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# Clergy Retention in the Church of the Nazarene, the Role of the District Superintendent in Clergy Decision-Making Regarding Persistence in Active Vocational Ministry

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CLERGY RETENTION IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, THE ROLE OF  
THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT IN CLERGY DECISION-MAKING  
REGARDING PERSISTENCE IN ACTIVE VOCATIONAL MINISTRY

by

Jeren L. Rowell

Dissertation

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the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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## DEDICATION

To Starla, who sacrificially encouraged me to pursue this work.

## ABSTRACT

by

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The researcher theorized that collecting and analyzing data on variables associated with clergy attrition, particularly the relationship between pastor and district superintendent, would lead toward suggesting strategies for clergy retention that could be applied in the denominational judicatories of the USA and Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene. This study provided a fresh look at the pastor-superintendent relationship. The research demonstrated that superintendents are not and likely will not be highly engaged with pastors in the actual decision-making process regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. However, the study also revealed a strong desire among pastors for the involvement of district superintendents to deliver pastoral care during and after the emotional process of pastoral transition.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Popular literature on contemporary American pastoral life raises a concerned voice over the current condition of clergy vocation. For example, Peterson (1987) said of modern pastors that “they are preoccupied with shopkeeper's concerns: how to keep the customers happy, how to lure customers away from competitors down the street, how to package the goods so that the customers will lay out more money” (p. 2). What Peterson noticed many years ago seems only to have deepened at the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Willimon (2002) suggested that “ministry provokes a collision with so many of the values held dear in this society” (p. 22). It does seem that people in the pews are now profoundly influenced by a consumer market orientation under which pastors often become targets of customer dissatisfaction rather than priests, prophets, and shepherds over God’s people. The work of the clergy in contemporary American life is significantly shaped by competing expectations and unrealistic demands. Beside this clash with contemporary values, the work of pastor is complex. As Willimon went on to describe accurately:

The pastoral ministry requires a wide range of sophisticated skills: public speaking, intellectual ability, relational gifts, self knowledge, theological understanding, verbal dexterity, management acumen, sweeping floors, moving folding metal chairs, serving as moral exemplar, and all the rest. No wonder failure is always crouching at the door. (p. 23)

All of this exacts a high price among clergy including strained family relationships, poor physical health, emotional stress, and worst of all for pastors, a sense of spiritual failure. Taylor (2007), a pastor who decided to leave local parish work, seems to strike at the heart of this dilemma as she wrote:

The demands of parish ministry routinely cut me off from the resources that enabled me to do parish ministry. I knew where God's fire was burning, but I could not get to it. I knew how to pray, how to bank the coals and call the Spirit, but by the time I got home each night it was all I could do to pay the bills and go to bed. I pecked God on the cheek the same way I did Ed, drying up inside for want of making love. (p. 98)

Spaite (1999), a physician and clergy person, asked in his book, *Time Bomb in the Church, Defusing Pastoral Burnout*, "What is this time bomb that ticks away with undetected certainty? It is the overworked, stressed-out lifestyle of the modern pastor. . . . It is the contemporary anomaly called burnout" (p. 9). Say the word *burnout* among any group of ministers and there will be quick recognition and emotional identification with the popular assumptions related to the effects of burnout such as emotional exhaustion, depression, and physical illness. Maslach (2003) provides the foundational work for understanding the phenomena associated with the term *burnout* that was coined by Freudenberger (1974). The experience of burnout, asserts Maslach, is not limited to the self-understanding of persons but has everything to do with "the social environment in which they work" (p. xxiii). This contention of Maslach links to clergy vocation in that the relational nature of the work of clergy often leaves one to assess its effectiveness on the basis of the immediate feedback of people. Congregation members (i.e., Maslach's

*social environment* idea), may or may not have any substantive basis on which to evaluate the job of pastor. As the current researcher previously noted, “We gradually pull away from true relationships (often in response to the pain of relationships) and find ourselves isolated and alone” (Rowell, 2004, p. 12). The pain of this isolation may be partially (and perhaps most critically) revealed by the attrition of credentialed ministers. When pastors decide to cease active vocational ministry it is often under a cloud of assumed defeat, failure, or weakness in terms of how leaving is assessed by the faith community. Reuter (1981) saw this when he noted the unfortunate result of clergy stress, “The longevity of clergy, once a hallmark of the profession, is declining” (p. 221). London and Wiseman (2006) continued to see it years after Reuter when they wondered who will step up to accept clergy leadership in our time. Assessing the “new generation of pastors coming on the scene,” they worry that too many of them “have failed to count the cost of serving Christ and His Church, and they are now in the process of dropping out” (p. 13).

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem, simply stated, is retention. The purpose of this study was to investigate possible correlations between the influence of a district superintendent and a pastor’s decision to leave or to remain in active vocational ministry. Given the immense expenditure involved in training and equipping pastoral leaders, it seemed in the best interest of the organization to identify and deliver strategies for judicatory leaders to help pastors persist in active vocational ministry.

The researcher hypothesized a correlation between a pastor’s decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry and the influence of the pastor’s district

superintendent. The goal of strengthening this relationship is that a pastor will not be left to make career and life-altering decisions in isolation but will make them in concert with counsel from his or her vocational supervisor.

### Background

A review of the literature revealed that researchers in this area make a common connection between the specific problem of clergy attrition and the more general issue of clergy burnout. Hambrick (1992) makes this link in his study of 63 pastors on the Philadelphia district of the Church of the Nazarene. Part of his work quotes a survey by Roberts in 1991, where burnout was the second-highest reason given by pastors who left, after the top reason of “sexual promiscuity” (p. 4). Weaver, Larson, Flannelly, Stapleton, and Koenig (2002) undertook a review of literature on mental health issues among clergy and other religious professionals. They noted a study of nearly 2,000 United Methodist pastors revealing that while “clergy rank in the top 10% of the population in terms of education, they are only 325<sup>th</sup> of 432 occupations in terms of salaries received” (p. 394), a common reason given for clergy attrition. Citing three additional studies, they go on to note that “the burnout syndrome has unfortunately become increasingly associated with pastoral work” (p. 395). Grosch and Olson (1991) define burnout relative to the work of clergy in the following way, “Burnout then can be understood as the consequence of three factors: a particular clergy personality style that craves admiring appreciation, the demands and pressures of congregational life, and the developmental needs of the clergy’s own family” (p. 297).

The problem of burnout generally has been the subject of significant attention and research across the last 25 years and more. Freudemberger (1974) and Maslach (2003), as

noted above, named this problem and placed it in the arena of psycho-social research with their work in the 1970s and, for Maslach, continuing through the next two decades. Maslach described the development of burnout as a subject of research in an article in 1976 in *Human Behavior* describing the burnout process. From this work Maslach and Jackson (1981) developed a standardized scale measure, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). This work helped to shift understanding about the cause of burnout from “personality malfunction” (Maslach, 2003, p. 15) to stress arising from “the *social* interaction between helper and recipient” (p. 2).

The particular issues of clergy burnout began to gain greater attention in the early 1980s with the work of Roy Oswald. In the Forward to Baab’s (2003) book, *Beating Burnout in Congregations*, Oswald reflects on his work in this area:

For years I have been focusing much energy on clergy burnout. For the past 15 years, I have led workshops to help clergy avoid the devastation of burnout. The number of requests for workshops on this subject has outstripped the requests for any other type of workshop I offer. Whenever I am in front of a group of clergy I can assume at least twenty percent of them are experiencing severe burnout, with another twenty percent already suffering some of the symptoms and perhaps bordering on burnout. (Forward ¶ 3)

Subsequently, the subject of clergy health, burnout, and attrition has gained much attention and is the subject of many articles, books, and dissertations written in the 1990s and early 2000s (Foss, 2001; Grosch & Olson, 1991; Hambrick, 1992; Hauerwas & Willimon, 1990; Knierim, 2001; Miraz, 2006; Payne, 1990; Rugenstein, 2004; Seaman, 1997; Sewell, 2002; Weaver, et al., 2002). This body of research focused largely on the

relationship between clergy burnout or attrition and variables including church size, compensation, education, community context, family support, and physical health. Consequently, the work focusing on clergy retention suggests strategies related to these kinds of variables. More work is needed that has in view a specific variable that was especially in focus and at the motivational heart of the current researcher: the role of the judicatory official in the decision-making of pastors about leaving or staying in active ministry. Particularly, in the researcher's context of the Church of the Nazarene, the role of the district superintendent at this critical decision-making point was in view.

Ryding (1984) asked pastors about support systems and noted that the primary sources of emotional support for Nazarene pastors are spouse/family and supportive local church leaders. He noted, "The district superintendent is considered a close friend by 51.1% of the pastors. However, 27.8% did not see the district superintendent as a close friend, and 24.8% would not consult the district superintendent regarding a career change" (p. 45). Hambrick (1992) looked at this connection, including studies with Church of the Nazarene clergy in view, and concluded that "support networks for the minister are totally insufficient" (p. 94). Even more pointedly he writes, "The greatest obstacle in unleashing the pastor is the administrative hierarchy who are often perceived as having complete control of a minister's career" (p. 184). Hambrick recommended and designed an intervention program that ran one session per month for nine months with positive results as measured by a burnout risk assessment tool. Foss (2001), in his study of burnout among clergy, recommended initial and ongoing periodic "assessment of employees for burnout risk" with a need for organizational or hierarchical "openness and

candor” (p. 83) to assess accurately systemic problems potentially leading to clergy burnout.

Some studies that looked at the pastor-judicatory connection were of limited value because they represented denominational forms of governance that are significantly different than the form of governance embraced by the Church of the Nazarene. For example, in a noteworthy study by Miraz (2006) the variable of *organizational commitment* was studied with some focus on the role of judicatory officials in the lives of clergy dealing with an *intention to leave*. However, her study was among pastors in the American Baptist Churches, USA; an affiliation that operates under a congregational form of governance in which congregations are mostly autonomous with regard to pastoral relations. The Church of the Nazarene operates under a *presbyterian* (a broader term than the name of Presbyterian denominations) form of governance by which there is shared responsibility between denominational officials and local church members on the matter of pastoral relations.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How pervasive among active Church of the Nazarene pastors was the serious consideration to leave active vocational ministry in the past three years?
2. Do correlations exist between the health of relationship of a pastor to the district superintendent and the pastor’s decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry?

3. What specific retention strategies may be suggested for use by district superintendents that may help Church of the Nazarene pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry?

#### Description of Terms

The following definitions provide clarity to the unique terms used in this dissertation project:

*Active vocational ministry.* The work of an officially credentialed clergy person whose service to the congregation is primary to all other pursuits.

*Attrition.* Attrition in this study refers to credentialed ministers who left active vocational ministry (not due to retirement) as defined by the credentialing authority.

*Burnout.* A syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do *people-work* of some kind (Maslach, 2003).

*Church of the Nazarene.* A global Christian denomination in the Wesleyan-Arminian theological tradition with historical roots in John Wesley's Methodist revival and the American holiness movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Credentialing authority.* The denominational hierarchy charged with oversight and approval responsibility in the licensing, education, experience, and ordination of persons who bear witness to a call to vocational ministry.

*District.* An organizational entity in the Church of the Nazarene referring to a group of congregations in geographic proximity with connectional interest and authority exercised by an annual meeting known as the District Assembly.

*District superintendent.* An ordained minister elected by the District Assembly to serve in the role of overseer for the ministers and congregations of the connection.

*Faith community.* Usually a synonym for congregation, however it can also have in view the larger connectional church as expressed through districts and denominations.

*Judicatory.* In this context, judicatory refers to denominational hierarchy with oversight responsibility for clergy and congregations in a connectional system of governance.

*Retention.* Vocational longevity, particularly as assisted by judicatory systems to provide prevention, intervention, and support strategies for pastors experiencing any or all of the three key factors (as identified by Maslach, 2003) leading to burnout.

*Vocational identity.* The conceptual framework from which a minister's vocation emerges with special attention to the bases on which the framework is constructed (e.g., meeting people's needs, written job descriptions, sense of divine calling, etc.).

### Significance of the Study

Among pastors of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States and Canada, 41% will leave active vocational ministry by the time they reach the 15-year mark in their vocational tenure (Crow, 2006). This statistic represents a problem of mostly untold personal pain for the pastors, their families, and congregations who have suffered under the ending of a pastoral career. It also points to a particular systemic problem for the Church of the Nazarene in providing a pastoral corps adequate to the needs of congregations. According to the office of the General Secretary for the Church of the Nazarene, there are now 5,096 active Nazarene churches in the USA and Canada region (Wilson, 2008). Crow's report shows that the number of lead Nazarene pastors in the

USA and Canada region has remained virtually steady since 2003 at about 4,400 ministers. These numbers are consistent with Crow's statement that "on any given day about 10% of the Nazarene congregations in the United States are without a pastor" (p. 16). The total number of active credentialed ministers in a denominationally recognized role of service is reported at 7,888. In other words, approximately 3,400 credentialed ministers are active as associate pastors, evangelists, educators, missionaries, chaplains, and administrators. The study also reports the total number of credentialed ministers in the USA and Canada region at 13,900. This would all seem to suggest that the Church of the Nazarene in USA and Canada is able to provide enough pastors for the need of congregations. However, these 13,900 include persons in ministerial preparation (students) and retired persons who are perpetually included on the roll of ordained ministers. Additionally, most districts in the Church of the Nazarene carry large numbers of inactive credentialed ministers due to a variety of circumstances beyond opportunity for service, including those who have maintained ministerial credentials while pursuing careers other than active vocational ministry. While Crow reports the annual attrition rate at around 3%, the cumulative effect over a 15-year period is that pastors who should be at the height of training, experience, and maturity are not available to lead the existing congregations as pastor. This creates a significant problem for congregations that find themselves in search of pastoral leadership and for district superintendents that are charged to assist congregations in providing strong pastoral leaders.

Of particular interest to the researcher at this point was the role of a pastor's judicatory official (district superintendent) in providing means by which the pastor can evaluate accurately the effectiveness of his or her ministry and make careful decisions

relative to persistence in active vocational ministry. Denominational polity places the Nazarene pastor and the Nazarene district superintendent in an unusual relationship relative to other denominations. The work of a Nazarene district superintendent is generally understood as including the responsibility to provide support for the pastors under their charge. It is not unusual for a superintendent to run interference for a pastor when conflict emerges between the pastor and congregation. This intervention can take many forms including meeting with church boards to negotiate conflict or direct confrontations with individuals who are actively opposing the leadership of their pastor. However, there is also an apparent expectation that district superintendents will stand in the gap to protect the vitality of a congregation from the incompetence or malpractice of a careless pastor. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene (2005) bears this out in directives which provide for a “special church/pastor review” (p. 80) that can be called by a congregation, with district superintendent approval, for the purpose of determining whether the church/pastor relationship should continue. This can become a nearly impossible tightrope on which a district superintendent is called to balance his or her work. It places the pastor and district superintendent in a sometimes tenuous relationship. The study of Rugenstein (2004) was particularly disheartening at this point in her observation that, “Coupled with perceived insensitivity . . . indifferent or disciplinarian attitudes of church hierarchy . . . some claim that denominational leaders have ‘lost touch’, are ‘inaccessible’, or simply fail to acknowledge the demands faced by clergy as needing intervention” (p. 101).

What was particularly poignant for this researcher was that Rugenstein’s (2004) study included 200 pastors in the Church of the Nazarene, one of three denominations

studied. Rugenstein noted that in her primarily quantitative study “answers to the qualitative question about why pastors had not approached denominational hierarchy with personal or professional problems indicate a high level of distrust” (p. 101). She included one particularly troubling story of a pastor who wrote in response to a survey question that:

He called his district superintendent for support as he struggled with the indirect attacks he was learning of. His district superintendent asked him to look at the palms of his hands. When he told him he was, the district superintendent asked him if there were any nail holes yet. ‘The implication was that what I needed help with was somehow non-important until blood was spilled told me I would NEVER go to hierarchy for help again.’ (p. 112)

This was a sad case of ministerial malpractice on the part of the district superintendent. How common is this kind of response of judicatory officials to pastors when the pastor seeks the counsel of their leader? This relationship needs careful examination in the broad question of clergy retention. The researcher theorized that collecting and analyzing data on the variables associated with clergy attrition, particularly the relationship between a pastor and a district superintendent, would lead toward suggesting strategies for clergy retention. These strategies could be applied in the 82 denominational judicatories in the USA and Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene and perhaps beyond to Nazarene clergy outside North America.

#### Process to Accomplish

This research used a mixed-method approach to assessment of the research questions. It included the gathering and assessment of quantitative data from a sample of

Church of the Nazarene pastors. It also employed significant elements of the case study approach as outlined by Yin (2003) who argues that case study methodology is preferred when researchers are dealing with “how” and “why” questions, “when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). This was precisely the case for the current research. This study sought particularly to identify the “tipping points” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 7) between clergy deciding to leave or to stay in their assignments, particularly in terms of the pastor’s relationship to the judicatory official.

The participants of the study were district licensed or ordained ministers on the USA and Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene. The denominational database of the Global Ministry Center of the Church of the Nazarene provided contact information for the population. The Nazarene Research department provided access to the contact data.

Two samples of the population of credentialed ministers were identified for this study. The first sample was district licensed or ordained ministers currently serving in the role of pastor as indicated by the role code designation *PAS* in the official current assembly journal of each district. This selection distinguished between lead or solo pastors and clergy serving in other roles such as associate pastors, chaplains, educators, administrators, etc. The second sample was previously district licensed or ordained ministers who had become inactive or were dropped from the roll of ministers during the past three years.

A study group of six pastors was gathered to review and assess the survey instruments prior to data collection in order to provide maximum clarity on the

questionnaires. The sample populations were then invited to respond to an online survey with an open collector between March 12 and March 31, 2009. The survey was collected confidentially through the office of Nazarene Research at the Global Ministry Center.

In pursuit of the first research question, the survey of currently active pastors was designed to reveal the degree to which they had seriously considered leaving active vocational ministry within the past three years (Appendix A). Currently inactive pastors were questioned about the timing and circumstances of their decision to leave active ministry (Appendix B). Both groups were questioned relative to their experience of *exhaustion* (the individual stress response), *cynicism* (the negative reaction to others and the job), and *inefficacy* (the negative evaluation of one's own accomplishments) as part of their professional experience. These are Maslach's (2003) identifiers of the "three core dimensions of the burnout experience" (p. xxii). These negative identifiers were compared to the positive side of *job engagement* which became the next set of coding strategies namely, *energy* (rather than exhaustion), *involvement* (rather than cynicism), and *efficacy* (rather than inefficacy).

The survey also gathered data from both samples on the relationship of the pastor to the district superintendent in order to assess the presence of possible correlations identified by the second research question. The study of this relationship was organized in terms of *accessibility*, *trust*, and *guidance*, specifically measuring correlation between the pastor-superintendent relationship and the pastor's decision-making relative to persistence in active vocational ministry. This process provided data for this study seeking to understand whether or not district superintendents in the Church of the

Nazarene have a consequential role in the decision-making of pastors relative to continuance in active ministry.

From these data and samples, the third research question was pursued through select personal interviews of members of each sample. A semi-structured interview process was used giving significant flexibility within a guiding framework. Robson (2002) noted that in this type of interview “question wording can be changed and explanation given; particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included” (p. 270). An independent interviewer was trained to conduct the interviews using a guiding framework of questions and protocol (Appendix C). The purpose of these interviews was to gather narrative related to the data gathered in the online surveys and specifically to gather narrative data related to possible strategies for district superintendents to employ in relationship building with pastors in an effort to increase clergy retention.

This dissertation added to the body of research on clergy attrition and retention. It particularly provided a narrative framework for district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene as they seek to fulfill their responsibility and calling. Key to this work is helping pastors during times of disequilibrium and stress to evaluate accurately the effectiveness of their ministry and to make careful decisions relative to persistence in active vocational ministry.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to review research on the problem of burnout among clergy generally and the problem of vocational attrition among clergy particularly. Burnout is discussed in many vocational fields including nursing (Browning, 2001; Heinrich, 2001), education (Greiner & Smith, 2006; Guarino, et al., 2006), and mental health vocations (Foss, 2001; Freudenberger, 1974). Leiter and Maslach (2005) suggested that “burnout is the biggest occupational hazard of the twenty-first century” costing the American economy more than 300 billion dollars in “sick time, long-term disability, and excessive job turnover” (p. 3). The particular concern of clergy burnout and attrition came into view subsequent to the more general identification of this problem among those in helping professions. Schwanz (1996) noted that “the problems faced by ministers have only recently been recognized as part of the same syndrome of burnout identified in other human service providers” (p. 48). Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, and Rodgerson (2004) continued to notice the link with the comment, “The burnout syndrome found among human service professionals has been associated with the pastorate as well” (p. 115). Actually, from the work of Roy Oswald in the early 1980s onward, the language of burnout has increasingly been linked to research and writing in the area of clergy attrition. While some researchers (Kisslinger, 2007; Payne, 1990) are finding lower incidence of burnout among pastors than among larger samples of the population, it is

clear that persistence in vocation for clergy is linked to concern for and research focus on the signs and symptoms of the burnout phenomenon among active vocational ministers.

### The Burnout Phenomenon

The generally accepted contemporary definition of burnout is essentially the one articulated by Maslach (2003): “Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do ‘people-work’ of some kind” (p. 2). Virtually all reviewed research for this paper recognizes the work of Maslach (and Freudenberger before her) as the seminal literature on the burnout (often expressed as *burn-out*) phenomenon. Early development of the idea was extremely personal in nature, rising from the testimony of those, like Freudenberger, who had experienced a loss so pervasive and troubling that *burnout* seemed the appropriate term.

Herbert Freudenberger described this loss in his book co-authored with Richelson (1980). As a psychotherapist and leader of the free-clinic movement of the sixties, Freudenberger set out to save the world, at least his world of the young, dropping-out and drugged-up residents of East Village in New York. Putting in 16-hour days between his regular practice and then the clinic drove him to the point of exhaustion. He wrote,

The more tired I was, the more I pushed myself. When my wife tried to caution me, I responded with irritation. ‘You think I should be doing less? I should be doing more.’ Had I paid attention to my own words, I might have spared myself much misery later on. (p. xviii)

His “misery” became evident when he was completely unable to accompany his family on a planned Christmas vacation, spending the next several days powerless to get

out of the bed; he was burned-out. Hauerwas and Willimon (1990) later offered an interesting observation that the term burnout “seems to be associated with rocketry. The rocket soars skyward on a huge burst of energy, then it *burns out* and falls to earth” (p. 248). The image seems an apt description of Freudenberger’s experience. This episode catalyzed his thinking about burnout. Consequently, he largely framed the burnout phenomenon as an issue of personality. In fact, he regularly uses the phrase *burn-out* as a noun, speaking of persons as *Burn-outs* or potential *Burn-outs*. This usage and the rocket imagery have both found their way into Merriam-Webster’s definition of the term. However, as this review will demonstrate, others (most notably Christina Maslach) will seek to locate the genesis of the burnout phenomenon in social-relational contexts as well as intrapersonal psychology.

One of the earliest publications on this phenomenon of burnout was an article by Freudenberger in the *Journal of Social Issues* titled simply, “Staff burnout” (Freudenberger, 1974). Writing specifically to workers in the *free-clinic movement*, the author placed the early discussion of burnout very much in individual terms. His list of the potential signs of burnout was personal and largely physical:

- Physical exhaustion and fatigue
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal disturbances
- Sleeplessness
- Shortness of breath
- Anger and outbursts
- Suspicion and paranoia

- Addictive behaviors. (p. 160)

However, even after beginning to discuss burnout from an intrapersonal perspective, Freudenberger went on to identify the interpersonal nature of the phenomenon. For example, he stated that “one of the chief preludes to burn-out seems to be the loss of charisma of the leader, and the let-down of the clinic with this disappointment” (p. 160).

Maslach (2003) accentuated the interpersonal nature of the burnout phenomenon. Contemporary with Freudenberger, Maslach wanted to understand burnout in terms of the social dynamics at work, particularly between caregivers and those being cared for. She came to understand this role as reaching beyond helping professions extending to “anyone in the position of providing extensive care for another person” (p. xxi). From this perspective she identified her “three core dimensions of the burnout experience” that were described in Chapter I of this paper (i.e., exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy). This is the conceptual framework leading her to conclude that “burnout is not a problem of people so much as it is the social environment in which they work” (p. xxiii). She also understands burnout as “a response to chronic, everyday stress (rather than to occasional crises)” (p. 17). This way of talking about the phenomenon seems to be somewhat a reaction to the discussion of burnout as an intrapersonal issue. “People interpret their experience of burnout as reflecting some basic personality malfunction. The feeling is that ‘something is wrong with me’ . . . “ (p. 15). Rather than simply a problem of personality dysfunction, Maslach understands the experience of burnout as the result of what she calls *major mismatches* between the nature of one’s work and the nature of the people, either the worker or the persons being served. She identified six key areas of this critical mismatch:

- Work overload
- Lack of control
- Insufficient rewards
- Breakdown of workplace community
- Absence of fairness
- Value conflict (p. xxiii).

These markers are clearly in view, as will be shown, in the research related specifically to the relationship of clergy and congregations. So much of what seems to lead to clergy attrition in terms of service in the parish is this *mismatch of expectations* that leads to great stress and conflict between people. As Maslach observed, “Burnout can be affected by the sorts of rules that govern the contract between provider and recipient” (p. 46).

These rules can be both explicit and implicit, but it is the implicit ones that are especially perilous. None of this is to suggest, however, that Maslach discounts the function of personality in the experience of burnout. In fact, she notes some particular personality traits that when present seem to provide a higher incidence of burnout in the provider. These traits are: *weak* (non-assertive), *impatient* (intolerant), and *lack of self-confidence*. (p. 104)

Research on burnout bears out this dynamic tension between understanding the phenomenon as mostly intrapersonal, interpersonal, or some combination of the two. Daniel (1981) wrote, “. . . it is the social, interpersonal pressures of the job, and not a basic personality fault within the worker that is responsible for burnout” (p. 39). Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, and Rodgeron (2004) concluded that both factors must be taken into account when doing research in this area. More pointedly they wrote, “The argument

offered by Maslach and Leiter (1997) that burnout is a problem of the work environment rather than the people themselves cannot be supported by the research. Both situational factors and personality factors contribute to burnout” (p. 123). This assertion may not have considered Maslach’s (2003) continuing recognition that personal factors are clearly in play when seeking to understand the burnout phenomenon. She said explicitly, “. . . external factors are not the entire story of burnout; internal factors play an important role . . . . What a person brings to a situation is just as critical as what the situation brings out of (or puts into) him or her” (p. 94).

Kisslinger (2007), recently studying burnout among Presbyterian clergy, identified four newer developments in burnout research, one of which speaks directly to the issue discussed above. First, there is more international focus now as samples from non-Anglo and non-North American cultures are being studied. This broadening of contexts may be fruitful for a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. For example Lee (1994), while studying burnout among Korean pastors, noted that the prevalence of shame issues in Asian culture links to a reticence to admit areas of stress, pain, or dysfunction. There may be correlations that would bear study in terms of how the ideas of weakness, guilt, shame, denial, et cetera are part of Christian culture and become a factor for pastors dealing with symptoms of burnout. Second, longitudinal studies in burnout are beginning to yield results. Third, consensus is forming around a dynamic model of personal/situational factors leading to burnout rather than focus on one aspect. However, Kisslinger’s study of a clergy sample found that “personality type attributes . . . are very strong and significant predictors of burnout” (p. 100). Fourth, research has expanded to a

wide array of occupations beyond traditionally understood helping or human service professions.

Along the lines of unique cultural dynamics, particularly with religious or church culture in view, several studies (Foss, 2001; Golden, et al., 2004; Hauerwas & Willimon, 1990; Kirsch, 2001) note the variable of *spirituality* in the experience of burnout. Foss, whose study sought to differentiate burnout in clergy from other helping professions, suggested that “while the MBI measures emotional, cognitive, and interpersonal phenomena associated with burnout, it does not measure certain spiritual or existential phenomena that are clearly part of the clergy burnout experience” (p. 5). Kirsch’s study of 272 diocesan priests in the Roman Catholic Church showed that “low levels of spirituality consistently predicted burnout on the MBI three subscales” (p. 1). His definition of spirituality is very broad, referring to “an individual’s ultimate values, one’s relationship with others, and one’s perceptions of the sacred” (p. 13). However, Golden et al. also studied this connection among United Methodist clergy and with a sharper definition of the term. “Although personality and situational factors were found to play important roles, spirituality, and especially that quality of spirituality which relates the individual to God through prayer or meditation, was also shown to be an important additional component in burnout” (p. 124). Rodgeron (1995) worked with this idea under the heading *religious variables*. He writes, “Whether one decides in partnership with God (Collaborative) or gives the problem over to God to solve (Deferring) there is less association with burnout than if one attempts to go it alone in the problem-solving process (Self-directing)” (p. 159). This variable presents some unique factors in the understanding of burnout among clergy. As Golden et al. noted, “Burnout among the

clergy may represent a threat not only to one's vocation, but to one's sense of life calling and identity as a pastor" (p. 115). Hauerwas and Willimon framed this factor of spirituality even more narrowly in terms of pastoral theology, or how a pastor understands the core work to which one has been called. This explanation will be detailed in the following section, but the authors begin by framing the whole concept of burnout a bit differently. If burnout is essentially about energy and the using up of energy (which is central to Maslach's key components of burnout), then there is a reframing possibility. "Energy, like love, is not a scarce resource we might use up, but when appropriately embodied, creates itself" (p. 248). Hauerwas and Willimon use the analogy of a family that has the capacity to expand its love in order to welcome a new child, rather than the idea of parceling out love as a scarce resource. This concept has something foundational to offer in the particular discussion of burnout and attrition among clergy, to which we now turn.

