

Canadian Mennonite Brethren Pastoral Report
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Abstract

Although pastoral retention and attrition rates have been studied, there is limited research documenting specific reasons for both. The present study attempts to define effective pastoral strategies for engaging in long-term ministry in various pastoral roles (i.e., youth pastor, senior pastor, assistant pastor, etc.). These findings can provide guidance in developing pastoral education, as pastors are being prepared to enter the ministerial environment and those in need of ongoing professional and personal development; provide resources to help equip congregations toward more supportive and encouraging environments for their pastors; and provide the necessary support tools for conference leaders and provincial and regional pastoral representatives to sustain and nourish their pastors. The ultimate goal is to provide information that identifies the main reasons for pastoral retention and attrition.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval was sought from the Canadian Mennonite University Research Ethics Board on December 9, 2005 and granted on December 20, 2005.

Procedure

On September 6, 2005, a group of individuals met to discuss the possibility of conducting a pastoral research trends study. In the following weeks, ideas were circulated that related to current issues of pastoral retention and attrition. Paralleling the development of the questionnaire, another study was conducted on the 1975-2004 MB Conference Pastoral Database. Findings from this study (September 28, 2005) provided some of the necessary parameters, as to the number of Canadian pastors, gender, terms, church locations, etc., to be included in the questionnaire. By October 4, 2005, a number of key issues had been identified and a group of 15 volunteers representing various roles in the Canadian MB office met for an incubation session to further delineate the specific pastoral issues for the development of the questionnaire. The final questionnaire was completed by December 8, 2005. December 9, 2005, an application for ethical approval was submitted to the Canadian Mennonite University Research Ethics Board on December 9, 2005 and granted on December 20, 2005. By January 25, 2006, the initial mailing and online survey open to participants (password protected). A short write-up of the study was published in the MB Herald on Feb 3, 2006, with a paralleling posting of the article on the MB Conference website. March 2, 2006, participants were sent a reminder through the quarterly mailer to all churches, encouraging pastors to complete their surveys.

Results

For the sake of clarity, results are reported using common statistical terms such as means (M) referring to statistically weighted averages; standard deviations (SD) referring to the range of scores around the mean; medians (Median) referring to the exact mid point of a set of scores; population response (N) referring to the number of participants who have responded; frequency referring to the number of responses made or participants who responded (similar to N), including both single (usually closed-ended questions) and multiple responses (usually open-ended questions) by individuals; difference scores between means (D); percentages (%), referring to the number of responses in comparison to the total number of valid responses possible; and correlations, referring to the relationship among variables (not casual relationships). Each of these is helpful in trying to identify various patterns represented by the group of participants.

Important to remember that throughout the reporting of the data in the following pages, that the term of unit of analysis be spelled out clearly in that it represents the respondents' perceptions, not the churches or the conference. Although this study focuses on perceptions of pastoral issues by pastors and former pastors, these are foundational in the attempt to understand what enhances pastor retention rates and what encourages pastor attrition rates. Thus, caution should be exercise in using this data in any way to represent the current congregations and/or conference, given that it is the pastors and former pastors that are the unit of analysis and not the congregations.

Number of Responses

A total of 1321 surveys were mailed to current and former pastors based on the most recent mailing lists based on two databases sources:

1. Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference Archives Database
 - Based on the archived annual reports from each of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren Churches
2. Canadian Mennonite Brethren Pension database.

The addresses from these two databases were combined into a mailing list database. The final list was screened for duplication of pastoral names producing a master list of 1321 potential participant addresses. Most (1303) were Canadian addresses and an additional 18 were sent to former Canadian pastors residing at US addresses. Another 16 requests came from Canadian pastors who were not in the present database, but discovered the study through the MB Herald news brief and requested to be part of the study. Thus, a total of 1337 survey packages were mailed during the first weeks of February 2006.

Hard Paper Copy Returned Incomplete

Of the 1337 mailings, a total of 266 surveys were returned incomplete. As seen in Table 1, 190 were returned to the Canadian MB office and an additional 76 were returned to the researcher's address for various reasons, the most predominant one being "Return to Sender". Thus, taking the 266 incomplete surveys into account, 1071 is a better

estimation of individuals correctly receiving the surveys.¹ Based on these findings, the current MB pastors and former pastors database will be updated.

Table 1. Reasons for returning surveys

Reasons for Returning	Numbers	Additional info
Returned to conference office		
“Return to Sender”	140	Envelopes were not opened.
People do not qualify	50	People don't qualify, pastor no longer with church, deceased people, elderly and not able to respond, etc.
Subtotal	190	
Returned to researcher's address		
Not interested in participating	2	Requested to have names deleted from database.
Not interested	3	Serving in different denominations.
Unable to respond	2	Ages 84, 92.
Unable to respond	2	Incapacitated; judged incompetent.
Unable to respond	3	No reason given.
Deceased	4	
Not Pastors	32	Couples (16) incorrectly identified.
Not pastors	28	Individuals incorrectly identified.
Subtotal	76	
Total	266	

Hard Paper Copy Returned Complete

A total of 194 participants completed the hard copy form and returned their survey by mail. The first surveys were received by mail within five days of the initial mailing (January 30, 2006) and continued to come in over the next four months. The last one was received June 2, 2006.

Online Copy – eStudy

The online survey was completed by a total of 127 entries. Most of these were completed within the first two weeks of the survey going online. The website was closed on March 31, 2006 at 12:00 a.m. Of the 127 online entries, 16 sessions were identified as repeat sessions (i.e., completion of the online survey over repeated sessions or as a result of Internet interruption). The repeat entries were identified and merged with the originals session to create single sessions. Three additional participants started the

¹ Of the 1071 mailings, it is still possible that incorrect addresses and incorrect “respondees” did not return the surveys, therefore this number is at best a modest estimation of reflecting the correct number of potentially eligible MB pastors and former pastors data pool.

survey, but completed less than 30% and their data were removed. Thus, a total of 108 participants completed the online version of the pastoral survey.

The length of time taken to complete the hard copy survey cannot be determined. However, based on the online version, those who completed ranged from 15:29:9 to 59:56:2 minutes ($M = 54:28:05$).

Total Hard Copy and Online Responses

Based on the 1071 potential correct mailings, a total of 302 or 28.2% (302/1071), which is a moderate survey response rate. Based on the current pool of participants who responded, 64.2% completed and mailed in their hard copy surveys, whereas 35.8% successfully completed the online version. Future polling of pastors should continue to provide both formats.

Profile of Participants

Gender

A total of 32 (10.6%) women and 267 (88.4%) men completed the survey², closely paralleling the current profile of pastors in the archival database (108 females = 9.6%; 1019 males = 90.4%, (Schönwetter, 2005)³.

Age

As seen in Table 2, the age ranged from 22 to 98 ($M = 51.8$; $SD = 14.9$; $Median = 50$). The largest age cohort was represented by the 41-50 year-olds.

Table 2. Age cohort represented	Frequency	%
22-30	11	3.7%
31-40	63	21.3%
41-50	86	29.1%
51-60	57	19.3%
61-65	18	6.1%
66-70	20	6.8%
71-80	28	9.5%
81-90	12	4.1%
91-98	1	.3%

² Three individuals chose not to provide their gender identification.

³ Note the 1975-2004 MB Conference Pastor database also identified 135 couples as serving or having served in pastoral couple roles.

Marital Status

As seen in Table 3, married individuals represented the largest group of participants (92.4%).

Table 3. Marital status	Frequency	%
Single	8	2.6%
Married	279	92.4%
Widowed	2	0.7%
Remarried	1	3.3%
Missing	3	1%
Total	302	

Children

The majority of participants were parents (88.1%) with adult (47%) as well as school-aged children (41.1%).

Table 4. Children represented	Frequency	%
Childless	24	7.9%
School-aged Children	124	41.1%
Adult Children	142	47%
Missing	12	4%
Total	302	

History

MB Employment History

Years Paid, Volunteered, and First Assignment

The range of years that participants have been in paid ministry included 0.5 to 50 years ($M = 13.22$; $SD = 10.89$; $Median = 9.5$). The range of years that participants have been in volunteer ministry included 0.25 to 50 years ($M = 8.74$; $SD = 8.62$; $Median = 6$). The age that participants began their first paid ministry spans from age 16 to age 69 ($M = 30.42$; $SD = 8.74$; $Median = 27$).

Previous Employment before Ministry

As seen in Table 5, 93 previous employment positions were listed. The top three included teaching (17.1%); construction, contracting, and carpentry (12.5%); and studying (7.1%). See Table 5 below for other employment positions.

Table 5. List of previous employment prior to ministry (N = 310)

• Teacher (53)	• Farming/Ranch (2)	• Golf course
• Construction, contracting, carpentry (39)	• First Aid (2)	• Graphic designer
• Student (22)	• Forest Service (2)	• Greenhouse Foreman
• Retail/Sales (14)	• Government (2)	• Grocery
• Business (11)	• Instructor (2)	• Hotel work
• Administrator (10)	• Insurance sales (2)	• Industrial first aid
• Counselor (9)	• Ministry (2)	• Journalist - Radio & Television
• Bus/truck driver (8)	• Music (2)	• Landscaping
• Missionary (7)	• Produce Clerk (2)	• Lawyer
• Management (6)	• Real estate (2)	• Letter carrier
• Social Worker (6)	• Service Industry (2)	• Logger
• Camp director, speaker (5)	• Shipping (2)	• Mining
• Engineer (5)	• Tree planting (2)	• Nanny
• Homemaker (5)	• Youth work (2)	• Office Manager
• Meat preparation (4)	• Assistant golf superintendent	• Operating equipment
• Pastor (4)	• Athletics Director	• Physiotherapist
• Accounting (3)	• Banking	• Police detective
• Computer Consult, Programmer (3)	• Biologist	• Power company
• Janitorial/Custodian/Carpet Cleaner (3)	• Campus Crusade for Christ	• Program director
• Nurse (3)	• Caterer	• Restaurant
• Office assistant (3)	• Chaplain	• Sawmill employee
• Professor (3)	• Customer service	• Security
• Self-employed (3)	• Day care	• Seminary
• Technician (3)	• Dental technician	• Supportive care
• Blue-collar jobs (2)	• Drafting (structural)	• Team Leader at a Hospital
• Bookstore (2)	• Evangelism	• Tile Setter
• Church planting (2)	• Factory	• Waiter
• College teacher (2)	• Field supervisor	• Welder
	• Foreman	
	• Forklift driver	
	• General Motors	

Mother's Main Occupation

Based on the 47 different occupations listed for participants' mothers in Table 6, the Homemaker, Housewife/keeper, Mother, "stay-at-home mom" description was the most common (68.3%). Not as common, but representing the next top two included careers in teaching/education (6.0%) and nursing (5.9%).

Table 6. List of mothers' careers (N = 382)

Homemaker, Housewife/keeper, Mother, "stay-at-home" (261)	Medical (3)	Guest ranch host (2)
Nurse (23)	Missionary (3)	Hewalome (2)
Teacher/Education (20)	Sales (3)	Pastor (2)
Farmer (8)	Seamstress/Sewing (3)	Administration
Admin/Legal Assistant (7)	Accountant (2)	Consultant
Office administrator/manager (5)	Bookkeeper (2)	Customer Service
Business (4)	Childcare/Daycare (2)	Dispatcher
	Clerk (2)	Factory worker

First-Aid Training	Pastoral support	Summer packing houses
Forensic chemist	Piano Teacher	Technician
Hairdresser	Property Manager	Therapist
Health care aide	Psychologist	Translator
Home Care	Realtor	Tree nursery
Human Resources	Receptionist	Vocal instructor
Interior decorating	Social Worker	Volunteer
Librarian	Speaker	Writer

Father's Main Occupation

Based on the 47 different occupations listed for participants' fathers in Table 7, the Farmer, Dairy, Rancher" description was the most dominant (28.7%). This might be reflective of the older age cohort being represented by the current study whose father's tend to the more common occupation of the previous generations of Mennonites – farming. Not as common, but representing the next top six included: minister (lay), pastor (10.0%), teacher, educator (8%), carpenter, builder, construction (7%), laborer (6.6%), tradesperson (6.1%), and retail, sales, business (4.7%).

Table 7. List of fathers' employment (N = 362)

Farmer/Dairy/Rancher (104)	Choir conductor/director (2)	Conference
Minister (lay)/Pastor (36)	City worker (2)	Cook
Teacher/Educator (29)	Counselor (2)	Delivery Man
Carpenter/Construction (49)	Custodian (2)	Disabled
Tradesperson (22)	Evangelist (2)	Dealer
Retail/Sales/Business (17)	Jail guard/Police Officer (2)	Firefighter
Administrator (8)	Manager/Supervisor (2)	First-Aid Training
Bus/truck driver (6)	Musician (2)	Mechanic
Business (6)	Real estate (2)	Nurse
Missionary (5)	Air Traffic Controller	Photographer
Professor (5)	Auctioneer	Politician
Medical Doctor (4)	Bank inspector	Purchaser
Engineer (3)	Bookkeeper (Russia)	Railroad engineer
Entrepreneur (3)	Carnival owner	Writer
Factory worker (3)	Childcare services	
Meat Cutter/Inspector (3)	Civil servant	

First MB Ministry Term

Leadership Profile During First MB Ministry Term

As seen in Table 8, during their first term of ministry, 50% of the participants perceived themselves as involved, related, and feeling (18.2% and 31.8%), 23.8% described themselves right in the middle, and the remaining 22.5% perceived themselves as analyzing, theorizing and thinking. This is fascinating, given that many pastors in their first position seem to be actively involved with the people they serve.

Second, participants more homogeneously view themselves as doers and participators ($M = 4.35$) as compared to watchers and viewers. Notice here the stronger clustering of participants on values of four and five (also reflected in a low STD). This again is expected and supports the strong involvement findings above. These findings would suggest that many pastors in their first term tend to be highly motivated.

Third, they respondents tend to lean more toward risk taking ($M = 3.79$) and less toward being observers. Here again, a strong clustering of results around values of three to five (with a low STD). These results support the two above in that pastors new to ministry, are highly motivated, involved, and more willing to take risks. The latter more so, given the lack of experience that may have when in their first term of ministry.

Table 8. Perceptions during first MB ministry term

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
How you thought about things during your first MB ministry term								
A. Involvement, relating, feeling (1) Analyzing, theorizing, thinking (5)								
Frequency	55	96	72	58	10	2.56	1.11	291
Percentage	18.2	31.8	23.8	19.2	3.3			
How you did things during your first MB ministry term								
A. Watcher, viewer (1)..... Doing, participating (5)								
Frequency	2	8	25	112	150	4.35	.80	297
Percentage	0.7	2.6	8.3	37.1	49.7			
B. Observer (1)..... Risk taking (5)								
Frequency	2	29	63	127	66	3.79	.94	287
Percentage	0.7	9.6	20.9	42.1	21.9			

Also of interest are the general characteristics that best described their first terms as leaders. As seen in Table 9, participants characterized their identity slightly more defined by self as compared to being dictated by the church ($M = 2.48$). However, the clustering of responses is much more variable around values of one through to four (notice the high STD), suggesting that this variable is not viewed the same by all participants. There are a number of participants who felt that their identity could have been defined by both church and self (17.2%), and 25% who felt the church defined their identity (19.5% and 5.6%).

Second, although participants as a group characterized themselves slightly more toward intimacy versus isolation ($M = 2.64$). Starting their careers as pastors, more of the participants had a focus of relating with people, quite important when first starting a position with any church. However, the spread of results was again distributed between one through four (notice the high STD), suggesting that participants are not homogenous, but diverse as a group. Some participants (23.2%) did not perceive themselves as intimate.

Third, as a group, participants described themselves strongly toward generativity ($M = 1.57$) as compared to stagnation (low STD), suggesting when starting their ministry, they perceive themselves as much more giving in terms of their leadership skills. This is supported by their strong perceptions of industriousness as compared to inferiority and by their higher perceptions of involvement, doers, and risk taking as seen above.

Fourth, most participants perceived themselves as intreguous versus despair in their first term ($M = 1.80$). Here again, first term dynamics are very reflective of most individuals in their first few months (even year) their high level of motivation that most first time employees demonstrate often referred to as the “honeymoon” phase. Finally, in their first terms, 54.3% of the participants described themselves as extroverted, 27.2% as in the middle, and a remaining 15.5% as introverted. Careers that focus on working with people, such as ministry, tend to attract extroverted individuals.

Table 9. Which best characterizes your leadership style when you first started MB ministry?

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
A. I knew who I was (1)..... The church dictated my identity (5)								
Frequency	78	90	52	59	17	2.48	1.24	296
Percentage	25.8	29.8	17.2	19.5	5.6			
B. Intimacy (1).....Isolation (5)								
Frequency	35	118	73	60	10	2.64	1.04	296
Percentage	11.6	39.1	24.2	19.9	3.3			
C. Generativity (giving my best) (1)..... Stagnation (5)								
Frequency	173	99	7	16	2	1.57	.84	297
Percentage	57.3	32.8	2.3	5.3	0.7			
D. Industrious (1).....Inferior (5)								
Frequency	125	115	29	23	6	1.89	1.00	298
Percentage	41.4	38.1	9.6	7.6	2			
E. Integrity (1).....Despair (5)								
Frequency	135	108	35	15	4	1.80	.93	297
Percentage	44.7	35.8	11.6	5	1.3			
F. Extrovert (1).....Introvert (5)								
Frequency	69	98	82	43	4	2.38	1.04	296
Percentage	22.8	32.5	27.2	14.2	1.3			

Current Ministry

Employment

Part-Time – Full-time

For the most part, participants were fully employed (74.8%). A few were half time (8.9%), and the remaining ranged between quarter-time to three-quarter time (16%).

