The Pastoral Care of Ministers by Uniting Church Presbyteries

A study of the effectiveness of the pastoral care and how it may be improved

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CEM  Continuing Education for Ministry
JNC  Joint Nominating Committee
NCLS  National Church Life Survey
PCUSA  Presbyterian Church of the USA
PPCN  Presbytery Pastoral Care Network
PRC  Pastoral Relations Committee
UCA  Uniting Church in Australia
UCC  United Church of Canada
URC  United Reformed Church
CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis [or dissertation, as appropriate]. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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Date: 4th July, 2012
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ABSTRACT

The Pastoral Care of Ministers by Uniting Church Presbyteries

The purpose of this thesis is to research the exercise of pastoral care of its ministers by presbyteries of the Uniting Church in Australia. From experience as a Uniting Church minister, results of Master of Ministry research and subsequent examination of past Synod reports, it was concluded that presbyteries were experiencing difficulty in providing adequate and effective pastoral care for their ministers. From this basis the present research began.

The subsequent review of literature during the preparatory year for the Doctor of Ministry degree confirmed that the proposed research had not been undertaken previously and it was seen by some presbyteries as timely research. Key issues emerging from the literature review were those of expectations and of stress experienced by ministers. Much was written on ministers and self-care but little was written on how ministers were pastorally cared for by the Church.

A Qualitative Research method was used, using the Grounded Theory approach. A representative sample of thirteen presbyteries drawn from four synods took part in the research programme. Interviews were conducted with members of the Pastoral Relations Committees of the participating presbyteries. Research was also carried out on three denominations with similar structure to the Uniting Church; one in Canada, one in the U.K. and one in the U.S.A..

Results of research of the Uniting Church presbyteries showed that presbyteries were making great efforts to provide pastoral care to ministers, particularly through the work of presbytery ministers and through preventative measures introduced by the Assembly. However, many presbyteries were under-resourced to fulfill Assembly requirements. Many ministers appeared reluctant to participate in the preventative programmes. The most frequently occurring crisis was that caused by differing expectations between congregation and minister. The most effective model of pastoral care of ministers
appears to be that used by the United Church of Canada and lessons could be learned from that denomination.

Conclusions included the following. One was that the congregation was the most appropriate place for the practical provision of pastoral care to ministers. It was also concluded that improvements could be made to the provision of pastoral care to ministers by presbyteries and so reduce the pressure on Pastoral Relations Committees. Moreover, the changes in society and declining congregations may require a change in the approach to the exercise of ministry by ministers of the Uniting Church. The key lies with presbyteries and how they exercise their episcopate.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction.

The purpose of the research is to understand the effectiveness of the presbyteries of the Uniting Church in Australia in providing pastoral care for their ministers and whether it is possible to improve on the provision of that pastoral care. Once it has been determined whether it is possible to improve pastoral care then how that can be done will be examined. While it may seem obvious that improvements can be made, there may be factors that continue to prevent this from happening. Previous research\(^1\) showed that there were ministers in the Uniting Church who reached crisis point in their lives before the Church acted on the problem. Since the Presbyteries in the Uniting Church are responsible for ministers it would appear that in some Presbyteries there was a problem of pastoral care of those ministers. In exploring the literature it was necessary to understand the structure of the Uniting Church and why Presbyteries were made responsible for the pastoral care of ministers.

The broad range of literature on the pastoral care of clergy revealed little in the way of a systemic approach to prevention nor is much written on how different Christian denominations care for their clergy. Much of the literature looks to the minister to be responsible for his/her own self-care.

The Apparent Problem: The pastoral care exercised by Presbyteries of the Uniting Church in Australia appears to be unable to prevent a serious number of ministers from suffering seriously from negative stress.

General Background to Study

The researcher is a Minister of the Word with The Uniting Church in Australia and was previously a member of the Pastoral Relations Committee of The Downs Presbytery. In a period of four years (2004–2007) four ministers of that presbytery burned out and


at least one other minister nearly burned out. Some members of Lay Ministry Teams were also very close to burnout suffering from the stress and exhaustion of coping with both secular and ministry responsibilities. One minister interviewed during Master of Ministry research described burnout as “like falling off the edge of a cliff”. He said that he became mentally and emotionally exhausted. Skinner describes burnout as “a chronic strain that develops over time in response to prolonged periods of high stress.” Edelwich and Bronsky put it differently. They wrote that “burnout is a progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose experienced by people in helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work.”\(^2\) The result of a person suffering from burnout can be up to six months of sick leave or even leaving the ministry.

During Master of Ministry\(^3\) research it was observed that there could be weaknesses in the way that Presbyteries in the Uniting Church provide pastoral care to ministers. In response to questionnaires sent out to Presbytery Ministers, three out of four presbyteries covering rural and remote areas stated that ministers had experienced health problems. One was associated with the amount of driving being done. Extensive driving increased fatigue and stress (Hall, 2006, p. 21). Problems that people experienced that caused stress were: time constraints, keeping up with constant preparation, dealing with funerals and grief and wearing out. The latter was associated more with members of Lay Ministry Teams. It was also found that ministers, e.g. Resource Ministers, sent out in ministry without adequate support would burn out.

Questionnaires were also sent out to ministers and Lay Ministry Teams. There was a clear relationship between geographical size of pastorate and the distances driven in a year. The more time spent on driving meant less time on direct ministry and the need to work longer hours, thus creating negative stress. A clear relationship emerged between the hours worked and health. Those people who worked more than fifty hours per week reported increased levels of stress and tiredness (Hall, 2006, p. 18). This applied equally to people in full-time ministry and those who had secular employment and also exercised ministry.

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One weakness appeared to be in the area of early identification of developing problems with/for ministry agents and the ability of presbyteries to take effective remedial action before the situation became serious e.g. a ministry agent burning out. The issue was pastoral care; the burnout could be seen as a symptom. In one instance known to the researcher, a Lay Ministry Team asked for help and that help was given by the presbytery. Had the team not asked for help, it is unlikely that the presbytery would have been aware of the problem or taken action. From the research for the M. Min. project it was known that similar problems existed in other Uniting Church presbyteries.

The Justification for the Research

Paul and Libby Whetham, in *Hard to be Holy*, 4 quote from the National Church Life Survey’s Leader Survey of 1996 that “...burnout is a major feature in the lives of nearly a quarter of congregational leaders. In addition, nearly half are bordering on burnout.” The authors point out that this is indicative of a “malaise centred around meaningful relationships … or lack of them” (Whetham, 2000, p. 28). Within the Christian context, “meaningful relationships” relates to pastoral care. On the same page the Whethams also identify roles and expectations as being at the very centre of the problem.

At the conclusion of Master of Ministry studies the researcher carried out a review of the Minutes of successive Synods of the Uniting Church in Queensland to determine whether the problem of pastoral care of ministers was a recent phenomenon or whether it had existed for a longer period of time.

On page 66 of the 11th Queensland Synod held in 1987, the Joint Presbyteries Settlements Advisory Committee (generally referred to as the “Settlements Committee”) reported its concerns about its ability to fulfill its responsibilities in terms of Assembly Regulation 2.4.5 and listed some of the reasons. Those that are pertinent to the research topic are set out below:

(b) The difficulty of placing ministers in their mid-fifties and early-sixties unless they have a “high profile” in the Church. This has led to suffering both for these ministers and their families through a lack of confidence in their own ability, and uncertainty as to whether the Church wants them. This related to the unrealistic expectations of parishes.

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(c) The problem of helping a minister whose health may be beginning to cause concern to continue in or change a settlement. It is clear that the health of some ministers in the 50 plus age group is being affected by the pressures of ministry.

Parishes:
(a) Many parishes have unreal expectations of their ministers in terms of age, experience and gifts. Often these expectations are quite contradictory.
(b) There appears to be a failure on the part of some parishes to understand the nature of the Church and the ministry, and therefore the increasing pressures on ministers.

The report went on to list factors that influenced some ministers in relation to the type of settlement that they would accept. These included economic reasons, the desire of the spouse to pursue a career and the need for the spouse to work to meet economic commitments. It referred to the desire of some ministers to make decisions on settlements based on personal choice. Two are worth quoting:

(g) Continued misunderstanding on the part of ministers and congregations of the nature of the Ministry of the Word/Deaconess and its relationship with the eldership and other lay ministries.
(h) The constancy of the pressures of parish life and the inability to ‘get away from it all for a while.’ At times this is related to insensitivity on the part of parishioners to such things as location and privacy of the manse, the nature of pressure on the ministry, etc.⁵

(From the subsequent research it is clear that these issues continue to exist. It has also been of interest to note that the same issues have occurred in other denominations studied.)

The Moderator’s Report to the Twelfth Synod in 1988 stated,

I would also encourage continued efforts to deal with conflict in role expectations that contribute to the present level of clergy burnout – between clergy and congregational expectations of themselves and of each other – between what we want, what we need, what the world needs, and what God is calling us to do!⁶

Thirteen years later, the Moderator’s Report to the 22nd Synod of Queensland in 2001 reported,

Seeking to respond to the hurts of people in conflicted congregations…has involved a considerable amount of time and effort. Usually the parties involved have been unable, for a variety of reasons, to resolve significant internal issues, and some conflicts have become chronic in nature.⁷

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⁶ Reports and Recommendations of the Twelfth Synod held at Brisbane 7th-13th October 1988, Vol. 1, p. 3.
While this does not mention ministers specifically, it would have involved them in many of the cases. The 23rd Queensland Synod\(^8\) received a report from the “Future of Ministry Task Group.” An appendix to the report discussed reasons for ministers dropping out of active ministry. It discussed the high levels of stress experienced by ministers because of conflicting expectations by different parts of the Church (pages 80-81). To quote the report:

> Perhaps in no other profession (except politics) is a person facing so many expectations from so many people. To make matters worse, those expectations vary enormously.

The stress on spouses and family was also reported on. It is clear that the Church is aware of the problems facing ministers but appears unable to deal with them effectively.

For at least twenty-three years the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church appears to have been wrestling with the same problem – that of effective pastoral care of ministers.

To determine the extent of this issue in the Uniting Church a brief survey was carried out on the other synods.

In 2005 the South Australian Synod\(^9\) merged all its presbyteries into one presbytery and now has the “Synod and Presbytery” of South Australia. Congregations were then set up into voluntary networks of similar-minded (e.g. theological understanding) congregations and those of a similar nature e.g. rural congregations. It subsequently restructured at Synod to have a team of four persons responsible for pastoral matters and one of those four specifically responsible for the pastoral care of ministers.

In 2005 the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania resolved to establish a Working Group to

(a)(ii) identify the stresses presently being experienced by Presbyteries, especially with respect to human, financial and leadership resources and how these can be addressed.

The Working Group reported back in 2006 and listed twenty-one major issues providing stress to Presbyteries.\(^10\) While all are of interest to this thesis, of particular interest are:

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\(^8\) Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod 23rd Synod, *Reports and Recommendations*  
\(^9\) Bentley, Peter. *Presbyteries: Not quite dead, but many on life support*, p. 5  
(x) diminishing energy and motivation as well as burnout
(xvi) increased workload without increased resources
(xvii) struggle to understand the point/role of Presbyteries
(xix) some Presbytery responsibilities (e.g. consultations on the life and witness of the congregations) are being ignored
(xx) PRC’s need extremely long meetings to deal with an increasing number of crises.

The report recommended that the number of presbyteries be reduced and the boundaries enlarged to form larger presbyteries. Presbyteries pooled resources to allow each presbytery to have three full-time presbytery ministers, each with a specific role. These are:

a) Administration
b) Pastoral Care and
c) Mission and Education.

These recommendations were implemented from 2008 onwards.

In 2009 the final report from the ‘Ministers in Crisis’ Task Group was published.\textsuperscript{11} The task group had sought responses from ministers and asked them to give five factors that led to crises. The five most frequently mentioned responses in a total of eighteen categories, in order were: Expectations; Power, Abuse and Bullying; Change; Personal Well-being; Support, Mentoring, Supervision. When, in the second phase of the research, they were asked which of eighteen categories were most likely to lead to a crisis the five highest were, in order: Boundaries; Conflict; Power, Abuse, Bullying; Personal Well-being; Faith. Given that the report was published at the start of this thesis research, it is very relevant to the topic. The research focused on ministers and not what presbyteries do.

Again, within the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is the “Bethel Pastoral Centre.”\textsuperscript{12} It exists to “provide counselling, pastoral support and spiritual guidance to people who have been abused by individuals and processes within the Church.” It also seeks ways to reduce the level of stress experienced by clergy and to educate clergy and congregations where abuse may have taken place.

All of the foregoing points to a need to understand how pastoral care is actually delivered in the Church and how presbyteries exercise this responsibility.

\textsuperscript{11} Ministers in Crisis Project Final Report, December 2009. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.
In discussions with Synods and Presbyteries of the Uniting Church in Australia during the course of 2008 several leaders stated that this proposed research into the issue of pastoral care was “timely”.

Part of the preliminary survey included looking at denominations with a similar structure to the Uniting Church. In 2008 the Assembly of the United Church of Canada set up a new team to develop new models for the supervision and pastoral care of ministers as a result of resolutions passed at its General Assembly. The Pastoral Care Network of the Presbyterian Church of the USA had as its theme for its 2008 Conference, “Moving from Crisis to Prevention”. This network was set up several years previously and meets annually to exchange information and consider ways to improve the pastoral care of the ministers.

All of these actions demonstrated that there was a need to research present methods of pastoral care of ministers by presbyteries and to determine whether it was possible for that pastoral care to be improved.

**Key Points That Emerged Before the Research was Undertaken**

*Presbyteries* appear not to be able to cope effectively with their responsibility for the pastoral care of ministers.

*Symptoms of Crisis* in a minister’s life are well documented in the literature but those symptoms can only be observed by someone who is in contact with the minister and relating to him/her pastorally. There is plenty of help for ministers when the problem is known but the weakness in the system appeared to be to identify it and to take appropriate action before it reaches crisis level.

*Role dissonance* appears to be a serious problem in the Uniting Church in Australia, the United Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church of the USA – a reflection on the exercise of pastoral care.

The *pastoral care aspect of Personal Episkope* appears to be in increasing demand. Within the Uniting Church there has been an ongoing conversation about the need for persons who would exercise personal episcope.13

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Self-care by ministers appears to be a low priority for many ministers, for whatever reasons. There is much written on self-help for ministers but little on why the ministers do not apply the self-help in their lives. Ministers in crisis appeared to be at unacceptably high levels.

Overall, this appears to be a management issue. The points noted above can be through the poor management of time and priorities by individual ministers, by the lack of effective management of the preventative measures set out in the Regulations and Code of Ethics, by the demands being placed on presbyteries beyond their resources. However, there could be impacts that make the management of pastoral care by presbyteries difficult to do in practice.