### Burnout and Vocational Attrition Among Clergy

The classical vows of ordination have to do with poverty, chastity, and obedience. Willimon (2002) noted that in the sixth century Saint Benedict added to these three core promises a fourth, "the vow of stability, the vow to remain where God had placed you, to persist in community, even when the community did not please you personally, to develop the disciplines required to remain where God wanted you to be" (p. 315). Contemporary literature in clergy attrition links this ancient value of stability or persistence in vocation to the modern idea of burnout.

While there is broad recognition that burnout is a problem among clergy, it is difficult to speak in terms of consensus regarding the extent to which the clergy are

experiencing burnout. Brower (2001) found in a sample of 398 Free Methodist pastors that “more than half of these ministers (52%) experienced moderate to high levels of emotional exhaustion” (p. 41). This finding was based on completion of the MBI and Human Services Survey (HSS). Rogerson’s (1995) study of 252 American Baptist clergy, however, led to the conclusion that “data in this sample also reflect lower levels of burnout in pastors than that suggested by Oswald (1991) who finds 20% of ministers to be burned out” (p. 153). Dart (2002) reported a national survey of pastors by the Pulpit & Pew research project of Duke Divinity School that suggested most pastors are actually happy and content in their work, “satisfied, loved by congregations, generally content with salary and benefits, and enjoying family life” (p. 14). During the five years prior to the survey, 60% of clergy said they had not doubted their call to ministry, and 70% reported that they had not considered leaving active vocational ministry for other work. Fisher’s (2006) study of Southern Baptist pastors found “most pastors (55.4%) reported that they experience feelings of calm, peacefulness, and happiness ‘all or most’ of the time” (p. 135). He was particularly examining the variables of physical health and spiritual health (*wellness* was the term he employed) as key strategies for dealing with the stress of pastoral work. Payne (1990) used as a control in his study of Presbyterian ministers the more than 11,000-person sample that has completed the MBI with results available to current researchers. Payne reported that “burnout among the ministers of this study was found to be somewhat less than that of the normative group, but was still in the moderate range” (p. 77). However, he also noted that in the Presbyterian Church USA denomination “twenty percent of ministers serving congregations are actively seeking employment in other congregations” (p. 1). Sewell (2002), studying attrition in the

Independent Christian Church, concluded that “half of all ministers in the Christian Church who enter ministry will leave ministry. In fact, the average length of total ministry . . . is only seven years” (p. 5). Conversely, Fichter (1984) offered an article titled *The Myth of Clergy Burnout*. He was reporting results of a survey of 4,660 Catholic priests and concluded that a small 6.2% of respondents “could be termed ‘candidates’ for burnout” (p. 373) based on their report of overwork and great emotional stress. The lower incidence of distress in the Catholic clergy as compared to Protestants is corroborated in the literature. Weaver, et al. (2002) noted this in their review of research while additionally stating:

Protestant clergy had the highest overall work-related stress and were next to the lowest in personal resources to cope with the occupational strain. Ministers, especially those who were sole pastors, indicated that they frequently felt isolated and had few friends or colleagues to whom to turn for help. (p. 396)

Consequently, as Weaver et al. noted, “there is evidence that large numbers of well-trained clergy are leaving the ministry at a great cost, financial and otherwise, to the religious community” (p. 403).

Reviewing the literature on this subject brings one across ubiquitous references to a study conducted by Fuller Theological Seminary’s Church Growth Institute in 1991. The nine summary findings of this study are replicated in multiple published books, Internet pages, unpublished dissertations, and journal articles. This researcher, seeking to note the apparently important work, attempted without success to locate the primary source. Ultimately, a reference librarian at Fuller Theological Seminary was able to track the genesis of these references to the work of a marketing copywriter based on an after-

meeting feedback survey taken from participants in an Institute-sponsored conference. The last and final director of the now defunct Fuller Institute, Carl George, wrote in email correspondence, “It should not be treated as reliable or defensible” (personal communication, January 7, 2009). The purpose of the current notation is hopefully to set the record straight on this regularly referenced non-academic survey.

Perhaps the most substantive contemporary study of clergy attrition was completed by Hoge and Wenger (2005), again through the Pulpit & Pew Project of Duke University, which is a “multi-year research project on Protestant and Catholic pastoral leadership” (p. viii). Part of the study project was conducted among clergy of five major Protestant denominations who had left active ministry either voluntarily or involuntarily. One of the key observations from this study is a very important point of balance to the motivation behind this current research in the Church of the Nazarene, namely, to enhance efforts on clergy retention. As Hoge and Wenger wisely note, “To be sure, not all cases of clergy leaving pastoral ministry are necessarily bad for the clergy or for the church” (p. ix). This observation was confirmed through their interviews with judicatory officials. “The officials also talked about some clergy who were simply incompetent” (p. 154). Johnson (1963) suggested that the pertinent issue is not about who leaves and who stays. “Mere recital of statistics throws little if any light on the heart of the issue. And it helps not at all to impugn the motives of those who quit while indiscriminately tossing laurels to those who remain” (p. 706). In the Hoge and Wegner study, they found that among the clergy who had left active ministry, “30 to 40 percent are involuntary leavers; 15 to 25 percent are voluntary leavers; and 40 to 50 percent are voluntary leavers including push factors” (p. 45). Those *push factors* are issues that, while not decisive

alone, factored significantly in the pastors' decisions. The study revealed seven main motivations that led pastors to the decision to leave local parish ministry:

- Preferred another kind of ministry
- Needed to care for children or family
- Conflict in the congregation
- Conflict with denominational leadership
- Burned-out or discouraged
- Sexual misconduct
- Divorce or marital problems. (p. 38)

In the current project, this researcher did not consider the first motivation as being in the category of *leaving*, since these people, while not serving as local parish pastors, are still engaged in vocational ministry as educators, administrators, chaplains, etc. In terms of specific data from the study, one of the key questions in their survey was, "Please describe your main feelings and motivations when you decided to, or were required to, leave local church ministry" (p. 35). Sixteen different topics were identified by the researchers in answer to this question, but three responses clearly emerged above all others: 32% of respondents left local parish ministry for another type of service, 26% left due to conflict with the denomination or judicatory leadership, and 21% left because they reported being burned-out or overworked. The motivation that deals with a pastor's relationship to the judicatory is of special interest to this researcher and will be explored further in the next section. Hoge and Wegner noted four trends in church culture across the last 30 years that they believe have significantly impacted the question of clergy attrition. These trends are: 1) A more educated laity, which in their view translates to

higher expectations of clergy performance, 2) Less trust in centralized authority, 3) Decreased denominational commitment, and 4) Lower clerical authority, or what the authors described as a “leveling between clergy and laity” (pp. 5-9) in terms of education and training which demands a much more collaborative relationship.

The Hoge and Wenger (2005) study reviewed above clearly placed much of the discussion around clergy attrition in the context of how social environments impact this phenomenon. Others give much more attention to the intrapersonal dynamics. For example, Rogerson (1995) wrote, “While the situation of a pastor is not unimportant, the personality of a pastor seems more important, perhaps helping to determine how a pastor perceives and interacts with the environment” (p. 156). Daniel (1981) was particularly pessimistic in his assertion that “the ministry is a vocation that attracts detached, maladjusted individuals” (p. 245). Grosch and Olson (1991), looking at this from a *self-psychology* as well as *systems* perspective, identified clergy personality style as the first of three key factors leading to burnout. They made a link between the idea of *divine calling* which is obviously present among clergy, and a consequent (in their model) grandiose assessment of self, or what they called *God complex* (following Jung). Using the Kohut model of narcissistic personality style, Grosch and Olson noted that “a primitive (largely unconscious) omnipotent grandiosity is perpetuated and any threat to this sense of self becomes experienced as a threat to one’s very existence” (p. 298). The potential for burnout apparently comes when one’s sense of self that has been shaped by identification as God’s chosen instrument is threatened by people or circumstances that call this identity into question. Miles (2003) wanted to counter some writers who seem mostly to blame congregations for clergy attrition, noting “It is our ego that can’t take the

criticism and causes us to strike back at any perceived slight and stand up and vigorously defend ourselves” (p. 10). Michael Ross, a Nazarene clergyperson who has been working for more than a decade on clergy attrition and retention issues, suggested in a 2001 interview that much of clergy attrition stems not only from this personal identity crisis but also from a pessimistic assessment of how clergy are being viewed generally (Slutz, 2001). “Burnout isn’t the issue, it’s disillusionment. It’s the feeling that the role of clergy has changed and you don’t buy into it anymore” (p. 2). From a non-clergy perspective, Maslach (2003) seems to corroborate the observation, saying “A virtual hallmark of the burnout syndrome is a shift in the individuals’ view of other people . . . viewed in more cynical and derogatory terms” (p. 27). She further explained that there is something intrinsic in the relationships of people in helping professions that leads to this rather negative view of people. “Four aspects of this relationship are especially critical: the focus on problems, the lack of positive feedback, the level of emotional stress, and the perceived possibility of change or improvement” (p. 28). Clergy relationships are beyond clinical, however, and may include cooperation, teamwork, accountability, and sometimes friendship. These other aspects may potentially provide resources for coping with the stress of being in the helping role. Payne (1990) concluded regarding the intra- versus interpersonal aspects of attrition: “Those ministers are likely to experience a lower sense of burnout who perceive themselves as having at least some control over their environment, rather than as being relatively helpless in the face of events that shape their lives” (p. 81).

Further, Grosch and Olson (1991) identified two important and related factors that may also contribute to clergy burnout: the demands and pressures of congregational life

and the developmental needs of the pastor's family. These two are very much connected in terms of how the needs and expectations of a congregation and the needs and expectations of a family vie for the pastor's attention and energy. The tension rises not only in terms of amount of time and energy available, but also from the tendency of congregants to idealize the role and person of the pastor. This places the pastor as "an idealized self object for parishioners with whom they can merge as an image of calmness, infallibility, and perfection" (Grosch & Olson, p. 300). This can be at once a gratifying and terrifying position for a pastor. "While intellectually the pastor may know these are idealizations, they are still so flattering that the pastor works even harder to gain more idealization" (p. 300). While there is evident danger in this idealization and its potential impact upon the psychological health of the pastor, there is additionally a profound point of potential danger when this idealization comes into direct conflict with how the pastor is assessed in his or her own family. The authors noted ". . . the deeper motivation is that the family may no longer be supporting the grandiose self of the pastor . . . thus the pastor who is admired as a hero at church may be seen as something considerably less at home, setting up a negative feedback loop" (p. 301). The conclusion may then be somewhat obvious: "Consistently working long hours because of feeling compelled to do more and more for the congregation, combined with tensions at home, as well as little or no recreation, leads to burnout" (p. 301). Price (2001) who looked primarily at financial stress as a reason for attrition, also noted the role of spouses in the decision to leave:

In a survey of pastors who had recently entered the ministry, spouses ranked ninth among those who influenced the pastor to enter the ministry. In a survey of

pastors who had recently decided to leave the ministry, spouses were by far the party most supportive of the pastor's decision. (p. 19)

Part of the complexity involved in seeking to understand this issue of clergy attrition is that researchers tend to look at limited variables against the broad question of burnout. These variables include but are not limited to: age, education, remuneration, tenure, conflict, marital health, physical fitness, and spiritual formation. Age appears to be a significant factor. Overall, researchers suggest that younger people are more susceptible to burnout than older people. For example, Headley (2007) noted that “consistently in the literature, older ministers do better with stress and burnout than younger ministers” (p. 14). Maslach (2003) said, “There is a clear relationship between age and burnout. Burnout is greatest when people-workers are young and is lower for older workers” (p. 99). She also noted that married people tend to do better managing the stresses potentially leading to burnout. Kirsch (2001) concluded from the study of Catholic priests “that the longer the years of service in a helping profession, the less likelihood for burnout . . . .” (p. 52). Shelley and Merrill's (1983) interview with Roy Oswald raised a different perspective without the benefit of subsequent research, but one that warrants attention given the stature of the interviewee in this field:

The ten years between age fifty-five and sixty-five are (sic) the period of most discouragement, lethargy, and burnout for many pastors. They know they're not going to be bishop, they begin seeing colleagues die, they feel stuck. Many churches say they don't want a pastor over fifty-five. (¶ 9)

Although there is much anecdotal evidence to support the validity of this observation, the empirical data is quite clear that “of all biographic characteristics, age is most

consistently related to burnout” and that “among *younger* employees, burnout is observed more often than among those aged over 30 or 40 years” (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2002, p. 7).

Jones and Francis (2003) studied the variable of self-esteem among a sample of more than 1,500 Anglican clergy and found that “the data demonstrate that male and female clergy have lower self-esteem than males and females in the general population” (p. 25). They further linked this observation to suggest a special vulnerability for clergy to “unhealthy compensating behaviors with which low self-esteem is known to be associated” (p. 27). These would include: work avoidance strategies, workaholism, and escapism. A broader explanation of the presence of this variable is offered by the authors of this study:

. . . the clerical profession is one which has become increasingly marginalised (sic) within secular society and increasingly irrelevant to modern life . . . it is likely that professional marginalisation (sic) will be reflected in lowering self-worth, self-concept, and self-esteem of individual clergy. (p. 21)

Daniel and Rogers (1981) offered a similar view but from an insider perspective. That is to say, from the perspective of the clergy collegiums, as well as how clergy tend to respond to the expectations or false assumptions that lay persons carry about them. Daniel (1981) wrote,

One factor is the physical isolation of many pastors, but even greater factors are:  
a) the competitive atmosphere of pastoral meetings which inhibit the sharing of problems, b) the identification with deity and pedestal on which one must live,

and c) the increased defensiveness found in ministers in many research studies. (p. 245)

From this perspective Daniel, a psychologist, concludes that there are indeed both intrapersonal and interpersonal realities in pastors that explain the tendency toward burnout: “. . . the emergence of a personality which is perfectionistic, introspective, conflicted over the expression of hostility, isolated, detached, and has great difficulty in establishing close interpersonal relationships” (p. 246).

The variable of anger in the personality of a pastor is discussed by French (2002) who developed an intervention for pastors in the Church of God (Anderson) denomination to study the question of whether reducing anger would reduce burnout. He noted that “the culture of the church works against pastors admitting that they are angry, frustrated, and need help beyond their dependence upon God” (p. 73). Therefore, “too many pastors are simply empty shells with all the vision, energy, and enthusiasm burned away” (p. 82). French reported anecdotal evidence to suggest that there was significant value in the intervention, and that there was “a significant positive correlation between the reduction of anger and burnout” (p. ii).

Price (2001), as previously noted, examined the variable of low salaries as a factor leading to clergy attrition. This is not, he asserted, only an issue of finances but is tied to how the work of clergy is now viewed in terms of its place among the professions. “Until recently, people have assumed that clergy are members of the professional middle class and can accumulate the same assets as other professionals, including some property, and pass them on to children” (p. 18). He offered the following data to show that this assumption can no longer be held:

In the 1990s, the average mean household income of married male clergy between 45 and 55 with a graduate degree was \$54,044. Doctors were earning \$188,630 and lawyers \$155,801. Clergy household earnings also lagged well behind those of teachers (\$90,260). In the past decade, those with graduate-level degrees earned an average mean household income of \$105,539, almost double that of male married clergy. The ratio of the earnings of all those with graduate degrees to clergy earnings is gradually increasing; the clergy are slipping further behind. (p. 18)

Some observers (Hauerwas & Willimon, 1990; Peterson, 1987) may be accused of being critical of clergy who would have professional concerns such as compensation and cultural esteem, what some might take for ambition, but Price sees this type of concern as being driven by fear. He framed it thus:

The career ladder is the only mechanism available both to those who want to provide for their families' future and to those who seek the same consumer durables as other members of the professional middle class. Since it is practically impossible to distinguish between the two goals, clergy are drawn into a theologically corrupted system. Serving the richer affluent churches that pay larger salaries becomes a "higher" calling as one progresses "upward" on a clergy career track. The only remedy for one's "fear of falling" is to climb higher. (p. 19)

While not tying this specifically to the issue of burnout, Price did suggest that this variable has much to do with attrition and the shrinking size of the prospect pool. "These trends will leave out young ministers who long to serve the church but do not wish to compete for a few choice appointments" (p. 20). There is an intriguing potential

correlation for the current research seeking clearer understanding of the relationship between pastors and judicatory officials. To what degree did this factor of compensation come into play when pastors serving in local congregations accepted the election or appointment of the denomination to serve in the role of judicatory official? In the Church of the Nazarene, district superintendents are generally among the highest paid clergy on each district. How might this reality figure in to the relationship between pastors and district superintendents especially during times of decision-making relative to persistence in active vocational ministry in a local congregation?

The most visceral and critical variable in this entire question may be the sense of divine calling under which nearly all pastors labor, or at least with which they entered into vocational ministry. Gilbert (2003) expressed the thinking of most pastors very well:

Ministry is not a job; it is a vocation. It is not something we aspire to. It is something we are called to. 'Do you love me?' is where it starts, and the command, 'Feed my lambs' is the 'job' description and the performance evaluation. (p. vi)

Consequently Gilbert suggested that when pastors leave active vocational ministry "they are reminding us that burnout is not about fatigue, but a matter of the heart" (p. iv).

Oden (1987) is recognized as a foundational work in pastoral theology. Gathering and organizing the classical texts on Christian leadership, he reflects on the uniqueness of this sense of calling to fit one for the work of pastor and locates the meaning of calling firmly within the affirmation of the church. "Either to feel inwardly called without being sent by the whole church, or to be ecclesiastically approved and sent without experiencing God's inward call, is inadequate grounding" (p. 21). Oden recognized that

faithful work as a pastor can only emerge from a clear and foundational identity. “One who engages in the practice of ministry must first learn and understand what a minister is” (p. 11). Kilcher (1987) agrees saying, “A sound theology of the ministry is essential to hold persons steady in the midst of their task” (p. 12).

Willimon (2002) saw that a clear and compelling sense of God’s call on one’s life is what really gives pastoral ministry its shape. He explains the centrality of this call very simply. “Although pastors may struggle with exactly what it means to be called by God to lead a church, they must have some sense that they are in ministry because God wants them to be” (p. 14). This is why Willimon does not really like the term *burnout* because it suggests lack of energy and he does not think this is essentially the problem in clergy attrition. He offers different language to guide us to the core issue: “. . . our pastoral problem of constancy is more a matter of ‘blackout’ or ‘brownout,’ the gradual dissipation of meaning in ministry, a blurring of vision, the inability to keep the theological rationale for ministry” (p. 325).

No doubt these ideas were worked out previously as is evident in the article written by Hauerwas and Willimon (1990) on this issue. Here the authors dismiss the construct of burnout as a “cop out” or a “culturally accepted justification” (p. 249) for leaving when the real problem is not energy but vision. If this is true, then they argue that “the cure for burnout lies in *enhancing the quality* of our activities, not simply in *reducing their quantity*” (p. 249). This development of quality has to do with vision by which they mean “that our ministry is not finally judged by its results. Rather, *ministry is an intrinsically good service to a community that knows how to name the good which it serves*” (p. 249). But this is the problem. “Burnout reminds us that we lack the common

agreement in our communities today which is necessary to justify setting some aside to do nothing but to be present with our people in their pain” (p. 250). Lacking this clear pastoral theology, pastors are not sure who to be and what to do. As Hauerwas and Willimon so poignantly observed, we are “often reduced to nothing more than quivering masses of availability that are quickly used up in the bottomless pit of a people whose needs have no limits.” Or to put it in even more earthy terms, “being a minister today is like being nibbled to death by ducks. People assume that we are paid basically to do nothing other than to be kind” (p. 251). From this model then, Hauerwas and Willimon asserted that burnout is not only to be seen as something destructive but can actually be viewed in a more positive way, vis-à-vis the *purgative* nature of burnout. In this sense,

We are driven to a more purposeful basis for our care. We reach out for those habits and activities that enable us to go on in service to another because we have learned, through burnout, how much we depend on one another. Even more, we learn how much we depend upon God to sustain ministry. (p. 253)

Seaman (1997) noted in his study of clergy self-care practices that “just less than half of the respondents indicated they were ‘concerned’ or ‘alarmed’ about their *spiritual life*” (p. 55). Kiesling and Colwell (2007) focused on how pastors can find an ongoing *generativity* in the pastorate in the midst of what they call the “maze of social contexts” (p. 3) in which pastors live and do their work. They have a forward-looking view of this divine calling as they link the idea of *blurred pastoral identity* (attributed to Oden) and the idea of *vocational bewilderment* (attributed to Olford) with Erikson’s theory of personality development. Kiesling and Colwell concluded that “what may be most determinative of any ministers’ identity or effectiveness is not so much the family or

social context from which they originated but the vision of the future that compels their hearts and minds” (p. 3). The authors encouraged pastors to judge their ministries and sense of self “not on the basis of congregational size or new professions of faith but instead on the quality of care those in the congregation exhibit and on how many parishioners are functioning as generative individuals” (p. 4).

Anderson (2001) also saw that when clergy are in great stress, distress, or burnout, it is often a problem of an out-of-focus pastoral theology. He believes that what is needed in these times is “intervention, not merely information” (p. 287). The reason for this is because the disequilibrium has often been caused by a crisis of identity that he described as the *Job syndrome*, referring to the lead character of the biblical text by that name. Anderson described this syndrome as an “inescapable bind” (p. 285). In the Bible story, Job becomes “convinced that his life is given over to God, and yet God has become his adversary. There is only one way out: risk himself to the very edge of destruction, and then God must be his vindication and his salvation” (p. 285). To paraphrase Anderson, it is as if a minister says, “My ministry is about to do me in so I’ll rush headlong into the work and kill myself through this ministry. Then we’ll see what God says since God got me into this mess in the first place!” There is a potential toxicity in vocational ministry for two reasons. First, because of what Anderson noted above relative to the deeply emotional and spiritual motivations of the one who has been called. Second, there is the toxic nature of people work, particularly from the Christian framework of sin and redemption that can have a profound impact on the emotional and spiritual health of the minister. Taylor (1999) noted this phenomenon in an article she wrote about meeting several of the key players who were involved the work of South Africa’s Truth and

Reconciliation Commission toward the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among the remarkable things to be learned from these people was the observation that “all of the members of that commission are ill in one way or another . . . no one has survived the process with his or her health intact” (p. 1202). Taylor surmised that the reason for the disease was because these people had “listened to confessions so full of toxic material that their own health has broken down” (p. 1202). The testimonies of veteran pastors are replete with the admission that bearing the sins of others through the hearing of confessions has made indelible marks on the pastors’ hearts. This fact is why at these kinds of points of acute stress a minister needs interventions not only emotionally, physically, and socially, but theologically as well. Taylor put this refocus in terms of a robust theology of the cross and of suffering. Anderson is practical, suggesting that “ministers know when they are neglecting their own physical and emotional well-being, the same as they know when they are precariously close to nervous exhaustion . . . this is why being told, or even warned, is not an effective deterrent. The well meaning appeal to common sense actually can compound the problem and accelerate the vicious cycle” (p. 286). Reuter (1981) has a different view, stating “Frequently pastors and their spouses are too caught up in their situation to be aware of the signs of stress” (p. 224). He called for intervention from *denominational officials*, among others, to stop pastors from the repeating cycles of stress. What Anderson wanted instead is a *theological intervention* that presumably would need to be directed by someone in accountable or even authoritative relationship to the pastor.

This is the relationship that is in view in the current research, the relationship of a district superintendent and a pastor during these critical times of decision-making

regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. It is to the examination of this relationship in the literature that we now turn.

### Efforts in Clergy Retention

The literature on clergy burnout and attrition is abundantly clear that pastors need someone to come to the rescue when the stress becomes unbearable and the vocation is in danger of being lost. The person most often mentioned to provide this ministry is the judicatory official, variously named. “We need safe places and safe people where we are nurtured, understood, free to wander and explore. We must also be guided by people of this same faith who also understand the work of ministry and the realities for ministers” (Gilbert, 2003, p. 43). With this cry, Gilbert expressed what seems to be conventional wisdom among those who think about such things. Bishops, overseers, and superintendents are the logical and rightful people to provide this safety net relationship for front-line pastors. However, as was noted in Chapter I, there is also considerable angst about this relationship. Both of these dimensions, the responsibility and the difficulty for ecclesial overseers to help pastors thrive, will be examined in this section.

The relationship of overseer (using the biblical term *episkope*, often translated as *bishop*) and pastor is relatively complex. On the one hand, most people recognize as a matter of common sense that pastors also need a pastor. Reuter (1981) wrote, “Pastors who deal consistently with the problems and sins of others need someone to whom they can unburden their souls, and, most importantly, someone to affirm and forgive them in the name of Jesus” (p. 225). Meek, McMinn, Brower, Burnett, McRay, Ramey, Swanson, and Villa (2003) said, “It is immensely comforting for pastors to be able to tell of their struggles and be understood rather than judged” (p. 345). They explained further,

“Like all professionals, pastors need communication, support, mentoring, vision-casting, and friendship . . . pastors need a pastor to listen and to take notice of signs of distress, perhaps even before they are aware of it themselves” (p. 345). Rowatt (2001) agreed, and under the “recommendations” section of his article wrote, “Every pastor needs a pastor. A pastor for the pastor and for clergy families seems to reduce stress and provide a needed component of support” (p. 533). Grieve (2007) placed this relationship in a biblical, covenantal context. “Church and judicatory leaders need to be stewards of *shalom*” (p. 119). He went on to explain:

Given that clergy are more likely to experience burnout as a result of criticism (according to his study) . . . church and denominational leaders need to protect clergy from the corrosive impact of excessive criticism. Criticism, more than any other ministry stressor, undermines pastoral *shalom*. (p. 120)

Kilcher (1987) spoke of the immense value of this kind relationship. “If employees know they work for a competent administrator who deserves respect and treats them fairly, morale will be high” (p. 98). More specifically, he suggested some things overseers can do in order to raise morale among the pastoral corps. “Pastoral morale can be raised by instituting certain changes by denominational leadership that would include attention to solving the administrative overload, promoting continuing education with development of talents and abilities, and input into denominational goals and programs” (p. 111).

Gorman (1999), a Nazarene pastor who left active vocational ministry due to a journey with clinical depression, spoke of the importance of his district superintendent

when he found himself “under fire” from a parishioner who had gone to the superintendent without the pastor’s knowledge to complain. He wrote:

My district superintendent assured me that I had his unequivocal support and that he even admonished this man for coming to see him behind my back. If it had not been for my district superintendent’s early vote of confidence during this deeply turbulent time, I am sure I would have been forced to leave my church. (p. 21)

As encouraging as this kind of story is, apparently the desire of pastors with regard to their leaders is for even more than understanding and sympathy; they desire leadership and vision as well. Meek, et al. (2003) quoted one of their study respondents saying,

We pastors need to know that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and that we, together, are called to a great destiny . . . we need leaders who are themselves excited, themselves organized, themselves passionate about the mission of our church and then personally, enthusiastically communicate that mission to us. (p. 343)

There is a balance to this expression that was articulated by Grieve (2007) in the recommendations from his study that “denominational leaders need to see themselves less as promoters of a denominational agenda or service providers for pastors and more as brokers” (p. 128). The meaning of *brokers* in this context is the task of bringing needs and resources together in response to an understanding of the kinds of helps that would promote what Grieve called *wellness practices*. Recognizing the barriers that can exist in this relationship (outlined below), Cedarleaf (1973) expressed his belief “that if we got over a few of our hang-ups about our ministry to each other, we *could* minister to each

other. It is not perfection or status or training that heals. It is open communication between people” (p. 33). Unfortunately, this open communication seems a much greater challenge than one might imagine when discussing this rather unique relationship of overseer and pastor. The dual nature of this relationship that forces overseers to function both as colleague and authority presents some significant potential tests of interpersonal skill.

