Chapter One

PRESBYTERIAN IDENTITY AND MINISTRY STRESS

In 1977 when almost half of all Presbyterian congregations in NSW joined the Uniting Church after decades of negotiations, ministers who remained with the Presbyterian Church faced many changes. The size and composition of congregations changed. The size and composition of presbyteries, regional governing bodies, changed. New structures were needed to support the Church's diminished role in social welfare, education and missions and to provide for theological education. These changes occurred in a context of reshaping the identity of the Presbyterian denomination in NSW, particularly in contrast to an alternative identity within the Uniting Church.

Sixteen years later the effects of these changes were still erupting as crises. In March, 1993 the Presbytery of Sydney found Dr Peter Cameron guilty of heresy, of making statements in a sermon that were inconsistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith to which all Presbyterian ministers and elders must assent. Cameron was a Presbyterian minister and Principal of St Andrew's College at the University of Sydney. He appealed to the General Assembly of NSW and in July, 1993 it dismissed his appeal on legal and theological grounds. The debate was given extensive media coverage and later Cameron published his views in Necessary Heresies: Alternatives to Fundamentalism (1993). For opponents of Cameron, the central issue was his attack on Scripture as "the only reliable source of religious authority" (Hastie, 1993, p.17). Supporters of Cameron perceived the central issue as a struggle for power: "It is not just a doctrinal matter, based on their view of the authority of Scripture, but behind it are the naked and frightening results of ambition, pride, greed and selfishness" (Mackay, 1993, p.13). Yet both sides were saddened by the matter, with Hastie (1993, p.17) describing it as "this painful event" and Mackay (1993, p.13) speaking "sorrowfully".

While significant changes were occurring within the denomination, ministers were continuing their pastoral work. Many writers have commented on the stressful nature of ministry, due to its structure and inherent role stresses (see summary and bibliography by Pryor (1982) and Australian research by Blaikie (1979) for example). I wondered about the psychological effects of such crises and ongoing stressors and how ministers attempted to cope with them. Some questions arose from working relationships with ministers and theological students in the early 1990s: in my interactions with theological students, as a teacher of pastoral counselling, and in interactions with ministers through informal contacts and more formal meetings in connection with work for the Social Services Department of the Presbyterian Church. I noticed that while some were enthused, productive and deeply committed to their vocation, others were struggling to maintain momentum, discouraged by lack of growth in their parishes and even questioning their vocation. The theological students were eager to finish their training and go out and evangelise, but some were struggling to fit their studies, families, personal spiritual development, parish commitments and a modicum of leisure into their
schedules.

These observations raised questions about stress in ministry, particularly within the Presbyterian denomination. How many ministers and theological students were highly stressed? What is producing the stress? Is the cause related to personality problems, social inadequacies or spiritual deficits? Is it related more to the functions of ministry? To what extent are issues within parishes and the denomination affecting stress levels in ministers? How does ministry stress relate to living in Australia in the 1990s?

In one sense, these questions were part of my background interests until a minister of a growing, innovative parish urgently requested that I conduct a study of ministry stress. He did not appear to be under great stress himself, but was obviously concerned about his colleagues and perhaps about seeds of stress in his own situation. That request became the catalyst for my study.

THE PRESBYTERIAN WORLDVIEW

In order to understand the thinking and coping of Presbyterian ministers in the 1990s it is important to consider at some length the theology that shapes their worldview. Blaikie (1979, p.56) defined a religious worldview as "an encompassing system of meaning that provides a definition of the nature of reality, including a conception of the supernatural, ideas on the nature of, and relationship between the 'religious' and the 'secular', beliefs about the nature of man and what constitutes meaning in life, and ideas about man's relationship to the supernatural and his fellow men." Worldviews can be related to coping at two levels: they provide linkages between individuals and social institutions as well as between everyday and transcendent reality. This point was made by Luckmann (1983, p.105) who stated: "Religious meanings are over-arching symbolic universes which attempt to link social structures to individual existence and convert everyday life and crisis situations to an extraordinary, transcendent level of reality."

The basis of Presbyterian theology was systematised by John Calvin (1509-1564) and his work underpins Presbyterian thinking today. It is not just important as the origins of Presbyterian thinking: there is also a strong resurgence of interest in, and preaching based on, original Calvinist themes. One example of this interest is a well-attended series of lectures titled "The Reformation Heritage and Today's Church" given by Alister McGrath at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Burwood from 11-14 September, 1995.

I also considered the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) in some detail because it is the confessional statement upon which the Presbyterian Church of Australia is based and ministers must assent to the Confession in their ordination vows. I summarised key aspects of Calvinism and the Westminster Confession because they provide a baseline from which my study charts differences between doctrine and pastoral realities.

Calvinism

I have chosen to discuss at some length Calvin's doctrines of human nature, God's
sovereignty and election. These correspond to important elements in Blaikie's (1979) definition of worldview and suggest how Presbyterians view divine-human relationships: they help to clarify how Presbyterians conceptualise human psychology, the divine nature and the basis of any relationship between God and humans. They cover a small but important part of Calvin's theology. I use them to establish a framework for the Calvinist worldview and some major psychological implications.

It is significant that the first section of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is titled "The Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Ourselves". In this section Calvin clearly states that self-knowledge is based on knowledge of God:

"In the first place, no one can look upon himself without immediately turning his thoughts to the contemplation of God ... indeed, our very being is nothing but subsistence in the one God" (Inst. I.i.1);

"On the other hand, it is plain that no man can arrive at the true knowledge of himself, without having first contemplated the divine character, and then descended to the consideration of his own" (Inst.I.i.2).

For Calvin, a valid human identity can only be gained through considering God as revealed in Scripture. Thus human psychology must be God-centred and informed by biblical knowledge. It is significant that Calvin's first discussion is of human identity compared to Divine being, a point which bears on his notion of human autonomy. In his view, humans are only free to act under the sovereignty of God. Presbyterian ministers today who have incorporated the central themes of Calvinism within their worldview would compare themselves to characteristics of God which are interpreted by Calvinist doctrines. Their sense of identity is inextricably linked to their understanding of the nature of God and their striving to become more like Christ.

**Human nature**

In exploring Calvin's views on the nature of humans it is important to distinguish between the original creation, reprobate or fallen humanity and the elect. Humans before the fall are described in terms of integrity and reason:

"The image of God ... denotes the integrity which Adam possessed, when he was endowed with a right understanding, when he had affections regulated by reason and all his senses governed in proper order ..." (Inst.I.xv.3).

This is important in describing the ideal person, before being corrupted by sin. It also suggests that Presbyterian ministers today are likely to strive towards personal integrity in which affect and behaviour are firmly controlled by cognition.

After the fall human reasoning was corrupted by sin and the will weakened by it (Inst.II.i.4); and humans are guilty before God for their sins (Inst. II.i.8). Consequently the doctrine of total depravity (the 'first point' of Calvinism) states:
"Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not - indeed he cannot - choose good over evil in the spiritual realm" (Steele and Thomas, 1963. p.15).

This emphasises the hopelessness of unsaved people. Ministers who assent to this doctrine view the plight of non-believers as desperate and are strongly motivated to spread the gospel message of hope that believers can be given a different nature when they are renewed by God:

"And let the small ones ... rejoice in their nobility, because God has exalted them, so much so that whereas they were simply like wretched worms and had nothing but ignominy in them, God has taken them up and made them new creatures" (Sermon on Ephesians 2:13-15, p.188).

In a chapter titled "Calvin and the Christian Self-Image", Louis Vos elaborates on the notion of a new creature, using material from Calvin's writings. He asserts that believers are fashioned into people who are like God and are given spiritual gifts:

"Furthermore, we have been 'rescued from the pit of perdition', through God's grace adopted and set apart for His own, begotten anew and conformed to a new life, and consequently embraced as new creatures, endowed with the gifts of His Spirit; as approved of God, we are pleasing and lovable to Him, renewed in the divine image, mirroring the marks and features of God's countenance" (1976. p.87).

In contrast to the wormlike hopelessness of non-believers, the situation and status of the believer as a beloved adopted child of God provides a basis for self-esteem. That is, the basis of self-esteem for a minister who assumes a Calvinist worldview is their status before God as a new creature. This can only be known and accessed through faith. Hence the self-esteem of a Presbyterian minister rests on faith and not concrete accomplishments in the past or present.

However, faith is expressed in a fundamental change in life direction and in a life of self-denial. Vos discusses repentance and its equivalent, regeneration or sanctification, as a complete life reorientation and asserts:

"Only through this complete reorientation of our life does the meaningless and uncertain existence of the sinner find meaning and certainty" (1976, p.93).

Presbyterian ministers, then, have resolved existential anxieties by internalising a set of beliefs which provide hope and ultimate meanings. Included in this worldview is a concept of the ideal person whose feelings and actions are rigorously subject to 'regenerate' thinking. Calvin states that the results of regeneration are humility in response to God's grace (Inst.II.i.11), a life of self-denial, glorifying God (Inst.III.vii.1) and a firm expectation of salvation (Inst.111.ii.16). That is, the ideal individual displays
moral qualities of humility and hope (which allows no lingering doubt about salvation) as well as behaviours consistent with self-denial. In short, the thinking which governs affect and behaviour is self-critical and self-controlling.

God's sovereignty

God's sovereignty is basic to Calvin's theology. His summary statement is found under the heading of "providence":

"(God) governs heaven and earth by his providence and regulates all things in such a manner that nothing happens but according to his counsel" (Inst.I.xvi.3).

A fuller account is as follows:

"... not only does he sustain this universe (as he once founded it) by his boundless might, regulate it by his wisdom, preserve it by his goodness, and especially rule mankind by his righteousness and judgement, bear with it in his mercy, watch over it by his protection; but also that no drop will be found of either wisdom or light, or of righteousness or power or rectitude, or of genuine truth, which does not flow from him, and of which he is not the cause. Thus may we learn to await and seek all these things from him, and thankfully ascribe them, once received, to him "(Instit. I.11.1).

This passage also reveals aspects of God's nature that are important in considering an appropriate human response to God's sovereignty. In other words, if God controls everything in the universe, what is he like? For Calvin, the manner in which God controls the universe depends on his wisdom, justice, goodness, righteousness, mercy and truth. According to Berkhof (1958), wisdom, truth and knowledge comprise the intellectual attributes of God; goodness (including mercy), holiness or ethical-majesty and righteousness comprise the moral attributes of God. Thus humans who desire ethical perfection can trust God's ruling and seek these things from God. Psychologically, these divine attributes depict the goal of human moral development for Presbyterian ministers. Yet moral development does not depend on striving to do good works. Instead, ministers' striving is directed towards properly seeking ethical perfection from God.

Does the doctrine of God's sovereignty imply passive submission to God's will? To some extent there is passivity in waiting for the sovereign God to act, but I have already mentioned the life of self-denial which Calvin posits as the proper human response to God's sovereignty. Two broad aspects of this response comprise loving worship of God and loving service to others (Inst.111.vii). Details of how a believer may actively obey God in various aspects of daily living are found in Scripture. The sovereign God reveals his nature and instructions to humans in Scripture which does not depend on the church for its authority but rather exhibits internal evidence of truth and is confirmed by the Holy Spirit's testimony to believers (Inst.1.iv to ix). Thus the Bible carries with it the full authority of God for all of human life. Ministers who assent to Calvinist theology take a strong position on the authority of Scripture. This was seen in the opponents of
Peter Cameron at his 'heresy trial' in 1993. It also has implications for their use of Scripture in making personal and ministry decisions. Ministers' coping behaviour is likely to include Bible reading to discern God's commands and principles, as well as prayer for confirmation of Biblical guidance by the inward work of the Holy Spirit.

The sovereignty of God over the whole of human life is emphasised in a chapter by Spykman (1976) titled "Sphere-Sovereignty in Calvin and the Calvinist Tradition" where he writes:

"Though the structures of creation have fallen under sin, God still upholds them by His Word and redeems them in Jesus Christ ... Fundamental to the Calvinist world-and- life-view is, therefore, an integrally unified understanding of the interrelatedness of creation and redemption. Redemption is the restoration of creation. Out of this commitment is born the conviction that life as a whole is religion; that life in its total extent and in all its parts is a coherent complex of ongoing responses, obedient and disobedient, to God's sovereign claim on the whole man in all his life-relationships" (pp 164-5).

Ministers assenting to Calvinist theology, then, strive towards obedience to God in all aspects of their lives. There is no distinction between 'secular' and 'sacred' domains of life: all is sacred and under the control of God. This poses the stress of bringing correct thinking to bear on all actions and affect, in every moment of life.

There are implications of God's sovereignty for corporate life, both Church and State. The relationship between the Church and State, or spiritual and temporal jurisdictions, is seen by Calvin to be that of separate spheres under the supreme authority of God (Inst. III.xix.15). Both Church and political arenas are legitimate spheres of Christian service and neither the Church nor the State has supremacy over human affairs (Commentary on Romans 13:1-7). However, the Church must assert its autonomy in the spiritual sphere.

Spykman (1976, p.167) argues that the doctrine of sphere-sovereignty offers a basis for cohesion in our highly differentiated society:

"It honours a rightful distribution of authority-centres in life. When its religious base is undermined or its unifying vision is lost, this view of things can degenerate into the fragmentation of life and the polarisation of society. But as long as these underlying Biblical principles are kept alive and these Biblical perspectives kept in clear focus, such a view of differentiated kingdom service can help the Christian community grow to greater maturity in exercising the many gifts of the Spirit".

In this passage it is clear that individuals exercising God-given gifts comprise the basis for community and that individual autonomy is not lost in community. These ideas also point to the expectation that the Calvinist minister will nurture a Christian community that is characterised by cohesion. Where parishes are fragmented and polarised, Calvinist ministers are likely to respond with some self-blame and also renewed emphasis on teaching about God's sovereignty over the Church.
Election

At the centre of Calvinist thinking about the relationship between God and humans is the doctrine of election. It states that those who are brought into a relationship of adopted sonship with God have been chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son and renewed by the Spirit. In particular, the doctrine of unconditioned election holds that God’s choice of those who are saved depends upon his will alone and not on any virtue or foreseen response in humans (Steele and Thomas, 1963). Those who are saved can be assured that they will be kept by God and need not fear damnation, according to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Psychologically, it is important to note that confirmation of election is discerned spiritually and not inferred from progress towards moral perfection. This issue is discussed further below.

On the other hand, those who are not elect are condemned to the judgement of eternal death, as Calvin states:

"Predestination we call the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined in himself, what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestined either to life or to death..." (Inst.III.xxii.5).

What are the implications of these doctrines for Presbyterian ministers today in terms of their work and stress? It may appear that election makes evangelism unnecessary: if God has already chosen those who will be saved, then calling upon all who hear the gospel to repent seems presumptuous. However, the doctrine of effectual calling distinguishes between an external call of God to all who hear the gospel and a special call by the Holy Spirit who cannot be rejected (Inst.III.xxii.8). The special call always results in salvation and is based completely upon God’s mercy (Inst.III.xxiv.1). It is often through evangelists who proclaim the external call of God that the Spirit calls the elect. Thus Calvinist theology encourages evangelism as one of the tasks of a minister.

The doctrine of election also makes a sharp division between the saved and unsaved. There are corresponding psychological differences between these groups. The unsaved may be "quite content with (their) own righteousness, wisdom and virtue" (Inst.I.i.2) but this contentment is based on self-ignorance (Inst.II.i.2) and is quickly punctured by suffering. Reformed theologians today argue that unsaved people experience the pain of separation from God, guilt and fear:

"On the one hand, conscience continues to inform man what he ought to do in relation to the will of God. On the other hand, it witnesses to the fact that man fails to do God’s will. The conflicting testimony awakens guilt. It drives man away from God into the experience of alienation. The conscience, with all of its potential for peace, in the situation of sin becomes the origin of fear and loneliness" (Minnema, 1976, p.145).
This is a further picture of unsaved congregational members, neighbours and acquaintances within the community. The appropriate response by the elect, according to Calvin, is compassion and continuing loving service. This view of the plight of the unsaved places considerable stress on Presbyterian ministers. They are acutely aware of suffering humanity (even if others are unaware of their alienation from God) and of their own responsibility to appeal to unsaved consciences through loving service and evangelism.

Are the elect exposed to specific anxieties? Weber argued that Calvinism resulted in great uncertainty about whether an individual was one of the elect and hence an emphasis on good works as a sign of election or, more accurately, as a means of convincing the individual of his or her salvation (1976, p.115). He then narrowed the notion of good works to work in one's vocation in order to argue that:

"The emphasis on the ascetic importance of a fixed calling provided an ethical justification of the modern specialised division of labour" (1976, p.163).

Does this analysis apply to Presbyterian ministers? Can it be argued that ministers who have a strong commitment to Calvinist theology are driven to work hard in their parishes in order to alleviate anxiety about their salvation?

It is true that Calvin mentioned only inward spiritual proofs of effective calling in the Institutes (Inst.III.xxv.1,6). According to Calvin, the assurance of the elect is based in faith on the love of God whose truth is revealed to them by the Holy Spirit (Inst III.ii.28) and hence there is a solid foundation for that assurance. On the other hand, a non-believer is unable to apprehend such spiritual truths because of a corrupted conscience. Thus from an "inside" perspective there is satisfactory spiritual evidence of election, while from an "outside" perspective there may be doubt and anxiety. A believer, then, may struggle with doubts and uncertainties but nonetheless return to full assurance of salvation.

Diligence in one's occupation is also part of Calvin's teaching on the Christian life but placed firmly under the sovereignty of God and accompanied by the help and guidance of God (Inst.III.x.6). Service in one's vocation is treated as one aspect of living as God's people (Inst.III.vii), springing from true worship of God which is defined as integrity:

"For, in the first place, he everywhere recommends integrity as a principal branch of his worship; by which he intends a sincere simplicity of heart, free from all guile and falsehood; the opposite of which is a double heart; as though it had been said, that the beginning of a life of uprightness is spiritual, when the internal affection of the mind is unfeignedly devoted to God in the cultivation of holiness and righteousness" (Inst. III.vi.5).

Current reformed theology defines work as tasks God is calling his people to do, not necessarily highly esteemed by the world, as a means of serving others and honouring God (McGrath, 1995). Recent emphasis on identifying one's gifts in order to make a correct decision about one's vocation is another corollary of the definition of vocation as
'what God has chosen for us' (McGrath, 1995, lecture 1). While there is no explicit teaching that diligence in one's calling, parish ministry or otherwise, is evidence of election, there is psychological pressure to seize on behaviours such as hard work in a lowly-regarded occupation as indicators of the self-abasement and self-control which mark the elect.

Since the anxiety of the unsaved is particularly associated with guilt and dread in the presence of human suffering, according to Calvinism, are the elect spared such anxiety? Through analysing Calvin's treatment of Christ's suffering in which the emphasis is on the perfection of Christ through obedience, Minnema (1976, p.159) argues that the elect are not only spared anxiety but experience love and grace in the suffering that is intrinsic to the human condition:

"Suffering for the believer in Christ, instead of intensifying conflict with God, intensifies fellowship with Him. Through Christ, suffering is transformed from a revelation of wrath and judgement to the revelation of love and grace. Christ makes the will of God even in suffering a mysterious joy and source of communion. Human pain in the life of the Christian is regarded not as an obstacle to the perfect life but an opportunity and means to its fulfilment."

A summary of the Presbyterian worldview, based on Calvin's theology, provides answers to three basic questions. What is God like? God is all-powerful, actively governing the universe in ways that are consistent with his ethical perfection. How can I know if I'm saved? Salvation is not based on family background or human actions. It is a gift from God to the elect. I can only know I am saved by faith, as a spiritual understanding given by God. What is required of me? I must commit myself to a life of obedience to God, actively carrying out Scriptural commands, seeking to become more and more Christ-like.

How is this worldview likely to produce stress in Presbyterian ministers? It presents an ideal of lifelong obedience in all aspects of life, together with progress towards ethical perfection. For ministers who are spiritual leaders or 'shepherds of the flock' there is pressure to model some measure of Christian maturity. Suffering cannot simply be endured (it certainly cannot be railed against) but must be seen to increase love, patience, self-control and other virtues. There is stress from the urgency of evangelism when the minister considers the state of the unsaved, both now and in the future. There is disappointment in seeing congregational members falter in their whole-of-life commitment and corresponding pressure to teach the full extent of God's requirement for believers. Finally there is the stress of constantly seeing one's body, which should be daily presented to God as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1) as merely weak, ineffectual and blemished by sin.

The Westminster Confession

The Confession was written by an assembly, called by and directly responsible to the English Parliament in 1643, to "formulate a plan for the reformation of the Church of England to make it more Presbyterian in government and more reformed in theology"
(Rogers, 1985, p.153). This move followed conflicts between church and monarchy in England over polity and creed since the establishment of a national church by Henry VIII in 1531. A century later the English Parliament was dominated by Presbyterian Puritans although Royalist Episcopalians and Independent Congregationalists were minority groups.

Together with catechisms, Psalter and other documents, the Confession was finished in 1647 and accepted by Parliament in 1648. However, political upheavals (overthrow of Charles I and rule by Cromwell without Parliament from 1653 to 1658, anarchy and restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660) meant that the Confession was not implemented and many Presbyterian ministers were ejected from their parishes. When the Episcopalian church was re-established under Charles II "vengeful bishops saw to it that on May 19, 1662, an Act of Uniformity was passed demanding complete conformity to a pre-1640s version of Episcopacy, with all the ecclesiastical and theological aspects to which the Puritans had objected" (Rogers, 1985, p.159).

Thus, the Westminster Confession should be read as a concise system of theology and the practical outworking of theology in the personal and social aspects of Christian life in opposition to the views of high-church Anglicans and, to a lesser extent, Congregationalists. The Assembly drew heavily on the theologies of Augustine and Calvin in preparing the 33 chapters which dealt with the following themes: Scripture as the Word of God for faith and life; God's sovereignty and purposes in human history; human sin and God's redemption; Christ as the mediator of God's covenant; salvation through Christ; Christian life in the ethical dimension; church, sacraments and last things. The thrust of the Confession is summarised in the first answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever". Glorifying God is expressed through living in obedience to God's Word.

Although the Westminster Confession did not become the basis for an established church in England, it has remained the principal standard, subordinate only to Scripture, for doctrine in Reformed churches elsewhere. According to Ward (1989, p.5):

"The distinctive feature of Presbyterian and Reformed churches which are true to original principles are:

1. **Acceptance of the Bible as the fully reliable written word of God**, the judge of all teaching and behaviour as well as of church government (2 Tim. 3:16). In other words, the Bible is the Supreme Standard.

2. **The public setting forth of the church's understanding of the teaching of Scripture in a Confession of Faith** which is adhered to by all office-bearers .... The **Westminster Confession** of 1647, sometimes with variations, is the principal Subordinate Standard of Presbyterian Churches."

Since the Westminster Confession is the official statement of faith for the Presbyterian Church in NSW it is important to emphasise its history as a reaction to high church
Anglicanism and its position as secondary to Scripture. It represents the declared beliefs of ministers and elders and the official doctrine of the Presbyterian Church.

Psychologically, the importance of the Westminster Confession lies in its propositional statement of orthodox Presbyterian beliefs. While the contemporary meaning of some propositions may be debated, the broad consensus concerning the Confession provides ministers with a clear standard for evaluating their own orthodoxy. This is significant in a context of privatisation (discussed further below) where denominational boundaries become blurred. The Confession can provide an enduring reference at times when they may question their identity as Presbyterian ministers.

Presbyterian History in Australia

An understanding of Presbyterian Church history is important as it provides a context for stressors within the Presbyterian Church today and helps to clarify the precursors of current conflicts and crises within the Church.

Ward (1989) provides a detailed history of Presbyterianism in Australia. The first Presbyterian minister arrived in NSW late in 1822 and five congregations were established by the time the Church was officially recognised by NSW Parliament. This occurred in 1837 through the Temporalities Act which recognised it as a colonial offshoot of the Church of Scotland. The crisis in the Church of Scotland in 1843, in which division arose over independence from state control, had repercussions in NSW. After much debate, in 1846 the evangelically oriented Church of Eastern Australia split from the Synod of Australia over the issue of solidarity with the Free, as opposed to the Established, Church of Scotland. A formal union of the two groups was achieved in 1865, when the colonial connection with the Church of Scotland was dissolved, although a small group continued as the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

In 1901 the Presbyterian Church of Australia was constituted. Its basis of union stated that the supreme standard of the Church was the Bible and the subordinate standard was the Westminster Confession of Faith read in the light of a Declaratory Statement which allows "liberty of opinion" on "matters in the subordinate standard not essential to the doctrine therein taught".

The period from 1901 to 1977 was marked by successive overtures regarding union with Methodist and Congregational denominations. Another theme was increasing liberalism in the Presbyterian Church of N.S.W. together with reactions such as the debate over the alleged heresy of Professor Samuel Angus between 1923 and his death in 1943. According to Clements (1983), debates over Union prior to World War II centred on maintaining a Calvinistic, as opposed to a more Arminian, perspective. Arminian theology holds that salvation depends on human faith, that Christ's death created the possibility of salvation for everyone provided they believe and that those who are saved may lose their faith and hence their salvation (Steele and Thomas, 1963). After 1960 the debates over Union centred on two issues: retaining the distinctive Presbyterian name and tradition, and holding the Bible to be the primary source of
authority for the Church (Clements, 1983).

Procedures to safeguard the rights and property of continuing Presbyterians were developed in the period up to formal union in 1977. An important issue was the use of the name "Presbyterian". Clements argues that in the legal battles over property and legislation for the formation of the Uniting Church the themes of "struggle" and "identity" merged into a debate over ownership of the Presbyterian Church. This was not new, for she comments that "there had not been a time since 1920 when an informal organisation did not exist in preparation for the defence of the Presbyterian Church" (1983, p.419). Indeed, she argues that there is an inherent basis for tension and splits within the Presbyterian Church because of its confessional position (and related disciplinary emphasis) together with its emphasis on the right of private conscience.

Across Australia, 916 Presbyterian congregations joined the Uniting Church and 521 remained as continuing Presbyterian congregations in 1977. In NSW 54% of congregations remained Presbyterian (Fullerton, 1988). Over the period to 1986, Fullerton concludes that there was a "general decline in the numeric strength of the Church in NSW" (p.22).

One important change after union was in theological training of continuing Presbyterian ministers. Some remained with the more liberal course at the Theological Hall located at St Andrews College while others undertook the Anglican course at Moore Theological College, with additional lectures in matters specifically related to the Presbyterian denomination. In 1983 the Theological Hall was moved to a temporary location and thence to its current location at Burwood. The Moore College course was an acceptable alternative, but the B.D. from Sydney University was rejected as a suitable course of training in 1985.

The main reason for these trends in the 1980s, according to Clements (1983, p.406), is as follows:

"...after 1977 the milieu in the Church was more conservative, and the differences were within a narrower range. At the Theological Hall, the Westminster Documents were used and veneration for Biblical scholarship was exhibited. The traditional Presbyterian position was again positively taught for the first time in decades. This was part of the world-wide revival of the 1970s in the publication and use of the best thinkers of the Reformed tradition that has previously been noted."

Thus there appears to be a return to Reformed traditions by continuing Presbyterian ministers in the decade immediately following establishment of the Uniting Church. These conflicts appear to have moulded a 'Presbyterian character' that is strongly committed to Calvinist theology. However, there is additional potential for stress because of the numerical decline of Presbyterianism after Union and conflicts between those who uphold Biblical authority with varying degrees of commitment. The numerical decline also corresponds with a decline in power and influence that is discussed more fully in the section on secularisation below.
So far, I have attempted to give an outline of the Presbyterian worldview based on selected themes from Calvin's theology, codified in the Westminster Confession and in the light of recent church history. The Presbyterian worldview contains the possibility of ministry stress in the following ways:

1. Its view of the unsaved as desperately suffering produces pressure to love and evangelise.

2. Since assurance of salvation is spiritually-based there is pressure to infer election or progress towards perfection from behaviour such as obedience to God in a low-status occupation.

3. Its ideal of the integrated human as a person with affect and behaviour firmly controlled by reason results in pressure towards cognitive control and self-criticism.

4. Since obedience and self-control are viewed as whole-of-life concerns there is pressure from the inclusiveness of religion.

5. Self-esteem is based on faith and therefore there is the pressure of vulnerability to self-doubt and lowered self-esteem if faith wavers.

6. As coping requires both waiting on God and active obedience to God's instructions given in Scripture there is the pressure of possible conflict between specific coping options.

7. The ideal of an ordered, cohesive Christian community can lead to the pressure of self-blame if the ideal is not realised.

8. The Westminster Confession as a standard for Presbyterian orthodoxy can lead to doubts about identity if the minister dissents but assurance of identity as a Presbyterian minister if the minister agrees.

In addition, I have argued that recent Presbyterian Church history has been stressful because it produced questioning of deeply-held beliefs and resulted in losses of people, property and influence.

MINISTRY AND STRESS

I now evaluate evidence about the nature and causes of ministerial stress using overseas and local research. I examine stress from a number of theoretical perspectives before turning to its immediate causes in Australian clergy.

Ministry stress and overseas studies

Ministry seems to be a stressful occupation. To what extent do ministers experience "strain upon their personal endurance" (Rosenthal and Rosenthal, 1985, p.146) or see
life as "taxing and exceeding (their) resources" (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984, p.19)? There is conflicting evidence over the extent of stress in ministers. Some studies based on narrow samples and exploring burnout or severe stress suggest strong clergy susceptibility (Jorden, 1980; Sanford, 1982; York, 1988) and Blackmon (1984) reported studies in which 75% of clergy experienced periods of high stress and one third seriously contemplated leaving their vocation. On the other hand, reporting on a series of studies using cross-denominational samples, Malony concluded:

"These results basically confirmed the earlier findings that clergy experienced less on-the-job stress and personal strain while feeling they had greater personal resources than the general population. However, these data suggest that clergy do experience greater role overload, role ambiguity and role responsibility; greater interpersonal strain; and less recreational and rational-cognitive resources than most people" (1988, p.166).

Studies have tended to emphasise either personality deficits or work-related factors in explaining clergy stress, with a much greater emphasis on situational causes. Three studies of personality factors are of interest. Two are about the Roman Catholic clergy whose communal living and vows of chastity obviously lead to lifestyles that are different from Presbyterian ministers. However, they raise questions about the effect of clergy roles on personality. In 1977, Kennedy, Heckler, Kobler and Walker assessed 271 randomly selected Roman Catholic priests and categorised 57% as "underdeveloped", defined as having an identity shaped by priestly roles and expectations of others, with little intimacy and much use of defences of intellectualisation and repression. From this study it is hard to distinguish the effects of elements common to clergy roles across all denominations, and elements specific to Roman Catholicism, but there is certainly evidence of clergy role affecting personality.

Daniel and Rogers (1981), in a review of studies using the MMPI and other assessment tools, concluded that a common personality type found in ministers was "perfectionistic, introspective, conflicted over the expression of hostility, isolated, detached and has great difficulty in establishing interpersonal relationships" and that studies "which show maladjustment increasing with increasing time spent within a religious vocation seem to support the theory that much of the maladjustment is due to job stress"(p.246). This study was not limited to Roman Catholic clergy and strongly suggests that dysfunctional personality styles in Presbyterian ministers could be the result of the work they do. Since the Calvinist worldview emphasises self-examination, striving to become Christ-like and human autonomy, it is likely that Presbyterian ministers would be at high risk of developing perfectionistic, introspective and isolated or detached personality styles.

In 1990, Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon studied 42 religious who were referred for residential treatment and found a consistent set of difficulties comprising intellectualisation, defensiveness, problems in handling emotions and, for males, confusion about sexual orientation. While this study did not try to link personality dysfunction to clergy roles, it detected a longstanding pattern of maladjustment, similar to the findings of Kennedy et al (1977). In addition, it raised the issue of whether these personality problems could have been identified at seminary, or novitiate entry. It is
likely that Presbyterian theological students have already developed a Calvinist worldview that would be modified during their training and subsequent work in ministry. Are they also likely to show signs of a typically 'Presbyterian' personality style?

These three studies raise questions about the relationship between personality and clergy stress. Together, they suggest that religious worldviews may produce typical personality styles that become increasingly maladaptive as the person is exposed to ministry stress. At a broader level these studies also raise questions about the plasticity of personality and identity, together with cause-effect relationships between person and situation factors.

Other overseas studies have focussed largely on situational factors. These include physical isolation, especially in rural parishes, the repetitive nature of ministry with weekly sermons and the same people, role conflict, role ambiguity, inadequate support, personal and family deprivation, institutional rigidity, conflicts regarding expectations placed on the minister and spouse, difficulties in defining success, blurred boundaries between personal and professional lives, and work autonomy which blurs the boundaries of accountability and responsibility (Rassieur, 1982; Willimon, 1989; Coate, 1989). However, the same studies mention corresponding psychological problems of loneliness, boredom, anger, frustration, low self esteem, lack of physical, psychological and social development, poor time management and doubt. Obviously there is a complex relationship between situational and personal factors in producing ministry stress and these cross-sectional, correlational studies are unable to establish causal pathways.

**Stress in Australian Clergy**

Australian studies of clergy stress have developed from a sociological perspective and hence emphasise conflict over goals and roles rather than specifically examining personality and situational contributions to stress.

Blaikie's (1979) study of the "Plight of the Australian Clergy" is the best source of data about role conflict and frustration as stressors in 1969-1970 for ministers in the state of Victoria from six denominations: Anglican, Baptist, Church of Christ, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian. His work was based on a number of assumptions. First, that conflicts and frustrations were part of parish ministry. Second, that one major source of conflict was the minister's worldview, defined in terms of theological position and orientation to "the world". Third, that conflicts between the minister and significant others over goals and role priorities were a major source of stress. These led to a primary hypothesis: "That the ability of clergy to cope with both challenge from other world views and conflicts over priorities and expectations is dependent on the nature of their own religious world views and the effectiveness of their reality maintenance procedures". (p.60).

The major problems found by Blaikie were: inadequate training; lack of time to complete ministry tasks to the satisfaction of clergy; excessive time spent on organising; high expectations from others; expectations not synchronous with those of the minister; little appreciation of work done; little leisure; and financial strain and strain on family life.
Blaikie found differences between those who held secularist and supernaturalist views, corresponding to liberal and evangelical theologies respectively. Those who had a secularist as opposed to a supernaturalist theological orientation experienced the greatest frustration and conflict and the secularists held views which tended to be different to those of significant others. Blaikie concluded that holding a secularist worldview was stressful for a number of reasons. Secularists tended to be tolerant of other worldviews and desire to help people in 'the world', thus confronting stress in their engagement with 'the world'. The openness of liberal theologies to other viewpoints made it more difficult to achieve an internally consistent meaning system. Secularists lacked supernatural legitimation and also tended to represent a minority position amongst clergy and laity, giving rise to reduced sources of social support and legitimation.

Blaikie's work sets a baseline for examining whether Presbyterian ministers experienced similar problems to clergy of other denominations or specific difficulties. While they shared some major problems with other clergy, the Presbyterian ministers differed from the ministers of other denominations in a number of ways. Of all ministers, they were most likely to believe that their goals were not shared by others in the denomination. Like Anglican ministers, they felt the system of appointment of clergy to parishes was unsatisfactory but together with Methodist and Church of Christ ministers, they reported that their stipend was satisfactory. Presbyterian and Methodist ministers said they were frustrated in performing ministry roles because of others' expectations and conflicts in their preaching between congregational wants and needs. These data should be considered in conjunction with Blaikie's finding that, along with Congregational and Methodist ministers, Presbyterians scored highest on secularist theological orientation.

Blaikie's study was conducted prior to 1977 and included many ministers who subsequently became clergy of the Uniting Church. In an appendix, Blaikie contrasted 35 Presbyterian ministers who remained part of the continuing Presbyterian Church after union, with 187 Presbyterians who joined the Uniting Church. He concluded that there were five major differences characterising a continuing Presbyterian minister: "theologically more conservative; more inclined to an anti-secularist and absolutist position; much more likely to adopt a "conservative" style of ministry and to focus in their ministry on the lost sheep and the parish; politically very conservative; and less likely to have had a university education" (1979, pp231-2).

Blaikie's work is important as a large study of Australian clergy from a number of denominations. Many specific areas of stress were examined and causes were attributed to conflicts, frustrations and lack of social support stemming from minority (secularist) theological beliefs.

At a descriptive level, similar evidence of discrepancies between gaols and roles of clergy and laity, though with different emphases, is found in Hughes' (1989) report from the Combined Churches Survey for Faith and Mission on Australian clergy. This was a national study, based on clergy and congregational responses from 98 churches representing five denominational groups but unfortunately Presbyterians were not included. Hughes emphasised stress in three areas: declining congregation numbers, together with a lack of evangelism skills, producing a sense of failure; increased demands
on clergy for personal friendship; and a decline in welfare and counselling roles (although there was a corresponding willingness to relinquish them).

Further evidence of role conflict between clergy and congregations of other non-Presbyterian denominations in Australia, expressed in terms of differing goals and role expectations for ministry, emerged in studies of the Uniting and Anglican Churches in a rural location by Dempsey (1983, 1991) and of Uniting Church ministers by Pryor (1982, 1986).

A study by Fullerton (1988), extending the work of Blaikie, provides the latest data on stress in Presbyterian ministers in NSW regarding theological orientation and role conflict. His theological categories were based on four belief statements: attitudes to wearing ecclesiastical robes in worship; and attitudes to the ordination of women. Major results were:

1. Those with a neo-orthodox orientation (that is, having a secularist emphasis) showed conflict and uncertainty over the future of the Church.

2. Role strain was experienced with respect to the roles of (1) evangelism due to negative self-evaluations and (2) administration, due to its time-consuming nature.

3. Tensions were experienced as a result of: inadequate training; living in a manse; viewing stipends as inadequate for future needs; excessive working hours; frequent moves; and expectations placed on the spouse.

4. Role conflict was experienced between ministers and significant others in the parish over the role of parish visitation.

Fullerton’s work emphasised that many of the tensions found in Victorian clergy in 1970 by Blaikie were also relevant to continuing Presbyterian clergy in NSW fifteen years later. He noted some trends towards a more fundamentalist theological position and it appeared that those with a greater secularist emphasis (the ‘neo-orthodox’ group) saw themselves as more deviant than their colleagues in NSW, but accepted by their parishioners and presbyteries.

To some extent, the studies of stress in Australian clergy have been limited by the theoretical focus on theological differences and role conflict as the causes of stress. The studies by Blaikie and Fullerton used theological categories (such as fundamentalist, moderate evangelical, neo-orthodox). Fullerton also attempted to use self-classification by the ministers but noted that “the major problem with the self-classification question was that, as no definitions of terms were provided, each respondent placed his or her own interpretation on the meaning of each category and it is clear that these interpretations were not always consistent with those on which the question was based or from respondent to respondent” (1988, pp71-2). These theological constructs are convenient labels, but cannot reveal the meanings of the terms for the individuals concerned. Similarly, goals such as care, challenge or worship and roles such as
evangelist, administrator or preacher are theoretical constructs having little integration because the focus is on partitioning behaviour in order to assess discrepancies. There is the beginning of integration in Blakie's work based on the concept of worldview but this is not fully articulated. The reader finds description and classification but not explanation. Thus the Australian studies conclude by specifying that ministers must clarify their roles and goals, reduce discrepancies by negotiation and seek support for their own position in order to cope with the conflicts. The individual minister, the individual context and individual meanings are lost in the analysis of roles. In contrast, psychological approaches focus on these critical issues.

Theoretical approaches to stress causation

There are many different definitions of stress and theoretical approaches from genetic and biological accounts to psycho-social explanations. In my view, process theories are most useful in analysing ministerial stress because of their breadth and ability to incorporate religious variables into the analysis.

In system or process theories a stimulus termed a 'stressor' places demands on the system which uses resources to cope with the stressor (Lazarus, 1971). The stressor can be an overstimulation or understimulation, while the system can be biological, psychological or social. Some stressful events may be desirable (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). Within process theories the concept of stress refers to the total transaction between stressor and outcome: in the transactional stress-coping theory of Folkman and Lazarus (1980, 1991) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) there are three levels of analysis (physiological, psychological and social) and four stages comprising causal antecedents, mediating processes, immediate effects and long-term effects. Of critical importance in this model is the mediating effect of cognitive appraisal comprising two interdependent types: primary appraisal which evaluates the event as irrelevant, benign or stressful; and secondary appraisal which is an evaluative process and deals with options, their probabilities of success and expectations of carrying out each option successfully.

A stress-process theory that emphasises the place of anxiety as an intermediate reaction is that of Spielberger (1972) who proposed that state anxiety is a response to a stressor perceived as a danger and in turn results in cognitive reappraisal and some form of coping response. He defined state anxiety as 'feelings of apprehension and tension' that are associated with but distinguished from, autonomic nervous system arousal (1972, p.491). One component of vulnerability to stress, proneness to anxiety in social situations, was defined as trait anxiety and Spielberger asserted that "individuals who are high in A-Trait are more disposed to experience elevations in A-State in situations that pose threats to self-esteem, and especially in interpersonal relationships in which personal adequacy is evaluated" (1972, p.490). Brown and Harris (1989) similarly argued that depression can be an emotional response to a stressor perceived as a loss in the presence of vulnerability factors (such as low self-esteem) and absence of protective factors (such as social support). Researchers have also investigated physical illness (eg Schroeder and Costa, 1984; McCrae and Costa, 1986) and schizophrenia (eg Day, 1987) as outcomes of stress.
Within the perspective of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), critical person variables affecting cognitive appraisals in stressful situations are held to be cognitive-coping style, such as repression-sensitisation, beliefs and values-commitments. While there is some discussion of how these sets of variables may individually affect coping via appraisals, their interrelationship is not addressed and strong empirical support for effects across widely different situations is lacking. However, research has demonstrated both direct effects of person and situation variables on coping responses as well as indirect or interactive effects, providing support for the process thesis (Krantz, 1983; McCrae, 1984; Scheier, Weintraub and Carver, 1986; McCrae and Costa, 1986; Parkes, 1986).

Stress and religion

Some research has been conducted on various aspects of the stress process, using religious measures in addition to secular measures. Religious commitment styles have been related to mental health, well-being and self-esteem in studies relating person and outcome variables (e.g. Batson and Ventis, 1982; Payne, Bergin, Bielma and Jenkins, 1991) and these suggest that different types of religiousness are related to psychological adjustment.

Causal attributions have been related to religious beliefs and type of situation. Ritzema (1979) reported stronger God attributions with positive outcomes and non-medical situations. In contrast Spilka and Schmidt (1983) found that God attributions increased in important medical situations where the outcome was in a positive direction. Gorsuch and Smith (1983) found that highly religious people attributed more responsibility to God for situations having extreme outcomes. Despite some discrepancies, these studies indicate that type of situation, outcome extremity and outcome direction are important correlates of God attributions.

Based on attribution theory, Spilka, Shaver and Kirkpatrick (1985) proposed that attributions depend on 'psychological availability' and hypothesised that religious attributions depended on religious characteristics of the attributor; the context of the attribution; characteristics of the event; and event context. Later empirical studies used more complex measures of God attributions and beliefs about God (Lalljee, Brown and Hilton, 1990) or investigated the attributional styles of specific religious groups, such as fundamentalists (Lupfer, Hopkinson and Kelley, 1988). Lupfer, Brock and DePaola (1992) tested ten predictions derived from the 'psychological availability' hypothesis. Among other findings they reported increased God attributions in positive situations and by people having conservative Christian beliefs. They found partial confirmation for the hypothesis that religious attributions increase when the event evokes religious values. Overall they confirmed three, partly confirmed three and failed to confirm four predictions.

In a broad programme of research, Pargament and others systematically investigated religious variables within the stress process. Religious commitment was related to a coping measure of psychosocial competence (Pargament, Steele and Tyler, 1979) and to attributions and coping (Pargament, Sullivan, Tyler and Steele, 1982; Pargament and Hahn, 1986). An important study investigating religiousness, religious problem-solving
styles and competence (Pargament, Kennell, Hathaway, Grevengoed, Newman and Jones, 1988) found that self-directing and collaborative problem-solving styles were correlated with measures of competence, whereas deferring styles were negatively related to competence. A comprehensive study of religious coping strategies within a fully researched process model of stress (Pargament, Ensing, Falgout, Olsen, Reilly, Van Haitsma and Warren, 1990) revealed that "the religious coping variables predicted outcomes beyond the effects of traditional dispositional religious variables and non-religious coping variables" (p.793) and hence established the need to use religious variables at all stages within the process stress model for a full understanding of stress and coping in religious populations.

While there has been much valuable work done on issues of stress and coping in religious people, I propose that two major questions require further elucidation:

1. What are the direct effects and interactions of event characteristics, with particular reference to judgements about the "religious" nature of the event? In this context it would be helpful to test Spilka, Shaver and Kirkpatrick's (1985) proposition that perceptions of the meaning of an event and its implications for personal control and self-esteem result in attributions to religious or other sources.

2. In what ways do religious appraisals affect the coping process? Pargament et al. (1990) found that religious appraisals, while statistically significant predictors of coping outcome, added little to the variance explained, yet appraisals are of central importance in process stress theories. Hence, further examination of their function is required.

Stress theory applied to ministers

Overseas studies of ministry stress have focussed on the direct effects of personal deficits and situational factors in producing stress and Australian studies have emphasised sociological approaches of role strain and role conflict. Can process approaches contribute to an understanding of clergy stress?

Process theories focus research on a number of levels (psychological, social, physiological) and stages (antecedent, mediating processes, immediate and long-term effects) with a particular emphasis on cognitive appraisals. Thus, they are able to take into account a large number of causes and effects in the stress-coping interaction and provide a broad model applicable to specific populations. As applied to ministers, they prompt questions about aspects of causal antecedents: cultural context; institutional systems; situational demands of ministry; personal resources brought to ministry tasks; and the nature of specific stressors. Mediating processes relevant to clergy comprise: social and institutional supports; clergy appraisals of stressful situations and support available; and clergy coping strategies. At the stage of immediate effects, process theories raise questions about physical and psychological effects on clergy as well as changes to relevant groups such as congregations or presbyteries. Longer term change at the levels of individual and organisational functioning would also be a focus in process theories. Moreover, the breadth of the theory invites broad description rather than detailed analysis of all stages. From the work of Pargament it is clear that application of
process theory to stress and coping in specific populations, such as members of religious
groups, requires extensive study and more readily addresses questions about responses
to specific stressors rather than questions about accumulated strains from ongoing life
experiences.

It seemed that in contemplating ministry stress, a process theory would be helpful in
describing all aspects of the problem because of its comprehensiveness, as seen above. However, it was necessary to focus more clearly on specific aspects of the context of
ministry in order to understand the possible meanings of stressful situations for clergy. One obvious feature of current ministry is the marginal status of religion in modern, secular Australia and an investigation of this phenomenon quickly became a part of my study.

SECULARISATION - THE CURRENT SOCIAL CONTEXT OF MINISTRY

In the above discussion of clergy stress some attention has been paid to personality and
environmental (parish, denominational) factors as causes. However, in a systems
analysis the broader social context is also a causal antecedent of stress. It would appear
that social change, particularly change in religious significance for Australians, is an
essential element in the study of stress. A general account of change in the religious
sphere is provided by secularisation theory and therefore this section will review
different approaches to secularisation as they pertain to ministry.

Definitions of secularisation

Generally secularisation theory includes an account of a process of decline in religious
significance, its causes and consequences. Secularisation is defined broadly as a process
in which there is a loss of social significance for religious thinking, institutions and
practice (Wilson, 1966). Some definitions include causal concepts of differentiation or
rationalisation. For example, Lechner (1991) stated that "secularisation theory is a
general theory of societal change ... (where) transcendentally anchored worldviews and
institutions lose social and cultural influence as a result of the dynamics of rationalisation
and the secularising impact of Christianity itself" (p.1104) and later noted that
"secularisation is properly conceived as a general process of differentiation but its pace,
form, and outcome depend on particular local conditions" (p.1105).

Wilson's (1966) definition points to the multidimensionality of religion but raises
questions about the nature of religious significance in the past and present. Lechner
(1991) adds causal elements and describes the effects as a decline in the wealth of
official churches; a separation of religious and secular authority; loss of religious
grounding of art, science and morality; and social membership based on citizenship
rather than on religious identity. The ultimate outcome of the secularisation process is
held by some to be the extinction of traditional (Christian) religion (Stark and
Iannaccone, 1994) although others (e.g. Lechner, 1991) deny that the demise of religion
is implied in secularisation theory.

Thomas Luckmann (1978) examines the "secularisation" of social theory or the change
from a traditional religious worldview to one based on empiricism. He argues that "the 'secularisation' of social theory thus resulted in a split between 'philosophical' and 'scientific' approaches to the knowledge of man and society" (p.9). Thus two methodologies have arisen: one based on mathematics and assuming a closed, mechanical universe and the other based on "intuitive reconstructions of the unfolding of the mind" (p.231). While Luckmann argues that the modern social structure has been secularised (defining secularisation as "the process that led to increasing autonomy of the various segments of the social structure from norms originating in the sacred cosmos" (1983, p.128)) he asserts that secularisation is a myth because it cannot account for "the fact that the individual is not secularised" (1983, p.132) even if the Church is.

These preliminary comments suggest that crucial to any evaluation of secularisation theory are clear definitions of what is religious and what is secular, as well as distinctions between institutional and individual levels of analysis. Some approaches to religious definitions from the sociological literature are now examined with the aim of establishing a basis for analysing claims about secularisation.

**Defining religion or religiousness**

According to Durkheim (1964) the distinction between religious and secular or sacred and profane lies in the social-individual dichotomy. For Durkheim, religious ideas stem from the collective mind while ideas constructed by a person are profane or secular. Religious rites are expressions of the group. Religious social relationships are characterised by intimacy and are found in societies based on mechanical solidarity, where the individual is linked directly to the group. Thus, religion is defined in terms of social relationships and the major function of religion in Durkheimian thinking is cohesiveness.

Which aspects of social relationships are central to ministry? Authority is important in ministry and was a major issue for my Presbyterian ministers. Weber (1947) analysed religious authority and identified its roots in charisma, where an individual is recognised as having exceptional powers usually of a divine origin. Followers are called to recognise the legitimate God-given authority of this person and to a sense of mission. However, few ministers possess charisma and Weber saw that charismatic authority is transitory and must become transformed or routinised to become a permanent basis for ministerial legitimacy. Charisma is therefore transformed into a rational-legal, 'traditional' authority.

For Presbyterianism, this tradition is Calvinism, but this presents problems for ministers today as Calvinism is no longer the mundane reality of their congregations. The evangelical flavour of modern Presbyterianism lends itself to charismatic leaders, yet "charismatic authority is specifically outside the realm of everyday routine" (Weber, 1947, p.361) with which most ministers are inundated. Furthermore, few Presbyterian ministers are naturally charismatic and struggle to set an appropriate example for their congregations. Weber also acknowledged that charismatic authority rests on "an emotional form of communal relationship" (1947, p.360) between the charismatic leader and their followers. A related problem is change in the composition of the congregation
due to social mobility and the recent phenomenon of 'denominational switching' (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Correy and Castle, 1994). While most Presbyterian ministers recognise the importance of close emotional ties with parishioners, few have the capacity to develop such ties with every member of the rapidly changing flock.

Glasner (1977) notes that Simmel held a religious relationship to be marked by faith, but not necessarily with a supernatural object, since any object can become an object of faith. He uses various terms to describe the religious element in human relationships: fervency, dependence, exaltation, devotion, surrender, unity (in Glasner, 1977, pp.107-8). What is of interest in Simmel's work is that he, too, defines as religious a type of social relationship which has been abstracted from the form of the group.

Glasner (1977) acknowledges that inclusive definitions of religion as examined above allow associations that are conventionally defined as secular, such as a tennis club, to be categorised as religious if the relationships between members are marked by interdependence, fervent pursuit of the inter-club championship, surrender of personal interests for the sake of the group and so on. The implication for secularisation theory, he asserts, is that while the structure of such organisations may change, by definition they will remain 'religious' and hence the notion of decline in their religious quality is untenable. Instead, he argues for an exclusive definition of religion, based on goals or objects, that corresponds more closely to conventional definitions: "Most accepted religions are concerned with salvation and have supernatural entities as their object of worship" (1977, p.111).

This exclusivist definition corresponds more closely to the phenomenon in which I am interested, ministry within the Presbyterian Church. It is appealing because it avoids difficulties of inclusivist definitions for secularisation theory. On the other hand, since it emphasises the objective of the social group in defining the association as religious or secular, it would not recognise ministry within a tennis club if the object of the social relationships (at least from the viewpoint of the minister) is the salvation of other tennis players. The exclusivist approach correctly examines the goals of the social group, but a broader theory is needed to account for individual objectives which can bring religious elements into secular groups. In other words, Glasner's approach fails to take into account individual motives and actions in his definition of religion.

For Glasner, secularisation "indicates a decline or decrease in the importance, significance and salience of religion at a specified level of analysis, over a specific period of time" (1977, p.112). He advocated two levels of analysis: cultural and organisational, with correlations between these levels to provide a secularisation profile at the societal level. He argued that analysis at the individual level (one's relationship with God, defined as 'the religious') was inappropriate since 'the religious' was available independently of organisations which could be more or less secularised. This may be true in the sense that religious beliefs can be held without engaging in corporate ritual, but the sources of beliefs relating to the supernatural order are most likely to be social and possibly social organisations such as churches, missions, educational institutions, families, media etc. Hence, while changes in 'the religious' may not correlate directly with secularisation they are not completely independent of organisational changes. The
sources of beliefs which underpin 'the religious' (in religious or other social organisations or institutions) are thus a legitimate concern of secularisation theory and cannot be dismissed as irrelevant.

An example of this can be seen in Clements' (1983) analysis of organisational changes within the Presbyterian Church in NSW immediately after the Uniting Church was formed in 1977. She argues that worldwide interest in Reformed thinking during the 1970s led to an increase in publications from a Reformed perspective and this, in turn, affected attitudes of Presbyterians in NSW. One result, she asserts, is an increased emphasis on Calvinist theology in the training of ministers. If her analysis is correct, then there is a causal chain from media to 'the religious' to organisational change which is of interest to secularisation theorists. Glasner's definition of religion would exclude consideration of change at this level.

Note also that Glasner is not implying a privatisation theory in which religion is banished from public life to be found only in a variety of personal experiences, but simply excluding the personal from a discussion of secularisation. In summary, a major implication of Glasner's approach for Presbyterian ministers and congregations is that changes in the beliefs or religious practices of individuals could not be examined as indications of secularisation processes. Psychological processes and explanations are considered irrelevant.

In contrast, Martin (1969) suggests that both the sacred and the profane are multidimensional and hence a series of polar opposites is needed to distinguish the two concepts. An example is this- versus other- worldliness, with strands of spiritual versus material, present versus future focus. He also argues that "no exclusive association exists in logic, or in practice between any one pole and any grouping of the others" (p.12) and hence "no sets of criteria can be utilised to distinguish between the religious and the secular" (p.13). He concludes there is no process of secularisation but rather the expansion and decline of different types of institutions over time. In a later work Martin (1978) restricted his definition of religion to Christianity and traced different patterns of development or 'transition to modernity' in various cultures. He thus moved towards Glasner's definition of religion as having a supernatural object, rather than taking an inclusive stance. His later work can be criticised, as Glasner's, for failing to incorporate psychological processes into his concept of religion.

A completely different approach was taken by Luckmann (1967) who argued that the basic problem of secularisation theory was its equating religion with the institution of the Church. Instead, he suggested an inclusive definition of religion in which a worldview or "configuration of meaning underlying a historical social order" (p.52) was defined as "an elementary social form of religion" (p.53). Applied to my study of Presbyterian ministers and congregations, this moves the emphasis from the denomination - its organisation, structure and history- to shared meaning systems held by people who may not consider themselves to be Presbyterian, attend church or participate in any organisations associated with Presbyterianism. People within the Presbyterian denomination in NSW may well share common elements in their worldviews, but this must be established and not assumed. In addition, any conclusions based on a study of "Presbyterians" having
common worldviews may also apply to others who do not identify with the denomination.

Yet Luckmann (1967) also argued that the socialisation process by which the worldview is internalised by an individual is also a religious process and this argument can be summarised from his treatment of the construction of systems of meaning as follows: Interpretive schemes, sedimented from past experiences, 'transcend' ongoing experience and are used to give meaning to ongoing experience which in turn modifies the interpretive schemes. The necessary detachment for the construction of interpretive schemes results from social interaction, observing the experience of another. Detachment leads to individuation of consciousness. Independent interpretations of another's experiences then become available as a means of interpretation for the self so that one views oneself from the eyes of another human. Through language, ready made schemes can be imported and through these the individual can create meaning. In addition, through face to face encounters, judgements of others on the individual's conduct are incorporated into the interpretive schemes as objective reality and hence conscience is formed. In structuring an objective moral universe of meaning the organism transcends its biological nature, asserts Luckmann, and this transcendence is a religious phenomenon. Hence the "social processes that lead to the formation of the Self [are viewed] as fundamentally religious" (1967, p49).

This is a radical departure from sociological theories of religion, to argue that psychological processes (internalisation of meaning systems and identity formation) are themselves religious. Certainly studies mentioned above of personality styles and theologically-based meaning systems contributing to clergy stress raise questions about the origins of maladaptive systems. Luckmann provides a coherent approach to this issue, a broad outline to which other specific explanations of identity formation can be applied.

Thus Luckmann contributes another functional definition of religion, emphasising systems of meaning, in contrast to other theorists who emphasise functions of social control (Bellah, 1970), legitimating, or challenging authority (Berger, 1967), or social cohesion (Durkheim, 1964). While exclusive definitions may be useful if the focus is only on religious institutions, inclusive definitions such as the one proposed by Luckmann (1967) allow a focus on religion at the level of the individual as well as allowing for a study of broad institutional change. Implications of both types of definitions are explored in the following sections.

Examination secularisation theories

If a broad definition of secularisation is a decline in the significance of religion then several specific aspects of religious institutions or organisations have been proposed as measures of secularisation, based on exclusive definitions of religion. These include a decline in power and wealth (Lechner, 1991) and in penetration in terms of membership, or participation of members (Barker, Beckford and Dobbelaere, 1993). In addition, proponents of a global theory of secularisation posit a contrast between a peak state for religious significance in the past and a lowered state in the present (the golden age
hypothesis).

It is common to point to the Middle Ages in Europe and Britain as a time of religious supremacy and personal faith where the worldview of individuals was dominated by religious tradition and ritual (e.g. Luckmann, 1978, who went on to critique this approach; Cox, 1965). Aspects of religious control included political power, formal control via church courts, informal control via confession and control via provision of education and welfare services (Thompson, 1986).

However, it has been cogently argued that in late medieval times in Britain and Europe, church attendances were very low relative to total populations; peasants were largely spirit worshippers; the behaviour of church attenders was often the opposite of pious; and clergy were deficient in religious knowledge and pious behaviours (Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; see also Budd, 1973). In other words, there was no previous 'golden age' of religion when religious influence was strong and consistent across all social groups (Douglas, 1983).

It is even more difficult to establish a 'golden age' for Presbyterianism in Australia, in order to measure a decline into secularisation. As I have already established, Ward's (1989) analysis of Presbyterian history indicates that the Presbyterian Church in NSW was insignificant in colonial times, weakened by splits before it became part of a national Church in 1901, and distracted by heresy trials and debates over merging with other denominations since 1901. There is simply no comparison between NSW Presbyterianism and the Holy Catholic Church prior to the Reformation. Nonetheless, individuals who correctly recall larger attendances at their local church or a bigger Sunday School in the past are implying a golden age in terms of their personal history. That is, it may be helpful to examine evidence for secularisation at regional or parish levels as well as at national, denominational levels if psychological aspects of secularisation are of interest.

Controversy surrounds evidence that is used to establish the decline or otherwise of religion in the present. Typical data include church affiliation as indicated on censuses or surveys; church membership; use of religious services related to life cycle events and civic occasions; measures of religious influence in political, economic, educational and family spheres; personal belief in God; and self-description as "a religious person" (Thompson, 1986; Stark and Iannaccone, 1994; Martin, 1969). Some of these indices relate to the dimensions of power and penetration of religion as an institution, but others refer to more private aspects of religion.

Lechner (1991) suggested that a decline in individual spirituality is not a refutation of secularisation theory because the theory is concerned with structural change in many societies; his view is that general secularisation theory has not been falsified. In contrast, Hervieu-Léger (1990) cited the rise of popular or celebratory religions in France, including the expansion of the Catholic charismatic movement to support a secularisation theory based on religious reorganisation rather than decline. The revival of fundamentalism (Ammerman, 1987) has also been used to refute secularisation theory, although Lechner (1991) disagreed, arguing that it is only a local phenomenon and
presupposes prior secularisation. On the other hand, Troeltsch (1931:1964) and Dent (1970) have argued that retreating to the core of a religion is a clear sign of secularisation because such fundamentalism indicates that the Church's teaching is no longer taken for granted. Some Presbyterian ministers in NSW possess charismatic gifts and teach about these phenomena as one aspect of the Christian life. Others (particularly at the time of the Cameron trial) have been labelled as 'fundamentalists' because of their views on the authority of Scripture. Of the two trends, the trend towards 'fundamentalism' appears to be stronger numerically. Does this indicate a reaction to secularisation, a process of desecularisation within the Presbyterian Church of NSW, or is it further proof of ongoing secularisation?

Current controversy about secularisation theory can be attributed to the effects of different definitions of religion (exclusive and inclusive) and different levels of analysis (institutional and individual). At present, general secularisation theory has grave weaknesses. Douglas (1983) and others have cast doubt on the notion of a peak period of religious significance. Although there is much evidence of declining church attendance across western societies there is evidence of a resurgence of formal religious practice in some places as well as moves towards fundamentalism. General secularisation theory cannot provide a clear interpretation of these trends.

General secularisation theory is inadequate for explaining the types of obvious changes that have occurred in NSW Presbyterianism over the last two decades. It appears that if a broad understanding of change across institutions and individuals is required, then an inclusive definition and theory such as proposed by Luckmann is required, together with a modified institutional theory that avoids the difficulties of general secularisation theory. I now return to Luckmann (1967) and examine his account of religious privatisation as a helpful extension of his secularisation theory. Then I discuss a specific framework for analysing secularisation within institutions, a theory that avoids the pitfalls of other approaches because it defines secularisation as a decline in religious authority over a specified period (Chaves, 1993, 1994). After outlining both approaches, I discuss how they can be applied to Presbyterian ministers in NSW.

Luckmann and private religion

Even within a small denomination, re-established as Presbyterian after decades of theological debate in 1977, there are many different theological positions (Fullerton, 1988). Are these just individual differences, or can they be understood as part of the process of secularisation?

According to Luckmann (1967), in simple societies, where uniform 'ultimate' meanings are available through primary socialisation, religion permeates all institutions and legitimates conduct across social situations. It is unquestioned, taken for granted. However, in more complex societies, where religious specialisation produces standardised doctrine, specialist roles and 'ecclesiastic' organisations, there is an increasing separation between religion and society, contributing to secularisation. The relevance of religious norms becomes more restricted to areas not already dominated by the norms of secular institutions. At the same time, major public institutions lose their
role of contributing to the formation of individual personality. The result, says Luckmann (1967) is that:

"The individual is left to his own devices in choosing goods and services, friends, marriage partners, neighbours, hobbies and ... even 'ultimate' meanings in a relatively autonomous fashion ... in a manner of speaking he is free to construct his own personal identity" (p.98)

and

"once religion is defined as a 'private affair' the individual may choose from the assortment of 'ultimate' meanings as he sees fit - guided only by the preferences that are determined by his social biography" (p.99).

Hence, individuals derive loosely integrated meaning systems from family members, friends, associates and media sources such as popular songs, personal advice columns in magazines, pop psychology articles, rather than through specialist religious or primary public institutions. Thus Luckmann (1967) affirms a theory of privatisation, in which religion is found in personal systems of meaning and has little part to play in public life. At the institutional level of analysis privatisation implies a declining role for religion in public affairs and as a source of ultimate meanings. At the individual level of analysis privatisation implies personal choice of values, beliefs and practices and religiosity that differs from official versions. More recent religious themes, constructed through association with significant others and used to provide purpose and meaning, include individual autonomy, self-expression, self-realisation, sexuality, familism, mobility and economic progress (Luckmann, 1967).

For Presbyterians, privatisation means that the sources and taken-for-grantedness of their 'fundamentalist' or 'Calvinist' or 'liberal' beliefs and actions are important. How do these themes relate to analysing secularisation from institutional and individual perspectives? If I am examining secularisation from a denominational perspective, I must ask first whether the beliefs and practices of ministers and congregations derive largely from their denomination, or from other sources: religious media, non-denominational organisations and secular sources. If the content of beliefs, practices and attitudes does not reflect official positions over time, a trend towards secularisation can be inferred. Second, at the individual level, I must establish whether the beliefs and practices are taken for granted or deliberately chosen. Luckmann's privatisation theory (1967; Beckford and Luckmann, 1989) emphasises free and deliberate choice of meaning systems as a criterion for secularisation.

The ministers appear to endorse strongly the Calvinist doctrines that are the official basis of the denomination but as a personal choice in the face of a secularised society. Calvinist doctrine also places a high value on human autonomy, under the overall sovereignty of God and there is room for individual variation in specific beliefs. At the denominational level, then, this does not imply secularisation but in their thinking ministers are choosing to desecularise themselves: they are cognitively secularised. The ministers' worldviews are also individuated and privatised.
Congregational members display a wider 'assortment' of beliefs which combine Calvinism with other theological positions (Kaldor, Powell, Bellamy, Castle, Correy and Moore, 1995). They are strongly committed to their religion (Kaldor et al. 1994), but it does not correspond as closely as ministers' religiosity with the official teaching of their denomination. The congregational members are privatised. In their thinking, some will have assumed denominational beliefs unquestioningly through primary socialisation and hence are unsecularised but others will have gone through crises of doubt and reconsideration: the latter group are also cognitively secularised. These remarks apply to secularisation at the individual level, but what can be said about the denomination as an organisation?

Chaves and institutional secularisation

Chaves (1993, 1994) proposed a modified secularisation theory of the declining scope of religious authority. He defines religious authority as the "influence of social structures whose legitimation rests on reference to the supernatural" (1994, p.756). Declining authority is examined at three levels: laicisation or the differentiation of religious from other institutions in society so that religion has no functional primacy; internal secularisation or transformation within religious organisations so that they conform to secular organisational patterns and hence result in a decline in the control of religious personnel over organisational resources; and religious disinvolvment or the decline in religious practices and beliefs in individuals. In this approach, specifying a focal period is essential so that decline in religious authority can be examined.

At the first level, in support of laicisation he discusses an analysis by Beyer (1993) of the Iranian Revolution and the role of fundamentalist religion pre- and post-revolution. In general terms, secularisation at the level of laicisation should result in decreased religious control over political institutions, the economy, courts, education, health and welfare services and other social institutions.

In the period since formation of the Presbyterian Church in Australia in 1901, but particularly since the Uniting Church was established in 1977, there are indications of secularisation at the three levels specified by Chaves. I will not attempt to develop the argument here but declining participation in educational, medical and welfare ventures suggest that laicisation is occurring within the Presbyterian Church in NSW, particularly as a result of events in 1977.

Chaves (1993) used data from a longitudinal study of 83 Protestant denominations in the US and Canada from 1919 to 1989 to investigate the second level, internal secularisation. He found that there was a trend for denominational control to pass increasingly from religious personnel to agency structures but the effect was dependent upon the degree of centralisation of religious authority as opposed to agency power. Often administrative centralisation was prompted by political or bureaucratic pressures such as laws related to property administration. Chaves argued that splits between conservative and liberal positions within denominations are "primarily elite struggles over organisational resources within Protestant denominations, struggles in which it is possible to mobilise support via theological issues" (1993, p.40).
Within NSW Presbyterianism, some specialisation of administration and conservative-liberal struggles over the Peter Cameron 'heresy trial' suggest internal secularisation.

Chaves (1993) argued that major effects of a movement from religious authority to agency authority in denominations comprised: congregational members became a resource base (market or constituency) instead of objects of control; the goal of the denomination was engagement with the world and not internal religious control; functional differentiation replaced geographical segmentation; and administrators having rational-legal authority replaced clergy with charismatic authority as primary roles within the organisation.

In his discussion of religious disinvolve, the third level of secularisation, Chaves (1994) argued that beliefs and affiliations were not central concerns but rather "the extent to which actions are regulated by religious authority" (p.768). Brief examples of intermarriages between US Catholics and Protestants and declining differences between the two groups in terms of family size and use of contraception were given to illustrate declining religious authority over individuals. Chaves also suggested that religious control over voting, diet, dress and weekend behaviour would also be relevant areas for research. He acknowledged that individual action may be regulated by overlapping spheres and hence it would be necessary to select strong measures of religious authority in trend data.

Within the Presbyterian Church, relatively liberal attitudes regarding remarriage after divorce and other selected social issues (Kaldor et al, 1995) suggest religious disinvolve. However, these trends within the denomination must be viewed in the context of secularisation trends at all three levels for churches as a whole in NSW. That is, there is also a general process of secularisation within NSW society.

**Secularisation and Presbyterian Ministers**

I have foreshadowed later argument that there are signs of secularisation within the Presbyterian Church using Chaves' definition and model (1994, 1995). Thus a major issue for Presbyterian ministers is likely to be the effects of secularisation at the level of their denomination and upon their parishioners. In other words, it would seem that many congregational members would be living 'secular' lives that have little connection with the ideals of Calvin, with worldviews that are influenced by many other informal sources of meanings and hence privatised. In contrast, ministers who have been part of the renewed interest in Reformed Theology would have been influenced by a worldview that emphasises individual responsibility under the broad sovereignty of God. To the extent that they take on Reformed theology as integrated, personal beliefs, they develop an identity as a Reformed minister, one of the elect, called to diligence and integrity and to lead others to individual faith and life commitment to God. That is, they are striving to live out a highly individualised, religious worldview and encourage others to do the same, while living in a secularised world. This produces conflict.

Luckmann (1967) gives three possible results of conflict between requirements of 'religion' and 'the world': (1) a 'leap of faith' or a purely individualistic solution to life
problems; (2) shifting from 'secular' to 'religious' behaviours in an unthinking, routine way; and (3) forming an explicitly 'secular' value system.

It is unlikely that ministers would form overtly secular value systems, despite the pressures of representing a denomination that is becoming secularised at institutional and organisational levels and dealing with parishioners' demands which spring from their privatised worldviews, if a religious worldview defines their identity. Some may routinise their performances so that they move unthinkingly between the two domains but it is likely that personal or vocational crises would demand reflection from time to time. It is most likely that ministers are pushed by the secularisation forces already outlined towards privatised belief, to individualistic solutions incorporating salient religious elements. Yet these solutions would be evaluated by individual ministers against the 'ideal' of their internalised theological systems, the idealised Reformed minister and some integration of this ideal and privatised beliefs would be needed.

Whatever solution is found to the conflict, discrepancies between the 'official model of religion' and 'the subjective system of ultimate significance' would be a major cause of stress in Presbyterian ministers.
Chapter Two

THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH, AIMS AND GUIDING HYPOTHESES

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MY STUDY

I began my study with a desire to integrate my work as a psychologist with my religious practice. As a clinical psychologist who also holds a theological diploma, I had for some time been involved in teaching pastoral counselling to Presbyterian theological students, while also offering therapy to ordained ministers and congregational members in difficulty. My students' idealism contrasted with the hard reality of pastoral life and I began to see how clergy stress was as much a matter of belief and religious striving, as of personal psychology. The two domains were woven together and both had to be addressed in therapy.

Several factors reinforced my interest in this topic. My masters thesis studied homeless adolescents at a church refuge and as a result I acted as a consultant psychologist for the staff. Together, we discussed counselling practice from a Christian perspective. One outcome was the joint presentation of a paper titled *Integrating counselling within community: a context for change in homeless adolescents* to the 1991 Australian Congress on Christian Counselling (Miner, Lee and Roncevich, 1991). My teaching and practice of counselling from a religious perspective led me to the works of popular Christian counsellors, such as: Collins (1988), Adams (1970) and Crabb (1977, 1987, 1988); lesser-known religious therapists such as Lovinger (1984); and pastoral theologians such as Boisen (1937), Hiltner (1958), Oden (1966, 1983) and Thurneyssen (1962). I also read in the Journal of Psychology and Theology about attempts to integrate faith and practice within individual therapy.

Preliminary reading on values

My reflections led to more discrepancies than any satisfying integration of approaches. In order to overcome some of the difficulties of specific religious beliefs, I began to read about therapist and client values and their impact upon therapy. I read in Rokeach (1973) that the purpose of therapy was to change client values. In the same decade Ellis (1971, 1973) was proposing that the purpose of rational emotive therapy was to produce a fundamental shift in the client's philosophy. Late in 1991 I prepared a paper on the contribution of A. E. Bergin to the psychology of religion. Bergin's work from 1980 to 1991 covered three main areas: values brought by therapists to the counselling process; religious approaches in therapy; and the implications of religiosity for mental health. The article I found most interesting was Bergin's 1980 paper, where he clearly compared theistic and humanistic values that were frequently applied in therapy. I saw Bergin's
underlying and often unstated assumptions were: religious values are a subset of general values; religious values affect therapy; religious values are involved in the non-specific, non-technical process of change in therapy; and religious values may legitimately be subjected to empirical analysis.

In December I submitted a 10,000 word paper which examined the theoretical and research context in each of these areas, a description and critique of Bergin's contribution and a concluding section on future research possibilities (Miner, 1991). This focussed my attention on significant issues in the psychology of religion over the past two decades and I moved away from a focus on values. I was critical of Bergin's lack of definition; his use of different sets of values across different studies; his failure to specify a basis for evaluating values (that is, moving from description, to ethics); and assuming that certain end states of therapy were desirable; and his simplistic conclusion that discrepancies between therapist and client values negatively affect therapy outcomes. In the area of religion and mental health, Bergin attempted to demonstrate that an intrinsic religious orientation promotes mental health. I was critical of Bergin's lack of any developmental theory of the religion-mental health nexus (although he conducted longitudinal studies in this area).

However, Bergin's research led me to an appreciation of research on the intrinsic-extrinsic orientation of Allport and Ross (1967) and, more importantly, the work by Pargament and others on the ways religion relates to coping in stressful situations (Pargament et al, 1988, Hathaway and Pargament, 1990). The last articles were significant because they took aspects of theoretical psychology with clinical significance and showed how sound measures and statistical techniques applied to theory could explicate relationships between religion and mental health.

Relationship between religion, stress and coping

At this stage my reading in preparing for my thesis was also informed by my teaching. Some of Pargament's work clearly related to themes of stress and coping that underlay the practical theory I was using in my teaching of crisis intervention and abnormal psychology. This led to a useful integration of religiosity, models of stress and coping, and psychopathology. In particular, Oser and Gmunder's (1991) study of religious judgement broadened my appreciation of these factors in the development of religious reasoning.

The culmination of six months of research and reading in 1992 was a paper titled 'Good' and 'bad' religion in stress and coping for the 1992 Australian Psychological Society Conference. This review of the literature from 1980 to 1991 made the following points:

a) Meta-analyses relating religiosity and clinical pathology showed weak positive associations between religious beliefs or commitment and mental health (Bergin, 1983).

b) Meta-analyses contrasting intrinsic religiosity (where the person is committed and religion is an internalised master-motive) and extrinsic religiosity, (where
religion is used for external purposes such as security, social status or power) found that intrinsics showed little worry or guilt, good control and competence, while extrinsics had more mental health problems (Batson & Ventis, 1982).

c) Very few clear relationships were found between specific types of religious coping and mental health outcomes, with the exception of problem-solving style. Pargament et al (1988) found that self-directing and collaborative styles (either making autonomous decisions or acting jointly with God) resulted in higher competence, whereas a deferring style (leaving it all to God) resulted in lower competence.

These studies examined religion as an independent variable, using mental health measures as dependent variables. More complex models, each with limited support, were proposed in the literature: the distress-deterrent model of Krause and Van Tran (1989); inconsistent mediation models of Hathaway and Pargament (1990) and Park, Cohen and Herb (1990); and a multivariate belief-motivation model of Schaeffer and Gorsuch (1991). My paper contrasted these models and noted that further research was required to apply them systematically across a range of situations with varying controllability, with outcome measures covering self-esteem, mastery and negative affect and with a range of intervening variables including religious appraisals and supports.

My reading on stress and coping from a secular perspective moved from the work of Lazarus (1966), Folkman and Lazarus (1980), Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Folkman and Lazarus (1991) to detailed studies of values, attitudes and beliefs as they affected coping, and particularly cognitions such as attributions and other appraisals. I examined the literature on social support as it affected coping including studies of religiousness and social support, religiousness and causal attributions, as well as Pargament’s work from 1979 on religiousness and the coping process.

Most of these studies were based on cross-sectional designs with large heterogeneous samples, using scales with known psychometric properties and correlated with other well-researched variables. Yet there were few studies examining structural and process issues in homogeneous samples. Given my clinical work with Presbyterian ministers and parishioners, I wondered if such a relatively homogeneous sample of believers would yield similar results to overseas studies. My reading of Oser and Gmunder (1991) had made me sensitive to the developmental aspects of religious thinking as well as the importance of qualitative analysis for investigating religious beliefs and judgements. I decided to examine the longitudinal aspect of belief on coping by comparing people’s responses at various ages, or stages in their religious journey. I also determined to gather qualitative data to supplement quantitative analyses.

I was also impressed by the rigour of Pargament’s work, so my first doctoral proposal in August 1992 was a major study of Presbyterian congregations, with coping as the dependent variable. While many studies had related dispositions and coping to psychological outcomes, detailed analyses of the determinants of religious coping were lacking. My proposed independent variables included: demographic data; religious behaviours and experience; religious judgement; congregational support; and appraisals
of a stressful event. At this point my interest in Presbyterians was fortuitous. I was involved in many activities of the Presbyterian Church and had some direct access to Presbyterian ministers, theological students and congregational members. I thought this would provide an interesting sample.