Hypothesis
In light of the foregoing, the hypothesis proposed for this research is:

Changes need to be made to the pastoral care of ministers by Uniting Church presbyteries so that the well-being of its ministers can be improved.

This is a working hypothesis that enables a research model to be developed. A grounded theory approach should draw out concepts from categories of data and allow a theory to be developed. The hypothesis then arises from the results of the research. It may or may not require the working hypothesis to be re-written.

Purpose of the Study
Research Objectives:

1. To understand the ways that Uniting Church presbyteries and similarly structured denominations exercise pastoral care of their ministers.

2. To identify support for ministers from other levels of the Church and to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of those methods and levels of support.

3. To reflect theologically on the exercise of pastoral care of ministers within the Uniting Church.

4. To bring research findings that will determine whether or not it is possible to develop more effective ways of providing pastoral care to ministers that will be preventative and also improve the early identification of problems and offer earlier remedial action to ministers.

Research Question:

*Is it possible to develop more effective ways of providing pastoral care to ministers that will be more effectively preventative in its approach.*

**Guiding Questions**

This study has sought to answer the following questions:

1. What could be learned from the comparison of New Testament models and existing church practice and what guidance could be offered from a theological reflection on pastoral care?
2. What are the key factors that influence the exercise of pastoral care by individual presbyteries e.g. distance, limited resources?
3. What was the frequency in individual presbyteries of ministers in crisis and how did that relate to the pastoral care exercised?
4. When cases were picked up by presbyteries, how effective was the pastoral care provided?
5. What can be learned from the experience of other Christian denominations with similar structures?

**Delimitations and Limitations**

*Time:* the time-frame for completing the thesis set the bounds on the extent of the research. It would not permit an in-depth study of all the UCA presbyteries. Also interviews were to be confined to Presbytery and Synod personnel. While it could be useful to identify and interview ministers who have suffered through crises and seek their views on the pastoral care by presbyteries, this would have made the research project too big. Also it was felt that previous studies by D. Brandon, P. Hall and those carried out by the Synods of Queensland and Victoria and Tasmania had provided adequate evidence of ministers’ responses.

*Distance:* to visit every presbytery would entail such a large amount of travel as to expend too much time on travelling.
Money: Being self-funded, there was a limit to what the researcher could afford. A sum of $20,000.00 was allocated for the cost of the research. This included all travel and accommodation expenses, both in Australia and overseas.

Definition of Terms: within the scope of this study terms were defined to reflect the scope of the study. These are listed and discussed later in this chapter.

Permission to Peruse Documents: the document study in each presbytery was limited to those documents that the researcher was given permission to read and make notes from.

Number of Presbyteries Studied: This was limited by the thesis outline and plan to ten but it was necessary to lift that number to thirteen to give a good representation across the different types of presbyteries.

Non-participation by the Aboriginal presbyteries: both of these presbyteries opted not to participate.

Limited Interviewing: Only members of Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees, Presbytery Ministers and relevant Synod staff were to be interviewed to keep the size of the study within reasonable bounds.

Definition of Terms

Defining 'Pastoral Care of Ministers by Uniting Church Presbyteries'

Three definitions are required in this research topic and each must be considered within the scope of the intended research. The research question clearly shows that it will look for the evidence of preventative pastoral care. The term, pastoral care, is used extensively in Uniting Church documents, apparently without definition. Pastoral care is a term used to describe one of the responsibilities of a Minister of the Word in relation to his/her pastoral charge. Pastoral Care is also a term that is used widely outside the Christian Church and is used, for example, in hospitals and educational establishments. A number of books were reviewed on the subject of “Pastoral Care” but they were referring, in the main, to clinical pastoral care and the training of people, including clergy, in the pastoral care of laity. The books also dealt with how to counsel in a crisis, not offering anything in the preventative approach. Of the definitions given in the literature reviewed none were suitable for use in this research project. It was

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more appropriate to propose one that was pertinent to the scope of the research. Leedy and Ormrod write:

Each term must be defined operationally; that is, the definition must interpret the term as it is used in relation to the researcher's project.¹⁵

All the definitions reviewed were too broad to fit the criteria stated by Leedy and Ormrod, not having any reference to Presbyteries or to the pastoral care of ministers.

Following the advice of Leedy and Ormrod, the following definition was decided upon by the researcher:

Pastoral Care is the regard and consideration for the spiritual guidance and well-being of ministers by the Presbytery in the course of providing oversight of said ministers within its jurisdiction, such regard and consideration to include measures to minimise the risk of a minister suffering seriously from a crisis that would affect his or her ministry.

Minister:
Who are "Ministers" in the Uniting Church of Australia?

Minister of the Word
A Minister of the Word is a person who is called and ordained to "preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise pastoral care so that all may be equipped for their particular ministries, thus maintaining the apostolic witness of Christ in the Church." (Basis of Union, Clause 14(a))¹⁶

Deacons
A Deacon is a person recognized by the Church and set apart by ordination to a ministry of service and "helps", engaging in the wider community as well as the Church.

Pastor
A pastor is a person who is set aside for ministry but is not ordained. It encompasses such ministries as Lay Pastor, Community Minister, Youth Worker.

The above ministries are known as "specified ministries" and are subject to exercising their ministries in "approved placements".

¹⁶ The Uniting Church in Australia (2008). Constitution and Regulations. Sydney: Uniting Church Assembly
At a meeting with presbytery ministers in 2008 it was agreed that a minister for the purpose of this research project would be: "a Minister is a person in a specified ministry in an approved placement within the bounds of a presbytery."

_Lay Ministry Teams_
This category is of more recent origin due to the decline in both financial resources of congregations and the availability of ordained ministers. Teams of persons from congregations were given training in the conduct of worship and certain persons licenced to celebrate the sacraments for that congregation only. The teams effectively are performing the duties of a Minister of the Word as set out in Regulation 2.4.2. They are increasingly important in the life of the Uniting Church, particularly in rural and remote areas, where congregations are unable to support a placement financially. While these teams are known as ministry agents their role is not recognized as a specified ministry and therefore they are excluded from this research project.

_Presbytery_
It would appear best to quote from the Basis of Union, Clause 15 (c):

> The Presbytery (or District Council) consists of such ministers, elders/leaders and other Church members as are appointed thereto …… on a basis determined by the Synod. Its function is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly.

Uniting Church Regulation 3.4.4. describes the responsibilities of a presbytery. The first sentence states,

> The Presbytery shall have responsibility for such pastoral and administrative oversight as is necessary to the life and mission of the Church within the bounds

Of particular relevance to this study, it goes on to say,

> … the Presbytery shall give attention to the following matters:
> (a) the pastoral and administrative oversight of all Ministers and pastoral charges within the bounds, including its responsibility for counseling and discipline of ministers in accordance with Regulations 7.6.1- 7.6.4. and for ensuring Ministers receive regular professional supervision.

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It can be seen that the role and responsibilities of a presbytery are clearly described in the Basis of Union and the Regulations.

From the foregoing a definition of Presbytery for the purpose of this research could be: the Presbytery is that Council of the Uniting Church which has responsibility for the pastoral and administrative oversight of all Ministers and pastoral charges within its bounds.

Three other definitions are required. Although they are not part of the topic title and research question, they do occur a number of times in the thesis.

The three-fold ministry
During the course of research there was referred to the “three-fold” ministry of the ordained ministers. This can be defined as:

“the preaching of the Gospel, administration of the sacraments and the exercise of pastoral care so that all may be equipped for their particular ministries.”

Spirituality
This is another term that occurred frequently in the research but was nowhere defined. It can be said to be that state that emanates from the spirit of a person. The human being is composed of body, mind and spirit. In the Gospel of John Ch. 4 verse 24, Jesus says, “God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” Here Jesus distinguishes between the physical and the spiritual aspects of a person. Paul, in his Letter to the Romans, Ch. 8 contrasts life in the Spirit with life in the flesh. He points to the choice that people have to make. Spirituality then refers to the relationship a person has with God. It can be defined as:

That state of being which encompasses the act of relating to God through the spirit by means such as meditation and prayer.

Stress

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This term emerged frequently in the literature review and also in the research itself. Stress can be both positive and negative. The use of the term throughout the literature and during the research was of the negative variety. The most appropriate definition is of “work stress” and defined as:

Harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker.¹⁹

Significance of the Study

It is expected that the study will determine whether improvements can be made on the delivery of pastoral care to ministers by presbyteries. The study should be able to identify where presbyteries are finding difficulty in fulfilling their role in pastoral care, if, indeed, they are experiencing difficulty. It may also identify ways that congregations can be encouraged to deal with the expectations of its members in a way that reduces stress on the ministers. The study may identify possible ways to monitor the self-care by ministers and encourage them to be more active in this area. This will benefit ministry in the Church generally. Changes in society have placed pressures on ministers with regard to their understanding of their role in Church and Society. The results of this research could indicate the changes needed to enable ministers to live out their calling with confidence and reduce the number who either resign or need long periods out of ministry.

Value Free Research and Disclosure of Bias

The researcher is an ordained Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia. Before Union he was a Congregationalist and had been for most of his life. While committed to the Basis of Union, the researcher is aware of the risk of theological bias from his earlier years. Over the years with the UCA the researcher has moved more to the presbyteral view. The researcher is also aware of the danger of bias from the experience of years of ministry. Again, some people interviewed were well known to the researcher and there was a need to set aside personal relationships during the course of research. As this is non-participatory research and in the interest of sound research, the researcher has set aside all pre-suppositions and personal views in relation to theology, ministry experience and personal relationships. This has been aided by the

researcher's past training and experience in industrial research and the demands for objective research in the commercial and industrial spheres.

Concluding Comment.

Both the previous research and the preliminary study of Uniting Church documents show that the Uniting Church is conscious of the need to improve the pastoral care of ministers if it is to retain ministers and encourage others to train for ministry. It is clear that "expectations" and "stress" affect the lives of ministers in the Uniting Church to a level that is of concern to the Church. Yet it would appear that the Church has not been able to deal effectively with these issues. As such, further research is warranted to see whether the Church can deal more effectively with issues and improve the level of pastoral care to ministers.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE PASTORAL CARE OF MINISTERS

Introduction
From its Biblical origins, the term “Pastoral Care” has developed a much broader meaning and is used in a wide range of contexts, in hospitals, schools and other secular organizations. From the “Introduction” it was seen that some define pastoral care as taking place in a crisis situation, but within the Christian Church it has the broader understanding of caring for its members in a “whole of life” way. This includes a pastoral caring that helps to prevent crisis situations and enables its members to live healthy, productive lives. The Biblical analogy would be that of the shepherd and the flock of sheep.

Having established that the issue of the pastoral care of ministers is one of ongoing concern within the Uniting Church, it is of value to establish what research has taken place in the wider Church. The review of the literature was carried out chronologically and then conclusions drawn from all of the literature reviewed based on topics identified. Not all literature reviewed is included in this chapter, particularly the literature not dealing specifically with the Church. The value of the chronological approach is that it can show the developments and thought in the issues facing ministers in the Christian Church. From the literature reviewed there appeared to have been an upsurge in research and reporting in the early-1990s. The next upsurge was in the years 2004–2007. The research appeared to become more narrowly focussed on specific issues, such as aspects of burnout, rather than looking at the broad picture. In the Uniting Church concerns were highlighted as far back as 1981. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the main feature of the literature relating to the Uniting Church has been the stress experienced by ministers, as will be shown in this review.

Researching the Issues related to Pastoral Care.
Research has been conducted over a number of years into different aspects of the health of clergy, the earliest identified being in 1981 and the latest in 2008. These span nearly thirty years and it is hard to see from the literature whether there has been an improvement in the situation. The most frequently occurring research relating to clergy appears to be on burnout and stress. Much has been written about the cause of burnout
and on how to avoid it but it is generally related to being an individual responsibility i.e. 
the sufferer. Generally, the research appears not to have discussed the Church’s role in 
helping to prevent it. Much of the research does not deal with the topic of this thesis, 
being the pastoral care of ministers by Uniting Church Presbyteries. However, by 
reviewing some of this literature it is possible to identify areas of concern that could be 
the focus of pastoral care strategies and this is of value.

Chronological Review

For the purpose of this study, the earliest book dealt with was Doug Brandon’s survey 
of Uniting Church presbyteries in 1981.20 This is only four years after the Uniting 
Church was formed. There have been changes, such as the wider introduction of 
presbytery ministers into presbyteries and much more regulation than existed in 1981. 
There are four main themes to the book, two of which are pertinent to this research. 
Part 1 deals with the pastoral care of ministers and parishes and Part 4 deals with 
corporate/personal episcopate. Brandon refers to the role of presbytery as being one of 
“episcopate – pastoral and administrative oversight” (Brandon, 1981, p.8). He also refers 
to any member of presbytery, including the lay members elected by congregations, as 
being a ‘presbyter’. When this is weighed against the New Testament and Presbyterian 
practice it would appear to diminish the role of elders and ministers.

Moving from the role of presbytery Brandon discusses the issues that were identified. 
The one that was most frequent in occurrence was that of “conflict”. This was at the 
parish level. Other issues of the time were those related to “settlements” and 
relationships with parish councils and elders. When reflecting on “episcopate”, Brandon 
points to the value of having a presbytery minister who has a pastoral responsibility for 
ministers because this allows relationships to be built up between ministers and the 
person who pastors them. He rightly points out that the key to effective pastoring is 
built relationships and the evidence he had collected pointed to that conclusion. At the 
time of the survey the duties of a presbytery minister varied greatly between 
presbyteries but all had a “pastor pastorum” role. He also noted that parishes 
welcomed a visit from a presbytery minister but often were more negative about visits 
from presbytery teams, seeing this as a ‘big brother’ visit. Brandon also found that 
where a full-time presbytery minister actively fostered mutual caring then the members 
of those presbyteries showed the greatest care for each other (Brandon, 1981, p. 84).

This is an important point. Another possibility could be that of a presbytery minister who saw the caring as a personal responsibility rather than a shared one to be encouraged in others. This latter approach could lead to a presbytery minister experiencing exhaustion and leading to burnout.

It is also interesting to note that Brandon found that the workload of the Pastoral Relations Committees was excessive and that the Regulations were demanding in the extreme (Brandon, 1981, p. 82). Brandon noted that one of the functions of episcopate was the guarding of the purity of the Christian faith. This can require the exercise of discipline but he found reluctance on the part of presbyteries to exercise that discipline where necessary.

The following year a study on the vocational needs of ministers was published for the Commission on Continuing Education for Ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia: Synod of Victoria. The author, Robin J. Pryor, reviewed and gave a summary of previous research. While much of the report is not pertinent to this thesis there were some aspects that are. There was an emphasis on the stress experienced by ministers and under the heading of “Career Stress in Ministers” (Pryor, 1982, p. 12) the author lists four types of expectations that are pertinent to ministers. These are:

1. Community expectations
2. Church and denominational expectations
3. Divine expectations
4. Self-expectations of the minister."