In Gilbert’s (2003) survey, he found among respondents that only “30.23% indicated that they had a ‘judiciary leader who understands my work.’ 32.00% of the respondents felt that they would trust their bishops, but only 27.13% felt that they could talk with their leaders” (p. 161). Hoge and Wegner (2005) reported that “half of our respondents said they could not speak openly with their denominational officials” (p. 99). In their study, 39% of currently active pastors felt supported by their overseers, while only 18% of those who recently left active ministry felt that they were supported. Hoge and Wegner also said that “many ex-pastors speak with considerable passion about . . . the insensitivity and lack of support that they received from the denominational officials” (p. ix). Rugenstein (2004) echoed these concerns reporting from her study that “. . . answers to the qualitative question about why pastors had not approached denominational hierarchy with personal or professional problems indicate a high level of distrust” (p. 101). Part of this problem may rise from the idea articulated by Chandler (2001) that “most denominations do very little to assist ministers in crisis. Though these people become displaced workers, there are fewer services available to them than a layperson in a parallel situation” (p. 564). Notably, Chandler was working from a population of ministers who did not choose to leave but were forced out through conflict. This may be a

significant population. Chandler wrote, “A study by *Leadership* magazine (Winter 1996) found that 22.8 percent of the responding readers have been forced out of their church ministry positions at least once during their careers” (p. 557). Further, this study illuminates part of the unique pain of ministers being forced out:

Clergy members from connectional churches complain that when conflict surfaces they are sent to “Podunk” to appease the vocal minority and they have no recourse or means of getting a better position since the “conflict” situation has become part of their official file. (p. 558)

These numbers and observations represent perhaps the key challenge in this relationship between pastors and hierarchy. It is well articulated by Grieve (2007) who wrote, “Pastors seem reticent to speak to their denominational supervisors about trouble until a situation deteriorates beyond remedy” (p. 111). This sentiment would certainly be echoed by colleagues of this researcher who serve as district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene. It is a painful reality because there is broad recognition that pastors need relationships with other pastors. “Evidently many pastors do not feel the freedom to confide in their judicatory leaders. Pastors seek their own networks and do not respond well to denominationally initiated networks” (Grieve, p. 110). Kilcher (1987) also recognized that pastors are hesitant to turn to leadership for fear that their struggle “could be interpreted as signs of incompetence and weakness in carrying out pastoral assignments” (p. 4). Gilbert (2003) does a good job of explaining the hesitancy of pastors to bring troubles to their overseer:

How do I say, “I am tired of this ministry, the people don’t cooperate, my family is complaining, and I have more and more doubts about God’s effectiveness in my

life?” What if we say that to the wrong parishioner? *We dare not tell our bishop or judicatory leader*. He or she may be my pastor, at least in theory, but how can you have this person as your pastor when he or she is also your boss? (p. 47, emphasis mine).

Therein is the proverbial rub. No matter how much an overseer may desire to function pastorally for those under his or her charge, there is no escaping the fact that in most church groups there is, to varying degrees, a hierarchical reality. In addition to the nature of the relationship there is also the consuming nature of administrative work that typically defines much of the role of bishop or superintendent. Gilbert also saw this fact, noting that “most denominational leaders are bogged down with endless meetings, reports, task forces, visitations, speaking engagements, etc., and yet we want them to be our pastors, guides, and mentors” (p. 158). Keesee (1998) came to a similar conclusion, noting that when pastors “look to their own immediate supervisors for help, they are often looking for assistance from persons who are more overworked and pressured than they are” (p. 9). This would be a valid observation particularly in the Church of the Nazarene where district superintendents serve essentially as middle managers, directly accountable to the Board of General Superintendents.

In Kilcher’s (1987) study of pastoral morale and motivation, he noted three reasons why trying to be a pastor to pastors is a tricky proposition. First, “pastors tend to deny that they are experiencing personal difficulties” (p. 228). Second, “pastors fear to share their pain because they may be labeled, thereby jeopardizing opportunities for further advancement” (p. 228). (See also Sturtevant, 2001). And third, “pastors don’t know who to trust or where to turn for help” (p. 228). To further expound on the second

point, Kilcher wrote tersely, “. . . overlapping administrative and support roles cannot happen” (p. 244). Bouma (1990) seems to argue that the idealization of overseers as pastors to pastors should be abandoned. It is, however, “kept alive by expectations ingrained in theological education and the kinds of speeches made at consecrations and enthronements” (p. 4). He further asserted that churches with presbyterian forms of governance (e.g., Church of the Nazarene) have tried varieties of the pastor/administrator model “and find them unworkable as a means of providing pastoral care for clergy” (p. 4). The current research sought to shed light on this very question. Sewell (2002) was more positive about the ability of connectional churches to deliver pastoral care, bemoaning the failure of his own congregational or independent model. He saw the primary value of connections in bringing pastors together for Christian conference and encouragement. “Without denominational structure, it is difficult to bring individuals together for a common cause” (p. 40).

Even deeper than the role conflicts in this relationship, “most studies reveal that denominational organizations not only are inadequately supportive of their ministers but also are part of the cause of their pressures” (p. 252). Meek et al. (2003) hinted at part of this stress when they reported that many of the pastors in their study have the belief “that their primary value is expressed in church growth” (p. 345). In other words, the null curriculum of judicatory communication is that pastors are most valued as a pragmatic means to an end, namely, the growth of the organization. Bouma (1990), writing specifically to this issue, was particularly pessimistic in his assessment of this relationship: “Any attempt to merge the roles of care-giver and manager is doomed to

failure . . . . Bishops and other senior administrators are structurally incapable of providing pastoral care to clergy” (p. 4)

Sadly, there are certainly times when the failures of hierarchy are due to nothing less than careless malpractice. Funston’s (1998) single-case study bears this fact out with the story of a pastor who was under fire from three members of the congregation. The bishop came for a visit and found the church to be generally healthy. The bishop promised that he would write the three detractors and tell them to cease their activity or leave the church. The pastor waited for response from the three detractors upon receiving the bishop’s letter, but as the researcher reports, “That letter, however, was never written” (p. 87). Consequently, within a few days the pastor notified the bishop of the decision made by himself and his family to resign from the church.

On the other hand, pastors are perhaps not without responsibility for the often less-than-uplifting relationship between themselves and their overseers. Hoge and Wegner (2005), in their important study noted a fairly recent development in this regard: “Judicatory officials spoke again and again about how pastors today seem to have a feeling of independence and entitlement that their predecessors lacked” (p. 154). However we might trace the cause-effect relationship, “what is clearly lacking is a ‘safe place’ where the pastor can be free to explore his or her vulnerable self without fear of criticism or attack” (Grosch & Olson, 1991, p. 301). What are the recommendations of previous research regarding the development of these *safe places*?

The majority of research studies and popular writing already referenced in this chapter include in their recommendations something about the development of support networks or groups for clergy where they can process the unique stressors of pastoral

ministry. Again, Grosch and Olson (1991) had a suggestion “. . . that more research by those who counsel clergy and by denominational hierarchies be done as to how to utilize support groups to help clergy and their spouses better understand what motivates them, and to move toward greater integration of self” (p. 303). Some researchers suggest formal relationships coordinated by the judicatory and others prefer the development of informal mentoring relationships. Rowatt (2001) suggested that “pastors might have a former professor or an older minister” (p. 533). He further mentioned the possibility of the denomination providing such a person but warned, “these positions are very helpful when they are separate from those who make decisions about promotion and placement” (p. 533). Payne (1990) concluded his study with the assertion that “those persons experience less burnout who involve themselves personally with others and who have a generalized sense of purpose that enables them to find meaning in the events and persons of their environment” (p. 81).

Daniel (1981) had fairly specific recommendations on prevention and retention strategies that could be initiated “at organizational, individual, and training levels to prevent burnout. The ministry has none of these preventative factors built in on any of the three levels and the potential for burnout is severe” (p. 3). This is clearly an extremely pessimistic view of the situation which may not be generalized. Daniel nevertheless strongly advocated the need for helping pastors to develop these relationships. “Functionally it seems ministers are particularly isolated from any type of peer supervision, in-house or non-job related types of support, or opportunities for group catharsis” (p. 4). Development of these kinds of relationships must be intentional. As one

leader said, “Such a group seldom drops from heaven. It usually has to be sought, prayed for, and created by deliberate action” (Hustead, Hestenes, & Coyle, 2003, p. 58).

Gorman (1999) may have revealed a common mindset among pastors when he confessed, “When I first started out in ministry, I thought that pastor get-togethers were a waste of time” (p. 404). After walking through the darkness of depression, however, his attitude was changed to the point that he said, “I no longer view community as an extravagance, but as a means of grace” (p. 404).

Hoge and Wegner (2005) identified four points of intervention or judicatory action:

- Initial assessment and training for pastors relative to handling stress
- Initial placement and installation to maximize contextual fitness
- Ongoing support to communicate care and interest
- Response and support in problem situations. (pp. 47-48)

Looking for the most effective way to deliver these kinds of actions, Bouma (1990) suggested that churches should take the lead of other large organizations in human resource management, having people or departments “which are separate from line management” (p. 4). Additionally, Schuiling (1996) identified eight things that judicatories can do to promote pastoral health:

- Educate congregations on the role of pastors
- Educate pastors on holistic health or wellness issues
- Advocate for pastors on sabbatical leaves and compensation
- Give explicit permission for pastors to seek help
- Ask questions that pastors may be overlooking or avoiding

- Facilitate networks of pastors for collegial support
- Serve as cheerleaders of encouragement
- Provide resources for support like retreats, counseling, etc. (pp. 167ff.)

*Leadership*, a journal for pastor and church leaders, periodically publishes a list of retreat centers and counseling services that are available to clergy. The 1995 listing included 34 ministries which are dedicated to pastoral renewal (Roberts & Roberts, 1995). In 2002, the *Christian Century* reported that American Baptists were proactively taking a comprehensive approach to promoting clergy health. This balance included “balanced nutrition, emotional well-being, periods of spiritual reflection and a sense of fulfillment with one’s job” (Buchanan, 2002, p. 18). This strategy was to include funding and other resources for retreats and sabbaticals. Denominational leadership was also quoted in the article: “What we are saying is that we need to change our cultural values so that [the pastor’s] wellness is as important as his or her achievement” (p. 18). Knierim’s (2001) project was about developing and delivering a seminar for pastors and spouses on *six wellness dimensions* of their lives. He claimed success for the seminar based on subjective feedback but did not offer substantive research to validate those claims.

Foss (2001) had suggestions for judicatories as well, to engage in preventative strategies relative to clergy attrition:

- Psychological screening of clergy before placement
- Ongoing assessment of trauma, support systems, boundaries
- Training in stress and conflict management
- Clear job descriptions (also Payne, 1991)

- Availability of non-connected therapists. (p. 17)

Obviously these suggestions are quite similar to the lists provided by Schuiling (1996) and Hoge and Wegner (2005). Very similar lists are also provided by Daniel (1981), Schwanz (1996), and Ireland (1999). Ireland uniquely recommended that the Church of the Nazarene “should establish a Pastoral Assessment Center in each educational zone of the United States with a goal to determine capability for pastoral ministry” (p. 209). This has in fact been established on at least a few districts across the Church.

Other unique suggestions include Gilbert’s (2003) idea that expectation for the pastor to be involved in these kinds of preventative experiences “should be a requirement, denomination-wide, stated clearly in the Letter of Call or contract between congregation or other workplace and the minister” (p. 74). He includes in this the commitment of judicatory leaders to engage in these processes, concerned that “many seem to walk away from it. Others simply bully their way through it” (p. 72). Even though many researchers have concluded that judicatories cannot be in a position to deliver, much less require meaningful interventions, Gorman (1999) shares this viewpoint:

I would like to see district superintendents strongly encourage or even require pastors to be part of a small group of pastors that meets on a regular basis. Pastors sometimes need to be given denominational imperatives to do what they might otherwise neglect on their own. (p. 412)

Hambrick (1992) gives some hope that this kind of leadership would in fact be positively received. His study of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene “indicated that if those suffering from burnout are offered help, they will respond and work to overcome this delimiting syndrome” (p. 179). His study of pre-program and post-program

assessment showed that his intervention program was effective for 45.5% of the clergy in the study.

Beside the need for supportive relationships, there is strong indication in the literature that some kind of personality assessment process is a critical component of early detection of those clergy who might be prone to burnout. Rogerson (1995) said, “A pastor who emerges from seminary without some knowledge of his or her own personality, some idea of how to assess the health of a church situation, some knowledge of cognitive appraisal and effective control, and some idea of the signs of burnout” (p. 165) may be more vulnerable. Scheib (2003) would include in this the importance of “increasing one’s level of self-differentiation” given that “high levels of anxiety, poorly defined boundaries, and a lack of clear vision in the denomination as a whole are contextual factors that can increase the likelihood of clergy burnout” (p. 83).

### Conclusions

This review of literature on the subject of burnout, attrition, and retention among clergy demonstrated that although much work has been accomplished toward understanding this complex intrapersonal and interpersonal problem, more research is needed that will provide clear and specific direction for church judicatories seeking to help pastors to persist in active vocational ministry. As Brower (2001) wrote, “A more detailed examination of the role of social support in the prevention and reduction of pastoral burnout is another necessary area for future study” (p. 48). Further, Brower indicated the needed addition of results from the kind of action-applied research that was the current project. “The literature on pastoral burnout would certainly benefit from more qualitative research as well” (p. 48).

This study attempted to combine key quantitative results with narrative data that brought additional information to district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene regarding the current condition of pastors relative to attrition. This study also brought specific direction to superintendents as they seek to fulfill their role of not only oversight but pastoral care as well.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The work of pastor in contemporary American society is difficult. Much of this has to do with the fact that pastors stand in the gap between two realities, the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world, seeking through prophetic word and deed to call forth a people whose communal life becomes an authentic expression of the kingdom of God in the world. This is hard work and it is dangerous.

Much of what we do as pastors falls on hard soil, deaf ears, stubborn hearts, and even dense minds. But, we try again. And again. And still again. It's enough to make lesser souls give up in frustration and quit. We, however, keep pressing forward believing that when all looks lost, grace will burst through and life will emerge where only death would have been expected. (Rowell, 2004, p. 11)

Academic and popular literature on clergy burnout and attrition make it abundantly clear that pastors need someone to come to the rescue when the stress becomes unbearable and the vocation is in danger of being lost. The person most often mentioned to provide this ministry is the judicatory official, variously named. Bishops, overseers, and superintendents would seem the logical and rightful persons to provide this safety net relationship for pastors but there is also considerable angst about this relationship. The purpose of this study was to investigate possible correlations between the influence of a district superintendent and a pastor's decision to leave or to remain in

active vocational ministry. The researcher, focusing on clergy in the Church of the Nazarene, hypothesized a correlation between a pastor's decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry and the influence of the pastor's district superintendent. Particularly, the question was whether research could suggest strategies to enhance the relationship between pastors and overseers to the point that a pastor will not be left to make career and life altering decisions in isolation but will make them in concert with counsel from his or her vocational supervisor. To this end, three research questions were identified:

1. How pervasive among active Church of the Nazarene pastors was the serious consideration to leave active vocational ministry in the past three years?
2. Do correlations exist between the health of relationship of a pastor to the district superintendent and the pastor's decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry?
3. What specific retention strategies may be suggested for use by district superintendents that may help Church of the Nazarene pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry?

This study attempted to combine key quantitative results with narrative data that brought additional information to district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene regarding the current condition of pastors relative to attrition. This study also brought specific direction to superintendents as they seek to fulfill their role of not only oversight but pastoral care as well.

## Research Design

This applied research project used a mixed-method approach for assessment of the research questions. It included the gathering and analysis of quantitative data from a sampling of Church of the Nazarene pastors. It also employed significant qualitative elements of the case study approach as outlined by Yin (2003), who argued that case study methodology is preferred when researchers are dealing with “how” and “why” questions, “when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1). This was precisely the case for the current research. This study sought particularly to identify the “tipping points” (Gladwell, 2000) between clergy deciding to leave or to stay in their assignments, particularly in terms of the pastor’s relationship to the judicatory official. Therefore, this research method seemed best suited for this problem for the following reasons:

- a. Multiple data collection techniques can be used. The researcher used surveys, interviews, and personal observation as data collectors.
- b. In this design, the researcher becomes “an instrument of data collection” (Robson, 2002, p. 166). This researcher lived and worked among the pastors studied in three areas of the country across nearly 30 years. This knowledge from experience shaped the design of survey and interview questions.
- c. This method is focused upon “a single idea or problem” for which understanding or a strategy for intervention is sought. Although several factors in the broad question of clergy retention came into view during this research, the primary motivating concern for the researcher was to

understand one potential variable (the role of the district superintendent) during times of decision-making about persistence in active vocational ministry.

Yin (2003) provided not only a protocol for case study research but also established the scientific validity of this kind of qualitative research as a part of a mixed-method research approach. “The case study has long been . . . stereotyped as a weak sibling among social science methods” (p. xiii). However, Yin argued the validity and preference of this methodology when researchers are working not only to describe but to assess foundational psycho-social dynamics that may serve to explain the observations. Robson (2002) affirmed case study as “a well-established research strategy” (p. 178). He went on to say that a case can be defined rather broadly as a person, a group of persons, or an organization. The methodologies involved in this type of research can include “multiple methods of data collection” including some quantitative data even though this is primarily a qualitative research approach. Generally case studies are further qualified as *explanatory*, *exploratory*, or *descriptive* (Robson added the qualifier *emancipatory*). The researcher focused on the idea of descriptive explanatory case study under the defining characteristics as outlined by Robson namely, “to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations” and that this type of research “requires extensive previous knowledge of the situation . . . to be researched or described, so that you know appropriate aspects on which to gather information” (p. 59). This prior knowledge is something that the researcher judged to be significantly present in the approach to the stated research questions.

With this type of methodology, while there is significant design direction available there is also significant freedom. One of the primary design decisions was in terms of approaching this work as a *single-case* study or a *multiple-case* study. The single-case approach was attractive for its relative simplicity and the fact that a single-case can be understood as a connectional group or organization like a particular district in the Church of the Nazarene. The danger of using a single-case model is that the study becomes vulnerable because, for one example, the possibility of direct replication is eliminated. Therefore, a multiple-case model was chosen in order to strengthen the analytical possibilities. As Yin (2003) asserted, “Analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases, as with two experiments, will be more powerful than those coming from a single case (or single experiment) alone” (p. 53). Consequently, the researcher chose to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from a sampling of active and inactive clergy across the USA/Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene, and to conduct select interviews with 12 clergy for the gathering of additional qualitative, narrative data toward the particular question of potential retention strategies. Preparation for this type of research methodology is outlined by Yin (2003) to contain the following components: Prior skills of the investigator, training and preparation for the specific research strategy, development of a protocol, and conducting a pilot study. Yin also provides a listing of particular skills needed by the researcher in this type of study: Ability to ask good questions, ability to listen without bias, adaptive and flexible approach to the process, a firm grasp of the issues beings studied, and the ability of the researcher to remain unbiased by preconceived ideas.

The researcher used Maslach's (2003) identifiers of "three core dimensions of the burnout experience" namely, *exhaustion* (the individual stress response), *cynicism* (the negative reaction to others and the job), and *inefficacy* (the negative evaluation of one's own accomplishments) as coding strategies for conducting survey, interview, and observation research of the population. These negative identifiers correlate to a positive side of "job engagement" which became the next set of coding strategies namely, *energy* (rather than exhaustion), *involvement* (rather than cynicism), and *efficacy* (rather than inefficacy). These coding strategies provided the rubric for designing data collection instruments. The researcher designed survey and interview instruments to relate these coding strategies specifically to the role of the district superintendent. This provided the needed matrix from which to conduct this descriptive explanatory case study seeking to gather data on how Church of the Nazarene pastors view their relationship with their district superintendent, whether or not district superintendents have a consequential role in the decision-making of pastors relative to persistence in active ministry, and possible strategies for district superintendents to employ in relationship building with pastors in an effort to increase clergy retention.

### Population

The participants of the study were district licensed or ordained ministers on the USA/Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene. Two samples of the population of credentialed ministers were identified for the survey portion of this study. The first sample (Sample A) was district licensed or ordained ministers currently serving in the role of pastor as indicated by the role code designation *PAS* in the official current assembly journal of each district. This selection distinguished between lead or solo

pastors and clergy serving in other roles such as associate pastors, chaplains, educators, administrators, etc. In this sample, 57.6% reported years in active, vocational ministry between 10 and 29. In terms of service to the current congregation, 42.7% have been in the current assignment less than five years while 75.6% have served less than 10 years in their current church. Most of these churches (71.8%) are described as suburban or small town with even distribution (35.9%) in each category. Seventy-eight percent (78.3%) defined their assignment as “full-time (no other job)” while 60% reported income from a spouse’s job. The majority (55.6%) received education for ministry through a college or university undergraduate program while 26.1% reported Master’s level and 26.4% Seminary level education. Nearly all (96.6%) were married and 44.1% had children in the home.

The second sample (Sample B) was previously district licensed or ordained ministers who had become inactive or were dropped from the roll of ministers (from the *PAS* role code) during the past three years. In this sample 54.2% reported years in active, vocational ministry between 10 and 29. In terms of years in the last congregation served, 55.3% were in the assignment less than five years. Most of these churches (61.7%) were described as suburban or small town with the greater percentage (42.6%) in small town settings and a lesser percentage (19.1%) described as suburban. The majority (57.4%) received education for ministry through a college or university undergraduate program while 21.3% reported Master’s level and 34% Seminary level education. Nearly all (97.9%) were married and 50% had children in the home.

A sub-sample group (Sample C) was selected by the researcher from among the respondents to either of the two online surveys. Respondents to both survey instruments

were given opportunity to supply contact information as they were willing to engage further in direct interviews on this subject. A surprisingly large number of participants gave this information and consent to be contacted. From Sample A, 213 pastors (72.2%) indicated their willingness to be interviewed further. From Sample B, 66 pastors (70.2%) indicated their willingness to be interviewed further. Fifteen pastors were chosen (9 from Sample A, 6 from Sample B) for further contact and interview according to the protocol and questions set forth in Appendix C. The interviewer reached 6 clergy from Sample A and 5 clergy from Sample B for further and clarifying conversations.

#### Data Collection

The researcher designed two related but distinct survey instruments to form the foundational data gathering tool for this study. One survey (Appendix A) was designed for currently active pastors and focused on the degree to which they had “considered leaving vocational ministry” during the preceding three years. Those pastors who indicated a consideration to leave were questioned further on the circumstances that led to this consideration and on steps that may have been undertaken in the decision-making process regarding their persistence in active, vocational ministry. Questions regarding these decision-making steps included items designed to assess the pastor’s relationship to the district superintendent including the pastor’s assessment of *accessibility*, *trust*, and *guidance* with regard to the attitudes and actions of the district superintendent. The other survey instrument (Appendix B) was designed for pastors who became inactive or unassigned during the previous three-year period. These pastors were questioned regarding the circumstances that led to their decision to leave and steps that may have been undertaken in the decision-making process, including an assessment of relationship

with their district superintendent during this time, also on the factors of *accessibility*, *trust*, and *guidance*. These survey items served the purpose of the first two research questions regarding the frequency of consideration to leave active ministry among currently active pastors and the nature of relationship between Nazarene pastors and their district superintendents particularly during times of decision-making regarding persistence in active vocational ministry.

Additionally, both samples were questioned regarding their sense of negative and positive feelings and personal assessments about their work in vocational ministry. The negative coding labels used were *exhaustion*, *cynicism*, and *inefficacy*. The corresponding positive coding labels used were *energy*, *involvement*, and *efficacy*. Maslach (2003) used these terms in this way as identifiers related to the burnout experience and job engagement.

The researcher worked with the staff of Nazarene Research, a department of the Global Ministry Center (GMC) of the Church of the Nazarene in Lenexa, Kansas to develop data collection procedures and instruments. Using the criteria set forth in the Process to Accomplish in Chapter I, the research staff set the selection parameters for the master database to deliver two samples from the population of Nazarene credentialed ministers in the USA and Canada as described in the preceding section. The research staff formed the two survey instruments into an online survey tool using the software resources of the GMC. Concurrently, a study group of six pastors was gathered to review and assess the survey instruments prior to data collection in order to provide maximum clarity on the questionnaires. All of this was done under the direct supervision of the researcher.

The sample populations were sent an advance email notice on March 10, 2009 (Appendix D) and were invited to respond to an online survey with an open collector between March 12 and March 31, 2009. For both samples, the survey link was preceded by a cover letter (Appendix E) which outlined the nature of the study, freedom to choose participation, and disclosure of any risks associated with participation. Opening the survey link was taken as implied consent to participate in the study, as approved by the Institutional Review Board.

For Sample A (currently active pastors) 600 were randomly selected for advance notification of the study. After removing contacts that were either unreachable or indicated unwillingness to participate, the survey link was sent to 551 pastors in Sample A. Of these invitations, 295 surveys were completed (53.5%). For Sample B (inactive during last 3 years), 406 pastors were identified in the GMC database that fit these criteria, which represented all credentialed persons in this criteria group, not a sample. After removing contacts that were either unreachable or indicated unwillingness to participate, the survey link was sent to 248 pastors in Sample B. Of these invitations, 94 surveys were completed (37.9%). These response rates yield a margin of error of 6% +/- for Sample A and 10% +/- for Sample B at the 95% confidence level using the calculation:  $0.98/\sqrt{n}$ .

From these data and samples, the third research question was pursued through select personal interviews of members of each sample. A semi-structured interview process was used giving significant flexibility within a guiding framework. Robson (2002) noted that in this type of interview “question wording can be changed and explanation given; particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular

interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included” (p. 270). An independent interviewer was trained to conduct the interviews using a guiding framework of questions and protocol (Appendix C). The interviewer was a retired clergy person with a distinguished career as pastor, missionary, and educator. The researcher conducted personalized training to the interviewer on the procedure and the interviews were conducted between May 15, 2009 and July 17, 2009. The purpose of these interviews was to gather narrative related to the data gathered in the online surveys and specifically to gather narrative data related to possible strategies for district superintendents to employ in relationship building with pastors in an effort to increase clergy retention. The interviewer provided written summaries of each interview to the researcher.

These data collection procedures provided important information for this study seeking to understand whether or not district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene have a consequential role in the decision-making of pastors relative to persistence in active ministry.

### Analytical Methods

Several analytical methods for interpretation of the data were employed by the researcher. Descriptive statistics were a key feature used to understand the nature of the samples in terms of factors such as education, tenure, ministry setting, family circumstances, and compensation. Chi square and crosstabs were the primary tests used for these descriptions of the samples. These methods also were employed to assess the degree to which clergy reported experience of the various conditions used as coding strategies (i.e., descriptors of the burnout experience). These types of descriptive statistics were used in pursuit of understanding the first research question: the degree to which

currently active pastors have considered leaving during the past three years, and the kinds of steps taken toward potential implementation of this decision, including their assessment of relationship with and assistance from their district superintendent. These reports of variability and frequency distribution are illustrated in the tables and graphs of Chapter IV.

Particularly important for this study were the measures of correlation to understand the relationship between variables. The second research question called for this statistical technique in order to answer the question, “Do correlations exist between the health of relationship of a pastor to the district superintendent and the pastor’s decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry?” Correlations were studied in order to link this research question with distinct variables in the data set.

The data set in this study also included several narrative responses on the surveys and select personal interviews that required qualitative analysis. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) noted the relative value of this approach in a mixed-method study with their observation that qualitative researchers “recognize that the issue they are studying has many dimensions and layers, and so they try to portray the issue in its multifaceted form” (p. 133). The researcher undertook a system of content analysis in order to arrive at discernable patterns and threads in the narratives that could serve to provide answers to the third research question, “What specific retention strategies may be suggested for use by district superintendents that may help Church of the Nazarene pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry?”

These and other methods of analysis provided a meaningful representation of the data in Chapter IV, Findings and Conclusions.

## Limitations

The researcher identified several possible limitations in this study. First, the fact that this study was conducted exclusively among clergy in the Church of the Nazarene in USA/Canada may limit the generalization of findings to other clergy on two counts: (a) in light of the unique polity structures in the Church of the Nazarene that place the pastor and district superintendent in a tension relationship of simultaneous vocational oversight and pastoral care and, (b) the inability to generalize these findings to pastors in the six other world regions that comprise the global Church of the Nazarene.

A technical limitation may be seen in the fact that the database used as the source for contacting both active and inactive pastors does not include those who may have taken steps formally to sever their credential relationship with the denomination thus eliminating some potentially strong feedback and assessment of their experience with the judicatory. Additionally, some pastors originally selected were not able to complete the survey due to lack of correct email address in the database.

The statistical analysis of data in this study was limited by the fact that data for the two samples were collected and organized separately. This complicated some of the analytical possibilities between conditions. Future studies may benefit by gathering data from one sample that includes both active and inactive pastors. Data analysis also revealed a design flaw in the logic used in the online survey instrument. In the survey for Sample A (currently active pastors) the logic was constructed to allow only those selecting “considered leaving, but no action steps taken” or “have actively considered leaving” in response to the question, “During the past three years have you considered leaving vocational ministry?” to proceed in the survey to the question, “What steps have

you taken toward locating another occupation?” Apparently some respondents who selected “considered leaving, but no action steps taken” went on to make selections in the subsequent question. The design flaw is that those pastors should have been excluded from responding to this question.