Table 10	Frequency	%
Quarter Time	8	2.6%
Third Time	6	2%
Half Time	27	8.9%
Two-Thirds Time	8	2.6%
Three-Quarter Time	14	4.6%
Full-Time	226	74.8%
Total	289	
No responses	13	

Employment for Supplement Income

Although a number of participants did not report employment or stated that they were not permitted by their church to work outside of the church to supplement their income (29.9%), those that did (70.1%) tended to rely on their pension, have small businesses, work as counselors, or teach. Other less frequently reported supplemental sources of income are reported in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Supplemental sources of income (N = 197)

• Blank, None, Not permitted to work outside of church (59)	• Weddings (3)	• Moonlight
• Retired, pension (11)	• Chaplain (2)	• Nurse
• Business (10)	• Janitorial/cleaning (2)	• Pulpit supply
• Counseling (9)	• Missionary (2)	• Purchasing Agent
• Teach college, university (9)	• Music lessons/services (2)	• Real Estate Investor
• Painter/Construction (7)	• Volunteer (2)	• Ref'ing
• Speaking (7)	• Builder	• Respite
• Writing/Publishing (7)	• Buy and sell vehicles	• Retail
• Farming/Ranching (6)	• Camp speaker	• Revival ministries
• Spouse works (6)	• Caregiver	• Special needs
• Teach, substitute (6)	• Conferences	• Supervise high school
• Consulting (5)	• Elections	• Support seniors home
• Bus driver/operator/guide (3)	• Employment Insurance	• Team leadership dev
• Carpentry (3)	• Fundraising	• Warehousing
• Funerals (3)	• Graphic design	• Wendy's
• Investments (3)	• Health Care	• Workshops/Seminars
• Rentals (3)	• Management	
	• Ministry to seniors	

Spouses Current Occupation

What is interesting, most of the participants did not report that their spouses worked in the section (only 3% reported spouses as providing supplemental income). Below, 220 of the occupations listed provide an income (homemaker can be assumed in most cases not to be revenue generating). However, in the Table 12, there are a number of spouses who work, whether out of necessity or out of their own need to work, this is not known. Of the 92.4% participants who were married, their current spouses' occupations included 75 different occupations. The top five included homemaker, wife,

mother (28.6%), teacher/educator (12.7%), nurse (6.8%), administrative assistant, clerical (6.5%), and pastor (4.9%).

Although many of the positions listed below in Table 12 might provide the needed additional income to supplement that of the pastor's salary, there are additional benefits to the pastors. For instance, the homemaker, wife, mother is critical in the nurturing of the children and providing a "safe" environment for the pastor to potentially find support and solitude away from the church; the teacher, educator provides invaluable resources (e.g., advice, ideas, reflection) for an important area of ministry, teaching; the nurse most importantly provides resources for a sense of caring for people, an invaluable resource for pastoral care; the administrative assistant provides resources of organization, and time management; and the spouse as pastor, provides the qualities of partnership, potentially including teamwork, sharing of resources and ideas, and many other qualities of working together. So the type of work a spouse does has the potential to benefit the pastor. Future research might want to probe further to see if spouses' careers are truly beneficial beyond just the additional income it provides.

Table 12. Spouses' current occupation (N = 308)⁴

• Homemaker, Wife, Mother (88)	• Photographer (2)	• Massage Therapist
• Teacher/Educator (39)	• Physical Therapist, Aide (2)	• Medical
• Nurse (21)	• Author/Writer	• Medical Office
• Administrative assistant/Clerical (20)	• Bus driver	• Medical receptionist
• Pastor (15)	• Care worker	• Missionary
• Sales/Retail (8)	• Conference	• Nursing Instructor
• Piano Teacher (7)	• Data Entry	• Operations Coordinator
• Office admin/manager (6)	• Cook	• Organist
• Counselor (5)	• Coordinator	• Part-time support with disabled
• Accountant (4)	• Dental Assistant	• Police officer
• Business owner (4)	• Director of Boys' Group Home	• Postal worker
• Teacher's Assistant (4)	• District counselor	• Realtor
• Administration (3)	• Dog Groomer	• Receptionist
• Bookkeeper (3)	• Consultant	• Researcher
• Children's ministry (3)	• Educational assistant	• School Principal
• Draftsperson/Designer (3)	• Esthetician	• Shipper/receiver in Christian Bookstore
• Librarian (3)	• Exec Director	• Social Service
• Professor (3)	• Executive assistant	• Speaker
• Volunteer (3)	• Farmer/Rancher	• Student
• Bank Teller/ Loans Mgr (2)	• Florist	• Therapist
• Advertising/Marketing (2)	• Hair Stylist	• Tool & Die
• Artist/Painter (2)	• Insurance agent	• Transport Canada inspector
• Child Care (2)	• IT manager	• Treasurer
• Communications (2)	• Lawyer	• Voice instructor
• Legal assistant/secretary (2)	• Manager of Investment Company	
• Medical Assistant (2)		
• Pastoral support (2)		

⁴ Reason that there are more spousal occupations than there are married pastors (308 vs. 279) is supported by the fact that some spouses who work more than one job (i.e., teacher or nurse and homemaker).

Current Terms

Length

Based on the most current term hired (see Table 13), most pastors are hired during the months of September (20.8%) and August (19.4%) with terms ending in June (24.6%) and July (16.1%). As seen in Table 14, term durations range from 1 to 24 years, although terms of one to five years are the most common: four year terms (14.8%), three and five year terms (both 13.0%), two year terms (12.2%) and a one year term (11.3%).

Table 13. Term start and end dates

	Term Start Dates		Term End Dates	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
January	29	10.2	7	5.9
February	9	3.2	7	5.9
March	10	3.5	4	3.4
April	10	3.5	4	3.4
May	15	5.3	8	6.8
June	22	7.7	29	24.6
July	36	12.7	19	16.1
August	55	19.4	14	11.9
September	59	20.8	11	9.3
October	20	7	1	0.8
November	11	3.9	4	3.4
December	8	2.8	10	8.5
Total	284		118	
No Responses	18		184 ⁵	
	302		302	

Table 14. Term duration

Years	Frequency	%
1.00	13	11.3
2.00	14	12.2
3.00	15	13.0
4.00	17	14.8
5.00	15	13.0
6.00	7	6.1
7.00	3	2.6
8.00	7	6.1
9.00	2	1.7
10.00	4	3.5
11.00	1	.9
12.00	4	3.5
13.00	2	1.7
14.00	3	2.6
15.00	1	.9
16.00	2	1.7
17.00	2	1.7
18.00	1	.9
23.00	1	.9
24.00	1	.9
Total	115	100.0

⁵ Note that a number of participants did not complete this question given that they are still in current positions.

Current Position

Position

As seen in Table 15, the current responses from participants are strongly represented by senior pastors (59.1%), followed by associate pastors (33.0%), assistant pastors (5.0%), interim pastors (2.2%) and intern/apprentice pastors (0.7%). This pattern of types of pastors is fairly representative of the 1975-2004 MB Pastor Database (see Table 15, columns 4-6; (Schönwetter, 2005), again suggesting that the data is fairly representative of the various types of pastors currently serving MB conference churches in Canada. However, note that in both the current study and the 1975-2004 MB Pastor Database, the senior pastor position represents that largest group in the MB conference, followed by the associate pastor position and less so for the assistant, interim, and intern/apprentice. All results need to be prefaced with these representations.

Table 15. Participants represented

	Frequency	%	2004 Pastor Database	Frequency	%
Senior	165	59.1	Pastor*	960	58.2
Associate	92	33.0	Associate	688	38.1
Assistant	14	5.0	Assistant	21	1.2
Intern/Apprentice	2	.7	Intern/Apprentice	32	1.8
Interim	6	2.2	Interim	104	5.8
Total	279	100.0			
No Response	23				
	302				

Note: Pastor* may not always represent a senior position in the 2004 Pastor Database.

Gifting Specialty

As seen in Table 16, participants provided information on their gifting and/or specialties. Of interest are the top 5, all of which scored 46% or higher. These include pastoral care, encouragement, discipleship, congregational life and small groups. Based on these findings, pastors perceive themselves as being well equipped to handle more of the general congregational needs.

Unique specializations or “giftings” in areas such as language, campus ministries, international ministries, new church plants, men, music, missions, integration and midweek programs, although low in scores, tend to fairly represent the needs based on the populations within the churches requiring those needs to be met. However, somewhat surprising are the low numbers of those feeling gifted or specializing in ministries to women (7.9%) in comparison to men (16.9%), especially given that many MB congregations are more likely to be represented by slightly larger population of women in comparison to men.

Of further interest is the breakdown of gifting or specialties by position. Even though the concentration of specialty of most positions focuses on pastoral care, each

position type seems to be championing a set of specific gifts. Senior pastors are also gifted to work with congregational life, encouragement, discipleship, and prayer; Associate pastors share some of the similar giftings as well as small groups, Christian education, and music; and the Assistant pastors have specialties working with small groups and encouragement.

Table 16. Areas of gifting or specialties represented by pastors

Areas of Gifting or Specialties Represented	Frequency	%	Positions				
			Senior	Associate	Assistant	Intern	Interim
Language	23	7.6%	13	4			
Women	24	7.9%	5	10	3	1	1
Campus Ministries	27	8.9%	5	15	2		
International	33	10.9%	16	13	1		1
New church plant	47	15.6%	37	3		1	
Other	49	16.2%	32	12	4	1	
Men	51	16.9%	32	14			1
Music	59	19.5%	22	31	2	1	1
Missions	62	20.5%	32	16	4		2
Integration	66	21.9%	36	20	4		2
Mid Week	66	21.9%	28	26	3		2
Spiritual Discovery	73	24.2%	40	22	3	1	5
Worship	75	24.8%	36	30	2		
Outreach/Orientation	86	28.5%	49	25	3		1
Evangelism	98	32.5%	60	27			2
Visitation	105	34.8%	56	28	5		
Prayer	110	36.4%	70	22	2	1	4
Christian Education	111	36.8%	55	39	4	2	1
Ministry Development	116	38.4%	68	32	4		3
Small Groups	139	46.0%	66	47	7		6
Congregational Life	151	50.0%	101	36	3	1	2
Discipleship	168	55.6%	95	56	5		3
Encouragement	177	58.6%	99	52	9	1	4
Pastoral Care	194	64.2%	110	59	7	1	5
Total	2110						

Note: the percentage values do not add up to 100% given that a participant may have identified with a number of areas of gifting.

Areas of Generational Specialties Represented

Based on Table 17, the participants work with various generational groups, ranging from the youngest (early childhood) to the oldest groups in their congregations. The top two generational specialties that most participants tend to feel competent in working with are families (64.6%) and the middle aged (49.3%). This is not surprising given that many participants are married, have families, and tend to represent the middle age cohort (see Tables 2, 3, and 4), and are more likely to feel comfortable and have experience with this generation of the congregation.

The next grouping of generational specialties which are fairly similar in percentage scores and fairly removed from the top two, include: young married, college and career, seniors, retirees, and the youth. This makes sense given that fewer of the participants represent these generational groupings. However, these groups are just as important, requiring the services of pastors.

The groups that participants had the least specialization with include the children, junior high and senior high youth (as separate groups these score low, but combining them and placing them under "youth" would move these two into the middle category of specialties), singles, early childhood, and alternative. This is somewhat concerning, given that those representing the younger people are the potential members of the future and also the group from which potential future leaders can be developed. More attention by pastors needs to be directed to these participants.

Also of interest is the breakdown of generational specialties by position. Even though the concentration of specialty of most positions focuses on family, each position type seems to be championing a specific set of other areas, some overlapping. Senior pastors tend also to be specialized to work with middle age, young married, and seniors; Associate pastors tend to be more focused on college/careers, youth, young married, senior/junior high youth, and middle aged; and the Assistant pastors have specialties working with middle aged, retirement, youth, and singles.

Table 17. Areas of generational specialties represented.

Areas of Generational Specialties Represented	Frequency	%	Positions				
			Senior	Associate	Assistant	Intern	Interim
Alternative	7	2.3%	3	1		1	
Other	12	4.0%	6	4	1	1	
Early Childhood	25	8.3%	9	13	1	1	
Singles	47	15.6%	19	15	4		2
Junior High Youth	48	15.9%	13	27	2		1
Children	49	16.2%	19	24	3	1	
Senior High Youth	58	19.2%	20	30	1		1
Youth	82	27.2%	34	35	5		1
Retirement	84	27.8%	49	19	5		3
Seniors	94	31.1%	61	17	5		4

College/Career	102	33.8%	53	40	1	1	1
Young Married	114	37.7%	71	31	3	1	1
Middle Aged	149	49.3%	106	29	5		3
Family	195	64.6%	123	50	6		4

Note: the percentage values do not add up to 100% given that a participant may have identified with a number of generational areas.

Another useful statistic involves the generational specialties according to the church location represented by the pastor. As seen in Table 17b, the “family” and “middle aged” specialty is shared across pastors representing rural, suburban, and urban churches. However, the specialties following are different for each group. For instance, the pastors representing rural churches rank their following generational specialties with “seniors”, “youth” and “young married”. Pastors from suburban churches tend to rank their following generational specialties with “young married”, “college/careers”, “retirees”, “youth” and “seniors”. The pastors from urban churches tend to rank their following generational specialties with “college/careers”, “young married”, “seniors”, “youth” and “retirees”.

Table 17b. Areas of generational specialties by church location represented.

Areas of Generational Specialties Represented	Frequency	%	Church Location		
			Rural	Suburban	Urban
Alternative	7	2.3%	1	3	3
Other	12	4.0%	1	9	1
Early Childhood	25	8.3%	2	10	8
Singles	47	15.6%	7	15	24
Junior High Youth	48	15.9%	17	15	14
Children	49	16.2%	9	20	15
Senior High Youth	58	19.2%	17	21	18
Youth	82	27.2%	25	27	29
Retirement	84	27.8%	20	30	28
Seniors	94	31.1%	27	27	36
College/Career	102	33.8%	21	34	42
Young Married	114	37.7%	25	48	38
Middle Aged	149	49.3%	37	55	47
Family	195	64.6%	47	67	70

Note: the percentage values do not add up to 100% given that a participant may have identified with a number of generational areas.

Current Job Description

Participants had an opportunity to define their job descriptions, listing all the activities that they were responsible for. Based on the participants' 1507 responses, a total of 30 different types of duties were identified. The most common were preaching (12.1%), teaching (7.1%), administration (6.3%), visitations (5.6%), pastoral care (4.6%) and leadership (4.0%).

Table 18. Participants' job descriptions (responses = 1507).