This is supported by the findings of Robert H. Lauer who found that both the minister and members are caught up in a network of expectations that are inevitably thwarted. Lauer, from his research, points out that the expectations are contradictory and become impossible for the minister to fulfill. This then creates stresses in the minister. A further stress is that of a minister’s prophetic role, which may include speaking out against any ungodly action of a congregation. Lauer points out that this is counter to the expectation of both denomination and congregation for the minister to be a unifying force rather than speak of anything that could cause conflict or division. Pryor pointed to a need for pre- and post-ordination training for ministers on how to deal with role

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stress and for congregations to understand their role in overcoming the role stress that ministers experience (Pryor, 1982, p. 19). Pryor’s research found that ministers wanted persons or agencies that would provide ministry to the ministers. Presbyteries generally have sought to remedy that situation in the years since the report was published.

While not a published work of research, John Sanford’s Ministry Burnout in 1982 was a useful pointer for ministers in their self-care. He discusses the issues ministers face in the exercise of their ministry, not the least the issues of “self”. Sanford points to the “repetitiveness of ministry and reduced work satisfaction” (Sanford, 1982, p. 26) which can be balanced by taking time out to “go to the wilderness” (Sanford, 1982, p. 29). When a minister is dealing with people’s expectations, Sanford’s advice to ministers is to not promise to do something that will be regretted later. He also stated that ministers need ordinary relationships not associated with ministry and that this is where most personal growth will take place (Sanford, 1982, p. 46). The other point worth noting is that ministers need to lose the ‘persona’ that many ministers have and be themselves. If it is not done then it will affect spiritual development (Sanford, 1982, p. 72). As noted, this is about self-care by ministers and not care of ministers.

Throughout the 1980’s the focus on the stresses of ministry seemed to gather momentum.

In 1987 Bedford completed a thesis on “mateship” as a means of UCA ministers caring for each other. He made the point that pastoral care is both preventative and therapeutic in its successful application (Bedford, 1987, p. 2). He goes on to write that a better response is evoked from pastors if they are able to choose to be involved with a model that is best for their needs but the Church needs to offer a variety of models. That can be difficult from a managerial or administrative point of view and it depends on the resources available to a presbytery. A more technical term today for the “mateship” model would be “collegiality”. It is twenty-five years since the thesis was written and the Uniting Church has moved to have more preventative measures in pastoral care than there would have been when the thesis was written.

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William H. Willimon carried out research through Duke University and had it published in 1989 under the title, "Clergy and Laity Burnout." He discusses the causes of burnout and dropout in churches. An important point he makes is that for "Too much of the time, the church doesn't give us a clear picture of the expectations and tasks we are supposed to fulfil." Indirectly, he says that each member of a church has his or her own expectations of a minister and trying to meet each expectation is not possible. A bishop in the United Methodist Church in the USA, he has written extensively. The book appears to be written primarily for pastors. Willimon discusses issues that lead to laity dropping out of active life in a church as well as issues affecting clergy themselves. His view is that stress is not the key to burnout but rather from ministry no longer having meaning. He sees that this can be caused by a person being "overburdened with the trivial and the unimportant." Willimon goes on to write about whether pastors are truly called by God to their role in the Church. He appears to be saying that pastors would never feel inadequate or get depressed if they are really called by God and committed to that call (Willimon, 1989, p. 30). It would be surprising if a pastor did not, at some time in his/her ministry, question his/her call by God and there can be a variety of reasons for it. He was making some key points that he believed pastors should follow. One of them was that pastors should keep themselves physically fit because that helps to reduce stress. He wrote that most pastors neglect to do this (Willimon, 1989, p.43). Willimon states that pastors are poor at time management and need to improve in this. When they do improve their time management then, he writes, the parishioners will come to respect the pastor's time (Willimon, 1989, p. 46). Willimon believes that pastors should set priorities for their ministry and they should learn to say "No" to things that are not important or a priority for that ministry (Willimon, 1989, p. 47). All these points are relevant to the research undertaken. While the book could be classed under 'self-care' the points in it are relevant to presbyteries caring pastorally for ministers and also for those engaged in writing Assembly Regulations.

Writing in Trinity Occasional Papers in 1989, Kingham discussed the "phenomenon of leadership stress." Using illustrations from the Bible, Ross demonstrated that stress "appears to be an intrinsic aspect of all Christian ministry" (Kingham, 1989, p. 19) but that modern church leaders are often reluctant to admit to experiencing stress. Kingham

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27 Kingham, Ross, Pastoral Support for Ministers Under Stress, Trinity Occasional Papers, June 89 VIII,1 pp. 19-23.
points to the need for church leaders to withdraw from their ministry scene for rest and refreshing. Using St. Paul as an example he points to the need for ministers to “embrace a lifestyle based on the grace of God” Kingham, 1989, p. 22) but often sees the reverse happening. Again Kingham cites the New Testament and points to the leaders having supportive friendships, indicating that ministers today need to do the same thing. Kingham advocates the use of retreats for ministers to achieve this. Kingham made a valuable contribution by citing the Bible to show that ministry stress is not new. Awareness of stress and training in stress management is necessary for all who would serve in Christian ministry.

Although published over twenty years ago, Roy Oswald’s Clergy Self-Care is of value to today’s clergy. Oswal lectured on stress management and he points to the fact if people have too much stress for a long period of time they could suffer illness (Oswald, 1991, p. 24). He quotes illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and hypertension. Oswald believes that clergy must find their individual threshold to being over-stressed and under-stressed and seek to maintain a balance. He states that “effective stress management will not only lengthen your life, but increase its quality as well” (Oswald, 1991, p. 27). He also states that if clergy do not maintain control in their lives then that situation becomes “a key contributor to deadly stress” (Oswald, 1991, p. 34). Oswald points out that life changes are stressors and designed a self-assessment tool to determine the level of stress caused by changes in a person’s life. He prepared one for clergy and one for clergy spouses (Oswald, 1991, pp.30-37). Oswald then invites clergy to assess the way they respond to stresses and strains. It would be useful for ministers to do the self-assessment in company with other ministers who know them and share the results. An important point that Oswald discusses in the book is the need for effective support systems and points out that “having strong social support may also help us to live longer (Oswald, 1991, p. 130).” He discusses the states of ‘intra-dependence’ and ‘extra-dependence’ and the need to effectively oscillate between the two to maintain a good life balance.

Both Kingham and Oswald provide effective pointers for those responsible for the pastoral care of ministers. Stress is part of ministry and how are individual ministers handling that stress? Do they have effective support systems in place in their lives?

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In 1992 Harbaugh had the results of his research published and set out sixteen ways of caring. The list was in fact the sixteen Christian denominations in the USA that participated in the research survey. Harbaugh describes the way each provides pastoral care, based on their replies. This work is similar to the topic of this thesis but not the same. Out of the sixteen denominations only five listed preventative pastoral care measures. All dealt with crisis care. Three encouraged clergy to be part of peer support groups. Two recommended lay support/mutual ministry committees to be established at the congregational level to support the pastor and family. One denomination, the Reformed Church of America, employs retired pastors and their wives part-time to be “pastor of pastors” to the pastors and wives. This is preventative pastoral care. Many of the denominations offered programmes and courses on subjects such as conflict management, sexual ethics, stress management and spirituality. These are more professional development and only indirectly preventative pastoral care. One problem with this survey is that it was done at denominational level and the views are those given from the denominational level. It is possible that much more preventative pastoral care existed at presbytery/district level that was not mentioned. Certainly, once a crisis occurs for a pastor, the Church will provide resources to assist.

McRae-McMahon, wrote in 1992 of the need for clergy to be “human” and be able to be honest and open with the lay leaders of a pastorate. She also points to prayer “as the joining of our love, health, and healing energy with that which belongs to God” (McRae-McMahon, 1992, p. 39). Being honest with yourself, with others and with God is an important ingredient for a healthy ministry.

Expectations of ministers that are conflicting can lead to loneliness and repressed anger, as researched by Meryem Brown in 1992. She quotes Croucher, (1983) who wrote that the main functions of a minister are often in conflict, pointing out that the prophetic role disturbs and the pastoral role comforts. This puts ministers under stress. Brown quotes a survey in 1987 by the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church into stress which reported that all respondents (376) saw the role of ministers to be very stressful.

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31 Brown, Meryem (1992), Loneliness and Repressed Anger as Correlates of Burnout amongst Clergy, Graduate Diploma thesis, University of Southern Queensland.
In her thesis Brown concluded that part of the profile of ministers at high risk of burnout "typically works in a rural parish, is relatively young and inexperienced, represses anger, and perceives him/herself to be lonely."\textsuperscript{32} The writer of the thesis claimed that part of the problem lay with the theological colleges giving students unrealistic expectations of ministry after graduation. While the claim about the theological colleges is still made by presbytery ministers it must be pointed out that there have been changes in the Uniting Church in the last nineteen years, when this thesis was published. It was the researcher's own observation from previous research\textsuperscript{33} that long-experienced ministers are equally likely to burn out and from current research that pastoral support for their ministers by congregations in rural areas tends to be greater than in the cities.

John Davey's \textit{Burnout: Stress in the Ministry}\textsuperscript{34} is more about stress than burnout. As such, it is a helpful book. Written primarily for the clergy, it helps clergy to self-assess their stress and lifestyles. Davey is an Anglican clergyman and the research he conducted was of the Anglican Church in England and Wales. This does not diminish the value of the book to clergy generally. Davey's initial thrust is to explain the causes of stress and then invite the reader to complete a stress test (Davey, 1995, pp. 8-10). Davey goes on to discuss why ministry is stressful. He addresses the problem of role conflict, pointing out that societal attitudes had changed substantially and that the ministerial role required many functions. Part of the role problem is that within the parish people will have differing expectations of the ministerial role and these expectations can, at times, be in conflict (Davey, 1995, p. 29), thus creating stress for the minister (priest). A minister's expectations on the exercise of his/her ministry can also be at variance with those of the congregation. It was clear from Davey's writing that whatever a minister's duties are as laid down by a denomination, a congregation's expectations are not necessarily the same. He points out that clergy are expected to be "all things to all people". This is something that it is impossible to do. Davey points out that when an individual's actions and behavior is contrary to those expectations then the relationship between the minister and pastorate will be compromised. In other word, clergy and pastorate will be in a conflict situation. Role dissonance in self is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Brown, Meryem (1992), \textit{Loneliness and Repressed Anger as Correlates of Burnout amongst Clergy}, Graduate Diploma thesis, University of Southern Queensland. p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Hall, Peter (2005), \textit{Issues in Ministry Project}, Master of Ministry, Charles Sturt University.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Davey, John (1995). \textit{Burnout: Stress in the Ministry}. Leominster: Gracewing.
\end{itemize}
described by Davey as “role ambiguity”. He points to low satisfaction with their work by those who are negative about the role ambiguity.

Davey states that role expectations need to be clearly defined. He goes on to quote from a Gallup survey carried out for the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, in 1986. The most widespread problem to clergy was the amount of administration. The issue of “problems with church buildings” was second. Third was the secularization of the surrounding culture and people (Davey, 1995, p. 34). Administration is not a task that ministers feel called to or are trained for at theological college. The survey identified what the current problems for ministry were (Davey, 1995, p. 35). Top of the list was “difficult relations with congregations/individuals in the parish.” This was much higher percentage-wise than the next item which was “personal doubts as to the worthiness of their ministry.” It must be assumed that this means the ministry as it is being exercised. When it is noted that administration and property top the list of problems and the current problem in ministry list is topped by relationship problems with congregations, it is understandable that one’s calling is questioned. The first two having nothing to do with the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the other is a denial by congregations of the teaching of Jesus Christ. Another finding of the Gallup survey was on the “perceived real support in ministry” (Davey, 1995, p.36). The highest was “wife and family” (for single clergy it was “personal friends”), followed by “church wardens” and thirdly “individuals in parish.” Support from the hierarchy and fellow clergy did not rate highly. It is interesting to note that while the pastorate is perceived as giving the most support it also rates highly for relationship difficulties. Davey goes on to quote from a study of Protestant clergy in New Zealand in 1987. It found that the principal work stress factor was parish conflicts and church conservatism (it included conflicts between minister and parish). From this it can be seen that parish conflict is not confined to one denomination or one country. In fact, it would appear to emerge as a universal problem for the Christian Church, at least in ‘Western Society’. Chapter 3 of the book provides case studies and parish profiles. A survey was carried out of clergy in both rural and urban benefices (defined as a church office endowed with capital assets that provide a living) and it sought their responses to aspects of ministry under three broad headings i.e. Organisational, Ministerial and Parochial, and Personal. Davey noted that the “general health factors by benefice category was fairly close to that recorded for reward, support and appreciation” (Davey, 1995, p. 61). The better a person felt rewarded, supported and appreciated, the better was their sense of health and
well-being. The book then looked at “Clergy Support”. This chapter is aimed more at
the hierarchy in the Anglican Church. It makes some useful observations. One of these
is the use of management models that implement a sickness monitoring system of the
clergy and identifying stress-related causes. If there is an indication of stress build-up,
then action would be taken to work with the affected clergy to solve the problems
causing the stress. Davey recommends a quarterly return, identifying clergy who may
be at risk through stress and identifying the causes of the stress. This would be
completed by the Rural Dean (Davey, 1995, p. 87) and further action initiated on the
basis of the report. While paperwork is disliked by many clergy, the quarterly return is
a useful approach because it requires people to be disciplined in their approach to
pastoral care of clergy. Helping to prevent a build-up of negative stress is an even
better approach. Davey goes on to identify the “parish as the place where the clergy can
receive their greatest support and the church council as the primary support group
outside the immediate family” (Davey, 1995, p. 101). He then discusses resources for
coping with and managing personal stress. Here he is writing to clergy again. In the
last chapter Davey presents check-lists for clergy to complete, rating themselves on a
scale of 1-5. He also gives a list of actions to be taken by clergy. Davey points to clergy
needing to have a healthy lifestyle, of dealing with problems, getting fit and eating
healthily and leading a balanced life.

Overall, Davey’s studies and recommendations are useful and can be used by others
outside the Anglican Church. The questionnaires and surveys were done with clergy
and not with the dioceses. It is useful in that it gives a picture of the views of clergy ‘at
the coalface’. What is needed also are the views of those at diocesan/district level.