**Locus of control (LOC) and other attributions**

In response to comments from Professor Brown of the University of NSW, and realising that this proposal too closely replicated Pargament's work, I moved towards an examination of how beliefs about control (and particularly God's control) influenced attributions and coping in stressful situations. Park, Cohen and Herb (1990) had found differences between Protestants and Catholics in outcome depending on the controllability of the event. They defined controllability in objective terms (event occurred independently of individual's behaviour or psychological condition) and used ratings of 8 psychologists to establish occurrence controllability of 111 events presented to their subjects.

Nonetheless, I thought they ignored several important considerations. First, individuals differ in appraisals of controllability. Rotter's (1966) work on LOC established that people vary in expectations that rewarding consequences will result from their own effort, luck, or powerful others. Thus, controllability is a function of attributional style. Second, attributional style may also depend on type of event. Third, for religious people, perceived controllability may also be a function of their understanding of God's purposes in the event. Perceived human controllability may also vary as a function of the type of causal attribution made to God: as directly causing the event; allowing the event to happen; or working through people to cause the event. Hence, event type, attributional style and perception of God's purposes, or working, in the event may interact to produce an assessment of controllability. Although considerable work has been done in the area of LOC and stress-coping variables (see Lefcourt, 1983 for a review), very few studies have related LOC to religion and stress. Pargament et al. (1982) related types of LOC (God, chance, self) to competence and found no direct relationship. It appeared to me that LOC as a cognitive style may not be directly related to outcome measures such as competence but mediated by other variables, such as causal attributions, skills, situational factors, social supports etc.

Denominational issues also emerged at a theoretical level at this stage. Most of the work done by Pargament involved mixed samples of US Protestant congregations. Park, Cohen and Herb (1990) contrasted Protestant and Catholic student groups but no studies had specifically compared attributions and coping of different Protestant groups. Some studies found denominational differences in LOC scores. Levin and Schiller (1986) reported high internal scores for Mormons, Episcopalians and Catholics and high external scores for Presbyterians. They suggested this was related to "reverence for powerful elders" (p.86). However, Silvestri (1979) found that religious subjects who were highly dependent on God scored high on internal control, presumably because they rejected chance as a cause. Other researchers (Tipton, Harrison and Mahoney, 1980; Jackson and Coursey, 1988; Mitchell, 1989) also found that high scores on faith in God were negatively correlated with an external (chance) LOC. Traditional Presbyterian
theology emphasises God as a sovereign who is highly controlling in the sense of predestining people to heaven and hell. On the basis of this central belief, I wondered whether Presbyterians would score highly on appraisals of God’s direct control and also on internal LOC. While religious judgement and social supports in a religious context were significant aspects of a coping model, they are not central to control beliefs and their effects and so I decided not to include them in my studies.

My thinking about other aspects of methodology also changed. I had initially proposed a study based on a congregational sample but I was becoming more interested in stress and coping in ministry through my clinical work and teaching at the theological college. Since the total populations of Presbyterian theological students (60) and parish ministers in NSW (130) are relatively small, I could carry out more intensive studies using these subjects while sampling relatively large proportions of these populations. Thus, while my emphasis on locus of control and beliefs about God’s control remained, I began to question how such beliefs and styles affected stress and coping in the stage of preparation for ministry, as well as during the career of a parish minister. I decided to carry out three related studies using Presbyterian theological students, ministers, and church attenders as samples. At this point I envisaged that three studies would converge in explicating the effects of beliefs about God’s control within the stress-coping process.

Initial aims

My broad aim was to investigate the relationship between perceptions of crisis events and coping behaviours in people actively holding Presbyterian beliefs. Specific aims were:

1) To investigate the strength of Calvinistic beliefs in Presbyterian church goers, ministers and theological students.

2) To examine the relationship between Calvinistic beliefs and LOC scores amongst Presbyterians.

3) To investigate the impact of dispositional styles (LOC, religious commitment, experience and problem-solving style), Calvinistic beliefs and situational appraisals (positive-negative, controllable-uncontrollable, severity, novelty and duration) upon causal attributions (God directly controlling, God allowing, God working through humans, self, chance, others).

4) To investigate the relationship between dispositional styles, Calvinistic beliefs, situational appraisals and causal attributions upon coping behaviours.

5) To examine the effects of dispositional styles, Calvinistic beliefs, appraisals, attributions and coping responses upon affect and well-being.

In this formulation, religion was clearly an independent variable, cognitive styles were both dependent variables (as in aim 3) and independent variables (as in aim 4), and coping behaviours were dependent variables (aim 4) and independent variables (aim 5),
all within a stress-coping model typical of Lazarus and Pargament. I will now describe the development of the three separate studies which formed my investigation.

STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

I wanted to conduct a small, preliminary study that would test a large number of variables related to these initial aims. Presbyterian theological students were an obvious choice as my first population: they were a small, distinct population; my teaching at the theological college meant they were readily accessible; they could be contacted over an academic year if repeated measures were taken; and they comprised a pre-ministry stage for a later study of ministry stress. I expected they would be a highly religious group because I thought their decision to study at a theological college would be based on strongly held beliefs. In addition, I thought their choice of a Presbyterian theological college would indicate adherence to a Calvinist theology which would be confirmed and strengthened by their studies. Thus, I expected that the Presbyterian students would form a relatively homogeneous group having high religious commitment and strong Calvinist beliefs.

Design and subjects

Their accessibility prompted me to think about a repeated measures design. I have already mentioned that I saw a need to move beyond cross-sectional studies to tease out cause-effect relationships in the stress-coping process. I decided to measure selected dispositions, affect and well-being early in the academic year and repeat these measures, along with measures of stress and coping, after six months. This period would allow for stress and coping related to mid-year exams to be assessed, as well as other individual stressors. The repeated measures design would allow me to test the effect of selected intervening stressors on change in the outcome measures of affect and well-being.

I also wondered about using a comparison group in this small, preliminary study. If I could locate a group of theological students who were similar to the Presbyterian students but differed in beliefs about God’s control, then I could specifically test the effects of control beliefs on the stress-coping process. In choosing which theological college to approach for a comparison group I decided that it should represent a large evangelical Protestant denomination for similarity but with a definite non-Calvinist theology. The Baptist denomination fulfils these criteria: it actually shared a Calvinistic theology in the past but has moved decisively to an Arminian perspective. Its 1689 Confession of Faith was based to a large extent on the Westminster Confession, although there are some important differences (Waldron, 1989). Chavura (undated) argued that over the period from 1831-1914, as a result of the Baptist search for identity, Baptist sects having a strict Calvinistic theology were overshadowed by the formation of the Baptist Union of NSW which today has a denominational identity and evangelical-Arminian theology. For these reasons I chose to use Baptist theological students as a comparison group.

My aim was to study 60 theological students, 30 enrolled at the Presbyterian Centre (a 50% sample of attending students) and 30 enrolled at the Baptist College (a 22% sample
of full-time students). I thought that this sample size would be sufficient to analyse the effects of denomination (and expected differences in Calvinist theology and control beliefs) on stress and coping. It would also be a manageable size for testing and analysing qualitative data.

**Measures**

In addition to basic demographic data, I needed to obtain measures of Calvinist beliefs, locus of control, dispositional styles, appraisals, coping and outcomes. Specific demographic items are listed in the chapter on methodology, as are details of the psychometric properties of the scales which I selected. Here I want to discuss reasons for the choice of specific measures. Since I decided to use a repeated measures design, some scales were also used in the second measurement stage.

**FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Calvinist beliefs**

While a general scale of Christian orthodoxy has been developed (the 6-item *Creedal Assent Scale* of King and Hunt, 1975) and several specialist beliefs scales as measures of fundamentalism (Kellstedt and Smidt, 1991), I could find no specific measure of Calvinism or Presbyterian beliefs, so it was necessary to construct a scale which would measure adherence to current Presbyterian theology.

From the text of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) I developed a set of statements to assess Calvinist theology. There are 172 paragraphs in the WCF and 87 statements were developed to reflect at least half of these, excluding only those doctrines which are regarded as incorrect by present-day Calvinistic theologians (Wilkinson, 1992), (such as identifying the Antichrist with the Pope (WCF 25.6)). It was not intended that the statement should reflect every idea within the paragraph, but simply one main idea. Thus the statements would not cover every point of doctrine within the WCF but were intended to cover a large sample of points. I submitted these draft statements to lecturers at the Presbyterian Theological College, together with their WCF reference, for comment. Following comments, which included the suggestion that additional items should be written based on the Declaratory Statement which "colours how the Confession in understood and sets some 'essentials' of belief" (Personal communication, 1993), I submitted a revised set of 90 items for comment and no further revisions were suggested.

Equal numbers of items were framed to reflect and fail to reflect Presbyterian doctrine. These items were then randomised so that they did not follow the order of chapters in the WCF. The 90-item set was then given to eight volunteers who were asked to indicate their agreement with each statement using a five point scale from strongly believe it to be true, to strongly believe it to be false. Based on their comments after the exercise was completed, several minor changes to the wording of items were made (see Appendix 1 for the item set resulting in the Calvinist Beliefs Measure). From these items I developed two scales using correlational and factor analyses (see Appendix 5 for
Benson and Spilka (1973) argue that Christians may score higher than non-Christians on internal LOC in traditional scales (Rotter I-E Scale, 1966; Levenson and Miller Scale, 1976) because they reject chance as causative. In a very small study, Silvestri (1979) found those high in "God-dependence" made significantly more internal choices on LOC while Tipton, Harrison and Mahoney (1980) found low correlations between faith in God and chance LOC. On the other hand, Richards (1991) found intensity of absorption in prayer was unrelated to internal LOC and was negatively associated with chance LOC and LOC in powerful others: he concluded that deep prayer does not require a person to relinquish control as a generalised style.

Consideration of earlier research led Gabbard, Howard and Tageson (1986) to develop a revision of the Rotter I-E Scale that could be used with highly religious subjects who otherwise may score at high levels on internality because they specifically reject chance or luck as causative. In their revision, Rotter's items referring to luck, chance or fate were replaced by items referring to God, spiritual powers or supernatural forces. They found that highly religious subjects were significantly more external on their revised scale than on Rotter's original scale and suggested that the revision gave a more accurate measure of LOC in highly religious groups. For these reasons I selected the Religious-Revision Locus of Control Scale for use with Presbyterian samples.

Religious dispositions

The choice of scales to measure religiousness was more difficult. It is clear that religiousness is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Dittes (1969) pointed out that while 'outside' studies of religion using general population samples found a general religious factor, 'inside' studies based on identified religious samples consistently found multiple religious variables. Working from a theoretical stance, Brown (1987) proposed that researchers studying religiousness should examine five components separately and in interaction: religious people; their beliefs and knowledge; attitudes and other responses; experiences claimed; and sanctioning religious traditions and groups.

A debatable issue is which variables best capture the multi-dimensionality of religiousness. Ragan and Malony (1976) reviewed studies based on theory, such as Glock and Stark's (1965) proposal of ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual and consequential dimensions, and on factor analysis. They praised as the most advanced and thorough 'inside' study of religiosity, the work of King and Hunt (1975) who developed and tested ten dimensions: creedal assent, devotionalism, church attendance, organisational activity, financial support, religious knowledge, orientation to growth and striving, extrinsic orientation, salience-behaviour and salience-cognition. These dimensions were confirmed through replications and factor analyses but the authors did not attempt traditional studies of reliability and validity. However, the question remained: were these ten dimensions most relevant to my purposes, or would specific scales having empirically based validity and reliability be more suitable?
One of the underlying aims of my study was to test the applicability of Pargament's findings to Australian, Presbyterian samples. He identified the intrinsic-extrinsic dimension, religious problem-solving styles, use of religious ritual and religious experience as important predictors of coping in religious samples (Pargament et al 1982, 1988, 1990). I decided to choose measures of these dimensions, in addition to a religious outcome measure that would complement secular outcome measures.

**Intrinsic-extrinsic religiousness**

The intrinsic-extrinsic (Int/Ext) orientation of Allport (1950, 1966) and Allport and Ross (1967) is defined variously as an attitude, motivation and cognitive style. Researchers have criticised the psychometric properties and the focus of their scale. For example, Hunt and King (1971) examined factor loadings and reported it was not a unidimensional, bipolar variable, a conclusion echoed by Hood (1971). Kahoe (1975) reviewed studies which suggested that Int and Ext were independent, rather than forming a continuum as originally suggested. In 1990 Kirkpatrick and Hood noted that Ext could be broken down into Ext-social (Es) and Ext-personal (Ep), depending on motivation for religious involvement and Int items did not cohere when part of a larger religious item set. Although Allport and Ross (1967) defined their concept as an attitude and motivation towards religion, Donahue (1985) and Kirkpatrick and Hood (1990) argued that it measured commitment and not sets of beliefs, with the latter writers advocating separate analysis of the respondent's belief system. In addition, Gorsuch (1990) pointed to bias in the development of the scale when he accused Allport of "clearly applying his own theological criteria to what a spiritually optimum Christian was" (p.88). On the other hand, the Int/Ext concept has generated widespread research into religiousness and has been aptly summarised as the "boon and bane" of current work in the psychology of religion (Kirkpatrick and Hood, 1990).

Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) developed a revised Int/Ext scale which takes into account criticisms of the original scales, provides measures of Es and Ep and has good psychometric properties (see Methodology section for details). I chose it for these reasons and also for its brevity and usefulness across all ages (see also Masters, 1991 for an evaluation of the revised Int/Ext scale).

**Religious problem-solving**

An obvious choice for the religious problem-solving scale was the original instrument developed by Pargament et al (1988). I have been unable to find any similar measure in the literature. I chose the shorter version of the scale for its brevity while retaining good psychometric properties (for details, see the Methodology section).

**Religious ritual and experience**

Pargament et al (1990) used single item measures of the frequency of church attendance, prayer and bible reading to reflect religious ritual. I would argue that a single item cannot reflect the richness of prayer as a religious activity since it may be individual or communal, an unthinking ritual or intense, personal experience, as well as having many
forms such as confession, thanksgiving, petition, meditation. Paloma and Pendleton (1991) obtained four prayer-type factors from their analysis of prayer activities: colloquial, petitional, ritual and meditative. They found that whereas frequency of prayer was a weak indicator of religious satisfaction, prayer experiences and use of meditative prayer were strong predictors. Since I planned to use an outcome measure that would reflect religious satisfaction or well-being, I decided to investigate prayer experience scales. Richards (1991) developed a Prayer Experiences Scale and tested it by means of factor analysis and correlations with psychological effects such as purpose in life, interpersonal trust, absorption and locus of control. Although detailed psychometric data are lacking, I chose it as an exploratory measure of prayer experience for this study in the absence of a better alternative.

Another published scale of religious experience is the Inspirit Scale of Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister and Benson (1991) who reported that it has high internal reliability and strong concurrent validity (see Methodology section for details). The items load onto a single factor with two aspects: feelings of closeness to God and experiences that have led to a conviction of God’s existence. It was chosen to complement the prayer experience measure for this study because of its known psychometric properties and published norms.

*Spiritual well-being*

The concept of spiritual well-being was explored as a possible measure of the outcome of stress. I wanted a broad but robust measure that could be used in repeated-measure and cross-sectional studies. The religious outcome measure used by Pargament et al (1990) was a three-item scale of closeness to God, closeness to the Church and perceived spiritual growth. I wanted a longer scale that would be less contaminated by recall over repeated measures but also more akin to the secular outcome measures I was using than Pargament's outcome measure. Interest in spiritual well-being (SWB) has grown from the quality of life movement where it was asserted that subjective well-being is an important component of quality of life (Campbell, Converse and Rogers, 1976; and Campbell, 1981). According to Ellison and Smith (1991) SWB is an approximation to spiritual health within a model of humans as integrated systems. Two related dimensions of SWB were proposed by Ellison (1983), a vertical dimension called religious well-being (RWB) based on the individual’s relationship with God and a horizontal dimension, existential well-being (EWB), based on a sense of life meaning, purpose and satisfaction.

Moberg (1984) argued that spiritual well-being was multi-dimensional and developed a 45-item scale which yielded seven indexes from factor analysis: Christian faith, self-satisfaction, personal piety, subjective spiritual well-being, optimism, religious cynicism and elitism. In contrast, the scale of Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) comprised 20 items, half measuring RWB and half measuring EWB. Respondents indicate the extent of their agreement with items on a six point scale. Scores may range from 10 to 60 on each subscale and between 20 and 120 for the full scale. There is considerable overlap between the Moberg and Paloutzian and Ellison scales: EWB correlates highly with self-satisfaction and RWB correlates highly with Christian faith and personal piety (Moberg, 1984). Since the scale of Paloutzian and Ellison is more parsimonious and has extensive
clinical and research use (see Methodology section for psychometric properties), I decided to use this measure.

As I reviewed the literature on spiritual well-being, I found an interesting cross-sectional study of spiritual well-being in college students. Fehring, Brennan and Keller (1987) found that EWB mediated depressive responses to life changes, but religious variables (RWB, spiritual maturity, spiritual outlook) were insignificant as mediators. However, these were unselected nursing students, and not strongly religious. I wondered whether religious variables, and particularly RWB, would have a mediating effect on depression or anxiety in highly religious subjects.

Psychological measures

In addition to a 'religious' outcome measure it was decided to use several psychological measures of immediate outcome in the stress-coping process. Many different non-religious outcome measures have been used: efficacy, trust and problem-solving skills (Pargament et al, 1982); self-esteem and personal control (Pargament et al, 1988); self-esteem and mastery (Krause and Van Tran, 1989); mental health status and perceptions of competence (Pargament et al, 1990); depression and anxiety (Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990) and anxiety (Schaeffer and Gorsuch, 1991). They appear to fall into three broad categories of positive outcomes such as self-esteem, competence and negative mood states. I decided to measure negative mood states as outcomes in order to avoid duplication of work already completed by Pargament and his collaborators.

I chose the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1963) as a measure of depression since it is a well-used and well-researched scale having excellent psychometric properties. Although the scale is transparent it has been used clinically and in research as both a state and trait measure of depression.

I selected the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI Form Y) as a measure of anxiety. It was developed by Spielberger (1983). I chose it for its psychometric properties and its widespread use in the literature.

Since many researchers have pointed to significant correlations between measures of religiousness and social desirability (eg Pargament, Brannick, Adamakos, Ensing, Kelemen, Warren, Falgout, Cook and Myers, 1987) and between measures of the stress-coping process and social desirability (eg Koman, 1991; Cole, 1988; Connell and Meyer, 1991) I decided to include a measure of social desirability in order to assess the effects of a general social desirability response bias on responding to self-report items about religiousness, stress and coping.

Two measures of social desirability have been used widely: the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne and Marlowe, 1960) and the Edwards (1970) Social Desirability Scale. The latter was constructed from the MMPI, while the former was constructed from other personality inventories in order to avoid the "pathological implications" of the Edwards' scale (Ballard, Crino and Rubenfeld, 1988, p. 228). Paulhus has distinguished two social desirability factors, self-deceptive positivity and
impression management, and reported that while the Edwards' Scale loaded on the first factor, the Marlowe-Crowne Scale loaded highly on both factors (Paulhus and Reid, 1991). On the other hand, Ballard et al. (1988) raised doubts about the sensitivity of some of the Marlowe-Crowne items. If the short-form is used, only two items out of thirteen have problematic indices of discrimination (below 35%), hence I decided to use the short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale as the best measure of social desirability.

In summary, the total questionnaire was a twenty-page document that required approximately one hour for completion. In briefing sessions I offered to administer it as an interview with students from non-English speaking backgrounds as some were more confident in their spoken English than reading skills. Apart from one-word or single sentence responses required for some items in the demographic section, other items involved circling a scale response or writing a number corresponding to a rating. The questionnaire comprised demographic items, the Calvinist Beliefs Measure, Religious-Revision Locus of Control Scale, Revised Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale, Religious Problem-Solving Scale, Prayer Experiences Scale, Inspirit Scale, Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory and Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale.

SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

Since this study was planned as a pre-test, post-test design I had to develop a second questionnaire that repeated some measures. The purpose was to investigate first, how religious and other dispositional variables affected perceptions of stressful situation and coping responses; and second, how stressful situations affected outcome measures of affect and well-being. A further aim was to compare responses to actual life events and hypothetical stressors.

Consequently, the second questionnaire included questions and scales relating to personally stressful life experiences and coping (see Appendix 2): repeated measures of depression, state anxiety, spiritual well-being and Calvinistic beliefs; and vignettes covering different types of life events together with ratings of attributions and coping alternatives (see Appendix 3).

Actual stressful life experiences

In the items about personal life experiences I wanted to use both validated scales and open-ended questions in order to understand how beliefs about God's control were applied in a stressful situation. I asked respondents to consider the most stressful event that had happened to them in the last six months and that had made them feel "most worried, angry, sad, afraid, or euphoric". The six months' period was selected to include end of first semester exams, as well as other personal or work-related issues. The definition of a stressor in terms of a positive or negative emotional response was intended to elicit a range of pleasant and unpleasant experiences. The open-ended items covered religious appraisals and responses and were designed to give a detailed account of how the respondent, in reflection, judged God's involvement in the event and in their
responses. I also wanted to obtain a number of measures of respondents' perceptions of God's influence in the event so that I could relate event-specific beliefs about God to general beliefs about God's control, as measured by the *Belief in God's Control Scale*.

In addition, I used five-point rating scales with items covering the event's pleasantness, novelty, avoidability and duration (after Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend, 1974; and McCrae, 1984); appraisal of the event as a threat, loss or challenge (after McCrae, 1984); and their handling of the event now and in a similar situation in the future.

I was particularly interested in whether beliefs about God's control affected appraisals of the event. McCrae (1984) himself categorised life events reported by his research subjects as losses, threats or challenges. He found that event types were correlated with choice of coping mechanism, so that faith, fatalism and expression of feelings were used particularly in response to a loss. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that dispositional styles could influence subjective appraisals of the event as a threat, loss or challenge. I wondered whether a tendency to attribute events to God's control, perhaps correlated with faith and fatalism as cognitive styles, might reduce judgements of the event as a threat or a loss. In other words, could strong beliefs in God's control reduce the perceived stressfulness of life events?

Prior to the questions concerning a specific life event, respondents completed a *Life Experiences Survey* (Sarason, Johnson and Siegel, 1978) covering the previous twelve months. This was included for two reasons: to get respondents thinking about stressful life events in the recent past and to establish the number of significant adjustments which they reported making in the last twelve months. Since only a total measure of adjustments was required, the respondents were not asked to rate the events as positive or negative, nor to indicate the perceived impact of the event at the time of its occurrence. It has been argued that "a simple count (unit scores) of self-rated negative life events is an efficient and predictive strategy to assess recent life stress" (Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990, p.564). Thus the scale was not used as designed by the authors and their psychometric data are not relevant for this study.

*Coping*

I had some difficulty in choosing coping measures. I wanted to assess both secular and religious coping using scales of similar length and format. There are three well-cited secular coping scales: the *Ways of Coping Scale* (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) which comprises 67 items rated on a four-point scale and loading on problem and emotion based factors; the *Coping Mechanisms Scale* of McCrea and Costa (1986) based on factor analysis of 118 items but comprising scales having low internal consistency; and the *COPE Scale* of Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989) comprising 60 items which load on 15 scales and were developed theoretically rather than empirically and could be administered to measure dispositional coping styles as well as situational coping.

Carver et al (1989) argued convincingly that the *Ways of Coping Scale* formed several factors, not just two and that other existing scales did not sample all of the domains of theoretical interest. Instead they proposed several scales related to different dimensions
of problem-based coping: active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint coping and social support for instrumental reasons. Two coping scales were related to an emotional focus and comprised social support for emotional reasons and focus on and venting of emotions. Mental disengagement and behavioural disengagement were also theoretically-based scales. However, they added empirically-based scales of reinterpretation and growth, denial, acceptance and turning to religion, and exploratory scales related to drug use and humour. Reliability (Cronbach alpha) for all scales, excepting mental disengagement, was satisfactory as were test-retest reliabilities over six weeks for the dispositional administration. Factor analysis revealed four clusters although turning to religion did not load substantially on any factor and evidence for discriminant and convergent validity was satisfactory (Carver et al, 1989).

Because psychometric data were reported for individual scales within COPE it was possible to select subsets of scales for particular purposes. I determined to select six scales including at least one to load on every factor and the remainder because of strong internal consistency. Consequently, I chose to use the scales of active coping, instrumental and emotional social support, restraint coping, denial and venting/focus on emotions. It seemed the first two scales involved primary coping, where the goal of dealing with the problematic situation was firmly in the forefront; the next scale involved positive secondary coping in that the emotional support did not directly change the situation but could help in subsequent active coping; restraint coping was primary in that the holding back was directed towards later action; denial and venting were secondary mechanisms which Carver et al (1989) suggested would be maladaptive in situations where active coping efforts were needed. Thus, the chosen scales also covered the primary-secondary dimensions and potentially adaptive-maladaptive methods.

The issue of an appropriate religious coping scale was more difficult. Pargament et al. (1990) reported on their empirically-based measure which comprised 29 items: factor analysis yielded five factors, namely spiritually based, good deeds, discontent, religious support and plead. They suggested the twelve items comprising the Spiritually Based scale shared "an emphasis on the intimate partnership between the individual and God in coping" (1990, p.802). The Plead scale comprised three items covering bargaining with God, requesting a miracle and questioning God about why the event happened. On theoretical grounds they added a further scale, Religious Avoidance. While all of the items in the first five scales had factor loadings in excess of .40, some of the scales with fewer than four items yielded internal consistency estimates below .70 and hence the authors indicated that revision was warranted. Although the religious coping scales of Pargament et al (1990) had satisfactory psychometric properties, they differed in construction from the secular COPE scale, yet it seemed that some of the scales were comparable. For example, the scale Good Deeds represented active coping, Religious Avoidance involved mental disengagement, Discontent involved venting, Religious Support obviously involved an undifferentiated type of social support and the Spiritually Based items involved a variety of primary and secondary coping methods. Eventually I decided to use Pargament's Religious Coping Activities Scale (1990) in an exploratory way, investigating different item combinations based on the theoretical considerations noted by Carver et al (1989).
I was interested in testing the usefulness of the primary-secondary coping dimension for subjects having strong Calvinist beliefs. If these beliefs represented a worldview in which God directly determined events, so that the appropriate human response was passive acceptance, then active efforts to cope by changing the situation would be unlikely. Instead, secondary religious coping would be prominent. On the other hand, if the Calvinist worldview encouraged human activity under the general sovereignty of God, then both primary and secondary coping methods would be used. Since I was developing hypotheses based on the Belief in God's Control Scale as a measure of God's direct control, I proposed that the first situation would hold and subjects would score high on secondary religious coping but low on primary religious coping (see "Guiding Hypotheses" below).

Another theoretical distinction that is relevant to religious coping is the distinction between primary and secondary vicarious coping. In primary vicarious coping the person is asking or using God for divine action or guidance; that is, God is doing the acting or planning. Examples from Pargament (1990) include "Used Christ as an example of how I should live" and "Asked for a miracle". In secondary vicarious coping the person is submitting to God's handling of the situation or themselves. Examples from the Religious Coping Activities Scale are "Accepted that the situation was not in my hands but in the hands of God" and "Realised that God was trying to strengthen me". I decided to explore these differences also and proposed that distinct scales of primary and secondary vicarious coping might be developed from the items of the Religious Coping Activities Scale.

Stress vignettes

One of the limitations in using actual life experiences is that each subject is depicting responses to a different situation. In order to obtain data about a specific set of situation types, I felt it necessary to use standardised material. I decided to develop a set of vignettes depicting stressful situations and tapping into the dimensions of: pleasantness-unpleasantness; health, moral, annoying and rewarding situations; and high-low potential control over outcome. These dimensions were derived from debates in the literature about the implications for stress theory of highly negative situations compared with hassles (eg Inglehart, 1991; Rodin, Schooler and Schaie, 1990); health or death related situations compared with other life events (Spilka and Schmidt, 1983; Billings and Moos, 1981); negative compared with positive, or pleasant situations (Bryant, 1989; Lalljee, Brown and Hilton, 1990) and the effects of judged controllability of the situation upon stress and coping (Rothbaum, Weisz and Snyder, 1982; Weisz, Rothbaum and Blackburn, 1984). Control over the cause of the situation was also found to be significant for coping (Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990), so I included this dimension in the design of the vignettes.

After several drafts and pilot administrations a set of eight vignettes was finalised. The vignettes were brief (approximately 35 word) descriptions, written in the second person, of stressful situations. Four types of situations were represented: health (cancer (can), injury (acc)), moral (drink-driving (D.D.), unethical work conduct (sack)), minor negative situations (document destroyed (work), poor haircut (hair)) and positive
situations (small win (win), major award (OOA)).

The following vignette describes a severe, unpleasant health situation with low control over the cause and low potential control over the outcome:

You have just been told that you have an inoperable cancer. There is no hope for a cure and it is likely that you will have less than twelve months to live.

A severe, unpleasant health situation with low control over the cause but high potential control over the outcome is illustrated by:

You receive many injuries after being hit by flying debris in a fierce storm. In hospital you are told that the extensive injuries should heal completely if you follow medical advice.

Table 1 below summarises the design of the vignettes across the four dimensions discussed above.

**Table 1: DESIGN OF VIGNETTES: SITUATION TYPE BY DIMENSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIMENSION*</th>
<th>SITUATION TYPE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Can. Acc.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over cause</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome control</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity/strength</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*High indicated by +

After the vignettes were items designed to measure attributions, control over the effects of the situation and coping responses (see Methodology section for details).

**Guiding hypotheses**

In this preliminary study the overall aim was to explore the relationships between beliefs and perceptions about God’s control and attributions in stressful situations, coping responses in stressful situations, and outcomes of the stress-coping process. Some specific hypotheses were also formulated:
1. Theological students will obtain high scores on measures of religiousness.

Studies have indicated that US seminary students score higher than other students or general populations on SWB (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1991) and intrinsic religiousness (Batson and Ventis, 1982). Other religious scores are expected to be high because of their significant correlation with intrinsic religiousness: collaborative problem-solving (Hathaway and Pargament, 1990); prayer experiences (Richards, 1991) and religious experience (Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch, 1985; Kass et al, 1991).

2. Presbyterian students will score higher on the Calvinist Beliefs Scale than Baptist students.

This is expected because the Westminster Confession of Faith, from which the Calvinist Beliefs Scale was derived, forms the basis of Presbyterian theology (Jell, 1980) but not current Baptist theology (Chavura, undated).

3. There will be no significant difference between Baptist and Presbyterian theological students on other measures of religiousness.

This hypothesis is based on the broad evangelical orientations of both denominations (Kaldor et al, 1995). Where denominational differences have been reported on measures of religiousness, these have been between evangelical and liberal/ethical’ Christians rather than between denominations sharing an evangelical orientation (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1991).

4. Religious well-being will mediate the effects of stress on outcome measures of anxiety and depression, so that high initial scores on RWB will predict lower subsequent scores on anxiety and depression.

This hypothesis is derived from findings of Fehring et al (1987) that EWB mediates the effects of stress on depression in non-religious subjects, in conjunction with Ellison and Smith’s (1991) observation that the two subscales of spiritual well-being (EWB and RWB) have different associations with measures of religiousness and psychological well-being.

5. Higher scores on the Calvinist Beliefs Scale will be correlated with:

   a) higher attributions to God’s causing the event;

   This tentative hypothesis is based on the view that the strong emphasis on God’s sovereignty in Calvinist theology (Calvin, 1559/1960; Spykman, 1976) could be interpreted as determinism, God directly causing world events.

   b) lower ratings of a stressful event as a threat or loss;

   A strong sense of control by God could diminish perceptions or experiences of an event as a threat or loss because this theology would provide meaning, a sense
of vicarious control and self-esteem that diminishes the negative psychological impact of threatening events.

c) higher scores on secondary religious coping and lower scores on primary religious coping.

This hypothesis derives from the problem- versus emotion- focussed coping distinction of Folkman and Lazarus (1984) and the finding by Pargament et al (1992) that religious coping mediates between general orientations (such as religious beliefs) and outcomes. Specifically, it is expected that people believing in God's direct control would be less likely to try to change the situation themselves but instead work on secondary dimensions of acceptance and emotional-spiritual change.

Note that the study of theological students was based on the above considerations. However, other questions were raised after reflecting on data from ministers and congregations. These questions and resulting post-hoc data analyses will be discussed later.

STUDY OF PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS

Although the study of theological students was designed to investigate a broad range of issues related to Presbyterian beliefs, stress and coping, the population of Presbyterian theological students in NSW was too small to permit statistical testing of stress-coping models. As I noted above, in preparing a paper for the Australian Psychological Society Conference (1992) I reviewed studies that tested theoretical models of religion, stress and coping. My interest was aroused by the relationships between sets of measures that related to the stress-coping processes of people with religious beliefs, or commitments. I now discuss these models in some detail to explain how my study developed.

Models of religion, stress and coping

In researching older black Americans, Krause and Van Tran (1989) found that while stress decreased mastery and self-esteem, church attendance and prayer operated independently to counterbalance this effect. That is, their work supported a distress-deterrent model but they recognised that other religious variables could intervene between stress and outcomes. Hathaway and Pargament (1990) found that intrinsic religious commitment had little direct effect on competence but an indirect effect via collaborative problem-solving style, supporting a mediation model. Park, Cohen and Herb (1990) used anxiety and depression as outcome measures. They found interactions between intrinsic religious commitment and the controllability of life stress, with differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant subjects. For Protestants, high intrinsic religious commitment was associated with a depressive response to uncontrollable events in the long term, suggesting the importance of mediating appraisal processes.

Schaeffer and Gorsuch (1991) found some direct effects of religious variables and some
mediating effects upon anxiety. They found that anxiety was largely mediated through religious problem-solving style, with collaborative and deferring styles associated with low anxiety and the self-directing style associated with high anxiety. Intrinsic religious commitment also directly predicted low levels of anxiety, while anxiety was increased by belief in an unpredictable and impersonal God. They concluded that measures of both belief and commitment were necessary to predict religious problem-solving and anxiety. It is important to note that while previous studies had explored religious variables as mediating between stress and outcomes, the research of Schaeffer and Gorsuch (1991) revealed relationships between measures of religious dispositions in addition to their mediating effects.

In process-stress models, appraisals and coping responses mediate dispositions and outcomes. Pargament et al. (1991) investigated the relationship between religious dispositions and religious coping. They defined coping as activities measured on the Religious Coping Activities Scale, non-religious coping activities, religious purposes and appraisals (including causal attributions and judgements of the event as a threat, loss or challenge). Although the sizes of some significant effects were quite modest, they found situation-specific coping differed between congregational members having intrinsic, extrinsic and quest orientations. That is, there was a direct relationship between generalised resources and specific coping.

Several further issues arising directly from these studies remained to be explored. First, what was the relationship between sets of variables that Pargament et al. (1991) defined as religious coping? In particular, the relationship between religious attributions and coping activities? Second, Pargament et al. (1990) found that religious coping activities strongly predicted outcomes of negative life events. Were religious attributions also predictors of outcomes? If so, did attributions mediate the effects of religious dispositions such as religious commitment and beliefs? Third, how do appraisals of event controllability relate to religious dispositions and coping? Fourth, most of the above studies examined coping responses to, and outcomes of, significant negative events. Were these models specific to serious negative situations, or would the relationships hold across a range of positive and negative events?

**Subjects and measures**

The vignettes (and related questions on attributions and coping) which were trialed in the preliminary study of theological students were designed to explore these issues. In addition I needed to obtain demographic data (see Methodology section for details) and measures of dispositions and beliefs. Since the sample would comprise Presbyterians, a suitable beliefs scale was one that measured Calvinist beliefs. The development of a Calvinist Beliefs Scale has been described above; it was applied to the congregational sample as an exploratory measure. Religious commitment and religious problem-solving were significant predictors of coping or outcomes in the studies discussed above and so were included in my study. A measure of social desirability was also included to evaluate systematic biases in responding to self-report measures. The specific measures used in the study of theological students were found to be satisfactory in these areas and so the same ones were used in this study (see Methodology).
As I have already indicated, in order to answer questions arising from the studies I have reviewed, I needed to obtain a large sample. Sample sizes for these studies ranged from 87 with relatively few variables in the model (Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990) to 538 with large item sets (Pargament et al., 1990, 1991). Since my questions related to several sets of variables in each of the categories of dispositions, appraisals, coping and outcomes, I needed a sample numbering at least in the hundreds. It was clear that the population of theological students (60) and parish ministers (130) was too small for this type of study and so I decided to use members of Presbyterian congregations. A large sample was also needed to analyse the Calvinist Beliefs Measure and to develop from it a smaller, reliable measure of beliefs about God’s control (BELCON or the Beliefs in God’s Control Scale).

Aims and guiding hypotheses

A number of hypotheses were based on assumptions that beliefs about God’s sovereignty would be related to external LOC scores and hence affect attributions and coping methods in similar ways. Note there was some evidence in the literature that specific attributions may be independent of LOC (Ritzema, 1979) and that religious coping may be independent of LOC (Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990) so the following hypotheses were tentative:

1) Those scoring high on Control Beliefs (BELCON) would be more likely to attribute events to God’s direct causation than to God’s allowing the events.

2) Those scoring high on BELCON would tend to use deferring problem-solving and those scoring low on BELCON would tend to use collaborative problem-solving.

3) Those scoring high on BELCON would be more likely to use religious coping in uncontrollable medical situations than in moral situations or minor hassles.

4) Those scoring high on BELCON would be more likely to use savouring (praising, thanking God) as a coping response than those scoring low on BELCON.

From my examination of the theoretical models in the religious stress-coping literature I predicted there would be a direct effect of religious commitment, BELCON and religious problem-solving upon coping, as well as an indirect effect through attributions. I further predicted that these direct and indirect effects would differ according to dimensions of the situation. Given conflicting findings in the literature, I was unable to develop any firmer hypotheses about the effects of situation type on the coping process at this stage.

STUDY OF MINISTERS

This phase of my research was originally conceptualised as a means of obtaining in-depth
information about the role of Presbyterian beliefs in the appraisals and coping of those I presumed would be a highly religious, distinct group: parish ministers. I wanted to extend the previous methodologies which either took one significant stressful event in the recent past (theological students' study) or provided hypothetical vignettes about supposedly stressful situations (study of students and congregations) to an examination of the life context of a homogeneous group for which general coping tendencies and specific coping data could be gathered. In other words, I wanted to extend my study of stress and coping from responses to discrete situations, to ongoing occupational stress. The main questions guiding this study were: Are Presbyterian ministers stressed? What aspects of ministry do they find most stressful? How are they attempting to cope with ministry stress? What are the religious and psychological outcomes of ministry stress?

Subjects

Two major criteria guided sample selection: first, I wanted the sample to be representative of parish ministers in the Presbyterian Church of NSW and second, I wanted a sample that would be sufficiently large to include contrasts between two or three subgroups of at least 20 cases, so a sample of at least 60 ministers was required. Interviews were completed with 65 parish ministers (for details of procedures and composition of the sample see Methodology section).

Measures

In order to answer the question, "Are Presbyterian ministers stressed?" I decided to investigate the extent of burnout in my sample. This reflects my interest in ongoing occupational stress in ministry.

Maslach (1982, p.3) defined burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind. It is a response to the chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings, particularly when they are troubled or having problems". In administering a burnout inventory I wanted to obtain a measure of stress that could be related specifically to vocational roles and could be used to check on the validity of the stress ratings obtained in the interviews. Three published measures of burnout were reviewed by Arthur (1990): the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) of Maslach and Jackson, 1986, the Staff Burnout Scale (SBS) of Jones, 1980, and the Tedium Scale of Pines, Aronson and Kafry, 1981. He suggested that the Tedium Scale required substantiation as a general burnout measure and noted that the SBS was developed for health professionals, with validation studies largely restricted to this occupational group. So I decided to use the MBI which has been applied to a range of helping occupations.

The question of sources of ministry stress was approached by a combined quantitative and qualitative method. I prepared a set of issues from the literature on ministry stress and with particular reference to Australian research being conducted by Rowland Croucher (personal communication, 1993). I decided to ask the ministers to judge the stressfulness of each issue on a five-point scale and then to comment on the issue. In
this way I expected to gain an understanding of the relative stressfulness of various aspects of ministry. In addition, Blaikie (1979) and Fullerton (1988) suggested that ministers were stressed by role strain and role conflict. I decided to include a set of ministry tasks for subjects to rate on a five-point scale according to their priorities and skills as a means of assessing role strain.

I planned to include a case study of one recent, stressful event to provide detailed information on appraisals and coping in the context of stress. This technique yielded rich data in the study of theological students and I was interested in comparing stress-related cognitions and responses of ministers and theological students as a first step in investigating developmental trends. For these reasons, I replicated the open-ended questions and coping inventories that were completed by the theological students.

I assumed that Presbyterian ministers would be a highly religious, homogeneous population with high scores on Calvinistic Beliefs and BELCON. In order to test these assumptions it was necessary to apply relevant inventories: those used in the study of the theological students had been administered without undue difficulty and so were replicated in the study of ministers (see Methodology section for details).

Depression and anxiety were used as stress outcome measures in the theological students' study. To facilitate comparisons I decided to use these measures also in the ministers' study. On the other hand, I was also interested in the relationship between these scores and measures of burnout and this was a further consideration in their use.

In addition to the usual demographic data, I decided to include some questions on the size, programmes and facilities of the parish. These were intended to provide a further basis for analysing questions on ministry stress.

**Broad aims and guiding hypotheses**

The broad aims of this study were to investigate attributions and coping in a specific situation but within a context of occupational stress. I sought answers to the following questions: Are ministers stressed? What degree of stress are they experiencing? What aspects of the vocation are judged to be most stressful? Is stress related to role conflict, as assumed in recent Australian sociological studies of parish ministry? Are beliefs about God's sovereignty stress reducers, stress exacerbators, or unrelated to stress? These questions derive from general dispositional and contextual aspects of the stress process. Other questions were derived from situation specific considerations: What sorts of attributions do ministers make in personally stressful situations? How do ministers attempt to cope with stressful situations? How do attributions and appraisals affect coping responses throughout the process? To what extent are coping responses related to specific aspects of the situation and appraisals? How successful are these coping strategies?

As I studied ministers' comments about stress I began to see patterns and ask questions that appeared to be unrelated to stress-coping process theory. For example, in the case study of the most stressful recent event, many ministers had difficulty in defining a
discrete event. Boundaries between the stressful event and its context in the ongoing life of the minister, the minister's family, the parish or presbytery, were blurred. Often the minister wanted to give detailed background to the event so that I could understand why it was so stressful. In other words, the kinds of appraisals examined in stress process theory, such as attributions, evaluation of the situation as a loss, threat or challenge, whether the event was perceived as controllable, or uncontrollable, failed to convey the meaning of the event for the minister. This made me reflect on definitions of stress. In process theory stress is defined as strain upon personal resources, with stressors, or that which produces the strain, defined as life events, either major crises or hassles. The ministers responded with some difficulty to this definition in the case study but seemed to abandon it in the open-ended responses. That is, when I asked them about strain in relation to their families, their parishes, their spiritual life and so on, they rarely referred to discrete events. Instead, strain was conceptualised in recurring themes of time pressure, isolation and personal inadequacy.

These themes became clearer as I used a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) with the interview data. This involved integrating apparent causes and consequences of ministry stress at a more abstract level of analysis, then systematically relating these more abstract categories to each other, and finally validating the relationships against data in the grounding process. In conducting the analysis I had to take process, or action-interaction sequences, into account. As I developed categories of increasing inclusiveness or generality, I grounded them by testing cases representing opposite polarities. For example, the theme of time pressure was included as an outcome in a more general concept of 'enmeshment'. Scores on depression, anxiety and burnout were compared for ministers within groups designated as high and low with respect to enmeshment by means of chi-square. Categories that differentiated ministers at the 10% level of significance were incorporated into more inclusive categories, such as the 'fully-furnished' versus 'unfurnished' continuum (see Chapter 5 for details). I used a computer software package, NUD.IST, (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994) for qualitative data to code and analyse the ministers' interview data and then used the SPSS statistical package for the grounding process. In this way I grounded individual-level interview data (responses of ministers) against individual-level quantitative data (scores on stress measures).

As I used grounded theory to examine the qualitative data I found that when hypotheses based on stress-process theory intruded on the analysis I became stuck at low or concrete levels of analysis. However, if I then abandoned those process assumptions and concentrated on what the ministers were saying, I had to take into account ongoing, goal directed actions and the meanings of those actions for those involved and consequences in terms of self-evaluations as well as in terms of physical or psychological states and judgements about the significance of the religious-historical context for those ministers reporting on their stress. That is, the relatively free responses of the ministers did not fit well into stress process theory and made me look for an alternative theory to provide a better explanation for those phenomena in their social-historical context.

In particular, stress-process theory did not specify what social or institutional variables to include in the analysis nor how these could be related to individual stress measures.
In other words, stress-process theory takes an individual view of coping and does not address institutional aspects. Ministers made frequent references to the institutional context and denominational history, as well as personal history, in their interviews. How could I ground these data? How could I validate the choice of institutional categories and the individual-institutional interactions that appeared in the data?

It was at this point that secularisation theory and in particular Chaves' (1993, 1994) theory of internal secularisation and religious disinvolvement provided an integration of my findings at an evidential level. Ministers' process level responses sorted themselves into discrete categories as I returned to my ministerial data and asked further questions. In formulating these questions I moved from an analysis of specific stressors matched to specific coping styles to an investigation of what was producing stress within Presbyterian ministers. This changed the significance of data collected in the studies of theological students and congregations. With my new perspective, I reviewed data from the Presbyterian students to establish, as far as possible, their goals, difficulties and coping strategies, as well as the nature and extent of their secularisation. The congregational data also became significant as an indicator of secularisation as well as pointing to sources of conflict with the ministers. Thus major questions guiding my final data analysis were as follows:

1) To what extent is the Presbyterian Church in NSW, at institutional and congregational levels, secularised?

2) To what extent are Presbyterian ministers and theological students secularised?

3) To what extent is individual coping of ministers and theological students a means of reducing internal dissonance, as opposed to dealing with external stressors?

4) What are the organisational responses to external stressors on ministers?

Finally, my reading in phenomenology revealed new ways of conceptualising the coping process. Laing (1960) discussed dysfunctional ways of coping with existential anxiety, including depersonalisation, isolation, defensive activity and world-shrinking. This contrasts with May's (1977) notion of the integrated, well-functioning human who confronts choice, participates fully and acts responsibly. Both Schutz (1972) and Luckmann (1967) discussed conflicts arising from contradictions and deficiencies in a person's worldview: difficulties arise when meaning systems no longer provide immediately plausible schemes of action in response to everyday life situations. Possible coping responses for Luckmann (1967) included taking on a dominant worldview and ignoring dissonance, acting on a privatised set of beliefs and oscillating between different worldviews. These considerations raise the question:

5) What is the best way of conceptualising coping and what are the consequences of different coping responses for ministers, congregations and the denomination?
SUMMARY

In summary, the study developed in focus from an explication of models of stress-coping in religious samples to a detailed investigation of the Calvinist worldview and its effects upon ministers and congregations in the context of institutional secularisation. I came to my data with a large set of questions derived from process theories of stress, secularisation theory and phenomenology. Some of these questions, categorised under the headings of worldview, stress and coping, are outlined below.

Worldview

How does Calvin's theology of God's sovereignty, human sinfulness, election and Christian conduct relate to current Presbyterian beliefs? How can current Presbyterian beliefs be measured? How strong are the Calvinist beliefs of ministers, theological students and Presbyterian congregations? How strongly do Presbyterians hold to a theology of God's control? Does a belief in God's sovereignty negate personal freedom and responsibility? How strongly committed to their religion are Presbyterians? How are their beliefs related to cognitive styles such as LOC? Do their beliefs indicate privatisation? How do their beliefs relate to coping and problem-solving in everyday life? Are strong Calvinist beliefs related to strong religious experiences or are experiential and cognitive elements of religion discrete?

Stress

Do Presbyterian ministers show high levels of burnout, anxiety or depression? How are these indicators of stress related to one another? Is burnout related to age, time in ministry, size or location of the parish? Is stress related to lower religiousness, internal LOC, stronger beliefs in God's control and low spiritual well-being? How does religiousness relate to stress? Can religiousness affect perceptions of stressful events, coping responses and outcomes? What are the most stressful aspects of ministry? How does religiousness affect perceptions of ministry stress? Are Calvinist beliefs directly related to levels of stress? Are ministers with strongly individual, privatised beliefs more stressed than others?

Coping

According to coping scales, how do ministers cope with stressful events? Do the results from scales differ from self-reports about coping? How well does the primary-secondary coping dichotomy reflect differences in outcome? How are religious and secular coping strategies related? Is it possible to measure primary and secondary mechanisms of religious coping? How does primary and secondary religious coping relate to Calvinist beliefs? Are strong beliefs about God's control related to higher scores on secondary religious coping? What are the effects of situation type on appraisals and coping? What are the important dimensions of a situation for different appraisals and coping approaches? Can patterns of coping based on phenomenological theory be identified in ministers? How are such coping patterns related to stress and burnout? In the light of current secularisation trends, do ministers need to change their coping strategies?
Conclusion

At this point in the development of my study I had formulated some specific hypotheses based on stress-coping process theory but there were many open questions to be explored. I realised that many of the issues in which I was interested had not been studied in depth within stress-process theory and so the questions that guided my subsequent data analysis were extremely broad. In fact, I struggled to find appropriate theories and methodologies to do justice to my data and my research questions. How I attempted to solve this dilemma is detailed in Chapter 6.
Chapter Three

METHODOLOGY

Here I formally set out the methodology of the three studies which comprised my research.

STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

Subjects

A total of 54 theological students, 28 Presbyterians and 26 Baptists, completed the first set of measures in April, 1993 and 45 students, 21 Presbyterians and 24 Baptists completed a second set of measures in October, 1993.

Measures

FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE

Items on the first questionnaire comprised basic demographic and religious data; scales of intrinsic-extrinsic religiousness, spiritual experience, prayer, religious problem-solving and spiritual well-being; psychological measures of social desirability, LOC, state and trait anxiety and depression; and a detailed Calvinistic beliefs scale.

Demographic

Demographic items included gender, age, birthplace, marital status, denomination, course and year of study. Religious items covered number and types of previous denominational affiliations, frequency and method of prayer and bible reading and decision to enter theological college.

Religious measures

The revised Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale (Gorsuch and McPherson, 1989) was used. Internal consistency for Int is good (alphas from .76 to .83), but is weaker for Ext (alphas from .65 to .66). When Ext is split into Ext-social and Ext-personal, the internal consistencies are variable for Ext-S (alphas from .58 to .73) but low for Ext-P (alphas from .53 to .57). The scale developers argue that the relatively low reliability of the revised external scale is comparable to the low internal consistency of the original external scale (alpha of .66) and could be improved by adding more items (Gorsuch and McPherson, 1989). It has 14 items, 8 measuring Int and scores range from 8 to 40 for Int and from 3 to 15 for each of Ext-S and Ext-P.

The shorter version of the Religious Problem-Solving Scale developed by Pargament et al (1988) was also chosen. It has 18 items and the three styles, self-directing,
collaborative and deferring, are supported by factor analysis, high internal consistency (alphas from .89 to .93) and correlation analysis with other measures of religiousness (Pargament et al, 1988). Scores range from 6 to 30 on each scale.

The *Prayer Experiences Scale* of Richards (1991) comprises six, 9-point Likert scale items and the range of scores is from 6 to 54. Detailed psychometric data have not been published and so this scale was used as an exploratory measure only.

The *Inspirit Scale* of Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttermeister and Benson (1991) was selected as a second measure of religious experiences. The authors reported that it has high internal reliability (Cronbach Alpha of .90) and strong concurrent validity based on correlations with the intrinsic scale of the *Religious Orientation Inventory*, the *Inventory for Positive Psychological Attitudes to Life* and the *Medical Symptom Check List*. The scale comprises seven items, each measured on a four point scale. Norms are based on the mean of all items weighted equally, hence scores that range from 1 to 4. Norms based on a small sample of hospital outpatients gave a mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of .83.

Spiritual well-being was measured by the *Spiritual Well-Being Scale* of Paloutzian and Ellison (1982). Test-retest reliability over 1-10 weeks is high, with correlations between .73 and .99. Internal consistency as measured by coefficient alpha ranges from .78 to .94 (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1991). With respect to validity, significant positive correlations were found between SWB and measures of religious commitment, beliefs, attributions and behaviours. There were also significant positive correlations with measures indicating adjustment such as self-esteem, social skills, assertiveness, acceptance of disability and negative correlations with depression, anxiety over diagnosis, loneliness and hopelessness (Ellison, 1983; Ellison and Smith, 1991). One potential problem in the use of the SWB scale is a ceiling effect when used with religious samples and thus the need for score transformations to obtain distributions that approximated normality (Ledbetter, Smith, Vosler-Hunter and Fischer, 1991).

I developed a *Calvinist Beliefs Scale* (PRESBEL) and *Scale of Belief in Control by God* (BELCON) from the Westminster Confession of Faith. I have described the process of developing a set of 90 items in Chapter 2 and the derivation of the two scales together with psychometric data in Appendix 5. For a brief summary of this psychometric data see the section on Presbyterian congregations below.

*Psychological measures*

The *Beck Depression Inventory* was chosen. It comprises 21 items, each with four or five alternative choices. Scores range from 0 to 63. According to Beck (1963, 1967) it has a split-half reliability of .93 and validity was established by measures of association with clinical ratings, all of which were highly significant results with p<.01.

The *State-Trait Anxiety Inventory* (Spielberger, 1983) was also used. It has a median coefficient alpha of .93 for state anxiety and .90 for trait anxiety. Test-retest reliabilities for trait anxiety exceed .70 over 30 days and exceed .60 over 60 days. Validity was
reported in terms of relatively high correlations with other trait anxiety measures, significant correlations between trait anxiety and measures of adjustment in distressed or disturbed subjects and differences in mean state anxiety scores of subjects assigned to stressful or non-stressful experimental conditions. The state anxiety scale comprises 20 items related to how the respondent feels "right now" while the trait anxiety scale comprises 20 items related to how the respondent "generally" feels, all measured on a four-point rating scale. Each anxiety scale thus has a possible range of scores from 20 to 80.

The Religious Revision Locus of Control Scale (Gabbard et al., 1986) was chosen for use with my religious samples. It comprises 23 items, 15 original Rotter LOC forced-choice items and 8 items in which the terms 'luck', 'fate' or 'chance' were replaced by reference to a controlling supernatural power. The validity of the revised scale was estimated using a confirmatory factor analytic approach and samples from religious and general populations. For the religious population, the estimated validity of the revised scale was .96, compared with an estimated validity of Rotter's original scale of .89. Corresponding means and standard deviations for the two measures using the religious sample were 11.09 (3.05) and 7.23 (3.39) respectively, illustrating the increase in external scores when the revision was used.

I decided to use the short-form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale as the best measure of social desirability (Reynolds, 1982). The short-form correlates highly with the standard form of the scale (.93) and has reasonable internal consistency (.76). It has 13 items. The mean score for the normative sample (N=608) was 5.67 with a standard deviation of 3.20.

SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

This included questions and ratings about the most stressful recent life event, vignettes covering different types of life events and repeated measures of depression, anxiety, spiritual well-being and Calvinist beliefs (see section above for details of these measures).

Stressful life event

The Life Experiences Survey of Sarason, Johnson and Siegel (1978) was administered by asking respondents to check the events which had occurred to them in the previous twelve months. It comprises 57 items relating to life changes such as moving house, starting a new job, leaving a romantic, or sexual relationship etc. The authors reported psychometric data based on subjects' ratings of each event on a seven point scale from extremely positive to extremely negative. Since my administration of the scale differed, (see reasons in Chapter 2) their psychometric data are not relevant to my purposes.

After briefly describing the most stressful event, subjects were given a series of ratings and open-ended questions concerning the event in a four-page protocol (for a copy see Appendix 2). Questions covered:
- opinions concerning whether God caused the event and how
- God's purpose in the event
- the relationship between divine and human causation
  of the event
- their immediate emotion
- their immediate response
- awareness of God at their immediate response
- how awareness of God affected their immediate response
- most significant subsequent responses to the situation
- consciousness of God after their immediate response
- how awareness, or thoughts of God affected behaviour
- judgment that God would affect the outcome
- relationship between divine and human control of the
  outcome
- ongoing and resolved issues from the event
- what was learned from the event.

Subjects then completed five-point rating scales relating to pleasantness, novelty,
unavoidability and duration of the event; appraisals of the event as a threat, loss or
challenge; and their handling of the event, both now and in a similar situation in the
future.

Six secular coping scales from COPE (Carver et al, 1989) were administered: active
coping, instrumental social support, emotional social support, restraint coping, denial
and venting. Possible scores on each scale range from 4 to 16 as each scale has four
items rated on a four-point scale. Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) were reasonable, with
all exceeding .60. Correlations between COPE scales and measures of optimism,
control, self-esteem, internality, hardness, Type A, monitoring, blunting, anxiety and
social desirability were cited as evidence of convergent and discriminant validity of the
scales. Normative data were provided for 156 subjects who completed the situationally
framed items of the COPE scale.

This comprises 29 items rated on a four-point scale. Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) for
the scales all exceeded .60. Normative data were provided for 586 Christian
congregational members from 10 Midwestern US churches.

Vignettes

As described in Chapter 2, the vignettes covered four types of situations and dimensions
of severity, pleasantness, controllability of cause, controllability of outcome. The
vignettes were followed by a series of five-point rating scales. The first set assessed
attributions to luck, self, others, God causing, God allowing and God working through
humans with ratings from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Second, there was a
single rating of the respondent's perceived control over the effects of the situation with
ratings from none to very much. Third, there were four coping items with ratings from
not at all likely, to extremely likely, or a certainty. The coping items comprised two
religious and two secular coping strategies for each situation. In total there were 11 active coping items, 6 secondary, 5 venting, 6 distraction and 4 savouring, to provide 32 ratings across the eight situations.

**Procedures**

After students were approached at both the Presbyterian and Baptist Theological Colleges in Sydney and informed consent for participation obtained, the subjects were given the first questionnaire to be completed within two weeks and returned in a sealed envelope to a slotted box in the administrative office. The questionnaire comprised basic demographic and religious data, the revised Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale, Religious Problem-Solving Scale, Prayer Experiences Scale, Inspirit Scale, Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Calvinist Beliefs Scale and Belief in God's Control Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Religious Revision Locus of Control Scale and Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale as described above. As I discussed in Chapter 2, I chose a repeated measures design to provide a test of some cause-effect relationships between characteristics and evaluations of the stressful event, coping strategies and psychological states. Consequently, six months later a second questionnaire was placed in the internal mail slot of each subject, together with covering letter and envelope. This comprised questions and ratings concerning the most stressful life event within the intervening six months, the Life Experiences Survey, six COPE scales, the Religious Coping Activities Scale, Beck Depression Inventory, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, Spiritual Well-Being Scale, Calvinist Beliefs Scale, Belief in God's Control Scale and a series of vignettes reproduced in Appendix 3. Subjects were invited to phone the researcher with queries about the research and to indicate if they desired individual results. Subjects who had not completed the questionnaire within two weeks were contacted in person wherever possible or by mail to encourage completion. A brief summary of preliminary results was posted to all participants within two months of obtaining the second questionnaires.

**Analysing the Data**

Since numbers were small, and the study exploratory, data were analysed initially by descriptive statistics and stem and leaf plots. Frequency tables were compiled for the demographic and basic religious data. Scores on the measures of religiousness and the psychological scales were obtained, descriptive statistics and graphs prepared and inter-correlations examined. Next t-tests for differences between means of Baptist and Presbyterian students were calculated and finally a limited regression analysis based on some data for all students was performed.

**STUDY OF PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS**

**Subjects**

The population of interest comprised members and regular attenders of Presbyterian churches in NSW during the last three months of 1993. Usable data was obtained from 363 adult attenders at Presbyterian church services in 20 parishes across NSW.
Sampling method

Sampling was stratified by presbytery and then was based on voluntary participation within parishes nominated by the presbytery. There are 16 presbyteries, or organisational structures, within the Presbyterian Church of NSW. Letters were sent to the clerks of each presbytery, requesting that one large parish or two small parishes from each presbytery take part in the study. A total of 20 parishes agreed to participate through their presbytery representatives.

At the morning services during which the questionnaires were distributed a total of 2241 adults were present. Of these, 1081 people took forms, 429 were returned and 363 contained sufficient information to be usable (all forms with more than 10% of items incomplete were discarded). This represents a 16% sample of all adult attenders at the morning services at the parishes surveyed, a return rate of 34% of questionnaires taken and a usable form rate of 87% of returns (See Table 5, Appendix 4 for details of returns by parish).

Thus I obtained a large self-selected sample of Presbyterian church attenders from parishes selected on a quota basis to be representative of presbyteries throughout NSW and generalisations to the population of NSW Presbyterians must be treated with caution. Since the questionnaires were filled out anonymously (in a deliberate attempt to elicit responses more freely) it was not possible to compare the characteristics of those who returned forms with those who did not, although comparisons were made between those who returned usable and non-usable forms.

Characteristics of those who returned unusable forms

Sixty-six forms were returned with most demographic data completed but other measures incomplete. All forms with more than 10% of items incomplete were discarded, but most of these rejected forms had at least half the questionnaire unanswered.

The average age was 66.84 years (sd=14.17) and they had belonged to the Presbyterian church, on average, for 43.51 years (sd=21.82). They had remained loyal to that denomination in that they had belonged to fewer than two denominations in their lives (average 1.76, sd=0.92): 44% had been Presbyterian only, 44% had belonged to two denominations and 9% had belonged to three denominations with two cases of four and six denominations respectively. The most frequently cited denominations with which they had been associated were Anglican (33%) and Methodist (18%).

The majority of respondents in this group were females (71%). They tended to be married (60%) or widowed (29%) with only 11% never married. Usual qualifications were an Intermediate Certificate at school (42%) followed by a non-trade certificate or diploma (21%). Only 12% completed a Bachelors degree at University, and 6% completed a Masters degree. With respect to employment, they tended to be retired (44%), or engaged in home duties (39%) and only 12% worked full time. Those born in Australia comprised 88% of this group.
They were regular in worship attendance and personal prayer, with 96% attending worship services at least once a week (11% twice) and 84% spending time in personal, private prayer at least daily. Personal bible reading was less regular, with 43% claiming to read their bible at least once every day, but a total of 87% claimed to read their bible personally at least once a week.

They had not retired from active involvement in the local church: 20% were elders, 27% helped with catering or cleaning, 26% helped with social service programmes and 11% participated in a choir or other musical activities.

In summary, this group who partially completed the questionnaire tended to be older than those who fully completed it but more staunchly associated with the Presbyterian Church and very committed in worship and personal prayer. They had a similar pattern of leading as elders, or PWA leaders and similar levels of helping except for areas of youth work and Sunday school teaching. It is possible that they failed to complete the survey because of physical difficulty in reading the questionnaire (which was not increased in print size, or contrast for older people), or slower rate of responding which made completion very time consuming, or reluctance to reveal more than basic demographic information to a researcher.

**Measures**

The questionnaire comprised demographic data (gender, age, country of birth, marital status, employment status), religious data (denominational history; frequency of church attendance; personal prayer and bible reading; areas of leadership within the Church; areas of helping and participation within the Church); and a series of scales and vignettes.

**Scales**


In addition, two new scales to measure adherence to Presbyterian beliefs and beliefs about God's control were developed from a set of items derived from the Westminster Confession of Faith. The first (PRESBEL), an index of adherence to current Presbyterian beliefs, comprised 12 items with item-total correlations exceeding 0.5. A reliability analysis indicated that these items formed an acceptable scale, with Cronbach's alpha of .891. A further six item scale (BELCON) was derived from nine items which theoretically endorse Calvinistic beliefs where Calvinistic and Arminian beliefs are contrasted. The reliability of this scale is lower (Cronbach's alpha of .642) but nonetheless above the limit for acceptability of a rating scale (Murphy and Davidshofer, 1988).
Vignettes

The vignettes were identical to those used in the study of theological students. Four types of situations were represented: health (cancer, injury), moral (drink-driving, unethical work conduct), minor negative situations (document destroyed, poor haircut) and positive situations (small win, major award). Half of the questionnaires were printed with the first example of each situation type and half with the second example so that every respondent considered one situation from each type. The vignettes were followed by the same rating scales as used in the study of theological students.

Procedures

Following notification from the 20 parishes of their willingness to participate in the study (sometimes achieved after some persuasion by the Clerk of Presbytery with whom initial correspondence was exchanged), letters were sent to the minister, or session clerk, to inform them of the aims of the study and procedures for introducing it to the congregation, distributing, collecting and forwarding completed questionnaires. No names were required and voluntary participation was emphasised.

In two large Sydney parishes the questionnaires were administered by the researcher personally. Some parishioners elected to complete the forms after the morning services but most took the forms home and returned them over the ensuing three weeks. A contact phone number was provided so that the participants could discuss any matter arising from the study with the researcher.

Forms were returned to a labelled box at the church or given to the minister/session clerk personally (in an envelope if the respondent desired). After three weeks, with weekly reminders to those who took questionnaires, all forms were mailed to the researcher, together with a summary sheet indicating the parish, date of survey, number of adults at the morning service at which the forms were distributed and number of forms completed.

Analysis of data

Frequency tables were compiled for the demographic and basic religious data. Scores on the measures of religiousness and social desirability were obtained and inter-correlations examined. Ratings for coping items were summed to provide total scores for religious and secular coping; primary coping which is designed to change the situation and secondary coping which is designed to align oneself with the changed situation; positive religious coping which was defined as active, secondary, venting and savouring strategies and negative religious coping which was defined as distraction-denial. Ratings for attributions were summed to provide total scores for each of the six attributions included in the study.

Descriptive statistics and stem-and-leaf plots were compiled for the attributions and coping strategies obtained by means of the vignettes.
The major analyses comprised several repeated measures, within-subjects multiple analyses of variance (MANOVAs) and a series of regression analyses. The regression analyses were performed separately for each situation type, with the aim of examining the direct effects of resources and attributions on positive religious coping, together with indirect effects of resources through attributions. The MANOVAs were used to examine the effects of situation type on causal attribution, religious versus secular coping and primary versus secondary coping. Wilks lambda was used to assess the significance of the multivariate F test. Wherever assumptions of sphericity were violated according to Mauchley's test, adjustments were made to the degrees of freedom for univariate F tests by multiplying them by the Greenhouse-Geisser Epsilon value (Norusis, 1990).

**STUDY OF MINISTERS**

**Subjects**

My sample was designed to comprise 50% of all ordained parish ministers in NSW, as at June 1993. From the 1993 Yearbook and Church Directory there were 130 ordained parish ministers in 16 presbyteries and an attempt was made to sample 50% of ministers within each presbytery, with numbers representative of parish size and years in ministry. Requests to take part in the study were made to half the ministers in each presbytery. Where the minister declined, or was unavailable at the time I was in that presbytery, another minister having a similar sized parish and with the same period in ministry was approached, first from the same presbytery, or then from another presbytery. However, given the small number of parishes in most presbyteries (11 out of 16 or 69% having fewer than 10 parishes in the presbytery) and the fact that one interview more or less could greatly increase or decrease representation from the target 50%, I decided to try to maximise overall representativeness - across presbyteries, parish sizes and length of time in ministry. Interviews were completed with 65 parish ministers.

*Representation of presbyteries*

Table 2 below specifies the number of ordained ministers in each presbytery, number and percentage of ministers sampled from that presbytery and percentage of sample from each presbytery.
Table 2: REPRESENTATION OF SAMPLE BY PRESBYTERIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presbytery</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>No. sampled</th>
<th>Percentage of Pres</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bathurst</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Coast</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubbo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrumbidgee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Rivers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney North</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney South</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagga Wagga</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that very few presbyteries were represented by an exact 50% sample. Overall, 42% of the sample represented Sydney metropolitan parishes (compared with 46% of the population of parish ministers) and 58% represented rural, or regional parishes (compared with 54% of the population).

*Representation by size of parish*

The size of the parish was defined as the official communicant membership. The table below gives the number of parishes of each of four sizes included in the study, each sized parish as a percentage of the total sample and corresponding percentages for parishes of each size in the population of NSW parishes.
Table 3: REPRESENTATION OF SAMPLE BY SIZE OF PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size: type and membership</th>
<th>Parishes in sample</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
<th>Criterion pop. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small - under 80</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium - 80 to 179</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large - 160 to 239</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very large - over 240</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Representation of large and very large parishes was adequate but small parishes were under-represented and medium parishes over-represented in the sampling.

Representation by years in ministry

Of the seven ministers approached who had spent over 30 years in ministry two declined to take part in the study and two retired before an interview could be arranged. One substitute minister having similar length of ministry and within the same parish, but having a medium sized parish, agreed to participate. The over-representation of ministers in their first year of ministry was partly an attempt to increase numbers in the category of small parishes within the presbyteries.

Table 4.: REPRESENTATION OF SAMPLE BY YEARS IN MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in ministry</th>
<th>Sample frequency</th>
<th>% of sample</th>
<th>Criterion pop. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One year or less</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to four years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five to nine years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten to nineteen years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty to twenty-nine yrs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirty years and over</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

The interview fell into three sections. The first asked for information about the parish: size, programmes, facilities, then five-point ratings of skills and priorities (from very high to very low) with respect to 17 ministry tasks. These comprised 12 tasks cited by Silverman, Pargament and Falgout (Undated, The Congregation Development Program Manual p.25) with one item, handling administrative tasks effectively, split into items referring to administration at parish and presbytery, or state levels respectively. Additional items covering involvement in wide issues of social justice, personal spiritual development, developing members' gifts and financially improving the Church were listed to increase the comprehensiveness of the list of ministry tasks.

The second section covered personal demographic information (age, place of birth, biographical data relating to denominations, theological training, ministry, marriage and family) and open-ended questions about issues which may have been stressful during ministry. First, the ministers were asked to rate the significance of each issue as a stressor on a five point scale from (1) not at all significant to (5) very significant. They were then asked to comment on what way the issue was stressful and their thoughts about the issue. The items were derived theoretically from the literature on ministry stress and also from questionnaires devised in a study of reasons given by Protestant ministers for leaving the ministry in Australia between 1960 and 1992 (personal communication from Rowland Croucher, Monash University). The issues were grouped into system factors: housing, salary, mobility, training, career path and denominational issues; family factors; parish factors: role expectations, ministry style, areas of encouragement and discouragement; personal factors: health, strengths, weaknesses; social factors; friends, collegiate relationships, loneliness; spiritual factors: call, spiritual journey, theological differences with congregation and denomination; and a final segment covered global attitudes towards and evaluations of ministry.

A third section of the interview related to a specific stressful event which had occurred recently. The format was identical to that used in the study of theological students, comprising a brief description of the event, ratings and detailed responses to questions about coping at various stages of the stress-coping process.

At the end of the interview the ministers were given a set of inventories to complete over the next fortnight, to be mailed in a stamped, addressed envelope. Most of these inventories were trialed in the study of the theological students and comprised: the Life Experiences Survey, Cope Scales and Religious Coping Scales to be completed with respect to the stressful event of section three in the interview; the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Form C; the Revised Intrinsic-Extrinsic Scale of Gorsuch and McPherson; the Religious Revision Locus of Control Scale of Gabbard and others); the Religious Problem-Solving Scale of Pargament and others; the Spiritual Well-Being Scale of Palouzian and Ellison; Richards' Prayer Experiences Scale; the Beck Depression Inventory; the Trait Anxiety Scale of Spielberger; the Calvinistic Beliefs Scale and Belief in God's Control Scale developed in studies of students and congregations; and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1986).
The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) has reasonable reliability: Cronbach alphas for the scales of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment were .90, .79 and .71 respectively and test-retest reliability coefficients over 2-4 weeks range from .69 (depersonalisation) to .82 (emotional exhaustion). Convergent validity was demonstrated by correlations with peer ratings, dimensions of the job experience and personally reported job outcomes (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). The factor structure of the MBI has been studied, with early evidence of three factors corresponding to the subscales (Maslach and Jackson, 1986; Green and Walkey, 1988; Pierce and Molloy, 1989) but later evidence points to a "core of burnout" comprising two correlated factors of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Walkey and Green, 1992). There has also been debate over the use of three sub-scale scores compared with phase scoring proposed by Golembiewski and Munzenrider (1984) as indicated by Leiter (1989) and Burke (1989). Since the sub-scale scoring method was supposedly compatible with the stress theories of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and avoids problems of dichotomising continuous scales (Leiter, 1989) I decided to compute three sub-scale measures of burnout in my analysis.

**Procedures**

Ministers selected within the sampling methodology described above were contacted directly by letter and then by telephone to make an appointment for an interview of approximately two hours' duration. The interview was conducted in the minister's office. Since the interview was extensive, and included ratings as well as responses to open-ended questions, I decided to write out responses in full, rather than through audio, or video tapes. As soon as possible after the interview I word-processed those responses. Inventories were left at the end of the interview, to be mailed back to me within two weeks and a reminder was given if necessary after three weeks. This procedure was successful in eliciting 63 inventories from the 65 ministers interviewed: two refused to complete the inventories.

**Analysis of data**

Scores were obtained from the psychological and religious inventories and means were compared with normative samples in order to describe ministers in terms of these measures. Other demographic and descriptive data from the interviews were compiled into frequency tables.

Ratings of skills and priorities were examined by calculating and ranking mean scores, by correlational analysis and by factor analysis of priorities to examine the resulting clusters. In addition, a global measure of role conflict was obtained by calculating the mean difference between priorities and skills across all areas: where the mean was greater than zero the case was assigned to the global role conflict group and where the mean was zero or less, the case was assigned to the non-role conflict group. The two groups were then compared on measures of stress to determine whether this type of role conflict was significantly associated with stress.
Inter-correlations between dispositional, appraisal, coping and outcome measures derived from theory about the stress-coping process were calculated in preparation for multiple regression analyses that were intended to focus upon different measures of judgements about God's control as independent variables within the process.

Qualitative interview data on ministry stress were examined using grounded theory procedures after Strauss and Corbin (1990) and by means of the QSR NUD*IST 3.0 computer programme. Some classifications derived from grounded theory were then statistically analysed by means of the chi-square statistic and refined typologies were investigated by multivariate analyses. Post-hoc analyses based on the qualitative data are discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

Summary

My research comprised three separate but related studies with the overall aim of investigating how Calvinist beliefs affected evaluations and coping in stressful situations. Samples were drawn from three Presbyterian populations: theological students, ministers and congregations. Measures differed slightly between the studies but common questions and scales related to demographic data, religiousness, appraisals of actual or typical stress situations and coping in those situations. In two studies outcome measures of depression, anxiety and spiritual well-being were used. Research designs comprised cross-sectional and repeated-measure surveys, together with intensive interviews for one sample. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics including regression analysis and multiple analyses of variance. Qualitative data were analysed using procedures based on grounded theory and selected typologies were then investigated by means of post hoc quantitative analyses.
Chapter Four

RESULTS PART 1

Dispositions, Appraisals and Coping by Presbyterians

I am presenting my results in two parts. This chapter deals with data on religion, stress and coping from my three studies of ministers, theological students and congregations. Although some qualitative data are presented, most of the data derive from quantitative measures. Chapter Five examines ministry stress in detail and largely presents qualitative data.

Here I describe the samples, examine their religiousness and Presbyterian beliefs and analyse their responses to actual and hypothetical stressful events. I then present data on religion as a stress mediator and the convergence of stress measures.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES

This section gives summary descriptions of the samples in narrative form. Detailed tables relating to selected material are provided in Appendix 4 to support the summaries and as a reference for readers who may want to make finer comparisons with other data.

Ministers

Personal (age, occupation, qualifications) and family data

Sixty-four ministers were male, one female. For reasons of confidentiality results for the female minister are not presented separately.

The average age of ministers was 45.8 years (sd=10.8). The youngest was 30 years and the oldest was 71 years. The majority (85%) were born in Australia, with another 9% born in the United Kingdom. The remaining four ministers in the sample were born in New Zealand, Hong Kong, Lebanon and the Cook Islands respectively.

About one third of the ministers (36%) left professional, management, or teaching work to enter ministry. The professional backgrounds included engineer, solicitor, geologist and zoologist. Management areas comprised financial management and director of small business. Another 38% were in skilled service occupations or sales. The welfare category comprised youth, police and social welfare work. Skilled white collar occupations included bank officer, paymaster, computing, assistant librarian and draftsman. Only 14% were in trades, or in unskilled work such as storeman and driver. For details see Table 2 in Appendix 4.
The highest qualification for the majority of ministers was a bachelors' degree (60%), followed by a diploma, or certificate (including ThL) for 32%. Only one person (2%) had a masters' degree and four people (6%) had a PhD or DMin.

Only 5% had never married. Of the married group, 83% were in their first marriage, 9% had been widowed and remarried, while 3% had been divorced and remarried. Eight percent of the sample had no children; 6% had one child; 29% two children; 29% three children; 23% four children and 5% had five or six children. Seventy per cent of the ministers had children living at home. Thirty-five per cent had young children, with the oldest being at primary school or younger, 12% had mixed primary and adolescent children, with 21% having adolescents or young adults at home. Details are given in Table 1 in Appendix 4.

The picture of a typical minister is a man of middle years, married with children at home, who had left a skilled, or professional, occupation to train for ministry.

Parish data (size, workload)

The majority of ministers had one preaching place (52.3%) and 20% had two. Another 23% had three or four preaching places but only 5% had five or more, with a maximum of seven. On average, ministers had spent 5.3 years in their current parish (sd=3.6 years). The maximum time in that parish was 18 years, the minimum less than one year.

