself, and I feel like the last one in the class. At this stage in my life, a lot of people I thought would be making the trip with me have not survived. It's been all the factors you named in previous slides....And anybody who makes it to the end, has made it either from being a psychopath or from having resilience. (IP1, p. 15)

In addition to attrition, Ulysses, a Catholic panel member speculated that age had an impact on responses due to:

[A] youthful Geist or something to like, dissatisfaction in some way... as a young cleric, you kind of go into those communities of young persons, where they are kind of frustrated about things, but then you go to the older group they're a little bit calmed down. (IP2, p. 8)

Samantha continued talking about the impact of age that was revealed in their own clergy research and stated:

[O]ne of the things we found was that people with more experience, had higher satisfaction, a larger number of core satisfiers, than people with less than 10 years of experience. And our speculation was its connected to the resiliency is that they tested ways of coping. They had a kind of confidence in their ability to cope, because of because it was linked also with so years of experience more than age, determined the level of satisfaction. It's interesting to see the possible confirmation or added support from your research. (IP2, p. 9)

For a variety of reasons, impact of age on the scale findings was affirmed by the panel members.

Summary of Interpretation Panels Response to Scale Findings

The first interpretation panel were quite surprised and encouraged by the positive scale responses; however, it was noted that there might be a degree of social acceptability in how clergy responded perhaps preventing honest answers. Discussion about age noted that clergy who are older and have more experience likely have a level of grit and perseverance and that other clergy may have dropped out of ministry and that knowledge of those who leave ministry is a missing piece of knowledge. Also, it was noted that geographic distance from family or personal supports may be perceived differently in the future due to electronic connections. Finally, the impact of congregational flourishing on scale findings was affirmed while also

noting that perception of flourishing might be quite diverse due to congregational and self-expectations.

Response to Resource Findings

Panel members were presented the following themes and subthemes related to resources identified through the interviews and open-ended survey questions.

Table 6.6 Resource Themes and Sub-themes.

Spiritual	Relational	Personal	Organizational
Communal gatherings	Spouse/ family	Balance	Provision
Prayer	Friends	Health	Role flexibility
Journaling/reflection	Peers	Boundaries	Institutional supports
Retreats	Mentors	Clear Calling	
Silence/solitude	Supervisor	Identity/ self-awareness	
Scripture	Congregation	Institutional alignment	
Sermons	Professional	Personal attributes	
Spiritual writings			

Panel members response to these resource themes and sub-themes were affirmative. Patrick, who had experience as a pastor, denominational leader and as an educator in a number of denominations expressed, “Wow, pretty comprehensive, and I have to concur that this pretty well covers the gamut, at least in my own journey of resilience, but also helping observe and navigate the resilience of others” (IP1, p. 19). Noah, a Lutheran educator panel member said, “this really resonates with the kind of experience I had with our graduates” (IP1, p. 20). Olivia, who is involved in clergy care shared:

I think you've done a great job of capturing, this is a really broad selection of resources. A pastor who would be able to check off a lot of these boxes would be in very good shape...for a lot of people, certain things are part of their experience, and certain things are not. (IP1, p. 22)

She further stated, “it's a very comprehensive list” (IP1, p. 22). Vern said, “I appreciate the comprehensiveness of what you're saying I'm looking for blind spots. I'm struggling to find something I think this thematic representation seems very comprehensive” (IP2, p. 16). Rhett affirmed that similar things were identified in research they were involved with multi-vocational clergy. Overall, the panel members affirmed the themes and sub-themes and added additional dimensions and priority, as discussed below.

Theological meaning was a spiritual resource not listed and emphasized by a number of panel members. Patrick who had experience in multiple denominations shared:

I am wondering if the theological is actually another standalone category that actually also informs some of these areas. A theological renewal of understanding of who God is and what his agenda is....There's a whole range of issues that mitigate on the spiritual vitality of the people of God. A lament is a theological reflection really, of going back to who God is, his kingdom authority, his power, his agenda, his Holiness, his righteousness, his standards of the law. And I'm just wondering, if theological is a resource that is absolutely essential to bring the renewing of the mind. When people experience grief and loss, where is God when it hurts? There are all sorts of you called me to this ministry. Now all I'm getting is criticism and negativity and fall out and the finances are going down, the churches get smaller, and there's these all there's these theological, I think, issues that pertain to resiliency. (IP1, p. 19)

Noah also described the importance of theological meaning as a resource. He explained, one of the key characteristics was what I would call the difference between a brittle bounded theology and an anchored, but flexible theology. They put down an anchor, let's say, in some key element of Christian faith, and then we're attached to it by a kind of a bungee cord that allowed them to explore with some freedom, where people were at no matter where they were at, without completely losing themselves in that. But they didn't have a kind of a brittle wall around that had to be protected, and they could go out and explore other things. (IP1, p. 46)

Theological meaning-making was described by interviewees and placed under the clear calling sub-theme but not adequately reflected in the preliminary sub-themes.

The importance of spousal and family support was emphasized by Rhett, who is involved in church planting research. He imparted,

I want to reaffirm the spouse and family piece, just from other [church planting in Canada] research I've been involved in... in my research, both the people that their project did not continue, it closed, bombed out in some way. And even those that succeeded and their church continued, and it survived. When asked, 'Would you do it again?' nobody said yes. Often it wasn't because I personally don't want to do it again. Often the reason was, my wife won't let me do it again....The spousal component, and the children component, I won't put my kids through that, again. I won't put my wife

through that, again. My wife won't let me do it again.... So, I think that this is an a profoundly important aspect, I could see that as purely about resilience. (IP1, p. 19)

Spousal and family support were considered a significant resource for resilience. As discussed earlier, this resource is so important the absence of it or the presence of spousal or family conflict seems to be its own form of adversity.

In elaborating on the sub-theme of identity, Rhett, who was involved in researching multi-vocational clergy shared:

[O]ne of the things that our multi-vocational participants said, their edge on vocational colleagues, was around identity construction. When you over-identify as a pastor, you have a problem. That was their thesis on why things worked so well for them is that they weren't just a pastor, and therefore, were more free to construct their identity as a pastor. Because they felt more free from the expectations of self, that sort of grandiose theological expectations... They were more free to take risks in ministry, to tell their congregation things their congregation didn't want to hear all because they weren't as invested from an identity construction perspective. In being a pastor, they had something else.... multi-vocational pastors claimed to have something additional to bring to the table. (IP1, pp. 19-20)

Identity was further highlighted as an important resource in addition to some of the discussion related to identity described earlier under the response to adversity.

Clear calling was another resource that was emphasized and expanded by panel members. Rhett highlighted both the arrival and departure aspect of calling saying:

[T]here's an arrival aspect of calling...what are you also called away from? So those are two key pieces of calling, it goes both directions. When should I go to this church? When should I leave this church? Some of the wisest pastors I know, that was one of the things they said, 'I knew when to leave.' Some of that was pragmatic, but some of that was also because of direct communication with God, they knew my time here is through, and some of them left when it was going well, some of them left top of the game kind of a thing. (IP1, p. 19).

This aspect was further emphasized by Quincy who stated:

It's all about the calling that I have received, whether I'm called to be in the marketplace, or called in the clergy in the past. There was time in my ministry, when I had to discern and speak to the Lord about departure. It was almost more of a release from him that it

was a calling somewhere else. And once I was released, from one place, then the call came to go to another place. (IP1, p. 21)

Olivia relayed a similar story, saying:

I have a couple of friends in ministry right now, one of whom has had a very clear sense of calling from God to leave a ministry. The other one is really on the edge of burnout, and yet is not feeling like there's any clear direction from God, 'what should I do? I don't hear from God, in the same way other people do.' This person has said recently, and I think there's some level of distress about that, 'why is it that some people hear so clearly from God, and some people just don't have that same sense.' But I think the more you have that sense, the more that undergirds the decisions that you make. I think you have a lot more confidence in those decisions. (IP1, p. 22).

Vern further affirmed the importance of calling and stated, "in our in our interview data that came out as being a foundational piece or a touchstone that people would make reference to when you asked about how you continue or what keeps you going" (IP2, p. 16).

Ulysses equated being reminded of one's calling as similar to marriage and the foundation of "what made you fall in love?" (IP1, p. 19). However, he also offered a caution related to calling and shared, "if taken to sort of extreme, it becomes clericalism. When it becomes clericalism, you get an imbalance of power and ego and everything else. That has its own problems" (IP2, p. 18). Calling may relate to an overarching call and also to individual decisions throughout ministry and impacts confidence in decisions.

Noah highlighted the importance of self-awareness as a resource but distinguishing it from identity where it was originally combined as a sub-theme. He relayed:

[A]s a pastor for many years...I have blind spots, so I couldn't always see how it was affecting others. And to get that kind of feedback in a gracious, supportive, lovingly way. It was really, really useful for me. It also increased my emotional intelligence, which I found among our own students was a key factor in their longevity. Interestingly, it can be taught, it's not just a personality characteristic....And so that self-awareness factor and that emotional intelligence factor is certainly a trainable thing. (IP1, p. 21)

Self-awareness and identity would seem to be distinct resource sub-themes and to fall under different resource themes.

The relational resources of mentors, peers, or supervisors were discussed by panel members. Quincy, who is in a denominational role, affirmed the role of mentoring. He shared

survey results done with their pastors during COVID-19 which found that those who said they were thriving identified having a mentor or a peer as a relational support as one of the top three reasons why they were thriving. However, Noah, who has been an educator of clergy, also offered a caution about mentors and supervisors. He warned:

I would say is that mentors were really important, but they were potentially disastrous too. For example, we had a two-year internship program where they took courses while they were on internship. The supervisors that were well trained, that had their own strong kind of ego identity and didn't feel threatened by this new person that was working with them and knew how to help their students integrate their spiritual life, their theology, and their practice of ministry. Those students could have horrible experiences, but [the supervisor] would help them process them and learn from them and grow wonderfully. Others went into the most caring congregations, but not with a strong supervisor, not a strong mentor, and actually had some fairly negative experiences come out of that. So that was quite a key factor...the training of the mentors and their capacity to mentor. (IP1, p. 21)

The ability of the mentor or supervisor may be an important mitigating factor to the value of mentors as a resource.

In speaking to the theme of relational resources and specifically about the sub-theme of friends, Quincy related the importance of this back to the adversity theme of isolation. He revealed:

I think that is a key resource that having right friends and good friends that are with you through it all, is so critical. So many clergy say I don't have those kinds of friends...sometimes in ministry, people will put us on a pedestal as a pastor, you're on a pedestal. They'll say to you 'don't you dare come off that pedestal.' Others will say, 'you're on that pedestal, and I will do everything I can to knock you off that pedestal.' The third piece is people who say, 'you're on the pedestal, but I will allow you, in fact, I invite you to come off the pedestal and come and be a friend of mine. I will respect you for who you are is a clergy as a man or woman called by God, I will respect you for that. But I really want you as a friend as well. And I will treat you both as a friend and as my clergy.'... I've been fortunate to have people around my life that say please come off the pedestal and join us...But at the same time I will respect you as my pastor. (IP1, p. 21)

The importance of the relational resource theme was affirmed for clergy resilience by the panel members

The health resource was also affirmed by two panel members. As shared earlier, survey results about coping in COVID-19 was shared by Quincy a C&MA denominational leader. One of the top three reasons identified by those indicating that they were thriving was “investing in physical health, exercise, and movement” (IP1, p.25). Further, Ulysses, a Catholic panel member, expressed that a key leader in their diocese recently emphasized, “go and exercise every day, you need to have lunch...a lot of us priests got together after and said, ‘we have never had anything like [that from leadership before], ‘you’ve got to eat three square meals a day, you’ve got exercise” (IP2, p. 18). Attending to physical health was affirmed as a resource.

Olivia who was involved in clergy care reflected on how the absence and presence of resources affects clergy well-being. She highlighted.

the absence of any number of them, is pretty detrimental to clergy well-being. Certainly, we’re a provider of some of these resources and what we’re finding is that when people get a hold of some of them, its life changing, literally, for some people to come and spend a week with us in retreat. They either haven’t had those experiences before, maybe the retreats that they’ve gone to are with other pastors in their own denomination there's some little more toxic factors at play in that spirit of competitiveness or not being able to be real about what's going on with yourself, because you're still trying to preserve reputation or something like that. (IP1, p. 22)

Also, related to this was Wyonna’s insight into COVID-19 as a time of “recalibrat[ing] the balance” between increased workload due to COVID-19 with resources (IP2, p. 16). Adversity and resources may be in balance in relationship to one another in order for clergy to be resilient.

Summary of Interpretation Panels Response to Resilience Resources

Input from the interpretation panels affirmed the overall themes and sub-themes as a comprehensive picture of resources that help clergy to positively adapt to adversity. The panel members also provided additional insights into the resource themes and subthemes. The importance of relational supports was affirmed, especially spousal support. Clear calling was also affirmed and noted for its overall prominence for clergy resilience. Identity seems linked to clear calling and to be primarily of spiritual process. Theological meaning making was noted as a standalone theme of importance that was missing and similar to calling plays an overarching role in clergy resilience.

Response to Helpful Initiatives Findings

Following the presentation on resources, panel members were presented the following themes and subthemes related to helpful initiatives identified through the interviews and open-ended survey questions.

Table 6.7 *Helpful Initiatives Themes and Sub-themes.*

Training & Development	Wellness Opportunities	Relational Opportunities	Organizational Priority
Rigorous discernment and preparation	Retreats	Conferences	Set wellness standards
Early ministry support	Sabbaticals	Denominational events	Encouraged not imposed
Specific skill training	Professional counselling	Structured	Financial support
Lifelong learning	Spiritual direction	Organic	

Panel members spoke to the importance of peer relationships and spiritual direction.

Vern, a Salvation Army panel member in talking about cohort based pre-service training shared:

[T]hey develop cohort relationships and when they get out in the field, there's someone that they already know well because they've lived with them for two years, that they can call upon and say, 'Hey, I'm really struggling with X, Y, Z. But there's a relational factor built in. (IP2, p. 23)

He also saw value in exposing students to supportive resources like spiritual direction or counselling during their training.

Value was also seen in clergy formation related to holiness and the development of pro-social skills. Vern also expressed:

[T]he building of relationship and the working out of some things that happens during that time, cannot be underestimated in formation process. And is facilitated by having it be a cohort that's going through this program for three and a half years.... one of their best things for holiness, in the Salvation Army tradition, is them all having to share the same van to get to classes together. The people who go late and the people want to be there early and having to work that out. They've got multiple family units in the townhouse complex where they all live. So, there's a human friction component, that they have a context to work it out in their formation process. Which I just thought it's funny of introducing human friction to help with holiness. (IP2, p. 24)

Vern also speculated on there being value for clergy formation in online formats as well.

Interpersonal skills and development of self-awareness was an important need discussed. Ulysses, a Catholic panel member also wondered about the relational aspect for formation and holiness and said:

[T]he life of a typical diocesan priest alone in the house where he has one other priest living with them, that is not conducive to holiness. You have to live in some kind of community, not just community amongst kind of clerics, but community amidst the people of God. And so that's always a tension because at the same time, many of the men are in these single vocations. But they also have to be pastors, not just pastors leading by domination, but leading by example, and humility. (IP2, p. 24)

This aspect of clergy formation highlighted by panel members related to the importance of relational resources and also to self-awareness.