• Preaching (182)	• Care Giving (7)	• Committee meetings (2)
• Teaching (107)	• Community relations/outreach (7)	• Creative Programming (2)
• Administration (95)	• Funerals (7)	• Deacons (2)
• Visitations (84)	• Junior High (7)	• Discernment (2)
• Pastoral Care (69)	• Meetings (7)	• Discovery class/groups (2)
• Leadership (60)	• Ministry development (7)	• Drama (2)
• Care/Cell/Small Group (48)	• Strategic planning (7)	• Empowering (2)
• Vision/Direction Casting (43)	• Church planting (6)	• Executive teams (2)
• Counseling (41)	• Church/congregational life (6)	• Fellowships (2)
• Worship (40)	• College and career (6)	• HR management (2)
• Retirement (37)	• Marriage prep/enrich (6)	• Life Needs Ministries (2)
• Leadership Development (33) (recruitment, training, mentoring, staff, leadership).	• Midweek (6)	• Management team (2)
• Senior High/Youth (27)	• Ministries (6)	• Men's ministries (2)
• Discipleship (25)	• Team leadership/building (6)	• Mobilizing people (2)
• Prayer (23)	• Assist/accountability lead pastor (5)	• People issues (2)
• Bible Study (18)	• Coaching staff (5)	• Public relations (2)
• Planning (18)	• Coordinating (5)	• Reading (2)
• Mentoring (15)	• Eldership (5)	• Schedule (2)
• Music leading/planning (15)	• Family ministries (5)	• Set up (2)
• Platform Service/Sunday Service/Planning (15)	• Integration/welcome newcomers (5)	• Speaking engagements (2)
• Evangelism (14)	• Senior pastor (5)	• TV station (2)
• Outreach (14)	• Seniors ministry (5)	• Women's ministry (2)
• Preparation (14)	• Church Council (4)	• Acquiring volunteers
• Sermon preparation (14)	• Church	• Advocate for staff
• Equipping (13)	• direction/purpose/revitalization/growth (4)	• Assessing
• Children's/Kids' Ministry (12)	• Ecumenical/Ministerial (4)	• Assisting churches with Church structure
• Conference Duties (10)	• Hospitality (4)	• Baptisms
• Education (10)	• Oversight/Overseeing (4)	• Camps
• Encouraging (10)	• Volunteer (4)	• Campus ministries
• Program Development/Planning (10)	• Budget/Finances (3)	• Chapel/speaking at chapels.
• Blank (9)	• Bulletins/Communication/Announcements (3)	• Chaplain
• Direction/Vision setting (9)	• Choir (3)	• Church growth
• Mission (9)	• Facility/Building management (3)	• Church moderator
• Problem solving/troubleshooting (9)	• One on one (3)	• Comfort
• Shepherding (9)	• Recruitment (3)	• Creative movement
• Spiritual Dev, Direction, Formation, Leadership (9)	• Student Ministries (3)	• Custodial
• Staff Dev, Coordination, leadership, management (9)	• Supervision (3)	• Database management
• Connecting/Relating With People (8)	• Technical/Sound/Lights (3)	• Deal with absentee members
• Organizing (8)	• Video Production (3)	• Design team of Sun
• Special/Large Events (8)	• Web (3)	• Facilitation of programs
• Study (8)	• Weddings (3)	• Fundraising
• Training (8)	• Young Adults (3)	• Gift discovery
• Writing/developing curriculum/resourcing (8)		• Implementing strategies
• Adult Ministries (7)		• Interaction with leaders
		• Intercessory prayer
		• Leading volunteers
		• Liaison with faith community
		• Listening
		• Mail

- Management
- Managing Staff
- Marketing
- Media ministries
- Ministry Formation Processes
- Ministry to seniors
- Modeling
- Multi Media
- Newsletter
- Nurturing
- Office communication
- Office work
- Operations Manager
- Orientation
- Pastor pastors and spouses
- Pastor to seniors, part-time
- Pastoral development- classes
- Pastoral equipping.
- Pastoral Search Committee
- Personal development
- Personal reading/study/prayer
- Personal study
- Philosophy
- Policy development
- Power Point
- Premarital counseling
- Preschool: program to volunteers
- Pre-teen education
- Protecting
- Pulpit supply
- Records
- Reflection
- Relating to parents
- Road Crew
- Running Alpha
- Safety policy procedure/training
- Secondary Pastoral Ministry responsibilities
- Seminary classes toward Masters
- Seniors' Council
- Seniors' Homes
- Setting goals and strategies
- Staff evaluation
- Sunday School programming
- Supplies organizing
- Support and builder of various ministry teams
- Talking to leaders of ministries
- Train volunteers
- Ushers
- Vacation Bible School
- Values

Current Leadership Profile

The general characteristics that best described pastors in the current term as leaders are interesting. As seen in Table 19, 39.9% of the participants perceived themselves as involved, related, and feeling (14% and 25.9%), 28.7% described themselves right in the middle, and the remaining 31.5% perceived themselves as analyzing, theorizing and thinking. In comparison to their perceptions during their first term of ministry (see Table 8), participants in their current term define themselves less as involved, relating, and feeling ($M = 2.81$ vs. $M = 2.56$), but still below the midpoint of the scale.

Second, participants more homogeneously view themselves as doers and participators as compared to watchers and viewers. This pattern is even stronger in their first term (see Table 8) in comparison to their current term ($M = 4.35$ vs. $M = 4.13$). Notice here the stronger clustering of participants on values of four and five (also similar to their first term perceptions).

Third, they leaned more toward risk taking and less as observers, although a little less than in their first term of ministry ($M = 3.60$ vs. $M = 3.79$). Here again, a strong clustering of results around the values of three to five.

Table 19. Perceptions during current MB ministry term

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
How you thought about things during your <u>current</u> MB ministry term								
A. Involvement, relating, feeling (1) Analyzing, theorizing, thinking (5)								
Frequency	40	74	82	80	10	2.81	1.10	286
Percentage	14%	25.9%	28.7%	28%	3.5%			

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
How you did things during your <u>current</u> MB ministry term								
A. <u>Watcher, viewer (1)..... Doing, participating (5)</u>								
Frequency	17	33	134	105	17	4.13	.84	289
Percentage	5.9%	11.4%	46.4%	36.3%	5.9%			
B. <u>Observer (1)..... Risk taking (5)</u>								
Frequency		17	33	134	105	3.60	1.02	294
Percentage		5.9%	11.4%	46.4%	36.3%			

Also of interest are the general characteristics that best described their current terms as leaders. As seen in Table 20, participants characterized their identity slightly more defined by self as compared to being dictated by the church and this self-identity is much stronger than it was for their first term as pastors ($M = 1.94$ vs. $M = 2.48$; see Table 9). This may be reflective of pastors who have become more confident in their roles, thereby having a strong identity that is dictated or defined by self vs. church. This finding is also strengthened by the fact that the clustering of responses is less variable around values of one through to four as compared to the higher level of variability in Table 9 ($STD = .96$ vs. 1.24). There are fewer participants who felt that their identity could have been defined by both church and self (9.2% vs. 17.2%) and who felt the church defined their identity (10% vs. 25%).

Second, participants as a group characterized themselves slightly more toward intimacy versus isolation and these findings are stronger for the current position as compared to their first term ($M = 2.42$ vs. $M = 2.64$; see Table 9). These higher perceptions of intimacy may reflect experience, in that as a pastor spends more time in a job working with people, there is a good likelihood that his or her ability to become more involved or intimate with parishioners will also increase.

Third, as a group, participants described themselves strongly toward generativity as compared to stagnation (low STD). However, this finding is not as high as that found in their first term of ministry ($M = 1.87$ vs. $M = 1.57$; see Table 9). This makes sense in that over time, the expectations of the pastor brought on by self and/or the congregation, may become overwhelming and even unattainable (see Table 35, unreasonable expectations by church), thereby waning the efforts of the best intentioned pastors. The perceptions of generativity are further supported by their strong perceptions of industriousness, paralleling perceptions of their first terms ($M = 1.87$ vs. $M = 1.89$).

Fourth, most participants perceived themselves almost equally integrious in their current as their first term. Finally, participants perceived themselves as less extroverted in their current as compared to their first terms. As a group, there are fewer participants who perceive themselves as staunch extroverts (e.g., scoring a 1) in comparison to the first term. However, overall, they still tend to perceive themselves as more toward the extroverted perspective. Again, a career that focuses on working with people would encourage and/or attract these types of characteristics.

Table 20. Which best characterizes your leadership style in your current MB ministry?

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
A. I knew who I am (1)..... The church dictates my identity (5)								
Frequency	106	130	27	25	4	1.94	.96	292
Percentage	36.3%	44.5%	9.2%	8.6%	1.4%			
B. Intimacy (1)..... Isolation (5)								
Frequency	37	142	67	38	5	2.42	.93	289
Percentage	12.8%	49.1%	23.2%	13.1%	1.7%			
C. Generativity (giving my best) (1)..... Stagnation (5)								
Frequency	125	115	24	19	8	1.87	1.00	291
Percentage	43%	39.5%	8.2%	6.5%	2.7%			
D. Industrious (1).....Inferior (5)								
Frequency	105	128	29	22	7	1.96	.99	291
Percentage	36.1%	44%	10%	7.6%	2.4%			
E. Integrity (1).....Despair (5)								
Frequency	133	105	27	19	6	1.83	.99	290
Percentage	45.9%	36.2%	9.3%	6.6%	2.1%			
F. Extrovert (1).....Introvert (5)								
Frequency	45	99	98	42	5	2.53	.98	289
Percentage	15.6%	34.3%	33.9%	14.5%	1.7%			

Reflection of the Last 12 Months

Each of the dynamics listed in Table 21 are seen as major challenges for pastoral retention (Ducklow, 2005). Based on participants' most current 12 months (or in the case of those who retired, their last 12 months) in their ministry (see Table 21), they strongly perceive their ministry as a "life-style commitment" and that their position "is never just a job, but a calling". Both of these items scored well above all other items and above 4.2 on a 5-point Likert-scale, indicating significant value to most participants. These findings are also supported by participants' main reasons for accepting a position or looking for future positions, were "calling" is perceived as very important (see Tables 25 and 26).

The next set of perceptions scoring in the strong, but moderate range include "empathize with the spiritual struggles of people daily", "empathize with the emotional struggles of people daily", "my work is my life", "on call 24 hours a day", "over-closeness of church and family' boundaries (i.e., success at church becomes celebrations at home; tragedies at church impact my family life)", "I should not be concerned about my financial needs, God will provide", and "Omni-competent' – having to be good at

too many roles". The first five perceptions closely parallel those found earlier where pastors feel involved and a high sense intimacy. Working with people will encourage these types of stronger perceptions. Feeling a stronger sense of "omni-competence" is a theme that continues throughout most of the questionnaire. As seen at various places throughout the report, participants feel a sense of overwhelming expectations that the congregations expect (see Tables 23 with demand; see Table 30 with feeling overworked; see Table 35 with feeling higher levels of unreasonable expectations from the church).

Perceptions scoring in the lowest range (below the midpoint of the scale = 3) include: "loving work more than domestic life (e.g., raising children, taking care of a household, etc.)", "at times, it feels that others own my soul, my marriage and my future", "my identity is best defined by my congregation (as they would see me)", "vulnerability to sexual temptation", and "I let the congregation "own" me". These findings reflect a strong, overall healthy group of participants.

Although the group means for each of the above are reflective of a "healthy" group, there is good reason to be concerned for the few respondents that represent some of the extremes (i.e., "red flags"). For instance, 42 (14.2%) felt strongly that their work was their life. According to Ducklow (2006), high scores indicate a predisposition to attrition, if the pastoral position is the only thing that brings meaning to the pastor. Ideally, a balance is suggested, whereby the pastor finds meaning not only in his/her career, but also in other areas of life (i.e., family, hobbies, soul mates, etc.). Second, 49 (16.9%) scored high "on call 24 hours", suggesting another "red flag" for potential burnout. Here again, balance is necessary. Pastors need to experience personal time as well as family time in order to meet the challenges of the pastorate role. Third, 25 (8.6%) scored high on "over-closeness of church and family "boundaries (i.e., success at church becomes celebrations at home; tragedies at church impact my family life)" predisposing pastors to the potential for burnout. Becoming too involved in the lives of church members is noble, but not at the potential cost of the pastor's own family. Balance is critical for successful leadership. Fourth, 34 (11.7%) scored high on "I should not be concerned about my financial needs, God will provide". Although this is often viewed as a "godly" perspective, reality does require a married pastor to provide for his/her family. When financial support is limiting or less than adequate to support a pastor and his/her family, this is known to cause extreme anxiety, usually for the spouse (Ducklow, 2006). Fifth, 35 (12%) scored very high on "'Omni-competent' – having to be good at too many roles". As mentioned earlier, high demands and/or expectations placed onto pastors by congregations, whether real or perceived, is a major concern that leads to potential burnout.

Sixth, 7 (4.2%) scored high on "Loving work more than domestic life (e.g., raising children, taking care of a household, etc.)", 10 (3.4%) scored high in "at times, it feels that others own my soul, my marriage and my future", 6 (2%) scored high on "My identity is best defined by my congregation (as they would see me)", and 3 (1%) scored high on "I let the congregation 'own' me". As pastors, the former may be rewarding providing the needed affirmation many might need. However, extreme scores in this area potentially predispose individuals to higher levels of marital and family stress, potentially

leading to major marital and family dysfunctions. Singles who score high on both these items are equally vulnerable. Even though they may not be responsible for a spouse or a family, it is critical that "others" do not "own their soul" or their "future". Established boundaries that protect for both single and married pastors from having others "own" them is very critical. Seventh, 8 (2.7%) scored high on "vulnerability to sexual temptation", with an additional 39 scoring moderately (13.3%). Although this is quite common for males, it is important to keep this in check and to maintain a level of accountability with others to strengthen and maintain the integrity of the person. Balance is necessary for healthy pastors to meet each of these challenges in order to reduce the potential of attrition.

Table 21. How do you best describe the last 12 months of your ministry?

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much so	Mean	STD	N
A life-style commitment								
Frequency	2	7	14	109	164	4.44	0.75	296
Percentage	0.7	2.4	4.7	36.8	55.4			
Is never just a job; it is a "calling"								
Frequency	3	12	40	98	141	4.23	0.91	294
Percentage	1	4.1	13.6	33.3	48			
Empathize with the spiritual struggles of people daily								
Frequency	0	28	83	145	37	3.65	0.82	293
Percentage		9.6	28.3	49.5	12.6			
Empathize with the emotional struggles of people daily								
Frequency	1	30	87	143	31	3.59	0.83	292
Percentage	0.3	10.3	29.8	49	10.6			
My work is my life								
Frequency	12	43	101	97	42	3.39	1.03	295
Percentage	4.1	14.6	34.2	32.9	14.2			
On call 24 hours a day								
Frequency	21	56	88	80	49	3.27	1.16	294
Percentage	7.1	19	29.9	27.2	16.7			
Over-closeness of church and family "boundaries (i.e., success at church becomes celebrations at home; tragedies at church impact my family life)								
Frequency	10	56	95	106	25	3.27	0.98	292
Percentage	3.4	19.2	32.5	36.3	8.6			
I should not be concerned about my financial needs, God will provide								
Frequency	17	58	90	91	34	3.23	1.08	290
Percentage	5.9	20	31	31.4	11.7			
"Omni-competent" – having to be good at too many roles								
Frequency	23	79	75	80	35	3.09	1.16	292
Percentage	7.9	27.1	25.7	27.4	12			

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much so	Mean	STD	N
Loving work more than domestic life (e.g., raising children, taking care of a household, etc.)								
Frequency	49	96	90	51	7	2.56	1.04	293
Percentage	16.7	32.8	30.7	17.4	2.4			
At times, it feels that others own my soul, my marriage and my future								
Frequency	67	99	65	52	10	2.45	1.13	293
Percentage	22.9	33.8	22.2	17.7	3.4			
My identity is best defined by my congregation (as they would see me)								
Frequency	55	118	75	39	6	2.4	1.00	293
Percentage	18.8	40.3	25.6	13.3	2			
Vulnerability to sexual temptation								
Frequency	63	105	78	39	8	2.4	1.05	293
Percentage	21.5	35.8	26.6	13.3	2.7			
I let the congregation "own" me								
Frequency	89	126	56	20	3	2.05	0.93	294
Percentage	30.3	42.9	19	6.8	1			

Perceptions of Ministry Success

Key to continuing in any given career is a sense of experiencing success, that the success experienced is directly related to or "owned" by the person, and that the cause of success is stable and controllable (Perry *et al.*, 1997; Rotter, 1990). As seen in Table 22, most participants (60.4%) have experienced success in the last 12 months of their ministry; participants are split on perceiving the success as directly related the person (23.6%) or the environment (24.7%); and split on the cause of the success being stable (35.7%) or changing (35.7%). There is also a stronger tendency of perceiving the cause of success as part of the person or others (42.8%) as compared to outside of the control of the person or other people (22.6%). This makes sense in that a number of participants responded that the success of ministry is very much under the control of God. Thus, for the most part, these results demonstrate a consistent positive pattern for participants. They experience success, attribute it either to themselves (ownership of the success) or to the situation (given that they work with people, this can be any number of reasons, such as significant others, prayer, God, etc.), and see success as controllable by the person or others.

One concern though, is the finding that 13% of participants who have not experienced success in the last 12 months. Although representing only a small number, these participants should be visited and encouraged to ensure that they still experience meaning in their positions. Current issues in their ministry and/or personal life may be influencing their ability to appreciate their careers.

Table 22. Perceptions of ministry success

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
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Considering all aspects of your ministry, how successful do you feel you were during the last 12 months? (1) Not At All Successful Very Successful (5)

Frequency	5	33	66	146	42	3.64	0.92	292
Percentage	1.7	11.3	22.6	50	14.4			

Is the cause of your success in ministry during the last 12 months something that (1) Is due to yourself... Is due to the situation (5)

Frequency	13	55	149	55	16	3.02	0.89	288
Percentage	4.5	19.1	51.7	19.1	5.6			

Is the cause of your success in ministry during the last 12 months something that (1) Changes over time.... Is stable over time (5)

Frequency	17	84	81	86	15	2.99	1.03	283
Percentage	6	29.7	28.6	30.4	5.3			

Is the cause of your success in ministry during the last 12 months something that (1) Is controllable by you or other people... Is uncontrollable by you or other people (5)

Frequency	18	108	97	53	12	2.77	0.96	288
Percentage	6.3	37.5	33.7	18.4	4.2			

Emotions Experienced

As seen in Table 23, experiencing a range of emotions is quite normal for participants while in ministry. Of specific interest are the types of emotions that seem to be the most represented by participants' experiences. Top of the list is acceptance, an affirmation type of emotion. This is wonderful to see, given the significance of acceptance in a career that involves working with so many different types of people.