The year following the publication of Davey’s book, Doug Brandon submitted a thesis
that supported Davey’s findings on the problems clergy experienced with
congregations. Dissonance is a term Brandon used in his studies on Uniting Church
clergy.35 He stated that there are two basic forms of role dissonance: (a) that between a
minister and a congregation and (b) that in a minister’s understanding of what their
ministry should be and the reality of what it is (again supporting Davey’s findings).
Instead of the word “dissonance” the phrase “difference in understanding” could be
used. Brandon writes on page 288,

The minister’s day-to-day experience of ministry is likely to be determined more by culture – with its expectations and mores and sanctions – than by the documents adopted by the Assembly. Thus any new understanding of the meaning of ministry has to be patiently worked through at the local level.

This would appear to be borne out by the comments of presbytery ministers and others that the theological college does not prepare students for the realities of congregational ministry. Brandon goes on to write,

As the present research developed it became clear that the self-definition of the minister – and the minister’s empowerment to implement his or her self-definition within the culture and structures of the church – are central issues in the matter of role stress among ministers.  

Before a minister is ordained in the Uniting Church, he or she has to present to the ordaining presbytery. Should a minister’s self-understanding be something that is rigorously checked by a presbytery outside of the formal setting of the presbytery meeting?

Lloyd Vidler was called to be the Presbytery Minister of the Presbytery of Mitchell in Victoria in 1987. He subsequently wrote of his experiences as a presbytery minister. They are useful in understanding the role as he exercised it and how pastoral care was provided to ministers. The book is now fifteen years old and there have been changes in the Uniting Church since it was published.

In Chapter 3 he pointed out that ministers need a framework of support (Vidler, 1997, p. 18). It included retreats and reflections. The framework also included the pastoral care of parishes. He writes that “the Presbytery Minister needs to be well known in congregations so that trust is built” (Vidler, 1997, p. 27) and that the Presbytery Minister “needs to be alert to signals which suggest a cry for help (Vidler, 1997, p. 28).” This latter is most important. Observation by the researcher in a previous study and during the exercise of ministry found that there is a certain amount of suspicion of Presbytery and its intentions when its representatives are not well known to congregations. This is particularly true of rural congregations that may be rarely visited. It is clear from Vidler’s writing that a close relationship needs to exist between the Presbytery Minister and the clergy if the Presbytery Minister is to be effective in the

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pastoral role (Vidler, 1997, p. 30-32). Davey implied as much when describing his stress management plan. In parts of the Uniting Church where there is a shortage of resources, both human and financial, this may be difficult to achieve and other models would need to be used. One tool used by the presbytery Vidler served in was for ministers to meet with the Pastoral Relations Committee after two years in their settlement and discuss their ministry so far in that place. A smaller grouping of parishes should mean closer relationships between them and between the clergy but that would not necessarily be so. Another tool for pastoral care used by the presbytery was the Hundred Day Reflection by the minister and a group of parishioners with the Presbytery Minister. This was for ministers in at least their second settlement. Done at one hundred, two hundred and three hundred day intervals, it allowed for discussion on possible differences arising between minister and parish and a means of settling them before they became serious (Vidler, 1997, p. 21). The final pastoral care tool mentioned in the chapter was the Ministers' and Partners' retreat, held annually for three days. This enabled both ministers and their families to develop a greater sense of “esprit de corps”, as Vidler put it (Vidler, 1997, p. 22). Writing about the relationship between parishes and clergy, Vidler discussed the problem of incompatibility between minister and parish. He put this down to “inadequate negotiation between parish and minister” and a lack of adequate consultation before a settlement is confirmed (Vidler, 1997, p. 31). This is an important point and the researcher found that profiles of congregations often do not reflect the true situation. Vidler discusses ministers who are compulsive workers or who have need of recognition. These are two examples of people in ministry who are not confident of who they are in God and may subsequently suffer from role dissonance. Vidler goes on to discuss in subsequent chapters the role of the Presbytery Minister in relation to the Presbytery and Synod. He recommends that the role should be much the same as that of a bishop in an episcopalian situation although he does not use the word “bishop”. Such a view had already been rejected by the people of the Uniting Church. There have been a lot of changes since this book was published and the presbytery of Mitchell no longer exists but has become part of a geographically larger presbytery. The book has value and some of the issues raised by Vidler continue in the Uniting Church today.
Also published in Australia in 1997 was *Shaping a Future – Characteristics of Vital Congregations*,\(^38\) drawing on the results of the 1991 National Church Life Survey and containing information pertinent to this thesis. Chapter 14 discusses leadership styles and it opens by pointing out that "there are conflicting expectations about the role of clergy" (Kaldor et al, 1997, p. 148). It noted that there are differing expectations within a congregation on the role of the leader (clergy) and that leaders are expected to be many different things to the sum total of a congregation. This creates stress on the leaders. The NCLS survey asked leaders to list what they saw as their two most important tasks in their ministry. They were also asked to list the two most time-consuming roles in their ministry. 53% saw the role of pastor as most important and 66% spent most time on this. Interestingly, 52% saw equipping the laity for ministry and mission as important but only 20% spent much time on the role. Another major variant was that of the role of organizer, where only 3% saw it as important but 29% spent most of their time on this role (Kaldor et al, 1997, p. 153). Such results would indicate a cause of stress for clergy and possibly a sense of frustration. It could also lead to conflict in some circumstances. These results would point to the need to question role expectations by minister and by congregation. The question would also have to be asked as to how the denominations responded to those results.

Writing to Anglican clergy in 2000 AD, Chris Edmondson\(^39\) discussed how clergy can care for themselves and how they are supported in different dioceses in England. Edmonson opens by discussing the changes in the public attitudes to the Christian Church since the 1960s and notes the impact this has had on clergy as they seek to cope with a much changed situation for ministry. He noted the differences that exist for clergy in different diocese and compared Hereford, a rural diocese, with Guildford, a diocese of suburbs on the edge of London. The former had been less impacted by change than the latter, to the benefit of clergy in the former. These are factors that are important when considering the pastoral care of clergy (Edmondson, 2000, p. 7). Collegiality, isolation, parish support for and care of clergy all can differ in differing circumstances and surroundings. Edmonson expresses the view that clergy need to reflect on what they believe to be their role. He also suggested that clergy should challenge the congregations on what they expect of the clergy and that they, the

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congregations, may need to change their views (Edmondson, 2000, p. 6). Such comments indicate that there could be a substantial number of cases of role dissonance between clergy and their pastorates. If so, this would support Davey's findings. Edmondson goes on to discuss (a) how clergy were being supported and (b) how clergy can help themselves. Four things are discussed by Edmonson for the former category. These are: Appropriate Continuing Ministerial Education (CME), Sabbaticals, Ministerial Reviews and Pastoral Provision. He noted that there was no consistent approach to CME in the Church of England. Some diocese were reactive and some proactive. At the time of his research Edmondson found that many clergy resisted doing CME. The diocese of Hereford was a contradiction to this, Edmonson finding that eighty percent of clergy in that diocese attended at least one training event each year (Edmondson, 2000, p. 14). He put this down to the fact that many of the clergy in that diocese operated in isolated conditions. Interestingly, a similar situation applied to the rural and remote presbyteries that participated in the research for this thesis. From the perspective of self-care it is important for clergy to ensure that they keep themselves up-to-date on skills needed to meet the demands of their ministry.

Worcester Diocese linked the CME to Ministerial Reviews. The reviews were passed to the Diocese Training Officer, who then discussed the appropriate action for ongoing training and development of clergy. This would seem to be a logical course of action since the reviews would reveal any weaknesses in a clergy’s ministry skills when related to the ministry being undertaken. With regard to sabbaticals, at the time of writing Edmonson found that few clergy took sabbaticals. One of the reasons appeared to be the need for further financial support when one took it. Apparently there was insufficient provision made in many diocesan budgets for this. Ministers in the UCA are fortunate in comparison, having long-service leave funded through Synod.

Discussing Pastoral Provision, Edmondson commented that many of the clergy do not feel cared for and surmised that a number of crises could have been averted if there had been more regular pastoral care (Edmondson, 2000, 17). This agrees with Vidler's contention that a Presbytery Minister must build relationships and be well known to both clergy and congregations. In the chapter on clergy caring for themselves, Edmonson emphasises three aspects. The first he entitled “Submitting to the Father's Will” and emphasized the need for self-discipline by clergy in their spiritual lives. Such discipline was to include regular time set aside for prayer and Bible study and having some-one to walk the spiritual path with. He then discussed both physical and
intellectual needs, each of which must receive due attention to maintain proper health. Finally, Edmonson pointed to the need for clergy to have significant relationships. He saw that this could best be done by building relationships in the parish, with other clergy and in the wider community. In all of this chapter Edmonson keeps pointing to the example of Jesus and what Jesus did. This is an important point. From the experience of the researcher, too many Christians focus on the problems in life, contrary to the teaching of Jesus, instead of staying focussed on Jesus. Overall the monograph is a useful comparison for the Uniting Church. Clearly, there are similarities on some issues despite the difference in size and complexity of each country and in Church structure. The author’s focus is on the clergy and not the diocese, although there are interesting comments that can be related to presbyteries. Grove Books, an Anglican publishing company, re-printed the small book in 2003, indicating its value to many clergy.

A significant study by Paul and Libby Whetham\textsuperscript{40} has been referred to in the Introduction to the thesis and was important to the undertaking of this research. \textit{Hard to be Holy} was published in 2000 AD and added to the growing concern by researchers to the plight of ministers. A number of points need to be brought out in this chapter. The authors point out that the demands on ministers are “often stressful and exhausting, to the point where they have little time to foster relationships with God, family or friends (Whetham, 2000, p.16).

If the expectations of members of the congregation and of the ministers of themselves that the minister should be Christ-like then this would indicate a recipe for disaster. They go on to write that ministry is a stressful calling and quote from surveys by the Uniting Church and the Anglican Church in Australia to support their position (Whetham, 2000, pp. 24-27). The authors go on to discuss the need for ministers and members of the congregation to develop relationships with each other. They point out that the Church has a responsibility to help ministers to develop relationships and “become more integrated into their church community” (Whetham, 2000, p 61). In a structure such as the Uniting Churches, this means the church community is both the congregation and the presbytery. It also means helping the congregation to develop its role of integrating the minister. The Whethams then develop the theme of building relationships and point out that it needs to become a discipline of the minister to build

\textsuperscript{40} Whetham, Paul and Libby (2000). \textit{Hard to be Holy}. Adelaide: Open Book Publishers
the relationship with God and also with others. Such discipline requires setting priorities in one’s life and adhering to them. Their research found that ministers who were interactive with God and their congregation were more likely to find satisfaction and contentment in their ministry. Such ministers were also able to turn to members of the congregation for support and help when it was needed and they were less stressed than others who did not do that (Whetham, 2000, p. 97). This is a significant finding. As the authors pointed out, when ministers utilized resources that were immediately available to them, they found that their feelings of isolation and separation were reduced. The Whethams go on to discuss the need for churches and clergy to reconsider the role of clergy in the churches. Quoting from Kaldor et al 1997,

Australian clergy need to rediscover their place in congregational life in an era of lay empowerment. As attenders take on the roles that were traditionally the precinct of the ordained ministry, clergy will need to redefine their role.41

Not only individual clergy need to do this but also the Church hierarchies who define the roles of their clergy.

Results of the Church Leadership Survey, as part of the National Church Life Survey by NCLS in 1996, were published in 2001 under the title, Burnout in Church Leaders.42 While the results are fifteen years old they are an important contribution to the Australian scene and relate the congregations to the leadership. The title could be misleading as it deals with far more than “burnout”. The survey analysis showed that 56% of church leadership bordered on burning out and only 21% did not see it as an issue. When broken down into denominations, the Uniting Church was just below the national average. It noted that leaders who were task-oriented were more likely to suffer stress and burnout than those that were people oriented (Kaldor & Bulpitt, 2001, p. 24). The survey noted that there was a strong relationship between health and burnout; the healthier a person, the less likely to burnout and conversely, the poorer a person’s health then burnout is more likely. The authors note that it is important for leaders to pay adequate attention to the issues of diet, exercise and rest. The book looked at how well trained leaders felt in different aspects of ministry. The highest percentage in ‘Very well trained’ was for ‘teaching and preaching’ at 45%. ‘Pastoring’ was only 22% and other categories of ministry were well below 20%. This would indicate that the colleges training leaders for ministry were not doing it well when all

categories of ministry were put together (Kaldor & Bulpitt, 2001, p. 28). The book moved on to deal with personal relationships. The clergy who felt close to God and were growing in their faith had lower rates of burnout (substitute the word, stress, for the purpose of this thesis). Similarly, those who had a good balance between work and family life suffered less from stress. Apart from relationships, the survey found that those who had good physical health were better able to cope with the stresses of ministry. These are significant factors that a denominational hierarchy should be considering in relation to the pastoral care of its clergy.

Like the 1991 survey this one also dealt with role expectations. 47% of Anglican/Protestant leaders believed that their main role included training people for ministry and mission but only 13% believed that they carried out that role. Similarly 20% wanted to provide vision and goals but only 11% did. In other areas on ministry the survey found that 30% leaders wanted to spend less time on visiting and counselling but in practice 48% spent more time on doing so. Only 12% believed that they should be spending time supervising parish work but 32% did in practice (Kaldor & Bulpitt, 2001, p. 91). These results are similar to those of the 1991 survey and indicate that little had changed for leaders in ministry. This clearly points to different expectations of ministry by the leaders and the congregations and can result in role dissonance. The survey found that 10% of leaders disagreed with those in their congregation about the ministry role. When well over 40% of leaders feel that they wasted a significant amount of time on tasks that were not central to their role it would appear that the 10% is in reality an understatement. It would appear that many leaders enact a role, to use the authors’ term, that balances the demands of congregation, denomination and a person’s own sense of call. The survey looked at ways that leaders cope with the stresses and strains of ministry. Over 50% do this by talking with someone that they can relate to honestly. A summary of the table on page 110 of the book is provided and has significant results shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People most useful to talk to:</th>
<th>% Overall</th>
<th>% UCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Clergy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-clergy friends</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination leaders</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Director</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This clearly shows that leaders prefer non-formal links when they feel the need to discuss issues in their lives. Interestingly, the survey results showed that those who talked to denominational leaders were less likely to burn out than those who talked to other clergy. The survey also found that those who spent more time in prayer were more likely to cope with the stresses of ministry. In other words the spiritual life of a leader is a vital factor in the exercise of ministry.

The book is about ministers and congregations and not about Church hierarchies or other Courts of the Church. However, there is a lot of useful information that can help the Church in its responsibility to care for its clergy.