Another dimension of clergy preparation was highlighted by Samantha, an Anglican panel member with roles as an educator and researcher. She cautioned:

[O]ne of the challenges around training and development is, when should it happen and who should be providing it? In my experience there is a little bit of hot potato. Denominations will say, the seminary should be doing this, you should be sending us people who know how to do this, who have these skills and have been through this preparation process. And you have seminary saying we can't do it all. If we're going to give them theological, biblical, pastoral training, there is a limit. I think there's a gap... in terms of denominations and seminaries saying, we all want this for our clergy and we each can bring something to the table. How do we identify what neither of us are doing, yet needs doing? Then how do we problem solve together in order to get this to the clergy? I don't know how to do that. But I'm really convinced that it would be important to figure out a way to bring people to the table in a collegial, collaborative manner and say, we really do all want what's best for the people who are going to be serving our churches and no one of us can do it all. I would just put that out there in terms of it's good to say these things are all important and they would be really helpful initiatives. But there's a big problem sitting behind that and that is how do you bring people together organizationally across organizations to affect some of that change. (IP2, pp. 21-22)

Tessa, also from the Anglican tradition, affirmed this aspect from a denominational perspective and said:

[W]e're looking at this; what we control and what the seminary controls. We're all involved in institutional change right now. Our diocese, our parishes are involved in transformational change, hopefully, and we recognize the seminary is to ... as our denominational staffing and finances are continuing to decline, how do we work smarter with the resources that we have to fill in some of those gaps? Some early, front ended stuff and as people are discerning a call. (IP2, p. 22).

These comments highlight the organizational challenges in coordinating to provide pre-service clergy training considered to be most helpful.

The aspect of setting standards was mentioned by Ulysses, a Catholic panel member. He emphasized the role accountability plays in having denominational standards and said:

[I]t's centered on the bishop... For example, we have to take one-month vacation, and it's universal across the world. But it's dependent, of course, on whether the bishop is going to hold you accountable to that... allow for those set structures, but then also kind of allow for spontaneity. (IP2, p. 24)

The aspect of accountability and enforcing standards was also touched on by Noah, a Lutheran panel member who revealed:

[O]ur students resisted enormously many of the wellness efforts, but we had the authority to require them to do it. They'd get mad at us, they'd complain to their congregations, but in the end, they'd had to do it and then they would say, 'oh, I never realized what this was going to do for me.' They're grateful afterwards, but we have to go through all this shit kind of in the process to get them there. So, the discipline character of the denominational structure... so I see that a healthy, flexible disciplinary structure as being quite important to this wellness piece. (IP1, p. 26)

Wyonna, A UCC panel member, also reflected on the nature of clergy response to denominational standards. She shared,

we have some mandatory training that's supposed to improve skills and it's challenging to get everybody to comply with that standard. We have standards for practice and ethical standards, which include self-care and some of those things that you're raising up. It's a dilemma.... What I'm noticing in some of the more disciplinary work is echoed from other research that's done. You have clergy leaders who are fabulous, and they're going to be lifelong learners, and they're going to be accessing everything that's being offered.... You have your biggest middle group, who are good ministers, and how can we

invest in them to be great. A lot of the ministers that I'm dealing with as individuals, the group that keep getting themselves in trouble, they tend to be the lone wolves, the ones that are not seeking collegial support, the ones who are not reading, not coming to denominational events. I'm wondering how those three groups playing in your research. (IP2, p. 21)

Tessa, an Anglican panel member, in a denominational role also shared:

Thinking about resilience, and how do we help and support and encourage our clergy. And I think we really struggle with that. We used to have a time when the bishop would have a sit down every year and say, 'who's your spiritual director, how is your prayer life, getting vacation, how's the family?' We don't have that in the same way... I think there may be other ways, obviously, to do that would be helpful ongoing rather than once every 18 months or every year...I think if we had an approach to help with building in resiliency, that has some level of accountability, I think would be really helpful for us. (IP2, p. 25)

The expressed desire for wellness opportunities received a strong reaction from panel members. Several indicated that they have these available, but they are not used. Rhett, who holds a denominational role in the Free Methodist expressed:

[O]ne of the most underused resources that we have are the wellness opportunities. We have funding for counseling. Pastors don't use counseling, we participate in the Kerith retreats, like that we make that available to our pastors. I'm not sure we've ever had a pastor take us up on that opportunity. So, it's fascinating to me this relationship...it's something that we're very aware of. These are things we invest in, from a budgetary standpoint, but they're perennially underused...it's fascinating how few of our clergy actually utilize the things that we've actually already created as part of the system. (IP1, p. 24)

Similarly, Noah, a Lutheran panel member said:

Jesus says, 'your faith has made you well.' That Greek word that we translate saved really is about health. So, here's all these leaders preaching about health and then sometimes reluctant to engage it for themselves. I was on our national church Council. We had a large fund that came both from the congregations and from the pastors themselves, intended for professional development and wellness, that hardly got used at all. It's not entirely surprising, if you think, for example, about exercise, it's hard work,

there's some pain involved, almost all therapeutic, or wellness interventions involve some kind of sacrifice, and struggle and grit and so forth. (IP1, p. 26)

Wyonna, a UCC panel member who works in a denominational role also expressed the under-utilized aspect of wellness initiatives. She indicated, “you describe the denominational dilemma to a tee! In our denomination we have the employee Family Assistance Program. Is it access to as much as it could be? No!” (IP2, p. 21).

In addition to those with experience in denominational roles, this sentiment was also expressed by Olivia, whose role is in a parachurch ministry focused on clergy care. She stated:

We've been in conversation with one of the training institutions in the country, who sees the value of our retreats and has suggested to his students in training that they should all go and attend one before they graduate from their educational institution, as sort of being more proactive about learning how to care for themselves while in ministry. It's interesting, because we've only had one or two of his students actually come and take us up on that, at this point. Even though there's a high level of value being attached to it.... If they would just come and learn some good practices along the way. (IP1, p.25)

However, Quincy, a C&MA panel member in denominational leadership, did indicate some good use of their wellness initiatives. He relayed:

[I]n our district, we set aside about \$10,000 a year to send pastors to [a retreat centre]. Some of that's a directive, in other words, you need to go, and we'll cover this cost, so just please go. Others come to us and say, ‘I’m burning up, can you help me?’ and we send them and that works out really well...we work in partnership with [the retreat centre], it’s great place to send our pastors. (IP2, p. 25)

A further dimension of the challenge of providing wellness opportunities was expressed by Patrick, who had experience in a number of different denominations. He said:

I think the dualism of those who probably need it the most are the ones that avoid it. It's like people who go to marriage retreats, who've got good marriages. It's the people that have got bad marriages that don't go, that need to go. There's kind of that dualism of I think everybody's been identifying here. Until it gets to a crisis point, rather than a cultivating process over time, it becomes harder to kind of dig people out. (IP1, p. 27)

Vern, a Salvation Army panel member, highlighted relational trust as a dimension for engagement with things like wellness opportunities. He emphasized,

there's a difference between someone having information about this is available, this is available, this is available, and having someone who comes alongside them and says, 'I hear you're struggling in this area, have you considered this or this or this.' People that they know actually care for them, that they trust, that work within the same organization, that are accessible. And there's some kind of prior relational connectivity that allows for that trust to develop. some of those issues, I think, factor substantially within our support structures... a significant relational component of can I fit here relationally, as well as theologically. (IP 2, p. 23)

The importance of wellness initiatives was not disputed; however, the dimensions of why these are not always utilized when provided was discussed. A caution about initiatives solely focused on clergy was raised by Vern. He alerted:

I wonder about the future of the church in Canada, in terms of the focus being on the clergy person, as opposed to on the congregational dynamic and a leadership team at the local level....I wonder if we've underestimated in both our formation in the seminary, and also formation denominationally, in terms of the local team dynamic, and the leadership at the local level in which the clergy person fits into and is part of, and so that's something I'm not seeing emphasized very often, and I'm wondering about if we've done a disservice in not emphasizing that enough. (IP2, p. 25)

Wyonna, an UCC panel member, had additional thoughts about the value of more ecumenical initiatives. She wondered,

this is blue sky dreaming that the post-COVID-19 Church is actually not as denominational. One of the ways to start to move in that direction is to be thinking out of the box and accountability groups or peer support groups or communities of practice, or whatever we want to call that support the vocation. Because I think that's different than pastoral support or personal support. That we really think in Canada, can we be much more cross denominational? (IP2, p. 26)

Key additions provided by the interpretation panel to the topic of helpful initiatives included cautions about how to not just provide wellness opportunities but to increase utilization of existing ones and also systemic organizational collaboration needed for clergy resilience.

Summary of Interpretation Panels Response to Helpful Initiative

Panel members offered additional input into the themes and subthemes of helpful initiatives. The importance of development of interpersonal skills and self-awareness for clergy

was affirmed. The value of having standards for clergy wellness was also affirmed and there was good discussion as the challenges of accountability for such standards. Wellness opportunities like retreats and counselling were affirmed as important but denominational leaders also noted that they have generally seen poor engagement with these what is available and a lack of clarity why. An additional insight arising from the interpretation panels was the necessity of school-denominational-congregational collaboration to support clergy resilience across the professional life span.

Final Data Triangulation and Analysis

Informed by the interpretation panel data and insights I revised the following themes and sub-themes. In the adversity category, under the theme of isolation, the interpretation panel discussion about the sub-theme of guarded was helpful in renaming this theme. This sub-theme has been renamed role separation with the action of being a guarded as a descriptor of an action that clergy may engage in. This new name better captured the nature of this sub-theme. Also, unique aspects that affect women in ministry were spotlighted as a relevant sub-theme. As such, barriers for women have been added under expectations. These represented responses shared through the survey, interviews, and interpretation panel.

Further, in the categories of adversity, the twinning effect with clear calling and spousal/family support was noted. If clerics experienced questioning their calling or spouse or family conflict this was reported as challenging their resilience. As such, a new theme of personal challenges was added to the adversity category with questioning calling and spousal/family conflict as sub-themes. Also, in the preliminary presentation health issues were identified by survey participants but was not included as a preliminary sub-theme. A sub-theme of health issues was added under the theme of personal challenges to better reflect the data. Also added under the personal challenges theme was a new sub-theme of lack of self-awareness. Data related to this was initially recorded as a missing resource but is now highlighted as an adversity sub-theme.

Table 6.8 Adversity Themes and Sub-themes Informed by Interpretation Panels.

Workload	Expectations	Isolation	Personal Challenges
Needs	Societal	Geographic	<i>Questioning calling</i>
Time	Financial	Theological or cultural	<i>Spousal or family conflict</i>
Complexity	Denominational	Relocations and schedules	<i>Health issues</i>
Change	Congregational	<i>Role separation</i>	<i>Lack of self-</i>

		<i>awareness</i>
Relational dynamics	Self-expectations	Decreased energy
	<i>Barriers for women</i>	Peer competition

Based on insights from the interpretation panels the sub-themes for resources and helpful initiatives were reorganized to better represent the data. Resource sub-themes were reorganized to ensure they were reflected under the best theme. Further the sub-themes for the spiritual theme were revised to reflect the prominence of key aspects of calling and identity, theological meaning-making, and relationship with God. Also, theological meaning-making was added to reflect aspects shared in the survey, interviews, and interpretation panels but originally underrepresented as a part of the clear calling sub-theme. Identity and self-awareness were initially combined in one sub-theme in the preliminary presentation but have now been split to represent their distinct natures. Identity was combined with clear calling under the spiritual life theme and self-awareness remains under the personal aspects theme as a standalone subtheme.

Further, the helpful initiatives themes and sub-themes was reorganized to better reflect the dimensions that were identified has having been experienced by participants as helpful to their resilience from those desired as participants felt the initiative would benefit their resilience. As such, those that participants identified as resources have been moved into the resource category under the theme of organizational practices in the Table 6.9 below. Updated subthemes are noted with bold, italic font. Those moved to organizational practices resources include: rigorous discernment and preparation, early ministry support, skills specific training and supports, and relational opportunities.

Table 6.9 Resource Themes and Sub-themes Informed by Interpretation Panels.

Spiritual	Relational	Personal	Organizational
<i>Clear calling/identity</i>	Spouse/ family	Balance	Provision
<i>Theological meaning-making</i>	Friends	Health	Role flexibility
<i>Relationship with God</i>	Peers	Boundaries	<i>Rigorous discernment and preparation process</i>
Communal faith	Mentors	Self-awareness	<i>Early ministry support</i>
Spiritual practices	Supervisor	<i>Lifelong Learning</i>	<i>Skill specific training and supports</i>
	Congregation	Institutional alignment	<i>Relational opportunities</i>
	Professional	Personal attributes	

The helpful initiatives category was renamed to “desired initiatives” and included data related to initiatives identified by participants as desired to support their resilience and well-being, as reflected in Table 6.10. The interpretation panels provided insights into the need and desire for organizational collaboration between denominations and educational institutions, to coordinate the pre-service equipping of clergy for their resilience and wellbeing. Also, highlighted by the interpretation panel was the importance of the local church in this aspect. As such, an additional sub-theme of seminary-denomination-church-clergy collaboration was added. Updated subthemes are noted with bold, italic font.

Table 6.10 *Desired Initiatives Themes and Sub-themes Informed by Interpretation Panels.*

Wellness Opportunities	Organizational Priority
Retreats	Set wellness standards
Sabbaticals	Encourage not impose standards
Professional counselling	Financial support of wellness opportunities
Spiritual direction	<i>Seminary-denomination-congregation-clergy collaboration</i>

A new sub-theme of ministry limitations was added to the COVID-19 findings based on feedback from the interpretation panels and review of the data.

Table 6.11 *COVID-19 Themes and Sub-themes themes Informed by Interpretation Panels.*

Challenges	Positives
Increased workload	Unique opportunities
<i>Ministry limitations</i>	Denominational support
Loss of resources	
Uncertainty about future of the church	

Another insight gained in the interpretation panels relates to all of the categories and is the acknowledgement of the diversity of clergy experience. What one cleric experiences as a challenge might for another be a positive. In considering the themes and sub-themes for adversity and resources it is important to remember that how these are experienced are highly individualized. While the themes and sub-themes represent a comprehensive list of what participants in this study reported, all are not experienced by any one cleric.

Chapter Summary

The interpretation panels provided valuable data and additional analysis for my study. Triangulation of the data from the surveys, interviewees, and interpretation panels affirmed the central themes and sub-themes related to adversity, resource, initiative, and COVID-19 as discussed above and reviewed in the table below.