A number of life-giving, positive emotions have scores well above the median of the scale. These include cooperativeness, joy, satisfaction, contentment, and assertiveness. Of the negative emotions, anxiety is the only one that scores above the median for the group of participants. This is quite common in a career that daily deals with people and adds to the challenges that are usually motivate many to face. Although most of the other negative emotions reflect scores well below the median (3) for participants as a group, it is important that those who provide support to the MB pastors be vigilant of pastors who consistently experience these negative emotions as displayed by the respondents scoring in the higher categories (4 or 5) on each of these negative emotions or lower categories of the positive emotions (1 or 2). For the most part, it is quite common for situations to arise that provoke negative emotions or thwart positive ones from being experienced. However, if experienced continuously by pastors, there is a greater likelihood of fatigue and potential apathy. An encouraging visit by the conference pastor and/or support from a mentor (see the following sections that consistently point to the significance a mentor can play) on can provide timely encouragement and/or affirmation.

Table 23. In the last 12 months of ministry, how much of the following emotions have you experienced as a result of ministry?

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much so	Mean	STD	N
1. Acceptance								
Frequency	7	22	40	118	105	4.00	1.01	292
Percentage	2.4	7.5	13.7	40.4	36			
2. Cooperativeness								
Frequency	3	12	52	172	52	3.89	0.78	291
Percentage	1	4.1	17.9	59.1	17.9			
3. Joy								
Frequency	6	37	55	135	60	3.7	0.999	293
Percentage	2	12.6	18.8	46.1	20.5			
4. Satisfaction								
Frequency	9	33	64	126	61	3.67	1.025	293
Percentage	3.1	11.3	21.8	43	20.8			
5. Contentment								
Frequency	12	36	70	138	39	3.53	1.00	295
Percentage	4.1	12.2	23.7	46.8	13.2			
6. Assertiveness								
Frequency	8	31	102	125	25	3.44	0.89	291
Percentage	2.7	10.7	35.1	43	8.6			
7. Anxiety								
Frequency	17	63	80	85	47	3.28	1.144	292
Percentage	5.8	21.6	27.4	29.1	16.1			
8. Compliance								
Frequency	26	86	115	56	5	2.75	0.93	288
Percentage	9	29.9	39.9	19.4	1.7			
9. Helplessness								
Frequency	61	81	60	61	29	2.71	1.28	292
Percentage	20.9	27.7	20.5	20.9	9.9			
10. Demand								
Frequency	60	75	80	49	24	2.66	1.22	288
Percentage	20.8	26	27.8	17	8.3			
11. Fear								
Frequency	55	94	74	50	17	2.59	1.15	290
Percentage	19	32.4	25.5	17.2	5.9			

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much so	Mean	STD	N
12. Anger								
Frequency	74	89	61	48	20	2.49	1.23	292
Percentage	25.3	30.5	20.9	16.4	6.8			
13. Passiveness								
Frequency	55	113	81	35	5	2.37	1.00	289
Percentage	19	39	27.9	12.1	1.7			
14. Withdrawal								
Frequency	72	107	53	44	12	2.36	1.14	288
Percentage	25	37.2	18.4	15.3	4.2			
15. Distrust								
Frequency	99	78	54	37	21	2.32	1.27	289
Percentage	34.3	27	18.7	12.8	7.3			
16. Rejection								
Frequency	94	93	51	32	20	2.28	1.22	290
Percentage	32.4	32.1	17.6	11	6.9			
17. Defiance								
Frequency	139	84	38	20	8	1.87	1.06	289
Percentage	48.1	29.1	13.1	6.9	2.8			

Spiritual Growth

As seen in Table 24, for the most part, participants perceive their current spiritual journey as growing. This is refreshing to hear and participants as a whole should be commended for their continued striving in this foundational area as pastors. Again, key for the success of pastors are mentors and or spiritual coaches that probe and encourage all pastors concerning their spiritual growth, especially those who are experiencing a spiritual decline. In this case, 18 participants perceive a decline and an additional 15 are neutral (no change either way).

Table 24. Spiritual growth

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
Spiritual journey: Decline (1)..... Growth (5)								
Frequency	1	17	15	165	96	4.15	.79	294
Percentage	0.3%	5.8%	5.1%	56.1%	32.7%			

Ministry Decision Making Factors

There are a number of influential factors that play a key role for a pastor in making a decision on accepting a term position. As seen in Table 25, 25 different factors were rated by participants representing three different terms:

- Their first term (with implications for hiring new pastors),
- Their current term (with implications for retaining pastors in MB churches), and
- Their future terms (implications what it would take to encourage retention into future MB church positions).

The 25 factors are ranked in order from the most important to the least important in helping with the decision making for pastors. The top three factors scoring well above all others included personal conviction, a sense of calling, and a passion for ministry. Next are three very interesting patterns. First, the increase of a factor's relevance from the first position to the most recent or current position, followed by the anticipated future position. For instance, the significance of a Bible study group, discernment by a group, divine encounter, family, finances, long term, mentor, mission, passion, personal conviction, sense of calling, significant group of friends, spouse, and significant friend, are all key factors in the decision making process that increase in influence as a pastor moves from his/her first position to the current position and anticipates a future position.

Second is the pattern where factors that for the very first term seemed important but the influence drops for both the current and future positions. These include another pastor, educator, parent, and a short-term position. The third pattern captures factors that stay fairly stable in influence across all three positions. These include circumstances, crises, discernment by a church, invitation, professional career desire, referral, and school. Each of these patterns add to the complexity of trying to understand the different dynamics that are important for a pastor in making a decision to go into ministry.

Table 25. How important are each of the following in your decision to go into ministry for each of your terms?

	Your 1 st Position			Your Current/Last Position			Future Positions		
	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N
Personal conviction	4.31	0.81	255	4.37	0.81	208	4.45	0.79	195
Sense of calling	4.29	0.97	255	4.41	0.95	211	4.55	0.87	199
Passion	4.03	0.99	251	4.14	0.94	206	4.39	0.85	195
Discernment by a church	3.81	3.51	247	3.72	1.37	208	3.96	1.18	195
Invitation	3.73	1.36	249	4.00	1.26	208	3.88	1.16	194
Spouse	3.57	1.55	243	4.26	1.02	207	4.55	0.86	196
Divine encounter	3.49	1.31	248	3.5	1.34	208	3.96	1.15	194
Circumstances	3.46	1.28	252	3.64	1.22	207	3.5	1.23	198
Another pastor	3.34	1.47	256	3.01	1.42	215	2.96	1.38	199
Discernment by a group	3.26	1.40	247	3.43	1.44	206	3.74	1.27	196
Family	3.20	1.40	249	3.33	1.43	209	3.54	1.41	189

	Your 1 st Position			Your Current/Last Position			Future Positions		
	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N
Mission	3.11	1.38	244	3.36	1.29	201	3.75	1.23	186
Long-term	2.88	1.50	233	3.40	1.42	200	3.49	1.42	184
Significant group, friends	2.68	1.36	241	2.88	1.40	202	3.14	1.35	193
Professional career desire	2.65	1.41	253	2.93	1.44	203	2.93	1.48	192
Close Friend	2.63	1.38	244	2.72	1.44	201	3.15	1.36	189
Mentor/Coach	2.60	1.42	248	2.50	1.35	201	3.13	1.27	190
Educator	2.54	1.37	247	2.07	1.29	199	2	1.17	188
Referral	2.50	1.44	256	2.97	1.39	203	2.86	1.27	190
Parents	2.23	1.24	248	1.82	1.09	201	1.88	1.15	190
Bible Study Group	2.17	1.28	247	2.22	1.37	202	2.55	1.35	193
Short-term	1.84	1.24	227	1.74	1.20	193	1.7	1.19	179
Financial	1.76	1.11	251	2.08	1.24	205	2.4	1.36	193
Crisis(es)	1.73	1.20	248	1.94	1.23	203	1.92	1.22	191
School counselor	1.28	0.72	239	1.28	0.77	195	1.13	0.49	185

Reasons for Accepting a Position

Participants were also given an opportunity to provide feedback about influential factors for accepting a position in an open-question format (e.g., provide additional thoughts). A total of 890 responses were represented by 591 different terms⁶. As seen in Table 26, the most frequent reason for accepting a position included being called or invited by the church or congregation or representative such as the board, followed by a calling, a career opportunity, a spiritual calling, and so on. These responses confirm the rankings of personal conviction and a sense of calling as seen in Table 25 above.

Table 26. Reasons for accepting a position

Terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
• Called, Invitation by church, congregation, council/board	61	41	21	39	8	2	1			173
• Call, Led	59	25	17	9	2	2	2			116
• Career advancement, move, opportunity, experience, open door, new challenge	44	21	8	11	3	2		1		90
• Call of God/Divine Call/Guidance/Leading	43	26	15	4	1	2	1			92
• Good fit; congregation/staff; in line with gifting	35	16	14	3	2					70

⁶ It is possible for a participant to have provided information for each of up to 9 terms.

Terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total
• Conviction/Desire/Interest/Passion/Excitement	27	14	5	2		3				51
• Church challenge/need/desperation	16	15	5	4	6	1	1	1		49
• Church planting	6	13	6	4	4	2	1			36
• Interim/short term/summer position	8	3	3	3	5	3	2	2	2	31
• Discernment/Direction	11	3	3	1						18
• Geographical location; proximity to agin parents	7	4	1	3	1					16
• Encouragement/advice of friends	11	2	1	1						15
• Call by Conference, Mission Board, Camp		5	3	4	2	1				15
• Affirmation	8	1	1	1	1					12
• Home church	9									9
• Seminary training/financial help	5	3	1							9
• Church vision/mission	4	4								8
• Internship	7	1								8
• Family considerations	7									7
• Vote/unanimous acceptance	7									7
• Ability/Gifting	5			1			1			7
• Sense of peace/freedom/joy	5	2								7
• Learn under great leaders/mentors/people		5	2							7
• Referral	3	3								6
• Invitation by senior pastor	3	2		1						6
• Longing/Desire to return to ministry		2		2			1			5
• Called by home church	4									4
• Prayer	2		2							4
• Discontent in other vocation	2									2
• Youth Ministry opening	2									2
• Opportunity during retirement		2								2
• Needed a job/financial			2	1						3
• Other: Adventure, evangelism, volunteer		1	1				1			3
Total Number of Responses	401	214	111	94	35	18	11	4	2	890
Total Number of Terms Represented	251	141	81	50	32	20	9	5	2	591

Note: In some cases, participants provided multiple responses and thus the larger number of responses versus number of respondents.

Parental and Spousal Influence on Vocational Ministry

Significant others play an important role in people's career decisions. To test this, participants responded to two questions focusing on parental and spousal influence on vocational ministry. Although not a very strong influence, 39.7% of participants perceived their parents to have an influence on their vocational ministry decision, whereas spouses seem to have a much larger perceived influence on participants' decisions (60.7%). These results need to take into account the fact that some pastors

started their ministry careers later in life, were spouses would have more of an influence. Also, spousal influence is not a major contender for those who are single when hired.

Table 27. Parental and spousal influence on vocational ministry

	1 Strongly Encouraged	2	3	4	5 Strongly Discouraged	Mean	STD	N
Your parents' influence on having you or one of your siblings enter vocational ministry								
Frequency	48	61	120	23	23	2.68	1.11	275
Percentage	17.5	22.2	43.6	8.4	8.4			
Spousal influence on having you enter vocational ministry								
Frequency	83	79	72	19	14	2.26	1.13	267
Percentage	31.1	29.6	27	7.1	5.2			

Reasons for Continuing in Ministry

The past set of results were important in understanding what factors were influential in a pastor's decision for entering or starting a new term in ministry. However, those results address only one aspect concerning the retention issue of pastors. Equally important to the retention of pastors are the factors that are critical in the continuation of ministry. As seen in Table 28, thirteen different factors were scored by pastors. These are ranked in descending order. The top three factors scoring well above 4.00 include spouse, personal development, and spiritual direction. Based on these findings, it is imperative that as the conference continues to find ways to retain its ministers, energy be focused in ensuring that spouses are somehow included in the support structure. Further interviews of pastoral spouses (both wives and husbands) will uncover what specific needs they require that the conference might be able to support. This might include more personal time for the couple, supporting retreats like marriage encounter to help strengthen their relationship and given that the pastor's job description is one that focus major energy on other families, nourishing pastors and their spouses will not only enhance their relationship, but also provide role models for marriages in the congregation.

Also important are ways in enhancing pastors' personal development and supporting their spiritual direction. Personal development may be supported through various opportunities for personal reflection, such as spending personal time in some sort of retreats (see the section on the success secrets of pastors for more information). Similar for supporting spiritual direction, spiritual retreats and opportunities to be challenged by leading pastors and those who have spiritual passion should be provided. Again, further probing of pastors in these areas would lend more specific details as to how best the conference can support them.

The next group of factors scoring at a moderately high level includes immediate family, overall congregation, professional development, mentors/coaches, church support

group, peers, an external support group, a ministerial group, and parents. Each of these should receive further attention by the conference that will encourage and support pastors. For instance, the immediate family needs should be probed and needs met through resources, resource people, and support. Overall congregations need to learn more about what it means to be a supporting group for their pastors and how to create smaller, more intimate support groups within the congregation that will provide additional support that pastors need. Workshops at both the conference level as well as video resources from the conference could be circulated from church to church to help encourage this at the congregational level. Professional development opportunities need to be continued and supported by the conference office that encourages further development and specifically how to deal with those issues that cause the most stress for the pastor. Mentors and/or spiritual coaches as well as peers need to be encouraged and identified early in the pastor's career and then continuously probed about the relationship between pastor and mentor/coaches and peers as well as time given to pastors to establish these important supportive relationships. These relationships are seen as significant in almost all careers and are also very critical to pastors (see the section on the success secrets of pastors).

Critical to retaining the MB pastors is sensitivity to supporting those factors that play a critical role in their desire to continue ministry. The conference needs to find ways to encourage each of these factors on a continuous manner (similar to a health care provider who has a series of questions that probe for the well-being of her patients). This includes sensitivity in knowing how to encourage pastors to actively pursue and maintain these ministry boosters. In the case of major stressors in marriage and/or family, immediate support through mentoring, marriage and family retreats, counseling, etc., should be provided early rather waiting until the situation has escalated and requires serious professional help.

Also as part of pastors' training, their needs to be a focus on teaching them to identify these critical support factors and how to seek them, how to nourish them, and how to make the most of these, as they are so important in their career.

Of least significance are building projects.

Table 28. How critical are each of the following to continue ministry?

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very Much So	Mean	STD	N
Spouse								
Frequency	3	2	5	16	204	4.81	0.64	230
Percentage	1.3	0.9	2.2	7	88.7			
Personal development								
Frequency	3	12	10	102	103	4.26	0.87	230
Percentage	1.3	5.2	4.3	44.3	44.8			

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very Much So	Mean	STD	N
Spiritual direction								
Frequency	8	12	28	72	114	4.16	1.05	234
Percentage	3.4	5.1	12	30.8	48.7			
Immediate Family								
Frequency	8	20	41	75	82	3.90	1.10	226
Percentage	3.5	8.8	18.1	33.2	36.3			
Overall congregation								
Frequency	6	8	51	98	62	3.90	0.94	225
Percentage	2.7	3.6	22.7	43.6	27.6			
Professional development								
Frequency	13	15	37	100	63	3.81	1.09	228
Percentage	5.7	6.6	16.2	43.9	27.6			
Mentors/Coaches								
Frequency	18	20	31	82	78	3.79	1.22	229
Percentage	7.9	8.7	13.5	35.8	34.1			
Church support group								
Frequency	10	25	46	96	51	3.67	1.08	228
Percentage	4.4	11	20.2	42.1	22.4			
Peers								
Frequency	7	25	56	101	38	3.61	0.99	227
Percentage	3.1	11	24.7	44.5	16.7			
External support group								
Frequency	18	37	55	79	37	3.35	1.17	226
Percentage	8	16.4	24.3	35	16.4			
Ministerial group								
Frequency	29	53	73	55	23	2.96	1.17	233
Percentage	12.4	22.7	31.3	23.6	9.9			
Parents								
Frequency	68	43	53	41	20	2.56	1.33	225
Percentage	30.2	19.1	23.6	18.2	8.9			
Building project(s)								
Frequency	101	65	42	15	7	1.97	1.08	230
Percentage	43.9	28.3	18.3	6.5	3			

Length of Terms

A total of 284 participants provided length of terms⁷. Range of terms spanned from 1 month to 240 months, with a mean of 59.50 months (STD = 43.37) and a median of 50.5 months (central point in the range). The most common terms in order of frequency include 12 months (N = 15), 24 months (N = 14), 36 months (N = 14), 60 months (N = 12), 48 months (N = 9), 72 months (N = 9), 23 months (N = 8), 35 months (N = 8), 84 months (N = 7), 33 months (N = 5), 66 months (N = 5), 69 months (N = 5), 81 months (N = 5), 96 months (N = 5).

Participants' Ministry Future

Of the 238 participants who responded (see Table 29), 61.8% are willing to stay with the MB conference in some form of ministry, whether it is to receive term renewal, to find employment in another MB church, or to move up, reclassification to a more senior position. Discouraging is the level of attrition that is anticipated following participants' completion of terms. A total of 38.2% of the participants will be leaving the MB conference for various reasons including retirement (17.2%), employment in another denominational church (4.2%), leaving church ministry (13%), no desire to ever return (3.8%).