The average communicant membership was 150 (sd=129 people) but the range was from a minimum of 21 to a maximum of 782 members. One fifth of ministers (22%) were in small parishes with fewer than 80 members, 52% were in medium parishes with a membership of 80-159 members, 15% were in large parishes of 160-239 members and 11% were in very large parishes of 240-782 members.

The average attendance was 95 people (sd=74) with a minimum of 20 and maximum of 400 attenders estimated. No evening services were conducted by 24 of the ministers (37%). Where an evening service was conducted, the average attendance was 45 (sd=38) with a minimum of 10 and maximum of 180 attenders estimated. Just over half (51%) of ministers perceived that attendances were growing, 35% saw attendance as steady while 14% perceived attendances as declining in their parish.

The majority of ministers (54%) usually prepared two sermons each week; 42% prepared one sermon weekly and 3% prepared three sermons each week. The majority (56%) prepared one bible study weekly; 25% did not prepare any bible study materials and 17% prepared for two different bible studies each week. One minister (2%) prepared for 6 different bible study groups. On average, ministers conducted 2 religious instruction (RI) classes each week (sd=2.6). However, 43% did not conduct any RI classes, 35% conducted one or two classes, 18% conducted three or four classes and only 3% conducted seven or eight classes.

The average estimate of time spent in ministry each week was 68 hours (sd=13) with a minimum of 40 hours spent by one person employed on a half-time basis and a maximum
of 99 hours. The minimum working week of a full-time minister was 45 hours and the most frequent estimate was of a 60 hour week (26%). Many of these estimates were 'best guesses' but some ministers consulted diaries, or computer notepads to calculate their estimates. Twenty-eight ministers (43%) reported that they were serving on one or more committees of the Presbyterian Church at state or national level.

The summary picture of the minister's workload is as follows. He has been ministering to a medium sized parish (80-159 members) for the last five years, preparing two sermons, one bible study and two RI classes each week, in addition to pastoral and administrative duties: these require a total working week of 68 hours.

**Past ministry (number of parishes and period in each)**

Five ministers (8%) were in their first year of ministry; 25% had been in ministry between 2 and four years; 19% had been in ministry 5-9 years; 26% for 10-19 years; 17% for 20-29 years and 6% had been in ministry for over 30 years.

On average, ministers had served in 2.8 parishes (sd=2.0): this includes home mission stations prior to ordination but excludes parishes in which the minister served as a student. Thirty-five per cent had served in one parish only, 20% in two parishes, 27% in three or four parishes, while the remaining 17% had served in five to nine parishes.

On average, the sample had spent 4.4 years (s.d=2.2 years) in each parish. Actual mean times are given in Table 3 in Appendix 4.

In summary, ministers had served in three different parishes in the past, spending four and a half years in each.

**Theological background (denominations, theological college)**

On average, the ministers had been associated with Presbyterianism and one other denomination (mean=1.97, sd=1.16) up to the present. Forty-three per cent had been Presbyterian only; 34% had been associated with two denominations; 12% with three denominations and 11% had been associated with four to six denominations.

Forty-three percent of ministers gave their theological background as Presbyterian (Pres) only. Another 37% gave two denominations, Presbyterian plus Anglican (Ang) (15%) or Methodist/Uniting (Meth/Unit) (9%), or Baptist (Bap) (5%) being the main combinations, with individuals (1.5%) specifying Catholic, Church of Christ, Cook Island Christian and Salvation Army as the second denomination with which they had been associated in the past. Where there were associations with three denominations (8%), they all comprised Presbyterian and Anglican with the third Methodist (5%), Baptist (1.5%) or Congregational (Cong) (1.5%). Only 6% specified four background denominations, with the majority of these Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist/Uniting and Baptist. The only person with five background denominations added Roman Catholic (Cath) to the list of four above. However, the person specifying six denominations had a different mixture: Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Brethren, Assemblies of God
and Independent Evangelical.

The diagram below shows the major linkages:

**Figure 1: DENOMINATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MINISTERS**

1. **Pres 43%**
   - 2. **Bap 5%**
     - 3. **Bap 2%**
     - 4. **SA 2%**
   - 2. **Ang 15%**
   - 3. **Meth/Cong 8%**
   - 4. **Bap 5%**
   - 5. **Meth/Unit 9%**
     - 5. **Cath 2%**
     - 5. **Cath 2%**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. denom</th>
<th>Type of denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pres 43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bap 5% Ang 15% Meth/Unit 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bap 2% Meth/Cong 8% Cath 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SA 2% Bap 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cath 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of ministers (62%) had studied at either Moore Theological College or the Presbyterian Theological Centre (PTC), or both. Candidates for Presbyterian ministry who enrol for a BTh at Moore, also must enrol in certain subjects at the PTC. Prior to the establishment of the PTC, candidates for Presbyterian ministry studied at the Theological Hall, St Andrews College, Sydney. For details, see Table 4 in Appendix 4.

A summary snapshot of ministers’ theological backgrounds reveals a solidly Presbyterian or mixed Presbyterian-Anglican or Presbyterian-Uniting background, with training at Moore College and the Presbyterian Theological Centre.

**Theological students**

Presbyterian and Baptist theological students are described and compared in terms of gender, age, birthplace, marital status and current course.

There were no significant differences between the gender composition of the two groups, with 23 male Presbyterians (82%) and 19 male Baptists (73%) and males
comprised 78% of the sample overall.

Presbyterian students (mean age 36.2 years, sd=10.48) were significantly older than the Baptist students (mean age 28.04 years, sd=6.29: t=3.50, df=52, p<.001).

Almost three-quarters of the subjects (Presbyterians 68%, Baptists 77%) were born in Australia with no significant differences between the two groups in place of birth (chi square=1.00, df=1, p=.317).

There was a higher proportion of single students amongst the Baptists (42%) than the Presbyterians (21%), with 32% of students overall unmarried. However, the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant (chi square= 2.72, df=1, p=.09).

Baptist students were more likely to be studying in the B.Min course (62%) with only 19% studying for a Dip.Th., Presbyterians, the B.Th Course (40%), or Dip.Th. (29%). This difference was statistically significant (chi square=27.92, df=3, p<.001). There were no differences between the groups in year of course (28% 1st year, 39% 2nd year, 24% 3rd year, 8% 4th year, 1% miscellaneous) but the Presbyterians were more likely to be doing the course part-time (28%), than Baptist students (8%).

Presbyterian students, on average, had been a member or affiliate of 2.34 denominations previously (sd=1.27) compared with 1.69 denominations (sd=0.82) for Baptist students. This difference was statistically significant: t=1.95, df=50, p=.05. Half the Baptist students had been associated with their own denomination only, compared with 23% of Presbyterian students; half the Presbyterian students but only 35% of the Baptist students had been associated with two denominations; and 27% of the Presbyterian students compared with 15% of the Baptist students had been associated with three or more denominations.

While the two groups of students were similar in terms of gender distribution, birthplace and year of course, differences in age, marital status, number of previous denominations and course may contribute to differences between the groups on other measures. A summary description of the Presbyterian students is a group of married males in their mid-thirties, having been affiliated with at least two denominations, studying for a Bachelors Degree in Theology.

**Congregations**

*Demographic aspects*

Slightly over half the sample was female (58.3%).

The average age of the sample was 53.29 years (SD 17.24) with a range from 18 years to 92 years. Numbers and percentages in the various age groupings are given in Table 6 in Appendix 4. The modal group was aged 60-69 years and comprised almost one quarter of the sample, but representation of attenders in their 30s, 40s and 50s was very
similar at 16% for each of these age groups.

Australian-born subjects comprised 86% of the total sample. Of the 49 people born overseas, 9 (18%) came from Scotland, 8 (16%) from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, 4 (8%) from each of New Zealand and Holland, 3 (6%) from each of USA and Germany, 2 (4%) from each of Indonesia and South Africa and the remainder came from miscellaneous, or unspecified, overseas countries.

See Table 7 in Appendix 4 for details of qualifications. Two-thirds of the sample had a post-school qualification, with the most common being a diploma or non-trade certificate (31%). One-quarter held a university degree, but only 3% held a masters degree or higher.

The majority were married (75%), with another 10% never married and 9% widowed. Only 5% were separated, divorced or living in a de facto relationship (see Table 8, Appendix 4).

Almost half (49%) of the sample were working full-time or part-time. The next largest group comprised retirees (27%), followed by those engaged in unpaid home duties (18%). For details see Table 9, Appendix 4.

A typical congregational member then, is middle-aged, Australian-born and married. She received a non-degree qualification after leaving school and is currently employed.

Denominational background

Table 10 in Appendix 4 shows the number of different denominations in which the sample had been involved as a member of attender for at least three months since childhood. On average, subjects had been involved in 2.2 different denominations (sd=1.21). There appears to be considerable stability in the denominational allegiance of Presbyterians in the sample, with only 12% attending four or more different denominations in their life history.

Table 11 in Appendix 4 gives the actual denominations in which congregational members had been involved since childhood. It is clear that the majority of the sample had been involved in one or more of the major Protestant denominations in the past such as the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist or, more recently, Uniting churches. Relatively few had been involved in charismatic churches, or in sects.

On average, the sample had been members or regular attenders of a Presbyterian church for 27.69 years (sd=22.39) with a median value of 20.5 years. It is noteworthy that 43% had been involved in the Presbyterian Church for under 17 years and thus had joined since the Uniting Church was formed in June 1977. However, the main finding is that the sample had substantial involvement in the Presbyterian Church. For details see Table 12 in Appendix 4.

In summary, the typical respondent is a staunch Presbyterian who has been a member or
regular attender of a Presbyterian church for over 20 years.

Religious practice and participation

Congregational members were regular church attenders with 91% attending services at least weekly. The respondents described themselves as highly religious with respect to their personal prayer and bible reading practices: 79% claimed that they prayed at least daily and 49% claimed that they read their bibles at least daily. Details are given in Appendix 4, Tables 13-15.

On average, congregational members held 0.83 leadership positions (sd=1.11). However, just over half held no leadership positions (52.3%) and the percentages with one or more positions are given in Table 16 in Appendix 4. One third of the sample comprised elders, or members of the Committee of Management which oversees financial and property affairs of the parish (see Table 17, Appendix 4). The large proportion of bible study leaders (16%) probably reflects the existence of home bible study groups in many parishes.

On average, congregational respondents indicated they participated or helped in 1.3 different areas (SD=1.10) with a range from 0 to 6 areas of participation. Ninety respondents (26%) indicated that they were not involved in any programme, apart from attending scheduled activities; 130 (37%) helped in one area; 84 (24%) helped in two areas; 38 (11%) helped in three areas and ten people (3%) helped in four to six areas. Types of participation are indicated in Table 18 in Appendix 4.

Another 29 respondents indicated other areas where they participated in church activities. These comprised taking a formal role in worship such as bible reading, leading the service, acting as usher, part of worship committee (8 respondents); secretarial, photocopying or helper with church library (6 respondents); part of mission or Christian education committee (7 respondents) and unspecified helper with social, bible study or prayer groups (4 respondents).

In summary, the respondents were highly religious in terms of their attendance and personal religious practices, as well as highly involved in leadership, or helping within the parish.

RELIGIOUSNESS OF PRESBYTERIANS

I assumed that the ministers and theological students would be highly religious in their commitment and religious practices compared with the average parishioner because of their calling within an evangelically-oriented denomination. Hughes (1989 p.27) found clergy saw their faith as "providing them with identity and purpose as they had opportunity to share with God in His work", whereas lay people described their faith "as a source of values or inner strength." Were these differences reflected in clergy-laitity differences in measures of religious commitment and practice amongst Presbyterians? This section presents results that test my assumption and also give further evidence of the religious commitment of congregational members.
Ministers and theological students

The table below gives mean and standard deviation scores for ministers and theological students on measures of religious commitment, religious problem solving, closeness to God in prayer and spiritual well being.

**Table 5: SCORES ON RELIGIOUS MEASURES, MINISTERS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS: MEANS AND (ST. DEVIATIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure*</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
<th>Theological students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presbyt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
<td>36.08 (2.76)</td>
<td>36.89 (2.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERES</td>
<td>6.45 (2.39)</td>
<td>5.68 (2.20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEREPE</td>
<td>6.90 (2.03)</td>
<td>6.89 (2.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.10 (3.48)</td>
<td>11.30 (4.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>21.82 (3.45)</td>
<td>21.04 (4.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>15.98 (4.69)</td>
<td>16.96 (5.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>32.12 (6.47)</td>
<td>31.32 (5.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWB</td>
<td>50.44 (6.96)</td>
<td>51.50 (5.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWB</td>
<td>54.51 (5.17)</td>
<td>56.21 (4.51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWB</td>
<td>105.02 (11.43)</td>
<td>107.50 (8.46)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ieri, IERES AND IEREPE indicate intrinsic, extrinsic social and extrinsic personal religious commitment. SD, COL and DEF indicate self-directing, collaborative and deferring problem solving styles. EWB, RWB and SWB indicate existential, religious and spiritual well-being.

Scores on intrinsic commitment were high compared with the maximum possible score of 40, indicating strong levels of personal commitment to religion. There was no significant difference between the two groups of theological students and their scores on the revised 8-item scale were similar to those of US college students from secular and religious institutions (Gorsuch and McPherson, 1989) who completed an earlier 9-item version of the scale and obtained a mean of 37.2 (sd=5.8). Thus the scores of Australian theological students and ministers indicate greater intrinsic commitment with greater concentration of scores around the mean than normative samples.

Scores were relatively low on extrinsic social commitment, compared with the maximum possible score of 15 and scores for the Baptist students were significantly higher than for the Presbyterian students (t=2.23, df=52, p<.05) indicating a greater tendency to perceive religious observance in terms of making, or meeting friends.

No significant differences between the two groups of students were obtained for
extrinsic personal commitment and scores were low compared with the maximum possible score of 15. Thus, there was relatively little use of religion as a source of personal comfort, protection and happiness.

Maximum scores for the religious problem solving scales were 30 for each measure. Overall the ministers and students scored highest on collaborative problem solving, then on deferring and lowest on self-directing. No significant differences between the two groups of theological students were found on these scales. Norms based on US congregations were given for the longer form of the scales where each had a maximum of 60 and were 36.02 (sd=10.67), 25.81 (sd=9.19) and 29.70 (sd=10.71) for collaborative, deferring and self-directing scales respectively (Pargament et al. 1988). Since the shorter forms correlated above .97 with the longer forms of these scales, it would appear that short form means could be estimated at 18.01, 12.90 and 14.85 respectively. Schaeffer and Gorsuch (1993) used the short form of the Religious Problem Solving Scales with 137 US college students having Protestant Christian affiliations. They obtained means of 17.52 (sd=6.3), 14.14 (sd=4.62) and 12.84 (sd=5.04) for the three scales respectively. Hence, the NSW ministers and theological students scored higher on collaborative and deferring styles and lower on the self-directing style than the US congregations and Protestant Christian college students.

Scores related to experiences of God in prayer (Prayer) were low relative to the maximum possible score of 54, and differences between the two groups of theological students were not statistically significant.

Religious well-being scores were consistently higher than scores for existential well-being and approached the maximum scale score of 60. There were no significant differences between the two groups of students on these well-being scales. The scores were almost identical with those of evangelical seminary students in the US who obtained means of 54.75 (sd=5.92), 51.25 (sd=5.88) and 106.0 (sd=10.29) for religious, existential and spiritual well-being respectively (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1991).

Overall the ministers and theological students obtained high scores as expected on the measures of religiousness. Inter-correlations between the measures were performed separately for ministers and theological students to investigate whether they were tapping into a general religiousness factor, or whether they comprised distinct religious measures. For theological students, apart from expected correlations between measures of EWB, RWB and SWB, only one correlation was statistically significant: prayer experience was positively associated with religious well being (r=.367, p<.001).

For the ministers, significant inter-correlations were obtained between measures of spiritual well-being, problem solving and prayer. Existential, religious and total spiritual well-being were positively correlated with prayer (r=.393, r=.416 and r=.424, p<.001 respectively) and negatively correlated with self-directing problem solving (r=-.308, r=-.355 and r=-.350, p<.01 respectively). Prayer was also correlated with deferring problem solving (r=.423, p<.001). Surprisingly, intrinsic commitment was uncorrelated with any other religious variable but extrinsic personal commitment was positively correlated with deferring problem solving (r=.322, p<.01). Apart from a modest
correlation with deferring problem solving ($r=.358$, $p<.01$), collaborative problem solving was not associated with any other religious variable.

In summary, the intercorrelations of religious measures suggest that for theological students there are relatively distinct areas of religiousness, whereas for ministers, use of prayer and God-centred problem solving are contributing to a sense of spiritual well-being, although the direction of the relationship cannot be assumed from correlation coefficients. It is clear, however, that the students and ministers were strongly religious according to the measures used and no consistent differences between the Baptist and Presbyterian theological students were found.

**Congregations**

Congregational members completed measures of religious commitment and problem solving only. Below are scores on these measures, inter-correlations and correlations with other religious measures.

The mean score for the congregational sample on intrinsic religious commitment (IERI) was 34.02 (sd=4.17). This is a high value which almost reaches the mean scores of ministers and theological students (see Table 5 above) but the congregational scores have greater variability.

Mean scores for extrinsic social (IERES) and extrinsic personal (IEREP) commitment were 6.35 (sd=2.47) and 8.67 (sd=3.13) respectively. The former is similar to the means of ministers and theological students, but the latter is higher, suggesting that congregations place a stronger emphasis on the social aspects of religion.

On self-directing problem solving the mean was 11.78 (sd=4.83); the mean for collaborative problem solving was 21.3 (sd=5.14); and for deferring problem solving it was 18.87 (sd=5.80). These are higher than US Presbyterian and Lutheran samples on collaborative and deferring styles (Pargament et al, 1988) where means were 18.01 (sd=5.34) and 12.91 (sd=4.59) respectively. The sample was also lower on self-directing problem solving compared with the US group mean of 14.9 (sd=5.35). The results were very similar to the styles of ministers and theological students (see Table 5 above), although congregational scores on deferring problem solving were higher.

Measures of commitment and religious problem solving were correlated first with each other in order to explore whether they were tapping into a common religious approach. They were then correlated with years as a Presbyterian, total denominations involved in, total leadership positions and total helping areas to determine whether core religiousness was associated with leadership, helping and exposure to Presbyterian worldviews.
Table 6: INTER-CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IERES</th>
<th>IREP</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>COL</th>
<th>DEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
<td>-.186**</td>
<td>-.181**</td>
<td>-.408**</td>
<td>.387**</td>
<td>.328**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERES</td>
<td>.426**</td>
<td>.114*</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.019</td>
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<tr>
<td>IREP</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>.259**</td>
<td>.218**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-.490**</td>
<td>-.345**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.605**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p<.01  * p<.05

NOTE: IERI, IERES and IREP indicate intrinsic, extrinsic social and extrinsic personal religious commitment. SD, COL and DEF indicate self-directing, collaborative and deferring problem solving.

There are significant correlations between sub-measures of commitment and religious problem solving. It appears that there are two clusters of commitment (intrinsic and extrinsic) and two clusters of problem solving (self-directing and collaborative/deferring). However, while intrinsic commitment is associated strongly with the collaborative/deferring cluster, extrinsic religiousness is not simply associated with self-directing problem solving. The finding that IRES is weakly associated with the self-directing style but IREP is more strongly associated with collaborative and deferring styles further supports the validity of distinguishing between extrinsic social and extrinsic personal commitment as argued by Kirkpatrick (1988) and Gorsuch and McPherson (1989). Although intrinsic and extrinsic personal commitment were negatively correlated for Presbyterian congregations, they were both associated with collaborative-deferring styles of problem solving. This result suggests that measures of both commitment and problem solving styles are needed to describe the religiousness of Presbyterian congregations.

Have these measures been affected by a tendency to reply in a socially desirable manner? An effort was made to answer this question by examining correlations while controlling for social desirability. The mean social desirability score of congregational members was 5.81 (sd=2.59), similar to norms from 608 undergraduate students whose mean was 5.67 and sd=3.20 (Reynolds, 1982). Social desirability was positively correlated with extrinsic personal religious commitment (r=.664, p<.01) and negatively correlated with intrinsic commitment (r=-.135, p<.05) and self-directing problem solving (r=-.137, p<.05). That is, higher scores on extrinsic personal commitment but lower scores on intrinsic commitment and self-directing problem solving were associated with social desirability as a response tendency.
The effect of social desirability on these measures was controlled by means of partial correlations. The significant negative correlation between intrinsic commitment and self-directing problem solving remained after controlling for the effects of social desirability (r = -.430, p < .01) as did the negative correlation between collaborative and self-directing problem solving (r = -.486, p < .01) and between deferring and self-directing problem solving (r = -.350, p < .01).

However, with social desirability controlled, correlations between extrinsic personal commitment and collaborative problem solving (r = .112, p = .02) and deferring problem solving (r = .124, p = .014) failed to reach statistical significance. In other words, the association between extrinsic personal commitment and the deferring/collaborative style appears to be a spurious consequence of social desirability response bias. Thus, in my sample of congregational members, intrinsic commitment was clearly associated with collaborative/deferring styles but extrinsic commitment was largely unrelated to problem solving style. A core 'religious' component comprised intrinsic commitment together with a style of problem solving that involved deferring to and collaborating with God.

Table 7: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT, PROBLEM SOLVING AND RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IERI</th>
<th>IERES</th>
<th>IERE</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>COL</th>
<th>DEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTLEAD</td>
<td>.201**</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>-.170**</td>
<td>-.111*</td>
<td>-.033</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTHELP</td>
<td>.147**</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.086</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.115**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTDENOM</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YRSPRES</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.109*</td>
<td>.148**</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>-.481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p < .01  * p < .05

NOTE: IERI, IERES and IERE indicate intrinsic, extrinsic social and extrinsic personal religious commitment. SD, COL and DEF indicate self-directing, collaborative and deferring problem solving. TOTLEAD and TOTHELP indicate number of leadership and helping positions held within the denomination, respectively. TOTDENOM indicates number of past denominational affiliations. YRSPRES indicates number of years as a Presbyterian.

Involvement in leadership in a range of areas was positively associated with intrinsic commitment but negatively associated with self-directing problem solving or extrinsic personal commitment. Helping across a range of church activities was also positively associated with intrinsic commitment but also with a deferring style of religious problem solving. The latter finding suggests that deferring to God in personal problem situations does not rule out actively participating in parish programmes.

The longer the period of association with the Presbyterian Church, the more likely the
person was to display an extrinsic personal commitment but not an extrinsic social commitment. This may be an age-related effect. There was no association between total number of denominations with which the person had been associated and measures of religious problem solving, or commitment. This finding is not surprising given the restricted variability of the "past denominations" measure.

Since elders carry a heavy pastoral role, in addition to administrative functions, within the Presbyterian Church, I examined differences between the 79 elders and other congregational members on age and religious measures. As expected, elders were significantly older than other members (mean age 56.80, sd=15.45 and 52.21, sd=17.65 respectively, t=2.10, df=355, p<.05). However, they did not differ significantly from other members on religious commitment, problem solving, frequency of prayer and bible reading, beliefs in God's control and adherence to core Presbyterian beliefs but there was a small but significant tendency for elders to attend worship services more frequently (mean frequencies 1.75, sd=.434 and 1.94, sd=.60, t=-2.66, df=357, p<.01). That is, apart from church attendance, elders were no more religious than other congregational members.

In summary, Presbyterian ministers, theological students and congregations are highly religious in their commitment and involve God in their problem solving. For ministers, a cluster of related religious measures comprises closeness to God in prayer, God-centred problem solving and spiritual well-being. For congregations, God-centred problem solving and intrinsic commitment form a religious cluster. In contrast, religious measures for theological students do not form clusters.

PRESBYTERIAN BELIEFS

This section examines data from scales based on the Westminster Confession for ministers, theological students and congregations in order to analyse typically Presbyterian beliefs (PRESBEL) and beliefs about God's sovereignty or control (BELCON). A full discussion of the development of the scales PRESBEL and BELCON is in Appendix 5. Questions that prompted the analyses below included: How strongly do Presbyterians hold to confessional beliefs and beliefs about God's sovereignty? How do ministers, congregations and theological students differ? How are beliefs related to locus of control and other measures of religiousness? Do these beliefs affect appraisals, or coping, in stressful situations? Are they related to outcomes of anxiety, depression or burnout?

Agreement with Westminster Confession

Items framed in ways that failed to reflect the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) were reverse scored so that high scores reflect strong adherence to WCF statements. The average total score for ministers was 370.71 (sd=24.51), corresponding to a mean score per item of 4.12, or an average level of agreement with the WCF. Average total scores for Presbyterian and Baptist theological students were 356.96 (sd=25.45) and 348.30 (sd=19.37) respectively, corresponding to average items scores of 3.97 and 3.87. Differences between Presbyterian and Baptist students on total scores were not
statistically significant ($t=1.66$, $df=51$, $p=.103$). The average total score for the congregational sample was 336.43 ($sd=30.60$). This corresponds to an average item score of 3.74, almost reaching an average agreement for each item.

The striking finding here is the general level of agreement with the Westminster Confession by ministers, congregations and both Presbyterian and Baptist theological students. At this broad level, there appears to be assent to confessional beliefs. Yet the high scores of Baptist students are puzzling given the Arminian focus of their denomination (Chavura, undated). Do they appear to take a Calvinist position according to more rigorous scales (PRESBEL and BELCON) and in their free responses? This is examined further below.

**BELCON scores**

Scores on BELCON for ministers, Presbyterian theological students and congregations differed significantly according to one-way analysis of variance ($F(2,452)=46.07$, $p<.001$). Based on the Newman-Keuls test with $p=.05$, ministers' scores on control beliefs (mean 26.90, $sd=3.79$) were significantly higher than those of congregational members (mean 21.78, $sd=5.26$) and Presbyterian theological students (mean 16.79, $sd=2.21$); and scores of congregations were also significantly higher than those of Presbyterian theological students. It is of interest that the mean score of Baptist theological students was 18.08 ($sd=3.32$) and there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of the Baptist and Presbyterian theological students. Note that the maximum possible score on BELCON was 30, so the mean of the ministers' scores was very high, indicating strong agreement with God's sovereignty in salvation. For congregations, the mean scale score indicated agreement but for Presbyterian theological students the mean scale score indicated a position between disagreement and neutrality on the issue of God's sovereignty in salvation.

**Validity of BELCON**

Preliminary validation for the BELCON scale was assessed using congregational data by correlating BELCON scores with deferring problem solving and intrinsic religiousness, assumed to be higher with stronger beliefs in God's control. As predicted the control beliefs scale was positively correlated with intrinsic religiousness ($r=.346$, $p<.01$) and deferring problem solving ($r=.163$, $p<.01$) and negatively correlated with extrinsic social religiousness ($r=-.150$, $p<.01$), extrinsic personal religiousness ($r=-.104$, $p<.05$) and self-directing problem solving ($r=-.166$, $p<.01$). The scale was also positively correlated with collaborative problem solving ($r=.115$, $p<.05$).

Thus, the Control Beliefs Scale which was theoretically based on a Calvinistic theology of God's sovereignty appeared to have reasonable reliability (see Methodology section) and sufficient indications of validity to be used in multiple regression and other correlational analyses.
Correlations with other measures

Ministers' BELCON scores were correlated with selected demographic variables (age, size of parish, years since ordination, time in current parish); appraisals of the most stressful event as a threat, loss or challenge; causal and outcome attributions; ratings of their handling of the event; the 17 priorities for ministry; ratings of ministry stress; and all measures of religiousness. No significant positive correlations were obtained except for collaborative problem solving ($r=.275$, $p<.05$) and two ratings of ministry stress: lack of encouragement ($r=.257$, $p<.05$) and dealing with ethical issues ($r=.311$, $p<.05$). BELCON was negatively correlated with attributing the most stressful event to deliberate positive actions by oneself ($r=-.299$, $p<.05$). In order to check for non-linear age trends, means of three age groups were compared by one-way ANOVA but no significant differences were found.

Relationships between ministers' scores on control beliefs and reports of God's sovereign control in their personally stressful situations were assessed by grouping responses to questions about God causing the event, the relationship between divine and human causation, God influencing the outcome and relationships between divine and human control over the outcome into categories of God's sovereignty and control versus God leading, allowing and acting in partnership with humans. Differences between the two groups in each case were assessed by t-tests but no significant differences were found. No significant associations were found between BELCON scores and outcome measures of burnout, anxiety or depression.

BELCON scores of theological students were correlated with measures of religiousness and all outcome measures: no significant correlations were obtained.

These findings point to the unexpected conclusion that beliefs about God's control are independent of age, other demographic aspects of ministry, ministry priorities, responses in personally stressful situations and outcomes. While weakly correlated with collaborative problem solving and several isolated ratings of the stressful situation for ministers, they are unrelated to other religious measures for ministers and theological students. One explanation is that the BELCON scale largely measures beliefs about God's sovereignty over human salvation. These beliefs may be crucial in bringing about a person's initial commitment to Christianity without affecting ongoing behaviour as a Christian layperson, or minister. An alternative explanation is that ceiling effects, particularly for ministers' scores, are attenuating correlations with other measures, a problem found with other religious measures used with highly religious subjects (see discussion of ceiling effects in relation to spiritual well-being in Ledbetter, Smith, Vosler-Hunter and Fischer, 1991).

BELCON and locus of control (LOC)

If BELCON measures belief in God's direct control in salvation and the Religious-Revision LOC Scale tends to produce higher (more external) scores with religious subjects, it was predicted that higher BELCON scores would be associated with higher LOC scores. However, neither ministers' nor theological students' scores on these
measures were significantly correlated (and LOC was not included as a measure in the congregational study). These findings indicate that LOC as a general expectation of rewards from supernatural powers, as opposed to one's own efforts, is not associated with beliefs in God's control in salvation.

Validity of PRESBEL

The PRESBEL scale has construct validity due to its basis in the Westminster Confession of Faith, its internal consistency and two-factor structure with factors comprising human sinfulness and God's loving holiness (See Appendix 5).

It was expected that a valid scale of Presbyterian beliefs would be positively correlated with BELCON, intrinsic religiousness, deferring and collaborative problem solving, but negatively correlated with extrinsic religiousness and self-directing problem solving. These predictions were partly supported in the congregational study where high scores on PRESBEL were positively correlated with BELCON (r=.863, p<.01), intrinsic commitment (r=.344, p<.01) and deferring problem solving (r=.115, p<.05) but negatively correlated with extrinsic social commitment (r=-.191, p<.01) and self-directing problem solving (r=-.171, p<.01).

Contrary to expectation, PRESBEL scores for ministers were uncorrelated with other religious variables. For theological students, PRESBEL scores were positively correlated with deferring problem solving (r=.357, p<.01) and extrinsic personal commitment (r=.320, p<.05) but negatively correlated with intrinsic commitment (r=-.353, p<.01). These findings suggest that Presbyterian beliefs are operating in different ways: as part of general religiousness for congregations but not for actual or aspiring ministers.

PRESBEL scores

Differences in PRESBEL scores for the three samples were investigated using one-way ANOVA followed by the Newman-Keuls test. The overall test was significant (F(2,452)=60.34, p<.001) and at the .05 level scores of ministers (mean 54.84, sd=6.29) were significantly higher than those of congregations (mean 44.63, sd=11.72) and Presbyterian theological students (mean 27.96, sd=5.73): in addition, congregational scores were significantly higher than student scores. The latter result did not appear to result from the younger age of the theological students since their PRESBEL scores were uncorrelated with age.

For ministers, PRESBEL scores were largely uncorrelated with ratings of ministry stress or appraisals in a personally stressful situation and were uncorrelated with measures of religious experience and with outcome measures. PRESBEL scores were also uncorrelated with outcome measures for theological students.
PRESBEL and LOC

Do those who score high on confessional beliefs tend to score externally on LOC? If the PRESBEL scale is a more general measure of Presbyterian beliefs, including God's sovereignty, then it is likely that high scores would be associated with beliefs in God as a source of reinforcement. However, for ministers PRESBEL and LOC were uncorrelated while for theological students PRESBEL and LOC were negatively correlated ($r=-.403, p<.01$). In other words, high PRESBEL scores were associated with internal LOC for the students and my tentative prediction was not supported.

Summary

There was general agreement with a large number of statements reflecting confessional beliefs by ministers, theological students and congregations. Six items formed a scale reflecting beliefs in God's sovereignty in salvation (BELCON). Ministers and congregational members tended to agree with God's control and human powerlessness in salvation, whereas theological students tended to disagree. Belief in God's salvation-sovereignty was correlated strongly with intrinsic religious commitment for congregations but was not strongly related to religiousness, or stress measures for ministers and theological students. It was not related to locus of control.

Twelve items formed a scale of central Presbyterian beliefs having two factors comprising human sinfulness and God's loving holiness. Ministers' scores reflected agreement with these beliefs, which were unrelated to other measures of religiousness or stress. Congregations also tended to agree with these beliefs and high scores reflected intrinsic religiousness. On the other hand, the theological students tended to disagree with central Presbyterian beliefs and disagreement with core Confessional statements was associated with stronger intrinsic religious commitment and external locus of control.

ANALYSIS OF STRESSFUL REAL-LIFE EVENT

The main objective in asking the series of questions about the most stressful recent event in the lives of ministers and students was to examine in detail how beliefs about God's sovereignty related to their judgements and responses in that situation. In this section, I focus on the responses of ministers, with data from theological students used for comparative purposes.
Description of event

Table 8: EVENT TYPE

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Min %</th>
<th>Pres %</th>
<th>Bap %</th>
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<td>N=64</td>
<td>N=21</td>
<td>N=24</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health-related, death</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational issue</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial, material</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In classifying the situations into a single event type, I defined ministry issues as those involving relationships with parish leaders, parishioners or community members seeking services from the minister. Health-related issues included illness, pregnancy, deaths and injuries to parishioners, the minister or student and family members. Relational issues comprised non-medical situations involving the minister, or student with family, or friends. The birth of a new baby was classified as a relational event when the comments were based on extended family relationships, rather than the biological aspects of pregnancy, or birth. Financial and material events included damage to property after an accident, difficulties over student benefits and difficulties directly related to parish finances. Academic issues included failing an important exam, or difficulties with academic work.

In comparing responses of ministers and students, there is a clear shift from relational and health issues of students to an emphasis on ministry issues as most stressful events for the ministers. Examining ministers' responses more closely I found that within the ministry issues, 23 situations involved relationships with parishioners and 18 involved relationships with leaders (session, committees, presbytery). Next I used multiple categories to try to capture why the event was so stressful for the minister.

For all stressful events reported by ministers, 36% involved perceived opposition to the minister. Often this was the result of changes made in forms of worship, or the role of the minister. A related theme was the authority of the minister over worship and parish matters. Typical comments were:

"We changed the style of the evening service. A lady wrote scathingly to session about the change, about my background, the direction of the church, music etc. Through a visit with the session clerk many fears were allayed and now she comes regularly. It was stressful as the whole session had to think through changes."
"Opposition I am having with the session clerk. His attempts to undermine the gospel ministry here and go behind my back to do things."

"I wanted an extra microphone in church for the communion table. One elder tried to block it but I felt it was necessary for the comfort of the congregation. I moved a motion and the meeting passed it in spite of his objections. When I arrived home I felt stressed and annoyed".

Over one-quarter of the stressful events involved a sense of grief over death, illness in a close family member or loss (27%). The sense of grief often related to parishioners leaving or being in situations where the minister's counsel was apparently ineffective. Typical comments were:

"An outflow of people from the congregation which was a country parish, with people transferring jobs and young people moving to large centres for education or work."

"A family with psychiatric problems in the father, psychological trauma for mother and children affected. After a number of attempts the father committed suicide. I was counselling them. There was the frustration of not seeming to do any good and I had to do the funeral."

Eight events (13%) were characterized by frustration, with ministry goals blocked by situations (rather than by opposition from people). Typical examples were:

"A car accident which necessitated change of plans regarding family, holidays, work and other matters."

"A few Sundays ago I preached a sermon, the middle of a series of three. I had no time to prepare properly, the sermon was poor and I felt let down. In the afternoon there was a youth leaders' meeting: some forgot to come and some reacted negatively. Afterwards at youth group the games and activities didn't go well."

Other broad characteristics of situations, particularly related to ministry events, comprised those where the minister took on a mediating role (8%), typically as interim moderator, and those where conflicts between parishioners caused stress (5%). Examples of each type were:

"A recent selection committee meeting where a vocal minority made its views felt. The meeting resolved to offer a call but because it was not unanimous the minister concerned declined to go ahead."

"While I was on leave a ladies' group gave a large donation to an aspect of ministry. However, members of one of the other churches within the parish pointed to an agreement whereby surplus funds would be used to pay off the debt on their manse. The ladies protested that it was a private gift. People took sides
and rumours flew."

Table 9: SEVERITY OF EVENT: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SEVERITY RATINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity Rating</th>
<th>Ministers Mean (S.d)</th>
<th>Students Mean (S.d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantry</td>
<td>1.62 (1.11)</td>
<td>2.29 (1.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency in past</td>
<td>3.85 (1.24)</td>
<td>3.91 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to avoid</td>
<td>1.08 (1.62)</td>
<td>1.69 (1.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>3.98 (1.28)</td>
<td>3.56 (1.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>3.46 (1.55)</td>
<td>3.29 (1.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss</td>
<td>3.67 (1.49)</td>
<td>3.00 (1.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>3.83 (1.42)</td>
<td>4.16 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the severity ratings fell towards the more severe ends of the 5-point scales. The events were typically perceived as being at least moderately unpleasant, long-lasting (for some weeks at least), involving challenge, loss and threat, largely unavoidable and novel (with only occasional similar experiences in the past).

Appraisals in the stressful event

Religious appraisals

Table 10: PERCEPTION OF GOD THROUGHOUT THE EVENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of God Perception</th>
<th>% Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God caused the event</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of God at time of immediate response</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts about God affected immediate response</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious of God after immediate response</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of God affected behaviour after immediate response</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God would influence the outcome</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 61 21 24
Awareness of God was strongest after the immediate response and involved some effect on subsequent behaviour and thoughts about the outcome. The Presbyterian students strongly endorsed God's direct causing of the event, emphasising his sovereignty rather than his leading or allowing, in contrast to the ministers and Baptist students. This may be related to their reporting more health-related situations as stressors, or to their personal beliefs.

Table 11: HOW GOD IS PERCEIVED AS CAUSING THE EVENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How God Caused the Event</th>
<th>Min % N=34</th>
<th>Pres % N=17</th>
<th>Bap % N=12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God is sovereign, controls, wills</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God leads, gives us opportunities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God allows, permits the event</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (God teaching, indirect)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of respondents perceived God as controlling or leading in the situation. When responses of ministers were examined in detail, God's control and leading were seen in a number of ways. In 13 replies (20%) there was a sense of general sovereignty, that God causes all things, such as:

"God is in complete control of all situations and events."

Ten replies (16%) reflected a belief in God's direct control over the stressful situation - He brought it about for a specific purpose. Typical comments were:

"We had problems with fertility and the birth was direct intervention from God: it was very strong divine intervention."

"I believe the 'person' who directed him to church was an angel."

Those who expressed God's control as leading, giving people opportunities, emphasised the need for humans to co-operate with the divine plan, for example:

"God called me from one parish to another. My deliberate action was in obedience to God's call. I had fulfilled His purpose in a previous parish and He wanted me to serve Him in a new area."

"He answered our prayers. God used a set of extraordinary events to show her the truth."

In one third of the replies in which God was seen as allowing the situation, there was a comment about sin being the direct cause:
"God allowed it, Satan engineered it."

"God allows our sinful behaviour to run its natural course."

However, in another third of replies, the outcome of God's allowing the situation was seen as positive - blessing or "things working together for good."

**Table 12: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVINE AND HUMAN CAUSATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divine-human Relationship</th>
<th>% Min N=30</th>
<th>Pres N=17</th>
<th>Bap N=13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God allows human decisions</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God works through, leads human decisions</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A partnership, interaction of sovereignty and free will</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God wills, controls and humans are agents</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God over-rules humans</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presbyterian students perceived God primarily as governing and over-ruling humans, while Baptists emphasised humans as agents of God's will. The ministers emphasised God's leading and allowing human decisions with some focus on the partnership between the sovereign God and humans with free will.

An example of direct control was where the minister believed God sent an angel to direct a man to his church:

"In the end, the man had little choice. He was reduced to desperation and panic and was resigned to death."

God's working through humans was expressed by one minister as:

"God works out His purposes through us, our faults and failings."

A more distant stance is taken on the position that God allows human decisions. Typical comments by ministers were:

"I see it [causation] to be mostly human, though God may have His ultimate purposes to achieve."

"There are many occasions where God allows our sinful behaviour to run its natural course."

The interaction position suggests a more immediate, or immanent sense of God but holds
two apparently contradictory truths in tension. For example:

"I'm the active agent, she is responsive in her own right. God created the circumstances and to some degree controls my emotional responses (he built me that way). Both are operating."

Secular attributions

I asked respondents to rate the percentage contribution of seven possible causes to the direct occurrence of their stressful event. In this way, causation could be attributed to a single cause or to multiple causes, with the total adding to 100%.

Table 13: SECULAR ATTRIBUTIONS RELATING TO EVENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Ministers Mean (S.d)</th>
<th>Students Mean (S.d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>17.7 (36.3)</td>
<td>19.1 (34.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberate positive</td>
<td>7.9 (19.7)</td>
<td>20.4 (34.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberate negative</td>
<td>39.2 (41.5)</td>
<td>13.8 (26.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unintended</td>
<td>19.5 (33.4)</td>
<td>12.8 (23.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberate positive</td>
<td>6.6 (19.6)</td>
<td>11.8 (21.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberate negative</td>
<td>4.3 (18.0)</td>
<td>8.0 (18.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unintended</td>
<td>3.5 (15.1)</td>
<td>9.8 (19.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine whether the departures from the expected value of 14.3 were sufficiently large to rule out the possibility of chance fluctuations, I calculated separate chi square tests for the ministers' and students' results. The obtained chi square value for ministers was 67.983, df=6, p<.001, indicating significant deviations from expected values but the obtained value for students was 8.979, df=6, a non-significant result. Thus, no trends can be reported for the students' responses but by inspection of the data it appears that ministers attributed the events significantly more than expected to the deliberate negative actions of others and significantly less than expected to self and deliberate positive actions of others. This last result which represents the smallest absolute difference from the expected value was checked by a t-test for a single mean, using an unbiased estimate of the standard error of the mean. The obtained t value was -17.737 which corresponds to a probability level of less than .001 for df=60. This supports the conclusions drawn from inspection of the data.

These findings raise the issue of the relationship between type of stressful event and attributions which I examined more thoroughly by means of congregational data (see
section below). However, some preliminary results from ministers and theological students follow.

**Event type and appraisals**

Did the type of event reported as the most stressful recent situation influence causal attributions, other appraisals and judgements about outcomes? Data for the ministers and theological students were combined, events were categorized as financial/material, or ministry/relational and chi square statistics were calculated for the following measures: how God caused the event (as sovereign controller versus other); relationship between divine and human causation (God controlling, over-ruling versus other); how God would influence the outcome; and divine-human influence over the outcome (both of these contrasting God's control with human participation). Only one result was statistically significant: those reporting material situations were more likely to see God as controlling and over-ruling humans in causing the situation (chi square after continuity correction = 7.90, df=1, p<.01).

With the following continuous measures the means of those reporting material and relational events were compared: pleasantness and duration of stressful event; secular causal attributions; appraisals as a threat, loss or challenge; secular outcome attributions; handling of the event. Those reporting material events were more likely to rate the event as pleasant (t=2.07, df=107, p<.05), to attribute the event to chance (t=4.70, df=105, p<.001) and to attribute the outcome to chance (t=4.28m df=100, p<.001). They were less likely to attribute the event to the negative actions of others (t=-3.11, df=105, p<.01) and to judge the event to be a threat (t=-2.43, df=104, p<.05). Thus, while the type of event did not affect many religious appraisals, it did have significant effects on a range of secular appraisals.

**Outcome attributions and global reflections**

**Table 14: HOW GOD WOULD INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How God Would Influence Outcome</th>
<th>Min% N=49</th>
<th>Pres% N=17</th>
<th>Bap% N=21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As sovereign, over-ruling</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping, changing, strengthening people</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By giving opportunities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of those who believed that God would influence the outcome of the event believed that this would occur through activities within people. Presbyterian students also tended to believe that God would over-rule with respect to the outcome (53%) compared with a minority of ministers and Baptist students.
From the ministers' data, situations related to direct intervention included illness, where God was seen as having healed, or in the process of healing (4 replies), parish activities, largely financial (4) and material loss due to fire (2). Typical replies were:

"Because of my faith I believed that God would answer my prayer for healing."

"God will break down the barrier one way or the other, perhaps by the alternative of a subdivision to provide funds."

"I believed God would give His help with the weather and protection of His people."

Examples of God influencing the outcome of the stressful situation by changing people included belief that God was bringing salvation or healing relationships. The latter involved change within the minister and others involved in the stressful events. An example of God working towards salvation is seen in:

"I hoped He would (influence the outcome) by softening hearts. He did work in this woman: she realised it was by faith she would be saved, not by works."

God's working in relationships is seen in:

"I would hope that the outcome would be that the influence this man is having would be stopped. God will intervene in some way to stop him, in the short or long term. God might also be dealing with me."

An example of God providing opportunities for humans to affect the outcome is as follows:

"God gave me the opportunity to speak with my father before his death to complete things. God could have allowed dad to die suddenly early in the year but in providence allowed for the completion of these issues. Then it was my responsibility to take these opportunities."

**Table 15: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIVINE AND HUMAN CONTROL OVER THE OUTCOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Relationship</th>
<th>Min% N=51</th>
<th>Pres% N=15</th>
<th>Bap% N=23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God works through people</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension: both sovereignty &amp; free will</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is sovereign, in control</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have full control or choice</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ministers emphasised God's working though people in the outcome, the Presbyterian students emphasised God's sovereignty and the Baptist students emphasised human freedom (although acknowledging the tension with God's sovereignty).

The ministers who perceived God working through humans in the outcome of their stressful situation saw themselves as God's agent, as a co-operative player in God's scheme, or as exercising responsibility within God's opportunities. Typical responses were:

"God's divine control works through human effort. In people who are His own people and Spirit filled, He directs a desire to promote His glory. God works through them by His Holy Spirit."

"The general conviction was that I was working towards God's purposes."

"I knew God had placed me in the congregation and I had to behave like a Christian in spite of difficulties."

The tension between God's sovereignty and human free will was acknowledged to be a mystery in eight ministers' responses, such as:

"There is a tension: God is sovereign but we are responsible."

"There are times in a situation where God will work in powerful ways and people will change their behaviours. At other times God appears far less powerful and final, resulting in a slower, long-term process of healing. At times, because of hardness of heart, there is no change."

Five ministers dealt with the tension by suggesting that humans influence outcomes in the short-term but God determines ultimate outcomes:

"In the long run God makes His will known through the courts of the church but they err because we are fallible human beings. There was a time in the process when I shut God out and when the church courts were not responsive to God's will."

"Eventually the earth will be filled with God's glory but not soon. I do not believe in omnipotence in the sense of God sending earthquakes."

Those who commented on God's direct control over the outcome of their situation implied that they received comfort and relief of stress in that belief and were able to pray for God's resolution of the situation. Examples were:

"God is in control. I couldn't cope in any situation apart from belief, standing on the promises of God."

"God's control is the one that has to operate. It will take supernatural power to
resolve the situation. It takes off some of the pressure to know that the issue is being in touch with God and tapping into Him appropriately.”

Secular outcome attributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Attribution</th>
<th>Theo. Students</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Sd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>45.04</td>
<td>32.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance</td>
<td>16.80</td>
<td>28.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>37.80</td>
<td>28.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both ministers and students were unlikely to attribute the outcome of the stressful situation to chance. Ministers were most likely to attribute the outcome to others, while students thought that the outcome rested in their own hands.

Secular outcome attributions were correlated with corresponding secular causes of the situation and in each case a significant relationship with p<.01 was found: luck (r=.49), others (r=.30) and self (r=.27). However, there was no relationship between attributions to God causing the stressful event and God influencing the outcome.

Attributions and outcomes

In the cross-sectional study of ministers it was difficult to tease out causal relationships between attributions and measures of stress and burnout. However, in the preliminary study using theological students, affect and well-being were measured twice. Strong measures of secular and religious attributions (averaged across vignettes) were correlated firstly with initial affect/well-being measures to explore whether initial dispositions affected attributions and then with change scores to explore the effects of attributions on affect/well-being.

Very few significant relationships were found. Those with high initial well-being scores made lower attributions to luck, and this effect was stronger for religious well-being (r=.52, p=.01) than for existential well-being (r=.34, p<.05). Those high on religious well-being initially were also more likely to attribute events to God's allowing (r=.33, p<.05).

A different pattern of relationships with luck emerged from the change scores. Change in spiritual well-being was unrelated to luck attributions but increasing depression was positively associated with luck attributions (r=.30, p<.05). That is, while initial depression did not appear to prompt luck attributions, those who made more attributions to luck were more likely to have higher depression after the stressful event.
Coping

The majority of respondents (88%) reported negative emotions such as sadness, anger, worry, fear or anguish in response to the event. The most frequently mentioned immediate response comprised planning or action (63%) followed by expressing feelings (15%) and prayer (14%).

Table 17: AWARENESS OF GOD IN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Aware of God</th>
<th>Min%</th>
<th>Pres%</th>
<th>Bap%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=48</td>
<td>N=18</td>
<td>N=19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of God's presence, support</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By faith, just knew God was in control</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In events</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In thoughts, reflection on God or Bible</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In feelings, a sense of peace</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A higher proportion of Baptist students (90%) than ministers (79%), or Presbyterian students (75%) reported awareness of God at the time of their immediate response. For both groups of students the awareness was more likely to be in reflection on God or Biblical principles than as a sense of God's presence. For the ministers, relatively few respondents (27%) were aware of God's presence as they responded to the event. However, those who were aware expressed the sense of presence strongly:

"I was aware that God was with me (in hospital), aware of His peace and strength."

"I knew God was there all the way through. It is still His church. I felt God's presence when I had difficulty in church at this time."

Almost half of the ministers mentioned a sense of God by faith, or in their thinking and feelings ("I believed God would take us through if I acted righteously") and another 25% mentioned an awareness of God in events ("It was something He had done once more for us, a great blessing").
Table 18: HOW THOUGHTS OF GOD AFFECTED IMMEDIATE BEHAVIOUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Thoughts of God Affected Behaviour</th>
<th>Min% N=40</th>
<th>Pres% N=17</th>
<th>Bap% N=16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unselfish, positive action</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted prayer</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed thoughts</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted emotion, changed negative emotion</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted waiting to respond</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted thanks, praise</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Presbyterian students, awareness of God was most likely to prompt a response of prayer (41%) while for Baptist students (37%) and the ministers (27%) the most frequent response was positive action.

Table 19: FOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT COPING RESPONSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping Response</th>
<th>Cope 1* Min P. B.</th>
<th>Cope 2** Min P. B.</th>
<th>Cope 3 Min P. B.</th>
<th>Cope 4 Min P. B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss with other</td>
<td>36 25 29</td>
<td>44 10 21</td>
<td>42 12 38</td>
<td>26 18 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive action</td>
<td>23 30 25</td>
<td>32 35 17</td>
<td>27 35 14</td>
<td>30 82 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayed</td>
<td>15 30 17</td>
<td>12 30 29</td>
<td>6 6 18</td>
<td>7 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned, thought</td>
<td>15 0 8</td>
<td>7 5 8</td>
<td>8 12 14</td>
<td>33 0 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed thinking</td>
<td>8 5 8</td>
<td>3 5 8</td>
<td>0 12 0</td>
<td>4 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought help, prayer</td>
<td>5 10 8</td>
<td>2 15 17</td>
<td>15 12 5</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vented</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 4</td>
<td>0 12 10</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*most significant coping response  **second most significant coping response etc.

Discussion with others was clearly perceived to be the most important coping response. It received highest endorsement as the most important response overall by ministers and Baptist students and was also endorsed most frequently as the second and third most important coping response by ministers.

Taking positive action was perceived to be the second most important coping response by ministers and Baptist students (most important response by Presbyterian students) and it was also the second most frequently endorsed response in the categories of second to fourth most important response by ministers.

Only around 15% of ministers and Baptist students indicated that praying was their most
significant coping response, although the Presbyterian students endorsed it strongly as first and second responses, and even lower percentages of ministers endorsed prayer as their second to fourth most important coping response.

For ministers, the most important coping response was unrelated to religious dispositions and religious appraisals except for collaborative problem solving where high scores were associated with taking positive action and low scores with discussion (chi square=7.03, df=1, p<.05).

Coping responses were also measured using scales of secular coping and religious coping items that were examined differently from original empirical scales (Pargament et al, 1990). In the table below the alpha levels relate to results from the theological students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 20: SCORES ON RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR COPING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coping Scale</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary vicarious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary interpretive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary vicarious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary interpretive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total primary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total secondary</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean scores for ministers and theological students on secular and religious coping in their personally stressful events were very similar. Average scores on the secular coping strategies of active, restraint and emotional social support coping approached 3 (medium use), on instrumental social support and venting approached 2 (little used) and on denial approached 1 (not used at all). Primary religious coping, or the use of religion to try to change the situation, was reportedly used more frequently than secondary religious coping, or using religion to change oneself. Within primary religious coping both religious planning (using God or the bible as guidance) and primary vicarious (using God or faith actively to change the situation) were most frequently used, at a level that approached medium use. Secondary religious coping was used at a level of little use, on average, with vicarious (allowing God to solve problems) and interpretive (asking God for meaning) coping used more than disengagement or venting.

Data from the theological students were used to assess the reliability of the coping scales for use with Australian samples. As expected, the secular coping scales had adequate reliability and the reliability of the primary religious coping items combined was most adequate but the reliability of the religious coping sub-scales varied considerably. Active (6 items), primary vicarious (4 items) and social support (2 items) coping had adequate reliabilities but the other primary religious scales with only 2 or 3 items failed to show coherence. The reliability of secondary religious items combined just failed to reach an adequate level for exploratory scales and of the secondary religious coping sub-scales, only the 7-item secondary vicarious coping scale had adequate reliability with the other 2-item scales having little coherence.

Some of the sub-scales were then combined in exploratory ways to assess whether reliabilities could be improved by adding items with theoretical relevance. Religious planning was combined with active religious coping to form a 9-item set. This had an acceptable alpha of .776. Primary and secondary interpretation items were combined and the resulting 4-item set had an improved, although still marginal, alpha of .576. The adequate reliabilities of the primary and secondary vicarious scales confirmed the usefulness of making these distinctions that were initially based on theoretical considerations. The distinction between active and vicarious primary coping also appears warranted and the robustness of social support as a theme in religious, as well as secular, coping is illustrated. However, it seems that more items need to be developed to test out the usefulness of other religious coping approaches based on theoretical considerations.
Table 21: HOW CONSCIOUS OF GOD AFTER IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Conscious of God</th>
<th>Min% N=50</th>
<th>Pres% N=19</th>
<th>Bap% N=21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware of presence, comfort of God</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In thoughts, prayer, faith</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In events, or loving action of others</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, a higher proportion of respondents were aware of God in their thinking (including in prayer and faith) than those who had emotional awareness of God's presence and comfort.

Table 22: HOW AWARENESS OF GOD AFFECTED SUBSEQUENT BEHAVIOUR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Attributed to Awareness of God</th>
<th>Min% N=41</th>
<th>Pres% N=19</th>
<th>Bap% N=21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changed thinking, feelings</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took positive, helpful action, prayed</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthened, motivated to keep on</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two-thirds indicated that awareness of God affected their thoughts and feelings, including motivation to persevere, while one third reported that it prompted action such as helpful responses or prayer.

The way in which the ministers perceived God in their coping throughout the stressful event was examined in detail. Two broad aspects of coping were selected: primary coping, including discussion, praying for change and taking action and secondary coping including praying for strength, restraint coping and inner change.

God was seen as a catalyst for initiating and persevering in primary coping by 22 ministers (34%). For example, after the birth of his son a minister reflected on his children and stated that God "drives me to take time with them and pray that He will use them." Several ministers commented that thoughts of God led them to consider biblical principles and seek to behave in biblical ways. One issue concerned relationships with an assistant. Awareness of God prompted the minister as follows:

"I sought to think of scriptural directives on partners in ministry and brothers in Christ - trying to meet, talk and pray in a biblical way and express concerns, issue
mild, gentle warnings in a confidential way."

Another minister confronted issues of Christian life and marriage in a parish family. He perceived God as prompting him:

"In writing a reconciling, explaining letter that shared from Scripture. I committed the situation in prayer, concerned for their marriage. I was trying to do what was loving and best for them, even if they left the church."

In another situation where the minister was counselling a couple with marriage problems the focus was on persevering in primary coping:

"I took them through 'Christianity Explained' which they didn't respond to. We were loving people whom we could just have walked out on."

Secondary coping, seen in 24 replies (38%) was a result of a focus on God especially in ministry situations and personal situations of illness or difficulties within the minister's family. A minister who described opposition from members of session as the stressful event stated that God influenced his response through:

"An awareness of how God would want me to behave, to keep cool, to be self-critical of my integrity. Dissenters accused me of lacking integrity, of just doing it as a takeover of the service."

This was an example of restraint coping (seen in 17 replies, 27%), or refraining from hasty action, as well as an examination of motives. Another example of secondary coping related to a sudden illness in the minister's family where God was seen as providing people at the hospital to give support, but also affected coping by strengthening and restraint and then in primary coping via decision making:

"God gave us confidence that there was a way through this. I could still make decisions even though tired and upset: the situation was not helpless and hopeless. God's assistance meant we didn't panic at stage 1 when we trusted medical help and stage 2 in making a decision they would not agree with."

Most of the comments on restraint coping related to God-given self control, patience and calmness:

"God made me sit still."

"God helped me to resolve the anger and the self-righteousness dissipated."

"I was put in shackles by the Holy Spirit."

Prayer was used as primary coping (request for God to change the situation) and secondary coping (prayer for strength, guidance, acceptance etc). In many cases both types of prayer were used. For example, in the situation of his wife's illness a minister
stated:

"I was always conscious of God. I prayed that God would take it away or else provide comfort and strength to live with it."

Summary

The above data describe the responses of highly religious people to actual stressful situations. The majority reported a sense of God in the event, from its causation through their responding to its outcome. However, what was striking were differences between the ministers and two groups of students. From the Presbyterian students there were repeated statements about God's sovereignty: in causing the event (and over-ruling humans in the causation) and in the outcome of the event. They responded to the event with some awareness of God's presence immediately, largely through reflection on God, or biblical principles and with strong emphasis on prayer as an immediate and subsequent response.

From the ministers there was a broader sense of God's causation of the event, including his leading and allowing of the situation, with greater scope for human decisions within the framework of God's overall leadership. They had a more diverse sense of God's immediate presence in the event by means of faith, reflection on current and past events, reflection on God and direct consciousness of God. Responses emphasised discussion and action. There was an emphasis on God's working in and through people in their reflections on the outcome of the event.

The Baptist students were similar to the Presbyterian ministers in their thoughts about God's causing the event and influencing the outcome. Yet they differed in their stronger views of humans as free agents of God, working in partnership with God.

In open-ended responses to personal events Presbyterian theological students expressed a narrow Calvinistic stance emphasising God's sovereignty; Baptist students expressed an Arminian position which emphasised human freedom; while ministers expressed a stance that was broadly Calvinistic. The findings for the students are puzzling with differences between responses to the full set of items reflecting confessional beliefs, specific Calvinist beliefs scales and unstructured responses to personal events. Previously I discussed their scores on Calvinist beliefs (PRESBEL and BELCON), concluding that scores for both groups of students were similar and they tended to disagree with central Presbyterian beliefs and beliefs concerning God's salvation-sovereignty. In contrast, both groups of students had scores reflecting overall agreement with the large set of items sampling propositions from the Westminster Confession (WCF). Nonetheless, in personally stressful situations Presbyterian students reported strong beliefs in God's control but Baptist students did not. There are several possible explanations. First, similarity of scores based on the WCF may mask real differences on component factors, or dimensions and not all dimensions may be unique to a Calvinist position. Second, the scales with established reliability and validity may be a more accurate measure of Calvinist beliefs than total scores on WCF items. Third, situational measures may be better than dispositional measures (as suggested by stress-
process theory: Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). This theme is discussed further in the section titled "Convergence of Stress Measures" below.

ANALYSIS OF STRESS VIGNETTES

The purpose of this section is to describe results of the congregational study of attributions and coping responses made to situations depicted in brief vignettes. Major questions included: To what extent do Presbyterians see God as controlling life events? Do they see God directly controlling events or working through people? Are religious attributions made at the expense of secular attributions? What aspects of situations affect the strength of different causal attributions? To what extent do Presbyterians use religious coping responses? Are religious coping responses endorsed more strongly than secular coping? How does the use of primary and secondary coping differ? How do attributions affect coping responses?

Attributions

Table 23: MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND MEDIAN ATTRIBUTIONS ALL RESPONSES COMBINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God allowed</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God through humans</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God caused/controlled</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across all situations, respondents endorsed most strongly that God allowed the event, followed by causal attributions to self and others. These three attributions were endorsed, on average, at levels of neutral to agree. Attributions to God working through humans, luck and God controlling the event were, on average, endorsed at levels of mild disagreement. In other words, Presbyterians did not assert God's direct control over life events. Instead, they reported a variety of religious and secular attributions that suggested an interaction between divine and human causes.
Inter-correlations between attributions

Table 24: INTERCORRELATION BETWEEN ATTRIBUTIONS ALL RESPONSES COMBINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Luck</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>GC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>.182*</td>
<td>.357**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>-.275**</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>-.141**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC</td>
<td>-.139*</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTH</td>
<td>-.104</td>
<td>.184**</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.227**</td>
<td>.591**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** p<.01  *p<.05

Within secular attributions the strongest positive association was between self and others but there was also a significant relationship between attributions to luck and others. Within religious attributions there were strong positive relationships between God working through humans and controlling or allowing situations. There was a negative relationship between attributions to God and attributions to luck. Those who made strong attributions to self, tended also to endorse that God worked through humans, while those who made strong attributions to others, tended to disagree that God allowed the situation. Attributions to God allowing the situation, as might be expected, were uncorrelated with attributions to God causing the situation.
### Table 25: MEANS (AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS) OF ATTRIBUTION SCORES BY SITUATION TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Situation type</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck</td>
<td>2.564</td>
<td>1.735</td>
<td>2.313</td>
<td>1.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.652)</td>
<td>(1.385)</td>
<td>(1.553)</td>
<td>(1.066)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>3.595</td>
<td>4.538</td>
<td>2.709</td>
<td>3.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.432)</td>
<td>(1.121)</td>
<td>(1.565)</td>
<td>(1.135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.313</td>
<td>2.440</td>
<td>4.164</td>
<td>3.935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.384)</td>
<td>(1.594)</td>
<td>(1.100)</td>
<td>(1.219)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God caused</td>
<td>1.817</td>
<td>1.638</td>
<td>1.638</td>
<td>2.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.817)</td>
<td>(1.233)</td>
<td>(1.166)</td>
<td>(1.397)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God allowed</td>
<td>3.809</td>
<td>3.494</td>
<td>3.331</td>
<td>3.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.484)</td>
<td>(1.566)</td>
<td>(1.612)</td>
<td>(1.290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God by humans</td>
<td>1.965</td>
<td>2.171</td>
<td>2.078</td>
<td>3.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.330)</td>
<td>(1.485)</td>
<td>(1.415)</td>
<td>(1.341)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the range of scores for each attribution was from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The multivariate test of significance for attributions (repeated measures, within-subjects MANOVA) was significant. The Pillai's-Bartlett trace yielded a significant difference: (F(5, 125)=102.77, p<.001). All univariate F tests with (1, 129)df, adjusted by epsilon=.673, were also significant at p<.001. This indicates that significant differences in ratings were found across all attributions, religious and secular.

The multivariate test of significance for situations was also statistically significant as the Pillai's-Bartlett trace yielded F(3, 127)=47.10, p<.001 but only two of the univariate F tests were significant. These involved contrasts between health and positive situations (F(1, 129)=121.06, p<.001) and between the negative situation and the mean of health, moral and positive situations (F(1,129) =18.92, p<.001). The contrast between the moral situation and the mean of positive and health situations did not reach statistical significance (F(1, 129)=3.09, p=.08). This indicates that significant differences in
attributions were found between health, negative and positive situations but not between the moral situation and the others.

Out of 15 attribution-by-situation interaction terms, 13 were statistically significant using F(1,129) adjusted by epsilon=.800 and p<.05. The two non-significant interactions were contrasts involving attributions to others across moral versus health and positive situations and attributions to God allowing across health versus positive situations.

Since the overall attribution by situation contrast was significant, further specific contrasts between grouped situations were explored. These are summarised in the table below with the above data included for comparison.
Table 26: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF ATTRIBUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source variance</th>
<th>Multivariate F</th>
<th>luck-self</th>
<th>oth</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>GC</th>
<th>GTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>102.77&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>291.89&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24.36&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13.62&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>129.35&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>18.87&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation:</td>
<td>47.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit by att</td>
<td>27.99&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit. type*:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health-pos</td>
<td>121.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24.29&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>156.73&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>52.01&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>82.05&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>29.05&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>6.24&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>31.43&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.15&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>negative</td>
<td>18.92&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>51.67&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>108.12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12.30&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24.04&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.74&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>9.57&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>148.65&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>226.04&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>165.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>22.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>383.80&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>81.91&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sev by att</td>
<td>96.03&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>108.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>227.49&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>43.78&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>54.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>41.27&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>27.02&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>230.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>808.64&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>37.86&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>363.70&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>76.98&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cont by att</td>
<td>74.81&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>208.21&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>152.24&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>19.67&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8.35&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>131.06&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>122.69&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>477.04&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>86.25&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>12.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>69.10&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleas by att</td>
<td>58.74&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>38.65&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>70.31&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>108.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>101.66&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Results relate to orthogonal contrasts between the named effect and the mean of preceding effects.

Note:  <sup>a</sup>p<.001  <sup>b</sup>p<.01  <sup>c</sup>p<.05
The severity contrast was between the trivial negative situations and all others combined. Main effects for severity and attributions as well as interactions were significant. In trivial situations, attributions to luck and others were higher, whereas in severe situations attributions to self and God were higher.

The control contrast was between moral situations where the individual could exercise some personal control and other situations combined. Again, both main effects and interactions were significant. As expected, attributions to self were higher in the moral situations involving personal control, whereas in uncontrollable situations, attributions to luck, others, God controlling and God working through humans were higher. The contrast involving God allowing the situation did not differ across situations with varying levels of control.

The pleasantness contrast was between positive and other situations combined. Attributions to luck were made more strongly in unpleasant situations. In pleasant situations attributions to self, others, God controlling and God working through humans were stronger. The contrast involving God allowing the situation did not differ across situations having differing levels of pleasantness.

*Attributions and religious dispositions*

Attribution scores were correlated with measures of religious commitment and religious problem solving. Intrinsic religiousness was weakly but significantly associated with attributions to God allowing ($r=.26$, $p<.01$), God directly causing the situation ($r=.15$, $p<.01$) and God working through humans ($r=.12$, $P<.05$) and negatively associated with attributions to luck ($r=-.36$, $p<.01$) and self ($r=-.13$, $p<.05$). Extrinsic social religiousness was associated with attributions to God working through humans ($r=.11$, $p<.05$), to others ($r=.16$, $p<.01$) and to luck ($r=.12$, $P<.05$). Extrinsic personal religiousness was significantly associated with the three secular attributions of luck ($r=.24$, $p<.01$), self ($r=.13$, $p<.05$) and others ($r=.24$, $p<.01$) but negatively associated with God allowing the event ($r=-.15$, $p<.01$).

While there was a pattern of results relating to religious commitment, with intrinsic commitment associated weakly but significantly with religious attributions and extrinsic commitments associated with secular attributions, problem solving styles were generally unrelated to attributions. However, self-directing problem solving was associated with attributions to luck ($r=.20$, $p<.01$), deferring with attributions to God causing the situation ($r=.14$, $P<.05$) and collaborative was negatively associated with luck attributions ($r=-.13$, $p<.05$).

*Summary*

These attributional analyses indicate that Presbyterian congregations do not believe that God is directly controlling a range of life events. Instead, they attribute causes to God's allowing the situation, together with other human means. Clearly, religious and secular attributions are applied to the same situations, with the exception that attributions to God and luck are not applied together. Those who attribute situations most strongly to
God tend to have high intrinsic commitment.

There are marked effects of different situation types on attributions. Whereas attributions to God allowing the situation occurred irrespective of the pleasantness or degree of personal control over the situation's cause, other God attributions were made more strongly in severe, pleasant and uncontrollable situations.

Dimensions of coping

For religious subjects, important dimensions of coping comprise the religious-secular and primary-secondary dimensions. A series of multivariate and univariate analyses of coping was performed to examine differences between religious versus secular and primary versus secondary coping. Primary coping included planning, seeking support and taking active steps to change the situation, including asking God to change the situation as one aspect of primary religious coping. Secondary coping involved emotional change, or avoidance and included emotional venting, acceptance, savouring, denial and disengagement. Multivariate analyses were performed across the four situation types (moral, health, negative and positive) while univariate analyses were performed across situations grouped according to severity, pleasantness and control over the cause. Results are summarised in Table 27 below while means and standard deviations are in Table 19, Appendix 4.
### Table 27: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSES OF COPING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Multivariate F</th>
<th>Univariate F for dimension*</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>moral-health</td>
<td>negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious vs secular coping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>43.58&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>98.62&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>85.03&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation*</td>
<td>46.99&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>5.69&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>7.67&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary vs secondary coping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>57.73&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation*</td>
<td>47.16&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>47.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>41.24&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>288.97&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>215.86&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup>p<.001  <sup>b</sup>p<.01  <sup>c</sup>p<.05

*Results relate to orthogonal contrasts between the named effect and the mean of preceding effects

Across all situations, mean scores on religious coping were higher than mean secular coping scores. Religious coping was highest in health situations and lowest in trivial negative situations. Religious and secular coping scores differed significantly in health and moral situations but these interactions did not hold for positive and annoying negative situations.

Scores on primary coping were higher than for secondary coping, except for positive situations. Primary coping was endorsed most strongly in moral situations, secondary coping in positive situations.

Relevant univariate effects are given in Tables 28-29 below.
Table 28: UNIVARIATE ANALYSES OF PRIMARY VERSUS SECONDARY COPING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>Univariate F for dimension: coping</th>
<th>situation</th>
<th>interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>74.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>16.37&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>48.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td>20.58&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>105.77&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>379.95&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over cause</td>
<td>301.26&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>7.58&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>436.23&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:  
<sup>a</sup>p<.001  
<sup>b</sup>p<.01  
<sup>c</sup>p<.05

Main effects and interactions were significant for all three situational dimensions. With respect to severity, primary coping was endorsed more strongly in both severe and trivial situations but the decline from primary to secondary coping scores was more pronounced in trivial situations. In pleasant situations active coping was used strongly, whereas in unpleasant situations secondary coping was preferred. In moral situations where the cause was controllable, active coping was strongly preferred but in uncontrollable situations secondary coping was marginally preferred.

Table 29. Univariate analyses of religious versus secular coping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>Univariate F for dimension: coping</th>
<th>situation</th>
<th>interaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severity</td>
<td>24.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>83.25&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td>16.24&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.10&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9.28&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control over cause</td>
<td>40.61&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.16&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:  
<sup>a</sup>p<.001  
<sup>b</sup>p<.01  
<sup>c</sup>p<.05

Religious coping was endorsed more strongly than secular coping across all situations and main effects were significant for all three situational dimensions. Severity of the situation increased both religious and secular coping, as did uncontrollability. Unpleasantness increased religious but had no effect on secular coping.
In summary, congregational members strongly endorsed both religious and secular coping as well as primary coping. Secondary coping was endorsed less strongly, except for positive situations where savouring was a preferred response. There were strong situational effects. Primary coping was higher in severe, pleasant, moral situations. Religious coping was higher in severe, unpleasant, uncontrollable situations.

**Positive religious coping**

Here I describe analyses of the determinants of positive religious coping. This was defined as active religious coping (asking God to change the situation) or secondary coping (asking God to change oneself) in contrast to negative religious coping which comprised venting (expressing negative feelings to God) and denial-distraction (focus on religious themes to take one's mind off present distractions). In positive situations, religious savouring (praising or thanking God) was defined as positive coping.

I performed four regression analyses, one for each situation type. Firstly I entered set one predictors which comprised dispositions or personal resources, then set two predictors or attributions. Six causal attributions and one outcome attribution were used. I followed the method of reduced form equations (Alwin and Hauser, 1975) to calculate the direct, indirect and total causal effects. The standardized beta coefficients from the entry of set one variables represent total causal effects (intervening variables omitted). The standardized beta coefficients in equations including set two variables give direct effects. The difference between total and direct effects gives the indirect effects.

*Regression on positive religious coping, health situations (N pairwise=277)*

The mean of positive religious coping, health (POSRELH) was 7.940, with a standard deviation of 2.34. Correlations of individual variables with POSRELH were low, from -.114 (other attribution) to .244 (control over outcome). Values in the table below are standardized beta coefficients. Note that the direct effects for set two variables are also total effects.
Table 30: REGRESSION ON POSREL COPING, HEALTH SITUATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set one</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.063906</td>
<td>-.011250</td>
<td>.052656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELCON</td>
<td>-.022365</td>
<td>-.017362</td>
<td>-.039727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEREP</td>
<td>-.192250*</td>
<td>.075327</td>
<td>-.116923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>.087720</td>
<td>-.017603</td>
<td>.070117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERES</td>
<td>.039268</td>
<td>-.010872</td>
<td>.028396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
<td>.116462</td>
<td>-.020601</td>
<td>.095861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>.055678</td>
<td>.004183</td>
<td>.059861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTH att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luck att.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R²</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.15423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05.  **p<.01

Only three independent variables were significantly related to positive religious coping in health situations: rating of control by self over the outcome, causal attribution to God's control and extrinsic personal orientation. Overall, the model explained only 15% of the variance in religious coping scores.

The total effect of extrinsic personal (IEREP) orientation on religious coping was negative but this comprised a direct negative effect and an indirect positive effect. The indirect effect was smaller than the direct effect (about 40% of the direct effect in magnitude) but it had the result of reducing the total effect of IEREP orientation on health coping to one that was not statistically significant. In other words, high scores on IEREP orientation were related to low religious coping directly but when the effect of IEREP orientation on appraisals was also considered, the total effect was no longer significant. Thus the indirect effect of IEREP through appraisals was sufficient to make the negative relationship with religious coping insignificant.
Regression on positive religious coping, minor negative situations (N pairwise=273)

The mean score for positive religious coping, minor negative situations (POSRELN) was 4.718 with a standard deviation of 2.076. Individual correlations with POSRELN were low, from -.152 (self-directing problem solving) to .224 (intrinsic commitment). Table entries are standardized beta coefficients.

Table 31: REGRESSION ON POSREL COPING, MINOR NEGATIVE SITUATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set one</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>-.033650</td>
<td>-.018787</td>
<td>-.052437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELCON</td>
<td>-.061766</td>
<td>-.000002</td>
<td>-.061764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEREP</td>
<td>-.070746</td>
<td>-.001454</td>
<td>-.069292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>-.073879</td>
<td>-.012391</td>
<td>-.086270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERES</td>
<td>.119402</td>
<td>.015974</td>
<td>.135376*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
<td>.165166*</td>
<td>.007188</td>
<td>.182354*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>.169768*</td>
<td>-.007856</td>
<td>.161912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control out</td>
<td>.079833</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self att.</td>
<td>.138117*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC att.</td>
<td>.090424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA att.</td>
<td>.200520**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck att.</td>
<td>.027136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other att.</td>
<td>.023613</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.15681</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05  ** p<.01

Two variables from the resources set (intrinsic orientation, collaborative problem solving style) and two from the appraisal set (God allows and self attributions) were significantly and directly related to religious coping in negative situations. However, extrinsic-social orientation was also significantly related to religious coping when total effects were considered i.e when its effect through appraisals was also considered. On the other hand, the total effect of collaborative problem solving style was not significant because of indirect effects in the opposite direction. For both intrinsic orientation and collaborative style the indirect effects were relatively weak (less than 5% of the magnitude of direct effects) but for extrinsic-social orientation the indirect effects through appraisals, although small in magnitude (less than 14% of the direct effects) were important.
Regression on positive religious coping, moral situations (N pairwise=281).

The mean score for positive religious coping, moral situations (POSRELM) was 4.541 with a standard deviation of 0.961. Correlations of independent variables on posrelm were low and ranged from -.119 (self-directing problem solving) to .248 (intrinsic commitment).

Table 32: REGRESSION ON POSRELM COPING, MORAL SITUATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set one</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.047971</td>
<td>.035548</td>
<td>.083519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELCON</td>
<td>.003739</td>
<td>.002254</td>
<td>.005993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERE</td>
<td>.036431</td>
<td>-.017525</td>
<td>.018910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>-.071304</td>
<td>-.009452</td>
<td>-.080756</td>
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<tr>
<td>IERES</td>
<td>-.025502</td>
<td>.013748</td>
<td>-.044805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
<td>.172383*</td>
<td>.013232</td>
<td>.185615**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>.290192**</td>
<td>.013265</td>
<td>.303457**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Set two** |                   |                 |              |
| GA att.     | .053301          |                 |              |
| Self att.   | .215424**        |                 |              |
| Con. outcome| -.001567         |                 |              |
| Other att.  | -.004795         |                 |              |
| GC att.     | -.067733         |                 |              |
| Luck att.   | .024949          |                 |              |
| GTH att.    | .120977          |                 |              |

R²          | .17639           |                 |              |

*p<.05,  **p<.01

Two of the resource variables, intrinsic orientation and collaborative problem solving, were significant predictors of positive religious coping in moral situations. Of the appraisals, only attribution to self was a significant predictor.