A final limitation to note in the study design may be seen in that the researcher’s name was attached to the invitation to complete the survey. Undoubtedly many of the respondents or potential respondents would have recognized the researcher as one who fills the office of district superintendent. Therefore, it is possible that some respondents may have been less than candid in their answers and some potential respondents may have chosen not to participate for this reason.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The data gathered in this study paint a picture of the state of pastors in the Church of the Nazarene regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. The question of burnout and attrition among clergy is widely studied. The review of literature in this paper demonstrated the complexity of issues involved in the general question of clergy retention. The current researcher was particularly interested in the relationship of pastors and judicatory officials in the United States and Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene and how this relationship may correlate with the key variables connected with clergy attrition. Specifically, the researcher hypothesized a correlation between a pastor's decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry and the influence of the pastor's district superintendent. The question was whether research could suggest strategies to enhance the relationship between pastors and overseers to the point that a pastor will not be left to make career and life altering decisions in isolation but will make them in concert with counsel from his or her vocational supervisor.

To this end, three research questions were identified:

1. How pervasive among active Church of the Nazarene pastors was the serious consideration to leave active vocational ministry in the past three years?
2. Do correlations exist between the health of relationship of a pastor to the

district superintendent and the pastor's decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry?

3. What specific retention strategies may be suggested for use by district superintendents that may help Church of the Nazarene pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry?

The following findings and analysis of data yielded a substantive basis for conclusions to be stated regarding these questions.

### Findings

#### *Prevalence of Consideration to Leave Vocational Ministry*

The leading research question was about the degree to which currently active pastors have engaged a serious consideration to leave active vocational ministry in the past three years. This question was directly posited to currently active pastors (Sample A) as, "During the past three years have you considered leaving vocational ministry?" The idea of leaving was further qualified as "not changing ministry assignments but finding a different vocation altogether." Among pastors in Sample A (currently active), 60.2% reported no consideration to leave vocational ministry during the past three years. Pastors that considered leaving with no action steps taken were 32% of the sample. Pastors that reported an active consideration to leave including specific steps taken were 7.8% of the sample (see Figure 1).

These data show that among currently active pastors in the Church of the Nazarene a total of 39.8% have considered leaving active vocational ministry in the past three years. The reasons given for this begin to provide a helpful look inside some of the specifics of this important decision. Participants in the research were provided nine

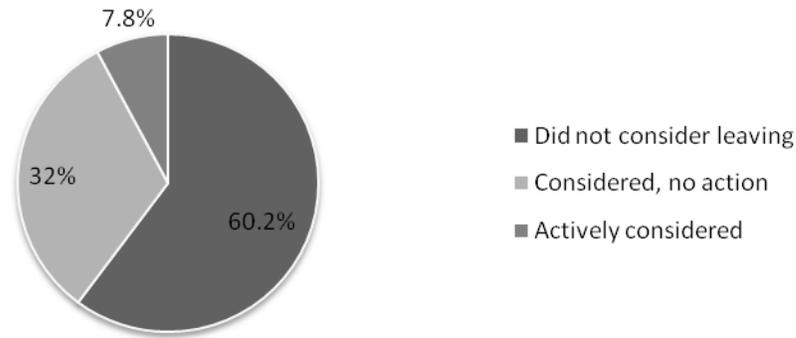


Figure 1. Consideration to leave among active pastors.

descriptions of circumstances that may have led to this deliberation. Additionally, participants were invited to check “other” and asked to describe further their reasons for this consideration to leave. The responses between samples to this question were compared as illustrated in Table 1.

Of particular note in these data is the remarkable higher incidence of *personal fatigue* and *loss of vision/passion* among currently active pastors who have considered leaving active ministry during the past three years. Another difference of note between samples is the number in Sample B (Inactive pastors) who selected the “other” option. The majority of respondents in Sample B selected “other” and chose to leave further explanation for the reasons to leave active ministry. Many of the responses (Appendix F) appear as near replications or further explanation of the response options offered as illustrated in Table 1. However, one component that emerges in these open-ended responses is the idea of the pastor being forced out or not supported by denominational leadership. Among those commenting on this question in Sample A, 17.8% mentioned this component while the mention of these issues in Sample B rises to 28.8% of those leaving narrative responses to this item.

Table 1

*Reasons for Leaving or Considering Leaving*

Reason	Sample A	Sample B
	Active, considered leaving	Inactive
Conflict with members	36.8	31.6
Personal fatigue	77.7	31.6
Impact on family	36.8	21.1
Financial stress	31.6	26.3
Inadequately prepared	4.2	0.0
Loss of vision/passion	35.0	8.4
Physical health	15.4	15.8
Doctrinal mismatch	3.4	1.1
Unable to secure assignment	11.1	14.7
Other	23.9	54.7

Reported as percentage of sample.

Respondents invited to check "all that apply."

Pastors in Sample A who indicated consideration to leave in the past three years were also asked to report on whether they had taken any tangible steps toward leaving and what those steps were. These results are illustrated in Figure 2 and are shown as percentage of the sample. The respondents were invited to “check all that apply.”

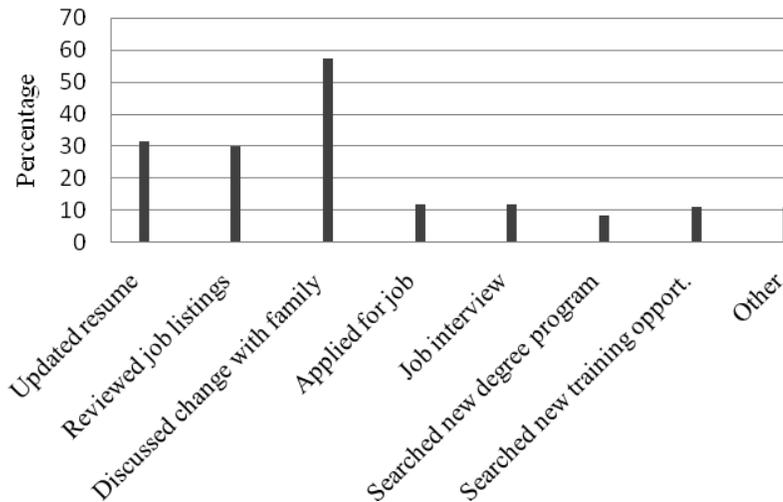


Figure 2. Steps toward locating another occupation.

Both sample groups were asked to report persons with whom they consulted during the time of their consideration to leave active vocational ministry. The results are shown below in Table 2. In view of the second research question, further questions were asked regarding the pastor's relationship with the district superintendent (DS) and these are reported in the next section.

Of particular note in this representation of data is the fact that while only 20.5% of currently active pastors consulted with their district superintendent on the consideration to leave active ministry, 66% of inactive pastors report having consulted with their district superintendent on this decision. A chi-square test with crosstabs was run to determine the statistical significance of the relationship between pastors who have considered leaving during the past three years (from Sample A) and whether or not they consulted with their district superintendent. The findings were significant at the  $p < .001$  level,  $X^2 (2) = 40.72$ . A chi-square test was also run on Sample B relative to the

Table 2

*Who was Consulted about Leaving?*

	Sample A Active, considered leaving	Sample B Inactive
DS	20.5	66.0
No one	6.8	1.1
Spouse	88.9	91.5
Other family	24.7	36.2
Fellow pastor	53.8	56.4
Layperson	19.7	26.6
Stranger	0.1	1.1
Other	10.3	11.7

Reported as percentage of sample.

Respondents invited to “check all that apply.”

large majority of this sample that reported consultation with the district superintendent on the question of leaving. These findings were significant at the  $p < .05$  level,  $X^2 (1) = 9.57$ .

Both samples were questioned on the identifiers used by Maslach (2003) as the “three core dimensions of the burnout experience” namely, *exhaustion* (the individual stress response), *cynicism* (the negative reaction to others and the job), and *inefficacy* (the negative evaluation of one’s own accomplishments). These negative identifiers are reported in Table 3 and were compared to the positive side of “job engagement” on

Table 3

*Responses to the Maslach Identifiers of the Burnout Experience*

<b>Exhaustion</b>	Sample B	Sample A		
	Inactive	Actively considered	Considered leaving	Not considered
Very often	22.3	26.0	33.0	3.0
Often	23.4	34.8	34.0	25.0
Occasionally	23.4	26.1	25.5	40.3
Rarely	30.9	13.1	7.5	31.7
For Sample A: $X^2(6) = 64.86, p < .001$ .				
<b>Cynicism</b>				
Very often	8.5	18.3	12.8	1.0
Often	13.8	22.7	19.1	10.2
Occasionally	33.0	31.8	33.0	32.0
Rarely	44.7	27.2	35.1	57.0
For Sample A: $X^2(6) = 34.30, p < .001$ .				
<b>Inefficacy</b>				
Very often	12.8	27.2	11.8	2.0
Often	18.1	18.2	24.7	18.8
Occasionally	25.5	32.0	34.4	41.0
Rarely	42.6	22.7	29.0	38.1
For Sample A: $X^2(6) = 25.37, p < .001$ .				

Reported as percentage of respondents in each category.

which respondents were also questioned. These markers were *energy* (rather than exhaustion), *involvement* (rather than cynicism), and *efficacy* (rather than inefficacy). Participants from Sample A were asked, “During the past three years, to what degree have you experienced an overall sense of (identifier)?” Participants from Sample B were presented the same basic questions in a slightly different manner, “During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of (identifier)?”

These representations of the data demonstrate that the negative identifiers for the burnout experience are most prominent among currently active pastors who have considered leaving during the past three years. For example, among currently active pastors, those who marked “very often” or “often” for exhaustion were 43.2% of the total sample. The percentage jumped to 65.8% of those who had considered leaving in the last three years. These observations are in sharp contrast to the prevalence of exhaustion among Sample A pastors who have not considered leaving with only 25% who marked “often” and just 3% who marked “very often.” Among Sample B (inactive), exhaustion at the “very often” or “often” level was 45.7% of the total sample. Figures 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the higher prevalence of negative identifiers for the burnout experience among currently active pastors who have considered leaving during the past three years.

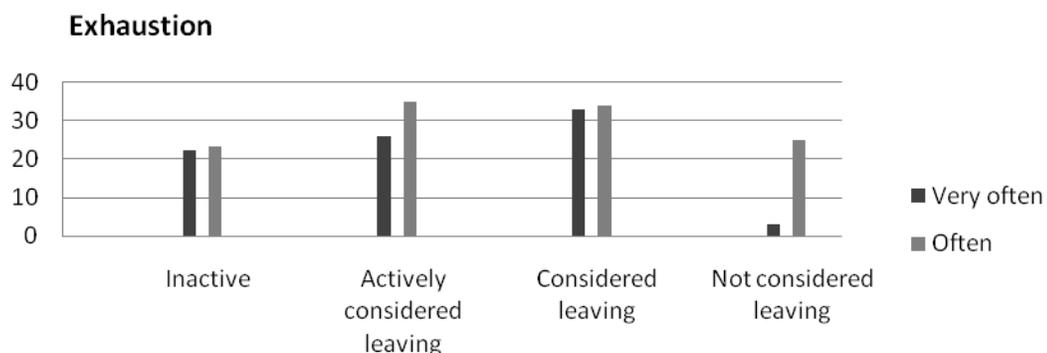


Figure 3. Highest responses to *exhaustion* identifier among groups.



Figure 4. Highest responses to *cynicism* identifier among groups.

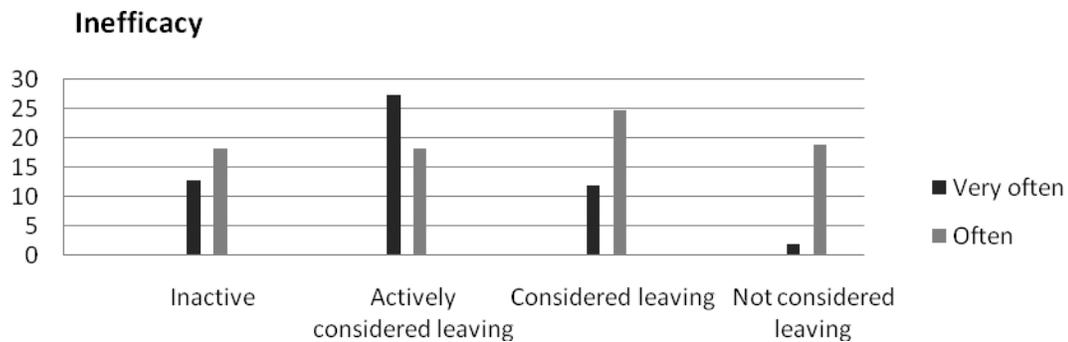


Figure 5. Highest responses to *inefficacy* identifier among groups.

Table 4 shows responses to the positive side of “job engagement” on which respondents were also questioned. Not surprisingly, these markers are highest among currently active pastors who have not considered leaving. However, those pastors who left active ministry during the past three years and are now officially inactive also demonstrate upon reflection high marks regarding these positive identifiers.

These responses indicate that while the markers of burnout are a significant factor in clergy attrition they do not appear to be the dominant factors among Church of the Nazarene pastors. In other words, many pastors considering transition do not report experiencing these classic markers of burnout at significant levels. However, a high percentage of pastors who are showing signs of burnout are considering transition. That

Table 4

*Responses to the Maslach Identifiers of Job Engagement*

<b>Energy</b>	Sample B	Sample A		
	Inactive	Actively considered	Considered leaving	Not considered
Very often	35.1	26.1	22.0	45.5
Often	30.9	26.1	42.9	36.4
Occasionally	20.2	43.5	31.9	14.8
Rarely	13.8	4.3	3.0	3.0

For Sample A:  $X^2(6) = 24.17, p < .001$ .

<b>Involvement</b>				
Very often	42.6	26.1	31.2	52.0
Often	30.9	34.8	46.2	36.2
Occasionally	18.1	26.1	20.4	10.0
Rarely	8.5	13.0	2.0	2.0

For Sample A:  $X^2(6) = 24.97, p < .001$ .

<b>Efficacy</b>				
Very often	26.6	18.2	13.8	28.8
Often	30.9	1.0	45.7	48.0
Occasionally	26.6	63.6	37.2	20.3
Rarely	16.0	13.6	3.0	3.0

For Sample A:  $X^2(6) = 36.77, p < .001$ .

Reported as percentage of respondents in each category.

is, nearly 66% of currently active pastors who have considered leaving in the last three years marked “very often” or “often” for exhaustion.

Comparing demographic data on the two samples yielded information that informs certain assumptions about factors that lead to clergy attrition. The first of these has to do with vocational tenure. Table 5 demonstrates the comparison between samples using a chi-square with crosstabs test on total number of years that pastors have served in active vocational ministry.

Table 5

*Years in Active Vocational Ministry*

	Sample B	Sample A		
	Inactive	Actively considered leaving	Considered leaving	Not considered leaving
Less 5	14.9	4.0	3.0	10.0
5 to 9	19.1	9.0	10.0	18.6
10 to 19	28.7	26.1	39.4	23.7
20 to 29	25.5	26.1	34.0	26.6
30 or more	11.7	34.8	13.8	21.5

Reported as percentage of respondents in each category.

This table shows that the consideration to leave among active pastors is most prevalent in the period between 10 and 30 years in active vocational ministry. This finding is similar to that revealed in the sample of pastors who left active vocational ministry during the past 3 years. However, among currently active pastors who have

taken specific steps toward the consideration to leave, the highest prevalence in this category is among pastors whose total ministry tenure is 30 years or more. A chi-square test showed these findings significant at the  $p < .05$  level,  $X^2 (8) = 18.83$ . Table 6 shows a similar look at the prevalence of consideration to leave among samples in terms of tenure in the current (active pastors) or last (inactive pastors) ministry assignment.

Table 6

*Years in Current or Last Assignment*

	Sample B		Sample A	
	Inactive	Actively considered leaving	Considered leaving	Not considered leaving
Less than 2	20.2	39.1	14.9	13.6
2 to 4	35.1	26.1	20.2	30.5
5 to 9	27.7	17.4	38.3	31.6
10 to 14	7.4	9.0	16.0	10.7
15 or more	9.6	9.0	10.6	13.6

Reported as percentage of respondents in each category.

These statistics generally follow the observation in Crow's (2006) report that the median tenure among all Nazarene pastors is 4 years and 5 months. However, these data show that among currently active pastors who have taken steps toward the consideration to leave, the majority have been in the current assignment less than 5 years with 39.1% in the current assignment less than two years. These findings were significant at the  $p < .05$  level,  $X^2 (8) = 15.78$ .

Another demographic component is ministry setting in terms of the urban, suburban, small town, or rural location of the church being served. Table 7 shows the distribution of these settings among the samples. A chi-square test was run which showed that the distribution was not significant,  $X^2(6) = 10.72$ . In other words, this is not significantly different than the distribution that would be expected by chance.

Table 7

*Ministry Setting*

	Sample B	Sample A		
	Inactive	Actively considered leaving	Considered leaving	Not considered leaving
Urban	17.0	21.7	12.8	19.8
Sub-urban	19.1	43.5	45.7	29.9
Small town	42.6	30.4	35.1	36.7
Rural	21.3	4.3	6.4	13.6

Reported as percentage of respondents in each category.

Similarly, a view of the size of congregation served by respondents in the samples reveals a distribution that is not statistically significant,  $X^2(10) = 7.26$ . The specific question was on the attendance at the Easter Sunday worship service last year. The findings on this variable are illustrated below in Figure 6. Of note in this representation of data is the slightly increased prevalence, compared to other groups, among those who left active vocational ministry during the past three years (inactive) to have served congregations with an Easter Sunday attendance of less than 75 in the last year.

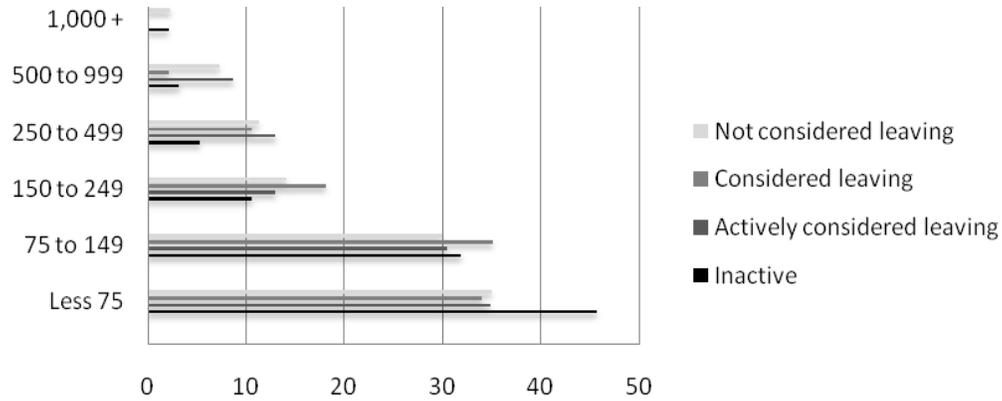


Figure 6. Consideration to leave by church size.

Finally in terms of demographic comparisons, the education level of respondents shows similarity between the samples with the largest difference being the greater percentage of seminary graduates among pastors who left active vocational ministry during the past three years.

Table 8

*Education for Ministry*

	Inactive	Considered leaving	Not considered
In Course of Study	2.1	2.5	4.5
COS graduate	20.2	24.7	26.5
District School	8.5	8.5	11.3
College/Univ.	57.2	53.8	56.5
Seminary	34.0	25.6	26.0
Masters level	21.3	24.8	15.8
Doctoral level	7.4	12.0	6.7
Other	6.4	6.8	6.2

Reported as percentage of sample. Check “all that apply.”

These reports may challenge some common assumptions among church leaders regarding factors that prompt clergy to leave active vocational ministry. It would appear that demographic factors of church size, location, and education of the pastor play little, if any, role in clergy attrition.

### *Relationship of Pastors and Superintendents*

In this study of pastors in the USA/Canada region of the Church of the Nazarene, the relationship of pastor and district superintendent is the central focus. The gathered data toward understanding this relationship represents the mixed-method approach of this study, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data.

Among the respondents in Sample A, only pastors who indicated a consideration to leave during the past three years were further questioned on their relationship to the district superintendent. As previously noted, only 20.5% of Sample A (active) pastors consulted with the DS compared to 66% of pastors who left during the past three years. Both groups were asked, “If you chose not to consult your district superintendent, why not?” Table 9 shows the results of quantitative answers to this question.

The most remarkable difference in these data is the pronounced increase among active pastors who are considering leaving to express reticence to contact the DS on the basis of being “afraid of consequences.” This may indicate a strain of relational trust between pastors and district superintendents which seems to be confirmed through analysis of the qualitative data as will be shown subsequently. Many pastors in both samples left comments about this question. These comments are listed in Appendix G. Representative among the comments from currently active (Sample A) pastors:

- “DS seems disconnected from real life and giving practical support.”

- “See him as a boss more than a friend; don't get to speak with him very often.”
- “My DS is great but I'm responsible, he's busy.”
- “Didn't want to add to his stress load, he is aware of our situation, hate to complain.”
- “I don't want to sound like I can't handle it.”

Table 9

*Why Did Not Consult the DS?*

	Sample A Active, considered leaving	Sample B Inactive
Didn't think about it	15.6	6.3
Afraid of consequences	26.6	9.4
DS would not understand	6.7	3.1
DS not approachable	5.6	15.6
DS not accessible	2.2	3.1
Other	43.3	62.5

Reported as percentage of those not contacting DS.

Representative among the comments from pastors who left active ministry during the past three years (Sample B):

- “I did talk with him but not until the decision had been made.”
- “I discussed with DS once I was pretty sure of the direction God was leading me.”
- “I felt the decision was between the Lord, my wife and myself.”

- “I was ashamed and felt I had failed.”

These observations shed more light on the previously noted fact that only 20.5% of Sample A (active) pastors who are considering leaving consulted with the DS compared to 66% of pastors who actually left during the past three years. This may begin to indicate that the DS is not generally viewed by the pastor as a partner in decision-making regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. A qualitative assessment of the narrative responses in these survey instruments reveals the general category of trust as a prominent theme. This general thematic category includes the ideas of not only potential negative consequences but also the regular comment from pastors who view the DS as too busy with other matters to be concerned about their trouble. These themes are evident in the representative comments listed above. However, in spite of this prevalent theme, most pastors view their DS as helpful or at least caring as the next components of the data illustrate. Analysis of these apparently conflicting dynamics brings into view the multi-dimensional nature of the pastor-DS relationship as was suggested in previous chapters. Among these relational dimensions is the institutional or professional component that seems to exist in tension with the pastoral component. This tension will be illustrated and explored further in this chapter.

In an effort to gain further information about the relationship between pastors and district superintendents, persons in both samples that indicated they had consulted their district superintendent were asked, “When you consulted with your district superintendent, how helpful was the DS?” Table 10 reveals the results of quantitative answers to this question.

Table 10

*How Helpful was the DS?*

	Sample A Active, considered leaving	Sample B Inactive
Very helpful/supportive	62.5	39.3
Caring but not helpful	33.3	37.7
Did not respond	4.2	16.4
Other	0.0	6.0

Reported as percentage of those contacting DS.

Further, both active pastors who considered leaving (Sample A) and inactive (Sample B) respondents were asked to supply narrative in response to this question, “What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent, if any, were helpful and appreciated by you?” Additionally, pastors were asked, “What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent would you have wished for or would have been helpful?” All of these responses are listed in Appendix H. The comments from active pastors who did consult the DS are generally positive and seem to reflect a sincere appreciation for the presence and support of district leadership. There are certainly exceptions to this trend, but overall the positive comments outpace negative comments by a significant margin as will be demonstrated subsequently. Representative among the comments from currently *active* pastors regarding helpful words or actions of the DS:

- “He called, he came by my office to visit, he gave me a good reference, and also shared with me what I should do.”
- “Expressed concern and prayer support and encouraged me to seriously think about and work on a sabbatical.”
- “He called one day out of the blue to let me know he appreciated my ministry and the work I was doing.”
- “The DS has been very helpful and supportive. He has very little time, however, due to the huge number of churches he is responsible for.”
- “I have a very supportive DS, but I did not talk to him. After nearly 40 years in pastoral ministry, experience tells me not to trust a DS. Most are too political, not interested, and would not be confidential.”

Representative among the comments from currently *inactive* pastors regarding helpful words or actions of the DS:

- “He listened. He cried with me. He understood. He cared deeply. He prayed for me. He kept the confidentiality of my trust.”
- “Prayer, support, and calls. Just his presence and encouragement.”
- “NOTHING.”

Representative among the comments from currently *active* pastors regarding “wished for” words or actions of the DS:

- “Communication: A phone call seeing how I'm doing, explaining what he is doing to help with a reassignment . . . or straight up words on my future in the ministry.”

- “I was told that I am not judged by my stats and production, but everywhere I turned, I felt like I was.”
- “What can I do for you?”
- “I would like my DS to check up on me at least once per year. Perhaps have coffee and see what is going on in my ministry. I would like for my DS to facilitate gathering of other clergy members where we could share and talk and get to know each other.”
- “A safe place to talk and pray. Help in finding a mentor.”

Representative among the comments from currently *inactive* pastors regarding “wished for” words or actions of the DS:

- “I think calling every once in a while would have been nice. He never confronted any of the negative behaviors that were behind all of this so the cycle continues.”
- “Support! The DS accepted the words of the congregation over my own and I felt like I had no confidence from the DS.”
- “Since leaving the church, I have felt like an outcast -- not even on the pastors' email roster any more.”
- “From the day I resigned I had no contact from the DS, was dropped from all district mail lists and the pastor email. In the next year only one pastor really sat down and took the time to listen to my pain.”

The researcher undertook a system of content analysis in order to arrive at discernable patterns and threads in the narratives. Four key threads emerged as repeated themes in the comments. These four threads are listed in descending order of frequency: communication, trust, church-pastor preference, and resourcing.

*Communication* primarily has to do with efforts that district superintendents make or that pastors wished they would make to initiate contact and conversation. Several pastors mentioned the challenge of geographic distance as a barrier to building a good relationship with the DS. As one pastor expressed it, “It was a whole day commitment just to meet for lunch.” Another common response in this area is about the pastor’s hesitancy to contact the DS under the assumption that he or she is already overburdened with many responsibilities. The pastor does not want to be viewed as adding to the burden of the DS.

*Trust* is significantly related to the first thread, particularly the idea of whether the pastor feels that he or she has access to the DS. It especially appears when an expectation violation has occurred in the relationship. That is, the pastor expected or assumed things about how the DS might respond to a critical situation and then was disappointed that the response was different than what the pastor expected. The concern in this area is a relational concern. There was also an institutional concern that appeared as an oft-expressed fear of potential negative consequences if a pastor were to reveal areas of struggle or conflict. This concern seems to relate to how a pastor might be assessed by the church hierarchy in ways that could impact one’s professional development or career path.

*Church-pastor preference* was a third thread in these comments that has to do with whether the congregation or the pastor receives the support of the district superintendent during times of conflict or disagreement. Several respondents commented that when faced with this tension district superintendents tend to side with congregational leadership rather than with pastors.

Finally, the thread of *resourcing* was a repeated theme in the comments and has to do with pastors desiring opportunities for continuing education and mentoring or coaching that is initiated and enabled by district leadership. Pastors apparently need and appreciate initiative by the district superintendent to facilitate these opportunities for growth and connection.

The researcher also applied content analysis in order to bring some quantitative assessment to the overall positive or negative tone of the comments. Each respondent to the online survey instrument was given opportunity to leave three open-ended narrative responses; the two that are reported above and one final question: “Do you have other comments related to your relationship with your district superintendent?” The responses to the final question are reported in Appendix I. These are analyzed in the next section but were considered in this quantitative assessment of the overall positive or negative tone. The researcher assigned one of four identifiers to the comments of each respondent in both samples. While those respondents who did leave narrative made mostly favorable comments, there is a remarkable increase in negative comments among pastors who are considering leaving or who have left active ministry in the last three years. Table 11 shows the assessment of all comments across the samples.

The survey instruments also included a quantitative assessment of the relationship between district superintendents and pastors. Questions were designed to appraise the pastor’s assessment of *accessibility*, *trust*, and *guidance* with regard to the attitudes and actions of the district superintendent. The three questions were essentially identical for the two samples. Active pastors were asked to reflect on the relationship with their current district superintendent. Inactive pastors were asked to reflect on the relationship

Table 11

*Assessment of Pastor-DS Relationship in Comments*

	Active, considered leaving	Active, no consideration to leave	Inactive
Positive	39.5	33.0	30.9
Negative	18.4	7.7	29.8
Mixed	16.7	12.6	17.0
No comment	25.4	46.7	22.3

Reported as percentage of each sample.

with their district superintendent when they left active ministry. The three questions were:

1. Generally speaking, to what degree do (did) you feel your district superintendent is (was) available to you or approachable?
2. Generally speaking, to what degree do (did) you personally trust your district superintendent to have your best interest at heart?
3. Generally speaking, to what degree does (did) your district superintendent offer you helpful guidance and advice?