Table 29. Participants' desire for their ministry future

What is your hope when you complete your current term or current employment?	Frequency	%
Receive term renewal	72	30.3%
Find employment in another MB church	52	21.8%
Retirement	41	17.2%
Leave church ministry	31	13.0%
Move up, reclassification, to a more senior position	23	9.7%
Find employment in another denomination church	10	4.2%
No desire to ever return	9	3.8%
Total	238	

Reasons for Resignations

A total of 464 responses were represented by 377 different terms⁸. As seen in Table 30, the most frequent reasons for resignation included leadership conflict, goal accomplishment, pursuing education, and another call. A careful grouping of reasons into positive, less positive, and neutral reasons is very revealing.

⁷ Some were still in their first term and did not report when their terms might end.

⁸ It is possible for a participant to have provided information for each of up to 9 terms.

For the positive reasons, representing 43.53% of the reasons for resignation, these include accomplished goals, tasks, and term completion; continuing or pursuing education; another call or invitation; career advancement or role change; God's call or divine call; church plant; to allow or enable someone else; maternity leave; and an amiable or mutual decision. These reasons are helpful to be included in the training of future pastors, in preparation of finding positive ways to transit between completing a term and being able to leave in a positive manner.

Unfortunately, the negative reasons tend to overshadow the positive in representing the group. A total of 44.85% of the reasons include leadership conflict or disillusionment; congregational conflict; family circumstances, crises, or losses; fatigue, exhaustion, overworked, or too challenged; conflict with the congregation including negative evaluations, tensions, and intolerance; burnout or long term disability; unprepared/resource poor/limitations, uncertainty, lack of personal confidence; decline in health; non-confidence, contract not renewed, asked to resign, terminated; lack of church finances/crises/door closed; conflict – misunderstanding, unclear/unethical expectations; lack of support/validation/thwarted; effectiveness/passion waning, stagnation; conflict – vision; personal; other: denominational change, boredom; financial; lack of support from MB leadership; conflict – undermined; and gender issues. Based on these findings, here too, preparation of pastors either formally through school or informally through effective mentoring and/or spiritual coaching through more senior pastors might provide the support that will allow pastors to be victorious when faced with these negative situations and provide the opportunities for continuing in MB ministry positions.

The neutral category represented only 11.64% of the total responses and included: retirement; need or time for renewal or change; geographical move or relocation; and age. These are reasons that are not changeable and do not necessarily hamper the participant's ability to serve in the MB church. Although age may incapacitate certain leaders for reasons of health, their experiences would serve well as they mentor the younger generations of pastors.

Table 30. Reasons for position resignation

Terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total	%
• Leadership conflict/disillusionment	30	11	6	2		1	1			51	10.99%
• Accomplished goal(s), tasks/term completion	14	10	9	3	1	4	1	4	2	48	10.34%
• Continued/Pursue Schooling/further education/training	29	9	4	1	1					44	9.48%
• Another call/invitation	35		4		1	2				42	9.05%
• Career advancement/role change	8	16	5	5						34	7.33%
• Retirement	6	2	5	2	5	4	3	2		29	6.25%
• Congregational conflict, need changing	8	3	12		1					24	5.17%

Terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total	%
• Family circumstances, dynamics/crisis/loss	6	6	2	4	3					21	4.53%
• God's call; Divine Call	8	8								16	3.45%
Terms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	total	%
• Fatigue/exhausted, overworked, too challenging	3	7	5							15	3.23%
• Conflict – congregation, negative evaluation, tensions, intolerable		12	2							14	3.02%
• Need/time for change/renewal	6	2	1	4	1					14	3.02%
• Burn-out/LTD	6	3	1	1						11	2.37%
• Unprepared/resource poor/limitations, uncertainty, lack of personal confidence	7	3								10	2.16%
• Decline in health	3	4		1	2					10	2.16%
• Church plant	3	4	2							9	1.94%
• Non-confidence, contract not renewed, asked to resign, terminated			4	3			1			8	1.72%
• Church finances/crises/doo closed	2	5		1						8	1.72%
• Conflict – misunderstanding, unclear/unethical expectations	8									8	1.72%
• Geographical move/relocation	4	2			1					7	1.51%
• Lack of support/validation/thwarted	3	1		1						5	1.08%
• Effectiveness/passion waning stagnation	4		1							5	1.08%
• Conflict – vision	2	3								5	1.08%
• Age	4									4	0.86%
• Allow/enable someone else	3				1					4	0.86%
• Personal	1	1		1						3	0.65%
• Other: Denominational change, boredom		1	1			1				3	0.65%
• Financial	2			1						3	0.65%
• Maternity leave	2	1								3	0.65%
• Amiable/mutual decision	2									2	0.43%
• Lack of support from MB leadership	2									2	0.43%
• Conflict – undermined	1									1	0.22%
• Gender issues	1									1	0.22%
Total Number of Responses	213	114	64	30	17	12	6	6	2	464	
Total Number of Terms Represented	192	73	40	30	18	12	6	4	2	377	

% of total terms represented ⁹	50.9	19.4	10.6	8.0	4.8	3.2	1.6	1	.5	
% representation from 1975-2004 database	67.8	20.1	7.1	2.9	1.6	.2	.1	.1	0	

Note: In some cases, participants provided multiple responses and thus the larger number of responses versus number of respondents.

Pastoral Competencies

Almost all careers have critical competencies that are necessary to complete daily tasks. For the current study, 28 were identified using a pseudo-Delphi approach with a team of conference staff and pastors as part of developing 28 critical competencies defining the role of a pastor. Of these 28, 23 were perceived as fairly important, receiving scores 4 or above on a 5-point scale. The remaining 5 competencies scored between 3.45 and 4, although lower than the previous competencies, these were still perceived high on the scale. Thus, all 28 competencies were viewed as important.

Table 31. Pastoral competencies

Pastoral Competencies	How important is this to your career to be successful?			How confident do you presently feel in this competency?			To what extent did your training prepare you for this?		
	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N
• Commitment	4.65	0.63	283	4.28	0.82	274	3.36	1.16	273
• Communicating	4.61	0.61	285	3.96	0.73	280	3.45	1.03	279
• Team-work	4.56	0.68	281	4.02	0.88	275	3.07	1.13	273
• Leading	4.45	0.72	283	3.81	0.84	277	3.17	1.08	273
• Family time	4.44	0.81	281	3.89	0.82	275	2.74	1.21	271
• Developing other leaders	4.41	0.83	283	3.5	0.91	277	2.6	1.09	274
• Listening	4.41	0.68	279	3.92	0.76	273	3.08	1.16	266
• Accountability	4.39	0.81	285	3.89	0.89	279	2.97	1.27	272
• Self care	4.39	0.79	280	3.51	0.89	275	2.81	1.16	272
• Encouraging	4.33	0.67	281	3.96	0.87	276	3.04	1.02	271
• Taking initiative	4.32	0.73	279	3.83	0.88	275	2.97	1.09	273
• Time management	4.30	0.73	282	3.61	0.86	275	2.92	1.06	274
• Delegating	4.26	0.75	282	3.53	0.92	276	2.55	1.07	274
• Self-awareness	4.23	0.80	277	3.8	0.80	270	2.84	1.13	269
• Conflict managing	4.22	0.78	283	3.42	0.92	277	2.59	1.21	275
• Teaching	4.21	0.71	282	3.96	0.83	277	3.62	1.07	277
• Care-giving (church)	4.15	0.79	285	3.82	0.83	278	3.18	1.09	274
• Organizing	4.13	0.75	283	3.68	0.83	277	2.95	1.07	272
• Self-esteem	4.12	0.87	278	3.63	0.93	274	2.8	1.08	269
• Problem-solving	4.10	0.77	278	3.7	0.82	273	2.78	1.05	270
• Preaching	4.08	1.10	284	3.82	1.00	278	3.6	1.17	277

⁹ Note that the % of total terms represented in the present study is fairly representative of the 1975-2004 database with exception of 4, 5, 6, terms.

Pastoral Competencies	How important is this to your career to be successful?			How confident do you presently feel in this competency?			To what extent did your training prepare you for this?		
	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N	Mean	STD	N
• Self-time	4.03	0.84	276	3.44	0.89	270	2.61	1.07	266
• Dealing with emotions	4.00	0.79	280	3.62	0.84	273	2.53	1.16	272
• Creativity	3.94	0.89	280	3.53	0.91	273	2.58	1.15	271
• Administration	3.88	0.81	286	3.6	0.97	281	2.58	1.17	277
• Story telling	3.64	1.04	279	3.39	0.94	271	2.45	1.04	266
• Consoling	3.61	0.85	279	3.52	0.90	271	2.75	1.08	271
• Counseling	3.45	0.99	283	3.31	0.99	275	3.00	1.21	272

Of interest is the rank ordering of competencies. As seen in Table 31, the top 30% ranked competencies in terms of importance include commitment, communicating, teamwork, leading, family time, developing other leaders, listening, accountability, and self care. Each of these is critical to the success of a minister. A delightful surprise is how high family time was scored, given the significance of a healthy family in supporting any career. A number of other patterns worth noting are:

- The differences between the mean scores on importance and the confidence level of the competency and,
- The difference between importance and training.

Importance vs. Confidence

The difference between the mean scores on importance and confidence provides insight on areas that pastors might benefit from more professional and/or personal development. These differences ranged from .91 to .14 between these means. Those that were demonstrated a difference (\underline{D})¹⁰ of 0.50 or higher include competencies such as:

- Developing other leaders (\underline{D} = .91)
- Self care (\underline{D} = .88)
- Conflict managing (\underline{D} = .80)
- Delegating (\underline{D} = .73)
- Time management (\underline{D} = .69)
- Communicating (\underline{D} = .65)
- Leading (\underline{D} = .64)
- Self-time (\underline{D} = .59)
- Family time (\underline{D} = .55)
- Teamwork (\underline{D} = .54)
- Accountability (\underline{D} = .50)

¹⁰ \underline{D} = difference between the means. For instance, the difference in means on developing other leaders from how important the participant viewed it (4.41) compared to how competent the participant felt about this (\underline{D} = 4.41 - 3.50 = .91).

Importance vs. Training

The difference between the mean scores on importance and prior training also provides insight on areas that pastors might benefit from more professional and/or personal development. The range of differences between these two were much higher than those found between importance and competence, ranging from .45 to 1.81. Those that demonstrated differences of at least 1.00 or more include competencies such as:

- Developing leaders (D = 1.81)
- Delegating (D = 1.71)
- Family time (D = 1.70)
- Conflict managing (D = 1.63)
- Self care (D = 1.58)
- Team-work (D = 1.49)
- Dealing with emotions (D = 1.47)
- Self-time (D = 1.42)
- Accountability (D = 1.42)
- Self-awareness (D = 1.39)
- Time management (D = 1.38)
- Creativity (D = 1.36)
- Taking initiative (D = 1.35)
- Listening (D = 1.33)
- Self-esteem (D = 1.32)
- Problem-solving (D = 1.32)
- Administration (D = 1.30)
- Commitment (D = 1.29)
- Encouraging (D = 1.29)
- Leading (D = 1.28)
- Story telling (D = 1.19)
- Organizing (D = 1.18)
- Communicating (D = 1.16)

Although these results demonstrate a significant difference between importance and prior training this in no way implies a deficit in prior training. This deficit is quite common, given that once in the “real-world” of a career, what has been taught is helpful, but does not provide all the solutions to the complexities that a pastor faces on a daily basis. However, these differences do provide helpful patterns that might be addressed during formal training as well as part of continuous professional development and/or part of a mentoring/spiritual coaching relationship.

Congregational Demographics

The congregation sizes included a range of 16 to 6000 (total church family including members and nonmembers), with a mean of 505 per church. As for membership, the range consisted of 7 to 2500, with a mean of 275 members per church.

Location

The study represented participation from eight provinces. These included BC ($N = 129$; 45.6%); MB ($N = 54$; 19.1%); ON ($N = 38$; 13.4%); SK ($N = 31$; 11%); AB ($N = 29$; 10.2%); and NB ($N = 2$; 0.7%). Although not all are represented, the percentage of participants who did respond is very similar to the 1975-2004 Database study (Schönwetter, 2006)¹¹ with exception of participation from Quebec.

As for location, 67 (24.0%) represented rural congregations, 99 (35.5%) represented urban congregations and 113 (40.5%) represented suburban congregations¹².

Congregation Profile

As seen in Table 32, pastors had an opportunity to use the same set of criteria used to define themselves, on their congregations. Respondents’ as a group describe their congregations as more toward involvement, relating and feeling as compared to analyzing, theorizing and thinking. However congregations were defined under each of the five categories. Congregations were also perceived as more doing and participating as compared to watching and viewing; and as more cautious as compared to risk taking.

¹¹ Based on the 1975-2004 Database Study representation of pastors from each province are: BC (42.3%); MB (18.4%); ON (13.9%); AB (11.7%); SK (9.1%); NB (4.9%); and PQ (2.1%) (see Schönwetter, 2006 for more details).

¹² Comparisons to the 1975-2004 Database study was more challenging given that only data was available based on rural (32.7%) and urban (67.3%) churches, and not suburban.

Table 32. How do you best describe your congregation?

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
How do you best describe how your congregation thinks about things?								
A. Involvement, relating, feeling (1) Analyzing, theorizing, thinking (5)								
Frequency	32	105	75	50	16	2.69	1.07	278
Percentage	11.5	37.8	27	18	5.8			
How do you best describe how your congregation does things?								
A. Watcher, viewer (1)..... Doing, participating (5)								
Frequency	7	59	78	117	18	3.29	0.95	279
Percentage	2.5	21.1	28	41.9	6.5			
B. Cautious (1)..... Risk taking (5)								
Frequency	34	87	76	70	11	2.77	1.08	278
Percentage	12.2	31.3	27.3	25.2	4			

Of the various congregational descriptors, participants as a group viewed their congregations as more mature than infancy; as having more of a corporate identity; as more intimate; as more giving of their best; as industrious; as high in integrity; and balancing between extroverted and introverted.

Table 33. Of the pairs of adjectives, which best characterizes your congregation?

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	STD	N
A. Infancy (1)..... Mature (5)								
Frequency	6	18	62	75	23	3.49	0.95	184
Percentage	3.3	9.8	33.7	40.8	12.5			
B. They knew who they are (1)..... Lack of corporate identity (5)								
Frequency	14	73	44	44	8	2.78	1.04	183
Percentage	7.7	39.9	24	24	4.4			
C. Intimacy (1).....Isolation (5)								
Frequency	7	69	75	31	2	2.74	0.82	184
Percentage	3.8	37.5	40.8	16.8	1.1			
D. Generativity (giving their best) (1)..... Stagnation (5)								
Frequency	14	78	54	33	5	2.66	0.95	184
Percentage	7.6	42.4	29.3	17.9	2.7			
E. Industrious (1).....Inferior (5)								
Frequency	16	89	59	18	2	2.46	0.83	184
Percentage	8.7	48.4	32.1	9.8	1.1			
F. Integrity (1).....Despair (5)								
Frequency	23	95	45	18	2	2.35	0.86	183
Percentage	12.6	51.9	24.6	9.8	1.1			

G. Extrovert (1).....Introvert (5)

Frequency	3	38	80	57	4	3.12	0.82	182
Percentage	1.6	20.9	44	31.3	2.2			

Numerical and Spiritual Growth of Congregations

As seen in Table 34, the numerical growth of participants' congregations as a group is viewed as slight stronger than maintaining and moving toward growth. The spiritual growth is view as between maintenance and growth.

Table 34. Numerical and spiritual growth in participants' congregations.

	1 Growing substantially	2	3 Maintaining	4	5 Shrinking substantially	Mean	STD	N
Numerical growth of your church								
Frequency	20	69	67	22	6	2.59	0.95	184
Percentage	10.9	37.5	36.4	12	3.3			
Spiritual growth of your church								
Frequency	12	108	51	6	2	2.32	0.70	179
Percentage	6.7	60.3	28.5	3.4	1.1			

Further descriptions of participants' congregations (ranked in descending mean scores) as strongly biblically literate, as well established, as responding to pastoral leadership, as having a strong sense of community, with low levels of inter-group conflicts, as church governance and vision statements being well articulated, and with trained leaders within the congregation.

An important finding is the low level of needs assessments conducted in churches. This is a matter of importance for strategic planning for pastors to ensure that most of the needs of their congregations are addressed. More encouragement and maybe even more training might be of benefit to help pastors with conducting insightful needs assessments.

The lower scores for finding volunteers is concerning, given that active participation by church members in worship and church duties often makes for meaningful corporate identity. Here more professional development for pastors in the art of delegation might be useful as well as more general conference workshops for chairpersons on how to actively support the pastor through congregational volunteering might be of benefit. Along with the lack of volunteers is the high level of unrealistic expectations of the congregations. As seen in the Table 35, 67.7% of participants viewed their churches as having unrealistic expectations. Conference should take leadership in finding innovative ways to help congregations become more aware of their unrealistic expectations of their pastors; find ways to train pastors in skills that deal with redefining these expectations; and having resources that would be helpful in preparing new pastors for these unrealistic expectations.

Table 35a. To what extent do each of the following describe your congregation.