Table 6.12 Review of Merged Findings

Focus	Scale	Subscales
Health	Health Scales	Good levels of current health Good levels of general health Good levels of wholistic wellness
Life satisfaction	Cantril Scale	High current life satisfaction Very high anticipated life satisfaction
Professional quality of life	ProQOL Scale	Average level of compassion satisfaction Average level of burnout Average level of secondary traumatic stress
Trait resiliency	Ego-Resiliency Scale	High resiliency trait
Perseverance	GRIT-S scale	Good level of grit
Focus	Theme	Subthemes
Adversity	Workload	Time demands, emotional/spiritual needs, role complexity, changing nature of ministry, relational dynamics and conflict
	Expectations	Societal, denominational, congregational, financial pressure, self-expectations, barriers for women
	Isolation	Geographic isolation, peer competition, theological and cultural differences, role separation, decreased energy
	Personal challenges	Questioning calling, spousal/family conflict, health issues, lack of self-awareness
Supportive Resources	Spiritual life	Clearing calling/identity, theological meaning-making, relationship with God, communal faith, spiritual practices
	Relational supports	Spouse/family, friend, peer, mentor, leadership, congregational, professional
	Personal aspects	Balance, caring for health, boundaries, self-awareness, lifelong learning, institutional alignment, personal attributes
	Organizational practices	Provision, role flexibility, rigorous discernment and preparation process, early ministry support, skill specific training and supports, relational opportunities
Desired Initiatives	Wellness opportunities	Sabbaticals and retreats, spiritual direction, counselling
	Organizational priority	Setting standards, encourage not impose standards, financial support, Seminary-denomination-congregation-clergy collaboration
COVID-19	Challenges	Increased workload, ministry limitations due to restrictions, loss of supportive resources, uncertain future of the church
	Positives	Value of denominational support, unique opportunities arising

The adversity themes and subthemes were not experienced by every cleric but represented a fulsome picture of a wide variety of clerics' experiences. Clergy participants were not a homogenous group in the adversity they experience nor in how that adversity impacted them. This study provided an overview of adversity but did not provide insight into the intensity of impact of the adversity on clergy nor the frequency to which they might be exposed to any of the listed types.

The diversity of resources represented a wide variety of things that some clergy found helpful in positively adapting to adversity they experience. Clergy are unique in which resources they benefit from. This study did not provide insight into which resources may be most available, most frequently accessed, or are more effective in helping clergy.

While spiritual life was an important theme of resources. The above categorization does not represent the prominence of clear calling and theological meaning-making on how clergy respond to adversity. Clear calling and theological meaning-making will be explored in the next chapter when the theoretical framework will be synthesized with my findings. An overarching influence of clergy calling to ministry and theological meaning-making is an important aspect of clergy resilience. The next chapter will also provide answers to my study research questions and a discussion of these findings.

Chapter Seven: Summary, Discussion, and Implications

This chapter will provide a summary, discussion, and implications for my research study. This chapter begins with an overview of the study purpose and methodology. Then I will summarize the findings for the three research questions related to clergy resilience and additional findings related to COVID-19, collected through the national survey, interviews, and interpretation panels as described in chapters four through six. These findings will also be discussed in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two, and significant findings will be identified. Finally, implications and recommendations for theory, practice, and future research will be provided.

Summary of Study Purpose and Methodology

My study sought to expand the foundational knowledge about clergy resilience as there were only three published studies (Burns et al., 2013; Lee, 2010; Meek et al., 2003) that explicitly investigated the process of clergy resilience and one other (Abernethy et al., 2016) that examined the impact of a resilience intervention. The knowledge gained through my study may guide future practices and policies related to clergy resilience and interventions to enhance the resilience of clergy.

The following questions guided my research:

1. What is the current nature of Christian clergy resilience and well-being in Canada, including what types of adversity do clergy perceive as impacting their levels of stress and burnout?
2. What variables, individual, social and relational, or contextual and organizational, do clergy perceive to impact their professional resilience?
3. What aspects of pre-service training and professional development are described as best helping to foster clergy resilience?

I used a mixed-methods research design to explore these questions.

Summary of the Study Findings

My mixed-methods study design included the use of a national survey, individual interviews, and interpretation panels. The national survey was completed by 519 participants and included various personal and congregational demographic, scale, and open-ended questions. One-on-one interviews were conducted with 13 participants guided by a semi-structured interview guide. Initial analysis of the survey and interview findings were shared with two groups of

interpretation panel members who provided further insight and analysis. The following is a review of my findings and a comparison of these findings with the literature reviewed in chapter two. As previously mentioned, I reported the findings in an inclusive and comprehensive manner as I wanted clerics from across Canada to find identification points in my study and relate to the findings in a helpful manner.

Question 1: Christian clergy resilience and well-being in Canada

My first research question was concerned with the current nature of clergy resilience. As summarized in Table 4.8 the survey scales indicated that current nature of resilience and well-being appeared to be good, with several areas showing some strength.

There were three scales that considered health and wellness. All three showed levels of good health. The first health scale asked participants to rate their current state of health or unhealth (with 100 indicating the best state and 0 indicating the worst state) and the mean response for this scale was 75.6 with a standard deviation of 16.5. Second, a five-question scale asked participants about their health in general and mean response for this scale was 19.3 (possible cumulative scores could range from five to 25) indicating that participants were not experiencing health concerns. Third, a holistic wellness scale included eight questions related to participants satisfaction with their wellness across various life domains and had a mean response of 29.6 (possible cumulative scores could range from eight to 40) indicating that survey participants were somewhat to mostly satisfied. As discussed in chapter four, there were areas of statistical difference in health scale responses related to congregational flourishing and age.

The Ego-Resiliency (ER-89) Scale measured respondents' ego-control and ego-resiliency and had a mean response of 45.0 (possible score ranged from zero to 56) which indicated 'High Resiliency Trait.' As discussed in chapter four, there were statistical differences related to congregational flourishing, engagement with a current mentor, and marital status.

The Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) scale measured the dimensions of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and compassion fatigue. The ProQOL cut points did not flag any areas of concern related to burnout or secondary trauma. Based on respondent's high endorsement of a number of statements on the compassion satisfaction subscale it would seem that there was an elevated level of compassion satisfaction experienced by the respondents. Conversely, based on respondent's low endorsement of a number of statements on the secondary traumatic stress subscale it would seem that there was little experience of secondary trauma by

the respondents. There was no statistical difference found in respondent's responses to the ProQOL based on the personal or congregational demographics.

The Grit-S scale measured respondents' sustained stamina and effort toward long-term goals with a mean 3.6 (possible score range from one to five) indicating a good level of grit. Statistical differences were found in GRIT-S responses related to congregational flourishing, distance from family supports, engagement with a current mentor, and age.

The Cantril Ladder measured life satisfaction with the first question focused on respondents' current sense of life satisfaction, and the second focused on their anticipation of where they will be in five years. There was a mean response of 8.3 (possible scores ranged from zero, representing the worst possible life and ten that represented the best possible life) for current satisfaction and a mean response of 9.1 for their sense of future satisfaction. Respondents had high current life satisfaction and very high anticipated life satisfaction. As discussed in chapter four there were areas of statistical difference with the Cantril scores related to respondents' distance from personal supports and age.

Based on the findings from these scales, the current nature of Canadian Christian clergy resilience seemed to indicate that clergy are doing well in having high resiliency trait, a good level of grit, are mostly satisfied with their health and wellness, and experience compassion satisfaction. There were several demographic or congregational factors to note. Congregational flourishing, age, distance from personal supports, and mentors all had some statistical connection to scale responses. Age was a factor to note for clergy, with those who were older having higher grit and ego-resiliency scores but lower wellness satisfaction. Congregational flourishing was another factor that is important to note in its connection to clergy well-being with higher overall health, ego-resiliency, and grit scores.

The value of the ER-89 and GRIT-S findings in understanding clergy resilience and well-being is revealed in the overlap with open-ended questions and interview findings. Open-ended question findings indicated that being extroverted, optimistic, diplomatic, and adaptable were seen as important facets of clergy resilience. Also, interview findings indicated that various personal aspects, such as being extroverted, optimistic, and adaptable, were beneficial to clergy resilience. The ER-89 questions like "I enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations" could be related to adaptability, "I am regarded as a very energetic person" may have some similarities to being extroverted and "my daily life is full of things that keep me interested" may have

similarities to optimism. Similarly, the GRIT-S question "setbacks don't discourage me" maybe related to optimism and adaptability.

The importance of the health scales findings in understanding clergy resilience and well-being is revealed in the overlap with open-ended questions and interview findings. Health issues were reported as a challenge for clergy resilience in the open-ended survey questions and the interviews. Issues identified included aging and decreased energy, chronic diseases, problems related to exercise and sleep, and negative perceptions of mental health. Paired with this was caring for health as a resource identified that helped clergy respond positively to adversity. Diet, exercise, rest, recreation, and humour were key facets of caring for health that were identified in the survey open-ended question findings. Interviewees also identified these same facets of caring for their personal health as a resource identified by clergy that helps their resilience.

In summary, the survey scale responses indicated that participants had high resiliency trait, a good level of grit, were mostly satisfied with their health and wellness, and had average levels of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary trauma. The personal or congregational demographic of statistical note included congregational flourishing, age, distance from personal supports, and mentors. Another dimension of research question one was gaining knowledge about the types of adversity clergy face.

Types of Adversity

Part of my first research question inquired about the types of adversity clergy face. Themes were identified through the survey, interviews, and interpretation panels and summarized in Table 6.12. Adversity themes identified were workload, expectations, isolation, and personal challenges with numerous subthemes discussed at length in chapters four and five.

Workload included the subthemes of time demands, emotional and spiritual needs, role complexity, changing nature of ministry, and relational dynamics and conflict. The clergy experienced a sense that the time required to meet the needs of their role was more than is reasonable and that there was not sufficient time to meet the demand. The intensity and complexity of emotional and spiritual needs that clergy encounter made it challenging to have a sense of progress or results and lead to a sense of burden for some participants. Clergy were required to engage in diverse types of work requiring diverse skill sets, including aspects such as human resources, finances, vision casting, congregational care, pre-marital counselling, meditation and interpersonal conflict, death and grief, suicide, crisis response, mental health support, marketing and social media, and response to natural disasters. The changing nature of

ministry, such as changing organizational structures, practices, or leadership and unexpected crisis, was a challenge reported. The relational workload of the clergy was quite challenging, both within and between the congregation and other staff.

Expectations included the subthemes of societal expectations, denominational expectations, congregational expectations, financial pressure, self-expectations, and barriers for women. Canadian societal expectations were considered skeptical of clergy with a sense of apathetic or even hostile towards spiritual matters and organized religion. Denominational expectations were viewed as sometimes unreasonable and not aligned with the cleric's or congregation's priorities, resulting in conflict. Congregational expectations involved unrealistic, varied, and opposing expectations from congregants on clergy related to their spiritual life, schedule, and ministry priorities. Financial pressure was noted as a challenge due to the interdependence of congregational finances and personal finances and systemic beliefs that hinder open conversation about clergy compensation. Self-expectations were adverse and arose from having high standards in serving God, the spiritual importance of ministry, pleasing congregants, or needing to earn their salary. Finally, barriers for women were adverse as some women experienced gender discrimination related to what limited opportunities in roles and influence, as well as limited peer support from other clerics.

Isolation included the subthemes of geographic isolation, peer competition, theological and cultural differences, relocations and schedules, role separation, decreased energy, and peer competition. Geographic isolation due to clerics ministering in rural or remote locations limited resources, such as medical services, social venues, contact with family and peers and placed limits on ministry opportunities. Theological and cultural differences between some clerics and their denomination, their congregation, the community, or peers lead to isolation or sense of culture shock that isolated them from meaningful relationships in their ministry context. Relocations and ministry schedules disrupted personal supports and hindered some clerics from connecting with family or friends who do not have the same schedule or live nearby. Decreased energy due to the workload demands on clergy hindered some from engaging in activities outside of ministry due to a lack of social energy to invest in developing supportive relationships. Role separation created barriers for many clerics to make friends, especially in their congregation, leaving some who lacked deep friendships and felt lonely. Peer competition included aspects of comparison and judgment among clerics towards one another which hindered trust and accessing peer support.

Personal challenges included the subthemes of questioning calling, spousal or family conflict, health issues, and lack of self-awareness. Questioning calling made ministry difficulties hard to navigate. Spousal or family conflict was a challenge and considered a hinderance to their resilience. Health issues, such as aging, chronic diseases, and mental health issues or challenges with exercise, diet, and sleep were problematic for clergy. Lack of self-awareness was viewed as creating an emotional vulnerability in the clergy as their personal tendencies, unacknowledged needs, or emotional immaturity hindered their ministry.

The broad adversity themes and some of the sub-themes discussed above were consistent with existing literature. However, my findings revealed additional nuances providing an increased understanding of the adversity clergy might encounter. This in-depth understanding helps consider which facets of adversity are intrinsic to the clergy role and which may be extrinsic and can be modified. Understanding the unique aspects of adversity can also bring insight when considering helpful resources, as these can sometimes have a pairing and buffering effect, as discussed in the next section.

In concluding research question one, clergy participants indicated high resiliency trait, a good grit level, were mostly satisfied with their health and wellness and experienced average compassion satisfaction. Scale responses also indicated that participants did not experience high secondary trauma nor burnout. Adversity and challenges reported by clergy included the themes of workload, expectations, isolation, and personal challenges. The subthemes added knowledge to the existing literature on adversity clergy face.

Question 2: Resources for Resilience

My second research question sought to understand the individual, social/relational, or contextual/organizational variables that clergy perceive as impacting their professional resilience. Themes identified through the survey, interviews, and interpretational panels are summarized in Table 6.12 and discussed at length in chapters four, five, and six. The themes of spiritual, relational, personal, and organizational are consistent with some of those highlighted by other authors and each includes a number of subthemes.

Spiritual life included four subthemes of theological meaning-making, clear calling and identity, partnership with God, and spiritual practices. First, theological meaning-making was an overarching resource that included the beliefs and theological values of clergy that influenced their perception of ministry and the adversity they faced. Second, clear calling was a source of motivation and encouragement for clergy. Third, partnership with God was another core resource

that involved grounded and strengthened clergy in difficult times as they viewed their ministry as God working through them as the clergy prayed and looked to God for guidance. Finally, spiritual practices, both individual and communal, were important resources for clergy resilience and included a wide range of practices such as prayer, scripture, spiritual writing, retreats, silence and solitude, confession, worship, sermons, creation, sacraments, small groups, liturgy, mass, the daily offices and journaling.

Relational support included seven subthemes of spouse and family, friends, peers, mentors, supervisors, congregational, and professional. First, spouse and family support were key resource for clergy resilience, as often spouses shared a collective sense of ministry calling and offered clerics grounding, balance, boundaries, a sounding board, problem-solving, and sharing the ministry load. Second, friends, both outside and inside of the church, were a relationship that allowed clergy to be honest about the challenges but friendship inside of the church had to consider dual roles. Third, peer relationships, both within one's denominational tradition and from other traditions, was appreciated due to the common understanding of ministry which provided opportunity to talk through ministry issues with someone who understood and share ideas and resources.

The fourth subtheme of relational supports is mentors support which was valued as it offered ministry guidance and wisdom and care, especially during early ministry. Fifth, supervisor support from denominational leaders, local lay leaders, or a supervising pastor was viewed as a resource for resilience. Sixth, congregational support from a positive church culture and expressions of encouragement, affirmation, care, and recognition of work were positively noted as helpful for clergy resilience. Finally, professional supports, especially counsellors and spiritual directors, were considered helpful for providing emotional care and relational engagement and bringing insight into cleric's spiritual life and how God has been at work.