For the two significant resource predictors, effects were largely direct, with indirect effects less than 10% of the magnitude of the direct effect. However, direct and total effects were significant, indicating that the indirect effects, through appraisals, were of importance and not to be overlooked.
Regression on religious coping, positive situations (N pairwise=165)

The mean score on positive religious coping, positive situations (POSREL) was 6.511, with a standard deviation of 2.063. Correlations of independent variables on posrelp were low and ranged from -.223 (Self-directing problem solving) to .376 (Deferring problem solving).

Table 33: REGRESSION ON POSREL COPING, POSITIVE SITUATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set one</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.064322</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.142071</td>
<td>.004038</td>
<td>-.138033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>.238970*</td>
<td>.040504</td>
<td>.279474**</td>
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<td>IERES</td>
<td>.178154*</td>
<td>.034052</td>
<td>.212206**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IERI</td>
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<td>-.006915</td>
<td>.178148*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COL</td>
<td>.100097</td>
<td>-.011204</td>
<td>.088893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set two</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA att.</td>
<td>.059194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self att.</td>
<td>.006926</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Con. outcome</td>
<td>-.034229</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other att.</td>
<td>-.002230</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC att.</td>
<td>.155708</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luck att.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTH att.</td>
<td>.026078</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.25592</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05,  **p<.01

The three resources which significantly predicted coping in positive situations were deferring problem solving, extrinsic social orientation and intrinsic orientation. All of these variables had positive, direct effects on coping and none had an indirect effect through appraisals.

**Summary**

In summary, both intrinsic orientation and collaborative problem solving style had significant effects on religious coping across negative and moral situations and these
effects were largely increased by consideration of small but important indirect effects through appraisals. Intrinsic orientation also had a direct effect on coping in positive situations but stronger effects were found for extrinsic social orientation and deferring problem solving. In health situations there was no positive direct, or total relationships between resource variables and coping. In this situation appraisals comprised the best predictors of coping.

**RELIGION AS A STRESS MEDIATOR**

So far, I have explored attributions, coping and small but important effects of attributions on religious coping. The next step is to consider the effects of attributions, coping and dispositional variables on outcomes, namely negative affect. Here I present data from theological students in which preliminary correlations are examined and various models of religiousness as a mediator between stress and negative affect are explored.

**Preliminary correlations**

Higher attributions to luck were related to higher scores on depression ($r=.348$, p<.05) and anxiety ($r=.288$, p<.05) and lower scores on religious ($r=-.509$, p<.01) and existential well being ($r=-.307$, p<.05).

The four grouped coping strategies (primary/secondary religious and secular) were correlated with outcome measures of depression, anxiety and spiritual well-being. Secondary secular coping was positively correlated with depression ($r=.382$, p<.01) and anxiety ($r=.490$, p<.01) and negatively correlated with spiritual well-being ($r=-.430$, p<.01), indicated that it was the least helpful coping strategy. When the subscales of spiritual well-being were examined, secondary secular coping was significantly negatively correlated with existential well-being but only slightly negatively correlated with religious well-being.

All of the measures of secondary secular coping related to the event (emotional social support, denial, venting) were correlated with the outcome measures. Denial was clearly the major negative influence, being strongly correlated with depression ($r=.618$, p<.01) and anxiety ($r=.423$, p<.01) and negatively correlated with existential well-being ($r=-.506$, p<.01). Venting was significantly correlated with anxiety ($r=.461$, p<.01) and negatively related to spiritual well-being ($r=-.331$, p<.05).

**Multiple regression analyses**

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict depression and anxiety following stressful events (depression and anxiety at time 2). Five independent variables that were significantly correlated with the dependent variables were entered by stepwise method: change in existential well-being (EWB); change in religious well-being (RWB); perception of most stressful event as a threat (threat); number of significant life events in the past year (life events); and use of religious interpretation as a coping response (interpretation). Change scores for EWB and RWB were used to overcome ceiling effects in the original scores.
Table 34: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DEPRESSION2, ANXIETY2 AND SELECTED INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>BDI r</th>
<th>Anx r</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EWB change</td>
<td>-2.10</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>-25-13</td>
<td>-.389*</td>
<td>-.480**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWB change</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>-18-9</td>
<td>-.376*</td>
<td>-.375*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>.461**</td>
<td>.589**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life events</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0-17</td>
<td>.406*</td>
<td>.422*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2-8</td>
<td>.397*</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.001    * p<.01

Post-stress depression was best predicted by three variables which together accounted for 42% of the variance in depression scores: perception of stress as a threat (21% of variance), use of religious interpretation (12% of variance) and change in RWB (9% of variance). Change in EWB and number of stressful life events in the past year failed to meet the tolerance tests for entry into the regression equation.

Table 35: STEPWISE REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLEA OF DEPRESSION WITH RELIGIOUS, PERCEPTUAL AND COPING INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² change</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>.460</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>12.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>11.06**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RWB change</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.415</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>10.42**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only variables that were significant are shown in order of entry into the model
** p<.001    * p<.01

Anxiety was best predicted by two variables which accounted for 47% of the variance in anxiety scores: perception of the most stressful event as a threat (35% of the variance) and change in EWB (12% of the variance). Change in RWB and use of interpretation did not reach criterion levels for entry into the regression equation.
Table 36: STEPWISE REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLE\textsuperscript{a} OF ANXIETY WITH RELIGIOUS, PERCEPTUAL AND COPING INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$ change</th>
<th>$F$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>.588</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>24.38**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWB change</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.471</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>20.05**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a} Only variables that were significant are shown in order of entry into the model
\textsuperscript{**} p<.001

In order to test in more detail effects of RWB and EWB on the dependent variables, three models (applied in the psychology of religion literature by Krause and Van Tran, 1989) were investigated using product moment correlations and multiple regression. They were the moderator, suppressor and distress-deterrent models. More sophisticated modelling techniques could not be used because of the small sample size.

*The moderator model* assumes that correlation between threat and changed SWB is low but that SWB becomes more effective in reducing the effect of threat on negative affect at higher levels of threat. It also assumes no direct effects of SWB on negative affect without threat. In order to test for moderating effects, the relevant cross-product term (threat x rwb change) is entered into the regression analysis along with the original independent variables.

*The suppressor model* holds that threatening life events decrease SWB which in turn increases negative affect. Since increasing threat is held to decrease SWB, these variables should be negatively correlated. An examination of product moment correlations provides a preliminary test of the model.

*The distress-deterrent model* assumes a direct relationship between threat and negative affect, as well as between lowered SWB and negative affect. However, no correlation between threat and SWB is postulated and the presence of significant product moment correlations would invalidate the model.

The figures below depict the relationships between SWB, threat and negative affect at time 2 according to product moment correlation coefficients.
Modelling depression

Figure 2: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THREAT, RWB1 AND DEPRESSION

![Diagram showing relationships between Threat, RWB1, Depression with correlation coefficients]

**r = .461**

Figure 3: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THREAT, RWB CHANGE AND DEPRESSION

![Diagram showing relationships between Threat, RWB Change, Depression with correlation coefficients]

**r = .461**

**p < .001  *p < .01**

Since there was no significant correlation between RWB1 and depression one requirement of the moderator model is supported but the distress-deterrent model is not supported. The results also fail to support the suppressor model, since correlations between threat and change in RWB fail to reach statistical significance.

Table 37 below summarizes the results when the cross-product term, RWB change x threat, was entered into the regression analysis along with the original independent variables.
Table 37: STEPWISE REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLE* OF DEPRESSION WITH RELIGIOUS, PERCEPTUAL AND COPING INDICATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R^2</th>
<th>R^2 change</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat</td>
<td>.461</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>12.380**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>11.063**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat x RWBch</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>10.891**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Only variables that were significant are shown in order of entry into the model

** p<.001

When the cross-product term was used it was a superior predictor to RWB change alone, indicating that it is the interaction between threat and RWB change that produces depression. Hence the moderator model is the best description of the relationship between threat, RWB change and depression.

Modelling anxiety

Figure 4: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THREAT, EWB AND ANXIETY
Figure 5: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THREAT, EWB CHANGE AND ANXIETY

EWB Change

- .231

- .480**

Threat

Anxiety

.589**

**p<.001  *p<.01

Since there is a significant negative correlation between EWB1 and anxiety the direct deterrent model is supported and the moderator model is not supported. Correlations between threat and EWB change fail to reach statistical significance, hence failing to support the suppressor model. Thus the distress-deterrent model is the best description of the relationship between threat, EWB change and anxiety.

Summary

Five main points emerged from these regression analyses:

1. Number of life change events in the past year, although positively associated with negative affect, did not contribute to levels of depression or anxiety.

2. A cognitive variable, perception of a major stressor as a threat, was the most significant predictor of both depression and anxiety for this sample.

3. A decrease in RWB was related to depression but a decrease in EWB was a strong predictor of anxiety.

4. Use of religious interpretation as a coping response contributed to an increase of depression, possibly because the questioning produced a state of doubt.

5. Two different models are required to explain the relationship between SWB and the affective states of depression and anxiety: for depression a moderator model using RWB is most consistent with the data, and for anxiety a distress-deterrent model using EWB is the most consistent.
CONVERGENCE OF STRESS MEASURES

This section examines the relationships between different measures of God-cognitions. I have already pointed out that Presbyterian and Baptist theological students did not differ on scales of Calvinistic beliefs, or on beliefs about God's control (with low scores on both), yet in responses to open questions about a personally stressful situation, the Presbyterian students affirmed God's sovereignty while the Baptist students affirmed a complex relationship involving human free will. Discrepant results across the two types of measures, scales and open questions, could be related to measurement error or to genuine differences between dispositional styles and situational responses. The latter issue was investigated further by examining correlations between dispositional measures (beliefs, LOC, problem solving styles) and measures of attribution and coping. Two types of situations were also used: the personally stressful situation and the vignettes.

Attributions to God's control

I examined relationships between BELCON scores: attributions to God from the vignettes: whether God caused the actual significant stress situation and how God caused it, divided into categories of God as sovereign controller versus God allowing or leading people in the situation; and whether/how God influenced the outcome of the stressful situation, using the same categories as the previous measure.

Product moment correlations between scores on the control beliefs scale (BELCON) and God attributions were between r=-.061 and r=-.105 and hence indicated a negligible relationship.

No significant differences at probability levels of .05 or less were found between those who perceived God as controller or leader on God attributions, based on t-tests. Similar comparisons of attributions between those who perceived that God influenced the outcome of the stressful situation through his over-ruling sovereignty, versus his helping or changing the respondent, failed to reach statistical significance. The only significant inter-correlations were between perceptions of God causing and God influencing the outcome of the stressful situation (r=.651, p<.001) and between attributions to God causing and God working through humans (r=.897, p<.001) in the vignettes.

These findings indicate little convergence in perceptions about God's control between a general beliefs scale, open responses about a personally stressful situation and attributions derived from vignettes.

Attributions and locus of control

Here I investigated attributions to God and secular sources (self, others, luck) from the vignettes; causal attributions to self, others and luck in the personally stressful situation and locus of control scores.
There were no significant inter-correlations between locus of control and any other attributions examined in this section. Within the vignettes there were significant positive correlations between God controlling and God working through humans \((r=.897, p<.001)\) and between luck and self \((r=.334, p<.01)\). Significant negative relationships were found between luck and God controlling \((r=-.362, p.01)\) and between luck and God working through humans \((r=-.343, p<.01)\).

From the stressful situation, causal attributions to self were significantly correlated with attributions to others \((r=.879, p<.001)\) and chance \((r=.614, p<.001)\), while attributions to others were also significantly correlated with chance attributions \((r=.529, p<.001)\). However, they were not correlated significantly with any other variables.

These findings indicate that attributions are interdependent within a particular mode (vignette, real-life stressor) but independent of each other. In addition, locus of control is not related to causal attributions.

**Religious coping measures**

I investigated relationships between subscale scores of religious coping in the personally stressful event and religious coping subscale scores from the vignettes, comprising active, secondary interpretation and acceptance, venting, distraction-denial and savouring.

Active religious coping (event) was negatively correlated with religious venting (vignette) \(r=-.301, p<.05\) and disengagement (event) was negatively correlated with venting (vignette) \(r=-.437, p<.01\). Expected significant correlations between active, secondary, venting and distraction/denial in both types of measure were not found.

Secondary religious responses (event) were positively correlated with savouring \(r=.290, p<.05\) and negatively with venting \(r=-.286, p<.06\), suggesting that savouring is more emotionally than actively based and venting is more actively based.

**Secular coping measures**

Here I used ratings of secular coping in the actual stressful experience and grouped coping responses to the vignettes. Very few significant relationships were found. Those who used denial in the stressful event tended to endorse distraction/denial responses in the vignettes \(r=.306, p<.05\) and those who sought emotional support from others in the actual event were more likely to use secular venting in the vignettes \(r=.358, p<.05\). When total primary and secondary venting scores from the event were correlated with responses to the vignettes, the only significant correlation was between secondary venting (event) and secular venting (vignettes) \(r=.325, p<.05\).

These findings suggest little convergence between measures of secular coping from personal experience and hypothetical situations.
Summary

There was little convergence overall between dispositional and situational measures and between more open responses in the personally stressful situation and structured responses to the vignettes. It would appear that the theological students were responding in different ways to different situations and that broad styles of responding were largely unrelated to specific attributions and coping responses.
Chapter Five
RESULTS PART 2
Ministry Stress

In this chapter I continue my presentation of results with material related to ministry stress. Chapter 4 lays the foundation of describing Presbyterian ministers in terms of demographic data, beliefs and other measures of religiousness and case studies of a recent stressful event. Here I focus on ministers' perceptions of occupational stress, measures of stress and how ministers cope with ongoing stress. The first section deals with the extent of ministry stress using scores from psychological inventories; ratings of seven sources of ministry stress; and examines differences between ministry priorities and skills as sources of role conflict and stress. The second section takes a grounded theory approach to interview data and develops a detailed picture of how ministry stress develops. In the third section I derive two ideal types from the interview data and test them against scores on stress-burnout measures.

THE EXTENT OF MINISTRY STRESS

Psychological inventories assessing stress

Three outcome measures of stress were administered to ministers: the Beck Depression Inventory, Spielberger's trait anxiety scale and the Maslach Burnout Inventory comprising three subscales, while measures of depression and state anxiety were used as stress indicators in the second questionnaire completed by theological students (provided for comparison).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Ministers (N=65)</th>
<th>Students (N=45)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>39.31</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional exhaustion</td>
<td>22.91</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>5.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal accomplishment</td>
<td>33.76</td>
<td>5.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean depression scores fall within the non-depressed range. Using conventional cutoff scores (Gallagher, Breckenridge, Steinmetz and Thompson, 1983) the ministers can be classified as 81% non-depressed, 11% mildly depressed and 8% severely depressed. Thus the ministers were not significantly depressed on the whole, although for five ministers who scored in the significantly depressed category, some intervention (medical, psychological) would seem indicated.

Trait anxiety scores were slightly higher than norms for male working adults in the US (mean 34.89, sd 9.19) according to Spielberger (1983) and were closer to norms for general medical and surgical patients without psychiatric complications (1983, p.10). If scores greater than one standard deviation above the mean (highest 16% of scores) are taken to indicate significantly elevated anxiety, then based on the US norms, 35% of ministers scoring above 44 on the scale exhibited significantly elevated anxiety. The implications for high trait anxiety are elevated potentials for state anxiety in stressful situations. As Spielberger commented: "Individuals who are high in A-Trait are more disposed to experience elevations in A-State in situations that pose threats to self-esteem and especially in interpersonal relationships in which personal adequacy is evaluated" (1972, p.490).

State anxiety scores for the students were very similar to norms for US male college students reported by Spielberger (1983): mean=36.47, sd=10.12.

Burnout scores were compared with norms for an occupational category that included ministers (Maslach and Jackson, 1986): ministers were similar on emotional exhaustion (mean 21.42, sd 11.05) but lower on depersonalisation (mean 8.11, sd 6.15) and personal accomplishment (mean 36.43, sd 7.00). The scales were structured so that one third of the normative sample fell into the high, medium and low categories of each subscale. High scores on emotional exhaustion (Emex) and depersonalisation (Depers), together with low scores on personal accomplishment (Pers. A.) characterise burnout. Over-representation of ministers in the medium categories of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment and low levels of depersonalisation are illustrated in Table 39 below.

**Table 39: CATEGORY SCORES OF MINISTERS ON BURNOUT SUBSALES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Low %</th>
<th>Medium %</th>
<th>High %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emex</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pers. A.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depers.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that the ministers do not admit to depersonalisation, an unfeeling response to people, who are the recipients of their services, or care. On the other hand, they have relatively low levels of personal accomplishment, indicating that they experience, or
admit to, reduced feelings of competence and achievement in their work. In addition, the majority report medium to high levels of emotional exhaustion, indicating that most feel at least moderately drained and over-extended by their work for others.

The correlation between depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion scores was .505 (p<.01), indicating a moderate positive relationship, while the correlation between emotional exhaustion and low scores on personal accomplishment was .325 (p<.05), a weaker relationship. There was an insignificant relationship (r=.257) between depersonalisation and low scores on personal accomplishment. These results reflect the findings of Walkey and Green (1992) that a core "burnout" factor comprises correlates of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, while personal accomplishment is a separate factor.

So far, my indicators of stress used comparisons with normative data but just how stressed were individual ministers? To determine clinical stress levels I adopted the cutoffs recommended by the scales I used. Hence, for emotional exhaustion, scores of at least 27; for depersonalisation, 13; and for personal accomplishment, 39. For depression, a cutoff of 10 indicates mild to moderate clinical depression and for trait anxiety a cutoff score of 44 was chosen, because it falls one standard deviation above the mean according to scale norms.

Table 40: NUMBER OF INDICES OF CLINICAL STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of indices</th>
<th>Nil</th>
<th>one</th>
<th>two</th>
<th>three</th>
<th>four</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forty-two ministers (67%) had at least one score out of the five stress-burnout measures in the clinical range and 29% had two or more stress-burnout indices; thirty-two (51%) had at least one high score on a burnout measure. Of the latter fourteen (22%) had at least one high burnout score plus one measure of negative clinical affect while ten ministers (16%) scored high on anxiety and/or depression only, with no indication of burnout. Thus two-thirds of ministers showed some clinical indication of stress-burnout, while almost one-third demonstrated a pattern of stress-burnout based on more than one measure.

Characteristics of stressed and unstressed ministers

I distinguished three groups of ministers: those with no clinical indices of stress; those with one index of stress; and those with two or more indices of stress. How did these groups differ on measures of religiousness, demographic variables and appraisals in their most stressful situation?

One-way analysis of variance was used to examine group differences on demographic and other relatively independent variables. The three stress groups did not differ
significantly on age, or size of parish; on appraisals of personally stressful situations as a threat, loss or challenge; on measures of intrinsic religiousness, spiritual well being, problem-solving style or experience of God in prayer; on control beliefs, or scores on Presbyterian beliefs. That is, the highly stressed group could not be distinguished from other ministers on any single dispositional measure that I examined.

Stress ratings

I have examined the extent of ministers' stress using measures of burnout, anxiety and depression and found that dispositional and demographic measures failed to distinguish between low, medium and high stress groups. Here I move to the ministers' ratings of stress produced by different aspects of their ministry. It is important to consider these results as ordinal data reflecting perceptions of stress and treat them with due caution. Nonetheless, they shed light on a number of important questions. Which features of ministry did they find most stressful? How were sources of ministry stress inter-related? Were demographic factors related to ministry stress? Findings relevant to these questions are as follows.

Sources of stress

Stress sources were rated on a five point scale with 1 (not at all significant) 2 (of little significance) 3 (of some significance) 4 (fairly significant) and 5 (very significant). Grouped results are in Table 41 below, but for detailed tables see Appendix 4, Tables 20-26.

Table 41: MEAN STRESS RATINGS FOR GROUPED MINISTRY STRESSORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of stress</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Personal stressors* included a sense of time pressure, feelings of inadequacy, lack of exercise or relaxation, lack of personal encouragement, ill-health and boredom. The most stressful were the first two. *Parish stressors* comprised role and style expectations, attendance, parish finances, theological conflicts and lack of valuing of ministry by the congregation and community. Health and lifestyle issues relating to the minister's partner and children were covered in *family stressors*. Issues such as mobility, stipend,
housing and theological education comprised system stressors. Denominational stressors included theological differences, expectations, feedback and financial management. Relational stressors comprised collegiate relationships, supervision and friendships. Issues related to the minister’s spiritual journey, spiritual practice, dealing with ethical issues, faith and doubts were covered as spiritual stressors.

Overall, average stress ratings were low with relatively high variance. Only two individual ratings exceeded 3 (of some significance): time pressures (3.54) and expectations of the minister’s role (3.17). These findings suggest little agreement over stressful aspects of ministry except for the issues of time pressure and role expectations.

Correlations between stressors

I then analysed correlations between the average stress ratings (See Table 27, Appendix 4 for details). Stress relating to spiritual factors was significantly correlated with all other stress sources except family stress. This suggests that although the actual amount of stress related to spiritual factors was reported to be low, spiritual stress is either a cause or effect of stress in many other areas of life. The relationship is not confined to parish concerns.

Parish, personal, system and denominational stressors were each correlated with at least three other stress sources, indicating another constellation of related sources. Yet family stress was uncorrelated with the other sources and thus was an isolated source of stress.

Correlations between stressors and demographic variables

I also correlated stress factors with demographic variables and factor scores for ministry priorities (see next section) and found the following significant inter-correlations:

**Personal stress:**
younger age (r=.28, p<.05)
less time since ordination (r=.25, p<.05)

**Parish stress:**
fewer hours worked (r=.33, p<.01)
fewer preaching places (r=.32, p<.01)
high priority parish leadership (r=.34, p<.01)
low priority social justice (r=.36, p<.01)

**System stress:**
high priority administration (r=.26, p<.05)

**Denominational:**
high priority smooth running (r=.26, p<.05)
longer time in parish (r=.27, p<.05)

**Relational:**
higher attendance morning (r=.32, p<.01)
increasing attendance trend (r=.29, p<.05)
There were no significant correlations for family or spiritual sources of stress. It is interesting that different variables were related to each stress source, suggesting the need for separate analyses of the various stress indices.

**Role conflict as stress**

I have already discussed Australian studies (Blaikie, 1979; Fullerton, 1988) suggesting that role conflict was a major component of ministry stress. Here I examine the stressful nature of role conflict, defined as discrepancies between a minister's priorities and skills.

**Ratings of priority and skills for ministry tasks**

Seventeen ministry tasks were rated on a scale from 5 (very high), 4 (high), 3 (moderate), 2 (low), to 1 (very low). Mean ratings for each task with respect to priorities and skills are given in the Tables 42 and 43 below.

**Table 42: MEAN RATINGS OF PRIORITY FOR MINISTRY TASKS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry task</th>
<th>Mean rating</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preaching meaningful sermons</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being caring and enabling</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual development</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing new members into church</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging members to use gifts</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing sense of church family</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise in theological matters</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting members</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging members to plan, lead</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill in religious rites</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the sick</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education for all ages</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish administration</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery/state administration</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community issues</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church finances</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 43: MEAN RATINGS OF SKILLS IN MINISTRY TASKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry task</th>
<th>Mean rating</th>
<th>S.d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preaching meaningful sermons</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being caring and enabling</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill in religious rites</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting members</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a sense of church family</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the sick</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise in theological matters</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging members to plan, lead</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging members to use gifts</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing new members into the church</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual development</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish administration</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education for all ages</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery/state administration</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church finances</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community issues</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two highest priorities, of preaching meaningful sermons and being caring or enabling, reflect the primacy of teaching and pastoring in Presbyterian ministry. It is of interest that most ministers rate their skills quite highly on these tasks.

However, for the next three priorities (spiritual development, evangelism and encouraging members to use gifts) skills were rated much lower than priorities, indicating potential conflicts which would be reasonable targets for training and encouragement of ministers. The sixth, seventh and ninth priorities (church family, theological expertise and encouraging leadership in members) have similar skills rankings.

Priorities ranked eighth, tenth and eleventh (comforting members, religious rites and visiting the sick) have corresponding skills rankings that are much higher, suggesting that it might be difficult for ministers to delegate these tasks to others (whether ordained or lay assistants) because of their own perceived competence in these areas.

There is general correspondence between those priorities ranked twelfth to seventeenth and perceived skills in the same areas.

A more detailed analysis was conducted using correlation coefficients. Table 44 below gives correlations between ratings of priorities and skills in the seventeen areas of ministry examined.
Table 44: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MINISTRY PRIORITIES AND SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of ministry</th>
<th>Priority-skill correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the sick</td>
<td>.567**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a sense of family</td>
<td>.554**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring and enabling</td>
<td>.354**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish administration</td>
<td>.606**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery/state level administration</td>
<td>.571**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal spiritual development</td>
<td>.423**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian education for all ages</td>
<td>.579**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in community issues</td>
<td>.286*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in broad social justice issues</td>
<td>.613**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing new members into the church</td>
<td>.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise in theological/biblical matters</td>
<td>.448**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging members to use gifts</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforting and reassuring members</td>
<td>.277*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving members in planning, leading</td>
<td>.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving church finances</td>
<td>.390**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill, sensitivity in religious rites</td>
<td>.431**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering meaningful sermons</td>
<td>.415**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** indicates p<.01; * indicates p<.05

The three areas where there is no relationship between priorities and skills relate to evangelism and delegation.

Factor analysis of priorities

How do the various priorities and skills cluster? Philip Hughes (1989) reported that clergy gave five major roles of the Church: worship (40%), converting people (25%), educating people in the Christian faith (12%), supporting and encouraging the faith of the local congregation (8%) and giving meaning and direction to life. He found primary roles for clergy were preaching (30%), pastoring (visiting and helping people - 25%), priestly (conducting worship, presiding at sacraments - 20%) and educating people in the Christian faith (5%). Other roles, which were seen as secondary rather than primary, were evangelism, counselling, administration and social reform.

Although Hughes' sample was broader than mine, in the absence of more recent data on Presbyterian clergy I hypothesised that there would be the following clusters of priorities for Presbyterian ministers:

**Preaching**

theological expertise and meaningful sermons.
Pastoral visiting the sick, caring and comforting members.
Priestly skill in rites.
Educating Christian education for all ages.
Administration at parish and state levels, church finances.
Evangelism bringing in new members
Social community issues and social justice

I made no predictions regarding the relationships between the remaining four variables and these clusters of priorities. I conducted a principal components factor analysis and seven factors emerged, accounting for 69% of the variance. Then I rotated these factors using the Varimax method which results in orthogonal, or uncorrelated factors.

Factor 1, labelled "pastoral priorities," accounts for 16.1% of the total variance and comprises the following variables, with factor loadings for each in parenthesis:

Developing a sense of family amongst members (.741)
Comforting members (.715)
Being a caring and enabling minister (.699)
Christian education for all ages (.521)
Involvement in community issues (.438)
Visiting the sick (.349)

A number of these variables unexpectedly related to pastoral priorities, namely the sense of family amongst members, Christian education and involvement in community issues. It would seem that these ministers take a wider view of their pastorate and pastoral responsibilities than would be expected from Hughes' (1989) study.

Factor 2 which accounts for 14.4% of the total variance is clearly priorities for administration and comprises:

Administration at presbytery and state levels (.826)
Administration at parish levels (.785)

These are unremarkable but it is interesting that improving the financial state of the Church was not related to these administrative activities.

Factor 3, accounting for 10.7% of the total variance, is more difficult to interpret but relates to parish leadership:

Encouraging members to plan and lead (.717)
Expertise in theological matters (.629)
Encouraging members to use their gifts (.363)

The interesting finding here is that theological expertise was not primarily related to the preaching of meaningful sermons but instead to a parish leadership style that develops and delegates to others.
Factor 4, which accounts for 7.9% of total variance, covers priorities for preaching but with overtones of spiritual leadership:

- Personal spiritual development (.750)
- Preaching meaningful sermons (.526)

This is labelled "spiritual leadership." The relationship between these two variables suggests that the ministers may value their own spiritual development as a basis for sermon preparation more highly than theological expertise.

Factor 5 accounts for 7.8% of the total variance and has only one variable loading appreciably on it:

- Social justice (.466)

Hence, it is labelled "priority for social justice." I expected that this variable would cluster with community issues but this was not reflected in the data. A concern for social justice is clearly an independent priority.

Factor 6, labelled "evangelism," also has only one variable loading onto it and accounts for 6.2% of the variance:

- Bringing new members into the church (.832)

This priority is clearly distinct from other clusters of priorities for ministry.

The last factor, accounting for 6.0% of the total variance, relates to the smooth running of the parish in both financial and sacramental areas and is labelled "smooth running":

- Skill and sensitivity in handling religious rites (.764)
- Improving church finances (.640).

This cluster is not limited to the priestly functions of a minister and is of interest in that a unique priestly priority was not found.

Mean ratings for the clusters of priorities, divided by number of items in the cluster for comparability, are given below, together with standardised item alphas for each cluster:
Table 45: CLUSTER OF PRIORITIES FOR MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority cluster</th>
<th>Mean rating</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish leadership</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual leadership</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth running</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates single item

The pastoral cluster, with six items, forms a moderately reliable scale, as does the administration cluster with only two items. The parish leadership cluster, which comprises only three items requires more items in order to be useful as a scale but has a promising basis. The other two-item scales of spiritual leadership and smooth running require more empirical work.

The first three scales, together with single item measures of social justice and evangelism priorities, were correlated with age, religious measures and outcome measures of depression, anxiety and burnout. No significant associations were found for the pastoral and administration scales but parish leadership was positively associated with spiritual well-being (r=.40, p<.01) and negatively correlated with anxiety (r=-.27, p<.05) and depersonalisation (r=-.25, p<.05). Giving social justice high priority was associated with collaborative problem-solving (r=.26, p<.05) while giving priority to evangelism was negatively associated with deferring problem-solving (r=-.26, p<.05).

Role conflict and stress measures

If one aspect of role conflict is difference between the expectations and personal abilities of the role occupant, then ministers who rate priorities for ministry higher than their skills are likely to experience role conflict. Note that this conflict arises directly from personal, or individual attributions rather than external sources, such as conflict between expectations of self and other. Is such inner conflict a source of stress and burnout?

A global measure of role conflict was obtained by calculating the mean difference between priorities and skills across all areas: where the mean was greater than zero the case was assigned to the global role conflict group (N=51) and where the mean was zero or less, the case was assigned to the no-conflict group (N=9). It is immediately clear that the majority of ministers experienced role conflict in the sense that overall, their personal ratings of skills failed to reach their ratings of priorities.
In order to assess whether role conflict was associated with stress measures, differences between the two conflict groups on measures of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, personal accomplishment, anxiety and depression were assessed by means of t-tests. On all measures except one, differences between the groups were non-significant. However, on depersonalisation the conflict group (mean 6.235, sd=5.050) scored significantly higher than the no-conflict group (mean=3.556, sd=2.555) with t=2.42, df=58, p<.05. Caution should be exercised in interpreting this result because of the small numbers in the no-conflict group.

I then examined correlations between the five measures of stress-burnout and role conflict scores, calculated as the difference between priorities and skills in each of the seventeen areas of ministry. Only three correlations were statistically significant at p<.05. Conflict over involvement in social justice issues was associated with depersonalisation (r=.313); role conflict over involving members in planning and leading was associated with low personal accomplishment (r=.322) and role conflict over comforting members was associated with anxiety (r=.310). It is clear that very few aspects of role conflict were directly related to stress-burnout measures.

**SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: ENMESHMENT IN WORK**

In previous sections, stress in ministers has been examined using psychological inventories and ratings of ministry stress. This section examines interviews with ministers to describe the sources of stress within ministry, the types of stress they confronted in their vocations and how ministers described their coping with ministry stress. Sources are categorised in terms of 'enmeshment', 'being ill-equipped', 'incongruence' and 'rogue dumpers'.

Enmeshment refers to a situation where work is all-absorbing, even to the extent of controlling the minister rather than the minister being in control of the work. Another way of looking at enmeshment is to see it as blurring the boundaries between private and public roles and between means and ends. Comments of ministers indicate that enmeshment is a significant source of stress and can be detected in a number of different areas that were investigated.

**Enmeshment in comments on meaning of ministry**

The enmeshment theme is suggested particularly in comments about the meaning of ministry with 37% of ministers commenting on it as a total life's work. Phrases used by these respondents included "what I live for," "my purpose in life," "the whole of life," "impinges on everything," "a life commitment," "a way of life," "everything in life," "my identity." Some elaborated with comments such as:

"My whole life. I have no hobbies any more and even music is for the Church. I joined Rotary for mission."

"My life - I don't switch off to it. That is why heavy criticism is so hard."
For these people parish ministry is of supreme importance and significance. Some indicated implications as they saw them: blending of personal and family roles with ministry; identity and personal worth centred on ministry; vulnerability to criticisms of ministry (as in the comment above); living and preaching the gospel; a sense of urgency about communicating the gospel. Several are reflected in the following:

"It is very significant. It impinges on everything: marriage, my relationship with God and others."

"My identity, my personal worth, is wrapped up in it. I wonder how I could cope if I were not doing it. It probably means too much to me to change occupations."

Obedience and service (firstly to God and secondly to the congregation) was the meaning of ministry for 20% of respondents. Almost half of these (6 respondents) commented that their obedience resulted in a sense of fulfilment, or peace with God. Other individuals mentioned service gave them a sense of privilege, or purpose and an opportunity to use their gifts. For one minister, perceiving ministry primarily as obedience to a call meant that he couldn't leave it. A typical comment was:

"Ministry is far more than just a job. It is personal fulfilment and an opportunity to serve the Lord and his people as I would like."

Loving people and helping them grow was seen as the meaning of ministry by 18% of respondents. Phrases used by these ministers included: "encouraging," "building up" and "caring." Often this type of response was also linked to a sense of fulfilment as in the following comments:

"Ministry means tremendous satisfaction as people have grown in their spiritual journey."

"It is the most significant thing I would want to do with my life, to be part of building a genuine, sharing community and preaching the gospel because Australia is a place of falseness and alienation."

A total of 17 ministers (26%) commented on a sense of fulfilment as a component of the meaning of ministry for them. However, 2 ministers (3%) perceived ministry primarily in terms of responsibility. Both wished they could have avoided the responsibility of parish leadership with one commenting:

"At times it is frightening because of the responsibility not to be a hypocrite and to discharge the duties faithfully. I ask, why me? At times I find ministry very difficult and demanding and would rather be in the pew, feeling jealous of people with a nine to-five job."

Compared with those who did not report that ministry was a total life-style, or life-work (63%), these ministers did not differ significantly on measures of burnout but tended to
score higher on anxiety. The difference in anxiety (chi-square=3.21, df=1, p<.10) failed to reach significance at the 5% confidence level.

Those who perceived ministry as a total life work did not differ significantly from other ministers on loneliness, grief or perceived pressure of time, indicating that it is part of the context of broad anxiety rather than having a direct effect of these outcomes.

Note on ministry as a career versus vocation

Answers to questions about ministry as a career, or vocation provide further information about the meaning of ministry. Over three quarters (78%) rated lack of a formal career path as not at all stressful, 14% of little stress, 6% of some stress and 2% as fairly stressful. About one third (31%) perceived their work to be a vocation rather than a career.

Those who commented on the nature of the informal career path indicated that it currently involved moving from smaller to larger parishes where there was responsibility for a staff. Yet the majority of these respondents said they personally rejected this perceived 'career progress':

"I don't think in terms of a career path. My expectation is to be a servant, therefore I renounce the management model. I must preach, counsel, visit, evangelise and train but numbers are not important. My goal is to be a better servant."

"To me, the most important thing in the world is ministering the gospel and I'm just as content doing that in a country town, or a large regional area, or here."

Thus the majority of ministers were satisfied with the lack of formal career structures, largely because they perceived it as a calling to service. Those who had reservations mentioned lack of diversity in career options, lack of challenge and lack of status that comes from recognizable career progress.

Were there differences between younger and older ministers in their perceptions of ministry? All ministers aged 60 or above commented on ministry as service, compared with 83% of younger ministers. However there was a decline in the perception of ministry as personally fulfilling with age: 46% of those aged in their 30s, 40% of those in their 40s and 50s and only 18% of those 60 or above commented on personal satisfaction or fulfilment as one of the reasons for being in ministry.

Enmeshment in comments about the manse

The majority of ministers lived in a manse, with only eight (13%) living in a private house. One third of those living in a manse (32%) were satisfied with its provision and 37% were satisfied with the maintenance of the manse. Another two ministers specifically noted that they took action directly to repair, or maintain the manse.
The manse is frequently located next to the church. This can produce a sense of separation from the wider community but also increased availability to religious and welfare needs. Where the office is a study in the home there is little separation of work and family roles. Comments about the manse producing an intrusion of work into family or leisure time, suggestive of enmeshment, occurred in 20 interviews (31%), while 22% commented on difficulties associated with the design, structure or facilities of the manse and 17% expressed concern over the size of the manse.

Typical comments on location included:

"I dislike being next to the church, being expected to do everything."

"Manses should not be built beside the church. You never have neighbours and this restricts social engagement"

"Living next to the church gives me a sense of responsibility for the security of the church."

"Here the location of the manse next to the church means there are more drop-ins."

Those who commented on the manse intruding into private roles did not differ significantly from others on measures of burnout. There was a slight tendency for them to score higher on anxiety (67% in 'intrusion' group but 50% in 'non-intrusion' group) and depression (50% in 'intrusion' group but 39% in 'non-intrusion' group) but these differences were not statistically significant using chi square.

Intrusion of the manse was not related significantly to time pressure, loneliness, having problems with congregational friendships, or being an organiser. It appears to be a background or context variable that can set the scene for enmeshment but does not contribute directly towards the negative effects of enmeshment.

**Enmeshment in comments about mobility**

For five ministers (8%) this question was not applicable because they had not left their first appointment. For another 38% there were few difficulties: they were settled; had few moves; they accepted the moves; they pointed to positive aspects of the moves.

Where difficulties were experienced, the most common source of stress was leaving relationships (34%). Practical issues involved in moving were cited by 9% as major difficulties, 5% noted family consequences of moves and 5% noted the stress of frequent moves.

Comments related to leaving relationships included:

"It is a grief situation, saying goodbye to friends. We have always coped but you need to build friendships all over again."
"I get emotionally overawed when leaving people, especially where there are new Christians."

"It is emotionally draining to say goodbye. For example, one family came six times to say goodbye."

"I mourned for my third parish in Sydney when we went to a country parish as we were so much part of that community."

The relationship between mobility and grieving was checked using chi square. The following table was prepared with column percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of parishes</th>
<th>Grief response</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td>19 (42%)</td>
<td>22 (34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to four</td>
<td>14 (64%)</td>
<td>17 (38%)</td>
<td>31 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more</td>
<td>5 (23%)</td>
<td>7 (16%)</td>
<td>12 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers were too small for statistical analysis, so the table was collapsed into two different 2x2 tables: one with one parish, versus two or more to assess the effects of any moves; and another with one to four parishes, versus five or more to assess the effects of multiple moves on grieving.

Differences in the second table were not statistically significant but predictably differences in the first table were (chi square 6.07, df=1, p<.05) indicating that those who made any moves were significantly more likely to grieve than those with no moves.

Those who remained in one parish were compared with those who moved at least once on loneliness; ministry as whole of life; problems with friendships within the congregation; and problems with friendships outside the congregation. None of the differences was statistically significant.

**Enmeshment in comments on stipend**

In rating the stressfulness of this issue, a total of 44% perceived salary as not at all or of little significance, 34% as of some significance and 22% as fairly to very significant. Those who gave medium to high stress ratings tended to comment on inability to finance a house either currently or for retirement (12%). In those cases enmeshment in work through continued living in a manse was likely but this theme did not occur in a significant number of interviews.
Typical comments were:

"My wife felt that she needed to be in the home for the sake of the three children and to support me in ministry so there has only been one income. We've managed to get by, that's all. I have eleven years to retirement and it's looming high how to provide a house. We have always had the attitude that the Lord will provide but the retirement issue is looming large."

"The stipend is a stressor in relation to retirement since we were unable to save previously but we expect God to provide."

"The Church does not look after those it employs, especially as they get older."

**Emmeshment due to the spiritual nature of work**

This encompasses the spiritual growth, or change, perceived as the most rewarding aspect of ministry by 77% of respondents and preaching, or promoting, the gospel as the reason for being in parish ministry by 48%. Typical comments relating to growth and change as most rewarding aspects of ministry were:

"Lives being changed, people becoming Christians and growing like Christ."

"Seeing people's lives changed and the truth validated: people becoming new, getting a purpose, relationships restored, dying with hope."

Typical comments relating to the gospel as motivation for parish ministry were:

"Because I have a gospel to proclaim and without the gospel the world is likely to come apart. It is all-important and I am constrained to do it. There is a sense of urgency in getting across man's rebellion to God but the solution is only found in salvation through Christ. The message is seen in its proclamation and reflected in personal help given to others."

"I believe that is where God wants me to be. People need to be built up spiritually, to hear the word in a way that is accurate and relevant. I believe I have abilities to do it. There is a specific need in this place."

In itself, the spiritual task is open-ended because evangelism leads to the task of building up believers over a lifetime. A pre-requisite for doing spiritual work is a certain level of spiritual functioning in the minister and hence there is pressure to engage in spiritual practices. However, personal spiritual practice was less than desired for 35% of ministers because of competing needs. Typical comments were:

"Time pressure from duties reduces the time or quality of time available for spiritual practice. There is frustration at the lack of quality time for prayer and meditation and retreats."
"Even my daily quiet time is easily squeezed out. I have to focus on the Bible, listening for myself, not just for sermon preparation."

In eight comments there was mention of perceived results of difficulties in spiritual practice: these were divided equally between guilt and frustration-stress. The guilt arises from personal or congregational expectations about the spiritual practices of a minister, frustration from lack of control over schedules. Typical comments were:

"It catches up on you after a while. At the back of your mind there is the feeling you should be taking time out to grow spiritually, to reflect on your faith and it grows to a level when you cannot ignore it any more."

"I feel irritation now when schedules are changed. I get up later as I am working more at night so I have my morning quiet time later and it may be interrupted."

For 11% a major issue was a sense of responsibility, or even hypocrisy in being a human spiritual leader of a congregation. Extracts from relevant comments were:

"I would like others to run ahead with these things but they wait for me as a spiritual catalyst."

"It is hard to keep up with it because of time and hard not to feel like a world class hypocrite."

Three people (5%) pinpointed fatigue as a major contributor to difficulties in spiritual practice. This could arise from a series of late-night meetings, or emotional exhaustion. One of these respondents traced a series of traumas for congregational members and his emotional involvement and fatigue in ministering to them. Their sufferings increased demands on him, giving less time for personal devotions but a greater sense of needing them. He attributed difficulties to a lack of self-discipline and concluded by saying:

"Spiritual practice is a very significant area but the stress is in the frustration because it is so difficult to do. I would like one morning every week near a river."

Self-blame, related to high self-expectations, was prominent in replies by 9%. The content was diverse: trying and abandoning many spiritual practices, sense of inadequacy in many spiritual areas, expectations to be in prayer for the congregation, feeling responsible to persevere in spiritual practice. A typical comment was:

"The tension is always there between the ideal and the reality. At times it is a struggle. I am never satisfied, hard on myself and others. It is a kind of drivenness."

Thus it appears that the spiritual nature of the work tended to produce enmeshment in the sense of motivation towards gospel ministry and spiritual practice. Enmeshment in the sense of open-ended work made it difficult for ministers to find time for spiritual
practice. Resulting discrepancies between ideal and actual practices (implied in the comments of one-quarter of the ministers) produced frustration-guilt.

**Enmeshment in open-ended work**

The pressure of many tasks to be done in limited time was reported by 55% of ministers. Typical comments that noted the unlimited nature of ministry tasks ("open ended work") were:

"There is the sense that ministry is never completed, so however hard I work this week there will still be as much there next week. I am never up to date in work. Always there is the feeling you could be doing more, or you could be doing it better. I am rarely happy with my sermon on Sunday morning."

"It is always there but I have to live with it as the job never ends. However, it really is the biggest stress for myself and my family."

Some recognised that expectations about time spent in ministry each week ("never-tire minister image") were self-imposed (5%) but 5% also perceived the expectations to be imposed by others, or both self and others.

As a consequence of the unlimited job description and exacerbated by living in a manse, there was a blurring of boundaries between work-time and personal time ("work-self merging"):

"Nominally Saturday is my day off. However, the biggest stressor is not knowing what time is mine. I cannot get to my hobbies as people drop in to say hello."

"The problem is the ongoingness of work: I can't switch off, living and working in the same place."

Workload stress was also related to deadlines for completing tasks, such as preparation for sermons, weddings, funerals, religious education etc ("multiple finishing tapes"):  

"It is an enormous source of stress. There is too much work and too little time. I'm always working to deadlines, putting off sermon preparation because of a sick parishioner but you cannot delay the visit because of a possible change in their condition, or death."

"My lateness is a result of trying to fit in too many things. You get a deadline for editing a book, a notice for the local paper, organizing things by phone."

Others (17%) noted peaks and troughs in workload, with stress caused by unpredictable, and therefore uncontrollable, tasks ("rogue dumpers"). Funerals were a considerable source of stress as they were usually unexpected and added considerably to the workload for that week.
"Unexpected funerals always come when you are preaching at presbytery."

"Lack of control over tasks was a source of stress in the previous parish. It was often frustrating if there were three funerals and a presbytery meeting in the one week."

"This occurs especially with funerals. Last year I had four in the first two and a half weeks. It is like a boxer with a body blow to start with, then it is harder to recover. Funerals are a valuable part of ministry but then the tension rapidly increases."

The perception was that funerals, or irregular demanding events, took time and energy that would otherwise be used for predictable tasks such as sermon preparation which is of great importance to evangelical ministers:

"On other weeks where there are scripture seminars in the morning and meetings on three to four nights then there is pressure for preparing a sermon. I place on myself a high expectation regarding the sermon as people come to be challenged and encouraged and need to have something worth listening to."

However, a number of ministers distinguished between time pressure as a source of stress and as a problem for them: for 22% ("organisers") it was not perceived as a problem because they could organise their work to a large extent (11%), prioritise issues (11%) and use strategies to relieve the pressure of a full workload.

Those who reported pressure of time did not differ significantly from the others on anxiety or depersonalisation. Nonetheless, they tended to score high on emotional exhaustion (58% compared with 31%, chi square 3.07, df=1, p<.10) and depression (45% compared with 16%, chi square 3.77, df=1, p<.10).

**Enmeshment in comments about friendships**

Spiritual authority and open-ended work produced problems in friendships within the congregation for at least 21% of ministers.

The majority of respondents noted that relationships with people of the congregation were generally good (69%) but 31% noted difficulties. There were three main causes of difficulty perceived by the ministers: the hierarchical role of minister interfering with fully reciprocal friendships (14%); lack of time because of the role (5%); and differences between the minister and the bulk of parishioners making friendships difficult (2%).

Comments in which the role of the minister can be seen to hinder friendships are as follows:

"Confidentiality is a problem. There is also the time factor here: criticism if you spend too much time with Mr A."
"I have to be guarded with friendships. If I am too close I am accused of manipulation. You must treat people equally in the congregation."

"The difficulty is really getting to know people."

The main strategy used by the ministers in handling relationships with parishioners was to be guarded (29%). Others (3%) specifically tried to be evenhanded in their relationships to avoid accusations of favouritism, or to avoid being manipulated by parishioners. One minister mentioned his policy was to seek out loners in the congregation and offer friendship.

Caution was a theme illustrated in the following excerpts:

"You have to constantly watch what you say and do ... however, you always have to be very careful and cautious, not making hasty decisions."

"We have to keep some distance. If we are too friendly with some, others miss out."

"There are some whom we can trust but some let us down and that is hurtful. My wife finds it hard to entrust herself to others in the congregation."

The consequences of close friendships within a congregation were largely perceived to be negative. The pain of leaving friends was mentioned in this context by 6%, while individuals commented on being hurt by people, being accused of favouritism, of being the seen as the subject of manipulation, such as in the comment:

"I had a really good elder as a friend but other people didn't know as it could lead to rivalry, or thoughts that I am in their pocket."

A comment illustrating grieving is as follows:

"It is not practical to keep in contact with all your friends because you move and there is grief during the settling in period. Part of the deal in ministry is that you have to say good-bye."

The dilemma of congregational friendships for a large proportion of ministers can be considered as an interaction between personal needs, role needs and negative consequences. The personal needs of ministers include: approval (seen in comments indicating sensitivity to criticism); relaxation (especially in what is perceived as "time off"); and stimulation from reciprocal social interactions (seen in the comment - "There is a gap in stimulation from people our own age and with similar interests").

The role needs include maintaining confidentiality ("I was unable to develop a close relationship with his wife because she is indiscreet"), providing pastoral care ("the gospel involves relationships") and being prepared to rebuke error as well as support people in love ("Now I can rebuke but also show constant love and care").
The dangers of forming close relationships with parishioners include the possibility of criticism or personal rejection, the breaching of confidentiality which could harm others or the minister's reputation, interference with a pastoral need to rebuke as required and the pain of inevitable separation.

Thus the dominant theme appears to be the one-sidedness of friendships, or close personal relationships between minister and congregation: ministers may offer friendship within the parameters of a ministry role but cannot receive friendship unthinkingly, because they are constrained by that role.

Similar factors also produced problems in maintaining friendships outside the congregation, an issue producing at least some stress for 34% of ministers.

Three main barriers to making outside friendships were mentioned. The time and effort required to establish or maintain friendships was noted by 26%, with typical comments:

"Inevitably you have a small groups of real friends because your time is so limited and you cannot be expansive."

"The stress here includes diminishing friendships with people I knew before college, a lack of contact because of busy-ness."

"There is no time to maintain friendships and so I tend to live in the present."

The last comment implies some unease about the future if friendships have been lost. Another minister raised the issue of mobility (also seen as a barrier to friendships by 9%) and was more specific about the future:

"I lose friends because of mobility. It is not stressful now as I am too busy but of concern for my later life. In my 60s I will be asking where my friends have gone."

Others (8%) commented on other ways in which the role of the minister was a barrier to friendships:

"I have no friends outside the congregation as ministry is antisocial. On a budget, I cannot entertain freely, cannot join groups to research family history as I would like."

"It is difficult for a minister to have friends due to the confidential nature of his work."

"A lot of our friends are Christians who are involved in their churches at weekends and it is difficult to visit them when we are both free."

"My wife and I prefer a small number of close friends but our work requires a large number of acquaintances and no special friends in the congregation."
Some (12%) specifically mentioned that a lack of friends outside the congregation was stressful for their wives.

The goals of friendship outside the congregation were perceived to be mutual support and concern of Christian friends, a release from the stress of congregational relationships and ministry to non-Christians. These three goals were typified in the following three comments:

"Most of my close friends are Christians and there have been many calls and inquiries as a result of my wife's illness."

"I appreciate friends through Rotary as it could be stifling otherwise."

"I am developing friendships through the parents of the children at school. It helps us and gives opportunities for ministry."

Enmeshment resulting in feelings of loneliness

While loneliness was not a significant stressor for most ministers, it produced at least some stress for 43%. Ministers who rated loneliness as not at all stressful, or of little stress, tended to comment on being busy, or on having good friendships or family relationships.

Those who mentioned difficulties with loneliness perceived their role as minister as the major source. In giving reasons for loneliness 16 ministers (25%) mentioned their responsibilities to the parish, 11% noted either distance from previous friends when they moved to the parish, or lack of time to continue prior friendships, 5% noted their singleness as an issue and 3% commented on differences in age or interests from others in the parish.

Comments about the role of minister included issues of responsibility, confidentiality and dependency upon the congregation for initiating, or responding to friendly overtures:

"Yes (I feel lonely) when there are problems within the church, in the sense of having the responsibility."

"I can't talk to anyone in the parish about money, family or marriage issues. Sometimes it feels lonely to be unable to share things."

"It would be good to have someone to unload to sometimes."

"You are coming as an outsider where people have their friendship circle but expect ministers to come and go."

"As a family we felt it acutely in our first year in the parish as we didn't get invited anywhere on our arrival."
A number gave particular contexts for feelings of loneliness, such as times of parish or family difficulty:

"I felt it at particular times, more when there was stress within the family and occasionally when there was stress within the congregation."

"This is a issue. Who do you talk with about a current problem when all your friends are in the congregation? How much do you bring home?"

"Yes, hard decisions can be lonely. Yes, when things have gone terribly wrong and people don't understand, sometimes your wife is not enough."

**Summary of enmeshment themes**

These comments illustrate the potential for stress in the nature of ministry: its open-endedness, mobility and unseen, spiritual goals. In each of the areas developed above, at least 20% of ministers reported that it produced some stress. Three types of outcomes were emphasised as a result of enmeshment, or intense involvement in ministry: loneliness, grieving and a sense of time pressure.

**SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY**

It was hypothesised that those who are well-equipped in terms of training, personal strengths and supports would be more likely to withstand stress and burnout in ministry. Conversely, those who judged themselves or could be judged as ill-equipped would be more likely to suffer stress and burnout.

**Theological training**

Only one quarter of respondents were satisfied with their initial theological education. Of these, half commented that their training had equipped them well, while half stated it was satisfactory because they also had prior training or experience in ministry. In addition, 5% stated that they had taught themselves the practical aspects of ministry through books or short courses after graduation.

In terms of stressfulness, 8% reported that deficiencies in theological education were very stressful in their early years of ministry, 17% reported them as fairly stressful and 20% as of some significance as causes of stress.

Those who coped because of prior training typically commented:

"If I had not done the S.M.B.C. (Sydney Missionary Bible College) course which taught me how to do scripture teaching and youth work I would have been stressed."
"I held a home mission appointment while doing theological training. The strengths of my training included more practical experience. The inadequacy was that I put formal studies second to parish commitments."

The most frequent complaint was that their theological training lacked practical, interpersonal, or counselling skills (51%). The practical and interpersonal issues included leadership; aspects of liturgy such as the correct use of communion wine and bread, or the order of procession from the church to the cemetery in country funerals; selection of music; handling committee meetings; papers to complete for a marriage; financial administration; dealing with aggression in a meeting. Counselling issues that were mentioned included: mental illness in parishioners; marriage and pre-marriage counselling; hospital visiting; and individual counselling.

Typical comments about deficiencies in practical theology were:

"We got nothing about the skills of counselling and had to get additional training in it."

"The present system is inadequate as we are trained to know how to understand and explain the Bible, then thrown in at the deep end to run a parish on our own without supervision. We have to pick up pastoral care, administration, development of the gifts of ministry."

Some noted the lack of training for wives:

"My wife received no preparation for ministry, for example in taking phone calls of people in crisis and had no experience in dealing with it."

Another 11% noted that the style or emphasis of the college was demanding and 3% commented that there was a lack of any overall framework or model of ministry.

Many of the comments recognised dilemmas in the allocation of time for various subject areas at theological college such as classical languages, Biblical studies and practical theology but included criticism of the emphases in their experience:

"Theological college was too academic. This is important - a grasp of Scripture has to undergird ministry as you are continuously giving out. However, you need practical work also. At the moment you have to ask about all of these things on the FES (Field Education Scheme) appointment. There is no preparation for using FES and no preparation for counselling. Lately in ministry I have had to grapple with psychological issues that have caused stress. I feel out of my depth and would like some guidance about where, or when, to refer on."

The major finding then, was a deficiency in practical or interpersonal issues in theological training (51%) and the list of deficiencies illustrates the diversity of tasks with which a parish minister is confronted; that is, it illustrates one aspect of open-ended
work. Where there was also a sense of isolation from early supervision, the minister also felt vulnerable to making potentially serious errors (22%).

Typical comments were:

"There was a problem of distance. It was a difficulty because within one year of being in my first parish there were only two inducted ministers in the presbytery. My closest colleague was almost 3 hours away and an older, very supportive minister was encouraging but four hours away. This is a time for working out how you will conduct weddings and baptismal services and you need help."

"As a theological student I was adequately supervised. In my first parish there was no support. The decisions were all mine but my work was known in a small town and this could have led to problems if I had made mistakes."

Ministers also directly related lack of skills in counselling, theological matters and leadership/administration to a sense of inadequacy (37%).

In commenting on areas of inadequacy, the majority mentioned skills with people in counselling or visiting (20%). Specific counselling issues were: confrontation if needed; bereavement counselling; suicides; homosexuality; marriage and divorce counselling; and hospital visits. They acknowledged a lack of training in these areas. Some mentioned how they coped. Strategies included attending courses, referrals to professionals, networking for assistance and private study. Typical responses were:

"In earlier years when I felt my training was inadequate this was stressful. I was delving into counselling books a chapter ahead of my parishioners' needs."

"Early to half way in ministry (after 5-6 years) I felt inadequate when I couldn't help people to right their lives. I realised I wasn't God and the final decision rests with them. The turning point for me was going to a CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) course where the role playing and so on taught me to understand the motives of helping for me."

"It was stressful in pastoral issues such as grief work, occult things, suicide. I dealt with it by further training, reading, delegating and networking to obtain assistance."

The next most frequently mentioned area of inadequacy was in biblical or theological matters (9%). For four ministers this was related to a relative lack of formal theological training, either initially or as continuing education. The other two ministers appeared to place great significance on the quality of sermons. Comments illustrating these two themes were:

"I am self-taught. I received an L.Th. from ... but I feel inadequate in dealing with educated people, relating at their level. I also feel inadequate after some 'put-down' experiences."
"I agonise over sermons because there is the feeling that the minister is only as competent as the last sermon. I want to inspire and convert. When there is little positive feedback then I question myself."

For 8% of respondents, inadequacies in areas of administration or leadership were of concern but they did not elaborate beyond pointing to time constraints and lack of success in dealing with these situations. Varying issues were also raised by one or two respondents: lack of skills in evangelism, or religious education, or youth work.

**Type of theological training and stress**

It is of interest that of those who commented on the lack of practical theology in their training 72% reported it was of some stress (36%), fairly (24%), or very stressful (12%) as a factor in their subsequent ministry. These respondents were also compared in terms of the theological colleges at which they studied (Moore and Presbyterian Theological Centre (PTC) versus other Australian and overseas colleges). Those who studied at Moore and/or the PTC were more likely to report proportionally lower levels of stress associated with practical theology.

How does liberal vs evangelical training affect perception of deficiency in training? Of those who commented on deficiencies in practical areas, 58% had trained at Moore, or PTC (evangelical training). However, the evangelically trained ministers comprised 62% of the total sample and hence were neither over nor under-represented. Thus there is no obvious relationship between type of training and perceived deficiency.

**Type of theological training and spiritual difficulties**

How was training related to spiritual aspects of ministry? For a minority (12%) there was a relationship between theological education and faith battering and this was related to type of training: all but one of these attended evangelical colleges.

The person who attended a liberal college elsewhere in Australia was stressed by the attack on his fundamentalist beliefs. Those whose faith was battered, either discarded cherished beliefs, or perceived that academic or time pressures of college meant that personal faith suffered. Typical comments were:

"I never doubted Jesus as Lord but doubted my ability to teach and preach it. I found I had an accumulation of wrong ideas and treasured notions that were demolished. On the rubble, Dr Knox built a new foundation. Others taught me that the Bible was reliable and showed me how to love people."

"Yes, I never dreamed it would happen in an evangelical college. Also there were financial stresses and doubts, part of my growth. Also there was pressure of work, with no time to research areas where I felt my faith was failing to such an extent that I wanted to bail out."
"I feel they beat students over the head with the Christian baseball rather than encouraging and uplifting them. There is too much emphasis on education. You need to survive the course and there is no sense of being uplifted by it. Even FES was not encouraging."

Type of training (Moore and/or PTC versus others) was related to reported difficulties in spiritual journey and difficulties in spiritual practice. For all ministers, 62% reported spiritual journey problems but the corresponding percentage was 81% for evangelically-trained ministers. With respect to spiritual practice, 62% of all ministers and 72% of evangelically-trained ministers reported problems. In both areas the associations just failed to reach statistical significance at the 5% level (chi squares of 3.48, df=1, p<.10 and 3.13, df=1, p<.10 respectively).

Training inadequacies and stress measures

Training deficiencies were related to burnout (depersonalisation) and trait anxiety. The ministers who commented on deficiencies (N=32) were compared with those who stated they had been well-equipped, taught themselves, or had prior training, or experience (N=19) on scores of burnout and anxiety dichotomised at the mean. Chi square statistics for depersonalisation (6.38, df=1, p<.05) and trait anxiety (4.56, df=1, p<.05) were significant. The actual contingency tables were:

Table 47: TRAINING DEFICIENCIES AND DEPERSONALISATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Depersonalisation</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 48.: TRAINING DEFICIENCIES AND ANXIETY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait anxiety</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal strength

At a physical level, having good health and obtaining sufficient exercise and relaxation were thought to indicate personal strength. At the psychological level the criterion was acceptance of strengths and limitations. At the spiritual level, satisfaction with spiritual practice was used as an indicator of personal strength.

**Physical**

Health problems were a difficulty for one third of the ministers. Where actual health problems were mentioned, the largest group comprised disorders that the minister specified as stress-related (15%): irritable bowel syndrome, heart disease, ulcers, asthma, migraine headaches and chronic depression. Comments included:

"I suffer from irritable bowel syndrome, a stress-related disorder. Every three to four months I am washed out but cannot stop, gradually running down."

"I suffered from dyspepsia which resulted in an ulcer but it has been stable in this parish. It relates to my strong urge to work with people and be accepted by them. If I am not accepted I feel stress."

"I have no major health problems but stress is affecting my health via irritable bowel syndrome. I am aware of physical responses to stressful encounters with people."

Extreme fatigue was noted by 9% of ministers. Other conditions reported by several ministers included major heart surgery, back injuries and diabetes.

Negative consequences of health problems have included long periods of sick leave with related concerns about neglect of the parish, fears of discrimination on the basis of health if a move were desired, pressure to keep going, or work harder despite health problems.
and worries about the impact of their ill-health on their families. Two ministers reported positive consequences in terms of learning and re-ordering one's life through illness. Comments about negative consequences included:

"There was also stress because no-one was available for supply if I was sick, even if funds were given. This increased my sense of responsibility."

"I have some heart problems, migraine headaches and emotional asthma. There is a lot of prejudice in congregations about the health of the minister. I tried not to emphasise the heart problem because otherwise I may not have received a call here."

"I had glandular fever two years ago. Now I find that the illness has left me fatigued and I have to sleep in the afternoon. I work hard so that others cannot think of me as lazy."

Fatigue and stress-related disorders appeared to result from the open-ended nature of the work. There was no statistical relationship between reports of health problems and measures of burnout, anxiety, or depression; nor was there a relationship with time pressure, or perceptions of inadequacy, according to the chi square statistic.

Deficiencies in exercise and relaxation were linked to enmeshment in that 25% stated that they lacked time for exercise and 26% lacked time for relaxation, largely due to work demands. Comments illustrating some of the problems surrounding exercise were:

"I take Saturdays off but often I'm doing things for Sunday. I find it increasingly difficult to relax. There is no time for exercise because I work more than 65 hours a week."

"Apart from this year I always tried to have Monday off, always took annual leave and tried to get three exercise periods each week. However, you get many funerals on Mondays here and you can't knock them back. If you lose Monday you can't pick it up during the week."

Relaxation was also a problem due to time pressures (26%) and 6% of ministers specifically noted that they had great difficulty in "switching off." Some had to leave the house in order to relax away from visitors and phone calls but even then they carried the mental burden of others' needs. Ultimately the result is further stress, burnout and possibly leaving ministry, as illustrated by the following:

"When I was in my former occupation I eventually learned how to cut off by saying 'It's only a job - blow it'. In ministry that seemed blasphemous, so in my first three years there were no boundaries between work and non-work. After holidays my stomach knotted up on return to the house. I began to apply for jobs in my previous profession and realised that I was at crisis point. Feeling desperate, I walked away from that and said 'Blow it'. This year has been more
of a struggle because of stress and I have found it harder to enjoy time off because of stress."

However, there was no direct relationship between lack of exercise or relaxation and measures of burnout and anxiety (obtained chi square values all failed to reach statistical significance even at the 10% level).

*Health, exercise and organisation of time*

Were those who described themselves as "organisers" in response to time pressures more likely to engage in exercise and relaxation? Percentages are suggestive but numbers were too small for statistical testing. While 27% of non-organisers reported adequate exercise and relaxation, the corresponding figure for organisers was 50%. Were those with health problems more or less organised? There was no relationship according to chi square.

Thus, while enmeshment was a cause of health-related problems (including lack of exercise and relaxation) it seems that other intervening variables, such as cognitions surrounding health-related limitations, may be more directly related to negative outcomes.

*Acceptance of strengths, limitations*

Knowing or developing strengths and accepting limitations can reduce enmeshment by allowing for delegation. Those who reported low levels of stress commented that they knew and accepted their limitations, or developed their strengths (31%). Since they were aware of their own imperfections they could delegate tasks if suitable people were available or else accept an imperfect job if they attempted it. Two ministers commented that knowing that their gifts and weaknesses were God-given relieved stress. Typical replies were:

"Many ministers don't want to tarnish the parish image by admitting weaknesses. The expectation that you should be top notch at everything is a source of problems. You can't. The problem starts when a man tries too hard. I deal with my weaknesses by referrals."

"The greatest liberator is to realise one can only use talents that God has given. Now I tell session upfront about my lacks and they can emerge as people to compensate for my limitations. If I pretend, then I will fail in my work with them."

Conversely, lack of self-acceptance can produce a "do-it-all" minister who is frustrated by the diversity of tasks, particularly if the minister has a perfectionist style and constantly strives to do better (15%). A typical comment was:
"I would like to be a perfect minister and do many functions much better. I am frustrated when I am not. I discipline myself to do extra reading and study so that I can be a better preacher."

"I sense that I am not achieving at the high level I set for myself or reaching the visions set before the congregation. As a leader of the congregation this lack of achievement reflects on me. I seem to set higher standards for myself than are realistically possible, and also for others."

Relationships between self-acceptance and reported training deficits, felt pressure of time and measures of stress were examined. Two groups were compared in chi-square analyses: those who knew and accepted strengths and limitations (N=20) and those who were stressed by discrepancies between their ideal and actual ministry (N=29). These did not differ in terms of reported training deficits and felt pressure of time. However, the accepting group were significantly less likely to feel inadequate in terms of their skills (chi square = 4.87, df=1, p<.05) and attitude/style (chi square = 3.88, df=1, p<.05). They were significantly less likely to be anxious (chi square = 5.58, df=1, p<.05) and tended to score lower on emotional exhaustion (chi square = 3.19, df=1, p<.10). Thus, there is a direct relationship between failure to accept limitations and measures of anxiety and burnout.

**Spiritual practice**

Because of the spiritual nature of the work, part of being equipped for ministry is a satisfactory level (according to self-evaluation) of spiritual practice. The relationship between spiritual practice and enmeshment has already been noted, as has the direct relationship between dissatisfaction with practice and frustration, or guilt.

Although 60% of ministers pointed to difficulties and frustrations with their spiritual practice, 30% were satisfied with this area of their lives. In commenting on positive aspects of this issue, 18% maintained that their spiritual practices were adequate. 8% that adequate provision was available or the parish encouraged them to use opportunities and 5% had accepted a less than desired level of spiritual practice.

The types of spiritual practice used by these twenty satisfied ministers comprised prayer (14%), Bible reading (9%), retreats (6%), family devotions (3%), meditation (3%), devotional reading (3%) and individuals mentioned fasting and groups for prayer and Bible study.

The relative importance of different approaches to spiritual practice was indicated by the frequency of referring to aspects of spiritual practice in the open-ended comments. Regularity was mentioned by 9% who specifically noted that they prayed, or had devotions daily, or used other practices on a regular basis. An illustrative comment was:
"Practices I use are adequate. There is a strong emphasis on family devotions within this church with a set programme for readings and prayer. I read the Bible every morning and evening with the family for about 15 minutes in the morning and 40 minutes in the evening."

For 6%, giving spiritual practice priority during the day when they felt it was needed was noted. For example, one minister said:

"I just make time for that, clear the diary if I need a morning of prayer."

Praying consistently, or using spiritual practice frequently throughout the day was reported by 5%. An illustrative comment was:

"I pray throughout the day and a little at the end of the evening. I pray in the car for situations, thinking about God's word. It occupies my mind about 60% of the time in the day. I have learned to rely on God."

Another 5% mentioned organising days to a week of time off for a spiritual retreat but one person commented that retreats were an impossibility because the congregation would not see them as a priority.

There was a significant relationship between reporting problems with spiritual practice and high levels of emotional exhaustion (chi square 8.81, df=1, p<.01) but not with other measures of anxiety and depression. In addition, those who had difficulties in accepting limitations were more likely to report problems with spiritual practice (chi square 9.55, df=1, p<.01).

There was also a slight tendency for those who were organisers and thus less prone to time pressure to have higher levels of satisfaction with spiritual practice (35% compared with 22% for all ministers) but numbers were too small for statistical analysis.

Support

The third area of being equipped for ministry is that of support from colleagues and friends. It includes professional and social support and valuing.

Relationships with colleagues

Relationships with ministers of other denominations were reported to be non-stressful (80%) but tended to be limited to contacts at the fraternal; at local hospitals, schools or prayer meetings and at ecumenical councils.

The majority of ministers (43%) referred to relationships with colleagues as good, or very good; 15% were neutral or gave mixed evaluations and 28% referred to poor, or very poor relationships.
Conflicting beliefs or attitudes were the major cause of relationship difficulties, specified by 20% of respondents. These include theological beliefs, attitudes to issues such as theological education and attitudes based on differences in education. Another 14% commented on lost opportunities for collegiate relationships due to distance or lack of time.

Where relationships were good, ministers referred to support (6%) and fellowship (4%). Those critical of peer relationships described criticism, or disagreement (18%), lack of support (12%), lack of fellowship (6%), defensiveness, or lack of trust (6%) and interference from colleagues (5%). Typical comments were:

"Here the problem is tension and division within the presbytery and I see myself as reconciler and peacemaker. However, I find spite, a "tit-for-tat" attitude and this is stressful because I am the meat in the sandwich. It is the result of lack of supervision by Ministry and Mission and presbytery is in a mess. It is stressful to see brothers going on as they are, doing damage to the Lord's witness."

"At times I would like opportunities for relationship but presbytery is a business meeting, not a time for fellowship."

In the face of difficult peer relationships the most common coping strategy mentioned was withdrawal (9%). This included non-attendance at presbytery and symbolic withdrawal by avoiding relationships. Illustrative comments included:

"One minister in this presbytery has withdrawn: he sees that all of his suggestions will be knocked back."

"I would not want involvement with some of them."

Other measures involved accepting the situation (6%) as well as active attempts at mediation (3%), encouragement (3%) and networking (5%).

Few respondents drew out the results of difficulties in peer relationships, but some (6%) commented on the hindering of parish work:

"If I am part of an upsetting presbytery meeting then I am wiped out for the next two days and I cannot afford that."

"It is stressful to see brothers going on as they are, doing damage to the Lord's witness."

Difficulties with peer relationships do not appear to be specifically linked to type of theological college attended as there were no differences between Moore/PTC trained ministers and others in their evaluation of collegiate relationships, according to the chi square statistic. Difficulties seem to be associated with formal meetings at presbytery or assembly, as illustrated above.
With respect to enmeshment, for a minority of ministers (14%) relationships were poor due to lack of time or distance, a direct result of the open-ended and mobile nature of ministry. For others, maintaining relationships meant an effort to network, or else accepting presbytery as the source of relationships.

How are reports of poor relationships associated with loneliness, anxiety and burnout? There was no association between perception of collegiate relationships and any of these outcome measures, according to chi square.

**Friendships**

The relationship between open-ended work and friendship difficulties has already been noted. Through the chi square statistic, associations between problems concerning friendships within and outside the congregation were examined with respect to loneliness, grieving, anxiety, depression and burnout. None was statistically significant at the 5% level, but those who reported difficulties with friendships outside the congregation tended to have higher levels of depersonalisation (chi square=3.19, df=1, p<.10).

**Valuing of work**

Valuing of their work by the community was not an issue for ministers. Only 5% rated it as of some significance, 8% as of little significance and the majority (88%) as not at all significant as a stressor. Half did not comment on this issue but 28% reported that they were valued and accepted by the community. They commented on three areas of community involvement: religious services to the community (weddings, baptisms, funerals); deliberate involvement in community organisations such as service clubs; and teaching-welfare roles in schools and hospitals. Typical comments were:

"My work here is a service industry to the community with weddings, baptisms and funerals to the community."

"I have always been involved in the community in some way such as scouts or community aid and have been accepted."

"In a small town others can see your work and ministry can shine out, through your high school teaching for example."

Ten ministers (15%) noted that they did not expect their work to be valued by the community and one stated that he expected hostility. Another 12% stated that they were not recognised by the community but that it was of no concern to them. These respondents tended to see their priority as gospel proclamation, or ministering to the congregation, rather than trying to meet community needs. Typical comments were:

"My first priority is to my own people. It is up to the government to provide a social worker for the community."
"The gospel is never valued by the community."

"I realised that the community doesn't value your work and understood this when I went into ministry."

A little over one-third of ministers reported lack of recognition or valuing of their work by the congregation was of some significance as a stressor, with 3% rating it as very stressful, 11% as fairly stressful and 20% as of some stress. It was perceived as not at all stressful by 55% of respondents, and of little stress by 11%.

One quarter of the ministers commented on how the congregation appreciated their work. It was seen in their praise, their tears when the minister left for another parish, their participation, their spiritual growth and in tangible gifts, including celebrations to mark milestones in ministry.

However, 28% simply noted that the congregation did not value their work, with no further comment. Those who did comment on lack of recognition by the congregation (37%), mentioned lack of thanks, or appreciation, difficulty for the congregation to know and value the minister's work, little response from people despite unusual effort by the minister, lack of participation as a sign of non-valuing and guilt over the desire to be valued. Higher stress levels were related to congregational ignorance, non-participation and failure to share the minister's priorities.

Typical comments were:

"You really feel it if you have gone out of your way to help and they don't recognise it, or turn on you."

"The congregation is responsive but at times I wonder if it is worth it. I spend hours and finally seem to crack part of the bible but there is little response, even negative responses about a tiny detail."

Five ministers (8%) reported stress from criticism, with greatest stress related to unjust criticism. Yet 6% maintained that they did not expect to be valued by the congregation. These ministers all reported that valuing was not at all stressful for them and all were encouraged by the knowledge that they were doing God's work.

With respect to enmeshment, it is likely that the more enmeshed in ministry, the more the minister would desire encouragement and valuing by the congregation since there would be fewer alternative sources of valuing. Some may be encouraged by spiritual change in others and by spiritual support (sense of God's presence, leading etc, or prayer by others for the ministry). However, the more diverse the minister's work, the less likely the congregation would be aware of (and thus able to value) the minister's efforts, as illustrated by the comments above. Valuing is likely to be based on public aspects of ministry such as the form and content of the worship service, or demeanour of the minister at public occasions.
According to chi square analysis, perceptions of being valued by the congregation were not directly related to measures of burnout, anxiety, depression, loneliness, grieving, or sense of inadequacy. Reports of lack of encouragement or criticism by the congregation were also related to measures of burnout, anxiety, depression, problems concerning friendships within the congregation and whole of life orientation. None of the differences was statistically significant.

Summary

It was hypothesised that a second major cause of difficulties in parish ministry related to the extent to which ministers were equipped by their training, capacities in physical, psychological and spiritual areas, and by support of others. Analyses have demonstrated that perceived training deficits, perceived problems in spiritual practice and failure to accept limitations were the aspects of "equipment" that related directly to negative outcomes.

SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: INCONGRUENCE

It was hypothesised that those who were out of step with expectations of others at parish, presbytery and denominational levels would be more likely to encounter stress from conflict and less likely to withstand other stress in ministry.

Incongruence at parish level

Two areas appeared relevant here: differences in expectations over the minister’s role and theological differences. Role expectations created considerable stress for many ministers. Only 15% reported that role expectations were not at all stressful; 14% stated that they evoked a little stress; for 23% they were of some significance as stressor; for 28% they were fairly significant; and for 18% they were very significant.

Where role expectations were not a problem, the situation was attributed to full discussion before, or during initial stages of ministry with the parish (17%), flexibility exhibited by the parish, or minister (11%) or both minister and parish having similar expectations (3%). Typical comments included:

"From the start (selection committee) I hid nothing. I told them all my commitments."

"The whole tone was set in the first months... I reached agreement by talking to session. I was clear and they agreed."

"I am fairly free and things are going reasonably well."

Major difficulties concerned traditional expectations held by the parish (17%), or very high expectations in one or more areas (15%). Characteristics of traditional ministry appeared to be an emphasis on visiting (mentioned by 12% of respondents), avoidance of change (8%) and wearing robes (8%). Individual respondents also mentioned using the
title "Reverend" rather than "Pastor"; use of traditional music; a specified form of service; a specified length of service; and for the minister to lead all services. A typical comment about traditional expectations was:

"As well, stress came from their traditional or liberal view of a minister's role with a high priority placed on visitation rather than preaching, to do maintenance rather than change, the use of robes and pulpit and not to change anything."

Comments about high general expectations included:

"There is stress from the expectation that you've always got to be there. At times it would be nice if the church operated without me but the feeling is that if I'm here I must be there for them."