In 2002 Grove Books published *Finding Support In Ministry*, edited by Nick Helm and Philip Allin, and re-printed it in 2003. It would seem that many Anglican clergy expressed a need for support but were unsure of how to get it. Nick Helm sees ministry as "an expression of oneself" and points out that one's integrity can be hard to maintain in the face of expectations by oneself and by others (Helm & Allin, 2003, p. 5). Between them, the contributors recommend clergy to have a spiritual director, a mentor and a supervisor. The book also encourages annual ministerial reviews. It points out that such a review enables a minister to reflect on their current ministry and is also an expression of pastoral care by the church. While confidential, the report is part of the minister's file. The Uniting Church requires its ministers to complete a report annually based on the list of duties set out in the Regulations. A file is held by the presbytery on each minister. A further recommendation on support was that of "Learning Partnerships" where two ministers meet and discuss their ministries with each other. This is a form of peer supervision and the authors said it succeeds when it is based on friendship and commitment and is confidential. Whether a minister would find time to embody all five of those recommendations into their timetable is questionable. Each is of value and should be used based on a minister’s need at the time.

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Jill Hudson, a consultant with the Alban Institute, wrote in a similar vein to Oswald but her book\(^4^4\) was directed at both pastors and congregation leaders. The first characteristic for effective ministry she put as “The Ability to Maintain Personal, Professional and Spiritual Balance” (Hudson, 2004, p. 38). Two things that Hudson emphasises is the need for pastors to develop their spiritual life and the need to have a support group to whom they are accountable. It is of note that Hudson posed questions for a pastor to answer and also questions for a Review Committee to answer on their own effectiveness in supporting the pastor. The other characteristics were related to the exercise of ministry and were beyond the scope of this thesis topic.

Leiter and Maslach have some valuable pointers for ministry.\(^4^5\) Some of Maslach’s research has been used as the basis for other research into stress and burnout in clergy. The authors state that there are six strategic areas in relation to a person’s work. These are Workload, Control, Reward, Community, Fairness and Values. The authors use the term ‘mismatch’ and ask readers to look at how well they are matched or mismatched with the expectations in each of the six areas for the job that they are doing. They then suggest that there are four steps that a person needs to take to control their work-life.

Again, this model is one that a presbytery could use with its ministers on a regular basis to identify any concerns. Where they exist, remedial action can be taken.

Moving to studies in the twenty-first century, it would appear that some became narrower in focus, particularly the papers that are now discussed.

Five papers used three attributes of burnout as a basis for their measurements. These were: exhaustion, depersonalization and achievement. The conclusions in these papers can be helpful in developing preventative measures in the pastoral care of ministers.

Three of the papers researched Anglican clergy in England and Wales. The other two researched Australian clergy.

Conclusions from the Hills, Francis and Rutledge paper\(^4^6\) noted that depersonalization as a coping strategy is more likely to be used by younger and less-experienced clergy.


Married clergy experienced emotional exhaustion more than single clergy, possibly due to the conflicting demands of family and parish. The researchers also identified 'neuroticism' as a predictor of exhaustion, 'psychoticism' of depersonalization and 'extraversion' of achievement.

Randall\(^{47}\), researching the relationship between burnout and age found that younger clergy were more prone to burnout. He also found that length of service was not a factor in preventing burnout but rather age and maturity. Older clergy had learned how to pace their work. An Anglican clergyman spends the first three or four years of ministry working alongside an experienced clergyman who is able to supervise and train the new clergy.

Maureen Miner\(^{48}\) studied the links between burnout and orientation to ministry in ministers at exit from theological college and a year later. Her findings could be helpful to those supervising people in their periods of discernment and also to the colleges. Her findings emphasise the need for spiritual depth in orientation to ministry. The research also identified "secularisation" as a factor that generated stress in ministry. The deeper the minister's faith and the stronger the relationship with God, the less likely is the person to burnout. Miner also confirmed findings of Hills, Francis and Rutledge. To quote,

> Neuroticism and openness to experience were significant predictors of EE. Having maintained Christian faith from childhood (Unsecularised) was a significant predictor of DEP. Extraversion and holding an internal orientation to ministry predicted high levels of PA.

(Where EE = Emotional Exhaustion; DEP = depersonalization and PA = personal accomplishment.) These findings should also be helpful to professional supervisors in the Uniting Church.

Lewis, Turton and Francis\(^{49}\) studied clergy work-related psychological health in relation to stress and burnout. Their finding that is relevant to this thesis was that a positive


attitude to prayer leads to lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of accomplishment.

Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin and Lewis\(^{50}\) researched and assessed emotional exhaustion among Australian Clergy. From the analysis of data it was noted that “clergy who scored high on the index of emotional exhaustion were also significantly more likely to experience disagreement with their congregation, ...” (page 274). This study also found that younger clergy are more susceptible to emotional exhaustion.

Findings from these papers provide information that can be usefully used by presbyteries in the process of providing pastoral care to ministers and candidates for ministry.

Skinner and Roche, in their handbook, ‘Stress and Burnout’\(^{51}\), list a number of early warning signs of chronic stress for the individual.\(^{52}\) Most match items listed by other writers and this list would therefore be useful if it could be completed honestly by clergy on a regular basis. Doctors usually recommend people having an annual check-up. Similarly, this check-list should perhaps be applied at least annually to clergy. This would be better completed by a questioner rather than the subject. The list is then followed by a check-up tool for managers and supervisors.\(^{53}\) There are four categories of items: Work performance; Physical Symptoms; Withdrawal behaviours and Emotional reactions. This table could be adapted for use in the UCA.

The magazine, Insights (a publication of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW), published an article by Jim Mein that discussed pastoral care\(^{54}\). The article focussed on the provision of pastoral care to different age groups and went on to discuss the different expectations people had of pastoral care. A key point the writer made to the readers was the need to care for those in specified ministries and thus avoid crises for

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those people. This appeared to be congregation members the author was writing to. He went on to write that in the future church of small groups the members would have to pastorally care for each other. Significantly, this places the practical responsibility for pastoral care within congregations rather than at the presbytery level.

In the same year Elizabeth Pector, a Christian family physician, wrote an article dealing with burnout in Christian pastors. Pector quoted a work by Barfoot which cited reasons for pastors leaving a pastorate. Some of these are relevant to this thesis. They include “conflicting visions for the church, personality clashes, and unrealistic congregational expectations.” She states that stress is created for pastors by Churches through bureaucracy, poor support and budget problems. This becomes particularly relevant in large denominations with declining membership. Pector writes that part of the prevention is to have a “healthy lifestyle, social support and work-life balance.” Three system solutions she quoted from Andrew Weaver are: psychological assessment of ordination candidates; professional consultation, supervision and spiritual direction throughout career; retreats, sabbaticals and networking with fellow clergy. These are relevant to this thesis as the presbytery role is considered.

Writing in Voice magazine in 2006, Steve Johnson discussed the pastoral care of pastors. In his introduction to the topic, Johnson quotes statistics from a survey by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth. They show that a high percentage of the pastors surveyed have serious concerns about the impact of ministry on their lives and the lives of their families. Johnson offers six points that pastors should incorporate into their lives to be able to cope. These are: (a) spend adequate time with God; (b) avoid isolation; (c) have a hobby; (d) manage time well; (e) set realistic life goals and work toward them; and (f) seek counsel if necessary. Johnson goes on to list four responsibilities of the church in caring for its pastor. These are: (a) provide for the pastor to attend at least two conferences or retreats each year; (b) respect the pastor’s study time; (c) don’t demand more than the pastor can give; and (d) grant the pastor a sabbatical.

Grosch and Olsen wrote an article in 2006 reporting on the results of research. One body of research found that clergy burn out because of the systems in which they work. They wrote, “From this perspective, burnout is the result of external systemic factors such as bureaucracy, poor administrative support and difficult work conditions.”

They reported that another body of research found that high idealism, Type-A personality, narcissism and perfectionism were causes of burnout. This latter would fit with the findings of Skinner.

Donna Schaper, writing in The Clergy Journal, recommends that clergy have two days a week off rather than just one. She argues that most people have a 9 - 5 mentality and this impacts on the way ministry is exercised. She writes, “Clergy may never have a predictable and regular time off,” and argues this why they should have two days off, one being for family and associated matters (laundry, she describes it) and the other to have a “sabbath” day of rest. She writes, “By sabbath I mean the separation of work from play, leisure from obligation, and duty from grace.” (page 12). Schaper points out that clergy need to advertise the times they will take for family and for rest and expect some opposition. Within the Uniting Church, many congregations encourage their ministers to have a regular day off but the point about a second day is valid. So often clergy have a day off but little time with family or friends or the day is spent doing the everyday jobs that need to be done outside of ministry. The Uniting Church has ministers working six days a week and only one day off. Should this be re-considered? While not encouraging secularization, it should be noted that a five-day (or 38-hour) week is the norm in most of Australian society.

Writing primarily to clergy in 2006, Peter Brain encouraged them to care for themselves. He writes,

An intentional self-care on the part of pastors is not a matter of selfish pampering, it is essential to maintaining an effective ministry over the long term (Brain, 2006, p. 10).

Brain states that the core activities of a pastor are “prayer, preparation, pastoral visiting, discipling and counselling” and that these activities are never ending (Brain, 2006, p. 12). It would be an interesting exercise to find out how much time most clergy spend on

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each of these activities and whether other activities of the church impinge greatly on these core activities. While emphasising self-care, Brain goes on to discuss stress and its impacts. He points out that there will always be stress in ministry and it is important that pastors understand what stress involves and how to manage it. Brain quotes A.D. Hart who tabulates stress in the ministry. Hart lists the sources of stress that can impact on an individual. He then lists personality factors and shows in a third column the symptoms of distress that can manifest as a result of stress. Finally, in a fourth column, Hart lists what he calls ‘stress diseases’ (Brain, 2006, p. 41). The extent to which these manifest themselves in a pastor’s life depend on how well a pastor is able to manage the stress and this involves deliberately exercising self-care. This is an important table for those who are pastorally responsible for pastors as it is a quick reference that can be used to read warning signs of problems developing. Brain goes on to advise pastors on how to live a balanced life and deal with problems such as depression and anger, giving principles and strategies for self-care. He then writes to congregations and denominational leaders on how to support their pastors. Brain emphasises the need for affirmation and, writing to the “Pastor of the pastors”, he list some ways to show affirmation. This is in praying with pastors, expressions of appreciation, seeing that pastors are properly resourced to exercise their ministry and giving encouragement and opportunities for development. Brain also recommends that the pastor of pastors should have no administrative responsibilities. For many presbyteries this may not be possible due to lack of adequate finances. While directed primarily at clergy, the book is useful reading for those responsible for providing pastoral care of those clergy.

In 2009 Grove Books published Ministry Burnout by Geoff Read. The main purpose of this small book is to help clergy to avoid burnout. A number of points he makes are valuable in seeking to reduce stress in ministry and can be used by presbyteries as they relate to ministers. Read points out that many who are getting near to burning out do because of “misplaced use of qualities such as tenacity and dedication and a strong sense of responsibility to reach goals” (Read, 2009, p. 6). This could apply to many clergy. Read goes on to quote Maslach as stating that the gap between expectation and reality can occur in any of six areas:

- The imbalance of workload and resources
- The degree of meaningful control one exercises

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• Fair reward, recognition and satisfaction
• Community dynamics
• Fair treatment by superiors
• Values, the sense of one’s work making a difference (Read, 2006, p. 7).

These six areas are a useful guide for presbyteries to use in conversation with ministers and assessing how they are coping. Looking at preventative measures, Read points out that it is essential to have “a commitment to developing spirituality” (Read, 2009, p. 19). This relates to the findings of the NCLS survey, that leaders who had a strong spiritual and prayer life coped much better with the stresses of ministry than those that did not. In writing to the Church, Read quotes the findings of Leslie Francis that personality factors are the best predictors of burnout and these are the best guide to the church on the type of support any one minister may need to have provided. This supports the findings of other researchers already reviewed.

Conclusions
Each of the different pieces of literature had emphases that could be listed and when these were collated it was found that the two most frequently occurring were that of “Expectations” and “Stress”. The literature dealt with the expectations of clergy, of congregations, of the Church institution and of the wider community. Of the four types of expectations the most frequently discussed was that of the differing expectations of congregation and clergy. It would appear that stress is an integral part of the role of clergy and therefore needs to be addressed by the Church as a whole and not left to clergy to deal with as part of an approach to their self-care. The literature indicates that stress is caused by differing role expectations of the Church, congregations and clergy themselves. Where those expectations are not met there is increased stress and even conflict. If the literature can be taken as an indicator of the seriousness of an issue then these are the issues of most concern to writers and researchers. It can be argued that both are linked. If a congregation’s expectations of the role that the minister should exercise is different from that of the minister then the minister will experience stress. This is role dissonance. The Church has a responsibility to know and understand its clergy and its congregations so that it should have an understanding of the likely development of the ministry in that place and the likely stresses the minister may encounter.
The third most frequently occurring emphasis was that of the spiritual life of the clergy, almost as frequent as the first two. The depth of spiritual life and relationship with God appears to be linked to a person’s self-understanding and who they are in God. As such, it is important for the Church to work with clergy to ensure that their spiritual life has depth.

The fourth-placed emphasis is that of “Support”. The majority of writers pointed out the need for greater support of clergy, particularly by the congregations they served. This is particularly interesting of Davey and Edmondson since they are part of the Anglican Church which is episcopal in its structure i.e. having bishops. The bishops state that they are pastors to the pastors. If a bishop claims to exercise personal episcopate then why the emphasis by these writers on the pastoral role of the parishes toward their pastors? There has been an ongoing discussion in the Uniting Church as to whether it should have bishops and the literature relating to this will be dealt with in the following chapter. The real question is whether clergy are best cared for through the exercise of “personal episcopate” or through “corporate episcopate”. Writers such a Vidler appear to have a preference for personal episcopate and within that the individual providing the pastoral care to pastors. However, the weight of the writers appears to lean toward a congregation exercising the pastoral care for pastors. Dividing support into three categories, the most frequently occurring in the literature was support from family and congregations. Second was that of “collegiality” and a poor third place was support from the Church. Research, e.g. by NCLS and Davey, showed that this placing was the choice of clergy. In any approach to “Support” by the Church this preference needs to be borne in mind.

It was clear from the literature that the writers were encouraging clergy to exercise self-care and some provided tools to assist clergy to do that. What is also clear is that the majority of clergy do not heed the advice. If they did, less would be written on the topic.