Personal aspects included seven subthemes of balance, caring for health, boundaries, self-awareness, lifelong learning, institutional alignment, and personal attributes. First, balance was seen as a pattern of sustainable rhythms that prioritized family, personal life spiritual, mental, physical well-being, recreation, and fun. Second, caring for health involved attending to diet, exercise, and rest through regular routines and also involved taking sabbath and vacation. Third, boundaries involved aspects such as, the ability to say 'no' to expectations enabling clerics to maintain the balance of time and energy between personal and ministry needs, and also relational, emotional, mental and physical boundaries to help disengage from ministry work.

The fourth subtheme of personal aspects is self-awareness which included the processing of emotional wounds, insight into congregational dynamics and the impact of these on one's self, and an understanding of one's unique gifting and grace for one's imperfections and need for growth. Fifth, lifelong learning through formal education or professional development enabled flexibility, self-reflection, and growth. Sixth, institutional alignment of the cleric's values and vision with their denomination, congregation, and team enabled resilience as it decreased friction and conflict and lead to a sense of flow. Finally, personality attributes like extroversion, optimism, realism, flexibility, adaptability, compassion, and diplomacy were considered resources for adapting to adversity under the personal aspects theme.

Organizational practices included six subthemes of provision, role flexibility, rigorous pre-service discernment and preparation, early ministry support, skill-specific training and supports, and relational opportunities. First, provision involved being cared for financially, and having access to health care plans, professional development opportunities, housing, and sabbaticals. Second, role flexibility in schedule and the freedom of being trusted to minister based on the cleric's sense of God's calling and to make their own decisions was beneficial. Third, rigorous pre-service discernment and preparation processes that involved screening for personal fit in ministry and discerning call to ministry was considered foundational for resilience. For those who are training for ministry, a process that involves experiential learning, mentoring, leadership development, training on self-care and resilience, and setting realistic ministry expectations were considered to support resilience.

The fourth subtheme of organizational practices is early ministry support through mentoring and peer cohorts helped new clergy to respond to the challenges of early ministry life as did training and guidance in boundaries, assertiveness, and relational skills. Fifth, skill specific training and supports from the denomination involved support for aspects such as finance, human resources, or technology tools, as well as accessibility, good communication, and clarity from denominations regarding work-related issues. The development of skills specific to address the complex needs of ministry included aspects of mental health, suicide assessment, interpersonal skills, conflict management, leadership, and technology. Sixth, relational opportunities at denominational or inter-denominational events were valued as a means connect with peers and develop relationships, as were structured mentoring or leadership programs

In conclusion to research question two, a wide range of resources that supported clergy resilience were reported. The themes of these resources were spiritual, relational, personal, and

organizational. The subthemes for each provided a nuanced understanding of the resources that the clergy reported as helping them respond positively to adversity.

Question 3: Helpful Pre-service Training and Professional Development

My final research question inquired about helpful aspects of pre-service training and professional development. Existing aspects highlighted were rigorous discernment of calling, inclusion of required practices, and skill development. As discussed under resources, a rigorous discernment of calling process was seen as helpful for resilience. For those who went through such a process, it became both an aspect of screening but also perseverance. Further, once in ministry, this affirmation of calling became an anchor point for clergy when they faced adversity.

Another aspect of preparation was the inclusion of required practices, such as spiritual direction or mentorship. For those whom this was required either in pre-service training or early ministry, it was valued in providing support but also teaching them the value of these resources.

Professional development through a variety of skill development was also seen as helpful for resilience. Skill development allowed clerics to develop their skills to address the diversity of work they are engaged in. Lifelong learning, in general, was also seen as a resource for resilience as it enabled clergy to grow and develop. Conferences were valued as training opportunities but also networking opportunities. The opportunity to network with peers from one's denomination or other traditions was valued and considered to contribute to clergy resilience.

Desired Initiatives. In inquiry about helpful pre-service training or professional development, the inquiry was also made about what initiatives clergy desired to support their resilience. Themes related to desired initiatives included wellness opportunities and denominational wellness standards and financial support.

First, there were ideas related to wellness opportunities, including retreats, sabbaticals, professional counselling, and spiritual direction. Sabbaticals and retreats were desired to help combat workload and increase spiritual, emotional, and physical self-care. Professional counselling was desired to support healthy balance and boundaries to address expectations and workload while also engaging in emotional care. Spiritual direction was seen as a means to provide spiritual care and to strength spiritual resources and meaning. The recommendations of professional supports, like counselling and spiritual direction, seemed to answer one participant's question, "who cares for the caregivers?" (S, Q7, line 113).

Second were ideas related to organizational priority, including denominational wellness standards, financial support for wellness opportunities, and increased collaboration in the system.

The desire for wellness standards was a tenuous one. There was a desire to have accountability for wellness without an imposing structure where standards are encouraged but not imposed. It seemed that setting some of these standards during pre-service training or early ministry may be more acceptable than beginning them with those further along in their ministry career.

Financial support for wellness opportunities seemed to have some barriers to overcome. Leaders in denominations where these are provided indicated poor uptake despite the expressed desired from participants for this. There seemed to be a gap between what clergy perceived as available and what denominational leaders saw as being utilized.

One the broadest systemic level, there was a need expressed for educational institutions, denominations, congregations, and clerics to collaborate to support clergy resilience. Christian clergy do not have one unifying body. More hierarchical traditions, such as the Catholic Church, seemed to have more collaboration among all parts of the system. However, less structured denominations or traditions struggled to collaborate to support clergy resilience, as each part of the system operates somewhat independently.

In conclusion, to research question three, several existing training and professional development aspects were identified as helpful. These included rigorous discernment and pre-service preparation, early ministry support, skills specific training, and lifelong learning and networking opportunities. Also identified were desired wellness opportunities and denominational wellness standards including financial support and systemic collaboration.

COVID-19 Findings

Additional findings outside of my research questions arose related to COVID-19. The COVID-19 pandemic was a unique global event, with restrictions beginning in Canada in March 2020 that introduced increased stress and adversity into many cleric's lives through the restrictions that accompanied it. Data for my study was collected in June through August 2020 and impacted all the study findings. It is interesting to note that the scale findings were as positive as they were given the pandemic.

The pandemic increased clergy workload, limited ministry opportunities, limited resources for resilience, and raised uncertainty about the church's future following the pandemic. On the positive side, many denominations increased their support to clerics amid the pandemic. Also, some clergy saw the pandemic as bring unique opportunities and a chance to reprioritize.

Conducting this study in the midst of COVID-19 provided a real-life example of the impact of adversity on the clergy. The scale findings reveal an overall resilience in clergy while,

at the same time, qualitative responses indicated that it was impacting clergy in a wide range of ways.

Discussion and Reconceptualized Framework

This study's findings related to the literature reviewed in a number of areas related to adversity, resources, and training and professional development. The interaction of the associated literature and the study findings informed the discussion below and the development of a reconceptualized framework called the Clergy Resilience Model.

Adversity Discussion

As discussed earlier, my research provided important insight into the nature of adversity and stress clergy experience in their roles. The themes of adversity included workload, expectations, isolation, and personal challenges. A number of my adversity findings were consistent with the literature reviewed.

Intersect of Adversity Findings with Literature.

Workload and some of its subthemes were revealed in prior literature. Abernethy et al. (2016) highlighted aspects of workload, expectations, and isolation as clergy burnout risk factors. Maslach and Leiter (2008) also identified workload as a factor for burnout. Malony and Hunt (1991) emphasized the role complexity aspect and how clergy are judged on both their technical abilities and spirituality. The complexity of workload was hinted at by Dibbert (1989) and McNeal (1998), who critiqued clergy training for lacking a wide range of skills.

Also, in the category of adversity, the stress of change was consistent with Steinke (2010), who highlighted the disruption of change and the lack of clergy skills in navigating change. The workload theme and some of its sub-themes are also consistent with Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core stressors of role and responsibility pressures, work relationship challenges, leading through change and controversy, pastoral care challenges, and time and workload strain.

Further related to adversity, aspects of expectations were also referenced in prior literature. Means (1989) identified the decreased status of clergy in modern society, which was a dimension of societal expectations. Jackson-Jordan (2013) identified expectations, from self and others, as a burnout risk factor. Grudem (2016) also acknowledged the expectation to change the world and taking more responsibility than is reasonable as a risk factor for clergy burnout. The theme of expectation was also similar to Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core stressor of perceived expectations as a strain on the clergy. Further, Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) also identified the sacred nature of clergy calling as a stress.

Under the expectations theme, the sub-theme of financial pressure also overlapped with the literature. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) identified decreasing financial stress as a means to promote the positive mental health of clergy. Rediger (1997) also highlighted the challenge of financial pressures on clergy resulting in an overinvestment in church success.

Congregational expectations were also consistent with the literature. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) identified that critical congregants were connected to clergy negative mental health, which related to the sub-theme of congregational expectations. Bartlett (1993) also identified high expectations of clergy from churches as a challenge. Further, intrusive and unrealistic expectations of the clergy are correlated with burnout (Abernethy et al., 2016).

Further, some facets of isolation were also consistent with the literature reviewed. Malony and Hunt (1991) identified the symbolic roles of clergy, which may be connected to the isolating effect of role separation. Irvine (1997) and Pappas (1995) recognized the stress and isolation that clergy can experience in entering a congregation as an outsider. Further, Maslach and Leiter (2008) identified social support interruption and value conflict between a professional and workplace as risk factors for burnout. Also, Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) identified social isolation as a correlation for negative mental health of clergy.

The questioning calling subtheme of the personal challenges theme had some connection to the literature reviewed. Questioning calling was related to Park and Folkman (1997), who highlighted the distress that can occur when global meaning is incongruent with situational experiences. Also, Grudem (2016) and Seamands (2005) emphasized the risk of bearing the ministry burden without feeling empowered by God.

The broad adversity themes and some of the sub-themes were consistent with existing literature. However, my findings reveal additional nuances that lead to a fulsome understanding of the adversity clergy may encounter. This in-depth understanding helps consider which facets of adversity are intrinsic to the clergy role and which may be extrinsic and can be modified. Understanding the unique aspects of adversity can also bring insight when considering helpful resources, as these can sometimes have a pairing and buffering effect, as discussed in the next section.

Contribution of Study Findings.

This study is significant in affirming previous literature and providing additional descriptions of the types of adversity clergy experience. A significant contribution of this study findings was in affirming role complexity as a form of adversity that clergy face. Approximately

30 years ago Means (1989), Dibbert (1989), and Malony and Hunt (1991) highlighted the increasing complexity of the clergy role and with that the need for clergy to have the training to ensure the diverse skills necessary. My findings seem to support their warnings and revealed increasing complexity as clerics face issues such as congregants' mental health needs, the COVID-19 pandemic, and technological advancements.

Another contribution of my study findings was related to the nature of adversity clergy experience. Overall, clergy seem to experience everyday adversity rather than trauma-related adversity. As discussed in the literature review, clergy are similar to teachers in facing everyday adversity. The adversity themes and subthemes were more aligned with everyday adversity and did not identify any traumatic adversity theme or subtheme. Examples of everyday adversity included negative or hostile societal expectations, which aligned with Means (1989) perspective of the lower status of clergy in society. Another example of everyday adversity identified was the theme of expectations which aligned with Abernethy et al.'s (2016) correlation of intrusive and unrealistic expectations of clergy and burnout.

This study affirmed that adversity presents a challenge to clergy resilience and well-being. While my research did not consider the varying frequency or levels of intensity of adversity encountered, my findings seemed to be aligned with McEwen, McEwen, and Milliken's (2017) view that chronic exposure to adversity without the buffering of resources can present a challenge. Meichenbaum's (2005) stress inoculation theory considered moderate levels of adversity to activate personal resources, such as social supports, and achieve a sense of mastery. Further, Seery, Holman, and Silver's (2010) curvilinear perspective considered the relationship between adversity and resilience and highlighted how moderate levels of adversity can result in high resilience, but how high levels of adversity can impede resilience. While the survey scales reported participants were doing well, it is important to keep a balanced perspective of adversity. For example, participants reported varying degrees of well-being both through their scale responses and qualitative responses. While the overall mean responses to the scales reported a surprising level of well-being, there were also comments, especially in the open-ended survey questions, that suggested some participants were not all doing well. The diversity of responses may point to the varying levels of adversity different clerics were experiencing.

Resources to buffer adversity were a central focus of this study; however, it is important to consider the nature of adversity and how high levels of adversity or unnecessary adversity might be best addressed. Considering these adversity findings, it is important to heed Traynor

(2017a) and Doney's (2013) cautions about intrinsic and extrinsic adversity. Both individually and systemically, it is important to evaluate if the adversity encountered is intrinsic to the clergy role or if it is extrinsic. For intrinsic adversity buffering through supportive resources is an important way to support the clergy. However, while buffering through resources may provide some help for extrinsic adversity, it is also important to acknowledge and address systemic issues, such as inadequate training, short staffing, or critical congregations. As Aranda and Hart (2015) highlighted, it is important that responsibility for inequitable situations is not placed on individuals. A systemic approach to resilience needs to recognize how the work system enhances or hinders resilience processes both regarding adversity and resources. While Christian clergy have a strong theology of suffering, Peterson (2000) noted that some adversity is unnecessary. Common-sense wisdom is a guide to avoid suffering for the wrong reasons.

My study provided several significant contributions related to knowledge of adversity and stress that clergy face. First, it affirmed prior literature related to adversity clergy encounter and provided a broader description of some of the nuances of adversity. Second, role complexity was affirmed as a challenge clergy face, and it was also revealed the increasing nature of this aspect. Third, my findings provided insights into the nature of adversity clergy experience being more everyday adversity rather than trauma-related adversity.

Resource Discussion

As discussed earlier, my research provided important insight into the resources that the clergy considered to support their resilience. The resource themes included spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices. A number of my resource findings were consistent with the literature reviewed.

Intersect of Resource Findings with Literature.

Many of the themes and sub-themes of resources that support clergy resilience were consistent with the literature. First, the spiritual sub-themes were consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter two related to clergy resilience. Meek et al. (2003) highlighted dynamic spirituality as resources. Also, Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie (2013) identified spiritual formation, which aligned with my findings. Searby (2015) also emphasized spiritual life and meaning, and Forney (2010) emphasized spiritual life. There also seemed to be some related aspects to Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core satisfiers, including spiritual practices and vocational calling. These findings also fit with Searby's (2015) principles of intimacy with God, daily focus on calling, emphasis on core values, and acceptance of grace.

Second, some of the personal aspect sub-themes were consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter two related to clergy resilience. Meek et al. (2003) highlighted work-life balance. Also aligned, Jackson-Jordan (2013) advocated for clergy self-care, and Searby (2015) emphasized self-awareness and boundaries to support clergy resilience. Forney (2010) stressed balance in ministry as a support for clergy. Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core satisfier of ongoing learning also aligns with the lifelong learning resource. This literature affirmed my findings of balance, caring for health, boundaries, self-awareness, and lifelong learning.

Finally, several of the organizational practices sub-themes overlapped with the literature reviewed in Chapter two. Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie (2013) identified the development of leadership and management skills, which aligned with my finding of skill-specific training. Literature from Jackson-Jordan (2013) regarding relational supports of peers and mentors for those new in ministry also related to my early ministry support findings. Forney (2010) emphasized skill development. Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core satisfiers of creative initiative, time and diversity of tasks seemed to be similar to my finding of role flexibility. Malcolm et al.'s (2019) core satisfier of building work relationships seemed similar to my finding of relational opportunities and early ministry support.