"Some people have unreasonable expectations, that you will be like a Messiah when you are just a human being. In the past this was more of a burden. Now I realise that expectations could drive me round the bend."

A number of ministers (9%) recognised that self-expectations were a major source of stress:

"Here they let me have free rein. The only stress has been self-imposed - my expectation that if not for me, they would go down the tube."

"I expect more of myself than the parish expects of me. I perceive some pressure from session to perform. The real pressure is from within, to do a lot well. My response to this varies: I tend to work harder but it is not working."

There was a recognition that expectations changed with moves to different parishes (9%) or with different people within a parish (9%). Typical comments were:

"The stress varied from place to place"

"It is easy to feel torn in different directions because of competing expectations within the parish. There is too much to do, it's impossible."

A few traced conflicts over expectations to the fact they differed significantly in some areas to their predecessor in ministry (5%), or to an unduly rigid session (5%). These concerns were expressed as:

"The previous minister made old people's work a focus. I told the session that I did not want to make that area a priority and the session backed me. Occasionally it is a stressor when there is a reminder of the previous minister."

"There is always conflict if the people in session are not given to new ideas. It is a drawback of the setup where elders are selected for life and become so set in their ways that they are blinkered and have no inclination to adapt and change."
Another 5% pointed to a continuing difficulty over expectations because parishioners did not understand the role of a minister:

"Some people cannot understand how time gets used, or have their own idea of what a minister does. If I run to my priorities then they may see my work as irrelevant and I can't explain what I am doing."

A number of specific conflicts around expectations were mentioned, each by 5% or fewer respondents: whether the minister should perform all ministry tasks, or delegate; whether visiting should be to all parishioners, or selective; whether needs of young, or old parishioners should take precedence; whether the minister should focus on administration, or pastoring.

Generally, the ministers who mentioned their own expectations referred to a preaching/pastoral role, with individuals noting evangelism or leadership as additional expectations. In contrast, the parishioners were seen as expecting the minister to visit (especially visitation of elderly members), or expecting the minister to share leadership and preaching roles within worship services.

At times, differences in expectations were continuing, unresolved issues and 6% mentioned heated session meetings or people leaving as a direct consequence. However, many differences were resolved through discussion and teaching by the minister (15%), or by specific changes made by the minister, such as delegating more, or becoming more accessible (12%). Comments related to these strategies were:

"I worked through the expectations by discussion with session and individuals."

"If I were to fulfil expectations here I would have to work 150 hours a week. People look to the minister to be everything. I try to handle it by reiterating my vision of ministry, to equip them to do ministry, as a player-coach and not as the team. I use "Church Dynamics" to get ideas across and elders use "Christianity Explained."

"Stress occurs when you have a large number of people in the parish and different expectations. I try to educate people that I cannot fulfil all their expectations and tell them what my priorities are. Having an office gives them freedom to come and being accessible helps to reduce their expectations. Also targeting people when they need help is important."

Other ministers stated that their solution was to evaluate the expectations of others when conflicts arose, often in conjunction with other methods (8%):

"I have to evaluate whether the expectations are fair, talk it over with people and be strategic."
"I deal with unexpected expectations by talking to the person if I felt I could approach them. With others I use more prayer, self-examination to see if there is any justification to their comments, or if I needed to adjust."

"I have also learned not to take responsibility for everything, to distinguish between goals where you have total control and desires which are legitimate but uncontrollable."

**Age trends**

There was a non-linear age trend in reports of conflicts, or difficulties over parish expectations. Two-thirds (67%) of younger ministers in their 30s, 53% of ministers in their 40s and 50s and 82% of ministers aged 60 or over, reported differences between themselves and parishioners over expectations. However, there were interesting differences between the two younger groups and the older group in the content of these differences. For 38% of respondents in each of the younger groups, conflicts arose because the parishioners desired a traditional presbyterian ministry, with an emphasis on pastoral visiting and the minister doing everything. For 31% of the younger ministers and 44% in the middle group, conflicts arose over parishioners expecting too much of the minister and making too many demands on the minister's time. In contrast, the greatest problem for the older ministers aged 60 or over, was that parishioners held a range of incompatible expectations so that the minister could only please some in the parish (44%). Differences between the minister and session over expectations were another major difficulty for the older ministers (22%) but not reported specifically by the younger ministers. None of the older ministers reported difficulties over traditional expectations, or excessive demands. Only two ministers, one over 60 and another in the middle age group, reported that members of the congregation expected to do more in the parish.

**Theological differences with the congregation**

For two-thirds of ministers this issue was not at all stressful (40%) or of little stress (26%). Another 15% perceived it as of some stress, 6% as fairly stressful and 12% very stressful.

Ministers who found theological differences in the congregation stressful generally mentioned liberal, or moderate, versus evangelical, or fundamentalist, divisions (14%). Seven out of these nine ministers tended towards an evangelical position whereas the congregation was typically liberal in theology. Five ministers rated these differences as very stressful: three commented that the division was between themselves and the elders, one considered himself strongly committed to an evangelical position and one felt criticised by both liberal and fundamentalist groups within his session and congregation. Illustrative comments were:

"On occasion this is stressful. This parish had a history or liberalism and the ghost dies slowly. If you have a gospel ministry you come up against this."
"In the previous country parish some members were very strong fundamentalist, Westminster puritans, narrow in their views and some significant members were all out to support women in ministry. I wanted to be friends with both. There were arguments in session and in the congregation. An elder resigned and joined the Anglicans on the issue. This was a source of stress as I felt warmly towards him. After preaching and shaking hands at the door, some days I was told I was very liberal, some days I was too fundamentalist. I couldn't do the right thing by both groups."

Four ministers (6%) specified the Cameron heresy trial issue as a focus of theological differences within the congregation and three ministers pointed to differences with Masons in session, or the congregation. A typical comment was:

"Generally there is little difference, more a lack of thinking by the congregation. One example is the Lodge (Masons); there was a rumour that I would not do a Lodge funeral and so we lost some Masons. Another example is that I preached on the place of the bible in the Christian life and at Assembly an elder voted opposite me on the Cameron case and this has caused some stress."

*Incongruence related to enmeshment and equipping*

Differences in expectations relate to enmeshment in the sense that in open-ended ministry (where there are many different tasks with different people in different contexts) people may not know what a minister does and hence retain unrealistic expectations. Expectations relate to theology where "traditional" expectations stem from a more liberal theological position.

Where a minister is equipped it is more likely that he or she will be able to satisfy expectations and, if also accepting of limitations, take steps to deal with deficiencies. They may be better able to handle the conflicts arising from differing expectations between minister and parish.

These hypotheses were tested using the chi square statistic, comparing 31 ministers who reported problems relating to parish expectations with 34 ministers who reported no problems. Issues examined comprised training deficiencies, ministry as "whole of life," perceived inadequacies, loneliness, feeling of time pressure, grieving, burnout, anxiety and depression. None of the differences between the two groups of ministers reached statistical significance, even at the 10% level.

Comparisons for the same issues were made between 24 ministers who reported no problems regarding parish theological differences and 18 ministers who reported problems. Two issues revealed statistically significant differences. Those expressing differences with parishioners due to theology were more likely to report grieving over leaving relationships (chi square 9.72, df=1, p<.01) and those expressing no theological differences were more likely to report feeling time pressure (chi square 8.84, df=1, p<.01). It is logical to assume that where theological differences were pronounced, parishioners would be more likely to leave the congregation and hence produce grief
over broken relationships. On the other hand, the reason for increased time pressure in those with similar theological views to parishioners is unclear.

Incongruence at presbytery level

Conflicts here related to theological differences between ministers (and hence differing approaches to presbytery business) and differing expectations about the role of presbytery (for example as a business meeting versus source of practical and spiritual support for ministers). In comments about relationships with colleagues and denominational feedback, 24 ministers expressed incongruence and 19 ministers made positive comments about presbytery, indicating a sense of congruence.

Comments illustrating congruence include:

"I always welcomed presbytery visitations. I'm encouraged by the response I've had from presbytery."

"It is a good presbytery and I am trying to encourage others."

Comments illustrating incongruence include:

"At presbytery level we are all aware of the tension between traditional and evangelical aspirations. It is the wisdom of presbytery not to rock the boat. I've had my fingers burned for testing the edges."

"Presbytery is too business oriented. Ministers feel threatened by each other and don't want to be troubled by your personal issues. There is a problem of time: we don't pray together as a presbytery. Also there is the problem of a lack of support group from peers."

The chi square statistic was used to examine the relationship between incongruence and training deficits, feelings of inadequacy, burnout, anxiety and depression. The only result approaching significance was that those who expressed incongruence were more likely to report feelings of inadequacy (chi square 3.41, df=1, p<.10).

Incongruence at denominational level

Since denominational expectations were stressful for fewer than 20% of parish ministers they were not included in the analysis of incongruence. However, some data are presented here for the sake of completeness.

Those who had no difficulty made three major observations. Firstly, they became acquainted with denominational expectations through personal experience and study (14%). Secondly, expectations were described as clear and well-defined by 11%, as illustrated by:
"Expectations are fairly well-defined. The code book is definitive on the minister's role in relation to the church, parish and presbytery. The minister's position and limits of responsibility are clear."

Thirdly, 5% commented that there were many niches within the Presbyterian Church and these were seen as functional in times of change:

"There was no blueprint because this was a planted church and presbytery gave us a lot of flexibility."

Four ministers (6%) stated that denominational expectations were not of concern because either they, or their congregations, were not strongly identified with the denomination. For these self-declared marginal people, wariness about denominational control was a clear issue:

"I long for a sense of denominational identity but not denominational control, just complementarity."

"I was always sceptical of denominational positions and pronouncements and from the age of 17 I knew the gospel would be my guide."

Those who reported being stressed by denominational expectations largely pointed to their absence, lack of clarity or instability (11%):

"Because of church union and the feeling of some that there is no longer a Presbyterian Church, there has been a period where there is no clear role."

Excessive or conflicting expectations were noted by 11% of respondents, including time commitments for parish and presbytery meetings and the diversity of responsibilities placed on the minister. Where conflicting expectations were mentioned, these were attributed to different sources. Some referred to intra-parish generational differences, with older members desiring a traditional ministry and younger members seeking newer structures and forms; others mentioned denominational conflict as a source of stress over expectations, while others pointed to conflict between parish concerns and denominational concerns:

"It is like having 25 bosses all telling you different things, e.g. Church and Nation, or CPE, or sermon preparation."

Theological differences within denomination

Whereas denominational expectations were a minor source of stress, theological differences were stressful for over half of the ministers, with 25% rating it as very stressful, 18% as fairly stressful, 15% of some stress, 15% of little stress and 26% as not at all stressful.
The majority saw the action taken against Peter Cameron as the main focus of theological differences within the denomination. Underlying theological issues were seen as the divinity and work of Christ (specifically the resurrection and whether salvation was through Christ alone) and the authority of the bible. Related issues were seen as the ordination of women as a precursor, and theological education as a consequence, of theological issues raised by Cameron.

"The basic issue is whether the bible is the word of God. Women in ministry is a secondary issue."

Those who commented on the opposite sides in the Cameron dispute designated them as older liberals, versus younger fundamentalists, or evangelicals, with a possible age division at 50 years. The majority noted negative consequences for the denomination, for parishes and for individuals. At the denominational level, major concerns were about division and disrepute (19%):

"It was a crisis for the denomination. It was so public, I felt we were being smeared across the country."

"I felt the devil was working in the Church over division in the Church. It is ripping the Church to pieces and we are becoming a laughing stock."

"It causes division between those who ought to be in fellowship."

"The Church is torn apart."

"I see it as an internal haemorrhage."

These are highly emotive comments and were expressed by ministers on both sides of the Cameron debate.

At a parish level many deplored the confusion and negative spiritual consequences which can be summarised as "hindering the gospel" (20%):

"I see it as confusing the congregation and people are getting sidetracked."

At a personal level there were reports of insults, labelling and intolerance (15%):

"In presbytery I am labelled a fundamentalist and typecast."

"I can disagree with colleagues at Assembly but it has become personalised at presbytery level. Problems are largely with elders at presbytery, not ministers, because elders are reacting at an emotional level, dismayed by change, although one minister has polarised presbytery and stirs up trouble."
Other personal consequences were seen as fatigue and sadness at levels of stress in colleagues (6%). There was also a sense of nostalgia and longing for a Church of earlier times (3%):

"It is not the same Church as it was but I feel nostalgia for the Church as it was when I was a child. It was the same until 1977 but with union there was a tremendous change in the Church."

Several (11%) mentioned that they contemplated leaving the denomination, or ministry as a result of the conflict, including two Cameron supporters who reported that they thought about leaving but decided to remain. Those who stated that they were not affected by the Cameron controversy, either reported that it was not an issue in their parish (11%), or they firmly held to the position that was upheld at Assembly (8%).

Incongruence and stress measures

Where ministers agreed with the trend in denominational debates, or reported that they were not stressed by the debates, they were assumed to be congruent with denominational theology (16 ministers). Those who reported at least some stress over specific denominational issues (42 ministers) were categorised as incongruent. Note that this does not equate incongruence with holding minority views but rather it is taking on as a personal stressor some of the conflicts within the denomination at the time.

Incongruence at denominational level was related to perceived training deficits, feelings of inadequacy, and measures of burnout, anxiety and depression by means of the chi square statistic. None of the results reached statistical significance, but there was a trend for the incongruent group to score higher on depersonalisation (chi square 2.71, df=1, p=.10).

Summary

There were no consistent relationships between incongruence at different levels and outcomes and the few obtained relationships were relatively weak. Incongruence at parish level was related to grieving over lost relationships, presumably as parishioners moved because of theological differences. Incongruence at presbytery level was weakly related to feelings of inadequacy and this finding fits the perceived need for greater personal and spiritual support from presbytery. Incongruence at denominational level was weakly related to one measure of burnout, depersonalisation, indicating that those who were stressed by denominational conflicts tended to withdraw from working relationships.

The issues of enmeshment and being poorly equipped for ministry appear to have a stronger, more direct association with negative outcomes than the theme of incongruence.
SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: ROGUE DUMPERS

These are the unexpected, acute events that cause immediate stress and require coping strategies for management (see earlier comments on time pressures). It was hypothesised that those who were equipped for ministry, with a lack of enmeshment and reasonable congruence would be able to withstand better the stress of rogue dumpers which were assumed to occur for all ministers. In the interviews all ministers were able to point to an acute, stressful event that occurred within the previous 12 months, or an exacerbation of a chronic stressor.

Both general interview data and data on the stressful incident (129 documents) were examined for evidence of rogue dumpers and coping strategies related to those incidents (for a full treatment of the most stressful event in the past 12 months see Chapter 4).

Types of rogue dumpers and coping

Types of rogue dumpers with percentage frequencies based on 65 ministers are given below (several ministers noted two distinct types of dumpers but only those that were fully described were used):

- Conflicts, frustrations in ministry 28%
- Injury or illness in self or family 26%
- Sick parishioners, pressure for visits 17%
- Funerals for parish, community 14%
- Death in family or close members congregation 11%
- Financial issues in ministry 11%
- Other specific issues 6%

Coping responses and their relative use are also given below, together with illustrative comments. Multiple coping responses were coded.

Dig self out: organise, work hard, press on 52%

"If there is a funeral then there is only half a day's notice and I have to reorganise and reprioritise. Here people drop in for a chat and therefore I try to get sermons done by Tuesday, then it is less stressful if time later goes. I do the bulletins next, then organisation for meetings."

Delegate: train others, refer on, choose a team 26%

"I have organised others to do pastoral care work such as hospital visits."

Skimming: leave less urgent tasks, cut corners 25%

"I don't give priority to administration and it doesn't get done."

Shed weight: resign from competing tasks 14%
"When there was not enough time for involvement I had to get off committees and reorder my priorities."

Secondary: acceptance, waiting 14%

"After my intervention I left it to them. I took a watching brief. I try not to rush in and do things."

Focus on ministry: disengage from family, work focus 11%

"If I looked after the children in the afternoons (while wife was working) I would have no time for sermon preparation."

Manage conflict: discussion 11%

"I didn't demand that the assistant cease the practice but asked to discuss it and to compromise."

Rely on God: trust God, let go before God 9%

"Ministry is constantly giving to people in God's strength and the only option is to rely on God's strength."

In order to examine the relationship between type of rogue dumpers and coping, categories were collapsed into the following types: sickness and death (family, close friends); funerals (parish, community); parishioners' visits, needs; conflict in ministry, including financial. Coping was collapsed into: minimising work (skim, shed, delegate); dig self out (including focus on ministry); secondary (acceptance and relying on God) and managing conflict.

Results are given in the table below where all percentages are row percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rogue dumpers</th>
<th>Minimise</th>
<th>Dig self</th>
<th>Coping Secondary</th>
<th>Managing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sick/death</td>
<td>10 (35%)</td>
<td>13 (45%)</td>
<td>4 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>9 (50%)</td>
<td>8 (44%)</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish needs</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
<td>7 (37%)</td>
<td>3 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>11 (32%)</td>
<td>11 (32%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (18%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minimising and digging oneself out were the most commonly reported coping strategies, followed by secondary coping and managing. In responding to sickness or death in close family or friends, ministers were most likely to use hard work and organisation as coping strategies, while their use of other strategies was similar to overall trends. They were more likely to use minimisation (shedding work, skimming) as a response to parish funerals for which conflict management techniques would be inappropriate. In the face of conflicts they were slightly more likely to use conflict management, but still used minimising and digging self out to a large degree.

**Coping with rogue dumpers and stress outcomes**

The relationship between coping response to rogue dumpers and high scores on measures of burnout, anxiety and depression is given below, with criterion percentages (C%) for all ministers included for comparison.

**Table 50: PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCORES ON OUTCOME MEASURES BY COPING RESPONSE TO ROGUE DUMPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome measure</th>
<th>Minimise</th>
<th>Dig self</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Manage</th>
<th>C %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emot. exhaustion</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who used minimising and digging oneself out as coping strategies had similar proportions of high scorers on outcome measures to all ministers combined. Major differences were found between those who used secondary coping (N=14) and managing conflict (N=8). Those who used secondary coping tended to have fewer high scorers on outcome measures, while those who tried to manage conflicts by discussion and other direct intervention, tended to score higher on outcome measures. However, numbers in these groups were too small to apply chi square so the significance of these differences is unknown.

**Consequences**

As a result of rogue dumpers and ongoing stress in ministry, there are several possible outcomes. First, the minister may manage the stress and function well, with low levels of distress and high levels of well-being. Second, the minister may struggle on in parish work with high levels of distress and/or low levels of well-being. Third, the minister may leave parish ministry.
I have already shown that two-thirds of ministers have some clinical indications of stress-burnout, despite high levels of spiritual well-being. The majority appear to fit the second category: struggling with high levels of distress. How many had ever considered leaving parish ministry?

Half the ministers (52%) had considered leaving ministry, whether momentarily or with serious, more extended deliberation. Six ministers (9%) stated that they had considered it briefly but not for more than a few hours. Where more extended deliberation was given, the causes were reported to be parish difficulties (11%), family problems, particularly where the wife was having difficulties coping (9%), the Cameron trial (5%), exhaustion (5%), depression (3%) and spiritual issues (2%). Thus a further consequence of rogue dumpers and ongoing stress was serious consideration of leaving the ministry.

Fifteen months after the interviews were completed the status of those ministers was checked with respect to retirement, moves to another parish, leaving ministry (demission), taking up a chaplaincy position, or remaining in the same parish. Results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remaining in same parish</td>
<td>50 (77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved, in process of moving</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demitted</td>
<td>3 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To chaplaincy</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The small number of those who had left ministry for a secular occupation suggests that demission may be a 'last option' for stressed ministers, assuming that stress played some part in the decision to demit.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MINISTERS BY AGE**

The 65 ministers were divided into three age groups: younger ministers in their thirties (N=24); those in their middle years, the forties and fifties (N=30); and older ministers aged 60 and over (N=11). Age trends in some demographic variables were noted, then issues where there were no apparent age differences, then issues with age differences.

**Demographic trends**

Younger ministers tended to be more highly educated than older ministers with 96% of younger ministers, 63% of those in the middle years and 27% of older ministers holding a Bachelors' degree or higher.

Younger ministers were more likely to have studied theology at the evangelical Moore Theological College and/or the PTC (92%) compared with 53% of ministers of middle years and 18% of older ministers.
Size of current parish was also related to age. Younger ministers were more likely to work in small parishes of less than 80 members (38%) compared with those of middle years (13%), or older ministers (9%). Those of middle years (60%), or older ministers (54%) were more likely than younger ministers (46%) to work in medium sized parishes of 80-159 members. Older ministers (36%) were more likely to work in larger parishes of 160 members or more, compared with those of middle years (27%), or younger ministers (16%).

As would be expected, age was significantly correlated with years since ordination (r=.74, p<.01) but it was also correlated with average time spent in each parish (r=.29, p<.05), hence older ministers tended to stay longer in their parishes. Priority clusters were generally unrelated to age, although older ministers tended to place greater priority on the smooth running of the parish in terms of finances and religious rites than younger ministers (r=.39, p<.01).

**Similarities with age**

Overall, 38% of ministers commented that their ministry was a 'whole of life' endeavour and there were no significant differences by age.

Pressure of time was acknowledged by 78% of all ministers, and again there were no significant differences by age.

Across all age groups approximately two-thirds of ministers stated that their theological education failed to provide some of the skills they needed in ministry, with added stress as the result.

There were no significant differences between the three age groups on evaluations of relationships with colleagues, with opinion evenly divided between good and neutral or poor evaluations.

Approximately two-thirds of ministers commented that friendships with congregational members were good or satisfactory, with no significant differences by age.

There was a slight tendency for ministers of middle years to report that congregations valued their work (37%) compared with 17% of younger and 9% of older ministers but this difference was not statistically significant (chi square=4.61, df=3, p<.30).

Age was not significantly related to measures of congruence. At the parish level there was a slight but non-significant tendency for older ministers (90%) to express greater congruence than ministers of middle years (61%), or younger ministers (76%). At the denominational level all of the older ministers indicated congruence, compared with 70% of middle-aged ministers and 60% of younger ministers. At presbytery level 60% of older ministers appeared congruent compared with 47% of middle-aged ministers and 29% of younger ministers. Thus, there was a trend towards increasing congruence with age, but this was not sufficiently strong to be statistically significant.
There was a trend towards increasing satisfaction with spiritual practice with age. In younger ministers and those of middle years 65% and 70% respectively said they had difficulties with spiritual practice but only 37% of older ministers reported difficulties. However, this trend failed to reach statistical significance (chi square=2.91, df=3, p<.50).

**Differences with age**

Loneliness was reported to be a problem for about half of younger ministers (46%) and those of middle years (57%) but none of the older ministers reported difficulties with loneliness. This difference was statistically significant (chi square=10.67, df=3, p<.05).

There was a trend for older ministers to report health problems (100%) compared with those of middle years (76%) and younger ministers (77%) but numbers in some cells were too small to examine this trend by chi square analysis.

Those of middle years reported greater difficulty with obtaining adequate exercise (60%) and relaxation (45%) compared with younger ministers (30% and 41% respectively) and older ministers (10% and 14% respectively). Again, some cell sizes were too small for statistical analysis.

Self-acceptance was another area where age trends were suggested but numbers were too small for statistical analysis. Those of middle years reported greatest acceptance of their limitations and development of strengths (60%) compared with 25% of younger and 15% of older ministers. Yet both younger ministers and those of middle years (43%) were more likely to report feelings of inadequacy than older ministers (14%).

In responses to the personally stressful event, older ministers were more likely than younger ones to judge the event strongly to be a loss (r=.27, p<.05), to deny that God caused the event (r=.29, p<.05), and to attribute the outcome more strongly to others (r=.41, p<.01) rather than oneself (r=.42, p<.01). The most important coping response, categorised as discussion/ advice seeking, prayer/ seeking prayer and thinking/ planning/ acting, did not differ significantly across the three age groups (chi square=2.59, df=4). Age was not related to the type of stressful event reported, categorised as physical/material, versus ministry/relational (chi square=0.56, df=2).

**TYPOLOGIES DERIVED FROM INTERVIEW DATA**

**Fully furnished ministers**

From the above discussion it is clear that there were many distressed ministers and a small proportion with high levels of well-being and low levels of distress. It has been established that higher levels of distress were related to enmeshment and deficits in equipment for ministry but not to incongruence. The next step was to examine combined categories relating equipment and enmeshment to determine whether a single type of minister could be identified as being able to manage stress and withstand anxiety and burnout.
Two significant aspects of "equipped" were found to be: satisfied with training, or self-taught (reported by 19 ministers); and accepting of strengths and limitations (20 ministers). Conversely, aspects of "unequipped" were: reporting deficits in training (N=33); and problems in accepting limitations (N=29). Thus, the concept of the equipped minister was defined as having properties of satisfaction with training and/or self-acceptance but neither deficits nor problems (N=14). Similarly the unequipped minister was defined as having deficits and/or problems but neither satisfied with training, nor self-accepting (N=30). The categories of 'equipped' and 'unequipped' did not overlap.

Significant aspects of enmeshment were found to be having a whole of life orientation to ministry (N=25), reporting problems with spiritual practice (N=18) and having problems with friendships due to ministry - being guarded or perceiving the role to be a barrier to friendships (N=32). Significant aspects of non-enmeshment were not having a whole of life orientation to ministry (N=40), being satisfied with personal spiritual practice (N=20), having no problems with friendships (N=33) and being able to organise work in the face of time pressure (N=14). Those who exhibited at least two of the relevant characteristics of each type were defined as "enmeshed" (N=20) and "not-enmeshed" (N=31) respectively. These categories did not overlap.

The two concepts of equipment and non-enmeshment were combined into the single category of "fully furnished minister." The term is derived from a reference to the Christian ideal as being "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy: 3:17 - Authorised/King James Bible). Fully furnished ministers were defined as being either equipped, or not-enmeshed, or both (N=25) while unfurnished ministers were defined as being either enmeshed, or not-equipped, or both (N=19). A further group that had characteristics of the fully-furnished and unfurnished groups was defined as an intermediate category (N=18). This intermediate category comprised four ministers who were enmeshed and equipped and fourteen ministers who were not enmeshed and not-equipped. Since the enmeshed and equipped group was so small it was decided to combine it with the other mixed group to form a larger group which shared some of the characteristics of the fully furnished and some of the unfurnished ministers.

Fully furnished ministers and stress

To test the hypothesis that fully furnished ministers manage stress and hence score low on stress measures but unfurnished ministers fail to manage stress and hence score higher on stress measures, chi square comparisons were made between their scores on burnout, anxiety and depression, dichotomised at the mean. Percentages of high scorers in each group are tabulated below.
Table 51: PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCORERS ON OUTCOME MEASURES FOR FULLY FURNISHED, UNFURNISHED AND MIXED GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome measure</th>
<th>Unfurnished</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Fully furnished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emot. exhaustion</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all cases the proportion of high scorers is greatest in the unfurnished group and the fully furnished ministers have the lowest proportion of high scorers except for depression. The unfurnished and fully furnished groups were compared by the chi square statistic. Differences in anxiety (chi square 12.01, df=1, p<.001), depersonalisation (chi square 3.88, df=1, p<.05) and emotional exhaustion (chi square 3.49, df=1, p<.10) were statistically significant but differences in depression failed to reach statistical significance at the .10 level.

Fully furnished and unfurnished ministers' scores on religious well being were compared. Fully furnished ministers tended to score higher (72% in high group) than unfurnished ministers (50% in high group) but the difference was not statistically significant. There was also a slight but non-significant tendency for the fully furnished ministers to score higher on personal accomplishment (67% and 46% respectively), collaborative problem-solving (78% and 54%), deferring problem-solving (44% and 33%), experience of God in prayer (56% and 41%) and intrinsic religious commitment (67% and 54% respectively).

Thus, it can be concluded from these preliminary analyses that the fully furnished ministers were better able to manage stress and withstand ongoing anxiety and burnout than unfurnished ministers. That is, ministers who were satisfied with their training for ministry and/or reported self-acceptance and/or resisted identifying self with ministry were functioning better according to outcome measures than ministers who reported being poorly equipped in terms of training or self-acceptance, or who identified themselves with ministry.

Relationships between 'furnished' group and other variables

According to chi square tests the fully furnished group was lower than the other groups on emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and trait anxiety. Do these results hold with analysis of variance using continuous data? Are there significant differences between the groups on other measures?

One way analysis of variance, followed by the Newman-Keuls test, was used to assess differences according to the 'furnished' group on affect and burnout measures. Scores on
depersonalisation were transformed by taking the square root in order to equalise group variances before performing the analysis. On emotional exhaustion the fully furnished ministers (mean=19.00) scored lower than the unfurnished ministers but at a level that just failed to reach statistical significance (mean=25.42) with F(2,57)=2.969, p=.059 while on transformed depersonalisation the mixed group (mean=1.85) scored lower than the unfurnished group but again at a significance level that just failed to reach statistical significance (mean=2.55) with F(2,57)=3.007, p=.057. Note that the mean of the fully furnished ministers on transformed depersonalisation was also low at 1.84. The three groups did not differ significantly on personal accomplishment, depression or trait anxiety.

Chi square analysis of furnished group by theological college (Moore or PTC versus other) failed to find any significant difference (chi square=1.08, df=2, p=.50) but the groups differed on qualifications (chi square=7.15, df=2, p<.05). Overall, 69% of ministers had gained a bachelor's degree or higher but 52% of the fully furnished group, 61% of the mixed group and 88% of the unfurnished group had gained a degree. Thus the fully furnished group were less likely to have achieved a university qualification than the other groups. This educational difference did not appear to be related to age, since the three groups did not differ significantly in age (chi square=7.663, df=4, p=.10).

The three groups did not differ on dispositional religious measures of problem-solving, commitment, prayer and spiritual well-being, nor did they differ on appraisals in the personally stressful situation. On secular coping they differed on the active scale: fully furnished ministers (mean=12.05) scored significantly higher than the unfurnished (mean=10.13) and mixed groups (mean=10.22) with F(2,57)=3.860, p=.027. On the religious coping strategy of distraction/denial, the fully furnished group (mean=2.67) scored significantly lower than the mixed group (mean=3.65) with F(2,58)=3.157, p=.050. On priorities for ministry the unfurnished group (mean=10.75) scored significantly lower than the fully furnished (mean=12.32) and mixed (mean=12.44) groups on delegation in parish leadership with F(2,58)=6.81, p=.002. The unfurnished group reported working for significantly longer hours (mean=72.38) than the mixed group (mean=62.25), with the fully furnished group reporting a mean of 66.42 hours (F(2,58)=3.083, p=.05).

Thus, in addition to lower burnout scores in comparison with the unfurnished group, the fully furnished ministers tended to have lower theological qualifications. They also tended to use more active secular coping and to give a higher priority to delegating parish leadership to others but did not differ on other measures of coping and priorities. The hours they worked were moderate, neither as high as the unfurnished group nor as low as the mixed group. It is interesting that the groups could not be differentiated on the basis of a range of dispositional and coping measures. In other words, the types of measures normally used in studies of stress and coping with religious samples did not differentiate the groups which emerged from the grounded theory analysis.

**Locus of coping continuum**

As I examined processes of coping in the three groups of ministers (for details see
discussion in Chapter 8) I became aware that they also differed in their main source of coping. That is, another broad classification is whether ministers have achieved or are actively seeking (with at least partial success) an inner sense of integrity, based on their spiritual state, or competence, or whether they lack a sense of internal integrity. Ministers in the latter group may be supported externally, by the approval of others, or may be desperately seeking integrity in their work but with a strong sense of failure.

The following table summarises the effects of locus of coping on outcome measures for the three types of ministers, as well as all ministers combined. 'Internals' were defined as those ministers who fulfilled at least two of the following: gave high priority to spiritual practice, were actively seeking personal integration, used self-analysis as a basis for personal change and revealed a sense of competence based on their training or skills. 'Externals' were defined as ministers who fulfilled at least two of the following: reported struggling without a sense of improvement in their spiritual practice, depended on congregational support and encouragement, or derived their legitimacy from their professional specialisation (particularly denominational administration). This classification resulted in a total of 32 'internal' ministers and 33 'external' ministers.
### Table 52: OUTCOME MEASURES BY TYPE AND SOURCE OF COPING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Internal source</th>
<th></th>
<th>External source</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>s.d.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>s. d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>traita</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fully furn.</td>
<td>34.67</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>40.17</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>36.14</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>11.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfurnished</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>47.17</td>
<td>11.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combined</td>
<td>35.90</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>43.63</td>
<td>10.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bdi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fully furn.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>8.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfurnished</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>8.83</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combined</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fully furn.</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>25.50</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>21.71</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>25.40</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfurnished</td>
<td>21.83</td>
<td>10.61</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combined</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>8.96</td>
<td>26.38</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>depers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fully furn.</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfurnished</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>8.42</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combined</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pers.acc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fully furn.</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>34.33</td>
<td>5.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>32.29</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfurnished</td>
<td>33.25</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>combined</td>
<td>34.32</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>5.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6: OUTCOME MEASURES BY TYPE AND SOURCE OF COPING

- TRAIT A
- DEPERS
- EMEX
- PERS, ACC
- BDI
Since the outcome measures were inter-correlated I used multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) to establish whether there were multivariate effects for group, type and group by type interaction before assessing univariate effects. When cases with missing data were deleted, the sample size was 60: there were 30 cases in each locus of coping type, 18 cases in each of groups 1 (fully furnished) and 2 (mixed) and 24 cases in group 3 (unfurnished). Homogeneity of the covariance matrices was improved by taking square root transformations of depression and depersonalisation. In addition, a linear transformation was performed on personal accomplishment by subtracting scores from 100 in order that on all measures high scores would indicate increased distress. Since cell sizes were disproportionate, a factorial MANOVA was run on SPSS using unique sum of squares decomposition, as recommended by Stevens (1986).

Multivariate tests for the effect of type were statistically significant: the Pillais-Bartlett trace yielded $F(5,50)=2.435$, $p=.047$. Significant univariate effects were obtained for emotional exhaustion ($F(1,54)=8.780$, $p=.005$) and trait anxiety ($F(1,54)=7.618$, $p=.008$). That is, externals scored significantly higher than internals on emotional exhaustion and trait anxiety.

Multivariate tests for the effect of group failed to reach statistical significance: the Pillais-Bartlett trace yielded $F(10,102)=1.310$, $p=.235$. None of the univariate $F$ tests reached statistical significance at $p<.05$. That is, the fully furnished, mixed and unfurnished groups did not differ on measures of stress-burnout.

Multivariate tests of the group by type interaction were non-significant: for example the Pillais-Bartlett trace yielded an $F$ value $(10,102)$ of .460, $p=.912$. None of the univariate $F$-tests for the group by type effect was significant at $p<.05$. This is not surprising since the group effect was insignificant and indicates that the furnished continuum did not alter the effect of internal-external type on stress-burnout measures.

In summary, the statistical analyses show that locus of coping type is a major predictor of emotional exhaustion and trait anxiety. However, group allocation (as fully furnished, mixed or unfurnished) is not a significant predictor and there is no interaction between type and group. Another way of expressing these results is that, irrespective of 'furnished' type, ministers having an internal source of coping scored at significantly lower levels on anxiety and emotional exhaustion.

Is the 'furnished' continuum irrelevant because it is not supported statistically? There are several reasons why the 'furnished' typology should be investigated further and not abandoned. First, it is harder to establish clear results when small numbers of subjects are divided into three groups. When group sizes are less than 20, large effects are harder to detect at the same alpha level than small effects in large samples because of the problem of power (Stevens, 1986). Second, the end points of the continuum represent a combination of identified risk factors relating to training, spiritual equipping and enmeshment and the types which summarise these effects are not as clearly defined as the 'locus of coping' type. In addition, the 'furnished' typology includes a mixed group which displays characteristics of both end points and thus makes clear statistical differences between groups less likely. The 'furnished' type has been grounded against
more liberal, univariate statistics. Its failure as a significant predictor in more conservative multivariate analyses indicates the need for further clarification of the typology with larger sample sizes and possibly using regression analyses to define more precisely the components of each contrasting pole. At present, the 'furnished' typology should be accepted provisionally, as having support from weaker statistical methods which are appropriate for the exploratory analyses I was conducting.

In the light of these comments, the overall findings suggest that two dimensions are required to account for stress and burnout in ministers: 'furnishing' based on equipping and enmeshment themes; and source of coping. Coping that is based on internal sources, such as charismatic experiences of God, or firm personal faith, or sense of competence in areas where they exert control, draws on stable resources for positive action. External resources, such as an encouraging congregation, or peer approval, may be withdrawn and hence are less reliable buttresses for coping. The group most vulnerable to crisis was the external unfurnished subtype because they lacked an inner core of skills or spiritual strength and also lacked support from external sources. Their narrowed focus, or enmeshment in ministry was the product of disappointment with themselves and others.

Do the internal and external coping groups differ on religious dispositions or coping? From a series of t-tests internals scored significantly higher than externals (p<.05) on experience of God in prayer (means 33.87 and 30.37 respectively), religious well-being (means 55.98 and 53.09), existential well-being (means 52.68 and 48.28); use of religious planning or seeking guidance from God, or the bible (means 9.43 and 8.44) and use of secondary interpretation or seeking meaning from God (means 4.77 and 4.09 respectively).

There were no differences between internals and externals on Presbyterian beliefs, locus of control, beliefs about God's control, ministry priorities, or perception of God in the personally stressful event. However, internals were more likely to see God as controlling the event than externals who saw more of a God-human partnership (chi square=3.56, df=1, p=.05).

**SUMMARY**

Ministers carry out their pastoral duties under stress with one-third moderately stressed and two-thirds showing some signs of clinical stress. Stress is not directly related to age, demographic features of the parish, measures of religiousness or Calvinist beliefs. It is not related to role conflict, defined as discrepancies between priorities and skills. It is not related to role conflict in the sense of discrepancies between the minister's expectations and those of others at parish or presbytery level (although there is a weak relationship with depersonalisation and role conflict at denominational level). It is not related to role conflict in the sense of theological differences with others in the parish, nor is stress directly related to training in an evangelical, or non-evangelical theological college.

Stress was clearly related to a sense of competence as a parish minister. From individual
ratings of stressors, the highest sources were a sense of time pressure and role expectations of others in the parish. Spiritual stressors were central: they were not directly related to stress ratings but correlated with all other sets of stressors.

From a grounded theory approach, the best predictor of stress was external locus of coping where the minister had failed to achieve (or partially achieve) an inner sense of integration based on competence or spiritual practice and instead relied on support from others. Another dimension which has promise as a predictor of ministry stress was the furnished continuum: ministers were unlikely to be stressed if they were equipped by their training and acceptance of personal limits but not enmeshed by ministry. Enmeshment involved having a 'whole of life' orientation to ministry, difficulties with friendships and dissatisfaction with personal spiritual practice.

Ministers try to cope with stress by two broad strategies. First, they focus on their work, working hard, organising themselves to do more in less time. Second, they focus selectively on certain tasks and shed others by declining to be involved or delegating. The least stressed ministers of the fully furnished type work moderate hours, delegate leadership, use active secular coping and use less religious denial than the unfurnished group. Yet even the highly stressed ministers tend to persevere in their work and few move to non-parish duties or leave ministry.
Chapter Six

STRESS AND STRESSORS

In this chapter I discuss the ministers and theological students in terms of the stress-coping process, examining dispositions (including general aspirations and expectations), specific sources of stress, appraisals, coping strategies and outcomes. In the past, ministry stress has been described with reference to possible sources (Pryor, 1982), or explained in terms of role conflict and theological differences from denominational norms (Blaikie, 1979; Fullerton, 1988). This chapter considers the usefulness of such sociological explanations and alternative explanations based on stress-coping theory. In other words, to what extent can an examination of dispositions, attributions and coping strategies provide a coherent explanation of stress and burnout in ministers?

DISPOSITIONS OF MINISTERS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

The ministers were aged in their middle years (around 45), on average, married and had children living at home. Students, on average, were about ten years younger and were also likely to be married. In these demographic features the ministers were very similar to the non-Catholic Australian clergy studied by the Christian Research Association (Hughes, 1989).

Religiousness

I expected ministers and theological students would score high on measures of religiousness and this was confirmed: they obtained very high scores on intrinsic religious commitment, suggesting that their faith was central in their lives and low scores on religion used for personal, or social ends. Spiritual well-being and particularly religious well-being was very high. Religious problem-solving was characterised by collaborative and then deferring styles. This is consistent with Pargament et al's (1988) findings that intrinsic orientation correlated more strongly with the collaborative, than the deferring scale. Pargament et al (1988, p.92) also suggested "the deferring style may be related to religious expressions tied to traditional structures and dogma, and the belief that God will respond to personal needs." The lower scores of Presbyterian ministers and students on the deferring scale indicate a greater reliance upon the competence-related collaborative style but their deferring scores were higher than those of a US congregational sample, possibly indicating some influence of traditional doctrines of God's sovereignty.

Their religiousness was only weakly based on direct experiences of God. Measures of experience of God in prayer were relatively low and only one quarter of the ministers and theological students reported awareness of God's presence in their immediate response, with less than one half aware of God's presence during subsequent responses to their most stressful event. Instead, awareness of God was largely cognitively based (by faith, knowledge, reflections upon God). This is consistent with a traditional
Presbyterian emphasis on faith and Scriptures as the basis for Christian life, rather than charismatic, or contemplative experiences.

Several important consequences flow from a cognitively-based relationship with God. First, priority is given to scholarship (especially Bible-based studies) and rational exposition in preaching. Second, the authority of the minister derives largely from their skill in preaching. Third, the minister lacks the immediacy of an emotional experience of God, because God is mediated through cognition. The implications of these consequences for the minister personally and for a secularised congregation will be taken up more fully in the next chapter. At this point it is sufficient to note that the absence of a contemplative tradition makes it less likely for ministers to use meditation for stress alleviation.

**Locus of Control**

Locus of control is a non-religious disposition, indicating the extent to which people anticipate reinforcement from internal or external sources. Based on the *Religious Revision Locus of Control Scale* (Gabbard et al, 1986), ministers scored slightly more external than evangelical US congregations (on average, half a standard deviation above the US mean, having a mean of 12.55 and standard deviation 4.00) and the theological students were even more external (on average, two thirds of a standard deviation above the US mean, having a mean of 13.17, standard deviation 3.54).

An interesting finding with respect to locus of control was the absence of any significant correlations with ministers’ and theological students’ measures apart from a moderate association between external LOC and trait anxiety in ministers (r=.356, p<.01). There was no association between LOC and other measures of stress-burnout, other religious dispositions or beliefs, attributions and coping scale scores. This is surprising, given the early literature on stress and LOC, summarised by Lefcourt (1983) who reported that in addition to greater trait anxiety, externals also demonstrated greater depression in negative life events, made less use of social supports, used fewer problem-solving coping strategies and more emotion-directed ones, were more motivated in situations attributed to chance and benefited more from structured therapy than internals. These well-established relationships suggest that LOC should be correlated positively with some appraisals, coping strategies and other outcome measures within a process stress model.

Findings about LOC in religious samples are inconsistent. Pargament et al (1982) found no direct relationship between locus of control, measured as control by God, chance, self and others and competence. Jackson and Coursey (1988) attempted to distinguish between LOC and belief in God’s control by using Rotter’s original scale as well as the *God as a Causal Agent Scale*. They found that high scores on God’s control beliefs were related to internal LOC; internal LOC, but not God’s control beliefs, predicted coping skills and purpose of life; and both predicted intrinsic commitment. The latter study, in particular, raises the question of whether the lack of relationship between LOC and other measures in this study of Presbyterian ministers and theological students is the result of measurement problems (especially using the religious-revision of Rotter’s scale), or are there theoretical reasons?
The religious revision of the scale forces respondents who believe that spiritual forces determine or play an important part in events, to answer in an external direction on seven of the 23 items that comprise the scale. Other items contributing to an external score include items contrasting one's own effort with control by others, or accidental happenings in personal and global situations. An external score, one exceeding 11 according to normative data (Gabbard et al, 1986), would indicate a belief in spiritual control as well as a choice of luck, or others over self as causes across a range of situations. Hence high scores would reflect externality if belief in control by God, or spiritual forces is a unitary belief and equivalent to other expressions of external locus of control.

Pargament et al (1982) found inconsistent relationships between internal LOC and using external explanations of control by God, others and chance, suggesting that external sources were not homogeneous. In addition, Jackson and Coursey (1988, p.408) concluded that "God control is not just one form of an external locus of control; rather it is a complex belief." Hence, my failure to obtain significant correlations between LOC and other measures may be the result of simplistic assumptions about the equivalence of belief in God's control and an external LOC in religious samples. If belief in God's control is complex, can some of the dimensions be identified? I attempted to address this issue in a preliminary way through measures of beliefs related to the Westminster Confession of Faith and attributional statements related to God's control in specific situations.

Control beliefs

I found it very difficult to measure belief in such a complex theological doctrine as God's sovereignty within a Calvinistic framework. It was impossible to reduce Confessional statements to propositions containing a single idea. In many items a qualifying phrase was needed to reflect the meaning of the original statement, making the item theologically accurate. For example:

"Since human nature has been corrupted as a result of the fall, it is impossible for unbelievers to do anything that is good or praiseworthy."

"Those who will not receive salvation are condemned for their sins which God allows and controls but does not will."

Although this was a limitation in my methodology because it made the belief statements complex and hence more difficult to comprehend, I think the large number of items enabled me to develop a small set of "strong" measures of Presbyterian and Control Beliefs.

I expected, correctly, that ministers would score higher than other groups on these scales and have lower score variances because the Confession forms the basis of Presbyterian doctrine studied in denominational theological colleges and all ministers and elders have affirmed that they "own and accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, read in the light of the Declaratory Statement" (Jell, 1980, pp.44, 46). But are ministers' high scores the
result of theological training, public affirmation of the Confession, or some other reason? Elders publicly affirm the Confession at their ordination but do not make a detailed study of it at theological college. Their scores on control beliefs did not differ from congregational members', suggesting that public affirmation of the Confession does not necessarily imply high agreement with its articles. Presbyterian theological students study the Confession in the last two years of their courses, so the majority would have been responding to the beliefs questions on the basis of some formal learning. Yet they scored lower than congregational members and did not differ from Baptist theological students who do not study the Westminster Confession in detail. Hence, formal training in itself does not appear to explain the ministers' high scores. In sum, the process of institutional socialisation of ministers' beliefs appears complex and requires further research.

It is important to recall that the Control Beliefs Scale reflected assent to God's sovereignty in the area of salvation. Those who scored high were agreeing that humans could not control their own salvation which is provided by God to the elect, who are then kept in the state of salvation by God. In contrast the Presbyterian Beliefs Scale was measuring core Presbyterian beliefs about human sinfulness and God's loving holiness, according to factor analysis. That is, because of its factor structure and internal consistency, the Presbyterian Beliefs Scale appears to be a strong measure of central Calvinist beliefs. As expected on the basis of institutional socialisation, ministers scored highest on these Calvinist beliefs, followed by congregational members who were middle aged, on average, and had a long association with the Presbyterian denomination. The low scores of theological students raise questions about the objectives and effectiveness of theological training for inculcating distinctive Presbyterian beliefs.

In the congregational sample control beliefs and Presbyterian beliefs were correlated with core religious measures of intrinsic commitment together with collaborative and deferring problem-solving. It seems that their beliefs were integrated with other aspects of personal religiousness. On the other hand, for ministers these beliefs were largely uncorrelated with other aspects of religiousness and for theological students those with strongest religious commitment scored lowest on Presbyterian beliefs. Ministers, then, assented to a theology of God's control but it had little direct influence on their lives. Theological students neither assented to a theology of God's control in their response to belief statements nor did these beliefs impinge upon their general religiousness or everyday lives.

Aspirations, ideals and expectations

Responses to questions about reasons for being in ministry and the meaning of ministry provide some insight into the aspirations and ideals of the ministers. The most frequently mentioned 'in order to' motive was service. This had two components: carrying out God's purposes and helping others in the congregation. Two stages were implied in their answers. First, they desired to preach, teach and promote the gospel. Second, this ideally resulted in spiritual changes - people being converted, or growing in their faith. The typical 'because' motive was a sense of God's call, although a substantial minority mentioned that personal satisfaction or fulfilment also motivated their work. As
the minister aged, the goal of service increased in importance but a sense of personal fulfillment declined.

For example, a young minister stated:

"I went into ministry because people said I had gifts in this area and should use them. The gifts are in leading, teaching and shepherding. My desire is to see people grow in their faith so they can bring others in. The Church is the crucial part of God's strategy for reaching the world and the best talents and energy should be brought to bear there. I also love the work, enjoy it and find it fulfilling."

Older ministers mentioned service but also some frustrations:

"That feeling of call is always with me. I belong to the Lord full-time. At times I am frustrated but only momentarily wish I were elsewhere."

"So I can offer pastoral ministry to people and teach. I enjoy it, at times feel penned in and cooped up, especially when others are enjoying their Saturdays and I can't get a sermon to go."

There is enthusiasm and idealism in the young minister's comments; duty in response to God's call in the older ministers. The young minister who made the first comment was in a busy, growing parish. The older minister, aged in his late fifties, pastored three centres in a rural parish, each comprising only two to eight families. The other older minister, also in his late fifties and pastoring a rural parish, commented on having an elderly congregation and experiencing great difficulty attracting or keeping young families. The older ministers were very aware of parish needs but were also aware they lacked the skills or energy to meet all the needs. Since they did not see rewards from their work (numbers increasing, commendations, young people seeking theological training for ministry) they focused on service rather than personal fulfillment. Rees and Francis (1991) found an interaction between age and heavy ministry responsibilities in predicting psychological problems and suggested that clergy responsible for multiple parishes experience burnout around the age of 60.

Comments about ministry as a career versus a vocation also indicate ministers' aspirations. Almost all ministers appeared to accept the lack of a formal career path within the denomination and many emphasized service as their goal. Thus the majority overtly rejected the goals of status and power through organizational hierarchies.

Success was defined in different ways. A small number of ministers, commenting on the 'informal' career path, said that moving from small, rural parishes to large urban parishes with responsibility for staff indicated success. At a different level, in comments on frustrating aspects of ministry, 29% mentioned lack of change in people despite faithful ministry as the greatest frustration and 19% mentioned unchristian conduct. The desired changes were towards spiritual awareness, responsiveness to the minister's ideas and relationships based on spiritual principles. Some behaviours that were specified as
illustrations of spiritual change were: people being converted; young people choosing to study for the ministry; attendance at bible studies; dramatic changes in lifestyle such as an alcoholic drying out; parishioners bringing others into the church; regular attendance by communicant members; change in attitude from seeing a function as a fund-raiser to seeing it as outreach; people being dependable in carrying out voluntary tasks; willingness to take risks, spend money; concerned, tolerant relationships between parishioners; people dying with hope; seeing young people attend, make a Christian marriage and baptise their children.

It is also of interest that spiritual change, which three-quarters stated to be the most rewarding aspect of parish ministry, was defined at the individual level: only one minister commented on transformation of a church community as most rewarding. Thus success is perceived largely in terms of spiritual change within individual congregational members. Hughes (1989) similarly found clergy thought of ministry success in terms of people being more devoted to God and caring for others rather than conversions, church attendance or appreciation of their work.

If individual spiritual change, as distinct from congregational harmony, is the standard for success, then it would be very difficult for a minister to be confident of having a successful ministry. Spiritual change itself is private, although it may be demonstrated by changes in behaviour, and largely inaccessible to view by the minister who would see only a small sample of congregational members' behaviour. In addition, there is no external reference group to validate the success. Colleagues would not be in a position to evaluate the spiritual change of a particular minister's congregation. In theory, elders share pastoral oversight of a congregation but according to a number of ministers, many are not equipped for spiritual leadership and only desire to have an administrative role. The session may theoretically provide another reference group to validate success, but in practice may be unable or unwilling to discern spiritual changes within the congregation. In other words, the minister alone is attempting to make causal attributions about hard to detect changes in congregational members, in order to validate his ministry. This leaves plenty of room for bias and doubt.

Another psychological problem with using spiritual change as the measure of success is that it cannot be used to enhance the minister's self-esteem. By definition, a spiritual change is produced by the Holy Spirit, although the minister may be a human agent for such change. Thus the minister cannot claim credit for spiritual change. At most, the minister may conclude that he or she has been a faithful servant of God, but here the criterion for self-approval moves from outward manifestations of spiritual change in others, to an evaluation of inner spiritual processes, such as faithfulness, in the self.

Spiritual change is a slow process and so rewarding feedback is delayed or may not appear before a minister leaves the parish. If it is detected by the minister, it can only remain a private sense of reward since ministers felt it was not appropriate to talk openly of the conversion or spiritual development of parishioners. Hence, the most important indicator of success in ministry is likely to be hard to detect, delayed, logically independent of the minister's self-esteem and private in the sense of being privately apprehended and then privately retained.
Consequently, it is impossible for Presbyterian ministers to demonstrate their success. They have rejected definitions of measurable success such as power within the denomination, congregational size or smooth parish organisation. Instead, the yardstick of individual spiritual change requires personal judgements and private beliefs. It is another example of secularisation, with denominational authority to define ministry success replaced by privatised beliefs. Psychologically it feeds into lowered self-esteem.

How is the global aim of spiritual change in parishioners translated into specific goals for ministry? Factor analysis of ministers' ratings also confirmed that spiritual leadership (including preaching) and evangelism were highest priorities, with pastoral concerns, administration and wider social issues of descending importance. In rating their priorities for ministry, the ministers were also indicating their personal ideals and aspirations. Fullerton concluded that:

"Generally, ministers spend the greatest proportion of their time and energy performing those roles they believe to be most important, at which they consider themselves to be most effective and from which they receive the greatest satisfaction" (1988, p.273).

How real is this for my sample?

A summary comparison is given in Table 53 below. Preaching has remained a high priority: it is consistently ranked first or second by Presbyterian ministers in Blaikie's study (1979) and Fullerton's study (1988). However, evangelism has increased in importance; it was ranked second in my study and fifth by Blaikie's and Fullerton's samples. Areas of social justice and administration have remained consistently as low priorities. In pastoral areas, while being caring or counselling has remained a high priority, visiting the sick has decreased in priority since Fullerton's study. These trends must be viewed cautiously since slightly different items and methods were used in each study.

In my study there were no major differences in priorities with age, apart from the emphasis by older ministers on the smooth running of the parish. Hence there is no evidence of developmental trends, but in the light of data from similar studies in the past there is evidence of a gradual historical change in ministry goals.
Table 53: IMPORTANCE OF MINISTRY ROLES AND TASKS: MY RESULTS COMPARED WITH BLAIKIE AND FULLERTON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Blaikie</th>
<th>Fullerton</th>
<th>Current study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Preacher &amp; worship leader (equal rank)</td>
<td>Spiritual leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(includes preaching)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Preacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Priest</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Parish leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Educator</td>
<td>Visitor</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
<td>Evangelist</td>
<td>Smooth running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(includes priest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Scholar</td>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Organiser</td>
<td>Scholar</td>
<td>Social reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Social reform</td>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Social reform</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do clergy expectations fit with expectations of their congregations? For over two-thirds of ministers, differences in expectations over the minister's role were of some significance as a stressor. Two major themes were noted. Parishioners expected the minister to conduct a traditional Presbyterian ministry involving extensive parish visiting, wearing of robes and unchanged forms of worship. Second, parishioners expected the minister to fulfil their extensive demands for pastoral attention. On the other hand, the majority of ministers gave priority to preaching, their own spiritual development, evangelism and encouraging members to use their gifts; visiting was in the lower half of their priorities. Thus, they were often doing things that the congregation did not desire and these activities took up time so that the minister could not also give as much individual pastoral attention as some of the flock desired.

Note that these comments were based on the ministers' observations of their parishioners' expectations. These observations of parishioners' expectations can be partly tested against data from a 1991 survey of Australian congregations (Kaldor et al,
Australian Presbyterians commented that they preferred worship leaders to wear robes (37%) or formal clothing such as suits (43%); 73% found hymn books and traditional church music most helpful; 64% chose 'educator' (teaching about the faith) and 46% chose 'pastor' (visiting, counselling and helping) as the two most important roles carried out by the minister; 15% described their leadership as 'bold, strong leaders who are clearly in charge' and 41% as 'leadership that inspires people to take action' (Kaldor et al, 1995, pp.46-7).

The Australian respondents in Kaldor's study may differ in some ways from my NSW sample, so their comments must be taken as a limited guide to the expectations of NSW parishioners. It would appear that congregations prefer traditional elements in worship, such as formal clothes and traditional music. They see the minister primarily as an educator and pastoral visitor-counsellor, one who inspires others to act rather than taking full control (although the latter perception does not imply that it is a preferred leadership style). From this, there is support for the claim that NSW congregations desire a traditional Presbyterian ministry but no evidence about whether they would also prefer a minister to inspire and encourage them to be active within the church.

In the light of the above, there is likely to be real (as well as perceived) conflict in expectations between parishioners who desire 'traditional' religion and ministers who want to offer a spiritually-based teaching ministry that may involve radical changes in forms of service and ministry roles. So it is interesting that theological differences between congregational members and between the minister and congregation were not seen as major sources of conflict. This suggests that differing expectations have not arisen primarily from doctrinal conflicts but from broader cultural differences. Evidence that tends to support this view are findings from Kaldor et al (1995) that when asked to select two traditions that were most influential in their faith journey, Australian Presbyterians were most likely to select their denominational tradition (46%), evangelical tradition (36%) and reformed tradition (35%). That is, the traditional teachings of their denomination were more significant than specific evangelical, or reformed theologies.

Expectations at presbytery and denominational levels were not sources of difficulty for the majority of ministers, although a minority were stressed by theological differences at presbytery level and over half were stressed by theological differences at state level. It appears that while theological division was sharp in some presbyteries and at the 1993 State Assembly because of the Peter Cameron 'heresy trial', it was more diffuse at parish level. At church courts there are equal numbers of ministers and elders under the parity rule (Jell, 1980), hence theological debate is informed by specialist knowledge on the part of at least half the participants. The effects of theological division were felt at the denominational level, with concerns about disrepute and further splits in the denomination; at the parish level, with concerns about hindering the gospel; and at the individual level where some experienced personal insult.

In summary, ministers translated the ideal of personal spiritual change within congregational members into specific goals of spiritual development in themselves, preaching and evangelism. Fullerton (1988) argued that effort depends upon the importance of ministry goals, resulting satisfaction and perceived effectiveness in
reaching them. Yet the picture I have of Presbyterian ministers today is of persistent effort despite problems in all three areas. It is dutiful effort without consequent rewards and so appears to be stressful for ministers having an external locus of coping. I have already argued that the overall goal of spiritual change cannot provide a strong, unambiguous sense of fulfilment and satisfaction. Resulting doubts and frustrations are stressful. The three specific goals of personal spiritual development, preaching and evangelism are undoubtedly important for ministers but their importance is not shared by congregational members who desire a more traditional ministry. This incongruence is stressful, particularly for ministers with an external locus of coping. Finally, skills in evangelism, preaching and personal spiritual practice have only low to moderate correlations (less than .5) with ministers' priorities in these three areas, indicating low perceived effectiveness in reaching these goals. Ministers' striving is not rewarded by a sense of effectiveness in key areas and so contributes to stress.

Theological training

Here I want to examine the extent to which theological training shapes or reinforces dispositions in ministers. Theological training begins with the candidate applying to presbytery which must assess the candidate's 'general health, maturity and suitability for training' (The Code, 1995, s7.01). If the candidate is deemed suitable the person comes under the authority of the Theological Education Committee concerning progress in academic matters but remains under jurisdiction of presbytery. Presbyteries are charged with reviewing candidates for ministry annually and for conducting trials for licence. There are three aspects to the trials: the conduct of a worship service; an oral examination on doctrine, practice and procedure; and a discussion with presbytery on the aims and methods of Christian ministry. After the candidate has completed all academic work the presbytery may then licence the candidate for preaching. The candidate remains under the authority of the licensing presbytery until transferred to another presbytery, such as through an appointment to a vacant pastoral charge. Presbytery has ongoing authority over candidates throughout the period from application to appointment to ministry and it is presbytery, not staff of the theological college, which ultimately tests the candidate's doctrine, gifts and calling.

Several factors are conducive to theological conservatism in Presbyterian ministers. The confessional basis of the Presbyterian Church of Australia sets limits to deviations from doctrine established in 1901. The presbytery system also has a conservative influence over doctrine, aspirations and expectations. Through its power over selection of candidates and sanctioning of licentiates, it is likely to approve those who are similar to current members of presbytery. Since ministers remain, on average, about four and a half years in each parish where they are inducted, those who may have less conservative views have a relatively short period in which they can attempt to influence colleagues and presbytery elders towards change in practices related to selection and sanctioning of potential ministers.

If presbytery has a major, conservative influence over candidates, does it mean that theological education has little effect in the shaping of ministers' dispositions? Since the
early 1980s there has been a trend towards an evangelical and reformed emphasis in Presbyterian theological education (Clements, 1983). Associated with this is an emphasis within the theological college on personal prayer and bible reading, student prayer groups and participation in evangelical outreach programmes. These emphases raise expectations about personal spirituality and evangelistic activity within ministry. The theological college has continued to emphasise traditional theological studies in Hebrew, Greek, doctrine, church history, biblical studies etc as well as providing courses in practical theology (including preaching, management and pastoral counselling).

Two expectations arise: firstly, that exit students will be competent in their use of biblical languages, biblical history and theology, particularly applied in preaching and teaching; and secondly, that they will be able to carry out the tasks of ministry with minimal supervision and assistance. There is also the expectation that the minister will be a generalist but have specific competencies in a range of semi-professional areas. At the level of skills, there is insufficient time to teach beyond the basics in management and counselling, while skills in evangelism, religious education and youth work are not formally addressed. There is no time for theoretical background in developmental psychology, mental health issues or organisational theory, all of which would provide a basis for specific skills. So theological education raises expectations about priorities and skills in ministry but in its present form cannot equip ministers thoroughly to meet these expectations. For these reasons theological education was perceived to be deficient by a majority of ministers and training inadequacies directly contributed to depersonalisation and anxiety.

**SITUATIONAL COMPONENTS**

In the light of the foregoing, in this section I examine the kinds of situations that ministers find most stressful and the reasons they give for their stressfulness. I also evaluate the extent to which role conflict is a source of stress for ministers.

**Most stressful recent events**

Almost two-thirds of the ministers referred to interpersonal issues associated with their ministry as the most stressful recent events. Their comments about these events revealed that the specific sources of stress were opposition, frustration and conflict. The second most frequently cited type of stressful event was related to death or illness (22%) and included grieving over the loss of parishioners by death or transfer.

It is interesting to contrast these themes with the events reported as most stressful by student nurses (Parkes, 1986) who mainly reported work-related issues of the care of dying patients (33%), interpersonal problems with colleagues (25%), insecurity about knowledge or skills (19%) and problems with difficult patients (10%). These issues appear to be directly related to the respondents being inexperienced people in human services occupations. In contrast the recent stressful events reported by congregational samples (Pargament et al, 1990) included few work-related events (8%) but death and health-related (51%) or interpersonal (14%) events. In other words, ministers' responses were more like student nurses' (who were asked specifically about work-related stress)
than congregations', even though ministers were asked to comment on a recent personal or ministry event. Their choice of ministry situations over private (personal or family) issues could relate to the context of the interview which concerned ministry stress but could also reflect a strong identification of the ministers with their work - an identification seen in their 'whole of life' responses to the meaning of ministry. What is significant here is the central meaning and significance attached to ministry, so that ministry difficulties threaten the minister's worldview and self-esteem.

**Ongoing stress sources**

Out of the seven domains of ongoing ministry stress, ministers rated personal stressors on average as most stressful, followed by parish, family, system and denominational stressors. They gave lowest stress ratings, on average, to relationships with colleagues and the spiritual domain. Across all domains, the four highest stressors on average related to time pressures, role expectations of parishioners, theological differences within the denomination and a sense of inadequacy as a minister. Family stressors such as problems, or illness of a child, or spouse were ranked fifth and eleventh respectively, based on average stress ratings. These rankings further emphasise the significance of work-related stress over and above family, or other private sources of stress. Some of the stressors within each broad domain will now be examined more closely to see how they inter-relate and produce anxiety or burnout. The domains are listed in order of stressfulness: within each domain only the most stressful items are discussed.

**Personal stressors: time pressure, sense of inadequacy**

Out of 45 possible sources of stress rated by the ministers the most stressful issue was lack of time to accomplish tasks. This issue was rated as fairly or very stressful by 54% of ministers and another 29% rated time pressure as of some concern. It is interesting that it is not a discrete event but a chronic psychological result of cumulative experiences. Hence, it is a descriptor of stress and the end of a chain of stressors. Typical descriptions are:

"Time pressure is the greatest constant source of stress in ministry. There is not enough time to do the job well, and for the family."

"It is one thing to plan the week but unexpected pastoral emergencies place demands on you. When there was not enough time for involvement I had to get off committees and reorder my priorities. I still think ministers work too long."

Why do the majority feel so stressed over time pressure? The obvious answer is because ministers work, on average, 68 hours per week but why do they feel the need to work such long hours? Three main reasons emerged from interview data. First, there is role stress, where ministers expect that they will accomplish a wide variety of tasks or perform many roles. These expectations derive from "traditional" ideas of Presbyterian ministry into which many candidates for ministry were socialised. The explicit and implicit curriculum of theological training emphasises a range of roles and the current needs, goals and desires of parishioners for whom the minister feels a sense of
responsibility. Second, there is the structure of ministry with inmovable deadlines (eg Sunday's sermon) and many uncontrollable tasks that are urgent, time-consuming and emotionally draining (eg funerals, visits to parishioners in crisis). Third, there is the location of ministry within the church, manse and community, providing little physical or psychological distance between work and private roles, thus blurring the work-self boundaries. It appears that a feeling of time pressure describes what it means to be stressed as a minister. The cost of time-pressure stress is increased risk of emotional exhaustion and depression.

Blaikie (1979) found that lack of time was a common problem for clergy. About one-third of the Presbyterian ministers he surveyed reported that their working hours were satisfactory and 58% stated that their hours were excessive but necessary. He speculated: "Why more clergy cannot enjoy even this minimum of leisure time might be due to the constant pressure to meet commitments, to a hypersensitive conscience, to inconsiderate parishioners, or to a lack of determination or organisation" (1979, p.162). Fullerton (1988) reported that his sample of Presbyterian ministers spent an average of 63 hours per week on parish duties and suggested reasons similar to those of Blaikie (1979) for the time pressure. A number of overseas studies of ministry stress also give time pressure or role overload as important contributors (e.g. Gavin, 1991; Hoge, Shields and Soroka, 1993).

Many writers discuss the components of time pressure separately. For example, Pryor (1982) distinguished two sources of role stress: conflict in expectations as a result of occupying different roles simultaneously and multiple, conflicting expectations within one role. The ministers in my study were referring to the first source of role stress in commenting on time pressure. Pryor cites research that indicates major sources of role stress are "(i) inadequate role models; (ii) poor role definitions; (iii) seminary training irrelevant to most parish tasks; (iv) a variety of conflicting role expectations from the laity; (v) a multiplicity of tasks" (1982, p.17). Hughes (1989) referred to blurred public-private roles as the cost of being available as a friend to members of the congregation. In an article reviewing overseas research Kunst (1993) specified four components of role conflict: expectations of the pastor's perfection; poorly defined role boundaries: difficulties with intimacy and isolation; and the pastor's need for pastoring. She discussed burnout and time pressure particularly in relation to congregational expectations, arguing that "emotional exhaustion and burnout are often the consequences of these high demands, and ministers troubled by such role conflict typically complain of lack of time to accomplish their goals, stress, frustration, feelings of inadequacy, spiritual dryness, fear of failure, and loneliness and isolation" (Kunst, 1993, p.209). My findings are consistent with the literature and provide precursors based on data rather than speculation.

Second to time pressure as a personal stressor were feelings of inadequacy, rated fourth out of the 45 possible stressors and of at least some stress to two-thirds of the ministers. The feelings of inadequacy did not relate to role models as in Pryor's research (1982), but to deficiencies in ministry skills of counselling, administration, preaching and theological expertise. A typical comment reflecting perceived inadequacy is:
"I sense that I am not achieving at the high level I set for myself, or reaching the visions set before the congregation. As a leader of the congregation, this lack of achievement reflects on me. I seem to set higher standards for myself than are realistically possible, and also for others."

Inadequacy is a stress descriptor, a psychological result of cumulative experiences. The sources are twofold: inadequate training and not reaching self-imposed standards that are often unrealistic. Hughes (1989) describes a sense of failure or inadequacy in ministers as a result of failure to evangelise, because clergy are either ill-equipped or not called to be evangelists. However, in my study the sense of inadequacy was not restricted to evangelism. It was largely independent of time pressure.

Parish stressors: expectations of parishioners

Parishioner expectations were rated as the second most stressful issue by ministers and the stress was attributed to traditional, or unrealistic expectations by parishioners. That is, felt stress related either to role conflict (ministers' expectations differed from parishioners'), or role strain (too many roles to juggle). An example of role conflict is seen in the following comment:

"Stress arises because of the expectations of a traditional minister compared with my priorities, concerns and ability to accomplish them. Some expect the minister to visit all day every day."

I have already pointed out that role strain feeds into felt time pressure and thus into the theme of enmeshment with its negative effects. However, role conflict, which is one aspect of incongruence at the parish level, was unrelated to time pressure, felt inadequacy and other negative effect. Why is role conflict, and incongruence as a whole, unrelated to significant negative consequences?

It appears that role conflict based on parishioners' traditional expectations, opposed to the minister's emphasis on teaching, reflects theological differences. Fullerton (1988) found that moderately evangelical and neo-orthodox ministers gave higher priority to pastoral work, seen as important to members, than strongly evangelical and fundamentalist ministers who gave higher priority to the roles of educator, evangelist and student. Conflicts with laity were greater for the latter group than the former. Similar findings were reported by Blaikie (1979) who distinguished between supernaturalist and secularist theological orientations. Hence, some stressed ministers in my study were reporting consequences of being, broadly speaking, supernaturalist/strong evangels in parishes where these views were not deemed highly significant.

Ministers in my study seem to cope with the role conflict by maintaining their own theological position and either attempting to change the congregation's position or changing their own work in ways that are consistent with their supernaturalist views. An example of an evangelistic minister attempting to change congregational expectations through changing attitudes of session is:
"I drew up a chart of what the church was doing already and got them to write the purpose of each group and give them ratings. We then went through Peter Bolt’s book, "Mission Minded" and discussed discrepancies between the ideal and the reality. We looked at how inward looking the church was, with its Sunday school and youth groups and monthly family night. The focus was on them (session) to decide and the congregation to comment."

Ministers could change their work without compromising a supernaturalist view by taking an evangelical focus on visits, inviting parishioners to the manse for hospitality that models a Christian lifestyle (lifestyle evangelism) and involving others in individual outreach efforts. Such a strategy can also produce role strain from attempting to do more and be more accessible to parishioners at the cost of private, or family roles. Evangelical visits can increase the list of those to be visited from church attenders, to parents of children and young people associated with the church, to newcomers in the community unaffiliated with another church. Role strain, or the pressure to do more, fits a strong evangelical, or fundamentalist theology of ministry as modelled by St. Paul and including "costly suffering for the spiritual benefit of others" and "daily pressure (burden, concern) of anxiety for the churches" (Kingham, 1986).

Thus, role conflict was dealt with in ways consistent with an evangelical worldview, including reducing the conflict by inculcating more evangelical attitudes in the congregation, or transforming it into role strain because the minister was trying to evangelise directly, or through lifestyle. If role conflict was reduced because of greater theological agreement between minister and congregation it produced less negative affect. If it was transformed into role strain, it produced negative affect as a direct result of time pressure and enmeshment. That is, role conflict itself was uncorrelated with anxiety-burnout because signs of incongruence prompted actions that reduced the role conflict, or changed it into role strain.

Role conflict has also been examined as incompatibility between the expectations and personality of the role occupant, including the gap between priorities and perceived effectiveness in achieving them (Fullerton, 1988, Blaikie, 1979). Blaikie found that "in general, clergy were successful in, effective at and obtained satisfaction from those roles to which they individually gave the highest priority" (1979, p.111) and Fullerton (1988) also found similarities between rankings of role importance, satisfaction and perceived effectiveness. However, rankings allow only limited statistical investigation and so I used ratings of priorities and skills in order to test correlations and group differences.

There was a positive correlation between ratings of most of the skills and priorities, although there was no relationship for the areas of bringing new members into the church, involving members in leadership, or encouraging members to use their gifts. In each of these three ministry tasks, the priority rating exceeded the skill rating, so ministers are likely to be frustrated by the gap between priorities and skills in areas of evangelism and delegation.

What are the consequences of role conflict based on discrepancies between priorities and skills? Only nine ministers rated their skills as equal to, or exceeding priorities across all
domains. The majority of ministers consistently rated their skills lower than their priorities and these scored significantly higher on depersonalisation than ministers without role conflict. That is, there was a tendency to 'switch off' to people, to give unfeeling and impersonal responses to parishioners, as a result of this type of role conflict.

*Family stressors: problems with child*

Ministers gave 'problems with (their own) child' the fifth highest rating after four other ministry-related stressors. It is the first stressor that includes a discrete event (such as an illness) although most examples in this category comprised ongoing problems concerning education, lifestyle and chronic medical conditions. Many of the problems were directly related to ministry. Educational concerns were frequently the result of mobility, the values, or standards of secular education and the costs of Christian education. Typical comments were:

"The move to a large country parish was most disruptive for the family. Our eldest son had finished school so we left him behind. Our younger son was at a nearby boys' high school and found it hard to adjust."

"At one parish I was unimpressed by the standard of education and behaviour in the high school, with continual changes of staff, so we sent the children as boarders to church schools. The church helped us financially but it was still a financial sacrifice so this led us to consider a city parish."

Lifestyle concerns were seldom linked to expectations on children because of their status as "minister's kids." Yet a common theme was the conflicting needs of family and ministry: concerns included the lack of time with children and lack of time when children needed a parent because of parish demands, especially at evenings and weekends. Just as parishioners' needs raise worldview themes of availability to others, so family needs raise worldview themes of the importance of the family: as Mol (1985 p.217) commented about Australians, "active Christians stand guard over normal family life." Thus, problems with children are stressful because of competing themes or values within the minister's worldview.

It is also interesting that marital problems were not high on the list of reported stressors, in contrast to Pryor's (1982) small study of those ministering to ministers in which tensions between the marriage and ministry were reported to be of greatest significance as a source of stress. Pryor's findings may reflect the perspective of counsellors who deal with manifest problems of clients, or a greater willingness of ministers to divulge personal problems in a counselling situation. On the other hand, a study comparing ministers with lay church members reported diminished marital adjustment and greater burnout amongst ministers and their wives based on scale scores (Warner and Carter, 1984). While their study did not attempt to compare a large number of sources of ministry stress, it raises questions about the relative usefulness of scales and open-ended questions to obtain data about sensitive marital issues.
System stressors: mobility and stipend

An important finding was that the most significant consequence of mobility for ministers, rated as the sixth highest stressor, on average, was grieving over lost relationships and this was a problem after one move, and not just multiple moves. It is an aspect of enmeshment in ministry because it reflects the affective bonds between minister and parishioners. It also emphasises that the relationship is based on friendship rather than a more distant, professional concern. The importance of congregations for social support is also highlighted by a small study of Roman Catholic priests in which Bricker and Fleischer (1993) claimed mandatory transfers contributed to stress because they disturbed social support networks.

The stipend, which was rated as stressful by two-thirds of ministers, was the ninth highest stressor on average. Apart from the direct strain of having to budget carefully, there were two deeper concerns expressed in the ministers' comments. First, there was the conflict between ministry and family needs: the ministers expected to adopt a modest lifestyle as a result of their call to ministry but felt stressed when they were unable to meet what were considered to be legitimate family needs. Second, there was a degree of enmeshment because the ministers could not afford private housing and were concerned about accommodation on retirement. Comments relating to these themes were:

"With four children and their demands, the stipend covers the bills but there is nothing over. Our children are aware that we cannot afford what others have."

"Our income does not make allowances for housing at the end of our ministry. Many ministers have sacrificed, have sold their house, in order to complete theological training."

Denominational stressors: theological differences

Theological differences between themselves and the denomination were rated as the third highest stressor, on average, and were largely focussed on the Cameron issue. A central theme in the 'heresy trial' of Dr Peter Cameron was the authority of Scripture but ordination of women was also at issue. What was surprising in ministers' comments was the vivid language that was highly emotionally charged, such as "It is ripping the Church to pieces and we are becoming a laughing stock." Underlying the conflict were theological issues, particularly biblical authority, and struggles for power over theological education between those of "supernaturalist" and "secularist" persuasions, to use Blaikie's (1979) terms. I think it was highly emotive because it was a definite, public statement about new theological directions within the denomination but also because other theological issues and values were caught up in the conflict.

One minister put the power issue succinctly:

"The real conflict is between the extremes and the middle ground. It is because the evangelicals who have been fighting for so long against the liberals now have the numbers."
Emotions ran high because for evangelicals the effect on their parishes was "hindering the gospel", for their opponents there was distress over rigidity and nostalgia and for both there was personal criticism and a sense of shame at the public nature of the division. Thus, strongly held values attached to the gospel, reputation and continuity with the past were raised and set in opposition to each other.

However, incongruence at the denominational level was not significantly related to negative affect. Why was this emotionally charged situation not more costly in terms of anxiety, depression or burnout? Certainly there were clashes of worldviews, but it appears that these were already deeply held and so individual ministers were not challenged by conflicting values that were central to their own worldview. Blaikie argued that "the range of theological orientations themselves, can be understood in terms of the most basic dimensions of all world views (sic), the extent to which the ideas of which they are constituted are held as absolutes or are regarded in more relativistic terms" (1979, p.84). For evangelicals the gospel is absolute and central; personal or denominational reputations are subordinated to that central value and tolerance of opposing viewpoints is rejected as contrary to the purity of the gospel. For neo-orthodox/liberals, the value of tolerance is central; values associated with reputation and continuity could be subordinated to it and values associated with absolutism would be rejected as incompatible with their worldview.