Overall, there was little written on how presbyteries (and their equivalents) exercise pastoral care of the clergy. The emphasis was more on how clergy should care for themselves. The key feature that has been shown is that of “expectations”, particularly between minister and congregation and minister of self. It would appear that stress in ministers could be lowered if more attention is paid by the Church to the topic of
"expectations". This is an important part of providing effective pastoral care. It can be concluded that there is a need to conduct research on the topic based on the findings in this literature review.
CHAPTER 3.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON
THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Introduction
The history of the pastoral care of ministers in the UCA has been shown in the previous two chapters through the research of Hall (p. 2), Prior (p. 18), and Brown (pp. 23-24). It can also be seen in the research work of Brandon (pp. 26-27) and the results of the NCLS research (pp. 29 and 33-35) and also Miner’s research on UCA exit students. In addition to these studies, Brandon surveyed the presbyteries in 1981 (pp. 17-18) and Vidler wrote of his experiences as a presbytery minister (pp. 27-29). While some of these sources may not be regarded as ‘history’ in the pure sense of the word, they provide information that helps to build the historical picture. As was seen in Chapter 1, reports and decisions of different synods gave a picture of the pastoral care of ministers over a period of twenty-five years. This chapter will take a historical perspective of the UCA to identify trends that impacted on ministry and the role of presbyteries.

As has been previously stated, the Uniting Church has a level of government known as the "Presbytery". It is of value to reflect on its origins and development in the history of the Christian Church so that its place in the Uniting Church is properly understood. What has been the presbytery’s role in the Uniting Church in Australia and what is its value in the Uniting Church today? To determine the role that it has played in the life of the Church it is of value to review and reflect on the Uniting Church from a historical perspective.

The Central Significance of Presbyteries to the UCA.
The word, presbytery, comes from the Greek words, presbuteros, meaning “aged person”, and “presbyterion”. The former word is usually translated as “elder”. Elders were also appointed in local synagogues and their role appears to have been one of administering the law. Since the synagogue was the centre of community life in Jesus' time it means that the elders were influential people in their community.

In the Book of Acts we read in Ch. 14 verse 23 that, "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church, …" A group of elders, "presbyters", is known as a
"presbyterate". This later becomes "presbytery". Within the Christian church an elder did not necessarily have to be an older person but rather one who is mature in the faith.\footnote{Titus 1: 9}

It is important to note that the evidence in the Book of Acts points to there being a plurality of elders in a local church. It would seem to indicate that a “presbyterate” (or presbytery) existed in the local church (James 5:14 and Titus 1:5). From the Book of Acts and the Epistles it is clear that the common practice was to have a group of elders in each local church, i.e. a presbyterate, and that this practice appears to have been modelled on the Jewish practice prevalent during the earthly lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth.

\textit{Developments in the Early Church}

At about 112 A.D. Ignatius wrote an epistle to the Smyrnaeans\footnote{Bettenson, Henry & Mauder, Chris (Eds.) (1999). \textit{Documents of the Christian Church}. Oxford: OUP. p. 46.} and in it he wrote,

\begin{quote}
All of you follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbytery as the Apostles, and respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no man perform anything pertaining to the church without the bishop.
\end{quote}

Here we see that a three-fold order of church government has emerged and we have a direct reference to a "presbytery". W.H.C. Frend writes of the period 260 - 303 A.D.,

\begin{quote}
The Church was now part of the everyday scene in most of the cities of the Mediterranean. Its government was in the hands of the bishop of a civitas or town, assisted by presbyters and deacons.\footnote{Frend, W.H.C. \textit{The Early Church}. London: SCM 2003. p. 111.}
\end{quote}

\textit{The Reformation Period}

John Calvin lived from 1509 - 64 A.D. About twenty-five years younger than Martin Luther he nevertheless wrote his famous \textit{Institutes of the Christian Religion} (published in 1536) while Luther was still alive. These writings have been very influential on later Reformation thinking. In his introductory notes to Chapter 3 of Book 4, Calvin appears to want to retain two functions as pertaining to the Ministry of the Word, namely those of elders and deacons. He points out that the terms, bishops, presbyters, pastors and ministers were one and the same thing to the apostles.\footnote{Calvin, John (1536). \textit{Institutes of the Christian Religion}. Translated by Henry Beveridge (2008). Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers,}
Of the government of the church, Calvin does not appear to be specific and appears to deal only with the congregation. Based on his understanding of Roman 12:8 he writes

> From the beginning, therefore, each church had its senate, composed of pious, grave and venerable men, in whom was lodged the power of correcting faults.... Moreover, experience shows that this arrangement was not confined to one age, and therefore we are to regard the office of government as necessary for all ages (Calvin, 2008, p. 705).

It would appear that in his writings Calvin was not the proponent of a presbyterian form of church government with different courts of the church. The reality in Geneva was somewhat different. The pastors of that city chose the pastor of each church. There was also strong involvement by the city council. According to Owen Chadwick, the elders were appointed by the city councillors after consultation with the pastors, the elders being responsible for the moral discipline of the city's citizens.5 Here we see in essence the basis of the Presbyterian form of government whereby there is participation by both the ordained and lay members of the church.

This model was taken back to Scotland by John Knox, where it was introduced to the Scottish Church. The structure of the Presbyterian Church was defined by the Westminster Assembly in its document, "Form of Church Government", which was submitted to, and approved by, the English Parliament in the seventeenth century.

Today, in the Uniting Church in Australia, a presbytery is composed of all the ordained ministers and an equal number of lay persons. It embodies a number of congregations within the bounds decided on by the Synod, a body composed of a number of presbyteries.

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The Spread of the Church through the British Empire.

The rise of British power in the world and the increase in the number of its colonies meant that the forms of church government existing in the United Kingdom would also spread to those colonies, not least in Australia. By the turn of the 20th Century there would be at least four major forms of church government in Australia i.e.

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congregational, episcopal, presbyterian and methodist. In Australia, three
denominations, each with a different form of government would seek to unite into one
denomination.

The Structures of the Uniting Denominations before Union

Congregational:

It should be noted that there was not a Congregational Church of Australia but a Union
of Congregational Churches. To quote R.W. Dale,

In a Congregational Church the "congregational of the faithful," - all members
of a Christian Church are directly responsible to Christ for the maintenance of
His authority in the Church; they elect their own officers, regulate their own
worship, determine what persons shall be received into their fellowship, and
what persons shall be excluded from it. Such a Church must also be
Independent - must be free from the interference of any authority external to
itself, and it must not be too large for all its members to meet regularly to fulfill
the trust which they have received from Christ. Congregationalism is
impossible without Independency.⁶

Each local congregation was totally independent of any other ecclesial authority. For
mutual support there were formed in Australia unions of Congregational Churches in
each state. Together they formed the Congregational Union of Australia. The State
Union's relationship with the local church was of an advisory nature. Each year a state
union would hold an Assembly and elect a president and other officers and members of
committees. Issues would be debated and resolutions passed but they were not binding
on a local congregation. The authority in a local congregation was Christ and Christ
alone. To quote from the document, Congregationalism:

The distinctive element in the Congregational polity has been the local church,
in which each member has his spiritual responsibility. The purpose of church
polity is that Christ, and Christ alone, may rule in His church. We believe that
the instrument whereby Christ rules in the local church is the church meeting, at
which all the covenant members of the church seek together by prayer and
discussion to discover the will of Christ and are guided into a common mind by
the Holy Spirit.⁷

The local congregation appointed deacons for a fixed term of office to assist a minister
in the spiritual oversight of the congregation and to be responsible to the church

⁷ Congregational Union of England & Wales (1951). (Congregationalism: A Statement made to the Faith
meeting for that and the congregation's administration. To quote again from Congregationalism,

The ministry is thus seen by the Congregationalists in terms of pastoral responsibility. Others besides ordained ministers may preach or preside at the Lord's Table, if appointed by the church, and those who are gifted for preaching are encouraged in the exercise of their gifts.\(^8\)

The church meeting elected deacons who would be responsible for the day-to-day management of the life of a congregation, both spiritual and temporal. One of the deacons would be elected by the Church meeting (that is, all members of the congregation meeting together) to be the Church Secretary. This person would in fact be regarded as the senior deacon although no such position existed.

A congregation had the right to call a person to be their minister whether that person was ordained or not and whether or not that person was a Congregationalist. A State Union may not agree with the choice or decision but had no power to prevent it going ahead. A minister, once trained to the standards set by the Union, could not be ordained until he or she was called by a congregation to be its minister. The person was in fact ordained to be minister to that congregation but once ordained the ordination was recognized by the denomination as a lifetime ordination. The minister was a member of the congregation and responsible to the Church Meeting for the conduct of his or her ministry. Should disagreements occur then there could be no outside intervention unless the Church Meeting requested that a Moderator be appointed to mediate in the matters of concern.

On the material side, the local congregation was solely responsible for any property that it acquired, the church meeting making the decisions in relation to these matters. Similarly, a congregation was responsible for its financial affairs. While a State Union may set levies on member congregations for its support its only recourse should a congregation refuse to pay would be to exclude it from the Union.

At the national level, any resolutions made needed the concurrence of state unions and local congregations. Administratively, the Congregational Unions were lean and had had few paid staff.

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Methodist

The structure of the Methodist Church of Australasia was very different to the Congregationalists. The Laws of the Methodist Church of Australasia were very detailed and it would seem that all members were expected to obey them. The publication contains nearly two hundred pages of laws prescribing the life and conduct of members of the Methodist Church. It appeared to be very authoritarian and covered most aspects of life within the denomination. The Church appeared to have been governed from the top.

Structurally, there were congregations gathered into circuits with a superintendent minister.

A number of circuits formed a District and all the circuits were part of a Conference. In Australasia, there were Annual Conferences comprising all the states in Australia and the countries of Tonga, Samoa and Fiji. These Annual Conferences comprised the membership of the General Conference. It governed the Methodist Church of Australasia.

Each circuit had a superintendent minister. He was supported by two circuit stewards, whom he would nominate annually for election by the circuit members. The circuit stewards were the executive officers of the circuit and responsible for its effective administration. The circuit steward was also the executive officer of the quarterly meeting and a member of the representative session of the annual district synod. Each church (congregation) elected church stewards, also nominated by the superintendent minister. They were the executive officers of the leaders' meeting.

Each district had a chairman who was elected by members of the ministerial session of the conference. The annual district synod elected a secretary and finance secretary. All were elected for a one-year term. The annual district synod was divided into two parts:

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the ministerial session and the representative session, the former being confined to the clergy.

Conferences were similarly structured and followed State boundaries. It is to be noted that the conference appointed a "stationing committee", which prepared a list of ministerial appointments for approval by the ministerial session of the conference. Circuits could make approaches to the stationing committee about possible appointments but there was no “call” system as such.

Each circuit, through its minister and steward, was expected to provide returns that fed information to the conference on the life of the circuit.

_Presbyterian_

This denomination appeared to be 'middle ground' when compared to the other two. Broadly speaking, the Presbyterian Church in Australia had four _Courts of the Church_\(^{12}\). These were:

- The Session - at Congregation level
- The Presbytery, being the District level
- The State Assembly, being the State level
- The General Assembly, being the national level.

The structure of the Presbyterian churches in different countries appears to be very similar, if not identical. Those of England, and of the United States of America, were studied and there is little difference.

The congregation has annual meetings that can elect elders (persons who are responsible with the minister for the spiritual welfare and discipline of the congregation) and members of the Board of Management. It has the right to call a minister but it is the presbytery that inducts a minister to that placement. Once in the placement, a minister can stay as long as he and the congregation want him to. The minister and elders form the Session and it deals with all spiritual matters, to quote:

... and the functions of the Session include the following:

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To superintend and promote the spiritual interests of the Charge in regard alike to worship, teaching and discipline; ..

From this is seen a three-fold responsibility based on Early Church practice i.e. worship, teaching and discipline. The Session elects a Session Clerk. The minister is the Moderator of the Session and chairs all its meetings. The Board of Management comprises elders and other lay persons and it is responsible for all the temporal matters of the congregation. It is also chaired by the minister.

The minister is a member of the Presbytery. It comprises all the ministers of congregations that form the presbytery and a representative elder from each session. On page 33 of the Standing Orders are set out the functions of the Presbytery. The opening statement reads, "To superintend all matters relating to doctrine, discipline and order in the several congregations," As well as this the Presbytery had a number of administrative responsibilities. The presbytery approves calls of ministers to congregations, ordains and indicts ministers. It also has the power to remove a minister from his 'settlement' if the circumstances justify it. The presbytery also has power to raise finance from the "charges" (congregations) within its bounds to meet its expenses, including its share of the budget of the State Assembly. The presbytery was also required to visit each of the "charges" in its care at least once every five years.

All land acquired by the "charges" was to be vested in the Corporation of the State Assembly.

The State Assembly was comprised of representatives from the presbyteries within its bounds and it had authority over those presbyteries. The General Assembly was comprised of representatives nominated by the presbyteries and the State Assemblies. It had authority over the State Assemblies and was the highest "court" of the Church.

From this, can be seen a continuation of the Geneva model and that developed by the Huguenots.

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A brief comparison of the denominations

At the congregation level, there was little difference in the day-to-day operations of the congregations of the three denominations. Many, particularly in rural areas, had entered into co-operative agreements long before union took place. The congregation appointed a lay leadership to look after the life of the congregation. In terms of the minister there was a real difference in how the placement occurred. The Congregationalist congregation had full authority over its choice and whom it called and the minister was responsible to the congregation. The tenure was indefinite. In the Presbyterian system the congregation's call had to be sanctioned by the presbytery, which was also responsible for the induction. The minister was answerable to the presbytery and not the congregation. Again, the tenure was indefinite. The Methodist minister was appointed by the State Conference to a circuit for a maximum tenure of seven years.  

The minister was answerable to the State Assembly.

Property was paid for by the local congregations but in the Methodist and Presbyterian System it was owned by the denomination. The local Congregational church retained ownership.

In both the Methodist and Presbyterian systems the final authority lay with the national body but with the Congregational system it was with the local church. The district synod of the Methodist Church and the presbytery of the Presbyterian Church appear to be similar in many ways. No such body existed for the Congregationalists. The State bodies of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches had authority over the lower levels of church government but in the case of the Congregationalists it was an advisory role only.

The Recommended Structure in the Pre-Union Documents

The members of the Joint Commission on Church Union, in preparing a recommended structure for the proposed Uniting Church, appeared to have looked to Scriptural reference and history to be their guide. In summary, the Joint Commission recommended that the ordained ministers prior to union be known as presbyters in the Uniting Church so that ministry would be seen as the responsibility of all members of

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the Church. The appointment of bishops by the presbyters was recommended and they would chair the presbyteries. On page 49 it states, "The bishops must be "bishops-in-presbytery so that their personal episcopate shall be exercised within the corporate episcopate of the presbyters". The Joint Commission also recommended that there be synods at the State level and a General Assembly at the national level. It is interesting that on page 45 of the document the Joint Commission writes about "Episcopate Beyond the Congregation" and argues for the continuance of structures that have authority over the congregations. While the Commission refers to inter-related councils of the Church, making it a conciliar Church, the fact that each higher level above that of the congregation can exercise authority over the lower levels (or smaller units of government) makes the Uniting Church hierarchical in terms of powers to make decisions on the life of the Church. This is a basic principle of management. It ceases to be hierarchical when the roles are advisory. Thus the theological ideal exists de jure and the practical reality de facto, both being held in tension with each other. The Commission stated that it is the role of the bishop to maintain "the true expression of the Christian faith in preaching, teaching and evangelism."  