Contribution of Study Findings.

This study is significant in providing additional knowledge about resources that clergy considered to support their resilience and affirming what has been previously identified in the literature. In addition to affirming the individual resources, significant insights from my study included the importance of pre-service preparation in developing supportive resources and the value of the organizational practices of denominations to provide support and accountability for clergy resilience and well-being.

As mentioned above in the review of the intersect between literature and the study findings, many resources that individual clerics engage with were consistent with the literature. The themes of spiritual life, relational supports, and personal aspects had significant overlap with literature. Relational supports had been emphasized in the literature, but these findings add a breadth of insight into additional support types, such as congregational and professional support. Likewise, many of the personal aspect subthemes have previously been highlighted in the literature. However, this study's findings also added breadth through the addition of institutional alignment as a “personal aspects” subtheme.

The importance of pre-service preparation on clergy resilience was consistent with Meek et al.'s (2003) recommendations to proactively support clergy resilience beginning in seminary preparation and added some significant findings. Additional aspects identified included the value of a rigorous discernment process. Also identified was the value of requiring pre-service clerics to begin engaging with resources considered to support resilience, such as mentors, spiritual directors, or peers. These aspects emphasized the interconnection of the necessary relationship between educational institutions, denominations, congregations, and clerics in a systemic approach to clergy resilience.

My finding of denominational priority was consistent with Meek et al.'s (2003) support of denominational leaders walking alongside clergy and encouraging a balanced life. A significant contribution of my study findings was identifying denominational prioritizing of clergy resilience and well-being through the setting of standards and accountability as helpful to clergy resilience. A nuance of this finding included the importance of flexible denominational standards, which encourage clerics to engage in supportive resource rather than imposing specific means. Denominational standards and accountability were considered helpful for clergy resilience when approached from a flexible and supportive stance.

In summary, the study provided several significant contributions related to the knowledge of resources that support clergy resilience. First, my findings provided additional insight into the types of relational supports that clergy find helpful for their resilience. Second, my findings provided significant insights related to the importance of pre-service preparation in developing supportive resources. Third, my study findings highlighted the value of the organizational practices of denominations to provide support and accountability for clergy resilience and well-being.

Pairing and Twinning of Adversity and Resources Discussion

My study noted the pairing and buffering relationship of some specific resources and adversity, as adversity and supportive resources often seemed to have some relationship with each other. Malcolm et al. (2019) and Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) identified that some positive and negative factors could be paired. My findings also revealed some adversity and resource variables pairing, with them being the opposite of each other. Malcolm et al. (2019) also identified twinning in that one aspect might be both positive and negative. For example, role complexity may be both positive and negative for clergy. Some clerics may find the diversity of their role positive, while others find it stressful. Likewise, an individual cleric might find role

complexity to be both negative and positive. In addition to pairing and twinning, there also seemed to be a relationship between the buffering effect of specific resources for specific adversity.

Contribution of Study Findings.

This study is significant in providing additional knowledge about the pairing and buffering of adversity and resources. The adversity personal challenges subthemes were all paired with resource subthemes. Questioning calling paired with the resource of clear calling. Spousal or family conflict paired with spouse and family support. When a cleric is married, it seemed particularly important for them to have spousal support, and spousal conflict was a form of adversity for clergy. Health issues paired with caring for health and lack of self-awareness paired with self-awareness.

Another significant contribution of my study findings is the buffering relationship between some specific resources and adversity. Balance seemed to be related to the challenging workload and time demands that clergy face in their roles and to buffer this adversity. Also, boundaries may be particularly helpful in response to expectations faced in clergy roles and may buffer this adversity. Further, relational support seemed helpful in responding to isolation and providing a buffering effect. Institutional alignment also seemed to be a resource that buffered the impact of theological isolation. Finally, the resource of skill-specific training and supports seemed to buffer the adversity of role complexity.

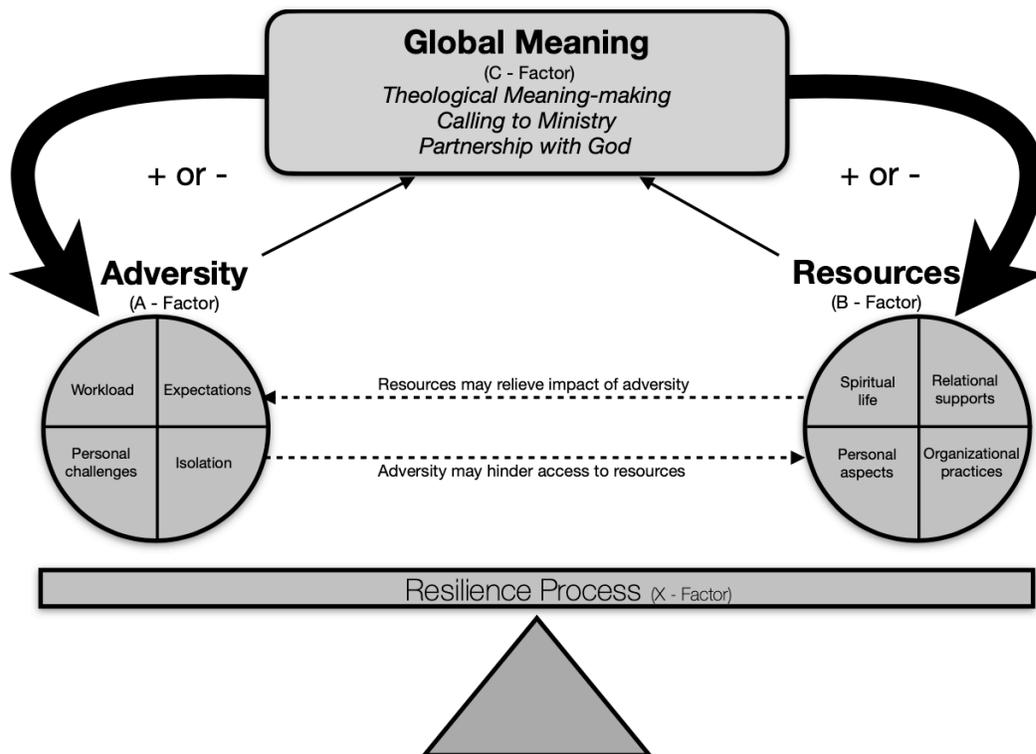
In summary, my study provided several significant contributions related to knowledge of the pairing and buffering relationship of some specific resources and adversity. First, several paired relationships arose and provided insight into how some aspects can have negative and positive dimensions. Second, a significant study contribution is in the findings related to the buffering relationship between some specific resources and adversity.

Reconceptualized Framework

In considering the spiritual life resource findings, some aspects of this theme seemed to have played a higher-level influence on clergy resilience. These aspects included theological meaning-making, clear calling, and partnership with God. Based on my study's qualitative findings, the Adaptive Resilience Model (Figure 2.2) that I presented earlier in this document has been reconceptualized to reflect the unique variables related to clergy resilience through my construction of the Clergy Resilience Model, illustrated in Figure 7.1 below. In this framework I speculate that the impact of theological meaning-making, clear calling, and partnership with God

play a unique role in clergy resilience through an overarching impact on global meaning. Also, the specific themes of adversity and resources for resilience that my study identified have been reflected. This framework begins to speculate on some of the stratification of clergy resilience.

Figure 7.1 Clergy Resilience Model. Source: Margaret Clarke.



Note. Informed by Patterson, J. M. (2002), Liu et al. (2017), Richardson (2002), and Park and Folkman (1997).

This model is aligned with a process view of resilience in which resilience is a process of interacting parts and also a possible outcome. First, is the process of an event or experience being evaluated and determined to be adverse based on the global meaning system. Resources are also evaluated by the global meaning system as to the support and buffering they offer. When adversity is experienced, a second part of the resilience process is the accessing of resources to buffer and balance the effects of the adversity. The experience of adversity may result in loss or burnout, rather than resilience. Ideally, the outcome of buffering through the global meaning system and resources results in a resilient outcome when a person returns to their baseline of functioning or experiences growth following the adversity.

The clergy resilience model highlights the importance of spiritual meaning in the global appraisal system of the clergy. Theological beliefs, calling to ministry, and partnership with God were identified in the study findings and impacted how clergy interpreted adversity and how they viewed resources. These findings seem to point to an appraisal system that governs the global meaning given to situational events. This is fitting with Park and Folkman (1997), who indicated that religion provides global meaning by providing causal reasons and various coping strategies. A spiritual framework can provide clergy with guidance on responding to the adversity they face (Fallon, Rice, & Howie, 2013; Nouwen, 1989). This framework also aligns with Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) view of calling as sacred and therefore exerting more pull on clergy to their work than other professionals.

While primarily the global meaning influences the situational, both adversity and resources, Park and Folkman (1997) considered a success in meaning-making to occur when the situational meaning is altered to fit with global meaning or when the global belief system is altered to accommodate the adverse situational event. Clergy's theological frameworks affect their approach to ministry, influence how they interpret events, and respond they to adversity (Fallon, Rice, & Howie, 2013).

Theological beliefs of hope, suffering, and ministry calling can act as interpretative filters for the experience of adverse events and determine spiritual coping resources, thus influencing the resilience of clergy. For example, a theology of hope can evoke patience and perseverance from clerics amid adversity, helping them persist in attaining the desired goal (Titus, 2006). The Cantril scale that revealed high levels of current life satisfaction and even higher anticipated satisfaction may have revealed the influence of theological hope. Further, the expectation of adversity combined with the awareness of God's presence in the midst of it is a theological perspective of Christian clergy that enables resilience. The GRIT-S scale scores revealed a good level of grit and may have revealed this influence of theological meaning-making on the adversity clergy experience.

Clear calling was an important aspect of clergy resilience identified in my study and seemed to be an anchor point for clergy despite adversity. A strong calling seemed to affect motivation, hope, and confidence. Clergy's sense of calling to ministry is also a central part of their belief system and results in interwoven personal, professional, and religious identities (Pargament, Tarakeshwar, Ellison, & Wulff, 2001).

However, a sense of calling to ministry can increase the sense of failure for clergy (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). Grudem (2016) highlighted the risk for clergy in their sense of calling to change the world and taking more responsibility than is reasonable. My study finding of self-expectations may have related to the sacred nature of their call to ministry, which can cause stress for clergy.

Also, my study findings revealed that questioning calling could lead to insecurity and discouragement. Doubting one's calling is related to depression, whereas ministry satisfaction is related to lower anxiety levels (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013). If calling was questioned, it was considered determinantal to resilience by my participants.

Ministering in the sense of partnership with God was identified as a resource in my findings and linked to a sense of grace and strength. Clergy may have had a sense that this partnership is about God working through them and this seemed relieve some of the pressure arising for clergy from ministry workload and expectations. Forney (2010) emphasized that when clergy hold a balanced view of their calling, it allows them to view themselves as actively collaborating with God in his purposes, rather than passively standing by helplessly. Further, the intimacy and acceptance from God may also alleviate a sense of isolation. As Seamands (2005) highlighted, worth found in God's acceptance provides a solid foundation for Christian ministry. The high resiliency trait identified through the Ego Resiliency scale may be connected to this sense of partnership with God.

Furthermore, for clergy resilience, spiritual life, including clerics' relationship with God and their spiritual practices, was also a key resource identified in my study. Spiritual life was tied to the global meaning but also a resource that clergy accessed in times of adversity. For clergy, a balanced sense of control involves the paradox of viewing the self as having control over the ministry, rather than being a victim of circumstances, while also acknowledging God's sovereignty in aspects beyond one's control (Forney, 2010). For example, prayer was a resource to release things that were beyond a cleric's control. The use of spiritual resources fits with Titus' (2006) perspective on spiritual resilience.

In addition to the overarching impact of the global meaning system on clergy resilience, the Clergy Resilience Model also reveals the ongoing nature of balance in resilience. As adversity and resources are in a dynamic relationship, there is a continuous balancing that occurs. Adversity and resources ebb and flow in a cleric's life, and ongoing evaluation of both of these can benefit clergy. The COVID-19 pandemic was a sharp reminder of how adversity can

increase, and resources can decrease, requiring a re-balancing for resilience. The Clergy Resilience Model may provide a useful tool for clergy to evaluate their own adversity-resource balance at any given time. Awareness of this resilience balance may prove beneficial to individual clerics in evaluating both the levels of adversity they are experiencing and their resources.

In summary, the Clergy Resilience Model incorporates significant findings from my study to provide a theoretical framework for understanding clergy resilience. First, it incorporates the specific themes of adversity and resources identified in my study. Second, it identifies the overarching global meaning system of the clergy. Finally, it emphasizes the ongoing nature of balance in resilience.

Implications of the Study

This study was an exploratory study that has provided an incremental understanding of the range of adversity and stress clergy experience. Clergy acknowledged a wide range of resources that help them bounce back from the stress they face, enabling them to be resilient. Reporting of these resources was descriptive and comprehensive rather than prescriptive.

There are many implications and recommendations arising from this study. These implications affect individual clerics and the broad system of the Canadian Christian church as a whole. Implications for clerics, congregations, denominations, and educational institutes will be considered. Also, recommendations for further research on clergy resilience will be made.

Implications for Clergy

Adversity is clearly part of serving in ministry for clergy. This study underlines the likelihood of clergy encountering adverse experiences and stress in their roles. Clergy are aware in many ways of the nature and facets of adversity that they uniquely face in their role and the impact it has on their spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being.

I speculate that clerics will benefit from understanding the ongoing nature of balance in resilience and the importance of resources in helping them be resilient while avoiding prescribing which resource might be advantageous to an individual. Further, it may be helpful for an individual cleric to evaluate on an ongoing basis the levels of adversity they are experiencing, which resources are present in their life, and to consider adding new resources that seem to hold the potential to be helpful to them. Further, given the central role of calling in resilience, it is recommended that clergy find meaningful ways to stay connected to their calling and nurture it regularly.

I also speculate that it will be beneficial for clergy to come to terms with the nature and facets of adversity faced in their roles. Enhancing or adding resources might be helpful in times of increased adversity to buffer the effects of the adversity. Clerics may want to consider developing relationships where they can honestly discuss the impact of adversity on their well-being and their families and consider the supportive resources they are accessing.

Implications for Congregations

Congregations also have a role to play in clergy resilience. Congregations that place unreasonable workload and expectations on their clergy would do well to address these. Critical congregants are a source of stress for clergy. Whereas, supportive congregations are a resource for clergy resilience. I speculate that it can be beneficial for congregations to consider their relational interactions with their clerics, working to reduce criticism and increase encouragement and care.

Financial pressure, both at a personal level and a church level is adverse for clergy. I speculate that it will likely be beneficial for congregations to consider the personal financial support they are providing clergy. Further, it will likely be beneficial for congregational lay leaders to share the responsibility for congregational finances with clergy to lessen the pressure on the clergy.

Implications for Denominations

The centrality of clear calling on clergy resilience is an important aspect for denominations to consider. Screening and confirming ministry calling through a thorough process can be valuable to long-term resilience. I speculate that it will be beneficial for overall clergy resilience if denominations evaluate their ministry screening and affirmation processes and consider improving gaps.