Relational stressors: relationships with colleagues

Relationships with Presbyterian colleagues were rated as twelfth in stress levels, on average. About one third of the ministers reported difficulties, attributed to attitude differences and distance, but problems were not related significantly to loneliness, anxiety and burnout. Why are relationship problems relatively unimportant as stressors?

Differences between ministers resulting from basic theological differences tend to arise in presbytery meetings where the focus is on business matters. To some extent, this defuses personal conflict. There is some regret, but no expectation, that presbytery will act as a source of spiritual and social support. This is seen in the comment:

"At times I would like opportunities for relationship [with colleagues] but presbytery is a business meeting, not a time for fellowship."

Ministers who desire spiritual or social support from colleagues have reportedly used informal networking. Where a younger minister faced a problem within the parish, there was a tendency to phone individuals with specialist expertise, such as an approachable senior minister, a lecturer at the theological college, or the co-ordinator of the counselling service. Friends were likely to be parishioners, or people outside the denomination. Hence, Presbyterian colleagues in general, or as a smaller group within presbytery, were not seen as significant sources of support and relational difficulties between ministers generally had little direct effect on stress levels.

Parish ministry was seen to be individually based and lonely. The lack of strong social support is likely to increase the vulnerability of ministers to distress (see review by
Pryor, 1982) and so may indirectly affect negative outcomes. For these reasons, both Blaikie (1979) and Fullerton (1988) urge individual ministers to seek, or form collegial support groups that are relatively homogeneous and where priorities and worldviews are shared. My data support their conclusions. In addition, I agree with Kunst (1993) that ministers need reciprocal relationships outside their professional roles so the minister can develop as a whole person and avoid enmeshment.

**Spiritual stressors: spiritual journey and practice**

Issues of spiritual journey and personal spiritual practice were rated as seventh and ninth most stressful, on average, by ministers, yet spiritual issues as a whole were rated as the least stressful domain. Does this mean they were insignificant as sources of stress?

The majority of ministers reported difficulties with spiritual practice. The main problem was lack of time, or fatigue due to competing needs of parishioners and so it was a consequence of enmeshment. A secondary problem was self-blame or guilt because of inability to fulfill personal expectations of spiritual practice, coupled with a sense of hypocrisy because the minister had to advocate spiritual practices to others. Where problems with spiritual practice were chronic, a period of spiritual dryness often resulted as part of the minister’s spiritual journey. In turn, dryness affected capacity to preach, to minister and to be controlled in difficult situations. Very few ministers reported a sense of enjoyment or spiritual uplift in their spiritual practice; the focus was on spiritual practice as a struggle, or duty in ministry. These themes are illustrated by:

"The tension is always there between the ideal and the reality. At times it is a struggle. I am never satisfied, hard on myself and others. It is a kind of drivenness."

"It is hard to keep up with it because of time. Hard not to feel like a world class hypocrite. The problem is when to do it e.g. if I wake up early, the children also wake or need attention."

Problems with spiritual practice were significantly related directly to emotional exhaustion. However, high scores on spiritual stress were significantly correlated with most other stress domains. Thus, while spiritual stressors have limited direct effects, they appear to have indirect effects on a range of negative outcomes through their relationship with other sources of stress. Specifically, problems in spiritual practice affected their sense of personal adequacy; often increased irritability in relationships with family, parishioners and colleagues; resulted in increased effort in ministry and hence, greater enmeshment; and increased loneliness because the issue was seen as a personal struggle with sin which was undermining a paramount relationship with God.

**Summary**

In this section I have examined sources of ministry stress in some detail. In particular, I have discussed the relative contributions of different stress sources, why they are so stressful and consequences of each source for anxiety, depression and burnout. Two
main points emerge from this discussion. First, my use of stress ratings rather than rankings has moved the analysis beyond a hierarchy of stress sources to a consideration of inter-relationships that led to themes of enmeshment, equipment and incongruence (discussed further in the next chapter). Second, the assumption that role conflict is a major source of stress requires revision. In fact, role strain (a multiplicity of roles) and role conflict based on discrepancies between priorities and ability were sources of some perceived stress, but role conflict based on competing expectations did not lead to stress because the conflict was transformed, or dealt with by the minister. Process stress theory has provided a new way of examining role strain and conflict with the additional consideration of coping and outcomes and this perspective has proved valuable.

**APPRAISALS**

In this section I examine how ministers and theological students view the causes and possible outcomes of problematic situations and relationships between situations and appraisals. Results are discussed in the light of current attribution theory.

**Complexity of attributions to God's control**

Over half the ministers and three-quarters of the Presbyterian theological students answered "yes" to the question "Do you think God caused the (personally stressful) situation in any way?" Yet the meaning of God's causation varied greatly, emphasising the complexity of God attributions.

In making a causal attribution to God, respondents were initially making a judgement on the sacred-profane dimension: at this point the assessment was whether a profane explanation sufficed, or whether an explanation had to include the sacred. In other words, could use of multiple sufficient cause schema explain the attributions?

Their explanations of God's causing the event included deductions from God's general sovereignty (God controls all things therefore he must have caused this event); God's direct intervention to produce the situation; God giving opportunities for people to exercise free will; and God allowing situations directly caused by sin, or allowing situations which, when used well by humans, produced blessings. It seemed the comments pointed to two clear dimensions: God's direct intervention (either clearly manifest, or a deduction from general sovereignty) and God's leading, or allowing when human free will could operate. Both views involve God achieving divine purposes rather than humans having freedom to achieve their purposes independently of God. In terms of the freedom-versus-dependency polarity (see Oser and Gmunder, 1991, for further discussion of polarities in religious thinking), the views of students fell on the extreme end of human dependency on God, while ministers' views fell at a mid-point towards human freedom where freedom was still under some divine restriction.

Within the explanations of God's causation there was also the dimension of immanence versus transcendence. Over 90% of ministers and theological students emphasised God's immanence in the stressful situation. This was expressed as God's concern for the affairs of individuals, both in history and their personal biography: it was typically experienced
as personal guidance, protection and help from God in the form of assurance, peace, strength, hope, or stillness. God’s transcendence was expressed by the small minority who did not believe that God directly caused the stressful event, were not aware of God in their coping, or did not expect God to influence the outcome. Their view was that God is sovereign, (He can control events in the world) but in their event He chose not to intervene, or withdrew from acting because of human sinfulness. Typical comments reflecting God’s transcendence include:

"God could have stopped the fire (but didn’t)."

"God allows our sinful behaviour to run its natural course."

A generational trend was found in God attributions. Presbyterian theological students strongly affirmed that God directly caused the stressful situation; younger ministers affirmed that God both caused and allowed the situation; older ministers tended to assert that God did not cause the situation in any way. Is this finding situation-specific, or does it reflect theological differences between those of different age groups? Ministers were more likely to believe that God caused situations involving health or material problems than relational problems ($r=.259$, $p<.05$) but this relationship did not hold for theological students. In addition, when the effects of age were removed by partial correlation, the moderate association above was reduced to a non-significant correlation. This indicates that differences between ministers and theological students in God attributions could not be explained by differences between their most stressful personal situations. I take up this point more generally in Chapter Seven where I examine differences over time between the worldviews of ministers and theological students.

Moreover, clear differences in beliefs were found between Presbyterian students and ministers, with students scoring lower on beliefs reflected in the Westminster Confession and on beliefs reflecting God’s sovereignty in salvation. The puzzling finding is that the students, who gave weaker endorsement to God’s control in the beliefs measures, gave stronger endorsement to God’s direct control in personal situations. God attributions in the personal situation were also correlated strongly with similar attributions to God’s control in the vignettes, so the discrepancy between general beliefs and attributions in specific situations, whether personal or simulated, is of concern. In fact, this problem highlights a central assumption of stress-process theory: that situation-specific measures are superior to dispositional measures in predicting coping and outcomes because they take into account person-environment interactions (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). My results support the conclusion that situationally-based measures should be used to infer beliefs about God’s control, rather than the dispositional measures, when the focus of interest is stress, or components of stress-coping.

**Explaining religious attributions**

Attributions to God varied across events and were highest in severe, uncontrollable and pleasant situations. Yet congregational attributions do not indicate a segregation of religious and secular explanations but rather the use of both. Analyses by situation type showed a fluid use of different causal attributions within the overall perspective of God
allowing the various situations to occur. The finding that they did not agree strongly
that God directly caused the situations, nor that God worked through humans except in
the positive situations suggests: (1) they did not hold to a strict view of God's
sovereignty as seen in traditional Calvinism and (2) they had accommodated to a view
which incorporated secular thinking of human autonomy with a more distant God
allowing the situations to occur.

From the perspective of Kelley's theory of multiple causal schema (1973), the use of
both secular and religious attributions fails to support multiple sufficient causal schema
where only one type of cause, religious or secular, is sufficient to explain behaviour.
Spilka et al (1985) referred to this as the availability hypothesis. In a direct test of the
availability hypothesis Lupfer et al (1992) failed to find confirmation, so my results are
not surprising. In fact, I found that luck and religious attributions (God allows and
controls) were negatively correlated and hence mutually exclusive. Attributions to self
and to God working through humans were positively correlated and complementary but
self attributions were independent of other religious attributions. Attributions to others
were negatively correlated with attributions to God's allowing and so mutually exclusive
but were independent of other religious attributions. These findings emphasise the
complexity of God attributions and the need to distinguish different types of religious
attributions.

An alternative explanation, multiple necessary causal schema, has been used to account
for religious attributions in extreme situations and is known as a "God of the gaps"
theory (Lupfer et al, 1992). This holds that when the situation is unusual and evokes
intense emotion the perceiver may then attribute it to God. Unusual, emotive situations
in my study were the health and moral situations. In these, congregations gave strong
attributions to God's allowing the situation but also to self. That is, both religious and
secular explanations were given and the multiple necessary schema theory is not
supported.

Congregational responses suggest a more flexible model of attribution, such as the
hypothesis testing model of Laljje, Lamb, Furnham and Jaspars (1984), or Taylor's
(1983) and Spilka et al's (1985) view of attributions as attempts to find meaning, mastery
and self-esteem. Before discussing these more fully I need to make a few preliminary
points.

Following Buss (1978) I think we should note the distinction between causes and
reasons. Causes apply to events that happen to a person, reasons to intentional
behaviour. In other words, a distinction should be made between events that have no
clear cause (eg some illnesses), events that had a clear non-human cause (eg person
killed by lightning) and events that were the result of clear, or supposed, human intention
(eg stealing to obtain drug).

A distinction should also be made between self-attribution and attributions made about
others' behaviour. Research using vignettes often assumes that asking people how they
would respond after presenting brief information is similar to self-attribution. However,
in using vignettes the person must make typifications, usually based on the inferred traits
and intentions of the actor and hence the data evoke person schema (Green, Lightfoot, Bandy and Buchanan, 1985). On the other hand, in self-attributions the person has much more information on which to base the attribution but biases such as positive or negative set (Green et al, 1985) may affect the attribution. Differences between attributions made from vignettes and from personally experienced situations, as found in my study, may result from deficiencies in the operative person schema and distortions caused by the positive, or negative sets.

It is assumed that attributions are efforts to find meaning, control and self-esteem, particularly in threatening situations (Taylor, 1983; Spilka et al, 1985). Taylor's research (1983) was based on the responses of women with breast cancer. There was no clear cause for their condition: it was unintentional. Taylor found that none of the attributions given by women correlated significantly with adjustment and concluded that "causal meaning itself is the goal of attributional search, rather than the specific form through which it is realised" (1983, p.1163). However, she also included efforts to understand the implications of the illness for their lives as part of the quest for meaning. While these are appraisals, they are not causal attributions. Here I think Taylor is blurring important distinctions between attributional and coping processes, especially since she argued that positive adjustment was correlated with constructing a new positive life meaning but not to specific causal attributions.

Mastery, in Taylor's (1983) work, was directly related to outcome attributions: that is, beliefs about personal control over the outcome of the cancer. There may be some overlap with causal attributions to the extent that coping behaviours remove, or modify, perceived causes but again I think Taylor is blurring attributional and coping processes which should remain distinct until their inter-relationship is examined.

In my study mastery could be direct or vicarious: there is a sense of control in knowing that a personally benevolent God is in control of one's life. For theological students, attributions to God causing the personally stressful situation but no other causal attributions, were significantly correlated with outcome attributions to God. In other words, the more directly God was judged to be involved in the situation, the more He was seen to be in control over the outcome.

Taylor inferred the goals of self-esteem, self-enhancing social comparisons and making evaluations of personal benefit from the experience. Yet it is difficult to distinguish between mastery and self-esteem as motives from behaviour. For example, Taylor (1983, p.1170) cites the case of a woman whose illusion of control over the cancer by diet was disconfirmed and who then decided to leave an uninteresting job and fulfill an ambition to write short stories. The inference made by Taylor was that the woman had lost control in one area of her life and was now exerting control in another life domain. On the other hand, it could equally be viewed as an attempt to gain self-esteem by constructing something positive from the situation and, of course, both motives could be operating together. The empirical problem is how to tease out these two effects.

Spilka et al (1985) suggested that intrinsically religious people would be more likely to attribute positive events to God and serious accidents to themselves, in order to maintain
self-esteem. In my study vignettes involving serious accidents were of two types: a moral situation where the accident was caused by drink-driving and a health situation resulting from serious injury in a storm. I found positive events were attributed to self and others just as strongly as to God: the drink-driving event was very strongly attributed to self but also strongly attributed to God's allowing; and the accident in the storm was strongly and equally attributed to self and God's allowing. That is, there was no evidence of self-esteem effects in my study.

The work of Taylor and Spilka et al is significant in relating major themes from social psychology to attribution processes. Taylor's observations are limited to serious health situations with ambiguous causes and clear threat. It is important to distinguish the three themes of meaning, mastery and self-esteem empirically and investigate their inter-relationship and contribution to outcomes across different types of problematic situations. Spilka et al's work is more comprehensive and I did not attempt a detailed examination of their general attribution theory. Yet my results fail to support the availability hypothesis, in common with Lupser et al (1992) and are inconsistent with some of the self-esteem effects they postulated. Instead, my findings suggest religious subjects consider proximal and distal effects when making attributions. In particular, my strongly intrinsically religious subjects firmly endorsed God's allowing severe events having varying pleasantness and degrees of control and so perceived that God was the distal cause. They also attributed these situations to human causes, self or others, and so perceived human agency to be the proximal cause.

COPING

Here I examine how ministers cope with ministry stress, their coping in personally stressful situations and age trends in coping from theological students to older ministers. I explore the determinants of coping strategies in terms of dispositions, appraisals and situation types. Finally, I examine the extent to which the denomination appears to be aware of and meeting ministers' coping needs.

Coping with ministry stress

Two major forms of coping with unexpected ministry stress were reported with equal frequency by ministers: working harder, organising and pressing on (described as 'dig self out'); and delegating, shedding tasks, or skimming over work (described as 'minimising'). There were no age trends in relation to ministry coping: equal numbers in the groups of younger, middle-years and older ministers used the two types. Neither of these coping forms was associated with increased probability of negative outcome, as measured by anxiety, depression, or burnout. They appear to be consistent across time in ministry and equally effective in avoiding personally negative consequences.

Further broad responses which can be inferred from ministers' replies to questions about expected and unexpected stressors comprise spiritual coping and self-esteem coping, the latter based on self-acceptance, or self-development. A typical comment on spiritual practice was:
"If I know where I can find water in the wilderness then I can cope. He meets our needs all the time. When I need refreshment He points us to Himself."

There was general agreement about the need for regular spiritual practice as part of their ministry. When ministers felt dry spiritually they tended to cope by giving priority to prayer, or retreat, or pressing on in work until the feeling diminished. A minority pointed to spiritual support that was available from the congregation (23%), colleagues (9%) or other sources (15%) as a blessing and encouragement for them. Those who had difficulty with spiritual practice were at risk of emotional exhaustion.

Self-acceptance as one aspect of self-esteem coping is seen in the following:

"I was always sceptical of denominational positions and pronouncements and from the age of 17 I knew the gospel would be my guide."

"I see myself as having a reasonable standard of competency for parish ministry so I'm not flogging myself for weakness."

The self-development aspect is seen in:

"Some changes [in values] have occurred and I have become more broad-minded. I am happy I have changed."

"At the end of last year I realised my whole life was around people in this congregation. Now I don't feel guilty cultivating friendships outside the congregation."

Some age trends were noted for 'self-esteem' coping although numbers were too small for statistical analysis: it was greatest in those of middle years, least in older ministers and at moderate levels in younger ministers. It included acceptance of limitations, together with referrals to others, and moderate attempts at self-improvement without overtones of striving for perfection. Those who lacked self-acceptance were more prone to anxiety and burnout.

In short, these broader coping styles involving use of spiritual practice and 'self-esteem coping' were not clearly related to age trends but seemed to contribute to positive outcomes. My detailed analysis of 'self-esteem' coping responses provided a starting point for the broader concept of 'internal locus of coping', discussed further in Chapter 8.

Coping in personally stressful situations

From open-ended questions, the most important coping responses in personally stressful situations were the apparently secular strategies of discussion with others and taking positive action. Prayer was endorsed strongly as a coping response by Presbyterian students but was of lesser significance to the ministers. Yet the distinction between 'religious' and 'secular' coping is blurred when further detail is considered. Often the 'others' involved in discussion were other ministers, trusted members of session or other
Christian people and positive action was directed towards some ministry goal. In their comments the ministers emphasised awareness of God (in faith or thinking) in their immediate and subsequent coping responses. Thus, while the responses may not have been obviously 'religious' they were reportedly prompted by 'religious' considerations.

In addition, when the most important coping response was categorised into discussion, taking positive action and other responses and related to religious dispositions and religious appraisals in the ministers' stressful situation, the only significant relationship was those high on collaborative problem-solving were more likely to take positive action and those low on collaborative problem-solving were more likely to use discussion as their primary coping response. Again this suggests that religious cognitions and traits were used generally across coping strategies rather than being specific to individual coping approaches.

The ministers and theological students tended to use the more adaptive secular coping strategies (Carver, Scheir and Weintraub, 1989), as well as more active religious coping, according to their scale scores. However, the secondary religious coping strategy of asking/allowing God to change oneself was also strongly used, emphasising the multidimensional nature of coping, even applied to relatively discrete events.

**Determinants of coping**

Are causal attributions, either religious or secular, significant predictors of coping strategies? Causal attributions appeared to be unrelated to coping, based on correlations with religious and secular scales using theological students. Nonetheless, outcome expectations were significantly associated: believing that God would influence the outcome was related to using primary religious coping.

Determinants of positive religious coping (active, secondary, savouring) were examined more intensively using congregational data. Four important results emerged. First, in different types of situations the religious dispositions and attributions accounted for small but significant amounts of variance (between 15% and 25%) in positive religious coping. Second, direct effects of religious causal attributions were found in health and minor negative situations but not in moral or positive situations. Believing that God directly caused the cancer or injury, or that God allowed minor annoyances, was more likely to result in positive religious coping. Third, indirect effects of religious dispositions through causal attributions were small but important in minor negative and moral situations. Fourth, while religious dispositions were generally the strongest predictors of religious coping, in health situations causal and outcome attributions were better predictors. Thus, there is evidence for a complex relationship between dispositions, attributions and situations in determining religious coping.

The lack of relationship between causal attributions and coping scales for theological students probably results from averaging effects across different types of situations which were experienced as personally stressful. Significant effects of outcome attributions on coping were also found in the congregational study for health situations but I only investigated amount of control by the self over outcome. In addition to
religious commitment as a significant predictor of religious coping, collaborative and
deferring problem-solving styles also had strong direct predictive effects. Schaefer and
Gorsuch (1991) found that religious commitment predicted problem-solving style and
that both predicted trait anxiety: my study confirmed that both religious commitment and
problem-solving predicted the intermediate step of religious coping choice.

In a later study, Schaefer and Gorsuch (1993) found that as the perceived stressfulness
of the situation increased, use of collaborative problem-solving increased and self-
directed problem-solving decreased. However, deferring problem-solving was not
related to any of the situational characteristics they measured. I found that deferring
problem-solving was a direct predictor of religious problem-solving in positive situations
which were not included in their set of threat, loss or challenge situations. The deferring
style thus predicted the responses of praising God or focussing on God's goodness that
were typical of positive religious coping options for the positive situations. That is,
although Pargament et al (1988) found that the deferring style was associated with
decreased personal effectiveness and competence, it may also prompt some adaptive
coping responses such as savouring in particular, positive situations.

These findings thus support and extend the findings of Pargament et al (1991) on the
determinants of religious coping by confirming the importance of several religious
dispositions and evaluating the effects of causal attributions across different situations.

Denominational support in coping

Ministers generally believed that their congregations did not understand the tasks and
stresses of ministry and hence were not providing the valuing and support they desired.
While only a minority referred to poor, or very poor, relationships with colleagues, few
commented on unsolicited support and encouragement from colleagues. The strong
impression is of isolated individuals, struggling to cope using their own resources:
personal strengths, spiritual practice, discussions with spouse and one or two trusted
confidants. To what extent has the denomination recognised the isolation and coping
needs of ministers?

From the work of Australians such as Blaikie (1979), Pryor (1982) and Fullerton (1988)
there is information readily available within the denomination about stress in Presbyterian
ministers. Recommendations from these authors generally refer to training issues,
continuing education and support systems for ministers. While some suggestions are
made for structural changes by these authors, Fullerton (1988, p.281) emphasises self-
help strategies because "there are limitations to what the Church, as an institution, can
do to keep a watchful eye on each minister's condition or to provide the means to assist
and support each minister."

Presbyterian ministers in NSW in 1993 still pointed to gaps in their training across the
six areas recommended for action by Pryor in 1982 (p.37):

1. Preparation for arrival in the first pastorate
2. The minister's marriage and marriage enrichment
3. Role stress, conflict management, priority setting and support systems in the ministry
4. Church administration, budgeting and policy
5. The need for provision of counselling and therapy on an easily accessible basis for candidates, their spouses and families
6. Keeping candidates fully informed of activities organised for ministers, and encouraging their involvement wherever possible.

On the other hand, current candidates for ministry were being informed about confidential counselling available without cost through the newly established Presbyterian Counselling Service and the small size of the theological college meant that information about relevant activities was readily disseminated.

In terms of continuing education there was general provision for a week's study leave each year, but other needs (such as for an extended course overseas or short residential components of distance education) had to be negotiated within the parish. There were no denominationally organised and funded retreats such as those suggested by Pryor (1982, p.37) for all ministers within five years of their ordination; at times of mid-life crisis, or career stress; or as preparation for retirement.

There were no formally organised support systems for ministers and the new Presbyterian Counselling Service was used mainly for parishioner problems rather than for the counselling needs of ministers and their families. Some, but not all, presbyteries organised spiritual retreats for ministers and their spouses. In September, 1993 the position of Superintendent of Ministry and Mission was reorganised to a full-time role of "ministering to ministers" and programmes of training in stress management, fostering support and co-ordinating retreats began. This initiative suggests that some of the needs of ministers had been recognised by the denomination but finances were not applied for a considerable time. The solution was also seen to be in one position, rather than in a broader commission that could integrate efforts in personal support, structural support and both initial and continuing education.

OUTCOMES

In this section I discuss the negative and positive outcomes revealed in the data: the stress-burnout effect as well as the 'fully-furnished minister'. I also examine the predictors of various outcomes. Some of these issues are taken up again in Chapter 8 in a focussed discussion of typologies.

Although one-third of the ministers were functioning well without signs of burnout or negative affect (low stress group), another third showed signs of potential difficulty by having one 'clinical' stress measure (medium stress group) and almost one-third of the ministers had anxiety-burnout scores in the clinical range, indicating a need for further assessment and assistance (high stress group). Depression was not a significant problem for the ministers but anxiety and burnout were the identified problems. Spiritual well-being was also high for ministers and theological students, indicating good 'spiritual health' overall.
Stress-burnout unrelated to dispositions

The high-stress group could not be distinguished from medium and low stress groups on demographic or dispositional measures such as beliefs, appraisals of specific situations, religious styles and spiritual well-being. From the data contrasting the 'fully-furnished' and 'unfurnished' ministers it is clear that negative outcomes are related specifically to ministry issues: being ill-equipped and responding to ministry stressors in maladaptive ways. The notion of equipment included both training and self-acceptance. Maladaptive coping with ministry stress involved a commitment to ministry that became over-identification with the role and a barrier to normal friendships and problems with spiritual practice.

While specific problems with spiritual practice contributed to stress, the generally high scores on spiritual well-being suggested that satisfaction with one's spiritual health either was independent of anxiety-burnout or perhaps mediated between stress and negative outcomes. This was tested using change scores in spiritual well-being for theological students. It was found that as events were perceived as more threatening, increased religious well-being acted to reduce depression (moderator model) while both threat and decreased existential well-being acted directly to increase anxiety (distress-deterrent model). In complex ways spiritual health mediated between threatening events and negative affect and it appears that ministers' stress levels would have been higher if they had not such a strong sense of spiritual health. The results also indicate that ongoing attention to spiritual well-being is warranted for stress minimisation. This could occur at entry to theological college, during studies, exiting to ministry and periodically afterwards.

Practical implications

What are the major implications of these findings? If dispositional factors are unrelated to stress outcomes for ministers, and Carroll and White argue that "there is no known personality configuration that will cause burnout" (1982, p.45), then it is difficult to select candidates for ministry on the basis of measurable 'desirable' dispositions. On the other hand, if candidates score at high levels on anxiety, depression or burnout and at low levels on spiritual well-being, it is likely that they will have difficulty in coping with ministry stress. The case of a theological student with low religious well-being which failed to moderate the effects of ministry stress on depression illustrates this well (Miner, 1995, p.258):

John (a pseudonym) was a final year theological student when I assessed him as part of a research project. He had given up a satisfying job in his mid-thirties to train for the ministry, hoping to use his abilities more fruitfully. During his college years his religious commitment was strong but religious experiences were low compared with other students. He said he had little time for personal prayer and no group prayer experiences. His SWB score was 58 (EWB 31, RWB 27), more than five standard deviations below the mean of Sydney theological students. Anxiety scores were in the normal range but depression was slightly elevated (one standard deviation above the mean, BDI score of 11).
While most of his coping scores were adaptive there was a suggestion of withdrawal in his high disengagement score.

During the next year he ministered in a busy parish. He reported feeling unappreciated in the parish and having some difficulties in a personal relationship.

At the end of that year John was clinically depressed (BDI score 25) with high anxiety (72 on STAI), high levels of expressed emotion and moderate depersonalisation. Overall SWB was unchanged but EWB had declined to 26 and RWB increased slightly to 32. With respect to coping, use of active religious coping had increased, as had religious venting.

It appeared that a stressful first year in ministry significantly affected John’s psychological health. His low EWB and RWB were unable to moderate the effects of ministry stressors initially. Two years later he reported significant improvements in his affect and attributed these to affirmation in his ministry by significant others and resolving the problematic personal issues.

An obvious conclusion is that psychological and spiritual problems should be assessed and dealt with before candidates take on the stress of ministry.

Another implication is that theological training should result in competence in the practical and personal skills needed by parish ministers: in administration, meeting procedures, counselling, leadership etc and in stress management and spiritual practice. As situations change, new skills may be required or existing skills updated (eg using computers in ministry for administration, sermon preparation, publishing etc) so continuing education needs must be assessed and resourced. Supporting these recommendations, Wilder and Plutchik (1982) discuss four major strategies for burnout prevention: teaching communication and interpersonal skills; improving understanding of organisation functioning; teaching stress management during training; and ongoing on-the-job maintenance of these skills.

Self-acceptance may be enhanced by training that promotes a wide range of competencies and realistic self-expectations. In addition, ongoing positive evaluations can maintain self-acceptance. Rosse, Boss, Johnson and Crown (1991) found that low self-esteem was both a cause and consequence of burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1986) reported that amongst other things, high levels of burnout were correlated with lack of job feedback. The ministers were not finding strong, positive feedback from parishioners and significant colleagues. Few reported celebrations of anniversaries in ministry or special achievements, so public recognition was deferred until the minister was about to leave the parish. In a study of Catholic priests, Hoge et al (1993) reported that lack of feedback on ministry tasks and inadequate rewards were the most frequently experienced organisational stressors so there is strong empirical evidence of the importance of positive feedback. Parishioners need to be reminded of the value of encouragement and public celebration, by denominational publications, the leadership of session members, or from the pulpit, particularly from visiting preachers. Supportive collegiate groups could
be nurtured in theological college but there is a problem of distance when candidates take up ministry throughout the State. In theory, presbytery is responsible for its ministers but this does not appear to extend to supportive fellowship. Either presbytery must become more supportive, or alternative collegiate structures set up in order to help maintain positive feedback and self-esteem. The collegiate structures should encourage fluid, caring relationships: Leiter (1988) found higher burnout in workers with extensive job-related communication but few informal, supportive relationships with co-workers.

Enmeshment is not easy to avoid in ministry when highly committed people engage in open-ended work. In psychological practice over-involvement with clients is curtailed through training in theory and ethical issues and ongoing supervision requirements. Both training and supervision of ministers would seem appropriate to reduce the risk of enmeshment. Other strategies from organisational development theory may also reduce enmeshment, such as role clarification; organisational integration; self-evaluation and renewal opportunities; and clear goal-setting (Golembiewski, 1982).

SUMMARY

I used stress-coping theory as a framework for addressing two major questions: why are ministers stressed and how are they coping? A further question related to both of these: how do Calvinist beliefs affect ministers' stress and coping? At this point I can venture preliminary answers from my data.

Ministers are stressed because they persevere in their ministry goals with little satisfaction from encouraging feedback or perceived effectiveness. As a broad goal, individual spiritual development flows directly from Calvinist themes. Lack of satisfaction also relates to Calvinist emphases on knowing God through faith and reason rather than experientially, as well as to difficulty in discerning spiritual change in others. Lack of perceived effectiveness results partly from training deficits (and the emphases in Presbyterian theological halls have some basis in Calvinist theology) but also from the expectations of self and others. It is clear that Calvinist beliefs as measured by scales or open-ended questions about stressful events are not directly associated with specific coping behaviours but broader Calvinist themes are influential. Other aspects of ministers' religiousness have a measurable impact on stress: spiritual well-being acts as a buffer to reduce the impact of threatening events.

There is little evidence that ministers and other Presbyterians use religious attributions to enhance self-esteem. They use a proximal-distal model which can provide a sense of security as well as individual control. There is security in the belief that a loving, holy God is allowing the stressful situation to occur but also a sense of control or mastery in the strongly expressed beliefs that humans also caused the situation and can exert control over the outcome. Just as ministers use both religious and secular attributions, they also use both types of coping in personally stressful situations. Ministers' beliefs do not predict coping directly but religious dispositions and attributions interact with type of situation to predict helpful religious coping. Neither working harder (related to a Calvinist emphasis on work and duty) nor relinquishing tasks affect outcomes of anxiety-burnout. On the other hand, spiritual and self-esteem coping styles are helpful in
reducing stress-burnout.

Implications for stress-coping theory

Results from ministers and theological students do not fit well with stress-coping theory. I did not find clear relationships between religious or cognitive styles, specific beliefs and appraisals in personally stressful situations, coping strategies and outcomes. In fact, inflated correlations were expected because the study relied upon self-report measures. I hoped that by using multiple measures within the one method the reliability of conclusions would be increased but I was aware that using independent measures would be desirable. Yet other research had failed to find much difference between subjective and objective ratings in areas where it was practical to use objective measures such as independent ratings of stress situations (e.g. Park, Cohen and Herb, 1990).

My major dispositional measures were well-validated religious scales of commitment and problem-solving style which have been related to coping and outcomes in congregational samples. Why was there little relationship between religious disposition measures and coping or outcomes in my study?

There was reduced variation in these dispositional scores compared with US congregational samples, so product moment correlations with other variables were likely to be attenuated to some extent. However, while this measurement problem may have reduced the significance of correlations, it is unlikely to account for the failure to replicate strong relationships found in other studies (eg Pargament et al, 1990; Schaefer and Gorsuch, 1991).

I think the difference has more to do with the types of situations rated in the US studies. In the Pargament study (1990) almost half the respondents referred to death, or health-related events while in the Schaefer and Gorsuch study (1991) vignettes illustrating threat, loss and challenge were used. In both studies the situations tended to be discrete crisis events with 'crisis' used in the sense of stressors of brief duration severely taxing the person's resources. In contrast, the ministers' situations tended to be ongoing relational problems.

In the US studies strong religiousness and a tendency to collaborate with God in problem-solving tended to reduce negative affect in crisis situations. The implication is that these dispositions enabled to person to appraise the crisis differently (as God's loving discipline, as an opportunity for service etc), or use adaptive problem, or emotion focussed strategies to deal with the crisis. The ministers were in situations where it was often difficult to reappraise the situation positively because the relational problem was itself a frustration of highly valued ministry goals. The strategies needed to deal with the situation were usually complex interpersonal, or organisational skills from the minister and some complementary responses from others in the situation. Thus, the ministers had relatively little control over the outcome and fewer options to use religious dispositions directly in adaptive coping, so the dispositions were generally uncorrelated with coping and outcomes.
Similarly, causal attributions and appraisals of threat, loss or challenge are fruitful cognitive measures in crisis situations. However, it appeared that the ministers were making different or finer appraisals of their situations. For example, while most situations were evaluated as threatening, they could be construed as a threat to the minister's integrity, to pastoral relationships with those immediately involved, to ongoing relationships with session, or to the spiritual well-being of the whole congregation. In each case, the most adaptive coping response (and outcome) could differ. Thus, I think that stress-coping process theory as it is currently described and researched has limitations for ministry stress situations. Certainly, further material from a grounded theory approach was needed to explicate relationships between resources and stress outcomes for ministers in my study.
Chapter Seven

SECULARISATION, PRIVATISATION AND INDIVIDUATION

In the last chapter I examined in detail the personal dispositions and resources of ministers and how these affected the stress-coping process. Since I had obtained independent measures of some traits and coping processes (religiousness and religious coping; beliefs about God's control and use of attributions to God's control in coping) I was able to assess the impact of these stable personality traits and related coping styles on outcomes. Whereas Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that stable dispositions would interact with appraisals to determine coping, I found some evidence of this for religious commitment and problem-solving but not for Calvinist beliefs.

Lazarus and Folkman developed a similar argument for environmental factors. That is, they argued that stable environmental characteristics influence coping, but not in a direct, additive manner. Instead, environmental factors have an interactive effect on coping, mediated through cognitive processes. In an elegant study of both direct and interaction effects of personality and environment on coping, Parkes (1986) found that scores on neuroticism and extroversion were significant predictors of coping scores and that interactions across person, environment and situation factors also explained substantial proportions of the variance in coping measures. Different combinations of these factors related significantly to different coping patterns, suggesting that particular types of appraisal are derived from combinations of personality, environment and situation and in turn lead to specific coping mechanisms. If environmental characteristics also interact with personality, situations and appraisals to influence coping, what are the implications for ministers' stress and coping?

So far, I have not attempted to consider the context of ministry in my discussion of ministry stress and coping. In this chapter I examine the implications of secularisation for understanding the dilemmas ministers face, as well as the framework it provides for understanding the extent of ministers' stress and their attempts to deal with it. Secularisation theory is helpful at this point because its focus is on shared and private meaning systems. Before giving a detailed analysis of my results in terms of secularisation theory, I present an overview of the arguments developed in this chapter.

There has been a decline over the last sixty years in reported affiliation with mainstream Protestant denominations in Australia (Kaldor et al, 1994) and Presbyterian ministers are part of a declining meaning system. As part of a denomination which has little authority, they are institutionally secularised. In the past, ministers enjoyed personal authority and a legitimate identity on the basis of representing a denomination having authority which was widely accepted. Now institutional legitimation has given way to personal and private legitimation. That is, personal meanings and evaluations undergird ministers' identity and authority.
There are a number of implications here for stress. First, Christianity is a social religion, based on people gathering together and recognising the authority of legitimate local leaders. Where legitimacy is not institutionally based, it must be personally and socially based. This means that ministers have to establish their authority by their skills, dispositions and achievements in the face of heavy demands and inability to satisfy everyone. Social legitimation is impossible and hence an ongoing source of stress.

Second, the ministers' private beliefs are also inherently stressful. As Presbyterians they subscribe to doctrines of total human sinfulness and God's unconditional election with the corollary that they must turn inward for spiritual proofs of their election. Further, a reformed worldview demands perseverance in their calling, as well as diligence, humility and self-control. In the absence of external legitimation, ministers struggle to achieve personal legitimation within a demanding meaning system.

Third, there is the stress of personal freedom and subjectivity when privatisation replaces institutional authority. That is, as denominational positions are no longer accepted as taken-for-granted reality, individuals are left to supply their own meanings. In their thinking they have rejected Church authority; they are cognitively secularised (McKnight, 1990) and must establish commonality in their thinking with others. A shared vocabulary may give the illusion of shared meaning, but further inquiry usually reveals there is little contact between individuals' meaning systems. Where there are as many variations on Presbyterian doctrines as individuals claiming allegiance to a Presbyterian Church there is complete subjectivity. As existential phenomenologists point out, the immediate consequence of a person being aware of subjectivity or freedom is anxiety, and so the legacy of privatisation and cognitive secularisation is anxiety-stress.

I now begin by exploring the third implication of secularisation: anxiety which is the direct consequence of privatisation. This is a deeper account of ministry stress based on existential phenomenology. I examine the roots of anxiety and then maladaptive coping in phenomenological terms before returning to a consideration of secularisation as the context for ministers' stress and implications of secularisation for coping. Here I broaden the discussion of coping from specific strategies to the meaning of these responses for the ministers.

MINISTRY STRESS AND COPING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

The seeds of existential phenomenology can be found in the writings of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and its development is attributed to Heidegger (Spinelli, 1989). Within psychology, two of the most prominent exponents of existential approaches are R.D. Laing and Rollo May (Hoeller, 1990). Kierkegaard emphasises anxiety as a corollary of human freedom which is the capacity to move between objectivity and subjectivity. In objectivity there is rule-governed behaviour but in subjectivity there is passionate faith (Warnock, 1970). Kierkegaard saw the task of philosophy as the rediscovery of subjectivity because:

"Subjectivity, paradoxical as it may seem, is hard to achieve. For though in fact
each of us is an individual, and we are therefore capable of thinking our own thoughts and living our own lives in inwardness, that is spontaneously, and capable of choosing for ourselves what to do, yet it is far easier for us to identify ourselves with a group or a sect and think their thoughts and accept their standards" (Warnock, 1970, p.9).

Anxiety is one state when people confront possibilities. Other corollaries of subjectivity, or acknowledging choice in interpretations of the world, are a sense of responsibility and hence guilt, meaninglessness and isolation (Hoeller, 1990). The benefit of embracing subjectivity (or being 'authentic' in Heidegger's (1962) terms) is a sense of individuality, independence and control and relationships marked by openness, flexibility and cooperation (Spinelli, 1989). In contrast, when the person moves into an inauthentic mode of being, the gain is a sense of security because existence appears meaningful and rule-bound, but the cost is a sense of passivity and fragmentation and relationships of conformity and non-responsibility (Spinelli, 1989).

While May follows Kierkegaard in attributing anxiety to the gap between oscillating experiences of the self as subject and object, he also defines anxiety as "the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a self" (1967, p.72). Anxiety is intensified for modern humans, according to May (1967), because of their loss of significance. This is related to modernity in that technological and associated social changes have shaken the individual's self-image, decreased a sense of personal responsibility and increased a sense of helplessness. Impotence, or loss of significance, results in proportional anxiety which gives way to regression and apathy, then hostility and finally alienation. The real danger of modernity is that humans will use technology as a means of avoiding confrontation with their anxiety, loneliness and alienation. Two further problems of modernity are held to be "the dichotomy of reason and emotion and the isolation of the individual from his community" (1967, p.69).

For May (1967), anxiety is a normal accompaniment to developmental transitions, but neurotic anxiety may develop if the person withdraws from the challenge of reintegration when confronted with subjectivity. With respect to essential values which are threatened in persons having neurotic anxiety, May argues that originally they are security patterns existing between the infant and significant others. At later stages of infancy and childhood, conflicts between autonomy and social dependency produce anxiety. Furthermore, for the adult in the modern world, success is the dominant social value and hence the major criterion for self-evaluation. Thus "whatever threatens this goal is, therefore, the occasion for profound anxiety for the individual in our culture because the threat is to values held essential to one's existence as a personality - i.e. essential to one's worth and prestige as a personality" (May, 1977, p.232). Yet May argues that confidence in individual success as a basic social value, is now being questioned and minor changes generate profound anxiety.

Essential values are linked to the self-object dilemma because anxiety arises when the individual's security base is threatened, and "since it is in terms of this security base that the individual has been able to experience himself as a self in relation to objects, the
distinction between subject and object also breaks down" (May, 1977, p.208).

In May's terms a well-functioning human being is a person who can act responsibly, participate in community, confront possibilities and actualise those possibilities. This person would display the quality of integrity: May refers here to Kierkegaard who believed that "certitude was an inner quality of integrity attainable only by the individual who could think, feel, and act as a psychological and ethical unity" (1967, p.66). In contrast, the person experiencing neurotic anxiety is experiencing an attack on his or her centredness and thus an attack of his or her existence. So the person copes by narrowing down the world to what can be dealt with:

"Neurosis, then is ... the method the individual uses to preserve his own centredness, his own existence. His symptoms are his way of shrinking the range of his world in order that his centeredness may be protected from threat; a way of blocking off aspects of his environment that he may be adequate to the remainder" (May, 1967, p.117).

R.D. Laing contrasted the ontologically secure person who could "encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological, from a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity" (1960, p.40), with the ontologically insecure person who experienced a split both within themselves and between themselves and others. The source of ontological insecurity, according to Laing, is when the family fails to distinguish between the person's action and being (Spinelli, 1989). Thus, attempts to suppress bad behaviour are perceived as a threat to one's being and hence the family controls both relationships with others and inner attempts to deal with the 'bad' self.

Laing described three main fears of the ontologically insecure individual: fear of engulfment, or being taken over by another; fear of implosion, or obliteration of identity from within; and fear of petrification, or change into a dependent, passive thing (1960). Coping involves defences against these fears. In the face of engulfment, Laing noted two responses of activity and isolation. In the face of petrification, Laing argued that the universal response was depersonalisation of oneself and others. He observed the 'vicious circle' of petrification:

"The more one attempts to preserve one's autonomy and identity by nullifying the specific human individuality of the other, the more it is felt to be necessary to continue to do so, because with each denial of the other person's ontological status, one's own ontological insecurity is decreased, the threat to the self from the other is potentiated and hence has to be even more desperately negated" (1960, p.55).

In the light of this overview, to what extent can the coping styles of ministers be understood in terms of existential phenomenology? If some of the "stress" of ministry is anxiety stemming from fundamental anxiety and the threatened or actual conflict between meanings from different provinces, then do ministers respond with petrification, isolation, defensive activity, or world-shrinking as noted by Laing and May, or are they dominated by rules and convention as 'inauthentic' modes of being? On the other hand,
do they largely respond with personal choice, integrity, spontaneity and passionate faith as 'authentic' modes of being?

**Inauthentic coping by ministers**

The ministers tended to use active coping. This is seen clearly in their scores on secular and religious coping scales, comments about personally stressful events and discussion about ministry stress. In discussing ministry the active strategy labelled "digging oneself out" was the most frequently reported method. However, from Laing's perspective, the essential issue is whether the activity was defensive, a means of warding off engulfment, or whether it allowed the risk of hurt by another. In Laing's (1960) accounts of defensive activity there was a feeling of desperation: in contrast, the activity of the ministers appeared to be purposeful and dogged. There appeared to be little evidence of defensive activity in the ministers' responses.

There were some accounts of isolation, or withdrawal in the ministers' coping. Some mentioned plans to leave the denomination if the Cameron issue had ended differently. Others withdrew from presbytery meetings or from colleagues in the face of difficult peer relationships, or from clergy of other denominations as a means of limiting difficult encounters. Still others mentioned temporary emotional withdrawal from their families as a result of ministry stress as in:

"At the beginning of the year there were twelve funerals and other issues that were stressful and this made me withdraw. My wife wanted to talk and my son was concerned about it. Eventually I was able to cry and communicate my feelings to them".

Isolation-withdrawal is a means of avoiding cognitive conflict. Yet it generates other conflicts, such as a denial, or radical reassessment of the call (in the case of considering leaving ministry), or a reduction in social supports that are already limited. Ongoing withdrawal is a characteristic of depersonalisation, which is one aspect of burnout. Thus, the risk of isolation-withdrawal is non-resolution of the existing conflict, generation of other conflicts and as an ongoing style is an indicator of burnout.

Coping responses of world-restriction and petrification were much more evident. In my discussion of enmeshment I noted that many ministers blurred distinctions between self and role as minister. They took on an expanding workload at the expense of 'private' activities, adapted their lifestyle to fit within parish expectations, were guarded in friendships and perceived friendships as opportunities for ministry. Other indicators of enmeshment included viewing studies as secondary to parish ministry, maintaining the manse out of the stipend and even taking responsibility for apathy in the parish. Illustrative comments were:

"At the previous parish there was only one other family under 55 years. We were under stress trying to adapt our lifestyle to them and we were never ourselves with the congregation".
"I get tense when I feel there is a level of apathy in the church. I deal with it through the service and programmes, feeling I have to stir up enthusiasm (not guilt but more a need to inspire)".

These, and other aspects of enmeshment discussed previously, resulted in a narrowing of existence to the ministry role and role reification, which is another description of Laing's petrification. According to existential theory, such responses lock the person into 'inauthentic' modes of being governed by a set of 'oughts', conformity, passivity and fragmentation of life into a series of roles.

**Authentic coping by ministers**

Did any ministers show evidence of spontaneity, integrity, passionate faith or even oscillations between faith and doubt that are held to characterise 'authentic' modes of being? Very few ministers (only 6%) admitted to doubts about their call but these were usually oscillations between faith and doubt, as in "The doubts came at times of discouragement, compared with a sense of God's enabling now" or "I never doubted Jesus as Lord but doubted my ability to teach and preach it". Some admitted to doubts about material provision in the future, together with faith in God, as in:

"I believe God will provide. I have never gone without even if there were no savings. The future concerning my children's needs is unknown".

Some spoke with passion about the meaning of ministry. For example, the following comment echoes Kirkegaard on the theme of subjectivity:

"There is no higher calling that someone can have than to speak God's word to people in all its breadth, to live out God's care and concern for the world (you have to live it as well as preach it). There is a tremendous incarnational dimension to the ministry".

Kirkegaard wrote:

"It is with subjectivity that Christianity is concerned, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all. Objectively, Christianity has absolutely no existence. If the truth happens to be only in a single subject it exists for him alone; and there is greater Christian joy in heaven over this one individual than over universal history or the system" (Warnock, 1970, p.9).

Those who spoke with passion were integrated in Kirkegaard's sense of being unified in thinking, feeling and action because their beliefs were applied firstly to themselves and then to others:

"It's what I live for, to share the word of God with people. To do that, I must grow myself. I have to preach to myself first, before to others. That's the fulfilment."
Another way of viewing integrity is in terms of the individual's commitment to their beliefs. The majority of ministers scored high on intrinsic commitment, indicating that they saw their faith as a unifying basis for living and as central to their thinking, feeling and behaviour. In their comments on ministry stress they also mentioned striving for integrity and abhorrence of any hypocrisy that resulted from discrepancies between their preaching and their behaviour. Thus intrinsic religiousness is one indicator of integrity, and thus of authentic being which is the product of adaptive coping.

To what extent did the ministers seek certainty, or were they able to tolerate ambiguity and make free choices? To some extent they resisted conformity by rejecting the materialistic, secular beliefs of contemporary society. Further, they did not take on, as a totality, the teachings of their denomination (either in the form of Calvinism, or the beliefs of the Westminster Confession). That is, their beliefs did not have the coherence of a systematic theology and their privatized nature reflected a process of individual choice: for these reasons the ministers were both privatized and cognitively secularized. In practice, they accepted both the evangelical thrust of their call as well as the indifference and lack of understanding of their audience. They did not seek legitimation through material success (seen particularly in their comments about stipends, the manse and career paths), and hence community values of material gain were of decreased importance and failure to gain success less significant as a source of anxiety. On the other hand, there was pressure to expect church growth as a result of their diligent work and as God's blessing upon a faithful servant (seen in comments about the meaning of ministry). Success in terms of power or the capacity to influence others for good was desired and could be seen as a sign of divine favour. In these ways there was scope for authentic being as well as pressures towards securing power as a sign of social legitimation.

Is authentic coping possible?

I have been discussing indicators of 'authentic' modes of living for ministers with the assumption that 'authentic' being is possible for them. Can ministers live as 'authentic' beings if they espouse Christian beliefs providing a ready-made scheme of meaning? While Heidegger (1962) asserts that defensively taking the position that existence is meaningful produces inauthentic being, Spinelli (1989) argues that the authentic-inauthentic duality exists within individuals rather than between them. Thus, a person can move between these modes of experiencing themselves and others, although one mode may be primary. Roberts (1957) goes further in arguing that Christianity is essentially paradoxical and hence permits authentic being. He states that linked to existentialism's stress on freedom is the emphasis on human ambiguity and that such ambiguity is "what Biblical revelation always has meant and always will mean" (Roberts, 1957, p9). In his discussion Roberts seeks to avoid both fundamentalism and dismissal of God in deciding what humans should do with their freedom. Instead he asserts:

"He will not avoid this dilemma by returning to the level of the animal who does not ask metaphysical and religious questions. Nor can he avoid it by accepting some ethical or religious system which purports to give him infallible guidance as to what he should do ... the genuinely existential thinker, on the contrary, regards
contradiction as not merely the Alpha but the Omega; thought must not only begin here but must return to the given ambiguity of the human situation and do so continually" (Roberts, 1957, pp8-9).

For ministers, ambiguity is inherent in their spiritual practice. In prayer and worship they are both priest and penitent, leader of the flock and wayward sheep, initiator and dependent, aware of self and aware (to some extent) of God, modelling outward form and yet unable to pass on the subjective experience. Those who recognised and lived at both poles of the paradox were coping as authentic beings in existentialist terms. On the other hand, those who struggled with this ambiguity tended to emphasise the role of minister, deny or ignore subjective experience and so move towards enmeshment.

Ambiguity is also inherent in their position as sinful yet called to be Christ-like. The greater their knowledge and appreciation of Christ's perfection, the greater is awareness of their own sinfulness (as in the paradox of St Paul in Romans 7). At a theological or cognitive level this is resolved by acknowledging a process of sanctification (Berkhof, 1941) or progression towards holiness but in practice there is a danger of denying one or both polarities, or isolating themselves from the struggle to live as 'becoming' beings. There is an appeal in cognitive segmentation where one is active in the areas or provinces where gains can be made but defensively avoiding provinces where action appears too difficult. In other words, the challenge of living with ambiguity as a Christian is to maintain openness between different provinces of meaning in the face of resulting anxiety.

Therefore there is justification for the assumption that ministers can live as 'authentic' as well as 'inauthentic' beings. However, does this acknowledgement of ambiguity support the approach of Batson and Ventis (1982) and in particular their endorsement of a quest orientation as an adaptive religious style? They began with a definition of religion as "whatever we do to come to grips with existential questions" (ibid, p.22) and argued that intrinsic religiousness involved "intense, rigid devotion to orthodox religious beliefs and practices" (ibid, p.147) in contrast to a quest approach marked by "complexity, doubt and tentativeness" (ibid, p.149). Consistent with previous research, they found that extrinsic religion was maladaptive: it was associated with anxiety, less meaning in life, intolerance, prejudice and no change in compassion. In my study extrinsic religion was unrelated to stress-burnout and there was no consistent pattern of relationships with coping strategies but my subjects generally scored low on measures of extrinsic commitment. Batson and Ventis (1982) found the quest orientation was psychologically and socially adaptive: it was associated with open-mindedness, flexibility, personal competence and control, as well as with reduced prejudice and increased compassion. The 'cost' was a greater focus on existential concerns.

I have already commented on research linking intrinsic religiousness with positive coping and beneficial psychological outcomes (see ch.2). In a review article Masters (1991) concluded that intrinsic commitment was positively correlated with well-being, internal locus of control, purpose in life, self-control, sociability, responsibility, tolerance and 'intellectual efficiency' as well as being negatively correlated with anxiety, insecurity and prejudice, amongst other traits. However, Batson and Ventis (1982) disputed the
beneficial effects of intrinsic religiousness, arguing that those who held an intrinsic orientation gained a sense of meaning at the cost of bondage to their beliefs, a sense of control at the cost of submitting to God’s control and only an appearance of concern and compassion rather than confirming behaviour. It appears that subsequent research, including my results given in Chapters 4 and 5, has failed to support their conclusions regarding intrinsic religiousness and there have been very few studies using the quest scale (Kojetin, Bridges, McIntosh and Spilka 1987, and Nielson and Fultz 1995 are notable exceptions). Hence, the work of Batson and Ventis should be viewed tentatively, as Brown (1991) concludes.

Summary

What conclusions can be drawn about the ‘inauthentic’ and ‘authentic’ coping styles of my ministers? Some have attempted to avoid clashes between provinces of meaning through isolation-withdrawal. Others have used petrifaction as defensive coping with potential engulfment by others. These are defined as ‘inauthentic’ styles because they constrict the world to what is manageable and ignore their full freedom. Both withdrawal and petrifaction have been identified as elements of enmeshment in ministry. At other times ministers have displayed doubts, facing ambiguity and conflicts between provinces; they have shown centredness in their responses by their integrity; they have thrown themselves into subjectivity in their passion for evangelism, or when some have immersed themselves in religious experiences. These themes did not emerge from my original examination of ministers’ comments, but the theme of integrity may relate to accepting one’s strengths and limitations which was an aspect of being equipped for ministry.

It is clear from extensive data presented in Chapter 5 that enmeshment (whether viewed as a coping style, or as a consequence of that style) had psychologically negative consequences according to stress-burnout measures, whereas being equipped but not-enmeshed had psychologically positive consequences. Thus, I found a direct relationship between ‘inauthentic’ modes of withdrawal/petrification, which were common responses within enmeshment themes, and maladaptive consequences but only some indirect support for ‘authentic’ modes of coping being adaptive, as discussed in the section above. The lack of clear relationships is hardly surprising since existential theory suggests that people fluctuate between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ modes (Spinelli, 1989) and my measures of association have used categories based on dominant response types.

SECULARISATION WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NSW

I have been discussing how anxiety results directly from cognitive secularisation and some typical modes of responding to that anxiety. This is clearly an individual-level process. Yet it is important to move beyond the level of the individual for several reasons. First, the context of ministry has an important effect on coping according to stress-process theory so I want to examine how changes within the denomination contribute directly to stress. Second, private beliefs are shaped by social processes and ministers’ religious beliefs are influenced by social processes within, or affecting the denomination. Thus, analysing social processes upon/within the denomination clarifies
sources of ministers' privatised beliefs. Secularisation theory is helpful as a framework for describing the Presbyterian denomination as stressor, as well as providing an analysis of processes that are directly relevant to personal beliefs.

For these reasons I now analyse secularisation with the Presbyterian Church in NSW using the approach of Chaves (1993, 1994) and his definition of secularisation as the declining scope of religious authority. Recall that he defines three dimensions of secularisation, corresponding to societal, organisational and individual levels of analysis: *laicisation*, or the process whereby the religious sphere loses its primacy over other institutions; *internal secularisation*, or the transformation of religious organisations so they conform to secular patterns and religious authority within the organisation declines; and *religious disinvolvelement*, or the decline in religious beliefs and practices among individuals. I have discussed reasons for adopting his secularisation theory more fully in Chapter 1. It is important to add that the notion of 'declining scope' immediately raises the question of a time frame: decline since when? Here I want to examine period of approximately 20 years from the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977 to the present (1995). A relatively brief period is sufficient to demonstrate significant influences on current beliefs and current stress levels and 1977 was a turning point for the denomination.

**Laicisation**

At the institutional level there is evidence of declining authority over other secular spheres or laicisation in the denomination's declining role in educational, welfare and medical spheres since 1977. Traditionally the Church has exerted influence in these areas. Within Calvinism, exhortation to provide for less fortunate people in the community is derived from principles of charity and stewardship. In Book 3 of the *Institutes* Calvin (1559/1960) writes:

> "All the blessings we enjoy are Divine deposits, committed to our trust on this condition, that they should be dispensed for the benefit of our neighbours" (vii.5); and

> "Moreover, that we may not be weary of doing good, which otherwise would of necessity soon be the case, we must add also the other character mentioned by the apostle, that 'charity suffereth long and is not easily provoked'" (vii.6).

Declining institutional authority since 1977 is largely a consequence of a decline in membership and wealth of the denomination after formation of the Uniting Church. This is essentially a continuing marginal decline in political authority: there is no evidence that just prior to 1977 Presbyterian schools, welfare services or hospitals were superior to others, or perceived to be superior, simply because of their church affiliation. In other words, the process of laicisation in which religion becomes just one institution amongst many in society, having no authoritative status, was largely complete for the NSW Presbyterian Church prior to 1977.

I have already stated that 46% of NSW Presbyterians joined the Uniting Church in 1977.
In 1980 there were 26,175 communicant members and 102 inducted ministers and in 1986 membership had declined to 24,655 while inducted ministers had increased 28% to 131 (Fullerton, 1988, p.22). According to the Year Book, in 1995 NSW communicant membership was 20,709 (a decline of 21% over 1980 figures) and there were 125 inducted ministers (an increase of 23% over 1980 figures). There is a trend of decreasing membership together with an increase in ordained ministers.

In settlements with the Uniting Church after 1977 there was a loss of schools, child welfare services and homes for disabled and elderly from the control of the Presbyterian Church. Since that time there has been some consolidation of child care services and development of aged accommodation but also the closure of the Scottish Presbyterian Hospital in April, 1995 because of financial difficulties (see Minutes of the NSW General Assembly, 1980-1995).

As a result of radically reducing its provision of services in these areas, the Presbyterian Church in NSW lost most of its capacity to influence political decisions as a large 'player' in these fields. In the child/youth welfare area in particular, the Presbyterian Church lost property and services that could have been the basis for attracting government funding towards new programmes. For example, as a result of the Usher Report (NSW Department of Community Services, 1992) in March, 1992 non-government sector organisations were invited to contract to provide substitute care services in NSW. The Presbyterian Church was running three small youth accommodation programmes in Sydney. It did not have a 'track record' of dealing with a range of problems such as youth with intellectual disabilities, drug or psychiatric problems, nor did it have a strong infrastructure of supportive services such as individual and family counselling services; community placement schemes; an integrated crisis, medium-term, long-term and exit programme for youth under its care. Hence, it was unable to compete with larger religious organisations for government funding to extend these services or replace them with alternative projects.

Consequently, there was little evidence that ministers thought that the denomination should be involved in broader political or social activities, with social justice rated lowest out of all priorities for ministry in my study, consistent with earlier studies of Presbyterian ministers in the 1960s and 1980s (Blaikie, 1979; Fullerton, 1988). In answers to the open question about denominational finances as a source of stress, none of the ministers advocated increased spending on denominational schools or social service programmes and some ministers were critical of current levels of spending on youth accommodation services. There appeared to be acceptance of laicisation in these areas.

**Internal secularisation**

To what extent has the NSW Presbyterian Church become more secularised, more like non-religious organisations, since 1977? In Chaves' terms, to what extent has religious authority declined within denominational organisations? One indicator is whether power has shifted from religious authorities to agency structures (Chaves, 1993), in effect passing from clergy to professional laypersons. A problem in analysing secularisation
within NSW Presbyterianism is the status and power of elders who are not theologically trained clergy but are ordained to carry out religious functions and hold religious power within the Church. Would an increase in the power of elders (many of whom are professionally trained) indicate secularisation, or would it simply represent a shift from one type of religious authority to another? In this case I think it is important to examine whether the elders are functioning largely as professionals, or representing the religious interests of their parishes or presbyteries in exercising their powers. In other words, is their primary identification as professional administrator, or as a religious authority?

There is no single organisational head having supreme authority in Presbyterianism, nor is there a professional administrator who takes on the role of CEO of the denomination. The titular head (Moderator) is an elected position with incumbency limited to one year. This position is usually filled by an ordained minister but for the first time an elder was appointed in 1995. Since 1977 the position of General Secretary of the Assembly has been filled by a lay person. Under the parity rule there is theoretically numerical equality between clergy and lay (elder) representation in State Assemblies which are the supreme policy making bodies and represent religious authority within the denomination. From time to time an imbalance occurs. For example, the Minutes of the 1995 NSW Assembly (p.58) refer to "a working principle of modern Presbyterian polity that there be a substantial numerical parity of ministers and elders" and in a subsequent paragraph referring to the 1994 Assembly note "there were 69 more ministers eligible to sit in Assembly than elders". Of course, such discrepancies may be reduced when those eligible to attend fail to do so, or else fail to vote and the 1995 Minutes include the observation that in the controversial issue of the Cameron Appeal previously, 126 ministers and 122 elders voted - an imbalance which would not have affected the outcome since the appeal was dismissed by a margin of 34 votes. In practice, then, there is reasonable equality between clergy and lay power at Assembly, which has formal control over the denomination. But does it have effective control?

Professional lay administrators (such as the Executive Officer of the Social Services Department) are subject to the relevant Church committee (such as Social Services Committee) and thence to Assembly in policy implementation. Moreover, agencies of the Church are not centralised: there is no single head or Board to co-ordinate the non-parish activities of the denomination, such as social services, theological education, mission, Christian education, and so on. So there is little opportunity for an agency head or board to gain sufficient influence to challenge religious authority of standing committees and Assembly. There has been little evidence of expansion of professional administrative positions within the NSW Church since 1977. The position of administrative head of the Church's Social Services Department was filled by a clergyman in the role of Acting Superintendent to mid-1979, followed by a part-time lay person in late 1979 and then a full-time lay Superintendent or Director from 1980 onwards. The Superintendent of Ministry and Mission, a department that oversees exit appointments, home missionaries, deaconesses and some specialist ministries, has alternated between a part-time and a full-time appointment since 1980 but every incumbent has been an ordained minister. None of the other standing committees of the NSW Assembly has a full-time paid director.
However, there have been clear struggles within the denomination between "liberals" and "conservatives", appearing as theological conflicts between liberal/neo-orthodox and evangelical/fundamentalist positions. Chaves (1993) argues that these often indicate struggles over organisational resources where support is mobilised by theological argument: that is, they are struggles to bring agency structures back under 'religious' control. These struggles would then result in desecularisation. In NSW Presbyterianism conflict has been particularly evident in struggles over the control of theological education. Prior to Union, a liberal theological education was provided at St Andrews College at Sydney University and theology degrees offered by secular universities were acceptable qualifications for Presbyterian ministers, whereas after Union in 1977 evangelical theology from (Anglican) Moore College and traditional Presbyterianism from the Presbyterian Theological Centre (PTC), located within the Presbytery of Sydney, were the acceptable courses. This is a shift towards theological education being controlled by religious authority within the denomination since the PTC is staffed by clergy and controlled by a committee under the religious authority of Assembly. The conflict between Peter Cameron, the principal of St Andrews College, and Sydney Presbytery was not just a matter of differing views of biblical authority, but fundamentally a dispute over the location and nature of theological education. Disputes over collections for the General Mission Programme (from which the PTC is financed) were struggles over resources for internally-based theological education. Since the "win" by conservatives in the Cameron "trial" the position of the PTC as primary supplier of theological education with an increase in staffing was confirmed by the NSW Assembly in 1994. In the sense that it demonstrated the power of religious authority over secular educational interests, it can be viewed as an indicator of desecularisation.

Another indication of internal secularisation (Chaves, 1993; 1994) is professionalisation of clergy as employees of the denomination. The growth of specialist positions for clergy is one example of a shift towards distinct employee roles. Yet specialist positions for clergy have been few in relation to parish positions and their growth has been slight. In 1980 of 120 ordained clergy, 12 were in specialist positions (10%) compared with 18 out of 149 ordained clergy (12%) in 1995 according to the Yearbook and Church Directory. Additional roles comprised hospital and prison chaplaincies, theological lecturing and missions. Overall, there is little evidence of internal secularisation in the growth of specialist positions within church organisations. In fact, the growth of parish clergy positions from 102 to 122 within the same period and despite falling membership suggests desecularisation.

Chaves (1993) shows how clergy and laypersons within a denomination are subject to two authority structures: agency and religious authority. They differ in orientation towards individuals (as resource base versus object of control); goals (engagement with the world versus internal/religious); basis of differentiation (functional versus geographical); primary role (administrator versus clergy); basis of legitimisation (rational/legal versus traditional/charismatic); and scope of authority (limited to employees versus members). Where clergy define themselves as employees within an agency structure and take on its orientation as primary, their identification with the denomination as agency would indicate internal secularisation.
To what extent do Presbyterian ministers identify with an agency orientation? That is, do they expect to fulfill organizational roles, market religion to potential customers, use administrative skills and build large, financially viable congregations? In my study, some ministers complained about requirements to attend presbytery and other denominational meetings and the expectation that they would take on the role of interim moderator of a vacant parish in addition to their local pastoral duties. On average, they gave low priority to administration at state level and only moderate priority to parish administration. Some ministers clearly conceptualized evangelism in marketing terms, although their underlying motivation was gospel-centred and those who mentioned criteria for 'career success' in ministry frequently spoke of large congregations with the means to employ a staff team. There are indications, then, that ministers were expected to behave as professional employees but that these expectations were seldom accepted wholeheartedly by ministers. This is inconsistent with internal secularisation.

In contrast, ministers defined their role narrowly in focus and scope. Their focus was largely preaching/teaching and related parish organisation with the parish their scope. Why were they defining their profession in this way? Is it an example of desecularisation, resisting a process that leads to internal secularisation? Is it a consequence of privatization, personal commitment to individually-held beliefs about ministry? Is it a defensive means of coping with unrealistic demands?

There are some clues in the factors obtained from their priorities for ministry (see Chapter 5). Preaching, the highest single priority, formed a cluster labelled *spiritual leadership* with personal spiritual development. Ministers rated this cluster as more important than *parish leadership* which included items related to theological expertise and delegation. In their ratings and their comments on the meaning of ministry they were primarily defining their role in spiritual terms. These were consistent with a Calvinist worldview and the evangelical emphasis seen in Presbyterian theological education since 1977. In other words, their role definition reflects a workable application of evangelical Calvinism. Psychologically, the narrowed focus appears to be a means of coping with unlimited demands but in a way that is consistent with their worldview. Ministers cannot evangelize the world, but even those lacking charisma and skills in crowd manipulation can attempt to influence people in their parish through their Sunday preaching and lifestyle evangelism which depends on personal spirituality. Since their role definition is consistent with Calvinism, it is not clear whether it springs from denominational socialisation, or if it results from privatization. In resisting a less 'religious' role as administrator and pastoral overseer they are part of a recent evangelical-fundamentalist trend within the religious authority structure and suggests desecularisation within the Presbyterian Church at the level of internal secularisation.

**Authority over individuals**

According to Chaves (1994), the third area in which secularisation may be observed is in the declining power of religious authority over the actions of individuals. He argues that generalised beliefs in God or church membership are less important indicators of secularisation, than specific beliefs and behaviours proscribed by a religious authority such as denial that papal authority descended from Jesus; religious intermarriage; use of
contraception; or eating certain foods on certain days, for Roman Catholic populations. In other words, the declining power of a religious organisation to influence its adherents' behaviour in areas where there are clearly articulated requirements or prohibitions is tenable evidence of secularisation. I will examine the extent of individual-level secularisation of NSW Presbyterians in terms of behaviours and denominationally-relevant beliefs.

Are there any clear behavioural requirements for NSW Presbyterians? If so, how compliant are adherents? According to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the ten commandments are to be used as 'a rule of life informing (believers) of the will of God' (xix, vi) and are to be followed; believers are to take part in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and divorce is permitted only in cases of adultery or wilful desertion. Other clear behavioural statements from the General Assembly of Australia (1994) involve abortion and homosexuality: abortion was considered unacceptable unless essential to save the mother's life and homosexual practices were declared to be sinful and hence recognition of homosexual marriages was unacceptable. Articles in Australian Presbyterian Living (APL Today), the official magazine of the Australian Presbyterian Church, also suggest areas of behaviour in which attempts are being made to exert influence by the Church. Recent articles have dealt negatively with homosexuality (November, 1993), infidelity (September, 1994) and euthanasia (July, 1995). These sources suggest specific behaviours that could be studied in congregational members over time to test the extent of Church influence over personal conduct.

My study did not obtain any direct behavioural evidence from congregational members. However, there is a little indirect evidence on attitudes, which are influenced by behaviour, from Kaldor's National Church Life Survey (1995) in which he asked questions on euthanasia, sex outside marriage and remarriage of divorced people. Compared with attenders of other churches, Australian Presbyterians were slightly less likely to agree or strongly agree with euthanasia (42% and 37% respectively), more likely to disagree with sex outside marriage (75% and 80% respectively) and had similar rates of agreement over remarriage in church of people who had been divorced (87% and 88% respectively). On these three issues the Presbyterians' views were most similar to those who held a contextualist view of the bible and tended to be more liberal than those who held a literalist view. Although such attitudes may bear little relationship to personal behaviour, they suggest that Australian Presbyterians generally:

1) would tend not to seek/endorse euthanasia, possibly because of the teaching of the sixth commandment;
2) uphold the seventh commandment as an ideal, if not also in practice;
3) do not condemn divorce (although whether the basis for this attitude is biblical, confessional, or cultural is not clear).

The moderate views of Presbyterians compared with other denominations are interesting from an ageing, theologically conservative congregation and suggest a degree of privatisation. It was not possible to establish a baseline for 1977 so that any trends could be identified as secularisation or desecularisation.
My study provided some information about how ministers viewed the authority of the denomination over their behaviour since 1977. A considerable minority did not see that there was any clear ideal of "Presbyterian" or "Presbyterian minister." That is, they viewed the time after 1977 as a period of instability and identity-seeking for the denomination. Some experienced this as tolerance for a wide range of views and behaviours and appreciated having many alternatives in a time of change. Others experienced it as a lack of denominational leadership so that congregations or themselves were not identified with the denomination: they saw themselves or their congregations as primarily Christians rather than members of a particular denominational group. Both the unidentified and the niche-dwellers did not perceive the denomination as having strong authority over their behaviour as ministers, or as individual believers. Some were extremely wary of denominational control, as voiced by the minister who said "I long for a sense of denominational identity but not denominational control, just complementarity." This group, then, illustrates secularisation at the individual level, where organisational control is implicitly or explicitly rejected. Of course, baseline data and stronger current data are required to confirm my tentative comments. Further, I am not arguing that ministers were behaving in ways contrary to emerging norms for Presbyterian ministers (and I suspect that many behaviours of these groups will become the norm), but that the behaviours did not result from the authority of the denomination.

Some more direct evidence about denominational influence over beliefs came from responses to the statements taken from the Westminster Confession. Again, this is not behavioural evidence, but it moves beyond generalised belief in God to specific beliefs identified within a denomination. Agreement with the Confession would indicate strong influence of the official denominational position. Congregational members agreed most strongly with general Protestant beliefs and tended to have lowest agreement on some distinctive "Presbyterian" items such as those relating to predestination and the inclusion of baptised infants within the church. Ministers also had highest agreement with broad Protestant doctrines of salvation by grace, repentance, judgement and the virgin birth, but disagreed with more technical aspects of predestination. Thus, the Presbyterian ministers and congregational members agreed most strongly with generalised Christian beliefs rather than beliefs that were denominationally specific. This suggests that:

1) ministers are teaching broader Protestant doctrines rather than narrowly focusing on distinctively Presbyterian theology; and

2) congregations are influenced more by local preaching and/or other sources of Protestant beliefs than official statements of distinctively Presbyterian doctrine.

Since I have no baseline data I cannot comment about any changes in Calvinist beliefs since 1977 and can draw no conclusions about individual level secularisation. Nonetheless, it appears that the influence of official Presbyterianism over clergy and congregational beliefs is not strong at present.

Are Calvinist beliefs affecting actual behaviour? Generally, my study showed that there was no direct relationship between Presbyterian beliefs and God attributions or religious coping across a range of life situations. However, general religious commitment and
problem-solving styles were predictors of coping, at least in some situations. That is, there was no direct influence of Calvinist themes of human sinfulness, God's holiness and God's sovereignty in salvation upon everyday behaviour, but some weak indirect effects were found through intrinsic-extrinsic commitment and collaborative, or deferring problem-solving styles. Again, repeated measures are needed for conclusions about secularisation.

Although I have argued that changes in congregational beliefs and behaviours must be assessed before secularisation/desecularisation can be inferred, it is also important to check for changes in official doctrines, particularly in the wake of such a significant change as occurred in NSW Presbyterianism in 1977. Has the "official" Church doctrine moved away from the statements of the Westminster Confession since union in 1977? I think not, for several reasons. First, since shortly after union, both ministers and elders are required to assent to the Confession in their ordination vows. Second, in a series of articles in APL Today on the Westminster Confession, original doctrines are explained and confirmed. For example, in an article on Chapter Three (God's Eternal Decree) Wilkinson points out that election is "God's free choice", brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart, a work of grace with the goal of personal holiness (1994, p.20). In these articles there is no attempt to give a detailed theological justification, or to argue for a logical synthesis of election, human freedom and human responsibility. They appear to be a concise statement of "official" beliefs presented in a direct, conversational style using modern language. Since the series did not begin until 1994 the articles could not have influenced the responses to my study.

Factor analysis of the Presbyterian Beliefs Scale showed that the best indicators of current Presbyterian beliefs were items relating to human sinfulness and God's holiness. These are underlying themes within Calvinism and reflect broad attitudes to human and divine characteristics. It seems that while the specific, technical doctrines of Calvinism are no longer part of the "received" doctrine of the NSW Presbyterian Church, a basic Christian doctrine is nonetheless flavoured by a Calvinist emphasis on human sinfulness and God's holiness. This "flavour" is common to ministers and congregations. Apparently it is being communicated by ministers and is influencing the beliefs of congregations. Thus, discrepancies between "official" and "received" doctrines, if continuing as a trend, would suggest individual-level secularisation but evidence of any continuing influence of broad Calvinist themes upon the beliefs of ministers and congregations should also be considered.

An important finding is the diversity of beliefs, the lack of consistency between beliefs held by individuals. This is seen in the low item-total correlations for the Westminster Confession statements (See Appendix 5). Such diversity, together with discrepancies between official and received doctrines that could indicate individual-level secularisation, if continuing, strongly points to religious privatisation (Luckmann, 1967; Berger and Luckmann, 1967). That is, the denomination no longer supplies an over-arching "public" and "official" religion to its members. Instead, the members select 'ultimate meanings' from a variety of sources. As a consequence, ministers can no longer depend on institutional legitimation and must base their authority elsewhere.
A further issue raised by the finding of diverse, privatised beliefs, is whether there is anything distinctive about Presbyterianism in NSW. If congregational beliefs and behaviours are similar to mainstream Protestantism there is little theologically to attract or retain members in the context of 'church-hopping' (Kaldor, 1994). It is likely that current members are Presbyterians because of family socialisation, tradition or social ties with other members. New members are attracted by personal evangelism and proximity; they persevere largely because of spiritual nurturing and caring, or positive social interactions (from Kaldor, 1994: Presbyterians did not differ from other Protestant denominations on these measures).

In summary, there is evidence of laicisation, but not internal secularisation, in the NSW Presbyterian Church. If current discrepancies between official and received doctrine continue, then secularisation at the individual level will emerge. For desecularisation to occur, the Church must regain influence over its members at least, and then extend its influence to new members. To do this it must promote a distinctive theology and/or a distinctive Church community that is characterised by nurturing, caring and opportunities for social interaction.

STUDENTS, WORLDVIEWS AND STRESS

In this and the next sections I move from an analysis of secularisation as declining religious authority at different levels to an individual-level analysis with a cognitive focus. That is, I attempt to examine changes in the thinking of theological students and ministers as they study religious materials and incorporate religious themes into their everyday thinking. The goal is to outline briefly the structure and content of their worldviews and how this relates to stress. A religious worldview is an over-arching meaning system that includes reference to the supernatural.

Definitions

Four definitions are important in the following discussion. *Unsecularised* refers to people who accept uncritically the religious meaning system into which they were socialised and are unaware of the claims of competing meaning systems so that their worldview is taken-for-granted. *Privatised* denotes people who choose a meaning system from an assortment provided by religious and secular organisations and individuals but without fundamental questioning of any elements so that their worldview is nevertheless taken-for-granted and 'somewhat precarious' (Luckmann, 1967, p.102). *Cognitively secularised* refers to people who recognise that they can choose a meaning system and reject a previously taken-for-granted worldview (McKnight, 1990). Instead of automatically applying meanings from various sources depending on the context, they are confronted with the need to synthesise a meaning system from the diverse elements. For this group, choice is used in the existential sense of confronting possibilities. *Desecularised* people have purposefully abandoned a previously held meaning system (usually rejecting secular meanings at a time of religious conversion) and have become socialised into a religious worldview. These definitions refer to types that describe cognitive states on dimensions of taken-for-grantedness and source of worldviews (religious or secular).
On entry to theological college candidates for ministry have already acquired religious knowledge and beliefs from the same denominational, other religious and secular sources as other young congregational members. Some 54 percent of Presbyterian theological students described a religious conversion experience and most described some type of experience of God in prayer. Religion is part of their daily life: in their studies, personal religious practices and possibly in a range of informal contacts. In phenomenological terms, religious themes are already incorporated within several finite provinces of meaning (Schutz, 1970a, 1972), including the provinces of paramount reality, scientific or systematised knowledge and religious experiences. Those who experienced conversion are cognitively transformed in a process called alternation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) where the person's reality is transformed and a process of resocialisation begins. The new subjective reality is maintained through significant others: "the religious community provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p.178). Cognitively, the person is desecularised. Those whose primary socialisation was within the Christian Church and who did not experience conversion are cognitively un secularised.