Table 12 reports the results of these questions comparing the two samples. The responses indicate a generally favorable assessment of the relationship between pastors and superintendents. However, clearly this relationship is rated less positively among inactive pastors with the variable of *trust* showing a remarkable downturn between samples.

*Availability* is rated lower by inactive pastors while the variable of *guidance*

Table 12

*Relationship of Pastor and Superintendent*

<b>Availability</b>	<b>Sample A</b>		<b>Sample B</b>
	Active, considered leaving	Active, no consideration	Inactive
Approachable and available	57.3	67.8	47.9
Approachable but busy and hard to reach	21.4	21.5	22.3
Approachable but only if it's really important	10.3	9.0	12.8
Mostly unapproachable and unavailable	11.1	1.6	17.0
<b>Trust</b>			
High level	49.5	62.7	33.0
Average level	29.9	28.2	30.9
Low level	12.8	7.9	26.6
No trust	7.7	1.1	9.6
<b>Guidance</b>			
High level	23.9	27.1	24.5
Average level	33.3	36.7	28.7
Minimal	33.3	27.7	30.9
No guidance	8.5	8.5	16.0

Reported as percentage of each sample.

shows similar ratings between the groups, although there is also a slight downturn among active pastors on this variable. Overall the factor of *guidance* is rated lower between samples than the variables of *availability* and *trust*.

Statistical tests were conducted on these items in Sample A to measure the correlation between these variables and the consideration to leave active ministry. A Spearman rank coefficient was run to determine if there was a relationship between pastors' consideration to leave vocational ministry and their assessment of the *availability* of the DS. A significant, but weak positive correlation was found,  $r(293) = 0.15, p < .05$ . A Spearman rank coefficient was run to determine if there was a relationship between pastors' consideration to leave vocational ministry and their assessment of the *trust* of the DS. A significant, but weak negative correlation was found,  $r(293) = -0.17, p < .05$ . A Spearman rank coefficient was run to determine if there was a relationship between pastors' consideration to leave vocational ministry and their assessment of the *guidance* of a DS. No significant relationship was discovered.

This lack of strong correlation represents an important finding in this research that speaks to the second research question on the relationship between pastors and district superintendents and the impact of that relationship on pastoral decision-making regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. These findings corroborate the earlier suggestion that district superintendents have little influence on the pastor's decision-making process. However, pastors do express an interest in and openness to a ministry of pastoral care from the DS to help them navigate transition.

### *Possible Clergy Retention Strategies*

The remaining research question sought to understand possible strategies that may be suggested for use by district superintendents to help pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry. The manner in which the question is stated intentionally suggests that not all pastors who are under the consideration to leave *should* remain. The study by Hoge and Wegner (2005) noted in Chapter II supports the belief that not all clergy who encounter difficulties in parish ministry should be encouraged to remain in active vocational ministry. However, when it is appropriate to encourage and support persistence in active vocational ministry are there strategies that judicatory officials should consider to prevent the attrition of pastors who should remain? The answer to this question was pursued in part through qualitative methodologies including analysis of survey comments and the conduct of select personal interviews with a sampling of pastors from both the active and inactive groups who completed the online survey instrument and gave permission for further contact. The purpose of these interviews was to bring additional narrative data to bear on what the survey data seem to show regarding the DS-pastor relationship. Fifteen pastors were chosen (9 from Sample A, 6 from Sample B) for further contact and interview according to the protocol and questions set forth in Appendix C. The interviewer reached 6 clergy from Sample A and 5 clergy from Sample B for further and clarifying conversations which are reported subsequently.

First, the researcher studied the narrative responses to the online survey (Appendixes H and I) to identify themes related to strategies or actions that district superintendents could employ to help pastors navigate the decision-making period. As

analysis of the data has suggested to this point, this question may in fact have more to do with enhancing the DS-pastor relationship in the transition rather than in the decision-making process. A review of responses to the question, “What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent, if any, were helpful and appreciated by you?” brings the issue of intentionality of communication and contact to the front. This question was put to currently active pastors who have considered leaving and to inactive pastors. Among the 77 respondents who commented on this question, 27 (35%) mentioned this theme of communication as being of primary importance to them. This includes: mechanisms for initiating contact regularly, visiting the pastor in context, active listening, and expressing care, concern, and understanding. Other themes in this sampling related to strategies for building the pastor-superintendent relationship included:

- DS praying with the pastor.
- Offering training or mentoring opportunities.
- Providing information on making assignment transitions.
- Providing intervention in times of conflict between pastor and congregation.

A review of responses to the question, “What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent would you have wished for or would have been helpful?” serves to sharpen the focus on communication and pastoral care as the most identified desire among pastors for actions from their district superintendent. Among the 124 respondents (inactive pastors and active pastors who have considered leaving) who commented on this question, 41 (33%) mentioned this theme as being of primary importance to them. An additional significant theme that emerges in this sampling is the expressed desire among pastors that district superintendents would confront and

challenge what they judge to be inappropriate behaviors or actions on the part of laypersons and church boards toward the pastor. Several pastors expressed disappointment or frustration about the tension that exists in the superintendent's responsibility to the pastor and to the congregation. Some of the pastors said that when these conflicts surface, the DS tends to take the side of the congregation. Other themes that appeared in this sampling included:

- Facilitating of fellowship and connection between pastors.
- Mentoring and training opportunities provided to pastors.
- Assistance with placement to other assignments.

In the responses to this second question, one theme that rises among the group of currently inactive pastors is the experience of being dropped from communication after leaving their congregation, even though they are still members of the district. As one pastor expressed it, "I felt like I was dropped like a hot potato." Part of this theme has to do with the official language of "unassigned" as the role code given to inactive pastors. This language was mentioned by several as being offensive or hurtful. This combines with recent polity changes in the Church of the Nazarene that now require clergy who remain in an unassigned status for four years or more to file their credentials which, according to the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (2005), means that one "has voluntarily temporarily given up the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of being a member of the clergy" (p. 206). One respondent expressed how the application of this polity made him feel:

The only communication from my new district office or superintendent was to tell me that if I didn't plan on being in full time ministry I would have to file my

credentials. That's like walking through the hospital and telling the soldiers with their legs blown off that they will have to resign their commission! It was very painful.

Throughout these narrative responses there are some key words that are repeated often and may serve to summarize the way the pastors who completed the online survey instruments express their desire for a particular kind of relationship with the district superintendent. These words are *visit*, *presence*, *call*, *show-up*, and *contact*.

Representative among these types of comments are the following:

- “He travels to visit with us and our ministry.”
- “He personally came to manage conflict/disagreements with me and some members of my church board.”
- “I would appreciate a call to see how I am doing but he never calls.”
- “He is the invisible man. He never shows up, never calls, never emails.”

Part of the research design involved the conduct of select personal interviews to deepen and clarify narrative responses related gathered in the online surveys. The key question in these interviews was, “What do you think a district superintendent could do to be in a position to provide substantive guidance and encouragement when pastors are facing the decision to leave or to remain in active vocational ministry?” Several themes were identified in these interviews that corroborate and further define analysis of the online narrative responses reported above. The following descriptions represent the researcher’s compilation, analysis, and summary of these interviews and tie into the four threads from the online comments reported above. The interview notes and summaries are reported in Appendix J.

*Communication* was mentioned most often as the desired component in the relationship between pastors and superintendents. This expansive category includes the particular ideas of communication that is regular, initiated by the DS, and has as its evident motivation a concern for the pastor rather than the promotion of a district agenda. It also includes the idea of *partnerships* that are developed and encouraged by the superintendent. These partnerships include mentoring relationships between pastors or between a pastor and district leader, accountability relationships among pastors such as the development of zone or mission area connections, and partnerships between congregations whereby strong churches are encouraged to support developing churches and these relationships are intentionally facilitated by district leadership. Perhaps also under the broad category of communication, *prayer support* is often mentioned as another desired relational component. This includes the communication of the leader's prayer for pastors as well as times of being present with the pastor and giving time to the practice of prayer together over the situations that the pastor is facing.

*Renewal strategies* are identified as something that pastors would like superintendents to offer in a deliberate way. This connects to the idea of resourcing that came through the online comments. These renewal strategies include the planning and execution of retreats, the connection of pastors to retreat and renewal ministries for individual or family use, and the promotion and assistance for times of sabbatical leave for pastors and their families.

*Conflict management* was identified by pastors as something that district superintendents could deliver that may make a difference in a pastor's decision regarding persistence in active vocational ministry. However, these comments regarding conflict

management seem actually to favor the idea and practice of presence more than a particular system or mechanism. In other words, during times of conflict between pastor and congregation, pastors seem to desire someone in authority to come beside them for emotional support even more than providing particular advice and direction. This clearly relates to earlier observations that the DS is likely to have greatest impact in a pastor's life during transition more than during actual decision-making. There is a connection to the thread of *trust* that was reported above and seems to have in view the personal, pastoral relationship of pastors and superintendents more than the professional, institutional relationship.

*Role identification* is also related to conflict management and has to do with a clarity that is communicated to all regarding the role of the district superintendent in times of conflict. The tension in this regard was described in Chapter I and has to do with a district superintendent's responsibility to be a pastor to the pastors yet also to protect congregations from inadequate pastoral leadership. Thus it connects to the *church-pastor preference thread* above. Pastors express a desire that they would not experience a violation in terms of what they expect from their DS during these conflict times and what actually is delivered. This undoubtedly relates to the desire for clear communication. This role tension is a shaping issue in the broad subject of the relationship between pastors and district superintendents in the Church of the Nazarene. One pastor expressed it in this way:

The ideal is for the DS to be the pastor's pastor. This is admirable, but impossible.

Bottom line, he is my immediate supervisor and key to any new assignments.

Confessing my inadequacies to him, no matter how good a pastor he is, is simply

shooting myself in the foot. When I need a confidante, it would have to be a pastor of another denomination or a friend of extremely high trust.

This tension may shed important light on why district superintendents are generally not invited into the actual decision-making process that pastors go through. However, this study also seems to show that pastors desire a meaningful connection with their superintendent as they navigate the powerful emotions and implications of making a decision to leave active vocational ministry.

### Conclusions

The first research question was, “How pervasive among active Church of the Nazarene pastors was the serious consideration to leave active vocational ministry in the past three years?” This study revealed that among currently active pastors nearly 40% (39.8) have considered leaving vocational ministry during the past three years. Further filtering of those who have not only considered leaving but have taken specific steps toward a potential decision to leave drops the selection to just under 8% (7.8) of currently active pastors. This would seem consistent with the data from Crow’s (2006) report that the attrition rate among Nazarene pastors in any given year is about 3%, as reported in Chapter I. A review of the steps taken toward locating another occupation shows that more pastors report steps that are private such as updating a resume or discussing the potential change with family. Fewer pastors report steps that are public such as applying for another job or having a job interview. This suggests that the consideration to leave among pastors remains a relatively private consideration until nearer the time a decision is made and acted upon. This conclusion was supported by the fact that only 20.5% of currently active pastors report consulting with their DS while 66% of inactive pastors

report consulting their DS on the consideration or decision to leave, which is discussed further under the conclusions to the second research question.

The questions of vocational tenure and (by implication) age of the minister are significant findings in this sampling of Church of the Nazarene pastors. As was reported in Chapter II, a review of the literature on burnout generally and on clergy attrition specifically shows the pervasive conclusion that younger people are more susceptible to burnout than older people. However, in this sampling, consideration to leave among pastors was most prevalent in the period between 10 and 30 years in active vocational ministry. This is in agreement with Oswald's assertion in the interview with Shelley and Merrill (1983) reported in Chapter II. Additionally, among those currently considering leaving ministry, the highest prevalence in this category was among pastors whose total ministry tenure is 30 years or more. These facts, combined with the finding that most pastors leave fairly early in their last assignment, indicate that the pastors apparently most at risk for attrition in terms of vocational tenure and age are older pastors in the early stages of a new assignment. Church of the Nazarene polity directs that a review of the relationship between pastor and congregation is conducted by the district superintendent following two years in an assignment and again every four years following. The data on when in the pastoral tenure a serious consideration to leave is most prevalent may confirm the importance of this directive.

Other demographic factors (church size, location, education) were generally unremarkable in terms of any correlation to attrition. There was a slightly increased prevalence, compared to other groups, among those who left active vocational ministry during the past three years (inactive) to have served congregations of fewer than 75 in

attendance. However, this overall lack of correlation between these demographic factors and attrition may in itself be a significant finding that challenges common assumptions about the pastors most at risk for attrition.

The data relative to prevalence of a consideration to leave among active pastors also reveal the most prominent incidence of the indicators of the burnout experience among currently active pastors who have considered leaving active vocational ministry during the past three years. As might be expected, the indicators are lower among active pastors who have not considered leaving. The surprise in this segment of the study is that among pastors who did in fact leave during the past three years, the reported experience of the burnout indicators is lower than that of currently active pastors. These pastors were asked to reflect on their experience leading up to the decision to leave. Perhaps upon reflection and away from the immediacy of the stresses that led to their decision the memory of *exhaustion*, *cynicism*, and *inefficacy* becomes muted or viewed with clearer perspective. As was noted above, while these markers of burnout are significant factors in clergy attrition they do not appear to be dominant factors among Church of the Nazarene pastors. The data show that not every pastor considering transition reports experiencing these classic markers of burnout. Therefore it is not possible to conclude from this study that tracking the signs of burnout among pastors toward some kind of intervention strategy will lead to greater clergy retention. The study suggests that many relatively content pastors who enjoy a good relationship with their district superintendent still leave active vocational ministry. The data illustrate that tracking signs of burnout may reveal the approximately 25% of pastors who are experiencing severe levels of exhaustion and considering leaving ministry. The knowledge that district superintendents may be able to

identify as many as a quarter of their at-risk pastors could be an important and helpful finding. The data support the claim that a high percentage of pastors who are showing signs of burnout are considering or actively considering transition.

The second research question was, “Do correlations exist between the health of relationship of a pastor to the district superintendent and the pastor’s decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry?” The data provide apparent confirmation of a widely held assumption among district superintendents namely, that pastors do not consult with their district superintendent about their consideration to leave active vocational ministry until the decision has been made and decisive steps (sometimes irreversible) have been taken. This observation represents a significant challenge to district superintendents in terms of the focus of the present study. There seems to be a distinction, however, between the decision-making component of the pastor-DS relationship and the pastoral care component in the process and aftermath of a pastor having made the decision to leave active vocational ministry. No causal relationship can be established between the health of the pastor-DS relationship and the actual decision to persist or to leave. Likewise, strong correlations in the quantitative data were not found. In spite of these facts, the importance of the relationship between pastors in the study and their DS is evident in the qualitative data. The assessment of pastors regarding the availability and openness of their superintendents is in need of clear communication in order to verify or correct assumptions that are made by pastors on this point. In spite of a clear hesitancy on the part of pastors to talk to their overseers about these issues, the study also bears out that most pastors see their district superintendent as helpful and caring. This challenges the finding of Rugenstein (2004) reported in Chapter I whose

study included Church of the Nazarene pastors. This finding is ground from which to build a model of pastoral care through transitions even though superintendents are not likely to have direct influence on the pastor's decision-making. Although there seems to be generally high regard for the district superintendent among active pastors in terms of *availability* and *trust*, actual helpfulness that would be reflected in the study marker of *guidance* is rated significantly lower. This is not necessarily bad news for district superintendents. There is a need for continued relationship between inactive pastors and their judicatory officials. District superintendents may be in a position to provide important and meaningful pastoral service to these clergy persons that may or may not preserve them to traditional roles of ministry but could have significant effect on their spiritual and emotional health and upon their attitude toward the Church.

The third research questions was, "What specific retention strategies may be suggested for use by district superintendents that may help Church of the Nazarene pastors who should persist to remain in active vocational ministry?" The data do not support the hypothesis that a correlation exists between a pastor's decision to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry and the influence of the district superintendent. The data do support the idea that district superintendents can play an influential role in the lives of pastors who are walking through the difficult process of transition from active vocational ministry. The study also suggests that while the markers of burnout are a significant factor in clergy attrition they do not appear to be the dominant factors among Church of the Nazarene pastors. Many pastors considering transition do not report experiencing these burnout signs at significant levels. However, a high percentage of pastors who are showing signs of burnout are considering transition. Nearly 66% of

currently active pastors who have considered leaving in the last three years marked “very often” or “often” for exhaustion. In another part of the survey, a similar percentage of active pastors who are considering leaving reported *personal fatigue* as a reason for this consideration (see Table 1). These findings came closest in this study to suggesting strategies that can be employed by district superintendents. The strategies cannot be shown to have a causal effect on retention but they can be shown to improve the pastoral relationship between superintendents and pastors which may serve to strengthen the long-term health of inactive pastors. The strategies in this regard would include:

1. Regular *communication* that is initiated by the DS, and has as its evident motivation a concern for the pastor rather than the promotion of a district agenda. This includes the idea of *partnerships* to include mentoring or coaching relationships, fellowship opportunities, and the practice of praying with pastors. Notable in this regard is the significant percentage of active pastors considering leaving (53.8%) who indicated that consultation with fellow pastors was a factor in this consideration to leave.
2. *Renewal strategies* that include the planning and execution of retreats, the connection of pastors to retreat and renewal ministries for individual or family use, and the promotion and assistance for times of sabbatical leave for pastors and their families. Given the findings on the prevalence of older pastors to leave in this population, delivering renewal strategies related to “finishing well” may prove helpful.
3. *Conflict management* that has more to do with someone in authority to come beside the pastor with emotional support, even more than providing particular

advice and direction. This also includes communicating with clarity the superintendent's role in times of disagreement between pastor and lay congregational leaders.

### Implications and Recommendations

There is a keen interest in the subject of clergy attrition and retention among denominational leaders. This is demonstrated broadly in the review of literature on the subject but it was also validated particularly in the Church of the Nazarene during the course of the present study. Denominational officials who learned of this study expressed a high level of interest in its results. District superintendents that learned of the study in process requested a copy of the report. The staff of Nazarene Research at the Global Ministry Center were highly engaged in assisting the researcher at least in part because of the potential impact this study could have upon how district superintendents conduct the work of overseer in the Church. The researcher was also invited to give the keynote address at the annual meeting of the Association of Nazarene Sociologists and Researchers (ANSR) in Kansas City on March 25, 2010 where the theme for the conference was announced as clergy attrition. The conference was attended by academics and church administrative leaders with the potential to impact the question of improving the rate of retention of clergy to active vocational ministry.

This study informs district superintendents regarding their lack of a significant role in clergy decision-making regarding vocational persistence. It also informs superintendents relative to the expressed desire of pastors for a meaningful pastoral relationship with their DS. The study demonstrated the potential value of church hierarchy learning how to assess pastors in terms of the potential markers of burnout. As

was indicated, this could help a DS to identify a significant number of potentially at-risk pastors. However, this study also suggests that the most appropriate and effective response for superintendents will not be to attempt insertion into the decision-making process but to enhance the pastoral care relationship so that pastors facing this difficult decision might have meaningful resources to draw upon from within the church structure, something that is evidently of high value to pastors.

Among recommendations that come into view as a result of the study, the researcher suggests that future studies look at the question of whether or not improving the continued pastoral relationship between district superintendents and clergy members who become inactive can be shown to have any correlation to the eventual return of these inactive pastors to active vocational ministry. Subsequent researchers on this subject with a particular interest in the Church of the Nazarene should know that the data collected in this study and retained by the Nazarene Research department at the Global Ministry Center in Lenexa, Kansas could be analyzed in multiple directions with potential links to a large number of demographic variables.

Because this study revealed the issue of role identification regarding the tension between district superintendents as pastors to pastors and responsibility to the local congregation, the researcher recommends that future studies focused in the Church of the Nazarene undertake a thorough examination of the superintendency in this regard. The call is for clearer polity statements of expectation, responsibility, and authority of the district superintendent toward pastors and congregations especially during times of conflict. More broadly, this important dilemma warrants the attention and intentional

conversation of all superintendents including the Board of General Superintendents and the general secretary of the Church of the Nazarene.

A further recommendation for potential future study is for particular focus on the variable of divine calling in the question of clergy attrition. The researcher offers the hypothesis that much of the evident emotion in the responses of the pastors in this study, particularly among those who have become inactive, may be traced to deep, personal dilemmas regarding the understanding of divine calling and the present inability to pursue that calling through vocational ministry.

This study made clear that pastors desire the presence of and personal connection to those who are charged with their oversight responsibility. In conclusion, the researcher offers to district superintendent colleagues in the Church of the Nazarene that among implications to be drawn from this report may be a call to superintendents in the church to understand and conduct their work more from a pastoral theology that remembers and prefers the essential work of care and spiritual direction and keeps in proper perspective the secondary work of administration and accountability. If the district superintendents will listen to the voices of pastors in the comments associated with this study there may be a poignant reminder that the real work of the office is to cast a biblical and theological framework for the work of the church rather than to default to a pragmatic consumer orientation that concerns itself mostly with attendance and finances. Some pastors obviously believe that these latter things are what the DS really cares about. Perhaps the work of DS needs a reimagining from being about managing conflict and gathering statistics to calling pastors and people to live together in ways that promote the “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

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Appendix A

Pastor's Online Survey for Sample A

1. Years in active, vocational ministry:
  - a. Less than five
  - b. Between five and nine
  - c. Between ten and nineteen
  - d. Between twenty and twenty-nine
  - e. Thirty or more
  
2. My current role in ministry is:
  - a. Full time (no other job)
  - b. Bi-vocational
  - c. Part time (less than 30 hours)
  
3. Sources of household income (check all that apply):
  - a. Salary from church assignment
  - b. Benefits from church assignment
  - c. Salary from additional job
  - d. Benefits from additional job
  - e. Salary from spouse job
  - f. Benefits from spouse job
  
4. My current ministry setting is:
  - a. Urban/large city
  - b. Sub-urban/mid city
  - c. Small town
  - d. Rural
  
5. Years in current assignment:
  - a. Less than two
  - b. Between two and four
  - c. Between five and nine
  - d. Between ten and fourteen
  - e. Fifteen or more
  
6. Easter Sunday attendance in my church last year was:
  - a. Fewer than 75
  - b. Between 75 and 149
  - c. Between 150 and 249
  - d. Between 250 and 499
  - e. Between 500 and 999
  - f. 1,000 or above
  
7. My education for ministry (check all that apply):
  - a. Currently working on Course of Study
  - b. Course of Study graduate
  - c. District School of Ministry
  - d. College/University undergraduate

- e. Masters level
- f. Seminary
- g. Doctoral level
- h. Other (specify):

8. My household situation:
- a. Married, children at home
  - b. Married, children gone
  - c. Married, no children
  - d. Single, children at home
  - e. Single, children gone
  - f. Single, no children
9. During the past three years have you considered leaving vocational ministry? (not changing ministry assignments but finding a different vocation altogether)
- a. Have not considered leaving
  - b. Considered leaving, but no action steps taken
  - c. Have actively considered leaving

*If you have not considered leaving, skip to question 12*

10. If you have considered leaving, generally what circumstances/situations have led to this consideration? (select all that apply)
- a. Conflict with members of the congregation
  - b. Sense of personal fatigue
  - c. Negative impact of ministry on my family
  - d. Not able to make it financially
  - e. Not adequately prepared
  - f. Loss of vision or passion for ministry
  - g. Physical health problem
  - h. Theological/doctrinal mismatch with denomination
  - i. Unable to secure an adequate assignment
  - j. Other (please describe)
11. If you have considered leaving, what steps have you taken toward locating another occupation? (check all that apply)
- a. Updated my resume
  - b. Reviewed job listings
  - c. Talked with spouse and/or family about making a change
  - d. Made application for another job
  - e. Had an interview for another job
  - f. Searched for degree program in another vocation
  - g. Searched for training opportunities in another vocation
  - h. Other (please describe)

12. During the past three years, to what degree have you experienced an overall sense of *exhaustion*<sup>1</sup>? (consumed, used up, extremely tired)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern
13. During the past three years, to what degree have you been aware of a sense of *cynicism* about your work? (negative, distrustful reaction to others and your job)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern
14. During the past three years, to what degree have you been aware of a sense of *inefficacy* about your work? (negative evaluation of accomplishments and effectiveness)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern
15. During the past three years, to what degree have you been aware of a sense of *energy* about your work? (vibrancy, empowered, active)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern
16. During the past three years, to what degree have you been aware of a sense of *involvement* about your work? (positive emotional engagement)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern
17. During the past three years, to what degree have you been aware of a sense of *efficacy* about your work? (positive evaluation of accomplishments and effectiveness)
- Very often, on a weekly basis
  - Often, once or twice a month
  - Occasionally, once a month or less
  - Rarely, no discernable pattern

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<sup>1</sup> The terms *exhaustion*, *cynicism*, *inefficacy*, *energy*, *involvement*, and *efficacy* are used in this way by Maslach (2003) as identifiers related to the burnout experience and job engagement.

*If you have not considered leaving, skip to question 23*

18. If you have considered leaving in the past three years, with whom have you discussed these thoughts? (check all that apply)
  - a. No one
  - b. My spouse
  - c. Other family member(s)
  - d. Pastoral colleague(s)
  - e. Lay friend(s)
  - f. My district superintendent
  - g. Stranger(s)
  - h. Other (please specify)
  
19. If you chose not to consult your district superintendent, why not?
  - a. Just didn't think about it
  - b. Afraid of potential consequences/repercussions
  - c. My DS wouldn't understand
  - d. My DS is not approachable
  - e. My DS is not accessible/too far away
  - f. Other (please specify)
  
20. If you did consult your district superintendent, how helpful was the DS?
  - a. Very helpful and supportive
  - b. Caring but not really that helpful
  - c. Didn't really "get it" at all
  - d. Did not respond to my contact
  - e. Other (please specify)
  
21. What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent, if any, were helpful and appreciated by you? (narrative comment)
  
22. What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent would you have wished for or would have been helpful? (narrative comment)
  
23. Generally speaking, to what degree do you feel your district superintendent is available to you or approachable?
  - a. Very approachable and available
  - b. Approachable but very busy and hard to reach
  - c. Approachable but only if it's really important
  - d. Mostly unapproachable and unavailable
  
24. Generally speaking, to what degree do you personally trust your district superintendent to have your best interest at heart?
  - a. No trust
  - b. Low level of trust
  - c. Average level of trust

d. High level of trust

25. Generally speaking, to what degree does your district superintendent offer you helpful guidance and advice?

- a. No guidance and advice
- b. Minimal guidance and advice
- c. Average level of guidance and advice
- d. High level of guidance and advice

26. Do you have other comments related to your relationship with your district superintendent? (narrative comment)

27. Would you be willing to be interviewed further (confidentially) about your answers? (yes or no)

If yes, please provide your name and contact information here:

Appendix B

Pastor's Online Survey for Sample B

1. Years you were in active, vocational ministry:
  - a. Less than five
  - b. Between five and nine
  - c. Between ten and nineteen
  - d. Between twenty and twenty-nine
  - e. Thirty or more
  
2. Years away from active, vocational ministry:
  - a. Less than one
  - b. Between one and three
  - c. More than three
  
3. My most recent ministry setting was:
  - a. Urban/large city
  - b. Sub-urban/mid city
  - c. Small town
  - d. Rural
  
4. Years in your last assignment:
  - a. Less than two
  - b. Between two and four
  - c. Between five and nine
  - d. Between ten and fourteen
  - e. Fifteen or more
  
5. Easter Sunday attendance in my church during my last year was:
  - a. Fewer than 75
  - b. Between 75 and 149
  - c. Between 150 and 249
  - d. Between 250 and 499
  - e. Between 500 and 999
  - f. 1,000 or above
  
6. My education for ministry (check all that apply):
  - a. Currently working on Course of Study
  - b. Course of Study graduate
  - c. District School of Ministry
  - d. College/University undergraduate
  - e. Masters level
  - f. Seminary
  - g. Doctoral level
  - h. Other (specify):
  
7. My household situation when I left ministry:
  - a. Married, children at home
  - b. Married, children gone

- c. Married, no children
  - d. Single, children at home
  - e. Single, children gone
  - f. Single, no children
8. Generally what circumstances/situations led to your decision to leave active ministry? (select all that apply)
- a. Conflict with members of the congregation
  - b. Sense of personal fatigue
  - c. Negative impact of ministry on my family
  - d. Not able to make it financially
  - e. Not adequately prepared
  - f. Loss of vision or passion for ministry
  - g. Physical health problem
  - h. Theological/doctrinal mismatch with denomination
  - i. Unable to secure an adequate assignment
  - j. Other (please describe)
9. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree did you experience an overall sense of *exhaustion*<sup>2</sup>? (consumed, used up, extremely tired)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis
  - b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
10. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of *cynicism* about your work? (negative, distrustful reaction to others and your job)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis
  - b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
11. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of *inefficacy* about your work? (negative evaluation of accomplishments and effectiveness)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis
  - b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
12. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of *energy* about your work? (vibrancy, empowered, active)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis

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<sup>2</sup> The terms *exhaustion*, *cynicism*, *inefficacy*, *energy*, *involvement*, and *efficacy* are used in this way by Maslach (2003) as identifiers related to the burnout experience and job engagement.