On page 50 of the document the Commission states that "the Uniting Church should make its own bishops." The model would embody the practice of the Early Church. It then goes on to say that the Church should "seek full and immediate unification of their ministries with the historic episcopate, (through union with the Church of England)." It is interesting that the re-unification discussions between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in England broke down on the issue of ordination. The Church of England insisted that the ordination of Methodist ministers was not valid and that they would have to be re-ordained by the bishops of the Church of England. The Methodist ministers disagreed. If the local presbyters are called by the people of the congregations to be their presbyters then the presbyters ordaining the bishop are doing it on behalf of the people in that locality. Logically, the same cannot be said of apostolic succession, which is what would result from recognition by the Anglican Church. It is interesting that the Commission was prepared to compromise its Reformed polity to accommodate episcopal denominations that adhere to apostolic succession, such as the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches. Subsequently, the people of the uniting denominations decided that they did not want bishops at all. The discussion on whether to have

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bishops was put aside to allow unification of the three denominations to go ahead. It was a matter that would be raised again in the future.

**The Structure of the Church at Union.**

The structure of the Uniting Church at union is taken from the Basis of Union\(^{18}\) and is set out in Clause 15 of that document. In the first paragraph of this clause it states that, “The Uniting Church is governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities …” demonstrating that the Uniting Church is a conciliar Church. The congregation was the basic unit within the Church. The third sentence states that:

> The congregation will recognize the need for a diversity of agencies for the better ordering of her life in such matters as education, administration and finance. (page 17)

Within the congregation there was to be the **Elders’ or Leaders’ Meeting**, comprising the minister and the persons to share with the minister the oversight of the congregation. The next level was the **Presbytery (the district council)**. It is comprised of a number of congregations, the boundaries of the presbytery being determined by the Synod. The membership of the presbytery is composed of the ministers in placement within its bounds and other persons appointed by the elders’ meeting or the congregation **on a basis to be determined by Synod** (sub-clause (c) on page 17). Its responsibility was to exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds. **The Synod (the regional council)** was comprised of presbyteries within its boundaries. Effectively, the synods at union were based largely on the boundaries of the Australian states and territories. Its membership was on a basis determined by the Assembly and it was responsible for the general oversight, mission and administration of all the congregations within its boundaries. **The Assembly (the national council)** was responsible for all matters relating to doctrine, worship, government and discipline within the Church (sub-clause (e) page 18). It could also *make decisions on the tasks and authority to be exercised by the other councils*. This was confirmed in the Constitution of the Uniting Church. The form of the inter-relationship of the councils through its members also makes this a connexional Church.

The Constitution and Regulations (interim) were published in 1975. Clause 23 of the Constitution refers to the *Constitution of Parishes (page 14)*. This is a variation from the Basis of Union. On the same page, clause 24 refers to the formation of Parish Councils and Councils of Elders. At the 1997 Assembly the term 'parish' was removed from the Constitution and replaced by the word, 'church' so that Parish Council became Church Council. The Presbytery, Synod and Assembly clauses were extensions of the sub-clauses in the Basis of Union.

The Interim Regulations required each Synod to establish a *Joint Presbyteries Settlements Advisory Committee* with representatives from each presbytery and from Synod (Regulations 32 & 33, pages38-39). Regulation 45 requires that Presbytery approve the call of a minister by a parish and that Presbytery may "delegate determining authority in this matter to a Pastoral Relations Committee".

A congregation was required to hold at least two General Meetings each year, one of which must be an Annual General Meeting (page 44). In the 'Responsibilities of the Presbytery' we read in IV.4.(i) that "the Presbytery shall give attention to... the oversight of all Ministers and Pastoral Charges within the Bounds". Ministers of the Word who are settled in Parishes within the Presbytery were automatically members of the Presbytery. A list of nine committees to be formed by a Presbytery was detailed in Regulation 42 on page 62. One of those committees was a *Pastoral Relations and Settlements Committee*.

All property was vested in the Uniting Church (Constitution Cl.50, p.20). This meant that Congregational churches entering into union had to cede ownership of their property to the denomination.

Ministers of the Word had the choice of being called or appointed. They were able to receive a call or be appointed to a parish for a period of five years with an option to extend for periods of up to three years at a time. Parishes that wished to call a minister had to request a list of names of ministers available for a call from the "Settlements Committee". Settlements were to be made by the Presbytery. (Regs. II.35-49 pp.37-39).

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19 The Joint Constitution Commission: *Uniting Church in Australia (in process of formation) Interim Constitution and Interim Regulations (part only)*: 1975: Joint Board of Christian Education, Melbourne.
The moderator of a synod was to be elected for a period of up to three years (reg. V.14, p.66).

It can be seen that every congregation entering union would experience change from the ways in which it had conducted its affairs in the past.

*The Key Changes at Union*

For Congregationalists the changes were significant. They lost the right to self-government and to own property. Other courts of the church would decide who their minister would be and how long that minister would be able to stay with the congregation. The presbytery was a new feature that they would have to 'grapple' with.

For Methodists, the parish now had the right to call a minister where it did not before. Tenure for a Methodist minister could be longer than previously. There would be a Parish Council and an Elders Council, both new. While names had changed, the broader structure was essentially the same.

Like the Congregationalists, the Presbyterian minister would no longer have unlimited tenure of a congregation. The Session would be re-named “Elders Council” and the Committee of Management would be re-named “Parish Council”. There would be greater lay representation at the Presbytery and Synod levels of church government.

It is interesting to note the numerical strength of each of the participating denominations at union in relation to each other. The Methodist Church dominated and the next numerically were the Presbyterians with the Congregationalists being by far the weakest numerically. The Methodist congregations had no choice but to do as the General Assembly decided. Overall, about fifty percent of the Presbyterian congregations declined to join and there was, and is, a continuing Presbyterian Church in Australia. The majority of the Congregationalist congregations joined. The largest grouping that stayed out of union was in N.S.W.. This result influenced the shape of the Uniting Church.
The Number of Synods and Presbyteries formed at the time of Union.

There were 7 Synods and 54 presbyteries\textsuperscript{20}. These were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synod</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the second Assembly in 1979 the total number of members and adherents was 369,765 persons.\textsuperscript{21}

The Renewed Debate on Bishops

In 1982 the Assembly was approached by the Victorian Synod wanting discussions on the introduction of episcopacy into the Uniting Church. This resulted in a proposal to introduce episcopacy being put before the 4\textsuperscript{th} Assembly in 1985\textsuperscript{22}. It presented arguments in three categories: practical, historical and ecumenical. For the purpose of this thesis discussion will be confined to the practical. The paper argued that pastoral care is not readily exercised by a council and that many presbyteries had appointed persons, often known as Presbytery Officers, to exercise personal pastoral care, particularly to ministers (4\textsuperscript{th} Assembly papers, p.192). It also argues that the presbyteries suffer from lack of leadership by persons with authority to make quick decisions when the situation warrants it. The paper also argues for a person who would be in place longer than the Presbytery Chairman normally is. It also quotes Doug Brandon as writing that presbyteries need “personal episcope”\textsuperscript{23}. Brandon wrote that the topic should be re-visited on the basis of what he had observed in presbyteries that


\textsuperscript{22} Reports to Second Assembly, 1979 p.6.

\textsuperscript{23} Uniting Church in Australia, 4\textsuperscript{th} Assembly 1985; paper “A Proposal to introduce episcopacy into the Uniting Church”, pp 192-195.
had presbytery ministers compared with those that did not. At the 5th Assembly in 1988 a paper prepared for the Assembly Standing Committee was approved and released for discussion by the Church. Effectively, it is an expanded version of the proposal put to the 4th Assembly and supported the introduction of bishops into the Uniting Church. It argued for a pastoral carer who would also have decision-making powers. Once this happens, the conciliar approach to decision-making is weakened. The proposal also ignores the fact that the New Testament evidence shows that “elder/overseer” was always in the plural (as is shown later in the thesis). This points to the New Testament model as being conciliar. The proposal also excluded laity from the role of bishop. This would have excluded persons well-gifted for the role and created a greater separation of the ordained and the lay members of the Church.

Mostert, writing in “Ministry,” supported the proposal and argued that presbyteries were deficient of the individual aspect of episkope and that the Church should institutionalize this function to rectify the situation. Mostert also argued that people who are good carers need power to be able to make decisions. In the same issue of the journal, Doreen Theaker wrote against the proposal, arguing that the “present structures are truer to the spirit of the UC.” She points out that people prefer to “turn to self-chosen carers” and would continue to do so irrespective of who is responsible for exercising pastoral care. Theaker also argues that while a hierarchical position is not proposed, the reality is that it would emerge if the person was given the power. The researcher’s own observations over the years tend to support this contention. Malcolm MacLeod also wrote in response to the Assembly paper and agreed that personal oversight is needed in presbyteries. However, while agreeing with the concept of “bishop-in-presbytery” he sees the Assembly paper as suggesting “episcopal” bishops and not “bishops-in-presbytery”. He saw the role as being in pastoral care and pastoral relations but not being involved in discipline, believing the two should be kept separate.

In 1990 Peter Bentley wrote a response to the Assembly paper. He appeared to neither support nor reject the paper but pointed out that the overwhelming majority of responses to the paper rejected the use of the title “bishop”. At the same time, there was

significant support for a “pastor to the pastors”. An important point in his contribution was that the position of “Presbytery Officer” was open to both lay and ordained persons while the proposed position of ‘bishop’ would only be open to the ordained persons and could exclude some very gifted lay persons. In the same month and year that Bentley’s article was published, one was published by Stuart Murray, the Convenor of the Assembly committee that produced the paper in 1985. The Pro Hart painting portrayed the Church as being out of touch with Jesus and the wider community, where Jesus was still to be found. Murray is in agreement with Bentley that while people reject “bishops” they do not reject the exercise of a personal pastoral role and cites the positive ministry of presbytery officers which confirms it. He wrote that many of those responses saw that pastoral care did not include preaching or teaching (two aspects of the traditional role of a bishop). The Assembly presented the Church’s response at its 6th Assembly and reported a decisive “No!” to Bishops. In discussing the ecumenical implications the report concludes,

..., what has been heard has been God’s call to us to be a church in Australia giving increased attention to both oversight and the care of people in ways that more fully express the mutuality of lay people and clergy, ...

Section 15 reported that a theme expressed frequently was that of separating pastoral care from administration.

What can be concluded from these papers and the report is that the Church has expressed support for presbyteries to have a person who has a ministry of pastoral care to ministers but it rejects having bishops and personal episcopate where episcopate is translated as “oversight” or “overseer”, for the latter implies a person who has authority over others. This decision helped to define the future development of the oversight and pastoral care of ministers by the presbyteries.

Changes in Presbytery Structures since Union.

Each Synod is reviewed individually and in alphabetical order.

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New South Wales

The overall structure of the Synod of New South Wales appears to have remained unchanged since union and the number of presbyteries remained unchanged at 2006. Since then the Western and Darling presbyteries have combined. The changes occurred in membership and the parishes. Membership declined by 9% between 1978 and 1987 and by 1983 the giving by parishes to the Mission and Service Fund was "down by a third on expectations." The Synod subsequently engaged a consultant to review the organization. In 1989 he reported that "the boards were too powerful, independent and, consequently, divisive" (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 49). He sought devolution to the presbyteries and parishes but this was rejected. Reid, the consultant, also stated that the presbyteries were "undergunned and overtasked" (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 50). The same year the Sydney Presbytery appointed a full-time Presbytery Officer and subsequently other presbyteries followed suit. The financial difficulties continued and in 1997 severe cost-cutting took place. This has continued. In 2003 the Mansfields wrote,

> Despite its congregational ideology, the Uniting Church remains strongly bureaucratic. Increasing professionalism, legal requirements and social expectations have all contributed to this end. The boards and their executive directors (formerly, and more assertively, general secretaries) persist as the most powerful elements in the structure (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 65).

It would appear that the boards of the Synod have dominated the life of the Synod from union. This appears to have left the Synod itself as somewhat weaker than it should have been. With the introduction of full-time Presbytery Officers, the presbyteries appeared to have developed a more decisive role in the life of the Synod. The dissolution of parishes and a return to congregations as the basic unit of the Church is a return to the pre-union situation. In New South Wales, government in the Church appears to have been predominantly a Methodist model. This may have had a stultifying effect on the life of the presbyteries and the congregations since 'ownership' of mission lay at Synod level and not at the "grass-roots".

The Northern Synod.

Before union it was known as the United Church in North Australia and included the Northern Territory and the northern part of West Australia taking a line south of Hall's

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Creek and Broome. The area also included the Pitjantatjara lands in the far north of South Australia (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 68). Essentially the church was formed in the 1950s out of the combined mission efforts of the missionary arms of the three uniting denominations. By 1977 it had an identity and ethos of its own, born of the "frontier-like" conditions of the area it served. It was financially dependent on the parent organizations.

At the formation of the Uniting Church, the new synod was established with four presbyteries and less than twenty parishes. It is the largest synod in area in the Uniting Church. The presbyteries found that the powers they had been vested with at union were too much and within a year much of their power and responsibilities had been given to the synod (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 73). Financially, it was dependant on funding external to the synod prior to union and it still is today. The Synod of North Australia now has two presbyteries: one for Australian Aboriginal congregations and one for congregations of other ethnicity. This was determined at the 1990 Synod (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, 96). There has been a decline in the numbers of members and more congregations find it difficult to be financially self-supporting. It would appear that the Uniting Church structure was inappropriate for the Northern Synod at union and may still be so today. The exercise of corporate episcopate by a presbytery may prove to be too difficult to maintain in the future if funding is substantially reduced and another model may need to be implemented.

Queensland

The Queensland Synod had eight presbyteries at union and has eight today. However, an Australian Aboriginal presbytery was formed in 1985 and called "Calvary" (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 110). There was some re-structuring and re-naming of presbyteries in the South-East corner of the State and one presbytery ceased to exist. The structure of the synod has also changed with the reduction in the number of departments, mainly due to financial restraints.

Duncan and John Harrison point to the essentially congregational nature of the Church in Queensland. To quote them:

The formative influences on the religious culture of Queensland in the nineteenth century were a pietism that transected sectarian boundaries and distance, the tyranny of which fostered and reinforced a pragmatic congregationalism in polity, which influenced all protestant denominationalism in spite of their official polity (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 99).

Despite the "government from the top" approach of the Methodist Church that carried over into the Uniting Church, this streak of "congregational" pragmatism continues in many congregations in Queensland today.