The scientific province of meaning

During theological training there are changes within the student's stock of knowledge relating to religion, theology, church administration etc. When the student grapples with new theoretical material he or she enters the 'scientific' province of meaning. The problem at hand may be the writing of an essay, or the critical reading of a text, but the student's cognitive state is one of detachment from ongoing life so that normal subjectivity is suspended. Depending upon the specific problem at hand, some data (input from lecturers, reading etc) will become relevant and hence investigated or clarified, while other data will become irrelevant and thus remain unquestioned (Schutz, 1970b). Thus, some theoretical knowledge from sub-provinces of theology, history etc, will be simply accepted because of the authority of the source, while other knowledge will be grasped evidentially through reconstructing the argument so that the data is understood clearly and distinctly. In these ways religious schemes of reference are built up within a person's stock of knowledge and provide a framework for purposive action. Those schemes which reflect 'official' denominational perspectives and are accepted unthinkingly maintain desecularisation, or un secularisation at the individual level.

Schutz argues that within a province of meaning items of knowledge may be inconsistent or contradictory providing that they relate to the theme of the province (Cox, 1978). Answers of the theological students to the Westminster Confession statements were not consistent with 'official' church doctrine, nor did they cohere in any internally consistent way. Their theological beliefs comprised many incompatible elements, but were nonetheless available within the 'scientific' province of meaning. Lack of consistency with 'official' doctrine and the internal inconsistency of their beliefs suggests privatisation. The belief assortments of Baptist and Presbyterian students probably include some common sources (general religious media, inter-denominational organisations etc) and some discrete sources (eg lectures, specific reading lists). This results in overall similarities on beliefs scales but different patterns of item-total correlations.
Province of religious experience

Schutz refers to religious experience as a separate province of meaning (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). For the Presbyterian theological students this province was rather narrow or restricted: they scored low on measures of religious experience and these scores were not significantly related to other measures of religiousness. It is possible for different provinces of meaning to have strong interconnections, or overlaps, so that a person can move rapidly and fluidly between the provinces. This could occur, for example, if the students heard about religious experiences in lectures, discussed this material over lunch, moved into a prayer meeting and later prepared an essay on theological aspects of religious contemplation. However, it appears that the province of religious experience was relatively distinct from the provinces of everyday life and scientific theorising for the students.

Province of everyday reality

How is religion part of the lifeworld, the world of paramount reality, for the students? It comprises the content of their "work" as students and a component of typifications. That is, the students are also developing expectations about ministry through interactions with current and former ministers and projecting themselves into ministry roles, as well as through their own experiences which may be fragmentary and contradictory. Some of their lifeworld experiences are stressful. In Schutz's terms, this involves a cognitive conflict where elements of the situation that have seemed relevant in a taken-for-granted way are suddenly insufficient for the person to master the situation (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). The mastery may involve interpretation of the situation as well as action taken.

Students who fail an exam, or respond with stress to the illness of a close relative, are confronted with a break in the taken-for-grantedness of the world. The typical response of the Presbyterian students was to affirm God's sovereignty (a strong Calvinist theme) and to act in the expectation that God would accomplish his purposes through humans, or else in some direct way. Their understanding of God's sovereignty appeared very close to determinism. In their responses they used a well-learned orientation to meaning and action rather than newly acquired beliefs sedimented in the 'scientific' province of meaning. Their comments on how they understood God to be involved in personally stressful situations were not couched in theological terms. There was also little use of themes from the province of 'religious experience'. Some students reported a sense of God's presence in different stages of the stressful experience but this was largely expressed in terms of belief rather than actual experience of God.

Thus, students were largely privatised. Their worldview was structured as unrelated religious themes in separate provinces of meaning instead of a theologically defined, well articulated meaning system. The students were involved in a denominational enterprise but had not taken on 'official' doctrine. Nonetheless, the influence of the denomination can be seen in the broad Calvinist orientation which was central to their interpretation of a lifeworld conflict.
How did the structure and content of their worldviews affect stress levels of Presbyterian theological students? Very little, it appears. Despite the incidence of one or more stressful life events there was no significant change over a period of six months from initial 'healthy' levels of anxiety, depression and spiritual well-being. That is, the interpretation of the events through their privatised, Calvinist orientation and their subsequent coping responses were sufficient to maintain 'psychological adjustment' as defined by the measures that were used.

MINISTERS, WORLDVIEWS AND STRESS

When students leave theological college and take up parish ministry the lifeworld changes radically. Perceived stressors and their resultant stress on ministers have already been examined. Here I want to examine processes contributing to stress at the cognitive level, but in the context of institutional secularisation. This analysis includes an examination of clergy, community and congregational worldviews and how they interrelate. Three themes will be discussed: expectations, enmeshment and equipment for ministry.

Expectations

Differences in the expectations of ministers and parishioners can be traced to different socialisation processes. As I have noted in Chapter 6, congregations tend to desire a 'traditional Presbyterian' type of ministry in which the minister has authority over parish organisations and public worship. Their expectations stem from denominational socialisation, the accumulation of personal experiences with different ministers who represent the authority of the denomination. In their thinking about ministry they are unsecularised. On the other hand, ministers generally expect to be facilitators, or 'team captains', rather than occupying roles of denominational authority. These expectations stem from their evangelically-based training and private beliefs about the nature of ministry. They are cognitively secularised in the sense of resisting denominational authority but are also privatised. Hence, the clash in expectations is an example of clashes between cognitively secularised and unsecularised views of ministers and congregations. The consequences for ministers of clashing expectations include periods of conflict, negotiations, change, resistance to change and perceived stress but they do not lead directly to burnout or negative affect.

Enmeshment

Enmeshment refers to an identification of the self with ministry as a result of the spiritual and open-ended nature of the vocation and is accompanied by a withdrawal from other roles such as spouse, parent or friend. How does enmeshment develop? It begins with motivation for ministry. The 'in order to' motives (Schutz, 1972) of ministers centre around proclaiming the gospel: they desire to convert people and build them up in faith. The 'because' motives relate to their calling which was largely based on a conviction about the need for people to be gospel ministers. Since the general Australian population is secular as measured by church attendance (Kaldor, 1994) and spiritual change is generally slow (particularly since charismatic gifts and experiences are given
little emphasis by most Presbyterian ministers) and it is hard to detect, the minister obtains little validating feedback. This is in spite of long hours in diverse tasks. The minister responds by working harder, or minimising work through delegation, or task shedding, so that the same basic motive is directed in one of several directions. Those who work harder must sacrifice other activities to ministry, thus deepening the enmeshment. This can be seen in the minister who plays sport with a parishioner in order to deepen a friendship, or the minister who joins Rotary in order to be a gospel witness. In extending traditional Presbyterian beliefs about evangelism through preaching to personal or lifestyle evangelism, ministers increase self-expectations and the danger of enmeshment.

Thus, enmeshment appears as one consequence of several processes or conditions: laicisation and individual-level secularisation in the general community resulting in mutual misunderstanding, or at least indifference between community members and minister; cognitive secularisation of the minister such that circumscribed 'traditional' ministry roles are eschewed; and privatisation, seen in the diversity of ministers' privately held evangelical beliefs.

The state of enmeshment is described by Berger and Luckmann (1967, p.108) in their discussion of one 'modality of consciousness', role reification:

"Roles may be reified in the same manner as institutions. The sector of self-consciousness that has been objectified in the role is then also apprehended as an inevitable fate, for which the individual may disclaim responsibility. The paradigmatic formula for this kind of reification is the statement "I have no choice in the matter, I have to act this way because of my position" - as husband, father, general, archbishop, chairman of the board, gangster or hangman, as the case may be. This means that the reification of roles narrows the subjective distance that the individual may establish between himself and his role-playing".

Reification brings several problems. Humans are perceived as things, people are seen as products of higher laws or the divine will and so what occurs is accepted passively, as being inevitable (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). The person steps outside of him- or herself in an objectivated social world, no longer living in the ongoing stream of consciousness but living in reflection. Colloquially, this is 'living in one's head'. The depersonalisation component of burnout (Maslach and Jackson, 1986) is also a description of reification. In fact, consequences of reification- enmeshment in ministers included anxiety, burnout and loneliness.

The loneliness of ministers can be seen as a psychological consequence of typical work structures (mobility, time pressure, pastoral role relationships etc) and personal beliefs about ministry. These private beliefs reflect both a traditional Calvinist 'work ethic' and evangelical convictions. Where the minister has strong evangelical convictions and has incorporated Calvinist themes of hard work, personal sinfulness and God's holiness into a private belief system, then the structure of ministry work together with difficulties of evangelism in a secular society produce role reification. This state of consciousness works against intimacy and friendship because it objectivates relationships. It also makes
an experiential relationship with God difficult. Loneliness is experienced as a sense of distance between oneself and others and oneself and God.

Thus, enmeshment can also be seen as a state of consciousness where there is danger of passivity and distancing from those people whom the minister is called to serve. In enmeshment there is also the likely neglect of legitimate needs (in oneself, spouse, family etc) that do not fit into priorities for ministry. Enmeshment is then a long-term and serious consequence for cognitively secularised and privatised ministers.

Equipment

Training

Equipment for ministry was defined in terms of training, spiritual practice and acceptance of limitations. Current theological training for ministers can be seen as a result of the denomination seeking an identity after union in 1977 and of subsequent power struggles between 'conservatives' and 'liberals'. I have argued that these processes suggest internal desecularisation. On the other hand, there are some trends that may result in internal secularisation, such as increasing professionalisation of training. This can be seen largely in the extension of the B.Th. course from a three-year to a four-year course and inclusion of professional skills training in the revised course (PTC Handbook, 1994). The consequences of deficiencies in skills training are increased anxiety and depersonalisation.

Spiritual practice

I have already discussed the relationship between difficulties with spiritual practice, enmeshment and specific negative outcomes. Here I want to examine the basis of beliefs about the importance of spiritual practice and their links with secularisation. Two major themes relating to the importance of spiritual practice or one's spiritual state emerged from the interview data: as a basis for a personal relationship with God and as a means of helping others. These themes are illustrated in the following excerpts.

"Sin really grates on me and makes me wonder if I've got it together enough to help others. I cope by working more, trying to minimise the impact so I don't wallow. I see inability to deal with sin as undermining my relationship with God and thus challenging the integrity of my ministry. The tension is necessary: it is necessary to admit sin and to struggle with it".

"The dryness has happened. I am inspired by the early church fathers but at times, because of busy-ness or being drained by funerals, I feel like the employee in the tourist office directing others to good destinations you have never been to yourself".

The ministers rate spiritual leadership and evangelism as their highest priorities for ministry. In order to carry out these roles the ministers acknowledge a need to have reached some level of spiritual maturity or spiritual aliveness or sense of competence in
their own lives. A sense of deficiency here cuts to the core of what it means to be a minister.

Hughes (1989, p.58) argued that Australian clergy saw their roles as ministering to the Church and hence were withdrawing from the world:

"The focus of faith, the activities of the church and the work of the clergy lies in a personal relationship with God. After the confusion of the sixties and seventies, the clergy have settled into ministry within their congregations.... The locus for ministry is in the church rather than in the world".

He viewed this as the result of secularisation in which other professionals have taken over clergy roles in welfare and counselling areas and a general decline of religious recognition in society. That is, he pointed to laicisation as an explanation for changed clergy roles. He also argued that withdrawal from the world included a decline in evangelistic activities: clergy rated evangelism as important but reported little success in this area of ministry, hence, distancing themselves from a personal responsibility for evangelism.

In contrast, the Presbyterian ministers rated evangelism second only to personal spiritual development out of seven priority clusters. There is a strong sense of individual responsibility for evangelism in their ratings and comments. In order to evangelise and assist in the growth of believers, the ministers believe that a personal relationship with God, nurtured through spiritual practice, is essential. In this task, they see themselves as individual ambassadors for Christ, not primarily as representatives of a denomination. Thus, while the goal may be seen ostensibly as evangelism (bringing people outside the church into the flock or realm of church influence), the process depends on the personal beliefs and spiritual integrity of the individual minister. The process is highly individualised and privatised.

There is an essential conflict here, between the individualised, privatised nature of their beliefs and the demands of public ministry and public evangelism. It would seem that many ministers attempt to resolve this conflict by emphasising personal evangelism or 'friendship evangelism' rather than larger scale evangelism which may produce quicker growth in numbers. This can be seen in frequent comments about "Christianity Explained", a programme of personal evangelism, in which parishioners were trained. However, this approach is less likely to produce rapid increases in congregational numbers, than larger scale evangelism and is less likely to meet denominational pressures for church growth. Thus, a solution which may meet the personal needs of ministers (slow, small-scale evangelism) still conflicts with basic organisational needs for growth.

There is also a potential conflict within the province of 'scientific' theorising between the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and beliefs impelling evangelism. The conflict can be posed as a question: if election means that God has already decided those who will be saved, then what is the force or necessity of evangelism? Theologians of a Reformed perspective have recognised the difficulty and attempted a synthesis of apparently contradictory texts (for example, see chapter titled "Election and the Preaching of the
Gospel" in Berkouwer, 1960). The significance of one's theology of election for evangelism is well captured by Berkouwer (1960, p.220):

"The preaching of the gospel is undermined not only because the absoluteness of Christianity has been abandoned, but also because the doctrine of election has been deterministically infected".

If a minister has not considered the implications of Calvinist theology for evangelism and developed a personally satisfying synthesis, or a methodology to which inconsistencies can be referred, then the consequences may well include ineffective preaching as well as cognitive dissonance when both issues become relevant to a lifeworld problem. For example, a question by a parishioner about election when the congregation is planning a programme of evangelism may bring previously discrepant but unrelated themes into focus. The possible consequences of such dissonance are discussed below.

**Personal acceptance and legitimation**

The theme of personal acceptance of strengths and limitations is important since lack of self-acceptance was related to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and burnout. It also raises the issue of self-legitimation. On what basis do ministers accept themselves? How do they explain and justify their roles?

Berger and Luckmann (1967, p.110) argue that individual-level or vertical legitimation, defined as "a second order objectivation of meaning" is necessary:

"In other words, the individual biography, in its several, successive, institutionally pre-defined phases, must be endowed with a meaning that makes the whole subjectively plausible".

According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), subjective identity is ultimately legitimated by ordering and integrating it within a symbolic universe. However, this legitimation is precarious because the construction of individual biography is always "threatened by the presence of realities that are meaningless in its terms" (p.121).

Initially ministers derive self-legitimation from their call. This has been described in various ways and in relation to differing provinces of meaning: as a religious experience, and thus within the province of religious experience; as a deliberate assessment of their gifts or abilities in the light of urgent human needs, or on the basis of beliefs derived from doctrine and thus within the province of 'scientific' theorising; on the advice and urging of significant others, and thus within the everyday province of meaning. For some ministers self-legitimation spans two or more different provinces of meaning. This allows legitimating religious themes to be present and accessible in multiple modes of consciousness.

The call is tested during theological training. It takes the form of conflicts within one or more provinces of meaning, in the manner of Schutz's discussion of relevance (1974). For example, the student fails several exams and immediately expectations about the
ongoing flow of everyday life as a student in response to the call are brought into question. Or the student writes a theological essay in which 'official' and private doctrines related in some way to the issue of calling are contradictory and this becomes a problem to be explicated. As a result of the problem, the student weighs up the alternative interpretations and possible goals for future action. That is, the notion of call may be revised or contradictions subsumed under a higher-order explanation (eg 'God is closing the door on ministry' or 'This is for my good and God is working it out' as two students commented in their discussion of stressful events during theological college). Through these experiences the nature of the legitimating symbolic universe may be changed.

For ministers, the ordination service is 'official' legitimation of their authority as Presbyterian ministers. Yet their ongoing stressful experiences related to slow spiritual change in others or dealing with illness and death or interpersonal relationships in ministry bring ultimate meanings into question and hence ongoing issues of legitimization arise. In other words, these experiences are realities which may initially appear meaningless from the perspective of the everyday lifeworld.

It appears that ministers do not seek legitimization primarily from community members, nor even from the approval of the congregation in half my cases, although a minority were stressed by a lack of valuing by parishioners. The latter suggests that some turn to congregational approval for legitimization but rarely find it. They do not seek legitimization from colleagues and the confidential nature of ministry means that at times spouses are excluded from legitimating roles. Ongoing legitimization, or sense of personal meaning, is found largely in spiritual terms: in private beliefs, experiences of God and apprehension of spiritual change in parishioners. That is, the bases for legitimization arise largely within the provinces of meaning of 'scientific' theorising and religious experience. If it is sought in social relationships within the everyday lifeworld then these are seldom sufficiently consistent or powerful to provide ongoing legitimization that can counteract stressful outcomes.

Secularisation has affected the potential sources of legitimization of ministers. Laicisation has resulted in a community that is largely indifferent to churches and their official representatives (Luckmann, 1967) and hence unable to offer legitimisation to ministers. Power struggles between 'conservatives' and 'liberals' that seem to have resulted in internal desecularisation have reduced the ability of colleagues to provide legitimisation. At a psychological level, cognitive secularisation and consequent individuation and privatisation of beliefs have resulted in the dominance of interior spirituality as legitimization. The consequences of such changed legitimization, and of secularisation generally, for ministry stress will now be examined.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SECULARISATION FOR MINISTERS**

I have examined secularisation within the Presbyterian Church of NSW and described the resulting individuated, privatised religion of ministers. One consequence is that legitimization derives from internal sources. In this section I focus on the structure of
ministers' worldviews and examine ministry stress as dissonance within and between provinces of meaning.

Stress as dissonance within provinces of meaning

First, it is necessary to state formally from a phenomenological perspective how conflict arises in lifeworld experiences. According to Schutz (1972), the minister brings a stock of knowledge and 'schemes of experience' or meaning contexts based upon syntheses of prior lived-through experiences to the lifeworld situation. The lived-through experiences include contradictory experiences of the everyday lifeworld. Current experiences are referred to schemes of experience for interpretation as they occur. Conflict occurs when the elements in a situation that have seemed relevant in a taken-for-granted way are now insufficient to master a situation (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974).

In the investigation of legitimation we find dissonance within the various provinces of meaning, crystallised in practical ministry issues. On the one hand the minister has authority as an ordained representative of the Presbyterian Church; on the other, in practice the minister must negotiate with session, persuade the congregation in spiritual and organisational issues and win over converts from the community. That is, in the everyday lifeworld, authority as a representative of a denomination claiming access to knowledge of the supernatural has to be buttressed by charismatic authority. Taken-for-granted authority arising out of the role of minister is insufficient to fulfil the tasks of ministry. This is stressful because few ministers claimed to possess charisma by virtue of personality or spiritual characteristics (using Weber's (1947, p.328) definition of charismatic authority as based on 'exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person'). The minister is then driven to develop leadership skills that can approximate charismatic authority, or to attain a spiritual maturity that can win and lead others.

In the province of 'scientific' theorising, doctrinal inconsistencies related to predestination, assurance of salvation or perseverance of believers may be brought into awareness by pastoral work. These contradictions may affect the content of the minister's religious beliefs and hence the internalised worldview that "serves to legitimate and justify explicitly the subjective pattern of priorities that is a constitutive element of personal identity" (Luckmann, 1967, p.71).

In the province of religious experience there are times of spiritual dryness alternating with spiritual aliveness. Practical ministry tasks of sermon preparation or interpersonal relationships where ministry is through conversation or example can bring the dry times into direct focus. The consequences are often feelings of hypocrisy and guilt precisely because self-legitimation is largely in terms of interior spirituality.

Stress as dissonance between provinces of meaning

If contradictions within the various provinces of meaning can be made explicit by ministry tasks within the lifeworld and serve as sources of stress, how can contradictions between elements in different provinces of meaning arise and produce stress? Elements
of knowledge that are formed out of different provinces of meaning are reciprocally irrelevant (Schutz and Luckmann, 1974). Hence, meanings and self-legitimation that derive from different provinces of meaning but are crystallised in a lifeworld experience, are thrown into collision.

To put this theorising in context, the example of an unexpected funeral of an uninvolved parishioner illustrates collision. The lifeworld task is to provide a meaningful service for mourners and will probably include an element of evangelism to unbelieving attenders (aims that are frequently incompatible). In preparing the funeral address the minister is likely to experience conflict between personally held beliefs about the salvation or damnation of apparent unbelievers and the pastoral demands of the service. Beliefs are scrutinised in the scientific province of meaning while the service itself involves the work of the minister as well as incorporating religious experience in the worship itself. The conflict is likely to be intensified if the minister is experiencing a time of spiritual dryness as a theme of the province of religious experience since it could increase theological uncertainties. Thus, elements from the provinces of scientific theorising, religious experience and the paramount reality come into focus. In particular, the content of the work (funeral service) immediately raises the issue of death and the basic experience of fear of death, referred to by Schutz (Cox, 1978, p.24) as “the fundamental anxiety”. It is not surprising that ministers referred to unexpected funerals as stressful (as seen in a number of comments under the heading “Enmeshment in open-ended work” in Chapter 5): they raise fundamental anxiety and generate conflict between different provinces of meaning.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to examine ministry stress from the vantage point of secularisation theory. Specifically, I used this approach to understand the effects of ministry context, direct and interactive, on ministers’ coping responses. Clearly, ministers work in a highly secularised context. From my interview protocols ministers suffered from institutional and cognitive secularisation and as we have seen became privatised as a consequence, responding by withdrawal, or enmeshment. Ministers who coped better than their peers were those who had a greater appreciation of the risks of enmeshment and privatisation. However, secularisation in all its forms remained a major contributor to ministry stress.

At the denominational level I found mixed evidence for secularisation, although there was a clear trend of declining Presbyterian Church membership. Moreover, there was a decline in denominational authority at the individual level and this individual-level secularisation affected ministers and congregations directly and indirectly. First, because of cognitive secularisation, ministers were directly exposed to the anxiety that accompanies subjectivity. They largely coped by non-defensive activity, but there was also strong evidence of depersonalisation, isolation-withdrawal and role reification that Laing (1960) related to fears of engulfment, implosion and petrifaction. That is, cognitive secularisation for some gave opportunities for openness, spontaneity, intense emotion and the integrity that was a Calvinist ideal. On the other hand there was danger of rigidity, isolation, passivity and life fragmentation.
Second, the absence of institutional legitimation meant that ministers had to rely on either social or individual legitimation. Because ministers and congregations were privatised and responding to secularisation in different ways there were clashes between their expectations of ministry resulting in little immediate social legitimation. Those ministers who struggled with inner, spiritual legitimation and depended on congregational support (the external locus of coping type) were highly stressed. In this situation, indirect effects of secularisation processes through privatisation resulted in stress. For other ministers, the need for personal legitimation intensified efforts towards personal competence and integration; where this was accomplished, at least partially, stress was diminished.
Chapter Eight

COPING STYLES, FURTHER DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the last chapter I discussed the impact of institutional secularisation on ministers, with a detailed analysis of the psychological consequences of cognitive secularisation and privatisation. I showed how some ministers used inauthentic styles of coping with maladaptive consequences, whereas others used authentic (and possibly adaptive) styles. In Chapter 5 I developed two typologies that differentiated ministers according to adaptive/maladaptive psychological outcomes. Using ideal types, is it possible to detail the processes by which ministers develop or maintain predominantly authentic, or inauthentic coping styles and then to trace the psychological consequences in terms of stress-burnout? This is the challenge for my final chapter.

Consequently, in this chapter I examine the authentic and inauthentic styles of coping by means of several ideal types. I have taken a basic classification of fully furnished and unfurnished ministers and attempted to describe various processes that generate each type. Two time periods are used to try to capture process: the first three years and ministry over subsequent parishes. Next I shift to an examination of another ideal type based on locus of coping, a theme which emerged from detailed examination of the 'furnished' continuum. I then discuss these types in the light of phenomenological theory and as responses to Calvinist theology. Finally, I draw out some implications of these coping types for selection, theological training and support of parish ministers after making some comments on further directions.

THE FURNISHED CONTINUUM

Overview

Recall that the fully furnished ministers (N=19) were equipped for ministry via training and personal acceptance, satisfied with their spiritual practice and committed to ministry without over-identification with the role. Unfurnished ministers (N=25) were unequipped and enmeshed in their over-identification with the role. The mixed group (N=18) had either deficits, or dissatisfaction in areas of equipment, or enmeshment but not both. The three types were ranked on burnout scores, with fully furnished ministers lowest and unfurnished ministers highest on the three sub-scales (see Chapter 5). In my discussion of the furnished typology below, I omit the mixed type in order to concentrate on the end points of the continuum.

Before examining types that can be derived from ministers' stressors and coping it is helpful to review these issues briefly for Presbyterian theological students. This gives a baseline picture, a summary of a typical pre-ministry state. Theological students were stressed by academic and personal issues such as examinations; medical problems in self,
or close family; and relational issues not connected with ministry. Prominent in their coping was a strong belief in God's sovereignty, amounting to a deterministic worldview. This resulted in coping through prayer and positive action in accordance with their perception of the meaning of the event. The meaning was largely expressed in terms of their perceptions of God's purposes. Students appeared to be coping with life stressors since measures of anxiety, depression and spiritual well-being did not decline significantly over a six month period. In other words, they appeared to be using non-defensive, active coping which reflected a dominant Calvinist theme and there was no suggestion of tension with conflicting beliefs from the scientific (theological) province of meaning. They avoided anxiety by isolating newly-acquired theological material from the everyday lifeworld.

Fully furnished type

In the first three years of ministry those who were fully furnished (N=4) reported few stressful training deficits and little time pressure. They were able to organise their work, or were in a position to delegate tasks. That is, learned organising skills or a context of competent elders/parishioners could reduce time pressure, illustrating the importance of considering both dispositions and context (after Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) on psychological outcomes. In common with the mixed group, they had a strong sense of call and felt supported by their congregations and colleagues. They also reported encouraging responses from others, often in strong terms such as "a hunger for bible study" or frequent personal comments that were approving and encouraging. The clearest difference between the mixed and fully furnished types in the initial years of ministry lay in their spiritual practice: whereas the mixed group were generally dissatisfied or struggling, the fully furnished group organised their spiritual practice with determination. It was given highest priority. Clearly, these ministers were in a good position to maintain self-esteem. They were also developing a basis for social legitimation and self-legitimation. Social support that comprises encouragement and acceptance from others can validate the meanings ascribed by ministers to their roles and engender self-acceptance, both aspects of legitimation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Positive responses from others act to justify ministers' roles, another aspect of legitimation. Thus, social support and positive responses from others were validating and justifying the minister's authority. At the same time, satisfaction with spiritual practice which was a high priority gave self-acceptance and a sense of meaning in ministry roles; both of these are aspects of self-legitimation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

In subsequent years, fully furnished ministers (N=15) dealt with stressful situations using their skills or organisation or delegation. Those whose stress levels were high tended to be drained by their efforts to maintain a declining congregation or frustrated by their inability to move into specialist ministry. However, where there were significant frustrations or disappointments there was now significant support in the current parish. In the past, these ministers had been able to move out of 'dead end' parishes to promising new parishes, or were able to take on challenging work within the declining parish such as organising aged care, or taking up chaplaincy work part-time. They reported significant successes: obvious change in people, a growing or stable parish and, possibly
as a result, they expressed great enjoyment in their work. Again, success and ability to use the system to change the work environment positively through active secular coping would maintain self-esteem (Carver et al., 1989). There is difficulty in maintaining social legitimation (seen in the shrinking congregational base for providing acceptance and role justification), probably as a result of institutional secularisation and differences in worldviews due to privatisation. Nonetheless, the minister copes adaptively on the basis of self-legitimation derived from interior spirituality.

A compilation of comments from a typical fully-furnished minister illustrates this pattern:

"My theological training was brilliant and I was able to get additional skills in counselling through seminars, books and videos. My wife and I had counselling at a difficult time in our marriage but she has always been fully involved and supportive. I had a difficult time in a previous parish where nothing I could do would please a small core group with extreme ultra-Reformed expectations. I couldn't measure up and left. I try to get people to see me as a friend and pastor but I do not hold back if rebuke is necessary. Some years ago, liking to be liked would have generated stress: now I risk friendship for the sake of the person. My significance comes from being a child of God, then husband and father, then pastor. I love nothing more than sharing the gospel with people. I couldn't ask for more privilege than being a pastor of the gospel."

Unfurnished type

During the first three years of ministry the unfurnished group (N=4) reported stressful deficiencies in their training and were stressed by lack of time to complete ministry tasks. They were strongly evangelical but were dissatisfied with their current spiritual practice. Some had doubts about their call. It appeared that this group encountered strong opposition in their work, or early dissatisfaction. This is evident in their perception of the congregation and colleagues as unsupportive, while some felt isolated and criticised in presbytery. This type, then, was highly idealistic but lacking the skills or spiritual resources and support to deal with difficult situations early in their ministry. The danger here is lowered self-esteem and difficulties in establishing a basis for legitimation. Lack of acceptance by the parish and colleagues would hamper social legitimation, while dissatisfaction with personal spirituality would hinder self-acceptance and self-legitimation. How then would the minister explain and justify his role? Possibly in institutional terms that would not be accepted by privatised parishioners, or in terms of past spiritual experiences, such as a call to ministry, that have not been integrated with the everyday province of meaning (Schutz, 1970a). Legitimation is therefore precarious and self-esteem low.

As they grew more experienced in ministry those who were unfurnished in later years (N=21) tended to narrow their focus, with all activities except ministry excluded, or else withdrew from engagement with people in ministry. Most were stressed by training deficits and time pressure. Although they had a strong sense of call to ministry in the main, they had mixed views about congregational and collegiate support, which was often seen as less than desired. These ministers exhibit patterns of inauthentic coping
(Laing, 1960). In the absence of strong social or individual legitimation, they base their authority as minister on their call. However, this is not supported by current spiritual experiences, nor indications of spiritual change in the congregation and hence, it is a precarious basis for legitimation. Coping responses of narrowing, or isolation, further limit opportunities for social support, social legitimation and self-esteem.

Comments from a typical unfurnished minister are:

"Ministry expectations were horrendous at first as it was a constant battle to be faithful because of elders who were not believers. I couldn't change them and had to go on regardless and preach the gospel. The congregation here is not appreciative. Time pressure is a problem. I have to watch things coming up as my coping mechanism is to shut down and just put things off. Time is given but not often rewarded by tangible results in the parish. It would be good to relate to Presbyterian colleagues. I don't have special friendships in the congregation so ministry is lonely but I understood it to be that way. Spiritual troughs occur and they affect my outlook and capacity to minister positively. I get exhausted and don't know how to be spiritually fresh. But I resolve, however I feel, I must go on. Ministry is my life and I don't switch off. That's why heavy criticism is so hard."

INTERNAL-EXTERNAL LOCUS OF COPING CONTINUUM

The furnished continuum is weakly associated with negative affect and burnout. It appears to relate to the psychological precursors of stress in ministry: its focus is self-acceptance, or its lack and the ability to maintain an appropriate psychological distance in ministry relationships. The locus-of-coping continuum is an independent typology that relates more to the stressful outcomes of different approaches to coping. Both typologies are needed to give a complete summary of Presbyterian ministers in relation to the stress-coping process.

Internal locus of coping

Ministers who had achieved, or were actively seeking an inner sense of integration based on competence in ministry, or spirituality were able to draw on inner resources for coping with stressful situations. In contrast with the external group, they placed strong emphasis on personal bible study, prayer and retreats. At times they felt inadequate but dealt with it by active coping, or emphasising their strengths in other areas: few made strongly emotional negative comments about their inadequacy and the tone of comments was descriptive and accepting. Often they used the term "integrity" to refer to consistency between their beliefs and behaviours and an uncompromising stand on an issue they saw as central to their ministry (see Chapter 5).

Those who were also fully-furnished ministers (N=12), or mixed (N=7) reported a strong spiritual basis for their ministry, despite times of dryness, or doubt. This was characterised primarily by ongoing prayer and daily bible reading, together with some spiritual support from others. At times their faith had been tested but it remained strong.
The emphasis was on the integration of faith with personal devotional practice rather than charismatic experiences. These practices led to self-examination with the possibility for change in attitudes or behaviour as a deliberate result: the self-examination could be generated by external criticism, or prompted by clinical pastoral training. Although there was self-criticism there was no indication of morbid introspection and despair. The self-analysis led to action, such as taking on roles of peacemaker and change agent in difficult situations. They tended to seek support from colleagues and to enjoy their work. These ministers appear high in self-esteem. Although legitimation is based primarily upon inner spirituality, these ministers also use collegiate support in ways that would confirm their roles and their active coping.

Those in the unfurnished group with an internal locus of coping (N=12) were either isolated, or conflicted. The isolated group (N=7) strove for legitimation on the basis of their authority as minister. They found it hard to relinquish authority and often experienced conflict because of challenges to their authority. Moreover, they lacked the resources (skills and personality) to delegate and appease successfully. Hence, they withdrew from tasks which they couldn't control, or from people who failed to acknowledge their authority. As a result, they spoke of procrastinating, backing away from confrontation, being emotionally detached and having fragmented relationships. They were lonely, because they desired relationships based on their authority but were unable, or unwilling, to make the necessary investment. In coping, they attempted to maintain control by following an internalised script of what the successful minister should do and did not seek external support. They remained in ministry because of a strong evangelical commitment. As ministers they wanted to control programmes and people according to their vision of the ministerial role. Given conflicts and their withdrawal from some people and some areas of ministry, they were still supported by the congregation and so felt competent in the areas they could control. They functioned, but at the cost of some stress and loneliness.

Most of the conflicted group (N=5) were attempting to pursue specialist ministries while facing conflicts over their family's needs and a perceived personal inadequacy that was highly significant in their ministry. Often the wives did not fulfil traditional roles as clergy partners and there were additional problems of illness in close family members. Personal inadequacies included a public speaking phobia in a minister who was developing a specialist preaching ministry; and very poor administrative skills in a parish minister who faced significant organisational tasks. These ministers were strongly motivated by privatised beliefs to accomplish their work. They were individualists who did not fit a traditional, or evangelical denominational stereotype. The combination of external and internal conflict taxed their personal resources. This was felt as a dissatisfaction with spiritual practice and hence they could not depend on their experience of God for support. While they reported support from colleagues, their highly individualised styles would have made close relationships difficult. They needed a lot of congregational tolerance when their ministry style did not focus on pastoral visiting, or open sharing. They continued in ministry because of their privatised beliefs and a sense that, on balance, their whole family and others were better off because of their ministry. If the balance tipped the other way it is likely that this type of minister would leave parish work for other specialist roles. Meanwhile they doggedly pursued
their ministry specialisation but were vulnerable to personal and parish crises.

Typical comments from a minister with an internal locus of coping are:

"My attitude is that what doesn't get done this week will get done next week. I could not cope with everything and have learned to manage. I see myself as having a standard of competency for parish ministry and so I'm not flogging myself for weakness. I have learned to manage time by setting priorities and realising I can't do everything. I am conscious of the danger of playing favourites in the congregation but I would not avoid making friends and naturally I am a very private person. At a liberal college where 96% of the students were evangelical we learned to stand on our own feet. Spiritually, there are times of dryness, mainly resulting from overwork, but the best antidote is to go and visit. The tendency is to shut yourself up in the manse. A diary is useful for (spiritual and ministry) assessment. Here people are spiritually supportive and I know when I'm being prayed for. I couldn't live comfortably in any other job and I enjoy being a minister, for all it is frustrating."

Internal ministers achieved self-legitimation based on inner spirituality and institutional legitimation. Where the minister's traditional views of ministry matched those of the congregation there was opportunity for shared meanings, support and social legitimation. There was scope for maintaining self-esteem because of change resulting from their active coping, whether narrowed or broad in scope.

External locus of coping

These ministers had fewer inner resources for coping than those with an internal locus of coping. Some were desperately seeking to match their demanding spiritual ideals with their behaviour and experience but had a strong sense of failure, indicated clearly by this comment:

"My prayer life needs attention because my own integrity before God demands it. I must continue to rebuild the wall that has crumbled. I am still struggling with praying for people. It's been a battle for 20 years because I need to hear from God."

There was less emphasis on active trust in God in their coping: the trust was passively expecting God to change events or people rather than as a springboard to action. While they strongly used secular coping, they were more likely than the internal group to express strong negative feelings about their inadequacy as a minister. These feelings included depression, humiliation, guilt and helplessness, seen in the following:

"This is the core feeling of depression, linked to criticism and a sense of rejection. This church exposes my inadequacies."

"It is humiliating to have elders who can preach better than you, or are doing
higher degrees."

"I feel very inadequate, failing at a job where I previously did well."

Many depended upon support from others as the primary source of their coping efforts. Yet this could be problematic as ministry needs changed, or supportive people moved away:

"People (in the congregation) are good at visiting each other and we have a casserole bank, transport rosters and practical help rosters for people in need. My job is to organise. The parish numbers are declining now as families are growing up, people are moving away and migrant families are moving in. There is a need for a multicultural outlook."

A small group of fully-furnished ministers (N=6) used an external locus of coping. They tended to be evangelical in outlook but did not emphasise the importance of personal spiritual practice in their ministry. Spiritual practice was not neglected: rather it was seen as another element in their work and lives. Their ministry style was that of captain-coach, one who attempted to train and enable others. They felt appreciated by their congregation, had a close friendship with a session clerk, or other member and enjoyed their pastoral authority over the flock. On the other hand, this group tended to be stressed by crises, particularly where their organisational skills did not immediately resolve the situation. They tended to spend less than four years in each parish, suggesting that one coping strategy for dealing with difficulties was to move to another parish, where their organising skills could be used for some immediate change.

Those who were externals from the mixed furnished and unfurnished group (N=14) tended to obtain congregational support and so relied on it in difficult situations. A minority sought congregational support that was lacking but did not have internal resources for adequate coping.

Externals from the unfurnished group (N=13) were stressed by training deficits but they had a strong sense of their call to ministry. Their focus on ministry was narrowed by time pressures, resulting in loss of friends outside the parish or a focus on friendships in order to evangelise. Some were able to organise and delegate but generally they worked long hours and actively strove to complete ministry tasks. They were driven by an evangelical commitment together with high personal expectations of competence. This made delegating difficult, as others may not reach expected standards. In addition, they critically evaluated their own performance. The perfectionist stance was also applied to their spiritual practice and there was a sense of disappointment, or inadequacy in the area of personal spirituality. However, they tended to work hard on spiritual practice, especially as they felt a sense of responsibility as spiritual leaders and correspondingly a strong sense of hypocrisy in times of spiritual dryness. Thus in pastoral and spiritual areas there was a strong desire for their responses to be based on personal integrity but a deep sense of failure in achieving this. Although they had high expectations of their evangelical ministry, they were generally disappointed by the lack of response. Some had growing congregations but the work was proceeding slowly with relational
problems; others struggled in declining parishes.

What kept this group in ministry? Largely it was their evangelical commitment: a strong sense of call and belief that it was where God wanted them to be. In narrowing their focus to ministry, they had lost skills and contacts that could have helped in seeking alternative work. To a large extent they were trapped by conviction, without social support from congregations and colleagues and without personal spiritual supports. Their privatised beliefs were maintaining them in their ministry but at the cost of clinical stress levels.

Typical of the external locus of coping group is the following account of a minister with narrowed focus and sense of failure in his spiritual competency:

"Ministry is the whole of my life: I have no hobbies any more and I joined Rotary for mission. There is a great deal of criticism but no support in the church. I am beset by criticism from colleagues and the congregation. I would love to be a social person but I'm really shy and have to build up courage (for social interactions). I am lonely all the time but I can't afford to be anything else. I have the Lord so I am not lonely to the point of distraction but I store it up and cry. Time pressure is not a stressor but a necessity. I tack work on at the end, do it until it is finished, because the work is too public and if I skimp I feel guilty. Spiritually I was dry for about a third of this year. Head knowledge keeps me going when I can't pray and I read the Psalms aloud. It was a very difficult time but my faith was strengthened. A weekly prayer meeting with other ministers in the Fraternal gave me spiritual support."

External ministers, then, experienced difficulties because of their lack of skills and lack of self-acceptance, particularly in spiritual areas. Self-esteem was low. They coped by avoidance, narrowing focus and seeking support. Legitimation was precarious because it was based on past religious experience (call) and social legitimation that waxes and wanes.

Differences between the four ideal types are summarised in Table 54 below. Each row also depicts a process by which the particular type, having characteristic dispositions or resources, copes under different parish conditions and displays a psychological outcome.
### Table 54: SUMMARY OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IDEAL TYPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Dispositions/resources</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Coping</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FF</td>
<td>Skilled</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>High SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Self legitimation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UF</td>
<td>Lacks skills</td>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>Narrowed focus</td>
<td>Low SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>Burnout trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spiritually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILOC</td>
<td>Spiritual integration</td>
<td>Mixed support</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>High SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>introspection</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self legitimation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELOC</td>
<td>Lacks spiritual</td>
<td>Mixed support</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Low SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perfectionism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Precarious self &amp; social legitimation</td>
<td>Narrowed focus</td>
<td>Burnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Passive introspection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: FF and UF refer to fully-furnished and unfurnished ministers. ILOC and ELOC denote internal and external locus of coping types. SE refers to self-esteem. Active introspection refers to self-examination that results in attempts to change oneself, whereas passive introspection refers to self-analysis resulting in negative emotions and/or withdrawal.

It should be clear from this summary that personality styles and resources interact with ministry conditions (particularly the levels of congregational and collegiate support) and coping styles to produce positive or negative psychological outcomes as suggested by stress-coping theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Personality styles of active/passive introspection and perfectionism, as well as levels of self-esteem, were inferred from ministers' self-reports and do not reflect inventory scores, so they may differ from
assessments that could be made prior to ordination, or during ministry.

For the furnished typology, resources of skills, social support and spirituality were more important than personality styles, underlining the significance of learned behaviours. Resources interacted with conditions, in which lack of support and opposition were critical, to produce adaptive, active coping, or maladaptive isolation and/or narrowed focussing.

For the locus-of-coping typology, critical dispositions were not straightforward personality styles. Spiritual integration involves a valuing of the Calvinist ideal of integrity and satisfaction with one's spiritual practice. The concept of active/passive introspection suggests high introversion but also includes a component of active/passive coping so it is not a simple reflection of Eysenck's (1956) personality types. Locus of coping was unrelated to the personality style, locus of control, as noted in the section titled 'locus of coping continuum' in Chapter 5. All of these findings suggest that it is a broader theoretical concept than an aspect of personality. Since social support varied for both internal and external locus of coping types, of great significance was the ability of the minister to establish self-legitimation and active coping strategies. That is, dispositions were interacting with context and coping strategies to produce psychological consequences. One important aspect of context was legitimation which has implications for the meaning and authority of ministers' roles. This is discussed further in the next sections which explore my typologies in the light of secularisation and phenomenological theory.

TYPES AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORY

In this section I discuss the furnished and locus of coping types in terms of phenomenological and secularisation theory. Some of this has already been foreshadowed in earlier chapters: here I want to integrate material from various theories to explain the two ideal types. At various points in the discussion it is necessary to outline some aspects of Schutz's theory in more detail, particularly those relating to interpretational and motivational relevance.

Interpretational relevance

Both the 'unfurnished' and the 'locus of coping' types can be understood more fully in the light of Schutz's theory of relevance (1970b). Systems of relevance are defined as frameworks for interpretation and action in daily life: goals are determined through "relevance systems composed of past experiences and higher order plans" (Cox, 1978, p.15). Orientation to daily life depends on the 'stock of knowledge at hand', comprising language, typifications, recipes and rules for conduct and modes of action in typical situations. Cox notes that:

"The interpretation of the past based in the stock of knowledge, and guided by the framework of possible means to the desired ends, generates plans of action for the future" (1978, p.4).
How do systems of relevance relate to ministers' stress and coping? In describing stress, the ministers commonly referred to situations where something was problematic or where their usual behaviour did not meet with expected responses from elders or parishioners. Their action then moved from what was taken-for-granted, or automatic, to a set of actions designed to explicate and deal with the problem; that is, to coping.

According to Schutz (1970b, p.101) there are two kinds of interpretation, or interpretational relevances that may be applied in problematic situations. One is based on sufficient knowledge and experience of the problem, where richer, or 'less anonymous', types are used to explore the problem. The other is a struggle to make an interpretation where the relevant elements of knowledge are not 'at hand', or available to the person. In the latter case, the person is more uncertain or fearful of dealing with it and either drops the problem-theme, turning to other tasks, or takes an exaggerated interest. Problems may become crises for ministers if, as a result, they need to re-order their total system of in-order-to motives, their whole plan of life. In a crisis, the person's belief in the taken-for-grantedness of the world is shattered if the outcomes do not match the prescriptions provided by the relevances.

Why is the loss of taken-for-grantedness particularly problematic for ministers? Because of institutional secularisation the Presbyterian denomination is a rump in a secular society. It has very little authority over the population in general and little direct influence over the lives of its members. Congregational members are privatised, absorbing broad Calvinist themes, other religious beliefs and styles, as well as secular attitudes. They have a selection of beliefs and recipes from which to choose in everyday situations. The ministers are privatised but they are also cognitively secularised. That is, they have not just assumed a total Calvinist theology based on the authority of the denomination but as individuals, usually at a liberal or evangelical but non-denominational (Anglican) theological college, they have questioned traditional Presbyterian teaching. This brings the realisation that they are now choosing a meaning system for themselves and that choice is an ongoing process. There is no longer the comfort of applying automatically religious principles or recipes. In a crisis, then, they have to use self-chosen values and principles rather than shared, well-accepted and well-used themes. Ministry crises are significant at professional, relational and spiritual levels so doubts about interpretation and coping in the situation are particularly stressful.

Psychologically, cognitive secularisation brings anxiety and loneliness. Ministers report general satisfaction with the biblical knowledge and skills acquired at theological college, but are they correctly interpreting Scripture in the life situations facing themselves and their parishioners? This uncertainty in the absence of authoritative denominational pronouncements could stem from a sense of theological inadequacy, or personal sinfulness; and it is one more path to anxiety. Another source of anxiety is uncertainty about their spiritual practice and religious experience. In this area the theological college and the denomination generally give little guidance and the minister is left to interpret and develop his religious life based on self-chosen principles. Loneliness comes from holding individualised belief systems. As Presbyterians they are already a minority in a secular society which is indifferent to religion; as ministers they occupy a role where authority can make friendships difficult; as individuals they have difficulty finding like-
minded colleagues who could validate their beliefs or offer social and practical support. In other words secularisation provides a ministry context that tends towards negative psychological outcomes of loneliness and anxiety.

*Application to the furnished continuum*

The fully-furnished ideal type represents the interaction between a particular ministry context and psychological themes. Cognitive secularisation and privatisation impacted differently on the ministers according to their training and psychological strengths. Those who were satisfied with their training, or were able to use other resources (prior experience, ongoing education) were better able to withstand engulfment in their vocation and maintain self-esteem. These were the fully furnished ministers. The unfurnished ministers were those whose training left them with uncertainty about their skills for ministry. Working hard and sacrificing self for ministry was a means of denying inadequacies and bolstering self-esteem. These psychological processes were needed because the ministers lacked institutional and social legitimation and had to develop self-legitimation. The enmeshment of the unfurnished ministers was increased by their belonging to a small denomination with few niches, either in parish ministry, or in related specialist ministries. The denominational context made it easier for ministers to become stuck in difficult, draining parish situations.

Schutz's (1970b) two kinds of interpretational relevances illustrate an essential difference between the fully furnished and unfurnished ministers in their coping. The fully furnished ministers are equipped with knowledge to explore the problem, skills to deal with it and psychological 'distance' from the problem both to explore and deal with it. The knowledge and skills are 'at hand', available for use as required. Lack of enmeshment means that the minister is able to refrain from 'automatic' responses and consider alternative responses to the problematic situation. Their coping is active, flexible and planned. In contrast, the unfurnished ministers have some lack of knowledge, skills and/or distance. As a result, they describe their uncertainty or anxiety in relation to the problem as stress. Some reported that they coped by leaving the problem and immersing themselves in other activities. Others worried, perhaps magnifying the problem or using other distorted cognitions such as long-term denial.

What is interesting in Schutz's treatment of interpretational relevance is that he foreshadows later work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and their successors (from a completely different theoretical perspective) on the importance of appraisals for coping and makes the ready availability of relevant knowledge an important element in the stressfulness or otherwise of life experiences.

*Motivational relevance*

In order to clarify further the differences between ministers in their coping it is helpful to discuss relevance in the light of Schutz's (1970a) treatment of finite provinces of meaning. In this discussion we move from a consideration of interpretational relevances to include motivational relevances, or those which apply in projecting goals for future
action. A new system of relevance with its own priorities and preferences may be imposed on, or assumed by an individual when he or she 'leaps' from one finite province of meaning to another. Usually stocks of knowledge relevant to one province of meaning are irrelevant to another. Hence, knowledge used to solve problems at work is generally of little use in dealing with dreams, or leisure, or religious experience. Yet in dealing with the problem of how knowledge from the 'scientific' province can be communicated in social interactions within the lifeworld, Schutz (1970b) asserted that inter-province connections commonly occur.

One type of inter-province connection is a symbol. Schutz (1970b) gives the illustration of a dream which is lost upon wakening but which can be remembered and interpreted in terms of the relevances pertaining to the paramount reality. A symbol is defined as:

"an enclave in the actual level of reality resulting from the annihilation of a topically relevant theme of experience originating on another level of reality" (p.107).

Similarly, a religious experience may be pondered and interpreted in the world of wide-awake living but with the expectation that the person will return to a similar theme. The person plans a further period of prayer, or meditation, or worship and expects that the previous theme will recur although there will be some changes because the person and the situation will be slightly different after a lapse of time. In this example, themes of religious experience and of daily life will be in the margins and centre of consciousness. Cox argues that Schutz hinted at but did not fully recognise the reality of "multiple and simultaneous ego activities" and "the 'multiple focal point' structure of the thematic field" (1978, p.160). This is the basis for arguing that ministers can attain cognitive integration: they can develop connections between the different provinces of meaning and move smoothly between them in the process of thinking or acting in the lifeworld.

How do relevances in various finite provinces of meaning relate to coping which is action in the everyday world? Both Schutz (1970b) and Cox (1978) examine the problem of how a social scientist can be both an observer in the lifeworld and a theorist 'within' the scientific province of meaning. A concise summary, using Schutz's analysis of judging, is given by Cox (1978, p.227):

"It is, however, at the pre-judging but actional level that the theorising social scientist is in contact with the lifeworld. This, we repeat, is not (necessarily) originary (he may be sitting alone in his study) but he is able to thematise, in the interest of theorising, lifeworld structures. On the basis of those objectivating acts, he can then go on to judge, to construct ideal types as Schutz says".

What is clear in this example is that the social scientist has typifications, procedures and relevances that overlap both provinces. Some connections are made automatically, or as Cox states:

"No judging could take place at the actional levels of mental life if there were no automatic syntheses establishing sense connections among the items in the field

A second step involves mental acts of reflection, inference and so on based on personal and secondary experience.

This can be applied to ministers as they struggle to integrate what is spiritual or religious into their ongoing behaviour in the lifeworld. Some have a large supply of typifications and relevances that overlap several provinces (including religious theory (theology) and religious experience) and can develop rich and varied ideal types that can be used in making judgements or dealing with life problems. Another way of describing them is that they are 'at home' in these provinces, able to select items from either province as relevant to the theme in focus in the lifeworld. Other ministers have not achieved the same facility in using themes from religious domains in various provinces.

Application to the furnished continuum

For fully-furnished ministers, training has given them facility in theological and skills areas (see Chapter 5) so they have rich typifications available. In earlier experiences of ministry they have experienced a supportive parish so they could develop confidence in their private meaning systems and hence self-legitimation and self-esteem. In the absence of any other personality characteristic that distinguished between the fully-furnished and unfurnished ministers (Chapter 5), it is likely that differences in self-esteem were important, particularly in coping with the general loss of taken-for-grantedness, as well as the shock of moving between different provinces of meaning. Their emphasis on spiritual practice allows them to move freely between experiential, theoretical and lifeworld provinces. While holding to a strong belief in God's sovereignty, they can also use a full range of active secular coping strategies, including delegation and organisation of others in which they are skilled. For example, a fully-furnished minister who reported 'anguish at personal sin' also stated:

"I am not fazed by paperwork or too many demands. I can pray about them and deal with them one at a time. I am able to ignore the phone: my wife screens phone calls and visits. I have concern about a lack of time for quietness with God ... [but] I see prayer as a discipline and fast each month with the elders."

In thinking about difficult ministry situations they can also consider moving to another parish. That is, they can contemplate alternatives without debilitating anxiety because their skills and supportive feedback have resulted in self-esteem. In short, the training and early ministry circumstances for this group have produced competence-based self-esteem and coping styles that enable them to overcome the anxiety of existential choice and move flexibly between provinces of meaning as they respond to difficult ministry situations.

In contrast the unfurnished ministers were less equipped by their training, leaving them with weaker, narrower typifications in areas of theology and skills. This was not through lack of formal training because the unfurnished group were more likely than the
furnished group to have obtained a university degree; nor was it because of the type of theological college since the two groups did not differ in their exposure to evangelical training at Moore College and/or the PTC (see Chapter 5 for details). However, it is likely that the furnished group received more practical training in their non-degree qualification and the unfurnished group were less satisfied with their training which emphasised ancient languages and theology in addition to biblical studies, church history and pastoral studies.

Unfurnished ministers were less able to cope with difficulties early in ministry (see illustrative quote in the section headed 'unfurnished type' above), and so failed to develop a sense of self-esteem and confidence in their abilities as minister. This in turn meant that they were vulnerable to loss of taken-for-grantedness, as well as to the shock of moving between provinces of meaning. Opposition and time pressure early in ministry also affected their spiritual practice, giving them less capacity than the fully-furnished ministers to move into the experiential province and use its resources for everyday coping. The problem of narrow typifications was exacerbated by their passive coping styles that included withdrawal and denial. Training and early ministry circumstances for this group failed to supply skills and competencies that produce self-esteem and situationally appropriate, flexible coping. Instead, they narrowed their focus, withdrew from people and persisted doggedly in ministry tasks, thus continuing the process of isolating different provinces of meaning and only bridging them with difficulty.

Were personality deficits irrelevant? I have argued earlier in this chapter (and see data in Chapter 5) that the two groups did not differ on the religious and secular measures that could be construed as personality styles or broad dispositions: intrinsic commitment, problem-solving styles, prayer experiences and locus of control. It is possible that clinically-oriented personality inventories could detect differences, associated with maladaptive psychological outcomes, between the two groups. Francis and Rodger (1994) found that dissatisfied Anglican clergy were more likely to have high scores on Eysenck’s measures of neuroticism and psychoticism. On the other hand, Francis and Kay (1995) used the same measures with Pentecostal candidates for ministry and reported lower scores than population norms on neuroticism and psychoticism. Are these denominational differences, age trends or radical changes due to the transition from theological college to full-time ministry? My data suggest that ministry experiences themselves may exacerbate slight personality deficits and result in psychological maladjustment but further work using personality measures is needed.

Application to the locus of coping continuum

In this section I relate themes from secularisation theory and Schutz’s (1970b) theory of interpretational and motivational relevances to the internal and external locus of coping ideal types. These are clearly differentiated ways of dealing with the basic anxiety and loneliness which stem from institutional secularisation and consequent cognitive secularisation and privatisation of ministers. Since ministers cannot use institutional legitimation as the basis for self-esteem and coping, they have the options of social legitimation and self-legitimation. Ministers with an internal locus of coping have
attained, or are pressing on towards self-legitimation, whereas those with an external locus of coping are judging and acting in their ministry on the basis of social legitimation as well as a self-legitimation that is precariously based.

Self-legitimation as a minister begins with a sense of call and internal ministers generally have a strong sense that God has called them to evangelise sinners and then build up the elect. The call is foundational and it also provides a measure of self-esteem, worth based on special God-given gifts for ministry (see discussion of this point in Chapter 1). For the internal ministers the significance of theological training is not primarily in providing theological expertise and skills (as it is for fully furnished ministers) but in promoting and developing Calvinist themes of spiritually-based integration. Internal ministers firmly believe in personal spiritual practices of private bible reading and prayer as essential for ministry and actively seek these as a priority. Their identity is primarily as a child of God called to ministry and their worldview includes an imperative for personal evangelism. In other words, their self-legitimation is based on an evangelical, Calvinistic worldview and their identity is centred on being chosen by God and striving for spiritual perfection.

Since spiritual practice is central, internal ministers develop rich typifications within the province of religious experience (Schutz, 1970a). These are not based on charismatic experiences; rather, they are cognitive and depend on scriptural meditation. They are readily accessible from the province of theological theorising and, for those ministers who pray frequently throughout the day, they are readily accessible from the province of everyday reality. Although the internal ministers may not have all the knowledge and skills needed to explore and deal with ministry problems they respond to crises with trust in God's overall sovereignty followed by self-analysis and action. In other words, the crisis brings trust in God to the centre of consciousness and strategies at hand involve scrutiny of self and others from a Calvinist perspective.

Another consequence of self-legitimation being closely tied to spiritual practice is that perseverance in spiritual striving generates self-esteem for the internal ministers. This is not easy given the time pressures of ministry, so the internal ministers seek spiritual support from others and make their spiritual lives a priority (see Chapter 5). Their coping is based on the belief that God is in control and will bring success to their efforts to be obedient to their calling. So their self-esteem is not demolished by lack of obvious success (increasing numbers) although their active religious coping strategies are likely to be helpful in ministry. In addition, their strong focus on religious knowledge and experience lessens the shock of moving between the different provinces of meaning.

The internal locus of coping ministers functioned better psychologically than the external ministers, demonstrated by their lower scores on emotional exhaustion and trait anxiety (see Chapter 5). They were strongly committed to personal spiritual practice as part of evangelical ministry. How did they avoid the problem of engulfment in ministry with its attendant psychological problems? Some of the internal ministers narrowed their focus to areas where they could have some control, but they all maintained a degree of psychological distance in their ministry through having a clear priority in their personal spiritual practice. Perhaps more importantly their fluid use of different provinces of meaning meant they did not need to live in reflection, with the danger of role reification
but could cope with everyday reality within that ongoing stream of consciousness.

In contrast the external ministers do not have a strong sense of identity based upon personal spiritual practice (as discussed above and Chapter 5). Since externals do not differ from internals on the basis of beliefs or dispositions, it does not appear that differences in religious commitment, or adherence to Calvinism contributes to this different focus. The two groups evaluate their theological training in similar ways, so this does not seem a fundamental basis for the difference. Instead, it is their response to early difficulties in ministry which appears to move the external group to seek ongoing social legitimation.

Externals do not have ready to hand typifications from the province of religious experience (Schutz, 1970b) as resources for assessing and dealing with ministry problems. Some desire personal integration based on spiritual practice but have a personality style that is marked by self-scrutiny and self-criticism. These are the perfectionist ministers with a sense of failure in their spiritual life. Since they perceive grave inadequacies in the experiential domain, they are unable to integrate it easily within the everyday province and lack well-developed typifications that arise from positive experiences. A comment, previously quoted, from an external minister illustrates the difficulty of integrating spiritual experiences within everyday life:

"My prayer life needs attention because my own integrity before God demands it. I must continue to rebuild the wall that has crumbled. I am still struggling with praying for people. I feel it is not a legalism but a sheer necessity to have a quiet time each day ... It's been a battle for 20 years because I need to hear from God. I haven't resolved it but I will press on."

Others perceive spiritual experience to be relatively unimportant and so do not strive for development in this area (as noted above in the section on fully-furnished ministers with an external locus of coping). These, too, have some difficulty in integrating experiential themes with theoretical and lifeworld provinces because religious experience is attended to as routine, ritual. There is obviously a narrow field in which ritual overlaps with theology and everyday reality but ritualised religious experience does not help the minister recognise and deal with deep spiritual conflicts in oneself and others.

The first group (having a sense of failure in their spiritual practice) deal with ministry problems by narrowing their focus, isolation and role reification as noted above. They cannot easily generate solutions within the lifeworld and step back to reflect, using theological systems as their main source of typifications. However, their Calvinist worldview is isolated and privatised and does not coincide with the more social worldview of their parishioners. Where expectations clash, these ministers cannot draw on a stable religious identity: they do not have identity and authority bestowed by the denomination and their personal religious identity is under attack because of their sense of spiritual inadequacy. These ministers flounder, seeking social legitimation based on their ministry skills but with responses lacking spontaneity or flexibility. They have low self-esteem because it is based on spiritual practice and they evaluate their spiritual practice poorly (see the quote above).
The second group who do not seek a high standard of spiritual practice also have difficulties in attaining social legitimation. Where there skills and expectations can approximate the expectations of parishioners they may be able to organise, delegate and gain social support by their efforts. However, because ministers and congregations undergo different secularisation processes their expectations are likely to differ. As a result of privatisation, both ministers and congregations have different expectations which are difficult to communicate because there is a lack of shared meanings. If the minister is able to develop a working set of shared meanings about parish goals, ministry and lay roles, parish functioning and related matters there is a continuing need for repeating the process because of demographic changes and church shopping (Kaldor et al, 1994). This makes the process of gaining and maintaining social legitimation a critical but extremely difficult task. Their self-esteem is precarious because it depends on congregational approval which is changing and seldom expressed in positive ways. In difficult times they must rely on knowledge, skills and experiences ready to hand in the paramount lifeworld for assessments and coping. Since congregational expectations of them are high and their abilities limited in some areas they cannot attain self-legitimization and self-esteem based on ministry competence alone. As a result, they are vulnerable to anxiety and burnout.

In summary the 'external locus of coping' ministers are those who are firmly grounded in the lifeworld and experience the leap of dissonance as they move into other finite provinces of meaning, particularly the province of religious experience. (Schutz, 1970a). Both dissonance and the restricted range of available themes for problem-solving contribute to stress. The 'internal locus of coping' ministers are those who have explored religious domains in various provinces and developed a working integration such that themes from disparate provinces are available for acts of judging and coping. They experience little, if any, dissonance stress and have as readily available a wide range of coping styles.

**TYPES AND CALVINIST THEOLOGY**

In this section I attempt to link issues arising from Calvinist theology to my two ideal types and secularisation processes. Essentially Calvinism holds that God is sovereign but the human task of obedience to the divine calling of God's sovereignty does not imply human passivity, or resignation. Two strands of human activity are emphasised: self-examination in order to assess and promote growth in holiness and perseverance in one's calling as a response to God's love and holiness (for a detailed discussion of this, see Chapter 1).

The operational basis of the distinction between the 'internal' and 'external' locus of coping types was whether the minister had achieved some measure of personal integration, or whether this was perceived to be absent. Related to this in some ministers was a striving towards perfection that amounted to a self-imposed pressure to be excellent across all aspects of ministry.
Striving towards perfection

How does this striving relate to Calvinism? Weber's (1976) argument that striving to do good works is an attempt to counter anxiety about one's election has already been discussed at a theoretical level (see Chapter 1). While this is not manifestly obvious, there is Calvinist teaching that upholds diligence in work as an aspect of obedience to God and ethical perfection as a response to election. Since spiritual progress is difficult to discern it is psychologically easier to use hard work and spiritual striving as indicators of growing spiritual maturity. It is also relevant to note that the ministers who reported such striving did not express doubts about their salvation, or their call. Rather, their reasoning appeared to be that God is holy and perfect and has called them to be like Him. For these reasons Calvinist ministers would place on themselves an expectation of hard work and spiritual striving and Calvinist congregations are likely to have similar expectations. This sets the scene for ministers to work harder than they should and be candidates for stress and burnout.

Calvinism also is a worldview that promotes individualism and indirectly causes loneliness. There is emphasis on God's election of individuals, individual evangelism and good works done by individuals in response to their salvation. Knowledge of God is largely obtained through private bible reading and God's will is confirmed individually through the Holy Spirit. Although there is teaching on corporate religious life, human autonomy is never lost in community (Spykman, 1976). This emphasis is reinforced by the current privatisation of religious belief where the authority of religious organisations over individual beliefs and behaviour are weakened and each individual chooses their own values, beliefs and religious observances. Privatisation breaks down shared meaning systems, making communication (and especially symbolic communication) difficult. In this way, harmonious community which is a goal of Calvinism, becomes very difficult to achieve. Calvinist ministers are striving to develop community in the face of an otherwise individualised theology and in the face of cultural trends towards individual autonomy. Loneliness arises from failure to establish shared meaning systems and also from the rejection that comes from misunderstood, or misguided actions.

Institutional legitimation

A further way in which ministers are subject to psychological pressure results directly from institutional secularisation. As the authority of the denomination over society and congregational members has declined, the authority of ministers as denominational representatives has also declined. When institutional legitimation is lost, the minister must establish another basis for authority. Within Calvinism, ministry is a God-given calling to honour God and serve others (McGrath, 1995) and so the image of the suffering servant dominates. How does the servant role in ministry generate authority? It requires others to recognise the sanctity or spiritual qualities of the ministers (a type of charismatic authority), no easy task given human frailty and the limited occasions on which parishioners can judge the spirituality of their minister. Moreover, Calvinism supports other ministry roles such as evangelism, teaching, preaching and counselling and each role has its own basis for authority, whether professional training and expertise or biblical authority or the charismatic authority of the public evangelist. A difficulty for
the Calvinist minister is establishing authority in the different roles when denominationally-based training has to establish credibility, when interpretations of Scripture vary and when personal charisma is uncommon. Although ministers may define their own roles based on their Calvinist training and beliefs, they must persuade their parishioners and the denomination that their priorities are valid. That is, some measure of social legitimation is essential for the minister to function in the parish.

It is clear that the loss of institutional legitimation leaves the minister without official support in what is now largely a private quest to evangelise and nurture within the parish. Presbytery can provide some legal support in the sense of defending a minister's rights under church law, but it fails to provide social and emotional support for most ministers. This is partly due to the current structure of presbytery and partly the result of privatisation which increases the potential for conflict, since a shared basis for action no longer overrides differences in personal beliefs. Since ministers are supported at parish level, rather than receiving housing and stipend from central funds, they may have to remind parishioners of their obligation to contribute to ministry expenses. This places a further difficulty in the way of ministers who may be struggling to win social legitimation from their congregation.

Social legitimation

Social legitimation is difficult to attain. Some ministers win support from parishioners because of their skills and personal qualities but an ongoing process of communication and compromise is required to maintain support. For ministers operating under social legitimation, the crisis occurs when they fail to resolve a major dispute within the parish and have to face opposition from a powerful disaffected group, or when they move to another parish where their skills and personality no longer are sufficient to obtain social support.

Individual legitimation

Individual legitimation based on a sense of personal integration and spiritual competence is also difficult to attain and maintain but once established it is less vulnerable to the ministry context.

Many ministers referred to the goal of their spiritual striving as integrity, or personal integration. As discussed previously, Calvin (1559/1960) refers to integrity as the image of God possessed by unfallen humans and also as whole-hearted worship. Thus, it incorporates themes of perfection and unity of spirit, thought and action. For Calvinist ministers the concept of personal integration represents what it means to be an authentic human being, an ideal to be pursued wholeheartedly.

In striving for integration ministers reported a process of self-examination, an attempt to obtain knowledge of self in the light of God's character and requirements. This emphasis on knowledge of God and self is foundational to Calvinism and is discussed in Chapter 1 of the Institutes of the Christian Religion (Calvin, 1559/1960). The striving also reflects the emphasis placed by Calvinism on human autonomy under the sovereignty of God.
(Holwerda, 1976). Ferguson (1988, p.67) has expressed this pithily:

"God gives increase in holiness by engaging our minds, wills, emotions and actions. We are involved in the process."

In Calvinist theology, then, there is an emphasis on knowledge and human action in the process of becoming integrated and holy. There is an interaction between the activity of God and human activity. This position contrasts with the Lutheran emphasis on God as the giver of holiness, and Pentecostal emphases on the Holy Spirit as giving gifts which are held to be one strand of evidence of personal holiness (Alexander, 1988). Thus, the ministers' emphasis on integrity is clearly grounded in Calvinist theology. The less-stressed, well-functioning ministers were able to accept and use their current levels of holiness and integrity. Those functioning at high stress levels experienced frustration and guilt in their striving for integrity and authenticity.

The emphasis on integrity in ministers also has implications for understanding their self-esteem and legitimisation. It appears that ministers' self-esteem was based to some extent of their perceptions of having reached a measure of integration of religious thinking, spiritual experience and behaviour. A sense of integrity, then, provided the basis for action in difficult ministry situations: it gave personal legitimisation for ongoing action. For those ministers who could attain some measure of integration and could see themselves becoming a fully authentic person, there was psychological benefit from adopting a Calvinist worldview but for those who could not, it was psychologically maladaptive.

Summary

In short, a Calvinist worldview imposes a demanding ideal of the authentic minister and this makes self-legitimation and self-esteem characteristic of the minister with an internal locus of coping difficult to achieve. It does not bestow status and authority on ministers and so social legitimisation is problematic, particularly in a context of institutional secularisation and privatisation. The minister using social legitimisation as the basis for an external locus of coping is likely to have ongoing problems and acute difficulties when the social context of ministry changes. The emphasis on a range of ministry tasks under the primary image of servanthood means the Calvinist minister has difficulty in being equipped and skilled in all areas of ministry. As well, the demanding ideal of a Calvinist minister makes enmeshment a danger. Thus it is not easy for a Calvinist minister to be fully furnished. A Calvinist worldview does not make ministry amongst people in a secularised society and having privatised beliefs easy but it does promote persistence in unrewarding ministry roles. For those who attain an internal locus of coping or fully furnished state, their Calvinist beliefs can bring a sense of satisfaction that is independent of context; for other ministers Calvinism promotes perseverance despite considerable levels of stress.

Calvinist beliefs reinforce internal and external loci of coping in circular processes. Those who are equipped with skills in organisation and communication are likely to win social support and begin to develop social legitimisation as well as self-legitimation based
on their skills. Calvinist ideals of working hard in one's vocation and servanthood increase ministry striving. This in turn may buttress social legitimation and reinforce an external locus of coping. On the other hand, ministry striving may increase dependency upon parishioners and result in enmeshment and defensive coping, such as isolation or narrowed focus, which may reduce social and self-legitimation. At this point, having an external locus of coping is maladaptive. Those equipped with religious 'skills' in areas of spiritual practice and religious experience are likely to emphasise spiritual characteristics in their identity and begin to develop self-legitimation. Calvinist ideals of perseverance and striving towards holiness increase spiritual striving. This may feed into a spiritually-based identity and reinforce an internal locus of coping but it may also increase social legitimation. On the other hand, spiritual striving may result in enmeshment through identification with servanthood in ministry. Defensive coping may reduce social legitimation but is less likely to affect self-legitimation based on spiritual identity. In this way, internal locus of coping may provide a basis for identity and legitimation with psychologically adaptive outcomes.

STRESS-COPING THEORY REVISITED

In my discussions so far I have tried to explain ministry stress in terms of a category that reflects learning and immediate context (furnished) and a coping style (internal-external) in a framework of Calvinist worldviews and secularisation. One conclusion is that Presbyterian ministry today is psychologically hazardous. The broad context of ministry places severe psychological strain on the ministers and it is hardly surprising that a majority function under moderate, to severe, levels of anxiety and burnout. Analysing stress and coping without sufficient attention to context can lead to short-term solutions that may help ministers to manage stress but do little to change the major causes. A strength of process theory is that it demands a full analysis of social and psychological variables contributing to stress exacerbation or alleviation.

Stress-coping theory emphasises situation-specific appraisals and coping strategies as predictors of stressful outcomes. I have argued that this theory is valuable in explaining the effects of discrete stressors but less helpful in providing a specific focus for ongoing occupational stress in ministers. Here I want to draw together some of the specific findings from my studies of ministers, theological students and congregations and explore their theoretical and practical implications.

Significance of context

Stress theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) attempts to predict immediate and long-term consequences of stressors by examining sets of effects defined as antecedent and mediating variables. Generally the fit of prediction models is tested by multiple regression analyses. Event characteristics are held to be of secondary importance compared with appraisals of the event. Usually, antecedent variables used in studies of religious stress and coping comprise personal resources such as beliefs, commitment, problem-solving style, religious experience and religious behaviour (see programme of research by Pargament and others, from 1982 onwards). Situational demands, the context of the institutional system and inter-relationships between personal resource
variables are often ignored. My study has demonstrated the usefulness of including data on secularisation to outline the context and to analyse situational demands, as well as the need for broader typifications derived from relevant resource variables. The 'furnished' and 'locus of coping' typologies incorporate psychological appraisals and/or personality styles into useful analytic concepts and similar procedures should be included in future research.

The theological students were highly committed in their religiousness but not strongly Calvinist in theology. The latter finding suggests they are more privatised than the ministers. Another indicator of privatisation and institutional secularisation is the higher level of 'church shopping' in Presbyterian students compared with Baptist theological students. They had been associated with several different denominations in the past, on average (see data in Chapter 4), and although they had chosen to study at a Presbyterian theological college it does not appear that the choice was made on the basis of informed commitment to Calvinist doctrine. On the other hand, they expressed Calvinist themes of God's sovereignty in discussing personally stressful events, reflecting some degree of socialisation into Presbyterian worldviews. Are these results relevant only to a unique group, or are they part of trend towards greater institutional secularisation and privatisation in candidates for ministry? Longitudinal studies are needed to investigate such a trend. If confirmed, it would make the role of the theological college in teaching distinctively Presbyterian doctrine more difficult, because the students would have readily available alternative plausibility structures incorporating religious themes. One consequence of this is an increased likelihood of highly privatised, individualist Presbyterian ministers. This in turn could affect cohesiveness within the denomination and exacerbate trends towards institutional secularisation.

Religious beliefs and appraisals

As well as investigating core Presbyterian beliefs I studied beliefs about God's control in the three samples. It was unrelated to locus of control and, unlike intrinsic commitment and collaborative, or deferring problem-solving, it did not predict religious coping (see Chapter 4). That is, I was unable to establish any broad orientation to God's sovereignty that predicted other appraisals, coping strategies, or outcomes in stressful situations. My findings suggest that control beliefs are complex because they incorporate beliefs about God as the cause of the life event, God's control over participants in the event and God's control over the outcome of the event. As a cause, God can be distantly allowing the event, or indirectly causing the event through people, or circumstances, or directly controlling all aspects of the event. During the event God can directly control or indirectly influence the behaviour, thinking and emotions of participants. God can be perceived as directly producing the outcome, indirectly producing it through human or non-human agents, or distantly allowing the outcome to occur. Presbyterianism cannot be equated with deterministic beliefs about divine control. An immediate implication, consistent with process theory, is that researchers, or clinicians should not make inferences about how Presbyterians would view God's sovereignty in stressful situations on the basis of their denominational affiliation but investigate their situation-specific appraisals. The complexity of control beliefs also seems to be linked to institutional secularisation and privatisation of congregational members: there is no uniform way in
which Presbyterians view God within the lifeworld, suggesting privatisation and their beliefs show distinct differences from official theology, suggesting a prior process in which the authority of the denomination over members has declined.

From examining congregational attributions across stressful and trivial situations it was clear that religious attributions were situationally specific, consistent with process theory. They did not replace secular attributions to self or others, perceived as immediate causes, but God’s allowing the situation was also perceived as the distant cause. Religious attributions were applied flexibly and in ways that appeared to give meaning and control. Control was inferred from the use of proximal attributions to self or others: where humans were perceived as causing the event there was greater likelihood of being able to control subsequent occurrences. The role of attributions in supplying meaning was seen in the comments of ministers and students about God’s role in causing a personally stressful event. Their comments about how God caused the event (as allowing, directly causing etc) largely referred to assumptions about God’s purposes and so God attributions included inferences about purpose. However, I did not study the self-esteem functions of attributions directly and found no evidence from post-hoc analyses to support a role of attributions in maintaining self-esteem. That is, some aspects of Spilka et al’s (1985) theory were confirmed but my study suggested a proximal-distal hypothesis rather than an availability hypothesis for attributions.

The importance of religious attributions within the stress-coping process lies in their mediating between religious dispositions (commitment, problem-solving) and religious coping yet the effect of attributions on coping, although significant, was very small. This has implications for the relationship between religious attributions and coping in specific situations. Pargament et al (1992) included religious attributions as a subset of religious coping (other subsets were purposes and activities). They found low correlations between religious appraisals and activities and pointed out that modest inter-correlations were expected from process theory. Together, these findings suggest a modification of process theory is needed. Inglehart (1991) argued that a distinction should be made between post hoc attributions (looking back to attribute cause) and a priori attributions (looking forward to possible outcomes), corresponding to causal and outcome attributions in my work. She held that causal attributions predict amount of tension or cognitive stress and outcome attributions predict type of tension reducing action or coping. In my study, an outcome attribution (control over the outcome by self) was the most significant predictor of positive religious coping in health situations. This suggests that further differentiation between causal and outcome attributions are required within process theory.

Religious coping

In the area of coping I found a flexible use of religious and secular coping together with primary and secondary coping. That is, the primary-secondary dichotomy proved to be a fruitful way of categorising religious coping and should be explored further as a direct application of the problem versus emotional focus of coping proposed by Folkman and Lazarus (1980). The situationally-specific nature of coping was prominent in my study and also supports a process theory. However, the coping patterns suggested by
existential phenomenology, and supported by my grounded methodology, were more relevant to the occupational stress of ministers. That is, different types of theoretically-based coping models may be required in analysing different kinds of stress situations.