- b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
13. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of *involvement* about your work? (positive emotional engagement)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis
  - b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
14. During your last year of active ministry, to what degree were you aware of a sense of *efficacy* about your work? (positive evaluation of accomplishments and effectiveness)
- a. Very often, on a weekly basis
  - b. Often, once or twice a month
  - c. Occasionally, once a month or less
  - d. Rarely, no discernable pattern
15. When you were dealing with a decision about leaving or staying in active ministry, with whom did you discuss these thoughts? (check all that apply)
- a. No one
  - b. My spouse
  - c. Other family member(s)
  - d. Pastoral colleague(s)
  - e. Lay friend(s)
  - f. My district superintendent
  - g. Stranger(s)
  - h. Other (please specify)
16. If you chose not to consult your district superintendent, why not?
- a. Just didn't think about it
  - b. Afraid of potential consequences/repercussions
  - c. My DS wouldn't understand
  - d. My DS is not approachable
  - e. My DS is not accessible/too far away
  - f. Other (please specify)
17. If you did consult your district superintendent, how helpful was the DS?
- a. Very helpful and supportive
  - b. Caring but not really that helpful
  - c. Didn't really "get it" at all
  - d. Did not respond to my contact
  - e. Other (please specify):

18. What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent, if any, were helpful and appreciated by you? (narrative comment)
19. What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent would you have wished for or would have been helpful? (narrative comment)
20. Generally speaking, to what degree did you feel your district superintendent was available to you or approachable?
  - a. Very approachable and available
  - b. Approachable but very busy and hard to reach
  - c. Approachable but only if it's really important
  - d. Mostly unapproachable and unavailable
21. Generally speaking, to what degree did you personally trust your district superintendent to have your best interest at heart?
  - a. No trust
  - b. Low level of trust
  - c. Average level of trust
  - d. High level of trust
22. Generally speaking, to what degree did your district superintendent offer you helpful guidance and advice?
  - a. No guidance and advice
  - b. Minimal guidance and advice
  - c. Average level of guidance and advice
  - d. High level of guidance and advice
23. Do you have other comments related to your relationship with your district superintendent during your active ministry? (narrative comment)
24. Would you be willing to be interviewed further (confidentially) about your answers? (yes or no)

If yes, please provide your name and contact information here:

## Appendix C

### Protocol for Select Personal Interviews

The purpose of these interviews is to gather narrative related to the data gathered in the online surveys and specifically to gather narrative data related to possible strategies for district superintendents to employ in relationship building with pastors in an effort to increase clergy retention.

We will employ a semi-structured interview process in order to provide significant flexibility within a guiding framework. Robson (2002) noted that in this type of interview “question wording can be changed and explanation given; particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included” (p. 270).

The following procedures should be employed to conduct the assigned interviews:

1. Call the pastor by phone to thank them for agreeing to be interviewed about their responses to the Clergy Retention Survey from Nazarene Research.
  - a. If you reach them in person: Ask if you can set up a convenient time for the phone interview. If they are willing to conduct the interview immediately, proceed. Otherwise, note the date and time and return the call at that time.
  - b. If you reach voice mail: Tell them you would like to set up the phone interview and invite to respond to you either via return call or email to select a date and time.
2. For the phone interview, take the appropriate time to establish rapport with the pastor, but also be sensitive to “get to the point” and honor the investment of their time.

3. Tell them that you have 5 questions to ask. If they are uncomfortable with any question they are welcome to “pass” without prejudice.
4. Proceed through the questions, making careful notes of their comments. Feel free to ask clarifying questions, but be careful not get off the point of the question.
5. After completing the last question, invite any further comment they would like to share and then thank them for their participation in this study.

#### Questions

1. How would you describe the circumstances that were in play when you were actively considering leaving active ministry?
2. To whom did you turn for support and counsel during this time and what did you receive from them?
3. Describe your relationship with your current (or former) district superintendent.
4. Can you name specific things that you received from your district superintendent during this time of decision making?
5. What do you think a district superintendent could do to be in a position to provide substantive guidance and encouragement when pastors are facing the decision to leave or to remain in active vocational ministry?

Appendix D

Advance Email Notice to Potential Study Participant

March 1, 2009

Dear Colleague:

In a few days you will receive an email inviting you to participate in research on clergy retention in the Church of the Nazarene. Please watch for this invitation.

Completing the survey will require about 10 minutes of your time.

The study focus is about helping pastors during critical moments when deciding whether to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry. Your responses to this survey are confidential and entirely voluntary.

Only about 750 pastors across the country are being invited to respond. Therefore, your time and energy to participate in this study is important and deeply appreciated. Please watch for the invitation and respond as quickly as you possibly can.

Research Department

Church of the Nazarene Global Ministry Center

Appendix E

Survey Cover Letter and Informed Consent

March 10, 2009

Dear Colleague:

You are invited to participate in research on clergy retention in the Church of the Nazarene. Completing the survey will require about 10 minutes of your time. The study focus is about helping pastors during critical moments when deciding whether to leave or to stay in active vocational ministry.

Only about 750 pastors across the country are being invited to respond. Therefore, your time and energy to participate in this study is important and deeply appreciated. This study may have a significant impact on how district superintendents support pastors during these crucial decision-making times.

Your responses to this survey are confidential and entirely voluntary. There is no coercion to complete the survey. There are no known risks to you or your personal well being due to participation in this study. There will be no individual gain or loss related to the completion of this survey. If you have any questions regarding this study I will be happy to respond.

Please follow this link to begin the survey: (A=active sample, B=inactive sample)

[2009 Survey of Pastors - A](#)

[2009 Survey of Pastors - B](#)

The peace of our Lord,

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Appendix F

“Other” Responses to Question on Reasons for Leaving

Sample A, question 10: “If you have considered leaving, generally what circumstances or situations have led to this consideration?”

<u>A10 Other (please describe)</u>
28 total responses
1. Lack of health insurance
2. Reaching retirement age
3. Poor district leadership
4. Could do more for the Kingdom outside of a denom./structure
5. Stress of trying to make ends meet
6. Lining up my passions and education with my call
7. Desire to not be so far away from married kids and grandkids
8. Lack of Joy
9. Sometimes fell like I am preaching to a deaf choir
10. Passionate in other ministry areas
11. Fight against Burn-Out.
12. People stopped following
13. Wondering if I am making a real impact in ministry
14. Move into higher education
15. Disillusionment / Desire to reach culture
16. Frustrated
17. Question my spiritual fitness
18. Divorce
19. I am ineffective here & need to move
20. Undercutting by a previous pastor; lack of district support
21. Inappropriate conduct of member toward my teenager.
22. Gift mix
23. 1st time as senior pastor / feelings of challenge in growing
24. Wife's physical health problem
25. Frustration with denominational issues
26. Cannot preach what is led for fear the DS will be called.
27. Church is struggling -- are we the right people to serve?
28. Wondering if I still have something to offer the church

Sample B, question 8: “Generally, what circumstances led to your decision to leave active ministry?”

<u>B8 Other (please describe)</u>
52 total responses
1. Cultural difficulties were larger than expected
2. Physical health of spouse
3. Review was not acceptable in my opinion
4. No calls for future ministry assignment as pastor
5. I didn't leave the ministry; I left the church I pastored.
6. Finish degree from Nazarene Bible College
7. D.S. had no place for me
8. Still active in the ministry - serving in a church
9. To complete Ph. D. dissertation
10. An answer to prayer that it was time to leave the assignment
11. Felt led by God to move on
12. Church board power move to prevent new persons from being ta
13. Wife's diabetes out of control due to stress
14. Felt strongly it was time for new leadership.
15. Loss of confidence in and support from District leadership
16. Forced out by board & DS; primary reason given: wanted new pastor
17. Was forced out
18. Psychological health problem
19. Aging congregation-uncommitted members
20. Church closed and no other assignment was given
21. God released me from the call to that church
22. This was an interim assignment.
23. Same issues in the church reoccurring for years prior
24. Move closer to family member who needed help
25. Church died
26. Offer to lead incredible organization
27. Take care of spouse with physical and emotional struggles.
28. Legally forced to move back
29. Spouse chose no longer to serve
30. Crisis of faith
31. Too much stress
32. Conflict with board members
33. Unable to secure any assignment
34. Recalled back by the Military. Returning next year

35. Have a call to preach
36. Changed ministry focus to counseling
37. District closed the church so they could do a restart
38. Congregations not ascertaining what the mission is about
39. I am actively in the process of planting a new church
40. To pursue a medical degree
41. My DS gave me one week to make a decision on where to move
42. I do not sense that it is the Lord's leading at this time
43. Special pastoral review
44. Lack of support from Church Board
45. We relocated and will be ministering in a home church again
46. Church in crisis; the church was since closed and in a re-start
47. Was also seeking a pastorate closer to home.
48. God's direction
49. Local church did not share vision for disaster relief
50. Wife having physical and emotional issues
51. different idea of what "success" or "church" looks like
52. Completely discouraged with bi-vocational ministry.

Appendix G

“Other” Responses to Question on Reason for Not Consulting DS

Question 19: "If you chose not to consult your district superintendent, why not?"

Sample A

Other A19 (please specify)
36 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. My DS perceives me a threat to his "kingdom"; he is not my pastor.
2. DS seems disconnected from real life and giving practical support
3. See him as a boss more than a friend. Don't get to speak with him very often.
4. He hasn't even been here for a pastor/people review that was due last year.
5. We don't have the kind of relationship where I feel safe to discuss such things
6. Combination: too busy
7. He has other things to do
8. He has enough to deal with
9. Would not consult until I was completely sure? This is a secondary step for me.
10. I don't focus on the "feelings" very long. They come when I have over done it some.
11. He doesn't care. Never calls his pastors for lunch or just encouragement. He is too busy?
12. I believed these feelings would go away. (They did.)
13. God settled it for me. Momentary loss of perspective (Elijah after Mt. Carmel)
14. I simply have others that I confide in
15. My D.S is great but I'm responsible... He's busy
16. My D.S. discusses and deals with these issues regularly.
17. Hard to admit problems in the church
18. Didn't want to add to his stress load; he is aware of our situation; hate to complain
19. He's got enough on his plate at the moment and I'm not sure enough to weigh him down.
20. Did not feel that the DS has the authority to make changes
21. Not his decision to make
22. My D.S. is aware of my journey. Recent divorce. (tired)
23. I think this is pretty normal.
24. Timing
25. I am considering retirement but have no church problems he could help with
26. I don't want to sound like I can't handle it.
27. DS was more interested in the politics than addressing the issue
28. Can't do anything about it at this point
29. DS doesn't really care
30. Timing not right
31. Just did not feel comfortable going the my DS
32. I have a better relationship with my colleagues.

33. I did not feel it was necessary.
34. Too busy with others with greater issues than mine
35. Didn't feel strongly enough to bother him.
36. The need was not that acute

Sample B

Other B16
17 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. Was blamed by DS as the problem in previous assignment
2. He knew about it and showed no concern
3. Loss of confidence in leadership
4. I have always been a very private person.
5. It was the DS leadership that allowed the closing
6. My DS was preoccupied with greater responsibilities than the smallest church on district
7. I did talk with him but not until the decision had been made. I needed to find employment to provide for family.
8. I felt the decision was between the Lord - my wife and myself.
9. It was my decision
10. I feel my DS would understand and help but I was ashamed and felt I had failed
11. Contacted him after spouse. Did not have option about choice
12. We got a new DS at the very time of my decision and the one that was with me through the service was no longer available.
13. I discussed with DS once I was pretty sure of the direction God was leading me.
14. I viewed him as at least passively involved in ambushing my ministry
15. No one has the answer to that question. Ultimately it's between God and myself.
16. My DS betrayed me
17. The decision was made for me; nothing to discuss

## Appendix H

### Narrative Responses to Questions on Pastor's Assessment of the Helpfulness of the District Superintendent

Question: “What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent, if any, were helpful and appreciated by you?”

**Sample A**

68 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. I simply do not trust supervisors mainly because of my age.
2. Hang in there. He called, he came by my office to visit, he gave me a good reference, and also shared with me what I should do.
3. His positive approach to the church. Also his love for the Church of the Nazarene. My experience with all of my DS's has been positive and helpful.
4. Understanding of current situation, not just sympathy. An explanation of how the Nazarene church places pastors, options available when the current church closed. A DS that says what he means and means what he says - follow up and follow through.
5. My DS is very thoughtful and would not hesitate to assist me in any kind of crisis
6. Helping me in the midst of losing a significant group of people from my church. Understanding my difficulties.
7. D.S. listened intently. Shared similar feelings during his ministerial career. D.S. has always allowed me to have an open dialogue regarding issues like this and has made himself very available to me.
8. There was affirmation regarding the reality of the situation that was burning my energy and passion. He acknowledged the toughness of the current assignment and wished I had a better opportunity.
9. He came to visit one of our services recently. It was a great blessing to know that he cared enough to drive the 100 miles to share a worship service with us.
10. I think the people there really like you.
11. Personal experiences, scriptural encouragement, prayer, supportive words of understanding and empathy, words and follow-up notes reminding me of vision and calling, etc.
12. Actually don't hear from my DS very often. I feel my DS is out of touch with current pastoral ministry and is near retirement age. He has not been in the trenches for years and feel has little understanding of the urban city churches on his district.
13. An occasional personal call or personal invite to eat out or a personal email to let me know he appreciates what's happening.
14. I have a very supportive DS, but I did not talk to him. After nearly 40 years in pastoral ministry, experience tells me not to trust a DS. Most are too political, not interested, and would not be confidential. However, I believe my present DS is of a different mold.
15. He called recently to see how my wife was doing
16. When there IS interaction, the DS has been very supportive, even of my out of

<p>the ordinary ideas. I believe that the DS does indeed pray for me. I appreciate the DS's passion. I also appreciated the way the DS handled the church-pastoral relationship review as a review of the relationship and not just the pastor.</p>
<p>17. District set up a Pastors Safety Network where we can go to counselors to discuss our issues with the district paying for it and they never know who it used the service. This gives us a professional to talk to without worry of being looked down on.</p>
<p>18. My DS is often encouraging and expresses appreciation in many ways. He is very approachable and humble. Makes himself available and vulnerable.</p>
<p>19. My District Superintendent has been helpful in regards to commitment to my leadership and vision for the congregation.</p>
<p>20. My D.S. has been aware of some of the problems we have had in my present assignment, and has periodically checked on me and has been very supportive</p>
<p>21. My D.S. is on our side in the ministry. Just knowing that helps me to know that if I have a real problem he will be there when I call. He is not afraid to confront any problems that my come up. That in its self is a big item in today's world.</p>
<p>22. His non-judgmental listening.</p>
<p>23. He sends out a letter sometimes to let us know he is praying for us.</p>
<p>24. He voiced his support of me and my wife. He stated how grateful he was we were in the situation--a pastoral couple with less experience and integrity could not have accomplished what we were able to accomplish. He attended several Church Board meetings to support me in my actions. He has contacted several other district superintendents requesting help in placing me in a new assignment. Given our situation and the limited power of the district superintendent I am not sure he could have been any better. He is doing a fine job for me in his support.</p>
<p>25. My district superintendent has always been supportive and encouraging. I know he trusts me and values my opinion.</p>
<p>26. Expressed concern and prayer support and encouraged me to seriously think about and work on a sabbatical</p>
<p>27. Keeps in contact. Has offered me the chance to interview at other places on this district, but none has panned out.</p>
<p>28. To see that others were having similar problems and mine was not an isolated situation. To have fellowship with a district advisor who was safe to talk to. The initial support of DS</p>
<p>29. He is in the process of moving me to another church.</p>
<p>30. Encouraging notes and e-mail regarding ministry accomplishment.</p>
<p>31. He is very friendly. I believe him to be a very good man. I do not believe he has any idea how I feel.</p>
<p>32. Doing a good job. The people love you. You really turned the church around.</p>
<p>33. Annual pastor's day of renewal, I don't receive salary from church but an amount from District, sent me and lay person to church growth week... I do feel supported by D.S. but not personally involved... D.S.'s as a rule are very busy.</p>
<p>34. Talks about these issues and encourages each Pastor to discuss any problems we may have. He has encouraged Sabbaticals recently and is very open about these matters.</p>

35. My DS is always available and kind when I see or talk to him
36. Thanks, You are a good pastor
37. His emails and phone calls are encouraging and positive. He regularly says that he believes in what we are doing and is encouraged by the positive reports we are able to bring. (We are in an unusual new start situation). He has helped us financially and promoted our mission with the DAB and the district churches. He travels to visit with us and our ministry.
38. He once told me during a difficult time that ministry is a marathon, not a sprint. That truly helped for a season.
39. The DS has been very helpful and supportive. He has very little time, however, due the huge number of churches he is responsible for.
40. Very caring.
41. He was convinced that I had been doing a great job and that I should forge ahead; that I had his full support and that I was right-on in my assessment of the current situation.
42. His support in my journey along with prayer and concern.
43. Actually I have a very good relationship with the D.S. He is very encouraging to me.
44. My District Superintendent is a very spiritual, compassionate, and wise man. Since I have other para-church ministry income/involvement, the decision to cut back as a stewardship factor of health and family starts with us.
45. My D.S. is awesome. When the time is right I have now worry that his wisdom and gifts will help to guide me. I need to hear from God first.
46. He listened and seemed to care.
47. I have a good D.S. but I don't have that kind of trust in most people. But when we do talk he is very supportive it me that can't seem to open up.
48. The DS here is very accessible and has been ready to listen at any time. That has not always been the case in the past - but this man is very caring
49. He always affirms my feelings, directs me to Scriptures, tells me I am not alone, prays for us, intervenes when necessary, gives Godly advice, always responds immediately to emails or phone calls.
50. He was all about me and calling me until I took the church now I do not hear from him! I guess that he is glad that he has filled the church!
51. Helped to relocate my family after resigning previous assignment. Very encouraging and willing to help in the healing process. He and his wife prayed often for and with us. Has a regular district training and encouragement time during the year.
52. Came to my church and baptized my kids provides nice setting for pastors retreat
53. He personally came to manage conflict/disagreements with me and some members of my church board.
54. He called one day out of the blue to let me know he appreciated my ministry and the work I was doing.
55. I believe in you, a concern for the person not the task/job at hand, etc.
56. He was very understanding. Our DS knows us pretty well and he was not surprised by our concerns. Said if there was anything he could do to help in the

process let him know and that we could contact him at anytime with information or questions.
57. He has been positive and encouraging. Has also equipped with some helpful training.
58. The phone calls reminding me that he is praying for me and my family!
59. My DS has always been encouraging he knows that I have a tough assignment. This is an assignment as I was asked to come to see if I could basically restart the church. I have been told and experienced when I came that the appointed board does not respect pastoral authority.
60. I didn't discuss with him where I am at. Did do that before taking this present church (my previous church was on the same district). It wasn't necessarily bad talking with him, just not helpful. Thought better just to seek others to talk to.
61. Listened with compassion. Offered encouragement and related the very real possibility that the inefficacy might not be a reflection of my ministry. Suggested another pastorate might produce a totally different outcome. Asked to be able to present my resume. Ultimately helped me make a move that has been wonderful.
62. He spoke wonderful words of encouragement, talked to me about being sure of my calling and if so, being sure I didn't neglect what God has called me to. He was understanding, kind, compassionate and reassuring.
63. My DS doesn't really seem to care about me or my family. His concern is numbers. He is unapproachable and not too supportive.
64. He made time for me and listened with compassion.
65. The DS contacted me and inquired about my feelings/thoughts on more than one occasion. Stopped by unexpectedly to chat when in the area. Always spoke encouragingly and optimistically.
66. I have a GREAT DS. He always very encouraging and up-beat. Calls and emails me regularly. Constantly giving me words of affirmation. He's always checking on me. He knows I have my struggles with family situations etc. and lets me know that he's praying for me. Could not improve on the character and quality.
67. Always encouraging
68. He is good to affirm my work, particularly to the district. He is available to me and I know it.

### Sample B

9 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. He offered his support and accepted my actions. He offered to help me find another church.
2. He listened. He cried with me. He understood. He cared deeply. He prayed for me. He kept the confidentiality of my trust.
3. I appreciated his willingness to meet with me as I requested and his honest

evaluation of what he was hearing from those in my congregation.
4. You still have good years of ministry ahead. You have much to offer. I want to use you to help churches that are in the process of finding a new pastor.
5. He expressed his appreciation to me and told me that I was still a part of the Team. He told me he would be looking for ways in which I could be helpful to the district (start a new church, do revival services, etc.).
6. He had an understanding of the need to be near family while being young and starting to have children.
7. NOTHING
8. Prayer, support, and calls. Just his presence and encouragement.
9. NONE

Question: "What specific words and/or actions from your district superintendent would you have wished for or would have been helpful?"

### Sample A

63 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. I don't have a clue
2. Could have responded to people who left in a firmer way.
3. Something better than sending an email or mailing a resume and rolling the dice on whether a DS call's you back, acknowledges your resume, or simply says "I'll pray about it". Something more tangible would appreciate.
4. Could have used a little more support before I left active pastoral ministry.
5. Communication: A phone call seeing how I'm doing, explaining what he is doing to help with a reassignment on the district or to another district, or straight up words on my future in the ministry on his district would be helpful.
6. ANY heartfelt encouragement; just being there from time to time or making a phone call just to check in. We are on a very small district in which a DS could actually personally contact every pastor at least bi-monthly in some way. ALSO, he could allow me some level of involvement on the district or at least come by and pray with me. I feel he is waiting for me to leave, resign, or die!
7. DS is the best
8. He has really been very helpful, with the exception of being involved or concerned on a personal level.
9. D.S. was very helpful.
10. I was told that I am not judged by my stats and production, but everywhere I turned, I felt like I was. I think my DS did as good as he could have with the situation that both he and I were dealing with.
11. None

12. What can I do for you?
13. I can't think of anything my DS did not do! Amazing leader, godly visionary.
14. Empathy, caring, offers of financial assistance in the short-term.
15. I would like my DS to check up on me at least once per year. Perhaps have coffee and see what is going on in my ministry. I would like for my DS to facilitate gathering of other clergy members where we could share and talk and get to know each other. I would like my DS to bring current appropriate voices to the district to share and learn from.
16. Just a kind word to let me know I am important to him & the district.
17. Any contact would be appreciated
18. Sometimes I feel alienated because the DS is much more conservative than I am.
19. He helped me. I did find myself at ease after our conversation.
20. Not sure I am looking for words, but a visit and time together without expectations would be appreciated.
21. More specificity in regards to financial and real-estate structures due to the fluid nature and partnership our particular congregation's building space has with the District and other entities. Clarity is always helpful
22. Just sit down and listen to his pastors. Rather than being so distant and at arm's length and he would not be defensive in critical thinking. He is a good man and is very sincere. There seems to be a loss of passion and care for the district churches.
23. One of the basic problems I am experiencing is the lack of power the district superintendent has in placing a pastor. It appears the real power lies in the local church board and members of the local church. If they know a pastor then they are willing to grant an interview. If they do not know him (or her) or if no one in the congregation is related to them, then an interview is nearly impossible. It appears the district superintendent may be able to place a pastor in a really small church, but the larger churches will not trust the district superintendent to place an unknown person even in an interview position. I guess the Church of the Nazarene is a "good old boys club" when it comes to pastoring our really strong churches.
24. The offer of a "good-fit" church that had some chance for growth (you said "wished for") and forward progress for the Kingdom.
25. I wish a DS would understand what it feels like to lose your church. I wish a DS would establish a more intensive one on one care for pastors with trusted district leaders. I wish a DS would establish a greater mentorship program for pastors. I wish a DS would be more supportive to pastors in church conflicts instead of being a "company" person who realizes a pastor is going to move so he works more with the church. The conflict is not resolved and the problem hits the next pastor coming in. I wish there was a counselor for pastors I wish there was district training for laypeople about the "chronic sheep-bit syndrome" and disrespect for pastors
26. Words of reassurance that the demands of ministry are great and that he appreciates my work.
27. Cannot think of any right now

28. When I ask for a move, I wished he would submit my name to all full time churches instead of offering me churches where I would need a job to support my family. You can tell I am sick of the system. I have paid my dues and think I would like to be heard. But none of your surveys ask about these kinds of things. I find not many churches are interested because of my age. Those churches who are interested ask why my resume was not given to them to consider. And no I have not always been so negative. It is only in the recent past that I have become this way. And by the way, I would prefer you would know who I am, but I am sure it would make no difference.
29. I really don't know.
30. A prayer retreat or day... Wish there was a district rep or part-time pastor for district pastors.
31. I needed my DS to listen... not listen and then tell me I need to "...just hang in there..." When I am empty and have spent time with God and sense Him telling me it is time to move on, I need my DS first of all to "show up" or be available to me. I don't need to hear from another pastor or the DS assistant, I need to hear from my leader. I just want a leader I can trust and follow, and when they are not there when I need them most, there is nothing to follow. After announcing my resignation I didn't hear one word from my "pastor" or (DS). We are told, (and I believe it's true) that we are to minister to the hurting. I guess hurting pastors don't apply. When the DS doesn't seem to care there is nowhere to turn. The pastor is left very alone. The only thing worse than being forced to leave ministry is to be an "ex-pastor." Even your friends who are also pastors stop calling.
32. A sense that he understood the up and down stages of a congregation - that a church must be measured by more than attendance figures, either positive or negative.
33. I should probably take more initiative to ask for talk time when the tough times come - I feel sure our DS would have been both approachable and helpful if I had done so before.
34. More contacts, follow - up, etc.
35. A safe place to talk and pray. Help in finding a mentor. Initiative to find better support solutions for bi-vocational pastors than the denomination currently has.
36. Realization of the emotions of pastors, himself included, that need to be dealt with by workshops, or general days of enrichment when colleagues get together.
37. Nothing comes to mind.
38. More openly supportive to the congregation.
39. Cannot think of any that would have meant more to me, than what he did say.
40. "He understands why I would want to move". "Do what you need to do"
41. None I can think of more than friendship.
42. I would appreciate a call once in a while to see how I am doing. But he never calls. I always have to call him. I feel so much like a lone ranger. It didn't used to be this way in the Church of the Nazarene that I have pastored with for 35 plus years. The sense of being on a team together has gotten lost somewhere. I often wonder these days exactly what the DS is there for. What is

his job?
43. It would have been helpful if he had met with the previous pastor to address his role in the crisis and then address the board members who thought the previous pastor walked on water.
44. I wouldn't change anything about him.
45. To appreciate bi-vocational pastors more and include them in district events and make them so bi-vocationalists can attend! Don't get me wrong, our DS is great and loving to all people.
46. How can I help? What can I do to learn more about what you are experience? How can your gift mix help our district ministries? How can I lift you load? Anything I or the District does to hinder your ministry and/or church?
47. I need to be around people who will challenge me and think outside the box. I am one of only two women pastors. So it has been a little hard to have someone to talk and ask for help.
48. Wished he would seek to understand women or co-pastors in leadership wished he would have shared with us that he told our church board that if they didn't want us then he would find another assignment to move us to. Instead we were told by our board member wished he would return phone calls, emails, or postal mail inquiries instead of never hearing anything from him or an office administrator wished he would follow through on what he says he would do or communicate that it isn't working out according to plan wished he would accept help for his weak areas of leadership instead of surrounding himself with more and more weakness wished he would have a vision wished we were a team of pastors wished we were not out here in pastorates in a sink or swim situation wished the district leadership were not all old guys
49. I wish he would have been more direct at confronting the carnality and wrongness of some of my board members. He seemed to be non-committal about who was right or wrong. I wish he would come out and say "I think you're RIGHT and you're WRONG.
50. None, he's doing a great job
51. The majority of our pastors are pastoring small, churches (under 150). We have got to get some help and or relief from our denominational leadership. Our financial system is killing our small churches--who continue to mortgage their futures to pay budgets. Very little denominational equipping is done for those pastors who do not have multiple staff etc. I'm tired of feeling that I am as qualified as other pastors who seem to be exalted for no other reason than having being able to have the resources to draw a crowd. I'm dying for my church and for the Kingdom. I'm expected to not only keep the status quo--but also figure out how to grow in the mean time. Very little of our system encourages true, transformational leadership. The most "successful" are those who have mastered pleasing the "system." This is the singular most frustrating aspect of serving as a pastor for the last 15 years.
52. I'm not sure. Just telling me to "Hang in there" is little encouragement. Perhaps a personal visit, lunch, dinner and listening - really listening and maybe even offering to help find a more satisfying assignment.
53. Nothing

54. I would like you to operate the church in a way you feel best and if any advise is needed the advisory board and DS are available for the success of your mission.
55. To really take the time to visit. He gives vibes that he is too busy and occupied with other matters. Which does raise my curiosity, shouldn't DSs be our pastors? We need someone to turn to who cares.
56. Could not have asked for a better response.
57. I couldn't have wished for a more caring attitude displayed by my District Superintendent. I came away from our conversation realizing that "what happens to me really does matter to him."
58. A sense of camaraderie. A sense that he prayed for me and supported what I do.
59. I would have wished for follow up. It's hard to reach out for help.
60. More expressed concern about how things are going.
61. More visionary support for the local context. DS seems to advocate LOOOOONNNNG term congregational transition. Asserts that visionary/missional, "new paradigm" thinking cannot be adopted my most members of the congregation and community and suggests that my role is better approached as a "chaplain" to the congregation.
62. Can't think of any.
63. None more than he has already shared.