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very much so	Mean	STD	N
Congregational members are biblically literate								
Frequency	3	21	86	63	9	4.43	1.53	183
Percentage	1.6	11.5	47	34.4	4.9			
Is well established								
Frequency	11	15	31	57	67	3.85	1.19	181
Percentage	6.1	8.3	17.1	31.5	37			
Responding to pastoral leadership								
Frequency	1	17	33	111	21	3.73	0.805	183
Percentage	0.5	9.3	18	60.7	11.5			
Strong sense of community								
Frequency		23	48	79	33	3.67	0.916	183
Percentage		12.6	26.2	43.2	18			
Low level of inter-group conflict between parishioners								
Frequency	7	23	45	71	33	3.56	1.055	179
Percentage	3.9	12.8	25.1	39.7	18.4			
Church governance is well articulated								
Frequency	6	30	44	70	32	3.51	1.07	182
Percentage	3.3	16.5	24.2	38.5	17.6			
Church vision is well articulated								
Frequency	12	27	49	72	23	3.37	1.09	183
Percentage	6.6	14.8	26.8	39.3	12.6			
Congregational members are leaders (trained and/or occupations)								
Frequency	2	37	70	67	8	3.23	0.857	184
Percentage	1.1	20.1	38	36.4	4.3			
Congregation's needs are routinely assessed								
Frequency	8	39	74	48	13	3.1	0.97	182
Percentage	4.4	21.4	40.7	26.4	7.1			
Volunteers are always available								
Frequency	5	52	76	43	6	2.96	0.875	182
Percentage	2.7	28.6	41.8	23.6	3.3			
Majority of the members have a long family connection to the MB Church								
Frequency	39	48	33	36	26	2.79	1.36	182
Percentage	21.4	26.4	18.1	19.8	14.3			
Unreasonable expectations by the church								
Frequency	35	87	33	20	5	2.29	0.996	180
Percentage	19.4	48.3	18.3	11.1	2.8			

Decision Making Style That Best Describes Your Church

Although a number of different leadership styles were identified, many of the churches are described using a combination of these styles listed in Table 35b below. The most common is the congregational style, whereby each member is part of the decision making process.

Table 35b. What decision making style best describes your church?

• Blank (24)	• Deacons (2)	• Intelligent
• Congregational (203)	• Accountable	• Management style
• Board (34)	• Affirmed	• Moderators
• Consensus/Unanimous (24)	• Aggressive	• Oneness of the Body
• Leadership (18)	• An unbalanced reliance on human wisdom and strength	• Painful
• Elders (39)	• Arrogant	• Parenting Style
• Leadership/Staff Team (9)	• Authoritarian driven	• Passive aggressive
• Majority/vote (8)	• Authoritative	• Pastors' boards
• Council (8)	• Conservative	• Patronizing
• Pastor lead (7)	• Considerate	• Progressively cautious – forward thinking
• Collaboration (5)	• Constitutionally	• Proposal
• Governance model (4)	• Decision-encouraging sermons	• "Railroading"
• Lead/senior pastor (4)	• Decisive	• Raising hands for prayer request or decision still works occasionally
• Prayer (4)	• Dialogue	• Reactionary planning for the future
• Discussion (4)	• Dictatorship	• Reactive to daily business operation
• Cooperative (3)	• Directive	• Relational
• Democracy (3)	• Discernment group	• Solicit input
• Slow and cautious (3)	• Distant	• Some confusion
• Team decisions/team work (3)	• Executive	• Spiritual goals
• Top down (3)	• Flexible	• Too fast – but things get done
• Listening (2)	• Fluid situation social interactions	• Utilitarian
• God's guidance/led (2)	• Grass roots (community)	• Volunteer driven
• Informed consent (2)	• Harmony	
• Questions (2)	• Hearing all sides –	
• Autocratic (2)	• Holy Spirit	
• Analytical/linear process oriented (2)	• Honest	
• Collegial (2)	• Informal	
• Communication (2)		

Training and Education

Sabbaticals and Leaves

A total of 195 participants responded to this question, indicating anywhere from no ($N = 122$), one ($N = 49$), two ($N = 18$), three ($N = 5$) and six ($N = 1$) sabbaticals/leaves during their MB ministries. The length of each in months ranged from one day ($N = 1$), three weeks ($N = 2$), one month ($N = 6$), two months ($N = 9$), twelve months ($N = 1$), thirteen months ($N = 1$), two and one half months ($N = 1$), three months ($N = 31$), four

months ($N = 10$), six months ($N = 6$), eight months ($N = 8$), nine months ($N = 2$), and twenty-four months ($N = 1$). During the sabbatical and leaves, the most frequent and important activity focused on studying, education and degree completion (25.2%).

Table 36. Most important activities conducted while on sabbaticals or leaves.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study, education, degree (35) • Rest, break (17) • Reading (15) • Spiritual renewal (10) • Family time (10) • Travel (9) • Short-term mission, ministries, evangelism (7) • Reflection (5) • Relaxation (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting, observing other churches/leaders (5) • Spouse/marriage (3) • Silence/solitude retreats (4) • Prayer (3) • Self-analysis: spiritual, personal, journaling (3) • Writing (3) • Walks (2) • Worked with my hands (2) • Recreation (2)
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Attrition of Pastors

Of the 104 participants who completed the following questions, 110 reasons were given for not being in ministry. The most common was retirement ($N = 48$). Other positive reasons included:

- Call to missions, teach, para-church, itinerant, counseling (7)
- Return to education (2)
- God's leading

However, of the less positive reasons, most dealt with some form of conflict (see Table 37a.)

Table 37a. Reasons for pastor attrition.

- Church dynamics: church split happened; church politics; secret agendas; church culture; change in language; traditions; values; incompatibility; demands; elders; gender bias; lack of respect (14)
- Personal/Family health (8)
- Tired, abused, scarred, fear (6)
- Current leadership: incompatible, lack trust (5)
- Another denomination (3)
- Family (3)
- Asked/forced to resign (3)
- Age (2)
- Disillusionment (2) (with conference)
- Increasing demands (2)
- Lack of competency (2)
- Failed (2)
- Lack of mentoring
- Relocated to another province with no MB churches

Why do Pastors Drop Out or Exit Out of Pastoral Ministry?

As seen in Table 37b, total of 249 participants provided the following reasons for why pastors drop out or exit from ministry. The reasons can be further broken into the following three categories:

- Congregational
- Personal
- Family

Each of the items under each category provides more details and meaning to the reasons for pastor attrition. More attention needs to be focused on how to best reduce and/or eliminate many of these factors in order to take the initial steps in reducing attrition rates. Specific training directed at how congregations can better support, encourage, and nurture their pastors should be a priority. This should be followed by carefully planned professional and personal development workshops and resources for pastors as well as guidance from supporting mentors and spiritual coaches. Part of personal development should also include resources on family and marriage relationships.

Table 37b. Why pastors drop out or exit out of pastoral ministry.

Congregational

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrealistic/high/ambiguous expectations by congregation (101) • Lack of support (congregation, church board, team) (53) • Pay/salary/finances (29) • Carnality, "Clergy-killers", "Owners", difficult, nasty, domineering, hostile, manipulative congregants/leaders (26) • Church politics, hidden agendas/don't understand (17) • Church Demands (16) • Overworked, long hours (16) • Criticism/opposition from church, inability to handle personal attacks (15) • Abuse/Abusive churches and emotionally used; hurt (13) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church people/leaders professionals, not following, domineering, receptive to change, inflexible, selfish, non-committed (12) • Dysfunctional, unhealthy churches/leaders (9) • Lack of appreciation (9) • Asked, forced, unlawful dismissal (4) • Evaluations/reviews (4) • Few volunteers (4) • Lack of care from others (4) • Serving/accountable to many masters (4) • Leadership/team conflict (3) • Building project (2) • Deceived • Too many restrictions |
|--|--|

Personal

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burnout (45) • Inadequate conflict management skills (37) • Stress, inability to cope with stress (31) • Lack/weak sense of call (26) • Discouragement (24) • Feelings of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence, insignificance, not making a difference, insecurity, despair, Imposter syndrome (20) • Blurred/unclear vision (18) • Lack of spiritual direction, growth, intimacy, vitality (18) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral/ethical/integrity issues, failure (15) • Breakdown in relationships (14) • Frustrations (14) • Lack of people skills/relationships/listening skills, interpersonal (14) • Lack of success/sense of failure (14) • Not suitable, not gifted, just a job (14) • Poor fit/placement/discernment process (13) • Disillusionment (12) • Exhaustion, tired, fatigue (12) • Lack of self-differentiation, self-awareness; Living out of an inauthentic core (12) |
|---|--|

- Lack of regular disciplined time/self-care (10)
- Self-defeating perception: view position as a job “professionalism” (9-5) vs. ministry (10)
- Lack of a spiritual and pastoral mentor/advocate/coaches/peers/fellowship (9)
- Self-sufficiency vs. God sufficiency (9)
- Arrogance/pride/ lack of humility (7)
- Bad experiences (7)
- False illusion of their capabilities (7)
- Inability to delegate tasks and develop leaders/team (7)
- Lack of encouragement (7)
- Loneliness/aloneness (6)
- Faulty perceptions of pressures, pitfalls role of pastoral ministries (6)
- Isolation (5)
- Lack of clear communication (5)
- Lack of commitment, dedication, conviction (5)
- Lack of professional/training and/or access to relevant training/resources (5)
- Lack of affirmation/invalidation of gifts (4)
- Depression (4)
- Carrying burdens of the church (4)
- Health (4)
- Inability to manage personal issues (4)
- Retirement/age (4)
- Attempting to accommodate everybody (3)
- Emotional pain (3)
- Lost their passion (3)
- Rejection/unaccepted (3)
- Boredom (2)
- Distrust of leadership (2)
- Gossip (2)
- Lack of accountability (2)
- Lack of being protected (2)
- Other interests pursued, more lucrative offers (2)
- Personality issues (2)
- Pushing agenda (2)
- Spiritual battle (2)
- Compromise
- Inability to confront
- Lack of boundaries
- Trained to teach vs. lead
- Unwillingness to learn or change
- Vulnerable
- Hebrews: “if they don’t work with joy, it is of no value to you”

Family

- Family issues/lack of time with (16)
- Marriage/family pressures/struggles (9)

What would Bring Pastors Back into Ministry Following Resignation or Quitting?

A total of 231 participants completed this question. As seen in Table 38, 36 different themes emerged. Notice the overlap of the suggestions with the three main areas that are perceived as causes in Table 37b: Congregation, Personal, and Family. Added to this is the support of the conference in dealing with issues that pastors have faced and allowing for some sort of reconciliation and healing.

Table 38. What would bring pastors back into ministry after they have resigned and/or quit.

- Not sure/don’t know/no idea (12);
Nothing, not much (3)
- Time of healing/balance pastor/family;
Deal/process unresolved inner issues (54)
- Renewed sense of
calling/conviction/invitation/passion (40)
- Loving, caring, kind, affirming,
appreciating, supportive, helpful,
committed, wise, trusting [partnership vs.
bosses]
congregation/community/leadership (37)
- Assurance of commitment, caring, trust,
leadership, presence, support, invitation,
walk alongside, compassion, support,
plan, exit interview, transition supports,
help to work through unresolved
conflicts, resourcing from
conference/conference minister,
addressed ASAP (37)
- Acknowledged time of
restoration/refreshed/renewal/revival of
spiritual strength, direction, regaining

- self-confidence/worth, relationships, reflection (34)
- Encouragement, modern day “Barnabas” (31)
- Church/subculture/leadership overhauled, review, honest, held accountable to basic common decency, human rights, labour law legislation, abuse of churches, treatment with respect, exit interview of church/board that needs to be “checked-out”, assurance of fair play, monitored by conference, follow-up (28)
- Empower, freedom, discernment/fit areas of values, giftings, vision vs. politics/buracacy (28)
- Rest (20); Sabbatical/study leave (4)
- Assurance of support, commitment, counsel from advocate/group/mentor (24)
- Redemptive reconciliation/resolution, repentance, apologies/forgiveness given and extended beginning with congregation/boards (23)
- Honest sober expectations/reevaluation/review/self-differentiation of who pastor is, how challenging it can be, and acceptance his/her strengths/challenges (8) Self-awareness, acknowledgement of gifting and weaknesses vs. disillusionment (5); Not all are called (9)
- Counseling/therapy (18)
- Clear realistic job description/expectations/boundaries (18)
- A supportive team ministry, work under a mentor/retired clergy (17)
- A “hospital church”/pastoral care, recovery program, safe place, oasis, “pastors in residence” program for retooling and reenergizing (16)
- Increase in salary/pay/financial/benefits (13)
- Hope for better experience(s)/situation/opportunity (13)
- Being valued/needed/belonging/appreciated (13)
- Commitment of support, protection (12)
- Prof dev, retooling, reentry/fresher course on challenges/demands/criticisms coping skills/balance dealing with church problems ministry (11)
- Short term position/temporary career change, volunteering (8)
- Prayer (fasting) (7)
- Affirmation (6)
- A clearly defined vision of the church and partnership in vision (5)
- New vision/approach/model to ministry (5)
- Preventative measures, working with a mentor, spiritual director (4)
- Return to Scriptural directives, Romans 12:3; Matthew 18, I Peter 5 (4)
- Friends (3)
- Miracle (3)
- Changes to the hiring process/superficial references major flaws (3)
- Board/church change/see themselves as partners vs. bosses (3)
- Move away from the concept of mega/professionalism churches (2)
- Change in venue/location/ministry (2)
- Optimistic mindset

Supporting the Pastor

A total of 257 participants provided feedback to what would maximize their effectiveness in their ministry. From the theme analyses, a total of 29 unique themes were identified (see Table 39a). Most important are opportunities for professional and personal development as well as mentorships/spiritual guidance.

Table 39a. Topics suggested for these development opportunities include:

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • identifying personal strengths | • Baptism classes, | • spousal support |
| • balancing ministry and private life | • Smoking cessation, | • nuts and bolts |
| • Equipping Leadership Team and team development | • Post abortion/Miscarriage support | • assimilation |
| • counseling | • Revitalizing local church ministry | • time management |
| • leadership development | • managing staff | • boundaries |
| • Conflict/Crisis Management, | • strategic planning | • governance |
| • pre-marital, weddings, Marriage Therapy | • business plan | • leading change |
| • Gift Discernment, | • manage pain | • delegation skills |
| | • spiritual renewal | • visioning |
| | | • funerals |
| | | • church health |

Table 39b. What would maximize their effectiveness in their ministry.

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Better affordable, accessible, ongoing equipping training opportunities, professional development toward a degree (44) | • Congregational leadership board/executive – ownership, trustful, competent, dedicated, visioning, commitment, supportive (13) |
| • Mentor/spiritual guide/director/accountability (39) | • Support (13) |
| • Stronger spiritual, support, resourcing, caring/encouragement from Conference (19) | • Encouragement (11) |
| • Networking/peer support system opportunities among pastors (spouses) (19) | • Frequent “protected” downtime/breaks/rests (beyond holidays) (10) |
| • Developing better team approach to ministry – strong staff/lay teams (19) | • Sabbatical support (10) |
| • Affirmation/validation; team by senior staff (16) | • Pastoral/associate qualified support staff (10) |
| • Personal-spiritual, devotional life, walk with God, inspiration, passion, fasting, spiritual refreshment, spiritual disciplines, reflection, vision casting, thinking (14) | • Opportunity to focus more on pastor’s areas of gifting/strengths (10) |
| • A greater willingness by leadership and congregation to explore new models of personal and corporate life, leadership, discipling relationships, cooperation, communication, dialogue, risk taking, less debate and more action, more intentional competent leadership, rebuilding towards future ministry, respect of healthy boundaries (13) | • Personal - reading, studying, teaching, self-care, health, less frenzied pace (9) |
| • Supportive/caring (family cared for), loving, ownership, belonging, respected, empowered and prayed for by church (13) | • Concise/clear/realistic/defined job role descriptions/expectations (9) |
| | • Financial support/pay raise/salary (9) |
| | • Prayer (monthly day) (9) |
| | • Coaching (8) |
| | • Administrative/personal assistant support (8) |
| | • Regularly meeting/retreats support groups peers/colleagues/new ministers (8) |
| | • Clarity/connected in/to church vision/goals/strategic plans (6) |
| | • More education with financial assistance (3) |
| | • Increased knowledge/reading of Scriptures and their application (3) |
| | • Emotional support (3) |
| | • Own building (3) |
| | • Rural care (3) |

Personal Issues Pastors Deal With

A total of 273 participants provided information concerning their issues (see Table 40). A total of 55 themes were provided. The top five include issues dealing with work, conflict management, family time, pastoral care for the pastor and spouse, and moral/ethical temptations. Many of the other issues are directly related to these five.