In setting standards related to engaging with resources to support well-being and resilience, accountability to the standards is important. For pre-service or early ministry clergy, these standards may be firmer, but as clergy develop, it is important to provide more flexible accountability. This flexible accountability should encourage engagement with supportive resources but not impose what these might look like for each cleric. An example might be setting a standard of going on a retreat but allowing clerics to deem when, where, and with whom they do such a retreat. Clear standards and accountability for clergy may be necessary to overcome the challenge of workload, which can hinder engagement with resources.

I speculate that it will likely be beneficial for denominations to provide financial support for wellness initiatives. Barriers to accessing initiatives that are being provided by denominations should also be explored. For example, if a denomination has funds available for their clergy to access professional counselling but the cleric must self-disclose the desire for counselling to a denominational leader to access these funds, this may be a barrier. Likewise, ineffective communication about the initiative may be a barrier as might be limits placed on the number of sessions available.

Denominational and congregational expectations can be stressful for clergy. I speculate that it will likely be beneficial for denominations to assess the necessity of their denominational expectations on clergy on an ongoing basis not to add extrinsic adversity. Also, for denominations that influence congregational expectations, it will likely be beneficial for the denomination to help congregations address unnecessary or unrealistic expectations.

Denominations have a unique systemic role in clergy resilience in their ability to set standards. Pre-service training and early ministry are two periods of unique influence on clergy where there seems to be more openness to guidance. It will likely be beneficial for denominations to set standards related to engaging in supportive resources as early in training or ministry as possible. Examples of this would be a requirement of students engaging with a spiritual director or a new cleric to have a mentor.

It will likely be beneficial for denominations to continue to offer events and gatherings that bring clergy together. These events can enhance many of the resources that support clergy resilience, such as peer relationships, skill-specific training, and affirmation of calling and spiritual nourishment. Also, it will likely be beneficial for denominations to be supportive of non-denominational events and conferences to encourage clergy peer relationships and other training and development. As will be discussed below, it will likely be beneficial for denominations to increase collaboration with educational institutions.

Implications for Educational Institutions

Educational institutions have a unique role in the pre-service training of clergy. They help equip clergy for their future roles. Given the diversity and complexity of clergy roles, it will likely be beneficial for educational institutions to evaluate the equipping needed for modern clergy. While educational institutions will likely be unable to provide clergy all the training needed for the complexity they face, determining key foundational training for beginning clergy and encouraging a lifelong learning perspective may be helpful. Also, it will likely be beneficial

for schools to provide students with training in the adversity and challenges faced in ministry. Alongside this, it may help educate students on supportive resources and require that students develop and engage with some of these. Skills related to balance and boundaries are important to include in pre-service training. As well, developing self-awareness is an important foundational skill.

Collaboration between denominations and educational institutions is important concerning two key areas that affect resilience. First, affirming a clear call to ministry would be beneficial before and during training. More hierarchical traditions consider calling before approving someone to begin training and continue to evaluate it during training through collaborating with the educational institution. For less hierarchical traditions or non-denominational schools, the process of affirming calling may be lacking. I speculate that it may be beneficial for such schools to consider increasing collaboration with their key denominational partners to ensure that a foundation of clear calling begins in pre-service training.

Collaboration between educational institutions and denominations is essential for the ongoing training and development of clergy. I speculate that it will likely be beneficial for educational institutions to seek increased collaboration with their denominational partners to determine the training needs of modern clergy and evaluate if, how, when, and by whom these are being addressed. Further, it will likely be beneficial for denominations to collaborate to determine when and by whom specific training needs will be met in the ministry span. Beyond pre-service training, educational institutions may be uniquely equipped to support denominations in providing ongoing skill-specific training and lifelong learning to their clerics.

Recommendations for Further Research

My study has provided incremental and foundational knowledge about clergy resilience within the Canadian Christian context. The study provided significant insight into a robust list of resources that clergy find valuable in adapting positively to the adversity they encounter. This knowledge is valuable for individual clergy in considering their own resources and also in providing some insight to congregations, denominations, and educational institutions considering how to support clergy resilience. However, it is important that these findings be understood as descriptive of what a wide range of clergy reported and that these findings are not prescriptive. Also, given the all-encompassing limitation of this research occurring during the COVID-19 pandemic, further inquiry following the pandemic to confirm consistency of the resources is important.

The exploratory knowledge gained about resources to support clergy resilience provided incremental and initial insight but requires further inquiry to understand different aspects of this phenomenon. Further inquiry may be useful to determine if the resources identified have generalizable value and might be used to create a useful assessment tool. Aspects for further research include investigating the intensity and frequency of the resources. Also, it will be valuable to further research regarding the buffering effect of specific resources with specific types of adversity.

Another area for further research is the Clergy Resilience Model. Gaining insight into the importance of theological meaning-making, calling, and partnership with God on the clergy's global meaning system is necessary. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate additional themes of adversity and resources and to see if the themes identified in this study hold true in other contexts. My Clergy Resilience Model is informed by this research but requires further testing and scrutiny.

The impact of congregational flourishing on clergy wellness was noted in the survey scale responses. Congregational support was also identified in the qualitative findings. It would be valuable to investigate further the connection between congregational flourishing and clergy resilience and wellness. Further understanding of the impact of diverse theological perspectives and also the impact of moral distress and resilience on clergy resilience is needed.

There was a gap between what clergy participants identified as needed wellness initiatives and what denominational leaders perceived as already existing but with low uptake. It would be valuable to investigate barriers to accessing the wellness and resilience supports and initiatives that exist currently. It would also be valuable to investigate the impact of social stigma on clerics in acknowledging need and accessing resources.

Healthy boundaries was identified as a resource for clergy resilience, especially those that seem to help clerics have greater balance and less enmeshment in their ministry life. It would be valuable to investigate the nature of boundaries that clerics find most helpful. Another aspect of this investigation could identify boundaries that spouses find beneficial, given the prominent role they play in clergy resilience.

Comparison of clergy resilience with other caring professionals, such as teachers and nurses, would be valuable. It would also be valuable to consider the applicability of the clergy resilience model to other professions. The general aspects of the model may be adaptable to the unique features of each profession, as has been done with clergy.

Female clergy seem to have unique experiences of adversity. This study did not differentiate any unique resources that female clerics find helpful for their resilience. It would be valuable to investigate the unique experiences of female clerics and their spouses with consideration for any differentiating aspects based the role of the female cleric, such as those in lead roles compared to those in associate roles.

This study focused on participants who remain in ministry. However, it did not capture those who leave the profession. It would be valuable to study former clerics who have left ministry to gain a more fulsome understanding of resilience.

The incorporation of interpretation panels into this mixed-method study was valuable to ensuring a comprehensive understanding. Interpretation panels seem to offer a unique opportunity for co-producing knowledge. It would be valuable to investigate further the contributions of interpretation panels to knowledge collection and knowledge construction.

Concluding Comments

Clergy resilience is a worthwhile consideration due to the spiritual, caregiving and educative role clergy hold. Clergy face unique adversity and stress in their roles. An understanding of supportive resources can benefit their resilience. This research on clergy resilience provides important information to understand how clergy resilience can be supported and nurtured. It was my goal to discover foundational knowledge about clergy resilience to contribute to its enhancement in some way. As a result of my mixed-methods methodology, I was able to better understand the adversity clergy face and to gain a robust understanding of the resources they consider helpful to their resilience.

Early in my study, I was asked whether clergy resilience was unique or the same as other professionals. While clergy resilience is similar to other professional resilience, it also seems to have some unique factors related to the adversity experienced in the role and the resources that were valued. Clergy participants reported experiencing adversity related to workload, expectations, isolation, and personal challenges. These adversity themes may overlap with other professions but are also unique in the experience and combination of them for clergy. Likewise, clergy reported resources themes of: spiritual life, relational supports, personal aspects, and organizational practices. The resources identified have much in common with the resources that other professionals find supportive of their resilience. Spiritual resources were very prominent for clergy, which could be common for all people of faith. However, the centrality of calling to

ministry was one unique aspect for clergy, as was the emerging pairing of resources to address specific forms of adversity.

This study arose from my personal and professional desire to understand clergy resilience. Conducting this study was a personal journey as a clergy spouse, and I was honoured to learn more about the commitment and dedication of the clergy as they serve the church. This study was also a professional journey as a therapist who works with clergy and supports their well-being. Confirming the adversity that clergy faced was disheartening for me, as it reminded me of challenges in my and my husband's ministry experiences, together with the stories shared with me as a therapist. However, the core spiritual strength and a wide variety of resources drawn upon to help clergy respond to adversity were enlightening and inspirational.

I think the Clergy Resilience Model is a tool that may help clergy resilience both on an individual and systemic level by creating awareness of key factors. As a professional therapist sharing this knowledge about supportive resources and considering ways to increase these will likely be valuable to my clients. The knowledge gained in this study will also be valuable for any future clergy resilience interventions.

Ultimately, the value of the knowledge gained in this study will be revealed in the ways that it supports clergy resilience. At the end of my one-on-one interviews, I asked interviewees what was helpful to them in our conversation. Many of them shared that the opportunity to talk to someone about their experiences in ministry reminded them of their sense of calling and was encouraging to them. I am grateful that in this small way that my study was a benefit to those clerics, and I hope that it will be beneficial to others as well.

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Appendix A

Appendix A: Clergy Resilience and Well-Being Survey

Clergy Resilience and Well-being Survey – June 2020

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: *Understanding Clergy Resilience: A Mixed Methods Research Study*

Student Researcher: Researcher: Margaret Clarke, Ph.D. student, University of Saskatchewan, Educational Administration, Email: mac558@mail.usask.ca

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr. Keith Walker, Professor, University of Saskatchewan, Educational Administration, Email: keith.walker@usask.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to investigate clergy resilience to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. This survey is collecting information about clergy resilience and wellness. Resilience is the ability to positively adapt to adversity or stress. This survey uses the term *clergy* to encompass all those in vocational ministry including those who go by alternate terms, such as *priest*, *pastor*, or *minister*. It will take approximately up to 25 minutes to complete the survey.

Procedures:

This study involves three aspects of data collection including an online survey of clergy, one-on-one interviews with clergy, and an interpretation panel composed of ten members including clergy, denominational leaders, professionals who are involved in educating clergy, and professionals who are involved in supporting clergy wellness.

Potential Risks:

- Discussing the challenges and adversity that clergy face in their professional role may bring up some mild emotional distress during the interview; however, this distress is considered minimal as the focus of the survey will be on clergy resilience. Should you become distressed while completing the survey, please pause and consider whether you want to continue, you are free to continue or discontinue the survey based on what you deem to be best interest for your well-being. If you are distressed, you may want to consider the possibility of seeking counselling through one of following counselling options:
 - Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)
 - For clergy who do not have an EAP, the following counselling services specialize in clergy counselling:
 - Fairhaven Leadership Retreat: 250-260-1616
 - Clergy Care: 1-888-525-3749
 - Shalem Mental Health Network/Clergy Care: 1-866-347-0041

Potential Benefits:

- The benefit of your participation is contributing to the knowledge about clergy resilience and wellness.

Confidentiality:

- The data will be treated confidentially.
- All findings will be presented in an anonymous fashion.
- Results from this study will be used primarily for Margaret Clarke’s dissertation, it may also be published in a journal or book, used for a presentation, or at a conference.
- Although the data from this research project may be published and presented at conferences, the survey data will be reported in aggregate form so that it will not be possible to identify individuals.
- This survey is hosted by Social Sciences Humanities Research Laboratory at the University of Saskatchewan, using Voxco.

Storage of Data:

- Voxco is a Canadian company that features Canadian data hosting.

- Data will be stored in a secure manner by the Social Sciences Humanities Research Laboratory and also by Margaret Clarke and Keith Walker.
- At the completion of the study, survey data will be securely stored and retained by Dr. Keith Walker, Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education. Data will be retained for five years post publication, after which it will be deleted and destroyed following University of Saskatchewan procedure.

Right to Withdraw:

- Participation in this survey is voluntary.
- You can decide not to participate at any time by closing your browser or choose not to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with. Survey responses will remain anonymous. Since the survey is anonymous, once it is submitted it cannot be removed.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position (e.g., employment, academic status, access to services) or how you will be treated.

Follow up:

- To obtain results from the study, please visit the Flourishing Congregations Institute website (flourishingcongregations.org) in 2021 for updates.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1.
- This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office: ethics.office@usask.ca; 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call toll free 1-888-966-2975.

By completing and submitting this questionnaire, your free and informed consent is implied and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study.

I. Personal Demographics

Please fill out the following demographic information

Tell us about yourself and your congregation.

Personal Demographics

1. *What is your age?*

Under 20, 20-29; 30-39; 40-49; 50-59; 60-69; 70-79; 80+; I'd prefer not to answer

2. *Which of the following best describes your present marital status?*

Single (never married); Common law; Married; Separated; Divorced

Widowed; Other – please specify; I'd prefer not to answer

3. *Please indicate whether you have children, and if so how many?*

I do not have children; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; Other – please specify; I'd prefer not to answer

4. *What is your gender?*

Female; Male; Other – please specify; I'd prefer not to answer

5. *What is the context for your ministry role?*

Congregation; Denomination; Para-church; Chaplaincy; Multiple contexts – please

specify; Other – please specify; I'd prefer not to answer

6. *Which of the following best describes your clergy role in your congregation/parish?*

Senior pastoral staff (e.g., priest, senior/lead minister/pastor; Associate – specify type:

_____); Other: ____; I'd prefer not to answer;

7. *Is your paid clergy role part-time or full-time?*

Full-time; Half-time or greater, but not full-time; Less than half-time; I'd prefer not to

answer

8. *Are you also employed in a non-ministry role?*

Yes; No; I'd prefer not to answer

9. *Please indicate your highest level of education?*

High school diploma; Some college or university; Diploma; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctoral degree; Other – please specify; I'd prefer not to answer

10. *How many years have you worked in your current role?*

Less than 1; 1-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-20 years; 21-30 years; over 30 years; I'd prefer not to answer

11. *How many years have you worked in vocational ministry (total of all roles)?*

Less than 1; 1-5 years; 6-10 years; 11-20 years; 21-30 years; over 30 years; I'd prefer not to answer

12. *How many different congregations have you worked in?*

1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7+; I'd prefer not to answer

13. *How many times have you relocated due to a change in your clergy role?*

0; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7+; I'd prefer not to answer

14. *What is your approximate household net income?*

Under \$20,000; \$20,000-\$34,999; \$35,000-49,999; \$50,000-64,999; \$65,000-79,999; \$80,000-94,999; \$95,000-109,999; \$110,000-124,999; \$125,000-139,999; \$ 140,000 and over; I'd prefer not to answer

15. *How far do you live from your closest family supports? (Excluding immediate family you live with)*

under 25 km; 25-99km; 100-299 km; 300-499 km; 500-699 km; over 700 km; I'd prefer not to answer

16. *How far do you live from your closest personal supports?(Excluding immediate family you live with)*

under 25 km; 25-99km; 100-299 km; 300-499 km; 500-699 km; over 700 km; I'd prefer not to answer

17. *Are you currently involved with a ministry mentor (or mentor program)?*

No, I am not currently involved with a ministry mentor; Yes, on a weekly basis; Yes, on a monthly basis; Yes, approximately 4-6 times per year; Yes, on an unscheduled basis; I'd prefer not to answer

18. *Have you been involved with a ministry mentor (or mentorship program) in the past?*

Yes; No; I'd prefer not to answer

II. **Health Status Scales**

To help us understand your sense of overall health, please answer the following questions.