**Sample B**

61 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. Maybe if he would have worked a little harder helping me find another place of ministry
2. I think calling every once in a while would have been nice. He never confronted any of the negative behaviors that were behind all of this so the cycle continues.
3. None-he was great and he allowed God to direct him.
4. I think he should have engaged the church board about several issues that he did not make in effort to discuss with them.
5. Support! The DS accepted the words of the congregation over my own and I felt like I had no confidence from the DS. During this time, I went through six months leading up to my resigning and have zero contacts from the DS about what was going on at the church. Following my resignation, I still did not receive any contacts from the DS. The interim pastor met with me a month after my resignation (and having met with all the families of the church) and communicated to me that he was convinced that I was not the problem or a contributing force in it, and that he would have handled the situation that exact same way. I have since received communication from church members agreeing that I should have stay, should have had the support of the district leadership, and that the few families causing the problems should have been

asked to leave. I had no meetings with the DS that we arranged by his office during my time at the church... communication and supports were non-existent.
6. Since leaving the church, I have felt like an outcast -- not even on the pastors' email roster any more. I am actively ministering, following my own calling from the Lord in a Christian school near my home.
7. While I appreciated his advice to "Never leave until God releases you from a place and also calls you to another," his assumption was that the 'other place' was another church assignment. The thought never came that sometimes God calls us to temporary times outside of vocational ministry.
8. AT LEAST A PHONE CALL, WHERE HE WOULD HAVE ASK; "HOW ARE YOU DOING??" I RECEIVED NOTHING.
9. I want to help you. "regardless if that means losing you"
10. He did great.
11. None
12. I would have appreciated a frequent call of encouragement especially during the real tough times. I wish they would have waited at least 30 days before calling a pastor. Not just for me but for my extended family. I have no doubt in my mind that God's will was for us to leave that pastorate. My DS whom I had served with for six years has never called!
13. Would liked to have seen him one on one and not talk on the phone
14. Considering what he knew at the time maybe not much more in that situation(Honestly, it was a church in crisis but that call was never made)...Except that there were other assignments that could have at least been offered that were never put on the table. One possible and nothing else since. That was more disappointing. I have come to know that there were a lot other issues on his plate that frankly outrank mine.
15. I wish he would have offered to sit down and talk with the board. I wish he had referred me to a conflict specialist who could have trained me and the board on how to resolve the issues. I wish the DS hadn't failed to respond to my calls for help for so long. I wish he had responded to the conflict I was experiencing with board members in the same way that he responded to a male colleague's conflict with board members. I felt like my situation was seen as less valid because I am a woman and more "emotional." I wish I would have been made to feel like a continuing member of ministry instead of an outlier.
16. Stood beside me when a vicious lie concerning me and my wife surface. Up front transparency, not going behind my back going to others before he knew truth.
17. My wife and I just wore out. We needed time off to recoup our passion for ministry and for her to regain her health. Other factors that went into the decision involved problems with my wife's. Our desire is to re-enter active pastoral ministry in the next few years.
18. Was exceptional and supportive.
19. It would be very nice if our DS had given us the benefit of the doubt after years in this church plant and years of ministry rather than assume that the speculations of a rogue church visitor were correct. To sum it up, we just got so very tired of the neglect coupled with the responsibility.

20. I would have liked to be trusted, I also would have liked more time before being released from an assignment
21. He allowed the board to ignore manual protocol and ignored protocol himself; convinced the board to force a resignation within one week when the board had other intentions; tried to convince board to give even less severance that board wanted to give; rather than be honest with congregation about what happened, would only say, "It's confidential;" manipulated facts to make himself and board look completely innocent in the force out; after force out only contacted me when he was questioned by the General Supt. as to his failure to help me and my family during this time. I would have wanted a DS who would support me; make the board follow manual protocol; protect my future ministry; minister to my family during the crisis, and be honest with the congregation.
22. Support, advice,
23. This was not really an issue with the District Superintendent. He said everything that was appropriate. I would have appreciated my church saying "Thanks" especially since I was there for almost a decade with almost triple growth that God gave. I don't mean this in a cruel way...it really did hurt me. I think they felt like I was wrong for stepping out and I guess that was the way they thought they should handle my resignation. I still deal with it.
24. Not sure.
25. I wish he had done more to help me move to another district. I think his opinion was that my health would not improve. I have gone on to be the regional sales manager for a private business. I have fully recovered from a heart attack and the accompanying depression.
26. A stronger role in negotiation of the transition package from the church. To not have been dropped from district communication circles.
27. There was only one phone call in the 6 months before my leaving the area, I was not home and the response was that would call later. That call did not ever happen! Only contact I had was in an e-mail a month before our agreed upon date of our leaving, just to remind me that our time would be up on the agreed date!
28. Rural pastors have little to no contact with the DS or other experienced pastors. DS or other experienced pastors need to have more interaction with the pastors and congregations of small struggling rural churches. Pastors of these churches feel isolated and insignificant in comparison to the work of the bigger churches. Much emphasis is placed in church growth through restructuring worship services, music ministries (worship teams) etc. Small congregations may be blessed to have only an overhead projector, CD/Tape player and one or two musicians (or none). Larger congregations often discard their outdated power point equipment, DVD players, TV monitor screens or other devices that would greatly benefit the smaller churches. Many pastors need meaningful counseling, training and fellowship with other pastors. Parish conflict resolutions would be beneficial. Pastors with higher education and from bigger churches receive greater amounts of TLC. Whereas less educated pastors especially in small churches are disregarded. After these pastors resign they are classified "unassigned" and become even more unimportant. They are no longer invited to

<p>district wide pastoral functions, which would otherwise provide encouragement and CEU credits. In fact this is true for even unpaid staff/pastors of small churches.</p>
<p>29. I believe that there should have been a consequence from the district for the individual who was primarily responsible for an action that led to the divisiveness.</p>
<p>30. I would have liked the DS to keep me better informed about events on the district, and encourage me to stay involved in District events while I was looking for another assignment. In spite of my request to be on the email list of pastors, so I could keep up with events happening on the district, it was never done.</p>
<p>31. I cannot think of anything. He was very supportive throughout it all.</p>
<p>32. The same issues had reoccurred in the church for years prior to my coming and were not dealt with properly in my opinion before my coming. The church over the years has been allowed to develop a reputation in the community more for hurting people than helping them. If it had not been for the support of the entire district family I would not have made it as long as I did.</p>
<p>33. "Would you be interested in another assignment"?</p>
<p>34. This retired pastor will not be in charge of your church by your request.</p>
<p>35. I began sharing that there was a problem at least 6 to 9 months before the church finally had to close. I asked for help, but help never really came. I suspect that the decision at the district level was to allow the church to die a natural death.</p>
<p>36. I wished he would have been more engaged when I was struggling with the same thing every pastor in my church for the previous 50 years had struggled with...and since I was trying to take the "bull by the horns" and finally stand up to the situation that had plagued the church for so long, it would have been nice to have had more input from him. He rarely returned my emails or phone calls. I was so disappointed.</p>
<p>37. Again nothing specific but I do think he is spread too thin and that no fault of his own.</p>
<p>38. He let the church board and a full church meeting vote to disorganize. Then let the DAV board list the church as inactive for two months. Then activated it with same name and the few who had didn't want it to change. If the district wasn't going to allow the change he should have said something before the pain of the vote. I never resigned!</p>
<p>39. More personal sessions for conversation/emotional &amp; spiritual support</p>
<p>40. In regard to a previous pastorate, I was extremely disappointed with my D.S. who was a friend, but who reinstated a couple to the church board, but people who were tithing only minimally. I had upheld the policies of the church manual that as lay leaders they should be tithers. I felt as if I had been stabbed in the back. In another situation I was forced out from a pastorate and was not really given an opportunity to be understood by the D.S.</p>
<p>41. I wish there had been more emphasis on taking care of the small, local congregations rather than such inordinate attention given to "New Starts" and "Church planting". Enormous resources were expended for these measures</p>

<p>while we struggled with keeping up on the building and property issues. To his favor I would say that he publicly admitted that that degree of emphasis during his season as DS was off the mark and he wished had had spent more time on the existing churches. Not long after that the district began focusing some of the Work and Witness efforts on district churches that were in dire need. I was glad I was there long enough to see these two desperately needed shifts.</p>
<p>42. That he would have made an offer of another assignment on the district</p>
<p>43. It would be nice to see our district superintendents be willing to look past political goals and ambitions, and be a pastor to those they are called to pastor. Since when is this whole thing about status?</p>
<p>44. Nothing else.</p>
<p>45. Can't remember any</p>
<p>46. More pastoral support - board had private meetings and there was no discipline for them. Consequences were that 2 members and their families left the church because they were clear on the wrong behavior of board and refused to remain a part of it.</p>
<p>47. I wish that in the 30 days that he knew I would be ambushed, and that he was reading the pack of bold faced lies that were put into my review that he would have had the decency to at least call me up and ask me what was going on, or at least give me a heads up so I could begin looking for another assignment. I wish just once that he or his wife had picked up the phone to just ask how I was doing. I wish that he had not held a meeting at our church after I was gone and told them that that I was doing great, and was right where God wanted me, when he had not spoken to me. I wish that my new district had reached out in some way to me. But sadly the only communication from my new district office or superintendent was to tell me that "If I didn't plan on being in full time ministry I would have to file my credentials." That's like walking through the hospital and telling the soldiers with their legs blown off that they will have to resign their commission! It was very painful.</p>
<p>48. An opportunity to talk through some issues. When I did speak with my DS, I was very of aware of his busy schedule.</p>
<p>49. I wish that he would have just come clean about not really knowing all the answers to my problems. I was supposed to walk on water with this broken church under 20 active members. When I didn't or when things went sour, I wished that I was given more advice than given the choice to leave or stay. I know that being a DS is hard, but a poor Preacher in a broken small church needs more of a cheerleader and prayer coach to keep him focused! I see the D.S. as a main coach who aides the small church pastor in an overall recovery plan. Then they check his or her progress to see how they can adjust the vision and progress!</p>
<p>50. I believe the DS could have been more active in trying to get a sabbatical period for me after serving the same local church for 12 years without any time &amp; being bi-vocational – working 7 days a week for years &amp; unable to even attend district retreats because of secure work &amp; the local church unable to pay.</p>
<p>51. From the day I resigned I had no contact from the D.S. was dropped from all</p>

district mail lists and the pastor email. In the next year only one pastor really sat down and took the time to listen to my pain.
52. My desire not a wish is that the Church of the Nazarene within the Headquarters and the Districts refocuses its purpose, mission, and call to again serve those who serve versus becoming just another political hierarchy that works at creating job security verses spiritual renewal of the church. My District Superintendent merely mirrored the headquarters.
53. I was removed from District Committees. I was rarely if ever contacted. Personal visits were rare. We never received personal phone calls or words of encouragement.
54. I wish my DS would have asked for my input, that he would have listened or considered my expertise in the situation.
55. We were very involved in Hurricane Katrina disaster relief. DS and local church did not have the same vision for my ministry. I felt I would be able to meet more needs of people who experience disaster (hurricane, tornado, fire, etc)outside of the Church of the Nazarene
56. I would have very much appreciated some sort of closure on the situation I was in. When I told him that I was stepping down and had accepted another position, all he asked was when my last week would be, and that was it. I never received any other communication from him, ever. I would have valued something to close the situation that I came out of - not getting paid for the entire last two months of my time there. I didn't want him to hold my hand, but at least recognize my sacrifice, and value to the district. I did not see myself as rebelling against the system, just living in reality with the situation I as a provider for my family was in.
57. I sense that my district superintendant has no desire to deal with small church problems. And I also sense that he has no intention of allowing me to be placed in another church of any size.
58. He did all he could do at that time.
59. More encouragement, support, he always said he was a pastor's pastor, but there have been several women pastors that he gave very little attention to.
60. I'm doing everything I can to find an assignment for you because I believe in you.
61. Came to the Church maybe once a year. Really felt on your own. He did not understand the difficulties of the church. I needed some thoughts on what to do in certain situations. Felt we weren't one of his chosen churches.
62. None that I can think of.

Appendix I

Narrative Responses to Final Question on Pastor's Assessment of  
Relationship to the District Superintendent

Question: "Do you have other comments related to your relationship with your district superintendent?"

**Sample A**

166 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
1. I plan to serve under my current DS for as long as possible, learn as much from him as I can - I do not believe I will ever have the opportunity to be mentored by anyone as genuine as him.
2. He seems very approachable, but when a pastor is struggling, usually the church comes first. I don't have a problem with that. I don't want to hurt the church. I don't want to be hurt either.
3. Wonderful man of great integrity. Just him being in the position gives me a sense of confidence.
4. No.
5. I think more highly of my DS than any previous. I have served under 4 district Superintendents, ranging from the criminal to the one I serve under now.
6. He's the best!
7. I don't have a relationship with my DS as he came aboard as my church was closing. I sensed I was a pariah on the district. Our first meeting was the first time he'd been made aware of our situation. I haven't heard from him since. It's been months.
8. Really we have been friends for a number of years. I love and appreciate him on that level, however, I really don't think he fits my idea of a good DS.
9. I meet bi-monthly for coaching sessions with my DS and he is readily available by phone or email. He returns correspondence within 24 hours.
10. He is the invisible man. He never shows up, never calls, never emails...does utterly nothing to show his support for me as a pastor...or a man. He always, in every situation, takes the side of laity in a church conflict regardless of right or wrong in relation to issues (in every church on the district). My DS is not supportive of pastors.
11. Our area is far away from the main stream of activity and not considered to matter much. What is his name, they often ask??
12. He meets all my expectations. Should I choose to quit my ministry role, I will retire.
13. I have the utmost respect for the man despite not always agreeing with him on an occasional element. He's a wonderfully godly man who is available as much as his time allows. He is innovative and supportive of innovation even when he doesn't "get it."
14. His passion like me is to preach the word. At this point the trust is average because of the short relationship. If I contacted the DS, I know he would offer guidance and advice.
15. He is a good man, does all the manual requirements but seems to have little

involvement in the local church except when things get real bad.
16. My comments are all very positive. I am very involved in the life of the district and have an extremely excellent relationship with my District Superintendent. My DS maintains a very helpful personal relationship with almost all of the pastors on our district, excepting only the ones who, as far as their part goes, do not make themselves very available. If I had feelings of leaving the ministry or was discouraged in any way, I would speak to my DS as one of my first sources of counsel.
17. My DS has always been there when I needed him. I have a very difficult assignment and he has always been open and extremely helpful.
18. He's basically new to the job and is getting his feet wet. Honestly I don't want to bother any DS. It would be in the most extreme nature to ever involve him. I don't mind informing a DS but rarely ever have.
19. My D.S. has been an amazing an influential influence on my life. He has trusted me with my assignment and allowed me freedom to innovate and try what seems like the right thing to do for my local church. Innovation has been encouraged and there is no fear of "punishment" for failure. He has always been available to talk through ideas and strategies - especially to troubleshoot obstacles or to assist with helping me build ways to communicate and create consensus among my board and membership. My D.S. has also challenged me to take on leadership roles on the District and in the community as I have been enabled to do so. He does not hold people back but challenges them to push forward. I'm not sure I would be in the ministry without my highly relational D.S. cheering me on.
20. No
21. Blessed. Our DS has such a challenging role here because he is required to satisfy so many expectations. His discernment and focus on God's calling has been inspirational. I am very pleased with his work and our relationship.
22. He is a pastor's pastor. I feel I can share with him without him using that against me in the future.
23. I hear of other districts that have pastors meeting in various groups and demographics. I hear of other districts that have very vital and interesting and on-going retreats for their pastors. I am longing for a vital ministry to the pastors of my district. I love my DS - but he is unable to bring vision and leadership to our district. We stumble along with the same old - and we don't challenge and move forward with a vision or passion - which is what is being asked of the local pastor.
24. I know they have many things & places to be at, so I don't need them to hold my hand. Just a note I am needed. Also, I know I don't call, email or invite him to eat so part of that is my responsibility. Although if I would, someone might think it's for personal gain.
25. I wonder what he really thinks, or if he has a genuine concern for me personally. I think I am just a pastor, and if the church does well I never hear from him. He does send email letters to all the pastors, but I do not feel a sense of connection. Maybe I am as much at fault for not advancing our relationship, but I think I am just a pastor and unless something goes wrong, or there is some crisis, there is no need to talk to me.

26. I cannot express how sad, disappointed, and at times angry I feel about most DS's I have had. I believe most have done more harm than good for the Kingdom and the COTN.
27. He is a great leader. He regularly prays for and communicates with the pastors under his care. I find this encouraging.
28. Seems the DS is gone a lot. He's a nice person but has little time or I don't seem to want to bother him. Things go smoothly enough so I do not call or see him often.
29. My DS is a very good person and I have nothing against him. I feel as though I am left all alone, even though I know he means well and is very busy. It isn't fair to the church or me when you go seven months over on review.
30. Always concerned for our Church & myself. Goes out of his way to be there for us.
31. Brainstormed on current issues and relevant matters. Has an opened mind and is approachable---free spirit. Enjoys hanging out with people.
32. Our District Superintendent depends on me to be involved with other churches, churches in crisis, to lead our district mission strategy team and to lead new church starts as well to supervise restart churches on the district. So there is a high level of trust between us.
33. Very good relationship with my DS.
34. While my DS wasn't extremely inspirational or give a lot of guidance, I had other sources I could go to fill that need and did.
35. I have always loved and appreciated every DS. In the past few years I have witnessed many of my fellow ministers drop out of ministry with little if any help from the current leadership. The way ministers are treated on this district upsets me greatly. I am afraid if I ever encountered a problem on the local level, that the current leadership on the district would simply throw me away as it has done to so many others.
36. I have had 4 D.S. in my time as a pastor. Three of them have been very good D.S.'s including the one I presently have. One I felt was a little wishy-washy and could have stood by me better. When you're in the fight and exhausted sometimes you have no esteem and cannot evaluate yourself. My dad shared with me that pastors are expendable; sometimes a D.S. cannot do a thing to help out. Their emphasis is on saving congregations sometimes at the expense of the pastor. Somehow with the Lord's help I stayed in the ministry.
37. Never had one I didn't like. At times felt the district was being too forceful in its dealing with church. Telling it what to do. Planning sessions are what every church needs but telling a plan must be submitted to the district is a little too demanding. I believe it could lead to (if the wrong kind of D.S. a very intrusive situation. We need to be held accountable but not told what to do as far as preaching etc. The district reports are getting less and less held in value. All kinds of time for long messages etc. by G.S. and others and less and less time for grass roots people in the trenches so that you can feel the heart of the pastor and passion of the pastor.
38. Good friend
39. I do not make him responsible for the disconnection, he is more than willing to

reach out, but I do not feel like I connect with him. There is a personality and philosophy difference.
40. I feel as though I could go to my DS with any problem and that he would hear me without being reactionary and seek a solution that would be in my best interest.
41. I am new to the COTN but my relationship and trust with the DS is growing at the expected speed of new relationships. We are able to have candid conversations and even disagree amicably and respectfully.
42. When the District Superintendent change was made I personally had a rough time with it for awhile. His leadership style and personality was different and it took me awhile to get to know him and find that his heart is in the right way. My D.S. has a great heart for pastors and for the souls of many people. Thank God.
43. We have an excellent superintendent. But we have a large district, where he is pulled in many directions, all at the same time. I love him and believe that he loves us pastors. He has a hard task; I do not wish to make it any harder.
44. I feel I'm not only speaking for myself, but also other pastors. Our district superintendent has always been quiet and reserved in his nature. Many pastors feel like they are alone in ministry and don't care anymore.
45. We have a good working and non-working relationship
46. I believe my district superintendent really loves me, really cares about me, and is really glad I am able to take care of a major problem church for him. I believe he really does not want me to move out of his district. However, I do believe he will do all he can to help me secure a new assignment. I just believe he is extremely limited in his power to accomplish the task.
47. Oh my goodness, my DS is so approachable. He is a pastor to the pastors. I could not ask for a better DS. He has been a wonderful support. Maybe that is because he knows he has asked me to do an impossible task here, this little church that in most cases should have been closed. But he has made ways to support me with finances, staff support, training opportunities and personal recognition.
48. I know he would be there if I needed him. I hesitate to call him for personal concerns because I am very aware of the pressure he is constantly under.
49. I love my D.S. very much. We are truly friends. I have come to the conclusion that folks that have been absent from the Pastoral role for more than five years or longer have little understanding about the present day pressures of ministry. Things are changing at such a pace that they cannot know what we are going through. It is my belief that even the best of D.S.'s are out of touch and somewhat insensitive, uninformed, and insulated to the struggles of the Pastoral ministry going on all around them.
50. He is always there whenever I call or contact him but I am not one of the individuals he would contact for personal input.
51. I have served on two districts and have found that every DS that I have had as my pastor/friend has been very different in personality types. I have never had to deal with a DS that did not have the time to listen to me when I really needed to share something that I was dealing with in the personal life or my church life. I pray daily for my leaders and I know that God is using them in a great way to

help others grow in their leadership skills.
52. I know he cares and really appreciates me as a person and a friend as well as ministry colleague and gives positive feedback on what he sees I am doing to lead the church.
53. The ideal is for the DS to be the pastor's pastor. This is admirable, but impossible. Bottom line, he is my immediate supervisor and key to any new assignments. Confessing my inadequacies to him, no matter how good a pastor he is, is simply shooting myself in the foot. When I need a confidante, it would have to be a pastor of another denomination or a friend of extremely high trust.
54. He is a very busy man. He is trying to help me. He loves me and I love him. I would like to stay on this district and continue to work with and for him, but it seems increasingly improbable that we will be able to do so. This is not his fault or my fault, but we both trust it is God's will. I have great respect for him and we have been friends for years.
55. While I understand the concept and importance of a district superintendent, I don't see that role as being truly vital in any pastor's life. The DS has too many things going on. I would suggest having a coaching system, or encouraging all pastors to find their own local encouragement (and not be afraid of non-Nazarene interaction / mentorship).
56. I love and appreciate our district superintendent.
57. I do not speak about my present DS.
58. The best DS I have served under in 37 years of ministry.
59. I have always had a good relationship with my DS, but I have always made an effort to befriend and encourage them.
60. I know the DS is extremely busy, yet he always returns my calls and responds to my e-mails. I know he loves me and prays for me, my ministry, and the church I serve. My job would be a lot harder without him.
61. Generally helpful and supportive. Of course...no one is perfect.
62. Our District Superintendent is in charge of a large area. That being said he is still very approachable and very available even if it means that it is a phone conversation or through e-mail.
63. I do not feel comfortable putting in writing negative things that have happened. If headquarters ever asked I would be truthful with them. However, I must say that there are worse district superintendents and ours could be worse in many ways. Just a lot of bad stuff on our district and any minister that is not 100% positive about it is on a bad list.
64. I think I have a great relationship with him. I think he does things how he is taught to do them. I just feel that there is a political system in the church and I am not a part of it. There are "chosen ones" who it seems can move over and up very quickly. The rest are left to do as they can. I have pastored 20 years and now find that most churches will have no part in talking to me because they want youth at the expense of experience. In my youth I spent my time getting the experience. Now what!
65. No
66. I have a number, but sorry to say from experience I do not feel safe in the survey to make them.

67. A good Godly man -- my small church does not hit the radar!
68. Just that my district superintendent is truly a gift to our district. He and his wife are a fantastic team that loves God, the Church, and all of us. So thankful for them
69. No
70. I feel real good about my DS and his availability to me. We have a good working relationship and work together on various committees. I feel that he is approachable and have no inhibition about doing so, if I felt the need.
71. He is new but seems to be willing and able to assist me as pastor
72. I love him and have always supported my DS.
73. I believe he is available and wants to encourage us as much as possible. However we as pastors should also encourage our District Superintendents. He has a great passion for the lost and really challenges us as Pastors to reach the unchurched as well as discipling those already in our parish. He also is concerned about our burn-out. He has encouraged pastors and spouses to attend the pastors retreat, however it is expensive sometimes and difficult to get time off from work.
74. I'm in a unique situation and it would be helpful if I knew what the D.S. is thinking and praying about my assignment. Personal contact 2 or 3 times a year would be great. He's a very good man
75. My district superintendent has many great qualities. As a leader he has a heart for his pastors and their churches. He is also very optimistic and helpful! He keeps us well informed on district issues/events and he provides trainings to help us in our growth.
76. Our district office is 250 miles away so there are few opportunities to meet. Closest Nazarene church is 60 and then 125 miles, so the tendency to feel isolated is very real. It's the nature of this assignment.
77. I don't think the problem with Pastor's leaving the ministry is much related to the DS at all. I would love to write you a book about what I do believe but your format is not conducive to what I wish to say.
78. I consider my D.S. a personal friend and mentor & feel a very high level of theological connectedness with him. I feel where he is leading the district, and where I am trying to lead my local church are similar directions. He places value on the non-quantifiable, yet vital efforts in being a missional church. I know for certain he blesses ministry efforts that would not be deemed worthwhile on certain other districts. I have friends in ministry I wish were pastors here.
79. Although I seldom reach out with a need, he has always been available when I have. He also on occasion calls or stops by when going through town.
80. I'm aware that he has a very busy schedule so I don't expect a lot of personal attention. Nevertheless, whenever I've needed help of any kind he has always been helpful, understanding and encouraging.
81. He has been a wonderful blessing to my ministry; he, like one other DS I've served under allows me room to fail and succeed which is the key to successful ministry. Letting go and delegated. On the last question I said my DS provides 'minimal input' because I don't ask for it; if I needed input he is always available and ready with a helpful hand, prayer and care.