Table 40. Issues that pastors deal with.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastor's Work (38) Issues: Confronting, Counseling, Coping, Our spiritual development, Leadership, Use of technology, Setting boundaries, Not asking for help when needed; Helping Single Parents, Need to Succeed ▪ Conflict management/mediation (31) ▪ Lack of family time and energy (29) ▪ Pastoral care for pastor & spouse (29) ▪ Moral/ethical temptations (25) ▪ Pressures (23) ▪ Financial stress (22) ▪ Family/Personal time and ministry balance/boundaries (21) ▪ Opportunities to network with other pastors (20) ▪ Congregation's unrealistic expectations (19) ▪ Loneliness (19) ▪ Marital demands, challenges, stress, tensions for pastors and spouses (18) ▪ Self-esteem, Inadequacy (18) ▪ Church Staff Team Development and Volunteers (17) ▪ Health issues (17) ▪ Time Management (17) ▪ Church board/congregation training (16) ▪ Isolation (15) ▪ Mentoring (15) ▪ Discouragement (12); disillusionment (2); Frustration ▪ Spiritual formation (15) ▪ Relationships in the church (14) ▪ Burn out (10) ▪ Leadership (10) ▪ Integrity (9) ▪ Depression (8) ▪ 24/7 demands (7) ▪ Evaluation (7): Reviews need to measure "is the person doing their job, not are they my best friend"; A better check up by conference leadership; Fair, honest and regular evaluations of how I was going in my job; Pastoral reviews need to be more specific and less about "does this person meet all MY needs; Require assessment before | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> congregational placement; Outside assessment; • Church Power, Politics, Abuse (6) • Professional Development (6) • Stress (6) • Job insecurities/anxieties (5) • Time Off/Sabbaticals (5) • Vision casting & buy-in (5) • Women in ministry (5) • Communication (3) • Delegating (3) • Fear of failure (3) • Trend whiplash (3) • Workaholism (3) • Gender-related frustrations (2) • Bible reading • Conducting ceremonial occasions • Discipline problems within the church family • Drinking • Forgiveness • Freedom to lead • Gifting and congregational fit • Grief • Handling criticism • Handling External Theological Issues • Regular conferences and retreats • Unclear job descriptions • When does a pastor leave a church? • Writers block • Youth pastors are regarded as "pastors in training" or "apprentice pastors" |
|--|---|

Providing Conference Support for Pastors

The same 271 participants provided suggestions of how the conference could help pastors deal with the issues listed in Table 41. A total of 13 themes reflect their suggestions.¹³ Each theme is clearly defined by a number of specific suggestions.

Table 41. How the provincial/national denominational conference staff can better support pastors.

Conference Staff - Better Support

- Support (23)
 - We need conference ministers who will work with our boards and congregations to develop procedures that will protect pastors and their families from abuse and unrealistic expectation
 - Conference could help pastors learn more about boundaries & how to carry the weight of people's pain
 - Emphasize the need for pastoral support to the congregations
 - Encourage your pastors!
 - Encourage psycho spiritual health and need to function from an internal locus
 - Encourage
 - Margin & healthy priorities – God, family, ministry
 - Encourage more delegation of specific areas of ministry
 - Lot's of conflict resolution support needed
 - To learn to be more compassionate to pastors of smaller congregations with no pastoral staff!
 - Just be available to help
 - Conference support (substitute pastors)
 - Supports in personal or church crisis
 - Personal contacts
 - Provide coaches and opportunities for pastors to share confidentially about their lives and ministry
 - One conference minister per province is very limiting, meeting 3-4 times a year
 - Procedures for pastoral advocacy committee
 - Provide safe Spiritual Directors who do not report to the denomination
 - Provincial ministers can work at connecting with pastors
 - Provide better support for church boards, tools, development ideas etc.
 - Try to address ministry disqualifiers: moral/ethical failure
 - Help with men's issues
 - Help us know what to do and when to do it
- Damage Control (8)
 - Close the communication gap
 - Conference ministers may be either too aloof or too unavailable
 - Found conference staff to be reluctant to give concrete advice
 - I don't look to conference staff for support
 - I don't know what you can do
 - I'm not sure the conference is in a position to deal with these

¹³ Note five independent participants commented on the value of the input of the conference.

- Little expectation or belief the conference staff cares for unique and unusual pastoral situations
- Provincial/national denominational support is difficult because our congregations are very independent from the conference
- Regional Networking Opportunities (7)
 - Create more opportunities for regional connecting times – conferences are all about coffee time
 - Encourage accountability partners
 - Make sure there are accountability relationships and spiritual friendships
 - Conference ministers to pull pastors together in clusters
 - Help pastors recognize signs of burn-out and encourage churches to allow times of refreshment for pastors
 - Set up “overseers” – one over every four or so churches – to build relationships with pastors
 - Sometimes a go-between is needed between pastor and congregation to help them understand each other better
- Seminary (5)
 - The emphasis is of our College and Seminary was on biblical, systematic and historical theology
 - The emphasis was quite academic: understanding the principles of hermeneutics, the Greek and Hebrew texts, etc
 - Providing Seminary courses at central locations
 - Require seminary applicants to undergo psychological testing/counseling
 - Funding or sending personal, like students, to help in church plants, etc
- Visits (5)
 - I went through a major crisis and never had one visit
 - Communication via phone calls
 - Weekends away for under supported pastors
 - Visits from the denominational leadership to connect and encourage were always welcome and meaningful
 - Conference minister needs to become more involved – in my 1st interim pastored I had no visit from the conference Minister
- Pastoral Care (5) – workshops/seminars/retreat
- Active Listening (4)
 - By listening rather than coming with all kinds of programs
 - But not more “meetings”
 - Less pressure to attend unhelpful events
 - Listen to them-give opportunity to share needs and take time for them and follow through with help
- Professional Development (4)
 - CAPPE training has much to offer in this area
 - Servant/leader training seminars
 - Seminars by those who have done well
 - Have a system in place to support pastors to take leaves of absence, etc.

- Develop resources (3)
 - Handbook for elders boards – “How to take care of your pastor” – to instruct them about sabbaticals, the need for encouragement, etc.
 - Training material from the conference which pastors could use to develop church boards and leaders,
 - Lists of resource persons who could provide training in developing productive relations between lay leaders and pastors, could be helpful
 - Models (2)
 - We may have to rethink the bishops role as well as the democracy model
 - We have carried a house church model into the larger congregation, and have made it a democracy, which in the political world too in time devours itself
 - Denomination Agenda (2)
 - Have a denominational leader and perhaps a denomination that cares as much about pastors as they do about churches and denominational structures surviving
 - Denomination could stop getting pastors to promote the denomination's agenda
 - Conference Leadership (2)
 - Minister gifted and available to invest time in building strong church leaders
 - Put people in conference leadership because of gifting, not their connectedness to old boys network
 - Other
 - Let us know that you are aware of us and care about our ministry Make it safe for them to walk in the light
 - The conference should encourage their congregations to hire pastors for full-time positions as much as possible, because we all know that even if they don't, they are just getting full-time work for a smaller price tag, and that's not fair to the pastors and their families
 - Take care of us so that we are better able to take care of you
 - The denomination is loosing credibility and effectiveness for local churches
 - They need to ask tough questions and be able to handle the answers
 - Have a greater concern to help pastors
 - Speak with the Chinese church boards
-

Hiring and “Letting Go: Process

A total of 253 participants responded to this question. Thirty-two were unfamiliar with the situation, had no or little experience or were not sure. Based on a theme analysis, five general categories were identified. Table 42 lists the general comments about both the hiring and “letting go” process overall. Table 43 focuses strictly on the hiring process. Table 44 represents comments about the “letting go” process. Table 44 identifies the interim process. Each of these tables provides valuable information for future considerations about improving the hiring process.

Table 42. General comments about the hiring and the “letting go” process

-
- Positive/satisfactory experience/adequate/excellent (27)
 - Denominational/conference involvement/ guidelines for both processes (6)
 - It is okay/fine/fair (5)
 - Structure, standardization on entry and exit processes needed (3)
 - Keep entire congregation informed (2)
 - Tendency to hire based somewhat on a “congregational decision model” but to let go on an “executive corporate model”

Table 43. Comments about the hiring process

-
- Good, affirming, okay process (20)
 - Godly guidance, prayer, biblically based (I Tim 3:1-16 Titus, II Tim 2:15) (20)
 - Honest, Clarify roles and realistic expectations, support for pastor and spouse (17)
 - Flawed; poor; too easy to get in; careless; church desperate; unethical and illegal practices; endless blind spots; chaotic; difficult; process weak as it regards theological coherence and integrity regarding our Confession of Faith/Polity (16)
 - Better process; Avoid risky decisions; internship/probation period; more time is needed for interaction and discernment; don't rush; so each can get to know each other; numerous visits; discover giftedness (15)
 - Pastor should “interview/research” congregation; better prepared about church; Honest, Clarify roles, expectations for church, picture of; politics of; understand the culture and personality; train them how to interview churches (15)
 - Search committees need more training, preparation, experience, strong spiritually and gift of discernment knowing requirements/criteria of task, HR responsibilities and ability to discern whether a candidate truly possesses, spiritually, psychologically ready, qualifications needed for ministry and avoid discrimination (15)
 - Discerning/sense of call; group discernment; input from various levels (15)
 - Hire/develop/discipleship from within; abilities in specific areas and character can be proven long before the thought of being hired enters the prospective pastor's mind, and personality clashes are less likely when hiring someone who is known; also allows for a sense of shared vision before formal leadership is given (13)
 - Not positive/intimidating/stressful/too long/intense (12)
 - In-depth, thorough questions (application process), comprehensive process (11)
 - Too much emphasis on educational/corporate model, performance; success, selling self, popularity, managerial abilities vs. gifting/prayer (11)
 - Prior to/throughout process Coordination between church/board, pastor or denominational leaders; guide them through the process of creating a profile, job description, sit with church board to provide “honest” feedback on fit; Conference pastors/leaders should be involved; offer to help church, help suggest names, and help potential pastors find churches (10)
 - More consistent process across churches; Congregation/church led = variety of processes in churches; standardized (9)
 - Spiritual gift discovery; analysis/assessment made available, focus on weakness also (8)
 - Adequate, honest, complete referrals and reference checks, including spouse (8)
 - Not a senior pastor's decision (5); Give all staff a “voice” (3)
 - A good fit/match must be encouraged by both (5)
 - Candidating: negative; too quick; super-charged; immediate artificial intimacy (5)
 - Churches need to discuss salaries (5)
 - Clearly articulated vision (4)
 - Personality, character, leadership, career suitability profiles (4)

- Eliminate vote of confidence; allows congregation to abdicate responsibility to support the pastor they have hired (2)
- Mentor young pastors (2)

Table 44. Comments about the “letting go” process

-
- Too harsh, too hurtful, terrible, pathetic, bad, poor, harsh, awful, Poorly done; Absolutely crazy, Absurd; Negative: Brutal; Bring them in, use them up and let them go; Cold; scars; Very damaging, Inconsiderate, irresponsible, inconsistent, impersonal; mess, like divorce, destructive, dishonest, Ridiculous, suffering; painful, divisive; offensive; disheartening; confusing; ostracizing; rejection; ungodly; unnatural; scapegoating; abandonment; attacked; isolated; demonized; on pastors and their families; leaving town, friends (72)
 - Prudent congregation/leadership and pastor to complete an exit interview/follow-up mediated by (more involvement of) Conference Minister/neighbouring churches to determine legitimacy of motivations, ethics and relational integrity; attempt to learn on the part of the church when an exit occurs; debriefing (23)
 - Conference (need more authority) consulted/involved early, entire process (16)
 - Churches/conference ill-prepared to deal with personnel issues/lack of training in “letting go”; Clearer expectations and guidelines; need training on how to do this more effectively and with grace and dignity; training on HR (13)
 - Honest/open/candid communication (sabbatoged by hidden agendas) (11)
 - Poor system of “letting go” (church = guilt; fear; secretive); Poor decisions; too cumbersome, challenging, difficult (9)
 - Need to support/authentic care; Lovingly encourage, support and mentor our wounded; is awkward & scarce (8)
 - Church accountability to conference; address wrong church commits; Honesty about (church’s) failures, (i.e., governance) perpetuating unhealthy habits (7)
 - Honest; Speak truth in agape; Reasons are not always reflective of situation (6)
 - Disband/discontinue “non” confidence vote (6)
 - “Delicate” process, but if pastor and congregation are really in touch with Spirit of God (praying for God’s guidance and leading) then there should be an affirmation of calling to go elsewhere and a releasing blessing (5)
 - “Minority” - power brokers of congregation/council initiate process – excluding congregation; ready to release pastor w/o regard to contract arrangements (5)
 - Disparity among business, spiritual, educational and professional model; between covenantal (loyalty commitment) and contractual (employer/employee) relationship (5)
 - Conflict resolution/management skills; Ensure church and the pastor are reconciled before entering into new relationships and timely manner (7)
 - Greater sensitivity, kindness, Christlike, integrity Mt 18 (5)
 - Leaving must be more cooperative, by mutual agreement, blessing each other (5)
 - Process needs a lot of work, better organization, complete overhaul (4)
 - Pastors need to know when/how to leave graciously/resign (4)
 - Pastor accountability (2)

Table 45. Comments about the interim process

-
- Ways of measuring ongoing effectiveness by credible leaders; Mutual accountability, clear and fair process of evaluation where changes/limitations and improvements can be realized (12)
 - Conference leaders confront pastors in areas of weakness and support with remedial work to prevent the dismissal (2)

Success Secrets of Pastors: Maintaining a Healthy Personal Spiritual Life

A total of 241 participants provided feedback on this question. As seen in Table 46, the top 5 of the 48 themes included prayer, reading books, Bible reading, daily devotions, and accountability groups/partners as helpful in maintaining a healthy personal spiritual life. Each of these themes could become resources for personal and professional development topics led by leading experts. These resources could be used in the training of new as well as professional development of pastors.

Table 46. How do pastors maintain a healthy personal spiritual life.

• Prayer (99)	• Take time, make it a real daily priority (8)
• Read books (79)	• Activities/relationships outside church (7)
• Bible reading (76)	• Family time (5)
• Daily devotions (45)	• Fasting (5)
• Accountability group or partner (42)	• Listening, playing worship music (4)
• Getting away with God alone (36)	• Sabbaths/week (4)
• Meet with other pastors, church leaders to share, learn, support (29)	• See a therapist, therapy group (4)
• Spiritual Retreats (29)	• Sermon prep (4)
• Fellowship/Bible study groups (28)	• Balance (3)
• Journaling (28)	• Creative sources to enhance spiritual growth; radio preachers, inspiring messages (3)
• Connecting with close friends (24)	• Eat healthy, sensibly (3)
• Spiritual direction from spiritual director or support group (23)	• Life-long learning process (3)
• Struggle/Challenge (19)	• Hobby, work with hands (3)
• Time with supportive spouse (18)	• Renovare groups (2)
• Attend seminars, conferences, conventions (18)	• Sleep well, rest (2)
• Physical Exercise (16)	• Creativity
• "Practicing Presence of God" (14)	• Delegate
• Actively living your faith (12)	• Laugh a lot
• Time daily with God (12)	• Memorize Scripture
• Meditation, reflection (10)	• Study breaks
• Corporate worship (9)	• Vacations
• Discipline (9)	• Weekly Eucharist
• Meditate on God's word (9)	• Weeping – a good release
• Serve Christ (9)	
• Prayer & Scripture reading (8)	
• Spiritual mentoring relationships (8)	

Dealing Effectively With Stress

As seen in Table 47, a total of 237 participants provided the following 41 stress reducing activities. Note that there are similar patterns as in the previous question, with prayer, regular exercise, talking/sharing with spouse, sports, and an accountability partner/mentor as being the top 5 themes. Here again, these activities would lend themselves useful as key topics given by those in leadership who faithfully and

successfully practice them. Again, both new as well as seasoned pastors would benefit from such sessions.

Table 47. How do you best deal with daily stress?

• Prayer (82)	• Realistic expectations (14)
• Regular exercise (59)	• Sleep (12)
• Talking, sharing with supportive/amazing spouse (55)	• Bible reading (10)
• Sports (42)	• Diet (10)
• Talking - Accountability partner/confidante/mentor (37)	• Rest, long hot baths, massages (10)
• Church staff communication (24)	• Scheduled "down" time (10)
• Balanced lifestyle and time management (23)	• Hands-on physical work (9)
• Talking it through, ranting with friends (21)	• Hanging out with friends outside of church (7)
• Hobbies (19)	• Leave work at work (7)
• Read (19)	• Play music, instrument (7)
• Time alone, silence (19)	• Relaxation (6)
• "Learn to fully trust the Lord and discipline yourself to do so, I truly believe that God is providential, I celebrate my humanity and surrender all my aspirations to God's control" (18)	• Worship (6)
• Family time (18)	• Devotional life (5)
• Walking (18)	• Mind diverting activities (5)
• Get away - escape (17)	• Creativity (4)
• TV, playing computer games (16)	• Movies, concerts, sport events (4)
• Challenging dealing with stress, no good solutions (15)	• Work hard, stress is a motivator (4)
	• Acts of kindness (3)
	• Communicate/confront people (3)
	• Healthy sex (3)
	• Journaling (3)
	• Not taking myself too seriously (2)
	• Humour (2)
	• Optimistic mindset (2)
	• Take courses (2)

Ministry's Influence on Spouse and Children

A total of 247 participants responded to how their role in ministry has had an influence on their spouse and children. A closer look at the data revealed three sets of responses. The first focuses on the spouse, the second on the children, and the third on the family. In order to remain true to the participants' responses, these same three categories are used below. Each of these three sections is further subdivided into strengths and challenges. Following the identification of themes for each category are a few direct quotes of advice that would serve as reference for those interested in learning from the experiences of pastors.