The broad significance of my findings is that they tend to support a process model of stress and coping for religious subjects, where appraisals and dispositions affect coping and stress outcomes. This was further confirmed in the study that showed how religious well-being could reduce depression in a threatening situation. Religious well-being can be considered as a disposition, or a self-appraisal. On average, stressful ministry situations are rated as moderately threatening but ministers scored low on depression and high on religious well-being. It appears that their sense of religious well-being reduced the risk of depression in the face of threat and so interventions that increase religious well-being are likely to buffer the stressful effects of threatening events.

Relevance of cognitive consistency theory

On the other hand, aspects of my work support a general cognitive consistency model (Inglehart, 1991) which incorporates process theory with specific cognitive consistency theories, including Heider's (1958) balance theory and Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance. Her model relates to critical life events, defined as "events which are inconsistent with that part of a person's worldview on which the person's attention is focused" (1991, p.95). Stress is equated with tension between inconsistent elements in the worldview relative to inconsistent elements on which attention is focused. If tension is due to an inconsistent causal hypothesis then it can be reduced by adopting a new cause-effect hypothesis. However, this change in worldview may produce inconsistency in the future. Coping is viewed as a means of establishing cognitive consistency. It can involve tension avoidance by withdrawal or changing the focus of attention. However, if this is costly in terms of effort, or results in an increase in tension, coping will involve tension reduction by changing the environment, or self. This model brings some of the insights of Schutz's phenomenology into a cognitive-process theory: in particular, aspects of attention within the lifeworld; the shock of cognitive dissonance; the importance of worldviews; and withdrawal, or attention refocussing as possible responses. These elements were significant in my study.

Stress reduction is linked to the disposition of self-complexity. Inglehart (1991) cites Linville's work (1982, 1985, 1987) showing the more aspects of the self a person differentiates and the less overlap between these aspects, the higher is a person's self-complexity. She argues that high self-complexity will result in reduced stress and better adjustment as a consequence of a stressful event. To some extent this parallels my finding that fully furnished ministers who were equipped by skills, self-acceptance and spiritual competence were better adjusted because they could move freely between different provinces of meaning and use richer typifications in their assessments and coping. It would be interesting to examine the correspondence between self-complexity and authentic being more closely.

Yet cognitive consistency theory has limitations for my data. As it is proposed by
Inglehart (1991) it ignores multiple attributions in a critical life event and so cannot easily deal with the complexity of a proximal-distal attribution hypothesis. It also proposes that choice of coping will depend on cost in terms of effort and tension. Calvinist ministers persist in unrewarding effort, while experiencing psychological tension, because of their worldview. Inglehart fails to take into account individual differences on the basis of worldview, or other dispositional factors in coping. Schutz's (1970b) theory of motivational relevances, together with Laing's (1960) existentially-based coping analysis provided a richer basis for exploring ministers' coping.

Process stress-coping theory provided a broad framework for my study and major findings generally supported it. At some points the addition of elements from cognitive consistency theory (Inglehart, 1991) provide a slightly better mesh for my data. However, a meaningful analysis of ministry stress depended upon my use of other well-developed theories in areas of context and coping. Specifically, I had to draw on Calvinist theology to understand the basis of ministers' theological worldviews and secularisation theory to understand the current context of ministry. While insights from theories of secular and religious coping were helpful in analyses of discrete stressful situations, I had to use existentialism and Schutz's phenomenology to understand coping in ongoing stressful situations that were interpersonal and largely uncontrollable. This suggests that stress-process theory requires extensive supplementation if it is to be a useful means of studying occupational stress in ministry or ongoing relationally-based stress in religious populations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Two broad areas are recommended: first, a longitudinal study of Presbyterian ministers from decision to enter theological college through to resignation or retirement; and second, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of ministers from other denominations.

Longitudinal studies of Presbyterian ministers

Longitudinal studies would help to resolve ambiguous data from my theological students, who could be a unique sample, or part of an ongoing trend. I have tried to estimate effects at various stages of ministry (student, first three years, later years) from cross-sectional data but longitudinal studies are needed to provide a trajectory of ministry stress and coping. Repeated measures of dependent stress outcome variables provide greater power and allow for them to be used as independent variables in subsequent analysis. In this way, ministry stress could be examined as a predictor of subsequent denominational secularisation. Repeated measures of antecedent and mediating variables would help to establish how stressful situations and ministers' responses change over time, as well as at different stages of ministry. Questions for longitudinal data include:

- What aspects of Calvinism have theological students absorbed on entry to college?
- What is their commitment to Presbyterianism at entry point? Are they cognitively unsecularised, privatised, secularised or desecularised?
- What is their level of knowledge and commitment at exit from college and during ministry?
- What is the change, if any, in religious experience during college and ministry?
- What is the change, if any, in coping styles?
- To what extent do religious dispositions, including spiritual well-being, buffer stress during college and throughout ministry?
- How do perceived training deficiencies and inadequacies in spiritual practice interact with the context of early ministry to produce stress?
- How does coping in response to early ministry stress affect spiritual self-appraisals, appraisals of ministry context and subsequent coping?
- Do ministers who show mixed characteristics of fully-furnished and unfurnished ministers move subsequently to either pole and what contributes to any shift?
- Can ministers with an internal locus of coping be identified at the stage of theological college?
- What aspects of disposition and context contribute to the internal locus of coping type?
- Are fully-furnished ministers or those with an internal locus of coping better able to deal with specific developmental crises in their ministry?
- While fully-furnished ministers and those with an internal locus of coping are less stressed than other ministers, are these types associated with any psychological disadvantage over time?
- How do dispositional differences between fully-furnished and unfurnished ministers change over time?
- How do dispositional differences between ministers with internal and external locus of coping styles change over time?
- Can maladaptive cognitive and coping styles associated with unfurnished ministers and those with an external locus of coping be changed by psychological intervention?
- How does institutional secularisation affect ministers’ worldviews, appraisals of situations as stressful and coping?
- How do ministers’ coping strategies affect institutional secularisation?

Answers to these questions would explicate the development of Presbyterian worldviews, both in terms of content (Calvinism) and their cognitive structure (cognitive secularisation). This in turn would be used to understand interactions between components of the process-stress model. In particular, the theoretical issues of interest are the reciprocal influences of institutional secularisation, worldviews and coping strategies.

Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of other denominations

In a cross-sectional study I have examined the interaction between secularisation and Calvinism in producing ministry stress amongst Presbyterian ministers. The next step would be to develop ways of measuring the worldviews of ministers from other denominations and use Chaves' (1993, 1994) methodology for investigating secularisation within those denominations. The broad aim would be to study how worldviews, secularisation trends and specific organisational contexts interact to produce
ministry stress. Specific questions would include:

- What are essential elements of worldviews in other denominations?
- How do ministers’ worldviews differ from those of congregational members?
- What evidence is there of secularisation at institutional, organisational and individual levels?
- How is secularisation producing stress amongst these ministers?
- What aspects of their worldviews are linked to ministry stress?

Other aspects of context to be examined in a stress-process study across denominations should include theological training; elements that would tend towards enmeshment such as church-provided housing, or emphasis on a generalist approach; differences in role expectations between ministers and congregations; institutionalised support services for ministers; 'apprenticeship' periods as an associate minister; and options for a change to non-parish ministry.

The role of religious dispositions in ministry stress has been investigated but other non-religious dispositions may be influential. Personality styles such as extroversion-introversion, optimism-pessimism and self-complexity may be fruitful areas for research in conjunction with research into ministry context.

If a religious worldview is a broad system of meaning that can contribute to stress, then the development of religious worldviews would be one focus of a longitudinal study. The work of James Fowler (1976, 1978, 1980, 1981) is of relevance here. Fowler studied the development of faith or ‘faithing’ which he defined as searching for meaning: “our way of ... giving meaning to the ... forces and relations that make up our lives” (1981, p.4). He held that individuals move through universal developmental stages comprising: (1) Intuitive-projective faith (egocentric); (2) Mythic-literal faith (narrative); (3) Synthetic-conventional faith (uncritical); (4) Individuative-reflective faith (self-serving commitments); (5) Paradoxical-consolidative / conjunctive faith (sacrificial) and (6) Universalising faith (selflessly compassionate).

Ford-Grabowsky (1986) argued that the first four stages involved ego-consolidation, while the last two involved ego-transcendence. Throughout these stages, she asserted, there is maturation of: perspective taking (from self-centredness to compassion); form of logic (from concrete to abstract thinking); moral judgment (from “law and order” to principled reasoning); locus of authority (from external to internal); world coherence (from differentiation to coherence) and symbolic function (from literal symbolism to a “penetration into meaning” (p.7)). At the last two levels of religious development, therefore, individuals are capable of principled, paradoxical and symbolic thought where “projections, illusions and defenses of earlier years are replaced by willed vulnerability and openness to truth” (p.6). In other words, people whose religious maturity exceeds Stage 4 have developed in their thinking, attachments and capacity for giving to the extent that, under stress, they would draw on inner resources for sacrificial loving rather than using defenses of isolation-withdrawal or petrification that are inauthentic modes of coping.
Fowler’s approach has been praised as ‘the most useful theoretical model available that broadly describes the process of religious development ... (and) invaluable in the study of the religious maturation process’ (Butman, 1990, p.17). However, it has been criticised for lacking precision and empirical confirmation (Butman, 1990) and for an excessively broad definition of faith (Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch, 1985; Dykstra and Parks, 1986; Ford-Grabowsky, 1986; Hanford, 1991).

With these reservations in mind, I suggest that using Fowler’s intensive “Faith Development Interview Guide” (in Fowler, 1981) would contribute to an understanding of religious development in ministers of different denominations. The specific hypothesis that ministers scoring at Stages 5 or 6 would use non-defensive coping and exhibit lower levels of negative affect could be tested in longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.

Religious coping

Pargament’s foundational work on religious coping from 1986 onwards has established the importance of investigating religious forms of coping when analysing stress and coping in religious people. Further work is needed on the dimensions of religious coping as my work has pointed to useful distinctions between primary and secondary religious coping, as well as an internal-external locus of coping dimension that requires further exploration in other samples. Both grounded theory methods and categories developed from existential-phenomenological approaches have resulted in development of coping types specific to my sample, such as isolation or narrowing. Other broad coping styles based on similar approaches could be fruitful in further studies of chronic stress and coping.

Coping must be considered in the light of secularisation and other contextual factors. In cross-denominational studies differences between ministers in religious and secular coping styles would be of interest, as well as whether the internal-external locus of coping typology relates significantly to maladaptive outcomes.

Scales and outcome measures

Outcome measures should be appropriate to the research issue and have well-attested psychometric properties if they are to be used as dependent variables in regression analyses. The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Paloutzian and Ellison, 1982) is a useful measure of religious outcomes if ceiling effects with highly religious samples are taken into consideration. In studies of congregational members, other behavioural outcome measures should be developed, extending beyond church attendance to participation in home bible study/prayer groups and other specific behaviours authorised, or promoted by their church.

In carrying out these cross-sectional studies it would be helpful to ground interview data against scales having adequate psychometric properties. I have suggested revision of Pargament’s Religious Coping Scale to incorporate adequate sub-scales of primary and secondary coping. It would be necessary to develop a broad scale that measured beliefs
about God's control covering all of the dimensions discussed above. More sensitive measures of 'applied beliefs' are required: beliefs about God's purposes; divine-human relationships; and relationships between humans, or humans and other structures within the situation. Explication of these types of beliefs and their use in stressful situations to interpret and guide behaviour is needed. In addition, scales that could identify fully furnished ministers and those with an internal locus of coping would be extremely useful although much work is needed to establish precise operational definitions and test sets of items.

CONCLUSION

Previous published studies of ministry stress have taken either a clinical perspective, or a sociological perspective focusing largely on role conflict. My study was an attempt to understand stress and coping in Presbyterian ministers using a broad process model together with analyses based on secularisation theory and phenomenology. Its contribution is a detailed analysis of ministry stress within this framework.

The context for Presbyterian ministry is institutional secularisation. This results in a decline in the authority of the denomination and of ministers who represent the denomination so institutional legitimisation for ministers is lacking. A corollary is cognitive secularisation where the comfort of taken-for-granted meanings is replaced by the shock of subjectivity and privatisation of ministers. Privatisation brings stress because congregations, who are also privatised, hold less strongly to Calvinist beliefs and have more traditional attitudes towards ministry roles. The clash between beliefs and expectations of ministers and congregations brings stress. It also makes social legitimisation more difficult, especially as it follows from privatisation that shared meanings have to be constructed - they cannot be assumed.

The stressfulness of ministry is not fundamentally caused by immediate work conditions although these have been thoroughly investigated in previous studies. Instead it issues from the attempt to live out very demanding ideals based on privatised, Calvinist beliefs without strong support from colleagues, congregations or denominational structures.

In the absence of widespread social legitimisation ministers are required either to establish their authority on the basis of competence in ministry tasks and especially conflict resolution, or to operate on the basis of self-legitimation. Those ministers whose training or previous experience made them skilled in communication and management were likely to gain social legitimisation. This support was helpful in withstanding ongoing stresses of ministry. Those whose beliefs included strong Calvinist themes, particularly personal integration, were likely to function on the basis of self-legitimation.

Ongoing conflicts in ministry essentially related to the roles and authority of the minister. Socially legitimated ministers who tended to use an external locus of coping responded to stress by exercising organisational skills or, if these failed, withdrawal and role reification. Ministers with self-legitimation, who tended to use an internal locus of coping responded to stress by trust in God, self-examination and active religious or secular coping strategies.
Appraisals as discrete cognitions in specific stressful events had little impact upon coping or outcomes. However, I found that ministers' appraisals were complex evaluations of the actions of others (including God) in the light of their goals for ministry and their personal striving towards integrity. Functional coping, coping that minimised the risk of trait anxiety or burnout, flowed from a developed, or developing, sense of integrity in ministers who were equipped for human interaction but not enmeshed in their work. Their Calvinist worldview was central to their appraisals and also established an ideal framework of coping as humans actively participating in the purposes of God.

Given current secularisation trends, it appears that the future will be even more stressful for ministers. Intervention is needed already for stressed ministers and policies and structural change for stress alleviation in the future are urgent. It is ironical that the same Calvinist theology that shaped powerful and successful ministers three to four centuries ago, today is producing ministers who are prone to enmeshment and isolation. Despite high levels of commitment and faith, ministers are clearly showing the psychological consequences of the organisational and theological changes resulting from rejection of Union in 1977. At least in part, they represent the human cost of the struggle for a Presbyterian identity.

RESCUING THE MINISTERS

In the following comments I am assuming that the current structure of ministry will remain basically unchanged. That is, a model where one full-time minister is called to shepherd a congregation. Some variations of this structure have already been implemented. Team ministry, with two or more full-time ordained ministers is conducted in several larger parishes with substantial resources and results in greater role specialisation. At the other extreme, part-time ministers (usually designated as home missionaries) may serve in some small, under-resourced parishes.

Two trends are likely to affect current models: secularisation and countering evangelism. Almost half (42%) of Presbyterian church attenders in Kaldor’s (1994) study were aged 60 or over, exactly the same percentage as in my study, compared with 19% in the general population. The average age of my sample was 53 years. Over the next two decades about half of the present membership is likely to be lost through infirmity or death. In addition, only 16% of Presbyterian attenders in Kaldor’s research were aged between 15 and 29 years, so increases in membership resulting from their offspring are unlikely to compensate for the loss of elderly members. Secularisation is likely to exacerbate loss of membership over the next decades in several ways. As a result of the loss of authority of religion over people in Australia, fewer are likely to consider church affiliation as a desirable option. Kaldor et al (1994) have also demonstrated specific loss of authority of mainstream Protestant denominations through their 'church switching' analysis: there was clear evidence of losses of 5% of weekly attenders in Presbyterian churches to other churches and overall the highest gain was for Pentecostal churches. If this trend continues, secularisation is likely to accelerate the decline in Presbyterian membership as regular attenders move to other churches. As a result of demographic and secularisation trends over the next two decades, many rural and urban parishes, especially in inner or near-inner city areas, will become too small to support a full-time
minister.

On the other hand, church planting is being carried out in some areas of population growth on the urban fringes. This is a response to evangelical pressures within the denomination. Over time, these congregations become self-supporting and may even provide resources for church planting in other growth areas. Yet there are long periods in which a full-time minister must be supported by central funding (such as Ministry and Mission funds), or by another congregation. All of these trends point to a decline in the number of full-time positions available to ordained ministers, at least over the next decades. Organisationally, this is probably the most significant issue for the denomination.

There are a number of possible organisational responses. Instead of moving directly from theological college to administration of a parish, exit students could be placed as 'apprentices' with more experienced ministers for a period of one to two years. This depends on centralised, or local funding to support the 'apprentice' minister. An alternative is to select candidates for ministry from those who are already engaged in lay ministry within the church and who have demonstrated skills in preaching, counselling or some other major ministry function.

Parishes may be reorganised so that small centres are closed, or one full-time minister takes over responsibility for congregations in a broader geographical area. Here the minister is primarily an administrator/preacher. More parishes may be designated as part-time ministry positions. Since central funding is limited, a consequence would be that ministers would be required to take on other paid part-time work (paid chaplaincies or other specialist religious roles, or even non-religious work). This option would involve a radical reassessment by ministers and congregations of the workloads and careers of ministers. If congregations expected a full range of pastoral services, then other members (elders?) would have to undertake some of the tasks of paid clergy on a voluntary basis. A third option is that of part-time team ministry, observed in one parish on the urban fringe. In this model the ordained minister takes on paid work in addition to parish duties and others with specialist qualifications are paid for their work within the parish. This option requires a commitment to lay ministry and teamwork, together with a radical reassessment of the notion of the authority and status of the minister. An extension of this model would involve abolishing the concept of ordained ministers and vesting authority (including authority to administer the sacraments) in elders who may be required to undertake specialist training for their expanded roles.

Another consequence of a part-time team ministry approach, whether led by an ordained minister or not, is an increased emphasis on the parish as locus of activity. That is, there is strong attention to parish organisation and affairs but little time and energy for presbytery or denominational matters. If this model results in a breakdown of presbytery power, it is likely that increased secularisation would result, since Chaves (1993) demonstrated that denominations with presbytery-type organisational structures are more successful in resisting internal secularisation.

A further possibility if secularisation trends threaten the viability of the Presbyterian
denomination is the emergence of a broad "reformed evangelical" network that could cut across the boundaries of many denominations. This is much more likely to emerge if dissatisfaction with centralised financial decisions and presbytery structures continue and if ministers from strongly evangelical parishes form well-organised support groups. However, given the problem-ridden history of denominational amalgamations to date in Australia, it is hard to see any formal restructuring of the denomination occurring along these lines.

Whatever the outcomes, it is likely that there will be an ongoing process of secularisation within the Presbyterian Church in NSW, with ministry stress both a result and also feeding into further secularisation. Since it is unlikely that radically different models will be implemented in the near future, the following comments on structural changes refer to the current situation, but the broad principles would also apply to any model of ministry.

**Manse**

Parishes should not be required to supply a manse. Current manses should be sold, or rented and ministers’ stipends adjusted upwards to reflect their professional training. The sale of manses could provide capital to be used to pay ministers’ stipends and other human costs associated with parish transitions brought about by demographic changes and secularisation. Where a spouse is involved in joint ministry the stipend should also be increased. Instead of providing a manse the parish should supply an office at the church, or elsewhere for administration, counselling and research. The parish should also supply a secretary-receptionist during office hours. Other broad structural changes should include a state-wide confidential counselling service for ministers and their families, together with formal training and support for ministers' wives.

**Selection**

The findings on ministry stress and coping raise issues that should be considered by presbytery in their assessment of potential candidates for ministry. I must emphasise that these comments do not relate to assessment for 'successful' ministry, however that may be defined but rather to assessing the likelihood of high stress and burnout in ministers.

It is important to screen candidates for current levels of anxiety-depression and psychological disturbances that could impair later efforts to deal with stressful situations. Since it is widely accepted that psychological disturbances increase vulnerability to stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), a thorough screening for Axis I and Axis II disorders (after Millon, 1983) would be desirable. In view of difficulties some ministers have with themes of perfectionism and control, particular attention should be paid to evidence of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder or traits. Those who were found to have a psychological disorder could be referred for appropriate therapy and reassessed if the candidate so desired on its completion.

On the positive side, a strong sense of spiritual well-being could act as a buffer to stress and this should also be assessed.
Training

Since both the unfurnished and mixed types were stressed by deficits in training in the first three years of ministry, it is clear that priority must be given to overcoming those deficits. Recommendations from Pryor (1982) have already been discussed in Chapter 4, but it must be stressed that training should include interpersonal and organisational skills as well as pastoral and theological skills.

In addition, unrealistic and perfectionist expectations should be dealt with before they contribute to the unfurnished minister. Clearly, the students absorb Calvinist ideals of holiness and integrity. Yet there is a tension between God's ongoing work and human effort that must be resolved in practice. Inviting experienced ministers to speak to students about their ongoing struggles in areas of self-expectation and perfectionism would be helpful.

Theological college should also provide training in spiritual practice: that is, there should be teaching about spiritual disciplines as well as encouragement and monitoring of spiritual practice. This should be followed by the provision of spiritual retreats over the first three years of ministry and at intervals thereafter.

Ministry support

Non-intrusive supervision and support by older colleagues is essential in the early years of ministry. Training programmes in supervision may be needed at presbytery level, as well as informal support from Ministry and Mission to implement good supervision policies. Congregational support in the first few years is also critical. This could be encouraged in educational programmes including short articles on ministry stress support in denominational journals such as Australian Presbyterian Living Today, brief talks whenever members of Theological Education or Ministry and Mission Committees visit the parishes, articles in parish newsletters and segments in lay pastoral care programmes.

Support is needed after the first three years, even for the apparently fully furnished ministers. Those with internal sources of coping need to update their skills and knowledge and be informed about opportunities for spiritual refreshment from denominational and other sources. In theory, presbytery is an ongoing support for ministers. However, in practice it is seen as a business meeting that itself is a source of conflict and stress for many ministers. In smaller, newer presbyteries it may be possible to establish a spirit of co-operation and caring between members. Yet in larger presbyteries that are divided along theological lines there may be little hope for change. Ministers in such presbyteries need to seek and maintain other sources of spiritual and professional support.

The danger for ministers who take on additional non-parish roles is stress-related illness because of their commitment to parish, presbytery and state-level administration. While as individuals they may be helped by training in stress management techniques, the denomination must also recognise the workload of those who take on roles as interim moderator, clerk of parish, membership of state, or national committees etc. One way
would be to provide supplementary funds to their parishes to cover some local ministries, moving to team ministries for those who wish to specialise in administration.

Those with a narrowed ministry focus risk being burned out and unable to work elsewhere. To reduce this risk they need two types of intervention. First, they must come to terms with their high self-expectations, possibly through a programme which encourages realistic self-examination such as a Clinical Pastoral Education course. Second, they need social and spiritual support. Programmes to mobilise congregational support have already been mentioned, as well as retreats to provide spiritual refreshment. Less formal supports such as groups of colleagues to pray for one another would also be helpful. Input that encourages a broader focus, whether inter-denominational or simply a focus on personal and social issues, is also needed as part of the self-examination and support strategies.

There are many ways of reducing ministry stress at individual and structural levels. While there are general needs that can be met with better training programmes and provision of basic support services, other interventions require individual assessment. It is important that assessment reach beyond the evident symptoms and investigate the roots of difficulty so that appropriate interventions can be designed. The challenge then, is twofold: the provision of appropriate services and the identification of those ministers who could benefit from them.
REFERENCES


Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd. NUD.IST [Computer Program] (3.0). La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia.


LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1

ITEM SET FOR CALVINIST BELIEFS MEASURES

Please read each statement of belief and FOR EVERY STATEMENT indicate your agreement or disagreement using the following ratings:

1. strongly believe it to be false
2. tend to believe it to be false
3. uncertain
4. tend to believe it to be true
5. strongly believe it to be true

1. Because Christ died for the whole world, God will eventually save every human being.

2. At the time of Creation humans knew exactly what God required of them but lacked the power to be obedient.

3. Christ put off all of his divine capacities and nature, becoming fully human (though sinless) from his birth.

4. Humans can desire to please God and hence begin to move back themselves towards a relationship with God.

5. Those who have never heard the gospel can be saved by carefully following the teachings of their own religion.

6. God’s protection, provision and discipline do not depend on whether a person is a believer or unbeliever.

7. There is no unforgivable sin provided the believer repents.

8. Good works, springing from faith in God, should be done to thank God, help other Christians and witness to unbelievers.

9. The ten commandments are a perfect statement of God’s requirements for holy human living in relationship with a loving Father.
10. Human conscience is the best and all-sufficient indicator of God's will.

11. Public worship must take place in duly consecrated buildings (i.e., churches).

12. Whatever the beliefs of civil authorities, Christians should pray for them, obey them and give them due respect.

13. Believers should support world-wide church needs, but should give first priority to the work of their own denomination.

14. Believing adults and children having at least one believing parent are to be baptised.

15. Believers and unbelievers receive spiritual benefit from taking part in the Lord's Supper.

16. Because God has chosen those who will be saved, the task of evangelism is not an imperative or "must" for the church.

17. Central to Christian faith is belief in a loving God who freely offers salvation to all people on the basis of Christ's sacrificial death for our sins.

18. The only way that people today can know God's will fully is through reading or hearing the Bible.

19. Predestination is based on God's knowledge of those who would respond to himself.

20. God usually implements his plans through people and the laws of nature.

21. Christ is now pleading on behalf of his people before God.

22. The Holy Spirit takes the gospel message and enables all who hear it to believe and respond to it.

23. A believer can never return to the ranks of condemned sinners.

24. Faith in Christians is a gift of God that can only grow stronger.

25. All sins against others in the church should be confessed publicly to the congregation or church leaders as well as to God.

26. Although the best actions of believers are imperfect and weak, God nevertheless accepts and rewards their efforts because of Christ.

27. Christians no longer require the ten commandments to tell them God's will as the Holy Spirit teaches them directly.
28. On the first day of the week believers are required by God to rest from daily work and spend their time in public and private worship.

29. Whenever a divorced person marries another, adultery is being committed because God sees the original marriage as continuing.

30. Only those who are ordained ministers should administer the sacraments eg the Lord's Supper, Baptism.

31. The correct method of performing baptism is by sprinkling; pouring and immersion are not to be used.

32. After death the soul of a believer immediately enters God's presence where it remains until God provides a fully resurrected body.

33. Church leaders are completely free to depart from doctrinal statements of the denomination in their public and private teaching on the basis of liberty of conscience.

34. Where the Bible does not give detailed guidance about a matter a person should seek direct wisdom from God.

35. God uses temptations and sufferings in believers to discipline them and bring them into a closer relationship with himself.

36. Through Christ's obedience we are now able to defeat sin completely in our lives and live as holy people in this world.

37. Through his obedient life and death Christ became the only acceptable substitute for our sins.

38. Faith in the life of every believer will be shown by loving actions.

39. The Holy Spirit gives some believers the gift of instant perfection where they remain in a state of love towards God and other people.

40. For each believer, assurance of personal salvation is solely dependent upon growth in holiness.

41. Christian teaching and preaching should give priority to God as father, creator and sustainer of the universe.

42. Believers should not marry non-believers or those with radically different religious beliefs.

43. Sacraments are not only signs of God's grace but also confirm God's promises to believers.
44. Difficulties of Biblical interpretation must be resolved by going back to the original language and by making comparisons with other Biblical passages on the same subject.

45. Since human nature has been corrupted as a result of the fall, it is impossible for unbelievers to do anything that is good or praiseworthy.

46. Humans are good at birth, but develop patterns of sinful behaviour.

47. God changes believers so that they want to be obedient to him and are able, by His grace, to do what is good.

48. Since God's eternal plan was to acquit the elect, those who are predestined to eternal life have always been pardoned.

49. The repentance of a sinner is a requirement for the pardon of their sins.

50. Those who have faith in Christ and conscientiously try to love and obey him may be certain of their salvation.

51. The ceremonial laws and the civil laws given to Israel in the Old Testament are binding on Jews today.

52. Children of believers are not fully part of the church community until they profess their own faith in Christ.

53. The benefit of a sacrament e.g. the Lord's Supper depends, in part, upon the worthiness of the one who administers it and of the one who receives it.

54. Church discipline should begin with exclusion from the sacraments and proceed to excommunication if the person does not repent.

55. The fate of unbelievers is eternal separation from Christ.

56. God is fully sovereign but does not override the free will of humans.

57. The relationship between God and humans differed completely in Old and New Testament times: the former was based on fear and law, the latter on love and faith.

58. Those people who died before Christ died and rose again cannot benefit from his work.

59. Only those who have faith in Christ are children of God.

60. True repentance develops in sinners from comparing their lives with God's requirements and from an understanding of Christ's forgiveness.
61. Since the Holy Spirit creates the desire and ability to do good works, believers should wait for the clear guidance of the Spirit before taking action.

62. Christians should obey lawful authorities.

63. Vows may be made to God provided that they accord with the Bible and those making vows are confident of their ability to fulfil them.

64. Believers are permitted to keep private property but should be urged to participate in the better system of common ownership.

65. Baptism is a means of gaining forgiveness and spiritual cleansing.

66. At the last judgment Christ will judge the world and fallen spiritual beings.

67. God's existence can be proved by scientific and philosophical arguments.

68. God has chosen those who will be saved as an act of grace, in no way based upon their merit.

69. Christ was not conceived by the sexual union of Mary and Joseph but through a miracle worked by the Holy Spirit.

70. God pronounces a sinner fit for heaven after He changes their nature from one that is inclined to disobedience to one of obedience to him.

71. Believers are changed inwardly by the gradual work of the Holy Spirit.

72. The works of unbelievers can be pleasing and acceptable to God if they conform to Biblical standards and glorify God.

73. Believers have freedom from the consequences of sin and from slavery to Satan because of Christ's obedience to God.

74. Any religion that teaches about a god who reveals himself to humans is able to bring people to God.

75. Since church and state are separate powers, Christians should not take up political or judicial offices.

76. Preaching should primarily emphasise the historical, true intervention of God in this world through Christ's actual birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension.

77. At the last judgment God will give no rewards except the gift of eternal life to the elect.

78. Those who will not receive salvation are condemned for their sins which God
allows and controls but does not will.

79. Humans today are being punished for Adam’s sin and for their own sins.

80. God's relationship with people today is based on his initiative and loving favour to them.

81. Those who become Christians are made conscious of their need for salvation by the preaching of the gospel.

82. Believers should expect to grow in love and holiness as they are strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

83. Those who have no assurance of salvation cannot be true believers.

84. The moral law is still binding and requires both outward and inward obedience of believers and non-believers.

85. Divorce is permitted on the grounds of adultery or desertion by the other partner.

86. God has created an orderly universe and will not intervene miraculously today.

87. Those who are unable to understand the written or spoken words of the gospel may be saved through the direct work of the Holy Spirit.

88. Faith in believers can be increased by Bible reading, prayer and participation in the sacraments.

89. Church membership in a particular congregation is a requirement for all believers.

90. The task of the church, through the Holy Spirit, is both to evangelise and help believers become more like Christ.
Appendix 2

STRESSFUL LIFE EXPERIENCES MEASURES

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS AND RATINGS

Please think about the most stressful thing that happened to you in the last six months, the event that made you feel most worried, angry, sad, afraid or euphoric. Then answer the following questions as indicated by short notes, numbers for ratings or circling yes or no. There are no correct answers: just try to reply as honestly and fully as you can.

1. Please give a brief description of the event.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. At the time, how positive or negative was the event? Use a rating scale with 1=very unpleasant, 2=moderately unpleasant, 3=mildly unpleasant, 4=mildly pleasant, 5=very pleasant.

Rating: _____

3. How often have you experienced this type of event in the past? (Note the event need not be the same, just within the same broad category of events). Use a rating scale with 1=always, 2=frequently, 3=sometimes, 4=occasionally, 5=never experienced before.

Rating: _____

4. Did this event include a moral conflict or a moral choice?
   Yes / No

If yes, please indicate the opposing possibilities:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. To what extent do you believe you could have avoided what happened? Use 0=not at all, 1=very little, 2=to a small extent, 3=to a moderate extent, 4=a large extent, 5=completely.

Rating: _____
6. For how long did the event and its direct effects last? Think of the period when you were aware of any disruption in your feelings, thinking, behaviour or physical state. Use a rating scale from 1=mins to hours, 2=1-7 days, 3=1-4 weeks, 4=1-3 months, 5=ongoing.

Rating: ___

7. What do you think directly caused the event? Give a % from 0% to 100% to each of the following possible causes, making sure the total adds up to 100%:

   CH = chance or laws of nature
   DO+ = deliberate positive or good action of another
   DO- = deliberate negative or harmful action of another
   DS+ = deliberate positive or good action of self
   DS- = deliberate negative or harmful action of self
   UO = unintended action by another
   US = unintended action by self

Cause:

CH ___% DO+ ___% DO- ___% DS+ ___% DS- ___% UO ___% US ___%

8. In your opinion, did God cause the event in any way? Yes/No

If yes, a) How?

b) What do you consider to be God's purpose in this event?

c) How do you see the relation between divine and human causation of the event?

If no, d) Why do you think the event happened to you?
9. What was your **immediate** emotion at the time of the event?


10. Using a rating scale with SA=strongly agree, A=agree, ?=neutral, D=disagree and SD=strongly disagree, circle one to indicate how much you saw the event as a:

   a) threat  SA  A  ?  D  SD
   b) loss    SA  A  ?  D  SD
   c) challenge SA  A  ?  D  SD

11. What was your **immediate** response?


12. At the time of your immediate response were you aware of God in any way? Yes/No

If yes, How?


13. Did awareness or thoughts of God affect what you did immediately? Yes/No

If yes, How?


14. List up to four things you did after your immediate response that you consider to be most significant in handling the situation. Make (1) the most important response, (2) the next most important etc. Be as specific and detailed as possible.

   (1)  
   (2)  
   (3)  
   (4)  


15. After your immediate response, were you conscious of God in any way? Yes/No

If yes, Explain:

16. Did thoughts about, or awareness of, God affect your behaviour? Yes/No

If yes, Explain

17. At the time you responded to the event, who or what did you think would determine the final outcome?

Use CH=chance/laws of nature, O=others, S=self and give a % from 0% to 100% to each of these possible sources of responsibility. Make sure the total adds up to 100%.

CH ___% O ___% S ___%

18. At the time, did you think that God would influence the outcome in any way? Yes/No

If yes, How?
19. How do you see the relation between divine and human control over the outcome?

20. What issues, if any, from the event are ongoing?

21. How were issues from the event resolved?

22. What have you learned from the event?

23. How would you rate your handling of the event? Use 1=very badly, 2=badly, 3=neutral, 4=well, 5=very well.

Rating: ____.

24. How would you rate your ability to handle similar events in the future? Use 1=very poorly, 2=poorly, 3=neutral, 4=well, 5=very well.

Rating: ____
COPING

These items relate to what you did when confronted by the stressful event. Please respond to each of the following items using the response choices listed below. Please try to respond to each item separately in your mind from each other item. Choose your answers thoughtfully and make your answers as true for you as you can. Please answer every item. There are no right or wrong answers so choose the most accurate answer for you.

1 = I didn't do it at all  
2 = I did this a little bit  
3 = I did this a medium amount  
4 = I did this a lot  

<p>| Rating | 1. I got upset and let my emotions out | 2. I tried to get advice from someone about what to do | 3. I concentrated my efforts on doing something about it | 4. I said to myself &quot;this isn't real&quot; | 5. I restrained myself from doing anything too quickly | 6. I discussed my feelings with someone | 7. I talked to someone to find out more about the situation | 8. I got upset and was really aware of it | 9. I held off doing something about it until the situation permitted | 10. I tried to get emotional support from friends and relatives | 11. I took additional action to try to get rid of the problem | 12. I refused to believe that it had happened | 13. I let my feelings out | 14. I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I got sympathy and understanding from someone</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>I pretended that it hadn't really happened</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>I tried to make sure not to make matters worse by acting too soon</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I asked people who had had similar experiences what they did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I felt a lot of emotional distress and found myself expressing those feelings a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I took direct action to get around the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I forced myself to wait for the right time to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I talked to someone about how I felt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I acted as though it hadn't even happened</td>
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<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I did what had to be done, one step at a time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
RELIGIOUS COPING SCALE

These questions relate to what you did in response to the stressful event. There are no right or wrong answers so choose your answers thoughtfully, making your answers as true for you as you can. Use the response choices below:

1 = I didn’t do this at all  
2 = I did this a little bit  
3 = I did this a medium amount  
4 = I did this a lot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I realised that God was trying to strengthen me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I asked God to guide me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I realised that I didn’t have to suffer since Jesus suffered for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I confessed my sins and asked for forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expressed feelings of anger towards or distance from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I sought support from clergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I focussed on the world to come rather than on the problems of this world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I used Christ as an example of how I should live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I participated in worship, seeking peace or inner strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I expressed feelings of anger towards or distance from members of the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I prayed that God would change the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I let God solve my problems for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I took control over what I could and gave the rest up to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My faith showed me different ways to handle the problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. I attended church services seeking answers or meaning

16. I questioned my beliefs until I found an answer

17. I asked God why it happened

18. I prayed or read the Bible to keep my mind off my problems

19. I accepted that the situation was not in my hands but in the hands of God

20. I found the lesson from God in the event

21. I participated in church groups (prayer groups, Bible groups, support groups)

22. I sought support from other members of the church

23. God showed me how to deal with the situation

24. I used my faith to help me decide how to cope with the situation

25. I provided help to other church members

26. I read the Bible to help me decide what to do

27. I prayed for the ability to accept the situation

28. I trusted that God wouldn't let anything terrible happen to me

29. I made restitution to others

30. I let God show me His love and care
Appendix 3

VIGNETTES

The vignettes covered four situation types (health, moral, annoying and rewarding) and the dimensions of pleasantness, control over cause, outcome control and severity/strength (see Table 1 in Chapter 2 for an analysis of vignettes by this classification). Each set comprised four situations, one of each type.

SET A

Please read the following situations and try to imagine yourself as the person involved. Then answer the questions underneath.

1. You receive many injuries after being hit by flying debris in a fierce storm with gale force winds. In hospital you are told that the extensive injuries should heal completely if you follow medical advice.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your injury.

Use 1 for strongly disagree
2 for slightly disagree
3 for neutral
4 for slightly agree
5 for strongly agree

1) It was pure chance
2) It happened because I chose to be outside
3) God caused it to happen
4) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it
5) God worked through my decision to cause it
6) Other people were careless or negligent

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over your recovery - how much you think your actions will change or speed up your recovery.

1 2 3 4 5
none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the injury in each of the following ways.
Use 1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
   2 for a little likely
   3 for moderately likely
   4 for very likely
   5 for extremely likely: I would almost certainly do this

1) Try to weigh up all your options 1 2 3 4 5
2) Pray that God would heal you 1 2 3 4 5
3) Express your feelings to God 1 2 3 4 5
4) Accept the reality of your situation 1 2 3 4 5

2. You have been behaving unethically at work and are discovered by an internal investigation. The consequences you face are automatic dismissal and public humiliation.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of the scandal.

   Use 1 for strongly disagree
       2 for slightly disagree
       3 for neutral
       4 for slightly agree
       5 for strongly agree

1) It happened because I chose to take these risks 1 2 3 4 5
2) It was bad luck 1 2 3 4 5
2) It was because my boss decided to check up on me 1 2 3 4 5
4) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it 1 2 3 4 5
5) God worked through human choices and actions to cause it 1 2 3 4 5
6) God caused it to happen 1 2 3 4 5

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over your current job situation.

   1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5
   none    a little  a moderate  much  very much
   amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

   Use 1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
       2 for a little likely
       3 for moderately likely
       4 for very likely
5 for extremely likely: I would almost certainly do this

1) Turn to other activities to take your mind off your predicament 1 2 3 4 5
2) Tell someone close how you feel 1 2 3 4 5
3) Withdraw from church groups and church activities that you were involved in 1 2 3 4 5
4) Confess and ask God for forgiveness 1 2 3 4 5

3. The person who normally cuts your hair to your full satisfaction does a noticeably poor job on this occasion. You have to hurry to an important function. You are aware that your hair looks strange.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your predicament.

Use 1 for strongly disagree
2 for slightly disagree
3 for neutral
4 for slightly agree
5 for strongly agree

1) It was bad luck 1 2 3 4 5
2) It happened because my hairdresser was careless 1 2 3 4 5
3) God caused it to happen 1 2 3 4 5
4) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it 1 2 3 4 5
5) I made a poor choice of hairdresser 1 2 3 4 5
6) God worked through human choices and actions to cause it 1 2 3 4 5

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the haircut.

1 2 3 4 5
none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use 1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
2 for a little likely
3 for moderately likely
4 for very likely
5 for extremely likely: I would almost always do this
1) Express your feelings to the hairdresser 1 2 3 4 5
2) Try to see the situation as a joke 1 2 3 4 5
3) Pray for strength to cope with an embarrassing situation 1 2 3 4 5
4) Focus on the world to come to take your mind off present concerns 1 2 3 4 5

4. Your friends have nominated you for the Order of Australia, based on your years of voluntary work with a particular organisation. You receive an official letter notifying you of the award.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your win.

   Use 1 for strongly disagree
     2 for slightly disagree
     3 for neutral
     4 for slightly agree
     5 for strongly agree

1) It was just luck 1 2 3 4 5
2) It happened because of my friends' action 1 2 3 4 5
3) God caused it to happen 1 2 3 4 5
4) It happened because of my hard work and dedication 1 2 3 4 5
5) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it 1 2 3 4 5
6) God planned this to happen and he worked through the choices and actions of others 1 2 3 4 5

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the win.

1______ 2______ 3______ 4______ 5______
none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use 1 for not at all likely
    2 for a little likely
    3 for moderately likely
    4 for very likely
    5 for a certainty
1) Focus on God's goodness at this happy time 1 2 3 4 5
2) Let others see how pleased you are 1 2 3 4 5
3) Read the Bible to help you decide whether to accept the award 1 2 3 4 5
4) Concentrate on enjoying the recognition 1 2 3 4 5

SET B

Please read the following situations and try to imagine yourself as the person involved. Then answer the questions underneath.

1. You have just been told that you have an inoperable cancer. There is no hope for a cure and it is likely that you will have less than twelve months to live.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your cancer.

Use 1 for strongly disagree
2 for slightly disagree
3 for neutral
4 for slightly agree
5 for strongly agree

1) God purposed that I should get cancer and worked through human choices and actions to cause it 1 2 3 4 5
2) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it 1 2 3 4 5
3) It happened because I didn't look after my body properly 1 2 3 4 5
4) God caused it to happen 1 2 3 4 5
5) It happened because the government has failed to control levels of toxic substances 1 2 3 4 5
6) It was bad luck 1 2 3 4 5

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over your cancer - how much your actions will change your health over the next twelve months.

1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5
none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the cancer in each of the following ways.

Use 1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
2 for a little likely
3 for moderately likely
4 for very likely
5 for extremely likely: I would almost certainly do this

1) Trust that God was taking the cancer away  1 2 3 4 5
2) Refuse to believe it had happened  1 2 3 4 5
3) Ask God why it had happened  1 2 3 4 5
4) Try to see it in a different light, to look for the good in the situation  1 2 3 4 5

2. You have been drinking heavily at a party. Driving home, you fail to stop at a red light and crash into another car. The cars are a write off but no-one is seriously injured.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of the crash.

Use
1 for strongly disagree
2 for slightly disagree
3 for neutral
4 for slightly agree
5 for strongly agree

1) God caused it to happen  1 2 3 4 5
2) It was bad luck  1 2 3 4 5
3) God planned my actions so he worked through my choices and those of others  1 2 3 4 5
4) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it  1 2 3 4 5
5) It happened because I chose to take these risks  1 2 3 4 5
6) It happened because the other driver didn't stop  1 2 3 4 5

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the crash.

1______ 2______ 3______ 4______ 5
none a little a moderate much very much
amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use
1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
2 for a little likely
3 for moderately likely
4 for very likely
5 for extremely likely: I would almost certainly do this
1) Ask God for forgiveness and try to make restitution to the others
2) Seek legal advice about how to avoid a culpable driving charge
3) Try to distract yourself from worrying thoughts by good works
4) Sleep more than usual

3. A colleague at work accidentally destroys the only copy of a document you have spent two hours preparing. You have all the material needed to produce another but it will mean rearranging a busy work schedule to have the document ready on time.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of the incident.

Use 1 for strongly disagree
     2 for slightly disagree
     3 for neutral
     4 for slightly agree
     5 for strongly agree

1) God worked through human choices and actions to cause it
2) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it
3) God caused it to happen
4) It happened because my colleague was careless
5) It happened because I didn't make another copy
6) It was bad luck

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the incident.

    1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5
    none   a little  a moderate much very much
    amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use 1 for not at all likely: I would almost never do this
     2 for a little likely
     3 for moderately likely
     4 for very likely
     5 for extremely likely: I would almost certainly do this
1) Do what has to be done, one step at a time
2) Let out your angry feelings to God
3) Pray that you will be able to accept the situation
4) Just give up trying to reach the deadline

4. A relative, grateful for your help, enters your name in a competition at a nearby shopping centre. You read in the local newspaper that you have won a $50 prize.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your win.

Use 1 for strongly disagree
     2 for slightly disagree
     3 for neutral
     4 for slightly agree
     5 for strongly agree

1) It was just luck
2) It was due to the help I gave
3) It happened because of my relative's action
4) God caused it to happen
5) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it
6) God planned this to happen and he worked through the choices and actions of others

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the win.

1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____ none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use 1 for not at all likely
     2 for a little likely
     3 for moderately likely
     4 for very likely
     5 for a certainty

1) Immediately go and spend the money
2) Enjoy time spent planning and buying items with the money
3) Ask a Christian friend to share the win
8. Your friends have nominated you for the Order of Australia, based on your years of voluntary work with a particular organisation. You receive an official letter notifying you of the award.

a) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to agree with each of the possible causes of your win.

Use
1 for strongly disagree
2 for slightly disagree
3 for neutral
4 for slightly agree
5 for strongly agree

1) It was just luck  
2) It happened because of my friends' action  
3) God caused it to happen  
4) God allowed it, but didn't specifically cause it  
5) God planned this to happen and he worked through the choices and actions of others

b) On the line below, circle the number that best represents how much control you think you have over the effects of the win.

1____ 2____ 3____ 4____ 5
none a little a moderate much very much amount

c) Circle a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how likely you are to respond to the situation in each of the following ways.

Use
1 for not at all likely
2 for a little likely
3 for moderately likely
4 for very likely
5 for a certainty

1) Focus on God's goodness at this happy time
2) Let others see how pleased you are
3) Read the Bible to help you decide whether to accept the award
4) Concentrate on enjoying the recognition
Appendix 4

ADDITIONAL TABLES

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES

a. Ministers

Table 1: FAMILY TYPE; STAGE OF CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool and primary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and adolescent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent only</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent and young adult</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adult at home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult children not at home</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: OCCUPATION BEFORE ENTERING MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical and skilled white collar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm, agriculture, forestry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled trades</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled labourer, transport etc</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No prior occupation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN EACH PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average time in years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF MAJOR STUDY FOR MINISTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theological College</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moore College</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Theological Centre, Burwood</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Hall, Sydney</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Hall, Brisbane</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Hall, overseas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological Hall, Melbourne</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney University (B.D course)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Congregations

There were 363 usable questionnaires. Losses from an original print run of 1600 are as follows:
Table 5: RETURNS OF QUESTIONNAIRES BY PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Adults at am service</th>
<th>No. taken</th>
<th>Returns</th>
<th>Usable forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coffs Harbour</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ives</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epping</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armidale</td>
<td>180*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollongong</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condobolin</td>
<td>50*</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Macquarie</td>
<td>100*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Bay</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballina</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gosford</td>
<td>250*</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>250*</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Blacktown</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Blacktown</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathfield</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Maitland</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queanbeyan</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caringbah</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finley</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>2241</strong></td>
<td><strong>1081</strong></td>
<td><strong>429</strong></td>
<td><strong>363</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates estimate from average weekly attendance

Table 6: AGE OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 and over</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>358</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7: HIGHEST QUALIFICATIONS OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate or school certificate</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving or higher school certificate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade certificate</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma or other certificate</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unspecified</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>333</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: MARITAL STATUS OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>75.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De facto</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>361</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working full-time</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working part-time</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home duties</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>362</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: NUMBER OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS ATTENDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of denominations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One - Presbyterian only</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five to eight</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>363</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: TYPES OF DENOMINATIONAL INVOLVEMENT SINCE CHILDHOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Number involved</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniting</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This includes 6 Congregational, 6 Dutch Reformed, 4 Brethren, 4 Independent, 2 Union Church and individuals having involvement in groups such as the Christian Missionary Alliance, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Gospel Hall, Revival Fellowship etc.

Table 12: PERIOD OF TIME AS PRESBYTERIAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of involvement</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years and under 10 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years and under 20 years</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 years and under 30 years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 years and under 40 years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 years and under 50 years</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 years and under 60 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 years and under 70 years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 83 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>352</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13: ATTENDANCE AT RELIGIOUS WORSHIP SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance at worship services</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twice weekly</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>71.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once per month</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once per quarter</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>361</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL, PRIVATE PRAYER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation in private prayer</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twice daily or more</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least twice weekly</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less frequently than weekly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>361</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: FREQUENCY OF PERSONAL BIBLE READING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal bible reading</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twice daily</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least twice weekly</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less frequently than weekly</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>359</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: NUMBER OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of leadership positions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four to seven</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>363</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17: TYPE OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS HELD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of leadership position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elder</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study leader</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader in finance, property etc</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth group leader</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader of aged, disabled group etc</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer group leader</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical director</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes PWA leader)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage of 363 congregational members

Table 18: TYPES OF PARTICIPATION OR HELPING BY RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of participation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catering or cleaning</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical items or accompaniment</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social service programme</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated visitor or counsellor</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday school teacher or helper</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture teacher in schools</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport roster</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth group helper</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage of 363 congregational members

Table 19: COPING OF CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERS:
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coping type</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Moral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.14)</td>
<td>(0.81)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>(0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td>(1.20)</td>
<td>(0.83)</td>
<td>(1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.40)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>(1.38)</td>
<td>(1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.67)</td>
<td>(0.97)</td>
<td>(0.82)</td>
<td>(0.82)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF MINISTRY STRESSORS

a. System variables

The ministers rated 8 system variables, comprising housing, house maintenance, stipend, mobility, allocation to first parish, theological education, continuing education and cultural differences between minister and parish. Mean ratings of stress significance for each variable and an average for all system variables are given below.

Table 20: STRESS RATINGS FOR SYSTEM VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological education</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing maintenance</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation to first parish</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average system stress 2.19 0.60

Overall, system variables were of little significance in terms of stress sources, but eleven ministers (17%) scored above 3 (of some significance) for average system stress with the highest score being 3.8.

b. Family variables

Table 21: STRESS RATING FOR FAMILY VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness in child</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness, disability in spouse</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness, death, distance parents</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital problem</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of spouse in ministry</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job or career for spouse</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse's support for minister's call</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average family stress 2.20 1.06

Generally, family variables were of little significance overall with 20% rating them not at all significant, 57% as of little significance and 20% as of some significance with the highest score being 3.5.
c. Denominational variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denominational variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theological differences with denomination</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational financial management</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of denominational expectations</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from denomination</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average denominational stress</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.16</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Parish variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of minister’s role</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline in congregational attendances</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict over style of ministry</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of parish finances</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological differences with congregation</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry not valued by congregation</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry not valued by community</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average parish stress</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.26</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.22</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Personal variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time pressures and lack of task control</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognising strengths and limitations</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of exercise or relaxation</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of personal encouragement</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average personal stress</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.44</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only 8% of ministers reported that personal stress was not at all significant on average, 51% rated it as of little significance, 32% rated it as of some significance and 9% rated it as fairly significant. Clearly the two most stressful personal issues were time pressures and feelings of inadequacy.

f. Relational variables

Table 25: STRESS RATINGS FOR RELATIONAL VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with Pres. colleagues</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of loneliness</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of supervision in early ministry</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships within congregation</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships outside congregation</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with non-Pres. ministers</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average relational stress 1.99 0.72

On average, 22% rated relational variables as not at all stressful, 52% rated them as of little stress, 23% rated them as of some stress and 3% rated them as fairly stressful.

g. Spiritual variables

Table 26: STRESS RATINGS FOR SPIRITUAL VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual variable</th>
<th>Mean stress</th>
<th>S.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dryness, troughs in personal journey</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with spiritual practice</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with ethical issues in ministry</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith during theological training</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubts about call to ministry</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in spiritual values during ministry</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average spiritual stress 1.93 0.61

On average, 23% rated spiritual variables as not at all stressful, 55% rated them as of little significance as stressors and 22% rated them as of some significance.
h. Correlations between stressors

Table 27: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STRESS SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DEN</th>
<th>FAM</th>
<th>PAR</th>
<th>PER</th>
<th>REL</th>
<th>SPIR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYS</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>039</td>
<td>267*</td>
<td>354**</td>
<td>045</td>
<td>365**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>050</td>
<td>306*</td>
<td>405**</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>262*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAM</td>
<td>-014</td>
<td>-003</td>
<td>002</td>
<td>042</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>053</td>
<td>268*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER</td>
<td>395**</td>
<td>502**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL</td>
<td>347**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Decimal points have been omitted. * indicates significant at p<.05, ** indicates significant at p<.01. Abbreviations are as follows for stress sources: system (SYS); denominational (DEN); family (FAM); parish (PAR); personal (PER); relational (REL); and spiritual (SPIR).
Appendix 5

DEVELOPMENT OF PRESBEL AND BELCON

I derived these scales from congregations' responses to 90 items based on the Westminster Confession of Faith (see Chapter 2 for details on how these items were developed). At each stage of analysing the responses I compared data from congregations and ministers to assess consistency between the two samples. The steps by which I developed the scales and compared the samples are detailed below.

ANALYSIS OF ITEMS WITH HIGH AND LOW MEANS

Data from ministers and congregations were examined to determine those statements which were most strongly and most weakly endorsed by Presbyterians. Since there were differences between congregations and ministers in strongly endorsed items, two separate item sets will be given.

Questions With High Average Agreement with Confession

Congregations scored above 4.5 on average on the 13 items below, indicating strong agreement with the view found in the Westminster Confession. The percentage scoring 5 (strongly agree) is also given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>%5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Christ substitute</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>83.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Believers grow in love</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Church tasks evangelism, sanctification</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>78.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Repentance needed for pardon</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Faith leads to thanks, help, witness</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Jesus conceived miraculously</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Faith increased by prayer etc (R)*</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Salvation via sacrificial death</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Christians not take civil office (R)*</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Believers changed by Spirit gradually</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Obey lawful authorities</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Salvation sure if faith and try to love</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Faith seen in love</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>64.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(R) indicates the item was reverse scored. Half the items were framed so that agreement was consistent with the Confession. Items for which agreement was inconsistent with the Confession were reverse scored so that a rating of 5 was changed to 1, 4 to 2, 2 to 4 and 1 to 5. In this way all high scores reflect agreement with the Confession.
These questions largely deal with basic Protestant beliefs about salvation, the nature and work of Christ and key issues of love, repentance and faith.

Ministers scored above 4.7, on average, on the 14 items below. It is interesting that fewer than half (6 items) are also strongly endorsed by congregations. Those items strongly endorsed by ministers but not congregations tend to refer to matters of election, salvation and judgment as indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>%5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Worship in consecrated buildings (R)</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Christ substitute</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>God has chosen elect by grace</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Jesus conceived miraculously</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>As election evangelism not imperative(R)</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Believers grow in love, holiness</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Salvation via sacrificial death</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Faith leads to thanks, help, witness</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>God will save all (R)</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Christ will judge world</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>God initiates loving relationships</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>God changes believers to want, do good</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Sinner must repent to be pardoned</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Salvation by following own religion (R)</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questions With Low Average Agreement with Confession**

Congregations scored below 3, on average, on the items below, indicating disagreement or strong disagreement with the Confession. The percentage scoring 5 (strongly agree) is also given. Ministers also scored below 3.5 on the first five items, on items 36, 52 and 89 below, but also on three additional items related to Sunday observance, goodness in unbelievers and God's sovereignty existing together with human free will.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>%5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ask for direct wisdom from God (R)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Give to own denomination first (R)</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Spirit enables all hearers believe (R)</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Preach first of God as father (R)</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>God changes nature, then accepted (R)</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>God predestines who would respond (R)</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Faith a gift growing stronger (R)</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>OT fear, NT love basis (R)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Children not in church until profess (R)</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>At judgement no reward but salvation (R)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Christ fully human from birth (R)</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The strong disagreement with item 34 indicates a rejection of the Confessional position that where the Bible does not give detailed guidance, humans can make rational deductions from Biblical principles to guide behaviour and possibly indicates adherence to a more charismatic position where wisdom is seen as a gift from God.

In item 13 the Confession does not limit spiritual communion or material aid to a particular denomination, but enjoins fellowship and help for all Christians. The response to this item indicates a strong denominational commitment.

Items 22, 70, 19 and 4 all relate to aspects of salvation and, either directly or indirectly, to election. It is of interest that congregations and ministers do not agree with some of the more technical aspects of predestination seen in the Confession, such as God effectually calling by the Holy Spirit only those whom He has predestined (Ch.X, Section 1 and Item 22) or God justifying those He calls by accounting them righteous, not infusing righteousness into them (Ch XI, Section 1 and Item 70) and tend to emphasise human responses above or with God’s election. In item 23 congregations also reject the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, thus tending to emphasise human sinfulness above God’s continuing grace.

**ITEM TOTAL CORRELATIONS: A PRESBYTERIAN BELIEFS SCALE**

If total scores on the ninety questions indicate general agreement with the Westminster Confession, then those items that correlate most strongly with total scores should be the best indicators of adherence to current Presbyterian beliefs.

On the other hand, if the Westminster Confession reflects a number of clear, relatively independent beliefs, then clusters of items should inter-correlate without necessarily producing a set of items with high item-total correlations.

Congregational data were used in these analyses in order to take advantage of the larger sample size. A theoretically based analysis was conducted, by firstly examining small clusters of items that were derived from the same section of the Confession. None of the item clusters in excess of two questions, reflecting any section of the Confession, had uniformly strong (p<.01) positive correlations between items. These results suggest that a theoretical analysis of the Confession, with the aim of establishing clusters of items with strong inter-correlations, was not successful since the majority of items theoretically linked according to sectional headings of the Confession exhibited negligible or negative inter-correlations. It appears that the congregational sample was not answering the
questions in accordance with the doctrinal themes as specified by the Confession.

I decided, then, to examine the questions more globally, according to their correlations with total scores on the questionnaire. The aim was to identify a subset of items that could represent a scale of Presbyterian beliefs and comprising those items that reflected most strongly agreement with the Westminster Confession.

Only twelve items had correlations higher than 0.5 with total beliefs. These items, with item-total correlation coefficients in parenthesis, are listed below:

Q1 (.634) God will save every human being (R)
Q5 (.632) Salvation by following own religion (R)
Q4 (.631) Humans can move towards God themselves (R)
Q46 (.629) Humans are good at birth (R)
Q74 (.628) Any theistic religion can bring to God (R)
Q10 (.621) Conscience supreme indicator God's will (R)
Q39 (.598) Holy Spirit gives instant perfection (R)
Q55 (.578) Fate of unbelievers eternal separation
Q68 (.556) Salvation by grace, not merit
Q42 (.554) Believers should not marry unbelievers
Q15 (.547) Benefit from sacrament for unbelievers (R)
Q65 (.546) Baptism for forgiveness (R)

Of the remaining items, 30 had moderate correlations of between .3 and .5 with total beliefs score. Another 32 items had slight positive correlations of between .1 and less than .3 with total scores. Negligible correlations (coefficients of between -.1 and +.1) were obtained for 10 items, slight negative correlations (between -.1 and -.3) were obtained for 5 items and for one item there was a moderate negative correlation of -.364 with total score. This item relates to ordained ministers only administering sacraments and suggests moderate disagreement with this view amongst those who otherwise have high total scores on the scale.

The twelve items having relatively strong correlations with total scores were subjected to a reliability analysis to test whether they formed a coherent scale. The results for the scale named PRESBEL are as follows:

Scale mean: 44.625 Scale s.d: 11.717
Item mean: 3.716
Item variance: 2.101
Inter-item correlation: 0.407
Cronbach's alpha: 0.891

While inter-item correlations are not high (maximum .628, minimum .177) the overall alpha reliability coefficient is acceptable.

A principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to test the factor composition of the 12-item scale of Presbyterian beliefs, PRESBEL. The
resulting rotated factor matrix was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Spirit gives instant perfection (R)</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Baptism for forgiveness (R)</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Conscience supreme indicator God (R)</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Humans good at birth (R)</td>
<td>.613</td>
<td>.376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Humans can move towards God (R)</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>.432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Any theistic religion move to God (R)</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Unbelievers benefit from sacrament (R)</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Unbelievers face eternal separation</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Believers not marry unbelievers</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Salvation by grace</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Salvation by own religion (R)</td>
<td>.414</td>
<td>.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>God will save everyone (R)</td>
<td>.429</td>
<td>.645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This solution accounted for 55.4% of the total variance. A plot of the varimax solution did not show simple structure and hence an oblimin rotation was examined. This yielded a plot where three variables had high positive loadings on Factor 1 (Q65, Q10 and Q39) and three variables had high negative loadings on Factor 2 (Q55, Q42 and Q68). The other variables had slight to moderate loadings on both factors. From inspection of the three defining variables it seems reasonable to conclude that Factor 1 relates to human sinfulness: not able to be instantly perfected, not cleansed by sacrament of baptism, not able to know God's will perfectly through human conscience. The common theme of variables loading onto Factor 2 is less obvious but it appears to relate to God's holiness: the eternal separation of sinners from God, the separation of believers from unbelievers in marriage and God's choice of the elect by grace and not their merit may reflect the underlying distance between God and sinners. It appears that the variables which load moderately on both factors include elements of both human sinfulness and God's (loving) holiness.

**COMPARISONS WITH OTHER SAMPLES**

The next question was whether the 12-item Presbyterian Beliefs scale (PRESBEL) also formed a scale in other Presbyterian samples. Five of the items also yielded strong item-total correlations in excess of 0.5 in both the ministers' and Presbyterian students' samples; two items also yielded strong item-total correlations in the ministers' sample only and one item also yielded a strong item-total correlation in the students' sample only.

From ministers' data the 12 PRESBEL items yielded the following results:

- Scale mean: 54.84
- Scale s.d.: 6.29
- Item mean: 4.57
- Cronbach's alpha: 0.812
Thus these items form an acceptable scale for the ministers, with higher scale mean and lower standard deviation than for congregational members.

The Presbyterian theological students obtained the following results:

Scale mean: 28.01  Scale s.d. 5.73
Item mean: 2.33
Cronbach's alpha: 0.647

It can be seen that the scale and item means are much lower for the student sample than for the samples of ministers and congregations. In addition the reliability of the scale for the students is at the lower limits as far as a satisfactory scale is concerned. Another finding which makes the scale problematic for the students is that there was no significant difference between scores of Baptist and Presbyterian theological students on the scale, as would be expected if the scale were a valid measure of distinctly Presbyterian beliefs. For the Baptist students, only two items from the scale (10 and 42) yielded item-total correlations in excess of 0.5. However, since the numbers in the samples of theological students were less than 30, it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions about the reliability of the scales for populations of theological students.

BELIEFS ABOUT CONTROL BY GOD

It had been assumed that a scale which most strongly reflected the Westminster Confession of Faith would be likely to reflect a firm view of God's sovereignty. However, inspection of the items and factors failed to support that assumption. Hence, it was necessary to investigate other items in order to establish a Beliefs about Control by God scale.

Nine items were identified as tapping into differences between Calvinist and Arminian perspectives, with the Calvinist position emphasising God's sovereignty. They related to themes of universal versus particular redemption (Q1), free will or human ability versus total depravity (Q4, 46, 78, 79), conditional versus unconditional election (Q19, 68), and falling from grace versus perseverance of the saints (Q23, 50). These nine items were inter-correlated and strong inter-item correlations were obtained for six items which were then examined by means of the SPSS reliability programme to determine whether they formed a reliable scale of control beliefs. Items are briefly described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>God will save all (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Humans can move towards God themselves (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>A believer can never return to the ranks of sinners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Humans are good at birth but develop sin (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Assurance of salvation through faith and love in Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>God has chosen those who will be saved by grace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 365 congregational responses, the scale named BELCON had a mean of 21.78
and standard deviation of 5.26. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .6645, with the standardised alpha at .6418. Although a higher alpha level would be preferable, a value of 0.65 is considered low but acceptable for preliminary assessments, especially when the measure is based on a rating scale (Murphy and Davidshofer, 1988).

Corresponding values for the sample of ministers were a mean of 26.90, standard deviation of 3.79, Cronbach's alpha of .7315 and standardised alpha of .7952. All items contributed to the reliability of the scale which could not be improved by deleting any of the items. Thus it was tentatively concluded that the items formed a satisfactory scale in which high scores reflected a Calvinistic theology of God’s sovereignty in salvation while low scores reflected an Arminian emphasis on human free will.
THE HUMAN COST OF

PRESBYTERIAN

IDENTITY:

Secularisation, Stress and
Psychological Outcomes
For Presbyterian Ministers in
N.S.W.

BY M.H. MINER

Submitted to the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1996
ABSTRACT

This study examines sources of clergy stress and ministers' coping strategies. My aim was to investigate Calvinist worldviews and their effects on Presbyterian ministers' choice of coping and stress levels. Specific hypotheses and questions were derived from process-stress theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) and applications in the psychology of religion, as well as from secularisation theory (Luckmann, 1967; Chaves, 1993, 1994).

I designed and conducted three separate, related studies. The first used 54 theological students comprising the pre-ministry stage. The second, focal study was of 65 parish ministers of the Presbyterian Church in NSW. These groups were chosen for an intensive study of the influence of Calvinist beliefs on stress and coping over two stages of ministry. The third surveyed 363 adult church attenders of Presbyterian congregations in NSW for specific analyses of stress-coping processes. Data were obtained through scales, questionnaires and interviews with parish ministers.

Presbyterian theological students scored high on religious commitment but low in their endorsement of Calvinist beliefs. They responded in different ways to personally stressful and hypothetical situations. Their broad styles of responding were largely unrelated to specific attributions and coping responses.

Presbyterian congregations also scored high on religious commitment and moderately high on their endorsement of Presbyterian beliefs. Major findings related to attributions and religious coping. Congregational members attributed life crises and hassles to God's allowing the situation, together with other human causes. Religious coping was largely predicted by intrinsic commitment and collaborative problem solving style but these effects were increased by consideration of small but significant indirect effects of appraisals. Important differences in coping were found between minor negative, positive, moral and health situations.

Ministers had high religious commitment and agreement with Calvinist beliefs. One third scored at clinical levels of anxiety and burnout. Stress levels were strongly related to using an external locus of coping and less strongly to deficiencies in training and equipment for ministry. These stress levels were not directly related to role conflict or specific situational measures.

Overall, findings pointed to inadequacies in process-stress theory for examining occupational stress. Ministry stress was best explained as a consequence of attempts to live out a Calvinist ideal in the absence of institutional and social legitimation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-state</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Dip.Th.</td>
<td>Diploma of Theology</td>
</tr>
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<td>Doctor of Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>external locus of coping ideal type</td>
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<td>FF</td>
<td>fully-furnished ideal type</td>
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</tr>
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<td>poor haircut: minor negative situation</td>
</tr>
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<td>I-E scale</td>
<td>internal-external locus of control scale</td>
</tr>
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<td>extrinsic personal religious commitment</td>
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<td>Inst.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Inst.1.xv.3</td>
<td>Book 1, chapter 15, paragraph 3 of Institutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int/Ext</td>
<td>intrinsic/extrinsic orientation</td>
</tr>
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<td>ILOC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.Th.</td>
<td>Licentiate in Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locus of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luck att</td>
<td>luck or chance attribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANOVA</td>
<td>multiple analysis of variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI</td>
<td>Maslach Burnout Inventory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meth
MMPI
NUD.IST
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PAR
PER
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Posreln
Posrelp
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REL
RI
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SA
sack
SBS
sd
SD
SE
Self att
SPIR
STAI
SWB
SYS
UF
Unit
WCF
win
work

Methodist
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
Non-numerical Unstructured Data. Indexing
Searching and Theorising
major award: positive situation
other attribution
Parish [as source of] stress
Personal [source of] stress
Personal accomplishment
positive religious [coping]
positive religious coping in health situations
positive religious coping in moral situations
positive religious coping in negative situations
positive religious coping in positive situations
Experience of God in Prayer Scale
Presbyterian
Presbyterian Beliefs Scale
Presbyterian Theological Centre
Relational [source of] stress
Religious Instruction
religious well-being
Salvation Army
unethical work conduct: moral situation
Staff Burnout Scale
standard deviation
self-directing problem solving style
self-esteem
self attribution
Spiritual [source of] stress
State-Trait Anxiety Inventory
spiritual well-being
System [as source of] stress
unfurnished ideal type
Uniting
Westminster Confession of Faith
small win: positive situation
document destroyed: minor negative situation
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter One: PRESBYTERIAN IDENTITY AND MINISTRY STRESS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE PRESBYTERIAN WORLDVIEW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvinism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human nature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God's sovereignty</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Westminster Confession</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian History in Australia</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTRY AND STRESS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry stress and overseas studies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress in Australian Clergy</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical approaches to stress causation</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress and religion</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress theory applied to ministers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECULARISATION - CURRENT SOCIAL CONTEXT OF MINISTRY</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of secularisation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining religion or religiousness</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examining secularisation theories</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckmann and private religion</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaves and institutional secularisation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secularisation and Presbyterian Ministers</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: DEVELOPMENT AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH,</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMS AND GUIDING HYPOTHESES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF MY STUDY</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary reading on values</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relationship between religion, stress and coping</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control (LOC) and other attributions</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial aims</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and subjects</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvinist beliefs</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus of control</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious dispositions</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic-extrinsic religiousness</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious problem-solving</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious ritual and experience</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual well-being</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological measures</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual stressful life experiences</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress vignettes</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding hypotheses</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Models of religion, stress and coping</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects and measures</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims and guiding hypotheses</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF MINISTERS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad aims and guiding hypotheses</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldview</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST QUESTIONNAIRE</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious measures</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological measures</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressful life event</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignettes</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing the data</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling method</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of those who returned unusable forms</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vignettes</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY OF MINISTERS</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of presbyteries</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANALYSIS OF STRESS VIGNETTES ......................................................... 106
Attributions ................................................................................. 106
  Inter-correlations between attributions .................................... 107
  Attributions and situation type .................................................. 108
  Attributions and religious dispositions ....................................... 111
  Summary .................................................................................. 111
Dimensions of coping ............................................................... 112
Positive religious coping .......................................................... 115
  Regression on positive religious coping, health situations ............ 115
  Regression on positive religious coping, negative situations ........ 117
  Regression on positive religious coping, moral situations ............. 118
  Regression on religious coping, positive situations ....................... 119
  Summary .................................................................................. 119
RELIGION AS STRESS MEDIATOR ..................................................... 120
  Preliminary correlations ............................................................ 120
Multiple regression analyses...................................................... 120
  Modelling depression ............................................................... 123
  Modelling anxiety .................................................................... 124
  Summary .................................................................................. 125
CONVERGENCE OF STRESS MEASURES .......................................... 126
  Attributions to God's control ....................................................... 126
  Attributions and LOC ................................................................. 126
Religious coping measures ....................................................... 127
Secular coping measures .......................................................... 127
Summary .................................................................................... 128

Chapter Five: RESULTS PART 2 - MINISTRY STRESS ....................... 129
THE EXTENT OF MINISTRY STRESS .................................................. 129
  Psychological inventories assessing stress .................................. 129
Characteristics of stressed and unstressed ministers ....................... 131
Stress ratings .............................................................................. 132
  Sources of stress ..................................................................... 132
  Correlations between stressors .................................................. 133
  Correlations between stressors and demographic variables ........... 133
Role conflict as stress ................................................................. 134
  Ratings of priority and skills for ministry tasks ........................... 134
  Factor analysis of priorities ...................................................... 136
  Role conflict and stress measures ............................................. 139
SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: ENMESHMENT IN WORK .................. 140
  Enmeshment in comments on meaning of ministry ...................... 140
  Note on ministry as a career versus vocation .............................. 142
  Enmeshment in comments about the manse ................................ 142
  Enmeshment in comments about mobility .................................. 143
  Enmeshment in comments on stipend ........................................ 144
Enmeshment due to the spiritual nature of work ........................................145
Enmeshment in open-ended work ..............................................................147
Enmeshment in comments about friendships .........................................148
Enmeshment resulting in feelings of loneliness ......................................151
Summary of enmeshment themes ...............................................................152

SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: EQUIPPED FOR MINISTRY .................152
Theological training ..................................................................................152
  Type of theological training and stress ..............................................155
  Type of theological training and spiritual difficulties ....................155
  Training inadequacies and stress measures .....................................156
Personal strength .....................................................................................157
  Physical .................................................................................................157
  Health, exercise and organisation of time .......................................159
  Acceptance of strengths, limitations ..............................................159
  Spiritual practice ..................................................................................160
Support .....................................................................................................161
  Relationships with colleagues .........................................................161
  Friendships ..........................................................................................163
  Valuing of work ...................................................................................163
Summary ....................................................................................................165

SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: INCONGRUENCE .................................165
Incongruence at parish level ...................................................................165
  Age trends .............................................................................................168
  Theological differences with the congregation ................................168
  Incongruence related to enmeshment and equipping ....................169
Incongruence at presbytery level .........................................................170
Incongruence at denominational level ................................................170
  Theological differences within denomination ................................171
  Incongruence and stress measures .................................................173
Summary ....................................................................................................173

SOURCES OF MINISTRY STRESS: ROGUE DUMPERS ..............................174
Types of rogue dumpers and coping .....................................................174
Coping with rogue dumpers and stress outcomes ...............................176
Consequences ..........................................................................................176

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MINISTERS BY AGE ........................................177
Demographic trends ...............................................................................177
Similarities with age ..............................................................................178
Differences with age ...............................................................................179

TYPOLOGIES DERIVED FROM INTERVIEW DATA ......................................179
Fully furnished ministers ........................................................................179
  Fully furnished ministers and stress ................................................180
  Relationships between 'furnished' group and other variables ..........181
Locus of coping continuum ....................................................................182

SUMMARY ..................................................................................................187
Chapter Six: STRESS AND STRESSORS .......................................................... 189

DISPOSITIONS OF MINISTERS AND THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS .......... 189
  Religiousness .................................................................................. 189
  Locus of Control ........................................................................... 190
  Control beliefs .............................................................................. 191
  Aspirations, ideals and expectations ............................................. 192
  Theological training ....................................................................... 198
SITUATIONAL COMPONENTS ................................................................. 199
  Most stressful recent events ........................................................... 199
  Ongoing stress sources .................................................................. 200
    Personal stressors: time pressure, sense of inadequacy .............. 200
    Parish stressors: expectations of parishioners ............................... 202
    Family stressors: problems with child .......................................... 204
    System stressors: mobility and stipend ........................................ 205
    Denominational stressors: theological differences ....................... 205
    Relational stressors: relationships with colleagues ....................... 206
    Spiritual stressors: spiritual journey and practice ....................... 207
  Summary .......................................................................................... 207

APPRAISALS ....................................................................................... 208
  Complexity of attributions to God's control ................................... 208
  Explaining religious attributions .................................................... 209

COPING .............................................................................................. 212
  Coping with ministry stress ........................................................... 212
  Coping in personally stressful situations ........................................ 213
  Determinants of coping ................................................................ 214
  Denominational support in coping .................................................. 215

OUTCOMES ....................................................................................... 216
  Stress-burnout unrelated to dispositions ........................................ 217
  Practical implications .................................................................... 217

SUMMARY .......................................................................................... 219
  Implications for stress-coping theory .............................................. 220

Chapter Seven: SECULARISATION, PRIVATISATION AND INDIVIDUATION ...222

MINISTRY STRESS AND COPING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGY ........................................................... 223
  Inauthentic coping by ministers ...................................................... 226
  Authentic coping by ministers ....................................................... 227
  Is authentic coping possible? ........................................................... 228
  Summary .......................................................................................... 230
SECULARISATION WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NSW .... 230
  Laicisation ...................................................................................... 231
  Internal secularisation ................................................................. 232
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority over individuals</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS, WORLDVIEWS AND STRESS</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scientific province of meaning</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province of religious experience</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province of everyday reality</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTERS, WORLDVIEWS AND STRESS</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmeshment</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual practice</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal acceptance and legitimation</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF SECULARISATION</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR MINISTERS</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress as dissonance within provinces of meaning</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress as dissonance between provinces of meaning</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight: COPING STYLES, FURTHER DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FURNISHED CONTINUUM</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully furnished type</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfurnished type</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNAL-EXTERNAL LOCUS OF COPING CONTINUUM</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of coping</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External locus of coping</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPES AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL THEORY</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretational relevance</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to the furnished continuum</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational relevance</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to the furnished continuum</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to the locus of coping continuum</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPES AND CALVINIST THEOLOGY</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striving towards perfection</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional legitimation</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social legitimation</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual legitimation</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRESS-COPING THEORY REVISITED</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of context</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious beliefs and appraisals</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
Longitudinal studies of Presbyterian ministers
Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of other denominations
Religious coping
Scales and outcome measures
CONCLUSION
RESCUING THE MINISTERS
Manse
Selection
Training
Ministry support
REFERENCES
LIST OF APPENDICES
1. Item set for Calvinist Beliefs measures
2. Stressful life experience: questions and scales
3. Vignettes
4. Description of samples: supplementary tables
5. Development of PRESBEL and BELCON