82. Our district is very fragmented and we don't know much of what is going on around the district so I don't really know how much to trust him. However, it isn't that I don't trust him. For the most part he is a non-player in my ministry. I may see him once or twice a year and have a short conversation with him at assembly or some meeting.
83. Many DS's in my career. Some lied to me-some encouraged-could not trust some-most promoted me & I marginalized me. Some were threatened-I was loyal. There is a quiet, persistent stream of negative chatter from pastors & laymen unhappy with his leadership. He is aware of the dissent.
84. My DS is very kind and considerate to all. He is in constant contact through E-Mail updates to all Pastors and at least once a month he sends out a news letter type of note.
85. My DS has never spent more than three to five years in a church. I don't feel he knows how to work through problems.
86. My philosophy is to be a team player and get the job done. I rarely call the DS. I figure he has enough work to do. I do feel comfortable enough with him to call at any time, if I need him. He has no trouble with me and I have no trouble with him.
87. DS has helped in the areas of finance in doing the repairs to our facility. He attended the installation service and calls from time to time to find out how he can pray for us. He has been an encouragement when consulting with him regarding issues of spiritual growth and the battle that is waged against church that has been reopened.
88. He is very supportive; gives a sense of being on the "same team" with the Pastors
89. He is a community-builder, which I appreciate immensely. He does not make decisions in a vacuum, nor is he indecisive... he simply knows how to involve others in the process, gently guides us, and builds consensus to reach a thoughtful conclusion. So refreshing that he is not aloof and above reproach, nor is he weak, or unable to lead. Our denomination needs more godly people with strong character such as our DS.
90. My DS is a Holy Spirit filled leader, which makes following him easy. He is leading our churches in a Godly fashion and direction. He has a burden for pastors and for reaching the lost. Not because it looks good on paper (the captains log) but because he is following the Great commission and the great commandment of Christ. He takes time for us when we need it.
91. He is one of the best district superintendents that we have had, in terms of being friendly, concerned and available; he seems to see himself as pastor to the pastors, which is a role I value in a DS.
92. By far the absolute very best DS I have ever had the honor of working with.
93. My D.S. is willing to upset the apple cart by talking about hard things... maybe a need for counseling, changes, etc.
94. Great man, available when called on, but not really needed in my situation.
95. I feel like he is a nice guy, but he does seem very dry and hard to see at times what he is getting at. I feel like possibly if he were more direct I would understand what he is trying to say or ask. He seems to me to be a bit out of

touch and not very easy to relate to, that could be our age difference because I am more than 20 years younger.
96. As a pastor is an equipper, so should the district superintendent be, maybe to a greater degree.
97. I think, based on my many friends pastoring across the U.S., that my District Superintendent is the exception rather than the rule. Many seem too busy to have meaningful time with their pastors. From the outside looking in, I think many D.S.'s are spending too much time working to hold the line on outdated issues rather than equipping churches to be "impactful" for the present and future. My D.S. is the exact opposite of that, and I appreciate him for it.
98. I have been blessed with two district superintendents that I felt were always available and who had my best interest in mind. I have been thankful to have this kind of relationship with both of my district superintendents, especially early in my ministry.
99. I can't imagine working for a better leader and brother in Christ!
100. I rarely call on the D. S. for guidance and advice.
101. While he is certainly a denominational man, he clearly has a Kingdom mindset. It does not appear that he places pastoral candidates in churches simply to fill open slots but genuinely seeks to make the right matches for the sake of God's work in the world.
102. I have not known the DS very long. He is a very nice and supportive person, and I think that he would do whatever he could to help. But our DS, like all of the DS's, has a great deal of responsibility, but no authority or power to actually make needed changes. The denomination is presently structured for failure.
103. He's new and very busy.
104. I have loved every DS and felt their support for me, my family and church. When I needed him, he was there. I didn't run for help or advice except in situations (very few) where I felt his input was important.
105. I wouldn't be on this district if it wasn't for the vision of my DS.
106. As a local pastor I feel like I'm nothing more than a clearing house for W.E. and District budgets. That is what the communication between district and local level has come down to. I love my DS, I think he is a great guy but all conversations lead down the same trail, money. At the local level were dying, when is our church leadership going to recognize that missions has reached around the world and found a new home in our own cities? I believe that my DS works within the frame work of what the general church has set up, so I don't fault him. If there is an issue and I believe there is, it has to be addressed at the top. Not on the district level, the DS is under the authority of the generals. I'm sure he is under the same pressure to perform as I am.
107. He's a wonderfully supportive man, and always tries to make himself available to listen and give counsel when I need it. There really is no issue with him or our relationship.
108. He is a good D.S. who cares deeply about the District and the pastors.
109. A good godly man. Over worked
110. Not at this time. Being bivocational, I feel left out of things.
111. My District Superintendent is a good Godly man who provides the support I

need.
112.I have been on the Advisory Board and other committees so I have a very good relationship with him. Some may feel differently or answer differently, but I know the concern my D. S. carries for the churches on our district and I see his efforts to help, so I am very positive in my attitude toward him.
113.It would be great to have more District On-going training & support - at the very least offer enough on-district events to earn either all or a good portion of our CEU's.
114.Could not have a better one!
115.I'm confident that the DS is concerned but is very busy but he is interested about me and my church.
116.I could not be more satisfied with my district superintendent, he is available for my need and most supportive.
117.I have been trusted by my DS in District level leadership. I believe he has the best of intentions. My difficulty is that he often bypasses Pastors going to local laity with issues, needs, etc. The position of pastor is devalued at the district level. The visual recognition is there, but the personal, professional, and pastoral support is vacant. We (pastors) have no pastor.
118.I have great confidence in my D.S. but feel he is feeling the same stress I am because we are about the same age and facing retirement.
119.I serve under an incredibly God-led District Superintendent! I know if there is a need he is there. He believes in his pastors and is very open about that. I am BLESSED to be a part of this district.
120.I believe he prays for me. But my perception is that he is glad I am filling a church pastorate so that he doesn't have to get someone else to pastor it, but he only wishes I could have a really growing church so that his statistics would look better. Maybe that is harsh and cynical, but it is so often what comes through the communications we receive. The growing churches get all the plugs and yet many of them don't pay budgets and really don't participate with district programs etc.
121.I am a retired missionary and bi-lingual English/Spanish. I am pastor to a small Hispanic church that meets in the building of a larger English speaking congregation of the same denomination.
122.Again it's me not him everyone that talk about him has nothing but good things to say about him.
123.I have changed churches and districts in the last 3 years and my situation is very different now. It is much more positive and the DS is not as political. I had a good relationship with the previous DS on a personal level but did not receive much practical support in the many crises encountered in my years there. I received verbal affirmation but little addressing of the real issues by the DS.
124.This man has a heart for God and should still be in the pastorate - He loves to preach and is great in the pulpit . . . administration is not his long suit, but he performs his duty. He loves the laity as well as the pastors. He filled in for a church that went through a split and brought healing to the congregation and helped them find a pastor that worked best for them.
125.Our DS is new and we have never been introduced. Seems like a nice guy at a

distance.
126. We highly respect him and love him. If it were not for him, we probably would have called it quits long ago!
127. My D.S. is very committed to his calling and he is always there to give all the necessary support and encouragements I need as a pastor, husband and father. He is a wonderful man of God.
128. I'm a planter and feel very alone in my work regarding the district itself, my district superintendent loves me but doesn't know how to offer practical help and guidance as is the case with my other pastor buddies, but I get help and support from denominational leaders at headquarters. Everyone is very willing, but only a few can really offer much help
129. He is a trustworthy, sincere, and passionate person about his ministry.
130. He is always willing to hear me when I call and offer good advice. We are blessed to have him as our DS
131. I appreciate him believing in me, giving me a chance, and supporting me.
132. Our DS has a heart for pastors and their ministries. He has a passionate vision for the district and conveys it to ministers and laypeople well.
133. It is very difficult in our relationship when we are not communicating on a regular basis. Our DS is not very evangelical or missional and my strongest gifts are evangelism and missional. Our district is more concerned with the status quo than winning lost people or starting new churches. This is the first district I have served on where I have NEVER received one communication about what our goals were for salvations, new Nazarenes, or adding members. The only communication I get from our District Office has only to do with finances and/or District programming.
134. My Ds and his wife are easy to communicate with and I do sense their support. I have enjoyed being here on this district. I do not want to just maintain here, but looking for any help in directing me to reach people for Christ.
135. My District Superintendent and I have a wonderful relationship. He was my former pastor and mentor and best friend. As my DS, he is very helpful and gives me good advice, is very trust worthy and has been a great friend. He is a very Godly man.
136. I serve on the DAB and the DST, and I am the 'Teaching Pastor' on our district. Before I got involved to this level, I had no contact with a DS - ever.
137. He is a good District Superintendent. I know there are other churches with problems. I don't expect him to be preoccupied with my church problems. Besides that...he has no magic wand to stop the un-Christlike nature of some church people. Only Jesus can help the church. The District Superintendent is only a man...a human being like me. There is only so much he can do to help me.
138. My District Superintendent is a close friend of mine, and as definitely one of the reasons for the effectiveness I am enjoying in ministry, and is one of the strong reasons why I wish to stay in my present assignment for the duration of my pastoral career.
139. My DS is a wonderful person, Christian and leader. However, his many levels of participation in many areas of church and life issues keep him from being as effective as he could possibly be.

140. Excellent. He's a wonderful person, a very good leader and all time wants to give me the opportunity to have a nice relationship with my church, community, leaders and me.
141. My district superintendent is supportive, encouraging, and truly cares about my family. I tend not to seek a great deal of his time, because I worry about his work load. He makes quite an effort, though, to be attentive to things my family is going through, and has always been genuine in his concern.
142. My DS has many administrative duties which take most of his time. He rarely has time to spent one on one.
143. No, with us he is great, but, churches are dying and there is not program in place to bring them back alive, I think the superintendent needs to put more attention on these congregations.
144. The DS offers help when it's needed, but doesn't micromanage. You can't offer the same level of guidance and advice to every person; it requires sensitivity to each Pastor's unique needs.
145. We would be better off as a district if we had a change in leadership.
146. I live many miles from where most of the other pastors and the superintendent reside, so distance makes our visits infrequent and our contact minimal. That is the difficult reality of pastoring rural/small town churches.
147. A lot of talk about bringing change to our churches and very little action. A lot of talk about resourcing the local church with the tools to bring about change, but very little active support.
148. My DS is not intentional about personal contact or connection, but if I have a question or need to contact him, he is readily available.
149. I have a great relationship with my DS. The problem is that it seems that his hands are tied and mine also. We are trying to build a church that has done its own thing for a very long time. It has been successful in the past but I have seen very little Wesleyan teaching.
150. In some ways it is nice to not have him coming around and checking all the time. But it would also be nice to have someone to talk to.
151. I believe that my DS has communicated an open and approachable attitude toward his pastors. I have always found that to be the case!
152. Should I need advice, interaction or prayer, I know my DS would be there for me. He has a servant's heart.
153. I see my district superintendent as a real friend and true pastor's pastor. He has encouraged me and I have always find help from him when I've asked. I believe he prays for my wife and I and hold us up before the Lord often.
154. I pray that others may experience the Godly leadership we experience on our district and the friendship we sense from our district pastor.
155. Part of the issue with our DS is the distance from here to where he's at. However, he's not good at contacting us, etc. We've called him with one prayer need, had to leave a voice mail, and never received a response. Not a great way to build trust or a team.
156. Keep in mind that I've recently transferred to a new district and am still forming relationship with the new D.S. My previous superintendents were great, caring men. They were also very busy and had little time to build personal relations

with their pastors.
157.High level of guidance and easily approachable, but consistent party line responses. Seems to reflect the attitude that we must not rock the boat. Despite the ridiculous proliferation of Nazarene churches in our area/region, the mindset SEEMS to be that no church can close. All churches must remain open, no matter how small the congregation or proximity of another Nazarene church.
158.Made it clear on last page. Could not make any improvements on my DS. He's the best I have ever served under!
159.We are a church plant and the DS has given us room to operate and "be." Our approach to ministry and church planting is not typical (as in the approach that most church plants have taken over the last several years, i.e., not attactional).
160.He is a very caring, compassionate, and engaged DS who knows my name, my wife's name, and basic information about my children. Though his schedule is busy, he is generally always accessible or available through multiple means and avenues of communication (i.e. email, phone, personal visit, etc.). It is obvious that he cares and I never have to fear approaching him with my concerns or questions.
161.I appreciate my DS, trust his leadership, and believe he prays for me and my church.
162.He has been available every time I have truly needed him. I try not to bother him w/ less than critical matters as he has lots to care for. The one absolute emergency in my ministry, he moved several appointments to meet my need. I am grateful.
163.We have a very Godly superintendent. I thank God for him.
164.My current District Superintendent is not the "meddlesome" type; he is ready and willing to assist when requested but does not give one the sense of his watching over your shoulder just waiting to give his opinion whether desired or not.
165.It is very difficult to express how highly I esteem my district superintendent. He is such a confident leader and friend. As a side note let me say that I feel this way about every pastor on our district. DS always encourages us in our service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I trust him because I see Jesus Christ in all aspects of his life. He truly lets Jesus Christ lead him as he leads us.
166.He is an excellent District Superintendent. He is a pastor's friend and goes the extra mile to assist me and the local church. He is a great leader and is passionate about reaching the lost. Great respect for him and his family.

## Sample B

51 total responses
<i>self-identifying responses have been edited to protect confidentiality</i>
<p>1. He was a good man, but the vast cultural differences in many of his congregations I think left him as confused about what to do as I was. This is not a comment about my DS, but about this survey. The questions and phrasing distinctly left the impression that, in your opinion, if someone left one pastoral position and did not immediately seek another, they had left the ministry for good. I do not think this is accurate and you have no place on your form where you can indicate if you intend to seek another position or not. There appears to be the assumption of burn-out and leaving the ministry completely in your questions, but there is never a chance to test if that assumption is accurate or not. For me, it is not. Some questions about whether periods of non-assigned status had happened before might be good too.</p>
<p>2. He cared deeply. He prayed for me. He kept the confidentiality of my trust. Without this I might not have been able to come back-which I am now back, now that my wife's health has recovered. He was always there for me.</p>
<p>3. I consider the DS to be like my pastor. I have not found the DS's in the Church of the Nazarene to be available as a pastor.</p>
<p>4. When we met it was always positive. Unfortunately, we met seldom due to the huge distances between our churches. It wasn't just connection with the DS, it was also connection with other pastors. It was a whole day commitment just to meet for lunch.</p>
<p>5. DS showed little concern about his pastors. I have worked with him on District committees and boards. As long as he wanted you to do something for him, I was OK.</p>
<p>6. I think that the DS has a great deal of responsibilities and pressure to the degree that I felt there often was an agenda first attitude then maybe if I fit the agenda we could talk. I don't know maybe if I was in the DS role I would do the same but I'd like to think ministry and kingdom work would come first then agenda and politics if they must come. I will say this I respect authority I am still pastor it just happens to be a non-Nazarene Church and I got to tell you I'd love to be a part of the Nazarene work again but please no more deception.</p>
<p>7. I had a new DS and had only been there for 3 months. I have known him for a while and we are friends. There was not much he could have done in this situation.</p>
<p>8. I think my DS is very good person and minister before God, and not just before people. He is very friendly and approachable with sincere attitude. I am blessed to have, know, and have a good relationship with such an exemplary man of faith.</p>
<p>9. I have said too much already. The one who helped me through was my best friend who was always there for me. I just did his funeral. I miss him very much. I just realized I now have no one to call.</p>

10. There is struggle between D.S. as manger and D.S. as Spiritual leader. I am never sure which to expect.
11. I loved my DS - I still do. He was new to his position as DS and I was new to pastoral ministry. I would have liked my relationship with the DS to be one of mentoring and discipleship. I wish our denomination in general was more supportive of women in ministry.
12. He did not come to my side while I lay in the hospital. I feel betrayed by my Church hurt rejected, set out like yesterdays trash. Believe me If my family makes it, it will be God's grace that will bring them through. But I love Jesus and I will continue and survive.
13. If there is any hesitation with approaching DSs, it lies with the way I am wired.
14. I have never had any bad D. S, experiences.
15. Yes, but they are too complicated to put in writing.
16. He was distant and unapproachable. He would only contact me when he wanted something. I blamed myself for the longest time for not developing better relationships. I have discovered that it was not all my issues.
17. I believe he is a man of God who truly is called to lead the district and is very loving and effective.
18. I no longer live in the District
19. Over all our DS is a very godly man but is burdened with great responsibility. Our prayers go out to him.
20. I think that he's a good man. He was just getting started in his position when things developed as they did in the church. I'm not sure of how much he could have done that would have made things different.
21. We have a 25 year friendship -As pastoral colleagues we enjoyed frequent conversations about ministry -Since becoming DS the time and opportunity for such conversations is almost non-existent -The time pressures he faces may have caused him to make assumptions.
22. I always knew he was there for me - if I needed him.
23. Although we may not see eye to eye on some things, he is the leader and I respect him for that. Any time that I called, things would be taken care of. I really appreciate what he did during the difficult times of my ministry. I explained to him due to my health problems and other things I would take early retirement. He was supportive of that.
24. Never felt as though they really heard the real issues involved. I also felt as though I was seen as a disgruntled person and one of little experience, etc. and therefore, felt my portrayal of events were discounted as just young and lack of experience. DS and district however were very supportive in regard to my health issues.
25. All superintendents forget what it is like to be a pastor. Our system of moving ministers is solely dependent on the D.S. Without him we have little chance of moving up or on. I even have friends that made D.S. and they too became different afterwards.
26. My DS. is a top notch guy! I have a great respect for him. He may or may not have always acted in my personal best interest, but I recognize that it's not all about me. He has an entire district to consider. I do believe that he acted in the

best interest of all that was under his care at the time.
27. I have always had great relationships with my DS's, and I did this one as well. However, he was just not engaged. I tried to tell him what we were facing, and he seemingly did NOTHING to help, and at the times he was engaged, he was not unilaterally supportive of me or my staff. He gave an ear to those who were complainers. It was really, really disappointing for my wife and I, so I began to search for other opportunities.
28. We had and have a healthy professional relationship. My DS gave much room to develop, build and grow unique ministries.
29. I didn't leave the ministry for any reason except that there were no churches in my area currently, and I had to live here.
30. My district superintendent was very supportive considering the situation. I feel the "contact person" on the church board did not give the district superintendent the correct financial information when I accepted the call to pastor the church.
31. My leaving active ministry was no fault of my DS
32. My wife and I felt that a senior role as a pastor in a rural setting, was not for me. We felt that assisting a struggling church plant in a much larger city would benefit the church. We have constantly been reminded by district leadership that we are unassigned (makes us feel that we have no home district, or church family) I do feel that my D.S is very supportive and loving, I would call him my Pastor; in fact I do.
33. My D.S., though caring, at the same time too busy to give the quality support that would have been very helpful. Is it even possible for a D.S. to give the level of support especially to pastors of small churches?
34. Much of my frustration and ultimate decision to leave active ministry was a result of the lack of response from district superintendents other than my own. I felt abandoned by the denomination because of other districts unresponsiveness.
35. This is an interesting question, one which I feel is telling about where you think the problems may lie. Being a woman minister, my particular path, all upper leadership has been completely supportive. I have even tried to be placed in the Wesleyan denomination with one of their DS's support and was not able to do that. I have inadvertently landed in a very conservative pocket of our nation and find the gender issue to be critical primarily to the lay people, whose votes on pastors keep them from seeing what God can do through anyone who is willing.
36. I experienced him as understanding, helpful in his guidance, realistic, and respectful of my decision.
37. He was very helpful.
38. I felt a lack of concern for me personally.
39. Shut up and listen! There are many pastors screaming out for help and not a one is heard. We have issues that need to be dealt with, not swept under the rug. Also, those that have been hurt in ministry situations should not be forced to back down to the so called starter churches. In all actuality those are the churches we should be sending our most experienced pastors, and not the other way around.
40. Never seen him very much. I had two superintendents during my time and I can count on one hand the number of times they made an effort to come to me and

<p>41. Great person.</p>
<p>42. I thought I knew my DS well. I really trusted him. I had sought their counsel and input many times. I really trusted that he had this review process in his hands and I really trusted him that if there was a problem he would help me. But, sadly that apparently is not what happened. It has been almost 2 years, I still feel like my legs were blown out from under me. I'm not sure how to recover from it. All I ever wanted to do my whole life was fulfill my call to preach, but I feel like the church, my church, the church that I love and have given my life serving, has tossed me aside, and almost two years later I am still dealing with my feelings of hurt and betrayal. And not once, not ever in 2 years, has anyone in leadership in "my church" reached out to ask me how I'm doing or if I'm ok. That hurts in ways I don't have words to describe.</p>
<p>43. I feel that the D.S.'s I have worked with meant well, but often they decided to respond with, "What do you want to do?" I will support you if you leave or decide to stay. I did not choose to leave ministry, I knew going in, that some churches are broken beyond human repair. Jesus saves not me. But some D.S.' do not see this. They see failure on the Minister's part."The right minister will fix everything!" That is the reason why I feel that I am having trouble getting interviews in other districts. I believe that before a Pastor decides to resign, He or she should be required to meet with the D.S. one on one and then the local board. In my case, I made the decisions over the phone, thinking of the future of the church, and not my future in ministry. It hurts my pride when NON-Nazarene ministers are allowed to Pastor when there are dozens on our district ready and willing to serve!</p>
<p>44. In response the previous question, "to what degree did you personally trust your district superintendent to have your best interest at heart?" I believe the DS mostly has the local church's best interest at heart &amp; not the local pastor except for relocation. He is active in creating a local church crisis intervention policy &amp; bases on church stats &amp; the one recommendation at each crisis level is the voluntary or involuntary removal of the pastor.</p>
<p>45. I believe he was supportive up until I actually resigned and then I felt like I was dropped like a hot potato.</p>
<p>46. He had always been a friend, supportive of family -- especially the spouse over the years of service. He was always positive about church members and such. But he was concerned about churches in negative situations providing training (even at district cost) to help pastors and staff to improve. This was met at times (as in my situation) with local church opposition.</p>
<p>47. I believe I have already made it clear that what I have seen in my District is merely a part of a disconnected denomination that has become just another organization. What was once a heart of Holiness has now become Rome.</p>
<p>48. I was extremely disappointed that a rural pastor who was experiencing growth amidst an aggressive building program worked with a superintendent: 1) who failed to provide annual reviews 2) rarely communicated 3) when the situation was addressed in what I felt was strictly informative, the result was negative and reactionary We gave sacrificially, conducted nearly all the work to keep the</p>

<p>building and congregation in the best of "shape" and after several hard years we had to resign to keep from physical breakdown. As a pastor and wife we appreciate this time of renewal. We still live across the street from the building in which we devoted so much time, talent and treasure.</p>
<p>49. I will say that he was a great man personally, and I believe in his conviction to see the church advance. I do wish that at more times I would have received help from him and the entire district. He knew better than I the situation that I was entering into and wish he would have at least let me know what I was getting me and my family into. He knew the lack of support from area Nazarenes, but did little to see a team of people come around me. Any help I got, was self-induced (more help from non-Nazarenes in the area). Not receiving any communication after I told him I was stepping down really summed up our relationship in a negative way.</p>
<p>50. In the beginning he was very friendly and supportive, I called him only if there was something I really could not handle he was there but distant.</p>
<p>51. We have shared a great relationship and he has been supportive and encouraging in all of my endeavors to please the Lord. He was grieved and supportive when I was released from my position. He has been encouraging and supportive as I have sought to remain in ministry while becoming Bi-vocational in my work.</p>

Appendix J  
Personal Interview Summaries

## Personal Interviews with Six Currently Active (Sample A) Pastors

### Survey Questions

#### **1. How would you describe the circumstances that were in play when you were actively considering leaving active ministry?**

- a. “Legally” (what he means by this I was not able to get a clear response) the church should have closed—the General and District leadership should have stepped in and closed it much earlier. I was appointed. An interim superintendent was appointed.
- b. Minimal respect by longtime Christians; personal frustrations.
- c. Had pastored the church for 7 years with a growing congregation of 300+ members; There developed a power struggle between the longtime members who were used to being elected to boards etc. and the more recent members who were more forward looking—the “control group” didn’t like the new growth involvement. Was out of ministry for about 2 months, but worked on doctorate during this time.
- d. Conflict in the Church, personal disappointment with the situation, health reasons.
- e. He changed churches and the church he left was angry because he made the change. Felt the D.S. could have handled the situation better and avoid some of the fallout.
- f. My personal feelings were reflected in asking the question, “Should I go into secular work?” Said he thought this to be a general and common reaction to situations which were extremely difficult to handle.

#### **2. To whom did you turn for support and counsel during this time and what did you receive from them?**

- a. The acting D.S.; I was a bi-vocational pastor and needed some help. I had 4 years of military leadership training, and 4 years in corporate leadership which helped me get through this time, but the need for District Leadership was very evident.
- b. D.S., received words of encouragement, D.S. took time to pray with me, discussed the situation.
- c. My wife, plus a good friend called me every day to pray with me and to offer help.
- d. A layman friend who was understanding and supportive.
- e. Got no support from the D.S.
- f. 3 or 4 pastors on the district who were good friends and caring persons.

#### **3. Describe your relationship with your current (or former) district superintendent.**

- a. None. “I had to tell the D.S. that the church was closing.” He is not pastoring now.
- b. Positive and encouraging, open to conversation.
- c. Very good, always constructive and helpful.
- d. Did not consult the D.S.
- e. At present the relationship is cordial.
- f. “Very good! On a scale of 1-4 I would say 3.5.”

**4. Can you name specific things that you received from your district superintendent during this time of decision making?**

- a. I received nothing!
- b. He took me to breakfast (He paid for the breakfast) He was positive about working toward the outcome which made me feel positive and secure.
- c. None.
- d. None.
- e. He presented my resume to the Church which I now pastor.
- f. Communication with the D.S. He was very open and understanding. It was not difficult to talk with him.

**5. What do you think a district superintendent could do to be in a position to provide substantive guidance and encouragement when pastors are facing the decision to leave or to remain in active vocational ministry?**

- a. The D.S. needs to get his head in the game. He needs to lead by example and be a source of information regarding the status of a church. D.S. needs to have plans to close a church—not just let it die and fade away
- b. Establish accountability partners; D.S. availability; develop a network of resources for help and encouragement; geographical zone leadership. *NOTE: Has a great attitude regarding Church leadership (the D.S. particularly).*
- c. Stay in touch! Offer help if just to listen! Invest some time with hurting pastors! Most of all have specific prayer with the concerned pastor.
- d. I don't know. My relationship with the D.S. at this time makes me feel hamstrung because of the power structure that seems to get in the way of real and supportive communication.
- e. Be a pastor to the pastors! Open communication is vital. Be encouraging and positive. *NOTE: No negative tone or attitude in his responses at all.*
- f. With current communication technology it should not be difficult for D.S.s to be in touch with his or her pastors on a weekly basis. For example, establish a weekly email contact with information, prayer requests, and important items that affect the district and local churches. Make his or herself available for personal and private conversations.

## Personal Interviews with Five Currently Inactive (Sample B) Pastors

### Survey Questions

#### **1. How would you describe the circumstances that were in play when you were actively considering leaving active ministry?**

- a. Clearly wants to be considered as “still being in ministry” though not serving as pastor to a specific congregation.
- b. Leadership decisions: the Church was growing, reaching a good segment of the older generation in the community, but the Church Board openly stated that if these people were brought into the Church it would be full of older people and their respective families. They were opposed to that sort of growth. They made it clear to the pastor that this was not the kind of congregation they wanted to have.
- c. The Church was growing, we were gaining new Christians, but “old heads” tried to control the Church.
- d. Felt ministry was taking him in a different direction. In the process, left the Church of the Nazarene (is still in the Holiness camp) for full time “Recovery” ministry, prison, and divorce recovery for men. Finds it a very fulfilling ministry even though it is not a full time pastoral assignment.
- e. Felt he was forced out of the system. He knows of at least 4 others who were forced out as well. The Church Board wanted a change. The D.S. had six Churches open, but as he listed each one he would remark, “You would not fit that situation.” So he felt he had no alternative. His age may have been a factor.

#### **2. To whom did you turn for support and counsel during this time and what did you receive from them?**

- a. Looked to another pastor for a listening ear and a source for wisdom and counsel. While not in active ministry at this time he is now teaching in public school which he says is a source of ministry opportunity.
- b. Pastor friends with whom he had good rapport and confidence, and the counsel of the D.S. who was aware of the whole situation.
- c. The D.S. was somewhat interested, but the most support and counsel came from a retired pastor who had experience dealing with Church conflict.
- d. An older retired pastor who was in the Church.
- e. A fellow pastor on the district was his main source of counsel and support. This fellow pastor would call him several times during the week to offer support and pray with him.

#### **3. Describe your relationship with your current (or former) district superintendent.**

- a. Very good relationship with present D.S.
- b. Very cordial.
- c. The relationship with the D.S. was good at that time. The relationship with the current D.S. is good.
- d. Minimal contact.

- e. There is little if any contact with the current D.S. Appraisal of the situation is that the D.S. had been a very good District Secretary and because of his district role was elected as D.S. While he was a very good District Secretary he lacked the leadership skills to be D.S. Had good things to say about former D.S.'s all of whom made it a point to be in touch with the ministers on the district.

**4. Can you name specific things that you received from your district superintendent during this time of decision making?**

- a. He let me do what I felt I needed to do. He had to deal with issues all over the district but he allowed me the time and space to make my decision.
- b. Nothing! He seemed indecisive about resolving the situation. It ended up that the D.S. gave him the option to leave if he felt that's what he ought to do.
- c. Nothing.
- d. In 12 years the D.S. made contact with him maybe 2 or 3 times. Felt that bi-vocational role of a pastor was too often accepted as the norm. Felt that a bi-vocational role was expected of him.
- e. No comment.

**5. What do you think a district superintendent could do to be in a position to provide substantive guidance and encouragement when pastors are facing the decision to leave or to remain in active vocational ministry?**

- a. Be a pastor to his/her pastors. Provide a sympathetic and understanding presence. Something needs to be done to provide pastors a resource for troubled or difficult situations.
- b. To work with both the Church Board and the Pastor to resolve the issues. Too often the "spiritual" aspects of ministry take a backseat to the political or governmental aspects of ministry. One issue that seemed to be significant was that the Church Board met in secret without the pastor to discuss the future of the Church. The D.S. apparently ignored this issue. In the end the D.S. left it up to the pastor to make the decision to leave.
- c. Too often the D.S.'s hands are tied (a) by the local Church Board, and (b) the heavy load placed on the D.S.
- d. Accessibility to the local Church and the Pastor. He recognized that such accessibility is difficult—especially on larger (geographically) districts. Have the Districts set up a "Retreat Cabin" on the District Center so that pastors could retreat and renew in spiritual and emotional strength. Ask larger Churches to fund a revival or renewal service once a year for smaller Churches who cannot afford good evangelists.
- e. Needs good rapport with his/her pastors; available for serious situations 24/7; pastors need to be able to count on the D.S. for support; good 2-way communication.