To help people say how good or bad a health state, imagine a scale (like a thermometer) on which the best state you can be is marked 100 and the worst state is 0. Indicate how good or bad your own health is today, in your opinion. Do this by assessing your state of health or unhealthy on scale of 0 to 100.

Please respond to the following 5 items. Be honest – there are no right or wrong answers!

Scale: 1= not like me at all, 2= not much like me, 3=somewhat like me, 4= mostly like me, 5= very much like me

1. I have no problems in walking about
2. I have no problems with self-care
3. I have no problems with performing my usual activities (Usual activities: work, study, housework family, leisure)
4. I have no pain or discomfort
5. I am not anxious or depressed

Please respond to the following Statements.

Scale: 1= not at all satisfied, 2= often dissatisfied, 3=somewhat satisfied, 4= mostly satisfied, 5= very much satisfied. How satisfied are you with your:

1. Physical Wellness: (e.g., exercised regularly, sleep not a problem, maintained healthy diet)
2. Emotional Wellness: (e.g., manage fatigue, managing stress, positive mood most times, no signs of depression or anxiety, no at-risk drug/alcohol use)
3. Intellectual Wellness: (e.g., positive learning environment, managing time, study schedules and test anxiety, good understanding of legal, ethical, and professional obligations)
4. Financial Wellness: (e.g., able to budget and manage finances; good understanding of financial planning)
5. Spiritual Wellness: (e.g., prayer, meditation)
6. Occupational Wellness: (e.g., understand processes to report discrimination, intimidation, and harassment; confident about career planning and professional networking)
7. Social Wellness: (e.g., maintain good work/life balance, nurture social relationships that have supportive and sustaining qualities)
8. Environmental Wellness: (e.g., make conscious effort to contribute to healthy environment)

III. Open-ended Questions (half the participants to get questions 1 and 2, the other half get questions 3 and 4)

1. What, if any, things (adversity, challenges, or problems) do you perceive as hindering and/or threatening your resilience and well-being as clergy?
2. Of the things mentioned above, what would you identify as the one thing that provides the greatest threat or hinderance to your resilience and well-being as clergy?
3. What, if any, things (personal, social, relational, contextual and organizational) do you perceive as helping you to positively adapt to the adversity, challenges, or problems you face in your role?

4. Of the things mentioned above, what would you identify as the one thing that provides the greatest enhancement to your resilience and well-being as clergy?

IV. Professional Quality of Life Scale

In your role as a person who comes alongside other people, you may have found, your compassion for those you seek to help can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current situation, as a person who helps others. Select the number that best reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the *last 30 days*.

Please respond to the following 28 items.

Scale: 1= not like me at all, 2= not much like me, 3=somewhat like me, 4= mostly like me, 5= very much like me

1. I am happy.
2. I am preoccupied with more than one person who I currently *help*.
3. I get satisfaction from being able to *help* people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I am startled by unexpected sounds.
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I *help*.
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a *clergy*.
8. I am not as productive at studies/work because I lose sleep over the traumatic experiences of a person who I *help*.
9. I think that I might be affected by the traumatic stress of those I *help*.
10. I feel trapped by my work as a *clergy*.
11. Because of my *helping*, I have felt "on edge" about various things.
12. I like my work as a *clergy*.
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I've *helped*.
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have *helped*.
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with *ministry* techniques and protocols.

17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
19. I feel worn out because of my work as a *clergy*.
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I *help* and how I've helped them.
21. I feel overwhelmed because my current workload seems endless.
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work as a *clergy*.
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I *help*.
24. I am proud of what I can do to *help others*.
25. As a result of my *helping others*, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
27. I have thoughts that I will be a "success" as a *clergy*.
28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
29. I am a very caring person.
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

V. Congregation Demographics

To help us understand the context in which you work, please answer the following questions:

1. *In what province/territory/treaty area is your congregation located?*
Alberta; British Columbia; Manitoba; New Brunswick; Newfoundland; Northwest Territories; Nova Scotia; Nunavut; Ontario; Prince Edward Island; Quebec; Saskatchewan; Yukon; Treaty area?
2. *Approximately how many people live where your current ministry role is located?*
Less than 1,000; 1,001-3000; 3001-5,000; 5,001-24,999; 25,000-49,999; Between 50,000-99,999; Between 100,000-249,999; Between 250,000-499,999; Between 500,000-749,999; Between 750,000-999,999; 1,000,000 +; Unsure; I'd prefer not to answer
3. *What denomination/tradition does your congregation/parish identify with?*

Anglican; Baptist; Catholic; Charismatic; Christian & Missionary Alliance; Church of Christ; Church of God; Church of the Nazarene; Christian or Plymouth Brethren; Covenant; Evangelical Free Church; Evangelical Missionary Church; Free Methodist; Full Gospel; Mennonite; Mennonite Brethren; Lutheran; Non-denominational; Orthodox; Pentecostal; Presbyterian; Reformed; Salvation Army; United Church of Canada; Other – please specify; Unsure; I'd prefer not to answer

4. *What is the average number of people who would attend a worship service through your current congregation/parish?*

0-50; 51-100; 101-250; 251-500; 501-750; 751-1200; over 1200; I'd prefer not to answer

5. *To the best of your knowledge, average weekly attendance at all of your worship services is:*

Growing; Declining; Staying the same; I'd prefer not to answer

6. *To what degree do you agree or disagree with the statement: Generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing.*

1-strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – neutral; 4 – agree; 5 – strongly agree; unsure

VI. Open-ended Questions (half the participants to get question 1, the other half get question 2)

1. What, if any, formal or informal initiatives, programs and supports (i.e. ministry preparation, professional development, denominational or para-church) do you feel have been helpful in sustaining your resilience and well-being in your clergy role?
2. What, if any, new initiatives, programs, or supports (i.e. ministry preparation, professional development, denominational or para-church), do you feel need to be created to support clergy resilience and well-being?

VII. Ego-resiliency scale

Please respond to the following 14 items.

1= does not apply at all; 2 = applies slightly, if at all; 3 = applies somewhat; and 4 = applies very strongly.

1. I am generous with my friends.
2. I quickly get over and recover from being startled.
3. I enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations.
4. I usually succeed in making a favourable impression on people.
5. I enjoy trying new foods I have never tasted before.
6. I am regarded as a very energetic person.
7. I like to take different paths to familiar places.
8. I am more curious than most people.
9. Most of the people I meet are likeable.
10. I usually think carefully about something before acting.
11. I like to do new and different things.
12. My daily life is full of things that keep me interested.
13. I would be willing to describe myself as a pretty "strong" personality.
14. I get over my anger at someone reasonably quickly.

VIII. GRIT scale

Please respond to the following 8 items.

Scale: 1=very much like me, 2 = mostly like me, 3=somewhat like me, 4=not much like me, 5=not like me at all

1. New ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones.*
2. Setbacks don't discourage me.
3. I have been obsessed with a certain idea or project for a short time but later lost interest.*
4. I am a hard worker.
5. I often set a goal but later choose to pursue a different one.*

6. I have difficulty maintaining my focus on projects that take more than a few months to complete.*
7. I finish whatever I begin.
8. I am diligent.

IX. Cantril Wellbeing Scale

To help us better understand your sense of well-being please answer the following questions.

Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from zero at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you.

1. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?
(ladder-present) [scale: 0-10]
2. On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now? (ladder-future)
[scale: 0-10]

X. Open-ended Question

Thank you for completing this survey and contributing to an understanding of clergy resilience and wellness.

1. Given everything we have asked, what, if any other comments would you like to add?

Appendix B

Appendix B: Clergy Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Recruitment and screening of interested participants will be based on the following criteria:

1. Vocational Christian clergy in a paid full or part-time role
2. English speaking
3. Able to participate in an interview face-to-face, by telephone or through online audio or video conferencing format
4. Priority for participants with diverse perspectives, such as from different denominations, roles, genders, years in ministry

Those screened in will be provided the informed consent form to review before agreeing and scheduling an interview.

At the beginning of the interview, prior to collection of data, the researcher will verbally explain informed consent and there will be opportunity for the participant to ask questions. The researcher will receive a hard or electronic copy of the signed informed consent before beginning interview process and audio recording the interview.

Interview Process:

1. One week prior to the interview, a worksheet (Appendix C) will be shared with participants.
 - a. Participants will be invited to complete the worksheet with their perceptions of adversity, resources and cognitive appraisal prior to the interview. The researcher will be available and will answer any questions the participant may have about that process.
 - b. The worksheet will be used as a reference for the participant to respond to the key questions posed by the researcher.
 - c. In addition to the audio recording of the interview, participants will be asked to submit their worksheet following the interview to be used as data.

2. Key Questions by researcher:

1. When you think about an experience of adversity you have faced in your role as clergy, what story comes to mind?
 - a. What other types of adversity, challenges, or problems have you experienced in your clergy journey?
 - b. What adverse experiences have been the greatest threat or encumbrance to your resilience and well-being?

2. When you think about things that have helped you to respond well to adversity, what comes to mind?
 - a. Personal? Social or relational? Contextual or organizational?
 - b. What would you say provides the greatest enhancement to your resilience and well-being as clergy?

3. Think of experiences you have had with formal or informal initiatives, programs, and personal supports to encourage your resilience or well-being. What stories come to mind?
 - a. What advice would you give to people creating clergy training programs or professional development about how to support clergy resilience and well-being?

4. Additional probing questions may be asked to go more in-depth and interpretative questions may be asked to confirm what has been said in the interview.

Appendix C

Appendix C: Understanding Clergy Resilience Pre-interview Worksheet

Adversity

What adversity, challenges or problems do you, as a clergy, experience that threatens your well-being?

Resources

What resources do you perceive as helping you to positively adapt to the adversity, challenges, or problems you face in your role?

Intra-individual personal resources?

Inter-personal social/relational resources?

Socio-ecological contextual/organizational resources?

Cognitive Appraisal

What thoughts are involved in your appraisal of the adversity and resources you experience?

What thoughts hinder your ability to positively adapt to the adversity you face in your role?

What thoughts foster your ability to positively adapt to the adversity you face in your role?

What thoughts do you have about the resources (personal, social, contextual) you have available to help you?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for Interview Participants

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *Understanding Clergy Resilience: A Mixed Methods Research Study*.

Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you might have

Study Researcher: Margaret Clarke, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.
E-mail: mac558@mail.usask.ca
Phone: (306) 631-2594

Study Supervisor: Dr. Keith Walker, Professor, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.
E-mail: keith.walker@usask.ca
Office Phone: (306) 220-0614

Purpose and Procedure: The purpose of this study is to investigate clergy resilience to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care.

This study involves three aspects of data collection including an online survey distributed through the Flourishing Congregations Institute, individual interviews with clergy, and an interpretation panel composed of ten members including clergy, denominational leaders, professionals who are involved in educating clergy, and professionals who are involved in supporting clergy wellness.

You are invited to participate in an **individual interview** based on the following criteria:

- have at least one year of work experience as a clergy in a congregational setting;
- preference given to variation in the interview participants based on gender, denominational affiliation, years of experience, and type of role;
- willing and able to read, write and speak in English;

- willing to attend the interview, either by telephone or via online video conferencing format; and
- willing and able to provide informed consent.

Participants will also be asked to complete some written answers on a worksheet prior to the interview and a photo of the worksheet will be collected by the researcher. Interviews will be audio recorded, as well as notes will be taking by the researchers. Participants may request that the audio-recorder be turned off at any point. The interview recording will be transcribed, either by the researcher or by a third party, with only the researcher and the transcriber hearing the recording. For interviews conducted over video conferencing a transcribing program may be used. The Social Science Research Lab may be used to transcribe some interviews and will sign a confidentiality agreement. Names of interview participants will be changed to pseudonyms in the transcript and the identities of interview participants will not be disclosed in any way.

Results from this study will be used primarily in my dissertation but may later be published in a journal or book, used for a presentation, or at a conference.

Confidentiality:

This study asks interview participants to share their perspectives on clergy resilience. Interview participants identities will be not be disclosed; instead participants will be identified using a pseudonym in the transcript and reporting. While individual quotes may be used in the report, all personal identifiers will be removed or altered to protect participant anonymity.

Storage of Data:

Consent forms with interview participants names will be stored separately from your interview worksheet, recording, and transcript. Consent forms will be secured in a locked cabinet within a locked office. During the study all information will be stored in a secured manner. At the completion of the study all consent forms, worksheets, surveys, recordings and transcripts will be securely stored and retained by Dr. Keith Walker, Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education. Data will be retained for five years post publication, after which it will be deleted and destroyed following University of Saskatchewan procedure.

Potential Benefits:

Interview participants will be invited to reflect on your experiences and share your perspectives on clergy resilience. There may be no direct benefit to you as a participant in this study.

However, for some participants these findings may contribute to increased knowledge of resilience and cause you to reflect on ways you can enhance your own personal resilience. There might also be applicability of findings to other areas of your professional role. Also, findings from this study may have the potential to contribute to theory and practice regarding clergy resilience. However, there is no way to know if any benefits will actually occur.

Potential Risks:

Discussing the challenges and adversity that clergy face in their professional role may bring up some mild emotional distress during the interview; however, this distress is considered minimal as the focus of the interview will be on clergy resilience. Should you become distressed during the interview it will be paused to explore if you wish to continue. If the you do not wish to continue, due to distress, the researcher will raise with you the possibility of seeking counselling and will provide the following counselling options:

- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)
- For clergy who do not have an EAP, the following counselling services specialize in clergy counselling:
 - Fairhaven Leadership Retreat: 250-260-1616
 - Clergy Care: 1-888-525-3749
 - Shalem Mental Health Network/Clergy Care: 1-866-347-0041

The interview will only be resumed at your indication.

The identity of interview participants will only be known to the researcher and supervisor; however, despite safeguards there is a small risk that your identity may be released. The consent forms with your name on it will be locked in a secure office separately from the recording of your interview worksheet, recording, and transcript. While the researcher is taking steps to

protect your identity, for this reason anonymity or confidentiality of participants cannot be guaranteed.

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to answer only those interview and survey questions that you are comfortable with. Despite agreeing to be interviewed, you have the right to withdraw at any point prior to or during the interview.

You will be invited to complete a worksheet prior to the interview, and you have the right to only complete what you are comfortable with. At the end of the interview you will be invited to submit the worksheet. Prior to submitting the worksheet at the end of the interview you can request to have any responses on the worksheet removed. Following the interview, you can no longer withdraw worksheet responses as they will be anonymous and not be identified by participant name.

Interview recordings will be transcribed, and you will be asked to review the transcript of your interview for accuracy. You will be sent a copy of your transcript and will be invited to review the transcript, submit revisions and give approval of the transcript within two weeks. Any parts of the transcript you would like removed, including the whole interview, can be removed prior to your approval of the transcript. If no response has been received from you within two weeks of receiving the transcript, it will be assumed that you are approving it and following this time it will not be possible to withdraw your responses. Once you have approved your transcript and analysis has begun, you can no longer withdraw your responses.