- N/A (4)
- No major influence/effect (3)
- Not sure
- Not married (2)

Table 48a. How has your role in ministry influenced the role and well being of your spouse?

Spouse - Strengths (positive)

- Supportive (19)
- Positive/good process (10)
- Involvement/opened ministry doors for spouse (10)
- Enjoyed/joy (7)
- Affirming/fulfilling (4)
- Benefited spouse (6)
- Share/partner ministry (5)
- Team (5)
- Encouraging (2)
- Helped issues in marriage (2)
- Created ways of time together
- Driven us closer to each other
- Has left me developing in wisdom and discernment
- Spiritual focus has helped spouse in analyzing non-Christian work environment
- Learning/growing experience
- Mentored by spouse
- Remained active
- Spouse greater commitment to church and deeper sense of its importance
- Strengthened by challenges that come with the job "We are in this together"
- Understanding

Spouse - Challenges (perceptions of the pastor of the spouse)

- Demands on time (13)
- Stressful/on marriage (11)
- Difficult/tired accept church criticism of pastor (8)
- Obligated to meet demands, expectations, pressure placed on spouse by church (7)
- Challenge to feel part of community, friendships uninvolvement, loneliness (6)
- Anger, frustration, confusion, disappointed (5)
- Handles more home duties (3)
- Paying a price/tough (3)
- Wants out/No desire for me to get back into ministry (3)
- Suffered (2)
- Hard on my spouse (2)
- Big learning curve/learned to cope (2)
- Wounded/burned out (2)
- Putting church before spouse
- Felt unnecessarily responsible for well-being of church
- Health
- Lack of funds
- Not being a "good" pastor
- Worries

Spouse - Advice

- Church is a mistress – competes with spouse and children in terms of attention and time. Spouse's and children's pastor is their husband and father – creates role confusion. Unique opportunity for spouse and children to be intimately involved with pastoral ministry.
- I have always made my spouse and family a top priority
- It is who we are and we make adjustments. My wife and I talk regularly and honestly about stuff.
- My spouse has very clear boundaries with this church and she keeps them well and thereby is able to thrive as a boss, mom, SS teacher, and pastor's wife.
- The church has allowed my wife and children to be who they are. The biggest gift a church can ever give to a pastor and family.

Table 48b. How has your role in ministry influenced the role and well being of your children?

Children - Strengths (positive)

- Good, valuable process (18)
- Influenced, equipped their current lay ministry, missionary involvement, attitude, serve (14)
- Actively involved, included, lifestyle in ministries (13)
- Good grounding/exposure/life training/individuality (7)
- Supportive, endorsed (7)
- Family team (5)
- Encouraging, joy (4)
- Babysitting, care, attention (3)
- Benefited, blessing (3)
- Drawn closer to Jesus (2)
- Fortunate parent pastors (2)
- Gained valuable friendship (2)
- Team/partners in ministry (2)
- No difficulty
- Role models

Children - Challenges (perceptions of the pastor of the children)

- Lack of time, attention, neglected (16)
- Spiritual disillusionment, alienated from church (8)
- Sacrifice, Suffered (2)
- Stressful (2)
- Difficult /negative (2)
- Emotional weight of every issue I deal with (2)
- Fish bowl
- Bear the secrets
- Guarded
- Dealt with struggles they might not have had otherwise
- Hear too much about politics
- Lack of emotional support
- Rebellious
- Vulnerable as PK's

Children - Advice

- Yes. Most of it has been positive as we have a healthy church that we genuinely like to be a part of. We constantly try to show our daughter that ministry is not "work" but it's church and it's a privilege to be a part of.
- We are involved in ministry because we want to be and based on the gifts God has given us to use. I hope my sons will learn that ministry must be genuine.
- Our ministry settings have not been "fishbowl" environments. We have not practiced religiosity at home. Faith walk is organic and natural, not contrived. Children have had to learn to make their faith their own, but have benefited from watching parents serve and love God and Church and those outside the faith.
- Kids are adults – very supportive & encouraging. I am very intentional in what I share about some of their frustrations. I tend to put a positive spin. I want them to have their own experience of church community.
- My kids have weathered well. I think it was important for them to observe the good and the bad times. I think my sabbaticals were very helpful for them as we did take a break from church attendance for a year and half, which created a healthy balance and perspective for them.
- My children understand my job but find it frustrating at times. My spouse and I work hard at informing our children about the benefits of ministry - flexible work schedule, people praying for us, etc.
- I have always made my spouse and family a top priority as a result they have not suffered. They have good memories of their father in ministry.
- My wife and I secured "sponsors" (mentors) for 2 of our children during heavy stress times
- Children feel vulnerable as "pastor kids".

- My kids still love Christ and his church even though they have seen the worst stuff in church. We have always talked through all the stuff with them. They understand the nature of people.
- My family would see a dichotomy between the body of Christ and an institution. Institution is where dad works. The body is where you are fed.
- We have enjoyed healthy ministries so far and thus my spouse has been very involved and loves it and my children are growing up with ministry being a part of our lifestyle. Our Job as parents, I believe will be to adequately create some boundaries so that our family health continues to move forward.

Table 48c. How has your role in ministry influenced the role and well being of your family?

Family - Strengths (positive)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positively, significantly, favorably (43) • Learning/growing life experience (7) • Enriched/Grown together spiritually (9) • Supportive (4) • Ream/work/joint together (4) • Flexible schedule (3) • Benefited/blessed (3) • Accepted, enjoyed/joy (3) • Higher expectations for all (2) • Commitment to ministry (2) • Relationships (2) • Family cooperation (2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added emphasis on prayer • Added purpose • Appreciate church and role it plays in our lives • Freeing • Depth of maturity • Exciting experiences • Felt supported • Healthy balance • Involved • Opportunity • Responsibility • Understanding • Well-being |
|---|--|

Family - Challenges (perceptions of the pastor of the family)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard, difficult, negative (14) • Time issues/rarely together (15) • Detrimental/devastating (2) • Emotional energy (2) • Stressful, pressure (8) • Pre-determined expectations (6) • Neglect (5) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle, suffered (5) • Financial issues (2) • Lost it (faith) • Moving • Poor view of church and Conference |
|--|---|

Family - Advice

- Perhaps pastors also need to be careful not to bring too much home, but that can be difficult to do when one feels isolated in their position.
- I recognized that my family in the circle of my calling and not outside it.
- We made our kids feel like other church attenders. I did not expect my spouse to be different than others in the church.
- Even though we moved from Manitoba to Saskatchewan to Ontario, to BC and back to Manitoba, the family was always very much consulted and listened to.
- Until I recognized that my family is in the circle of my calling and not outside it.
- That's hard to say but I believe greater generosity to the pastoral family re: vacations, encouragement and salaries would have been a positive.

Responses Concerning the Questionnaire

Critical to the ongoing success of any needs assessment instrument is the invitation of participants to provide feedback and evaluation. Based on the responses, over 203 participants provided valuable feedback which are divided into two sections: concerns and positive feedback.

Table 50. Comments participants have concerning the questionnaire.

Theme analysis

- Blank (99)
- None, N/A (13)

Concerns

- About specific question(s) vague/confusion/ambiguous/redundant (42)
- About how results will be interpreted/changes conference will take (16)
- Length/Time (11)
- About survey assumptions (5)
- Utility of the survey (4)
- Not applicable to person (3)
- More space to write responses (3)
- Confidentiality/image=reality (3)
- Too detailed
- Conference should have paid the postage
- Not good at surveys
- Hope results will be used and not just shelved

Positive

- Overdue/Pleased/Aplaud/Appreciation/ for survey, excellent idea (44)
- Hopeful/best wishes that input is helpful for present/future conference/church leaders (28)
- Anticipating results (15)
- Pertinent/survey/research tool/extensive/thorough/comprehensive (13)
- Grateful for being included/given a "voice"/opportunity (11)
- Encouraging MB conferences (9)
- Personal reflection was helpful/thought provoking (5)
- Anticipating changes conferences will implement (4)

Executive Summary of Findings

Representation of the Participants with the Greater Population

In the present study, 302 or 28.2% of the participants responded either via online or mail. Demographics from the current study such as gender, position type, number of terms, and provincial representation parallel those in the 1975-2004 Database Study, thereby indicating that the participant pool is an adequate representation of the larger population of MB pastors and former pastors in Canada. However, note that in both the current study and the 1975-2004 MB Pastoral Database, the senior pastor position represents that largest group in the MB conference (60%), followed by the associate pastor position (30%) and less so for the assistant, interim, and intern/apprentice. All results need to be prefaced with these representations.

Key Findings

The current study provides valuable information in understanding the dynamics of pastoral retention and attrition among Canadian MB pastors. The findings can be best delineated into implications for pastors, for congregations, for conference, for training institutions, and for future research.

Implications for Pastors

Based on the success secrets of pastors (see Table 46) and how pastors deal successfully with stress (see Table 47), there are a number of things that pastors can do to increase their level of being successful. Probably the most effective and consistent throughout the study is that of having mentors, of continuously seeking ways to develop professionally and personally, to ensure that the spouse and family are a priority, to develop a clear set of boundaries between church work, personal time, and family time; and to have other outlets that provide a healthy perspective on work (i.e., hobbies, sports, personal time, etc. See Tables 46 and 47 for more details). Also critical is the ability to identify the critical support factors and how to seek them, how to nourish them, and how to make the most of these, as they are so important in the success of current pastors.

Pastors also need to be more proactive in helping their congregations provide clarification of expectations and a more manageable set of work expectations. Part of this solution is a more realistic expectation of the pastor as well as a good understanding and acceptance of his or her limitations. Some pastors fall prey to their own unrealistic expectations that they are capable of doing more than is humanly possible. Involving others through delegation would be of great benefit. This might mean more professional development for pastors in the art of delegation, team building, and the art of effective persuasion of volunteers.

Part of being successful is having a good sense of the congregation's needs. This is best done through any number of needs assessment methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, town-hall sessions, etc.). Outcomes can be instrumental in strategic planning for pastors to ensure that most of the needs of their congregations are addressed. More encouragement and maybe even more training might be of benefit to help pastors with conducting insightful needs assessments.

Implications for Congregations

The success of pastors can be attributed to the support and encouragement from their congregations. Repeatedly demonstrated in the present study, pastors benefited from the support that came from their congregations in the form of encouraging mentors; accommodating congregational leadership; willing members that actively participated and volunteered at all levels of ministry; sensitive church community that respected and encouraged personal time and family time of the pastor; and caring individuals who included the spouse and provided provisions for the pastor's family. Encouragement comes in the form of affirmation of the gifts and abilities of the pastor, of work done well, and of difficult situations handled well.

The complexities of pastors working for congregations are challenging at best, given that each member can be potentially viewed as one of the bosses. Although many pastors felt strong support from their congregations, working for many people can encourage expectations that are demanding, unclear, and unrealistic, leading to high levels of pastor attrition (see Tables 30, 37a, and 37b). Poorly articulated expectations of congregations and the unreasonable demands placed on the pastor predispose him or her to being overworked, fatigued, and potentially leading to burnout. Open communication between pastor and congregation often helps to alleviate these misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations. Active participation by church members in worship and church duties often makes for meaningful corporate identity, providing a supportive environment for the pastor (see Table 35a). The power invested in church leadership also has the potential of turning abusive as it is directed toward the pastor in various unhealthy ways, especially in some of the past practices of "letting-go" of pastors (see Table 44). The dignity of all people, especially in the church, needs to be uplifting, especially during times of conflict between congregation, church boards, leadership teams, and the pastor.

Overall congregations need to learn more about what it means to be a supporting group for their pastors. Workshops and resources that focus on communication, encouragement, and support should be circulated from church to church to help promote and encourage these behaviours at the congregational level. Professional development for chairpersons on how to actively support the pastor through encouraging more congregational volunteering would be of benefit.

Implications for the Conference

Key to the success of pastors is the support by the conference in the form of resource people, resources, and policies. Pastors thrive with the affirmation they receive from their regional representatives. Attuned to the current needs of their pastors; the sensitivity to listen to the struggles and challenges of their pastors; the heart of an advocate in times of need; the foresight to anticipate and guide their pastors through conflicts; the ability to provide appropriate resources and contacts to other experts in a timely manner; and the nurturing of their souls; these regional representatives become powerful liaisons of support for their pastors in their regions.

Although many pastors are grateful for the support they have received from the conference, more is required of the conference that focuses on the holistic caring of their pastors, the spouses and families of pastors, including emotional, intellectual, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing. First, by being actively involved in the hiring process to ensure that both the pastor and the congregation clearly see each other's perspectives, visions, and dreams to ensure better matches (see Tables 41 and 43). This would include providing more background information about the congregation's personality to the pastor as well as providing background information about the pastor's abilities to the congregation. Second, identifying and encouraging pastors' gifts, and affirming their strengths. Third, by finding what the current challenges are (e.g., issues dealing with work, conflict management, family time, pastoral care for the pastor and spouse, and moral/ethical temptations; see Table 40) and providing timely connection to resources as well as resource people, especially mentors and spiritual advisors for each pastor. Along with the challenges are support people who would be willing to hold the pastor accountable as he/she goes through these challenges. Fourth, a number of current pastors have not experienced success in their last 12 months of ministry and are in need of support (see Table 22). Fifth, by soliciting the common needs of pastors and creating resource opportunities through professional development workshops, retreats, and personal time away from the office that nurtures and sustains pastors. Sixth, is advocacy for the pastor and mediation with congregations early and throughout times of conflict. Each of these actions will provide more meaningful and needed support to pastors (see Tables 41 and 43).

The conference should also take active leadership in finding innovative ways to help congregations and pastors in providing resources. First to help congregations become more aware of their unrealistic expectations of their pastors as well as find ways to train pastors in skills that deal with redefining these expectations (see Tables 37a, 37b). Second, the conference should develop create resources and professional development opportunities (see Table 39a for a specific list of topics by participants) for the nurturing of their pastors. These professional development opportunities should also include further education toward a graduate degree. Third, to be aware of and to address the various reasons that pastors resign (see Table 30) and the reasons for attrition (see Tables 37a, 37b). Fourth, to provide support that deals directly with the current issues they are facing (see Tables 40 and 41). Fifth, to continue promoting the critical factors that support pastors' ministry (see Table 28).

Also important is for the conference to become more aware of the complexities of the hiring and "letting go" processes from the perspectives of the pastor (refer to Tables 42-45). Leading experts need to find ways to address these complexities, finding processes and creating policies that would support more meaningful and amenable transitions for both the pastor and the congregation, while maintaining a high level of integrity with regard to human rights policies.

The conference needs to seriously prepare for the future vacancy of pastor positions. As seen in Table 29, future expectations of current pastors suggest that 38.2% will be leaving the MB conference for various reasons including retirement (17.2%),

employment in another denominational church (4.2%), leaving church ministry (13%), no desire to ever return (3.8%). Along with the vacancy issues are the low numbers of specialization required of certain populations (see Tables 16 and 17). These include pastors trained to minister to women, early childhood and children, junior high and senior high youth, singles, and alternative. This is somewhat concerning, given that these are the potential members of the future and also the group from which potential future pastors can be developed. More attention is needed to train pastors to meet these specialized needs.

Implications for Training Institutions

Although not directly identified in the questionnaire, many of the open-ended responses by participants highlighted the importance of training. Critical is the training of new pastors as well as the continued development of experienced pastors. The training of new pastors should take into account the various competencies that current pastors see as important, yet least competent or trained in. These include areas such as developing leaders, delegating, family time, conflict managing, self-care, teamwork, dealing with emotions and self-time (see Table 31 for more details). As mentioned earlier, specialization required of certain populations (see Tables 16 and 17) should be addressed by training new pastors to specialize in more of the following areas: to minister to women, early childhood and children, junior high and senior high youth, singles, and alternative. Also important is the development of mentoring relationships and the networking of peers. Ongoing professional development that helps meet the various issues that pastors deal with would be another key area of focus of training institutions (see Tables 40 and 41).

Also important is a continued contact between the conference and the institutions to ensure that the needs of future and current pastors are met in both formal (courses) and informal (workshops) training, and to ensure that issues identified in the present study are adequately addressed.

Implications for Future Research

A number of practical as well as theoretical issues arise from the current study. From a practical perspective, both online and hard copy formats should be used for future polling of conference pastors. The latter should not be discontinued, given that there are still some pastors who do not have access to a computer, or a modem to complete online forms. Also useful would be a shorter survey. Moreover, critical to the success of any follow-up is the speed and diplomacy in which the current findings are presented back to the respondents. Important is the sensitivity in reporting findings that will maintain the integrity of the entire population of MB pastors, while providing valuable input into the strategic planning of how the conference, the congregations, and the pastors, both those being trained and those in the field, can benefit maximally from these results.

From a theoretical perspective, other research questions that would provide more information on the current findings include:

- Which churches had fewest pastors over longest period and why?

- Asking spouses and children (latter a reflection of adult children) of pastors to provide their perspective on similar questions as well as to how best the congregation and conference can best provide them with support.
- What are the benefits of spouses' careers? Financial? Expertise in supporting different aspects of pastoral ministry (i.e., nurse – care-giving)?

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