Questions: You are free to ask any questions concerning the research project at any point in the process. You are also free to contact the researcher and supervisor at the emails or numbers provided on the first page, if you have other questions.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office: ethics.office@usask.ca; 306-966-2975; out of town participants may call toll free 1-888-966-2975.

If you would like to receive a brief summary of study results, please provide an email address below and you will be sent a PDF copy.

Email address: _____

Appendix E

Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Interpretation Panel Members

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *Understanding Clergy Resilience: A Mixed Methods Research Study*.

Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you might have

Study Researcher: Margaret Clarke, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.
E-mail: mclarke72@mac.com
Phone: (306) 631-2594

Study Supervisor: Dr. Keith Walker, Professor, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.
E-mail: keith.walker@usask.ca
Phone: (306) 220-0614

Purpose and Procedure: The purpose of this study is to investigate clergy resilience to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care.

This study involves three aspects of data collection including an online survey distributed through the Flourishing Congregations Institute, one-on-one interviews with clergy, and an interpretation panel composed of ten members including clergy, denominational leaders, professionals who are involved in educating clergy, and professionals who are involved in supporting clergy wellness. The interpretation panel will be adding interpretative data to the survey and interview findings and providing insight into ways to foster clergy resilience through pre-service training and professional development.

You are invited to participate in the **interpretation panel** based on the following criteria:

- nomination by the Flourishing Congregations Institute advisory panel.
- have at least 5 years of work experience in one or more of the following categories:
 - as a clergy;
 - as a denominational leader;
 - as professional who is involved in educating clergy;
 - as a professional who is involved in supporting clergy wellness.
- preference given to variation in the panel members based on gender, denominational affiliation, years of experience, and type of role.
- willing and able to read, write and speak in English.
- willing to attend the interpretation panel meeting either in person or via online video conferencing format.
- willing and able to provide informed consent.

Notes will be taking during the interpretation panel discussion, in addition to being audio recorded. The recording will be transcribed, either by the researcher or by a third party, with only the researcher and the transcriber hearing the recordings. For interviews conducted over video conferencing a transcribing program may be used. The Social Science Research Lab may be used to transcribe the interpretation panel discussion and will sign a confidentiality agreement. Names of panel members will be changed to pseudonyms in the transcript and the identities of panel members will not be disclosed in any way. Non-identifying demographic information will be used to describe the panel composition in reporting. Individual quotations from the panel discussion may be included in the written reports but will be identified by pseudonym but actual identity.

Results from this study will be used primarily in my dissertation but may later be published in a journal or book, used for a presentation, or at a conference.

Confidentiality:

This study asks interpretation panel members to share their perspectives on clergy resilience. Interpretation panel members identities will be not be disclosed; instead members will be identified using a pseudonym in the transcript and reporting. While individual quotes may be used in the report, all personal identifiers will be removed or altered to protect participant anonymity.

The interpretation panel will occur in a group discussion format. At the beginning of the panel discussion, panel members will be asked to not disclose who has participated in the panel or what other members contributed. Panel members will be asked to not take photos, videos, or audio-recordings on their phones or other devices during the panel discussion.

Storage of Data:

Consent forms with interpretation panel members names will be stored separately from the panel discussion recording and transcript. Consent forms will be secured in a locked cabinet within a locked office. During the study all information will be stored in a secured manner. At the completion of the study all consent forms, surveys, recordings and transcripts will be securely stored and retained by Dr. Keith Walker, Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education. Data will be retained for five years post publication, after which it will be deleted and destroyed following University of Saskatchewan procedure.

Potential Benefits:

Interpretation panel members will be invited to reflect on the findings from the national survey and one-to-one interviews and provide further insights into clergy resilience and ways it can be fostered through pre-service training and professional development. There may be no direct benefit to you as a participant in this study.

However, for some participants these findings may contribute to increased knowledge of resilience and cause you to reflect on way you can enhance your own personal resilience. There might also be applicability of findings to other areas of your professional role. Also, findings from this study may have the potential to contribute to theory and practice regarding clergy resilience. However, there is no way to know if any benefits will actually occur.

Potential Risks:

Discussing the challenges and adversity that clergy face in their professional role may bring up some mild emotional distress during the interpretation panel; however, this distress is considered minimal as the focus of the interpretation panel will be on ways to foster clergy resilience. Should you become distressed during the interpretation panel it will be paused to explore if you

wish to continue. If the you do not wish to continue, due to distress, the researcher will raise with you the possibility of seeking counselling and will provide the following counselling options:

- Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)
- For clergy who do not have an EAP, the following counselling services specialize in clergy counselling:
 - Fairhaven Leadership Retreat: 250-260-1616
 - Clergy Care: 1-888-525-3749
 - Shalem Mental Health Network/Clergy Care: 1-866-347-0041

Your participation in the interpretation panel will only be resumed at your indication.

Any names used by participants in the interpretation panel discussion will be removed in the transcript and reporting. The identity of panel members will only be known to the researcher, supervisor, and the Flourishing Congregations Institute research team who will assist with panel member selection. Interpretation panel members will be asked to not identify other panel members who participated.

There is a small risk that your identity may be released. First, there is a risk that another panel member may disclose your identity. Second, the consent forms with your name on it will be locked in a secure office separately from the recording of the panel discussion and transcript. However, there is a small chance that they might be stolen. While the researcher is taking steps to protect your identity, for these reasons anonymity or confidentiality of participants cannot be guaranteed.

Right to Withdraw:

Despite agreeing to serve on the interpretation panel, you have the right to withdraw at any point prior to or during the interpretation panel discussion. Your participation is voluntary, and you can participate in only those discussions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, without explanation or penalty of any sort. Should you wish to withdraw, you may leave the interpretation panel at any time; however, data that have already been collected cannot be withdrawn as it forms part of the context for information provided by other participants.

I read and explained this consent form to the participant before receiving the participant's consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it.

Name of Participant

Researcher's Signature

Date

If you would like to receive a brief summary of study results, please provide an email address below and you will be sent a PDF copy.

Email address: _____

Appendix F

Appendix F: Agenda for Interpretation Panel

One week prior to the meeting, each panel member will receive an executive briefing of survey and interview findings to review.

1. Introductions and overview of the research study (10 min)
2. Quantitative findings (20 min)
 - a. Presentation of findings
 - b. Discussion about the ways in which these findings confirm or contradict panel members perspectives
3. Qualitative findings (35 min)
 - a. Presentation of findings
 - b. Discussion about the ways in which these findings confirm or contradict panel members perspectives
4. Discussion of implications of all of the findings to research question three related to pre-service training and professional development (45 min)
5. Summary of key discussion points and thanks (10 min)

Appendix G

Appendix G: Findings Presentation for Interpretation Panel

UNDERSTANDING CLERGY RESILIENCE

A Mixed-methods Study

Findings arise from a Canadian survey collected in June - July, 2020 with 519 participants and one-to-one interviews with 13 clergy members

Adversity

What adversity, challenges or problems do clergy perceive as hindering their resilience and wellbeing?

ISOLATION

Aspects of isolation identified by participants were geographic isolation, theological or cultural differences, the impact of moving and relocations, being cautious in relationships, having little energy for relationships, and peer competition.

WORKLOAD

Aspect of workload that participants identified as challenging included the needs encountered, time demands, complexity in the role requiring diverse skillset, the constant change encountered in their roles, and the relational dynamics involved in the work.

EXPECTATIONS

Aspects of expectations identified as adverse included societal apathy or hostility, financial pressures, denominational expectations, congregational expectations, and self-expectations.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Participants identified challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic as increased workload, restriction of supportive resources, and uncertainty about the future. They also valued denominational support during the pandemic and the unique opportunities that arose.

Scale Findings

A number of scales were used in the survey to understand the current nature of clergy wellbeing and resilience

GRIT-S

3.59/5
(SD 0.60)

1 = 'not gritty at all' 5 = 'extremely gritty'

Higher GRIT scores for older participants, those who agreed with statement "generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing", and who lived further than 25 km from family but had a mentor.

EGO RESILIENCY

44.96/56
(SD 4.86)

'High Resiliency Trait' (35-46)

Higher ER scores for those participants who had a current mentor and those who agreed with statement "generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing."

CANTRIL LADDER

Current satisfaction

8.27/10 (SD 1.58)

0 = worst possible life 10 = best possible life

Anticipated satisfaction

9.12/10 (SD 1.59)

Higher current satisfaction for older participants; whereas, those who lived more than 25 km from their personal supports had lower scores.

Higher anticipated satisfaction for those who agreed with statement "generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing."

HEALTH CURRENT STATE

75.57/100
(SD 16.52)

0 = worst state 100 = best state

Lower health current state scores for those who disagreed with the statement "generally, your congregation/parish is flourishing" than for those who agreed.

HEALTH GENERAL STATE

19.28
(SD 3.90)

5 = more health concerns 25 = less health concerns

WELLNESS SATISFACTION

29.58
(SD 4.86)

8 = not at all satisfied 40 = very much satisfied

Lower wellness satisfaction for participants 60-69 and 70+ years old than those under 40 and 40-49 years of age.

RESOURCES for clergy resilience

What personal, social, relational, contextual, and organizational aspects do clergy perceive as helping them to positively adapt to the adversity they face in their roles?

SPIRITUAL

Participants identified their relationship with God and a wide variety of spiritual practices and disciplines as a resource for their resilience. The communal aspect of spiritual life was highlighted. Practices that were frequently referenced included prayer, retreats, scripture, sermons, and spiritual writings.

RELATIONAL SUPPORTS

Relational supports was identified by participants as a resource that enabled them to be resilient. Categories of supports included: Spouse/family, friends, peers, mentors, leadership, congregation, and professional supports like counselling and spiritual direction.

PERSONAL ASPECTS

Participants identified a number of personal aspects as helping them to positively adapt to the adversity they face. Balance, boundaries, and attending to health through aspects like diet and exercise were identified as helpful. Also, a clear sense of ministry calling, a firm sense of identity, and self-awareness were also seen as important. Further, alignment between personal and insitutional values was important. Aspects of personality like optimism and flexibility were also identified.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Some organizational aspects were identified by participants as helpful for resilience. Institutional support such as good communication, training, or HR/business assistance were valued. Provision of needs through things such as salary and house were also identified. Role flexibility was another aspect identified.

HELPFUL INITIATIVES to support resilience

What formal or informal initiatives, programs, or supports do clergy consider to be helpful in sustaining their resilience and well-being?

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Participants identified a number of training and development aspects as helpful to their resilience. A rigorous discernment and ministry preparation process was identified as contributing to resilience, as was additional supports for those in early ministry. Development of specific skills related to ministry needs was also valued, as well as lifelong learning in general.

WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES

Participants identified access to wellness opportunities such as retreats and sabbaticals as helpful. They also desired financial means to access professional counselling and spiritual direction.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

Participants identified conferences and denominational events as helpful in providing both structured and organic opportunities to develop relationships with peers.

ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITY

Participants expressed the desire to have denominations set standards related clergy wellness and resilience that would be encouraged with clergy members, but not imposed. Also, there was a desire for denominational financial support of resilience initiatives.

Appendix H

Appendix H: Transcript Release form

Study Title: *Understanding Clergy Resilience: A Mixed Methods Research Study.*

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Margaret Clarke. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Margaret Clarke to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Appendix I

Appendix I: Survey Invitation Email Script

Dear [person's name],

I am emailing to invite you to participate in a nation survey of Canadian Christian clergy. This survey is one aspect of my research study, *Understanding Clergy Resilience*, which I am undertaking at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Keith Walker and in collaboration with the Flourishing Congregations Institute.

The purpose of my study is to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. Resilience is the ability to positively adapt to adversity or stress. Clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout. Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families as it decreases ministry effectiveness, lowers the sense of personal accomplishment in their role, and negatively impacting the quality of family life and family relationships.

Unfortunately, there is limited literature on the current nature of clergy resilience, the specific variables that enable clergy to positively adapt to adversity, and the aspects of pre-service training and professional development that best foster clergy resilience. This survey is seeking to collect information to understand the current nature of clergy resilience and wellness in Canada. Knowledge of the nature of clergy resilience may provide valuable insights for the development of clergy resilience through aspects such as post-secondary preparation of pastors, ongoing professional development, and individual care.

This survey will take participants approximately *25 minutes* to complete and includes a variety of questions about your resilience and well-being. As a full or part-time Christian clergy, you have valuable insight to provide, which will lead to greater understanding of clergy resilience in Canada. You can access the survey here: (survey link or hyperlink) and the survey will remain open until June 30, 2020.

You are welcome to share this survey link with any other clergy colleagues, as a great number of participants will provide robust knowledge of clergy resilience. Thank you for taking the time to consider my request. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clarke, Ph.D. (cand.)

Appendix J

Appendix J: Information Letter for Denominations

Dear [leader or organization name],

Thank you for considering my request to [distribute or share] my online survey link to all of your [clergy or members or constituents]. This survey of Canadian Christian clergy is one aspect of my doctoral dissertation research study, *Understanding Clergy Resilience*, which I am undertaking at the University of Saskatchewan under the supervision of Dr. Keith Walker. My study is also being done in collaboration with the Flourishing Congregations Institute.

The purpose of my study is to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. Resilience is the ability to positively adapt to adversity or stress. Clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout. Burnout is a significant concern for the clergy profession, those they serve, and their families as it decreases ministry effectiveness, lowers the sense of personal accomplishment in their role, and negatively impacting the quality of family life and family relationships.

Unfortunately, there is limited literature on the current nature of clergy resilience, the specific variables that enable clergy to positively adapt to adversity, and the aspects of pre-service training and professional development that best foster clergy resilience. This survey is seeking to collect information to understand the current nature of clergy resilience and wellness in Canada. Knowledge of the nature of clergy resilience may provide valuable insights for the development of clergy resilience through aspects such as post-secondary preparation of pastors, ongoing professional development, and individual care.

This survey will take participants approximately *25 minutes* to complete. The survey instrument includes questions across seven sections: (a) demographic information; (b) health status; (c) professional quality of life; (d) Cantril wellbeing scale; (e) Ego-resiliency scale, (f) GRIT scale; and (g) open-ended questions.*

By receiving this survey link from their [leadership title/organization], [clergy, pastors, priests] are more likely to participate in the survey and provide their valuable input, leading to greater understanding of clergy resilience. The online link is currently being programmed with the goal of having it ready to share by June 1. Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Margaret Clarke, Ph.D. (cand.)

* If you would like to review the scales and survey questions, I have provided an accompanying PDF document.

Appendix K



PURPOSE

Understanding Clergy Resilience is a research study through the University of Saskatchewan that is seeking to explore the nature of Christian clergy resilience in Canada to support its development through post-secondary training, ongoing professional development and individual care. Resilience is the ability to positively adapt to adversity or stress. Understanding clergy resilience is important as clergy are at risk of experiencing the negative impacts of role-related stress and adversity, especially burnout, which is a documented concern for the profession.

This survey is seeking to collect information from clergy across Canada to understand the current nature of their resilience and wellness. The survey will take participants approximately *25 minutes* to complete. Survey responses will be treated confidentially and all findings will be presented in an anonymous fashion.

Appendix L

Appendix L: TCPS-2 Certificate

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE



Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Margaret Clarke

*has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)*

Date of Issue: **10 December, 2018**