Prior to union the Methodist Church in Queensland had a full-time chairman in North Queensland, and another in Central Queensland, which were funded by the connexional office (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 117). These areas became presbyteries of the Uniting Church and the roles were continued under the title of "Presbytery Officer". Their primary role was pastoral. Mary-Burnett followed suit in 1979 and The Downs in 1981. Two more presbyteries followed suit late in the 1980's. Given the primarily pastoral role of these appointments, it could be argued that these appointments were "de facto" bishops. As a result of the success of these roles in the Church, the Synod offered funding to the presbyteries for the position of full-time presbytery officer (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 118). In Queensland the presbytery has provided a strong and influential role in the life of the synod. This may be seen in part to be the result of a more widely distributed population in Queensland than in other states and, as previously mentioned, the pragmatic 'congregationalism' that exists. Declining membership of congregations and reduced financial giving to the Mission and Service Fund resulted in further reviews of the Synod departments and more contraction of services. This has placed a heavier burden on the presbyteries but also resulted in a more streamlined synod. In 1993 a full-time three-year term for the moderator was put into effect (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 123). With the continued decline in the financial position the role of presbytery ministers may be affected but the value of the presbytery role in Queensland, given its size as a state, has been proven.

South Australia

In South Australia the Methodist Church was by far the largest denomination of three entering union at 82% of the Uniting Church membership in that state (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 134). This has been an influential factor in the development of the
Uniting Church there. As previously mentioned, there were seven presbyteries in South Australia at union. It is interesting that the author of this chapter in "The First twenty-five Years" does not refer to the structures of the Uniting Church, and more specifically presbyteries, at all. Could this be an indication that Methodist thinking dominated the South Australian synod? If so, then one would expect that the presbyteries would be comparatively weak. In 2005 the synod combined all of its presbyteries into one and is now the Synod and Presbytery of S.A.. It appointed a staff of four in 2008 to be responsible for ministers, one of the four being responsible for pastoral care of ministers. The Synod is divided into six districts with a Resource Minister allocated to each district but liaising with the Synod. The Synod created "networks" so that like-minded congregations or congregations with similar ministries could network together. Some networks are divided on theological lines, others geographically (e.g. rural) and others by type of ministry (e.g. regional churches). It could be said that South Australia has effectively reverted to a Methodist structure.

Tasmania

At the founding of the Uniting Church three presbyteries were created in Tasmania. The synod office was located in Launceston because it was geographically more central than Hobart. The main change in structure for many was the formation of parishes. This brought together congregations of differing heritage and created tensions for some (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 163). Within four years of union membership had dropped by nearly 17%.

How influential were the Divisions based at Synod? The Divisions of Mission and Christian Education, and not the presbyteries, were seen to be taking the lead on programmes (Emilsen & Emisen, 2003, pp. 167-8). It is also noted that Derwent Presbytery applied for funds to employ a person in a ministry role in the presbytery. The end result (after a review) was to place personnel within the divisions and agencies of synod and to fund them from the budget. Control, therefore, remained with the synod and devolution did not occur. One exception appears to be in the placement of chaplains in hospitals, an initiative that appears to have been taken by the presbyteries (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 171). By 1991 Synod finances were facing difficulties. There had been a serious reduction in income to fund staff and programmes and the end result saw divisions amalgamating and some services being cut. The primary

33 From conversations with Synod staff in 2006 and 2008.
responsibility for outreach was passed to the congregations. In 1993 the three presbyteries were combined into one and their powers referred to the Synod (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, pp. 180-181). Effectively, the role of the presbyteries ceased and Tasmania was back to a Methodist model that existed before union. Constraints caused by the lack of resources forced the change. The resource situation continued to worsen and in 2002 the Synod of Tasmania amalgamated with the Synod of Victoria. For former Methodists and Presbyterians, Tasmania was once again administered from Victoria.

Victoria
The period dealt with is from union in 1977 until it combined with Tasmania in 2002.

Ian Breward writes that Victoria was the largest synod with 83,000 members and it had a large and strong rural base (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p.193). Through the assets that came to it from the previous denominations it had a very solid financial base. Victoria had thirteen presbyteries at union. It appears to have had Presbytery Ministers from the commencement of the Uniting Church. It is useful to reflect on Lloyd Vidler's experience as a presbytery minister.34 He became minister of Mitchell Presbytery in 1987, having moved from New South Wales Synod to take up the placement, and served in the role for ten years. Out of his experience, Lloyd proposed five points for the role of the presbytery minister: (a) to be given authority to exercise leadership (b) pastoral care of clergy (in this he includes the role of professional supervision - although not using that term) (c) oversight of the presbytery (d) keeper of the faith and (e) management of staff and the co-ordination of the work of presbytery. This has similarities to a modern-day bishop.

Like other synods, Victoria has suffered a serious drop in membership. It had reduced to 32,000 in 2002 (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 197). This is a 60% drop in membership since union and it has had serious impacts on presbyteries. This presented a dwindling human resource to fill positions on committees of presbytery. There was also a smaller base of available ministers to serve congregations and three presbyteries formed “clusters” of small congregations to be served by one minister. This was tackled in the combined Victoria and Tasmania Synod.

The Combined Synods of Victoria and Tasmania.

As previously mentioned, Victoria and Tasmania combined into one synod, with a synod representative based in Tasmania. In 2005 a Synod review was undertaken due to the concern in dwindling resources, particularly human, in the presbyteries. A Presbytery Review Working Group was appointed. There was also concern that presbytery ministers were not coping with all the responsibilities laid upon them. The Working Group reported back to Synod in 2006. It listed twenty-one stresses being experienced by presbyteries.\(^{35}\) It considered five main options:

(i) moving from the present model to approximately 30 small Presbyteries, but no Presbytery-wide placements;
(ii) retaining the present number and boundaries, but with better resourcing;
(iii) no change to the existing structure;
(iv) forming larger presbyteries with total staff at level of current staff funding;
(v) forming larger presbyteries with equivalent full-time Presbytery-wide placements of 3.0.

The working Group recommended a reduction of the number of presbyteries to eight and the appointment of a Mission Facilitator, a Pastoral Facilitator and an Administration Facilitator. Working as a team they would report to the Chairperson of Presbytery (page C7.6). This recommendation stays within the Regulations. It is interesting that it takes a different approach to 'authority' to Lloyd Vidler. The 2007 Synod accepted the recommendations but changed the titles to be:

Presbytery Minister - Pastoral Care;
Presbytery Minister - Administration; and
Presbytery Minister - Mission and Education.\(^{36}\)

Financial resources of presbyteries were pooled to allow this to happen.\(^{37}\) Presbytery boundaries were revised and a number of them were increased in size both geographically and in the number of congregations. There are now eight presbyteries compared to sixteen at union but appearing to be better resourced than before.

Western Australia

\(^{35}\) Presbytery Review Working Group Report; Victoria & Tasmania Synod Reports 2006, Section C7.
\(^{36}\) Presbytery Implementation Task Group; Victoria & Tasmania Synod Reports 2007, Section C6.
Like South Australia, this synod was confronted with most of the population being in a small area of the state and a large land area with mainly small communities scattered throughout it. In 1978 the total membership was 16,000 compared to South Australia’s 60,000 plus. It was going to be difficult to resource the structure laid upon it. The North-West Presbytery had about one hundred members and six ministers (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 225). While the Perth presbytery was city-based, others were a mixture of suburban and rural, stretching for hundreds of kilometres. From union this synod was poorly resourced for the task ahead of it and the presbyteries suffered from this. They also had to cope with a lot of external pressure and it is worth quoting Michael Owen:

A problem that affected all presbyteries was identified by Perth Presbytery in 1978:

Much of the agenda of the Presbytery and its committees arises from correspondence from bodies outside … As a result Presbytery has had difficulty in developing meetings that effectively demonstrate Presbytery as a place of pastoral concern for the life and witness of the Congregations and Parishes.

The eagerness of others to mould the character of the new church was inhibiting a presbytery's development of its identity and function (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 226).

An example of the financial pressures was that the synod found difficulty in finding the finance for a full-time Synod Secretary but did so in 1980 by finding savings elsewhere (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 233). The difficulties continued. Michael Owen wrote that, "Presbyteries and pastoral relations committees found caring for congregations and ministers very demanding" (Emilsen & Emilsen, 2003, p. 244). Much of the control appeared to still reside with the Synod and presbyteries were finding it difficult to fulfil all their responsibilities. Finally, in 2005 the West Australian Synod combined all of its presbyteries into one and is now the Presbytery and Synod of W.A.. It has divided the Synod up into Districts. The Synod has appointed a Pastoral Care Minister to be on the Synod staff and appointed District Officers to be responsible for pastoral care in their district, meeting each month with the Synod Pastoral Care Minister38. Like South Australia, it has effectively returned to a Methodist model of government. One could argue that it was defeated by geography and resources.

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38 From conversation with General Secretary of WA Synod in 2008.
Secular Impacts on the Church

Over the last thirty years there has been an increase in secular legislation that has placed greater administrative responsibilities onto the Church. This has affected all levels of the Uniting Church and increased the workload of those exercising ministry. A very good example of this is seen in the Code of Ethics that has been drawn up for ministers to observe.\(^{39}\) In 1977 this did not exist nor was it felt to be necessary at the time. Presbyteries are caught up in all of this as it is their responsibility to see that all the requirements are met by the clergy. Ministers now have to have a professional supervisor whom they should see and with whom they should discuss their ministry practice (Code of Ethics 3.7, page 7.) Again, a minister is now required to develop and submit a five-year programme for continuing education to the presbytery. All of these requirements are to be supervised by the presbytery. Child-Safe Church and Privacy Laws have to be observed by ministers and congregations. Presbyteries also expressed concern at the increase in the amount of responsibility placed on them by the Assembly. While the changes mentioned are beneficial to ministers when properly complied with, effectively, the workload of the presbytery is far greater today than it was in 1977 and when Brandon surveyed presbyteries in 1981.

Presbyteries and the Uniting Church Today.

By 2006 two synods, Victoria and Tasmania, had united into one Synod. Originally, there were seven synods in the UCA and this has now reduced to six synods. The number of presbyteries was originally 54 and had reduced to 40 by 2006. The number has reduced even further since then. Membership and Adherents of the Uniting Church in 1996 was 229,034 persons\(^{40}\). This is a reduction of nearly 38% since 1979. It is clear that the size of the Uniting Church has reduced substantially over the last thirty years. The average age of congregations has risen substantially with many more retirees in membership than at union. Prolonged droughts in rural areas have meant a reduction in both membership and income in rural churches. The result overall has been a serious reduction in financial resources to support ministry, presbyteries and departments of the Church. This is particularly so with many of the “rural and remote” presbyteries where


\(^{40}\) Uniting Church in Australia Assembly (1997). Minutes and Reports of the Eighth Assembly, Table 2. Sydney: Uniting Church in Australia. p. C3-5.
support to ministry can be provided only with financial support from Synod or Assembly. In contrast to this decline, typical of many denominations of the “Western” culture, there has been an increase in the number of multi-cultural and ethnic congregations brought about by the increase of non-white migrants and refugees to Australia. In 1985 the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress came into being and is part of the Uniting Church. Separate non-geographic presbyteries have been formed as part of that Congress within synods. The Congress has seen growth in membership of its congregations. The strength of the Korean presence in the Uniting Church resulted in regulations being written specifically for Korean congregations.

In more recent years, many congregations have reached the point of not being able to afford a minister and Lay Ministry Teams have been formed to take over the role of the ordained minister in their congregation. This has led to the development of a ‘Resource Minister’ role whereby that person is a presbytery appointment and who trains and equips the members of the Lay Ministry Team for their role. Thus, for many ordained ministers, there has been a change in the understanding of their role.

In summary, two synods, West Australia and South Australia, have effectively done away with their presbyteries and the synod has taken over the responsibilities of the presbyteries. For legal reasons they are known as the “Synod and Presbytery of…” The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has greatly reduced the number of presbyteries but substantially increased the resources to provide more effective ministry to the congregations. It has done this by having presbyteries pool resources to provide three presbytery ministers in each presbytery. The roles are (a) Pastoral Care (b) Mission Development and (c) Administration. The Synod of North Australia has reduced the number of presbyteries by 50% but works very closely with the presbyteries, one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal. The remaining two synods, New South Wales and Queensland, are little changed from union in terms of the number of presbyteries but seriously reduced in financial resources to provide effective ministry. The value of the presbytery today remains unchanged from the day of Union in 1977, which is to pastorally care for congregations and clergy. Its responsibilities have increased since the Uniting Church was formed. The key appears to be whether the resources available are adequate to support the presbytery in its role and also support a synod. Legally, they are required to exist. When resources and membership reduce to a critical point then it is no longer possible to support all levels of church government. If the present
rate of attrition of membership and resources continues then the future of one of the levels of government will be in doubt for the whole of the Uniting Church and not just three synods. The original purpose of a presbytery was to provide pastoral care, to ensure that there was sound teaching of the doctrine of the Christian Church, so that its members grew in their Christian faith, and discipline in the Faith applied. Presbyteries in the Uniting Church have much wider responsibilities and the question may be whether some of those responsibilities should be divested either downwards to the congregations or upwards to the synods. Given the geography of Australia, there is value in the existence of a body that is close to, and can have a real understanding of, the congregations in a smaller geographical area and provide the pastoral care and oversight that will strengthen the Church. For want of a better term, it would be the presbytery.

Additional Responsibilities Related to Pastoral Care by Presbyteries since Union

In considering the pastoral care of ministers by the presbyteries, the Assembly has introduced several measures since the three denominations united. Technically, none of these are pastoral care in the narrow sense of the term but can be seen to be valid in the broader sense because they can help a minister to maintain a healthy life and ministry. Three of these measures are contained in the Code of Ethics and they are Continuing Education for Ministers (Clause 3.4(a)), Self-Care (Clause 3.8) and Professional Supervision (Clause 3.9). Ministers are required to embody all three within their ministry and life-style. A fourth measure is an Annual Report to the Presbytery by ministers of their activities in relation to the duties set out in Regulation 2.4.2, which is shown below:

DUTIES OF A MINISTER

2.4.2 Within the ministry of the whole Church, Jesus Christ calls men and women to proclamation of the gospel in word and deed through the ministry of the Word and the ministry of Deacon. This calling is exercised by:
(a) preaching of the Word;
(b) presiding at the celebration of the sacraments;
(c) providing for other persons to preside at worship and/or preach within the pastoral charge in which the Minister is in placement;

witnessing in the community to the gospel of Christ
guiding and instructing the members of the Church and
equipping them for their ministry in the community;
nurturing candidates for baptism and confirmation;
pastoral oversight and counsel wherever needed;
serving in the community, especially among those who
are hurt disadvantaged, oppressed or marginalized;
careful attention to administrative responsibilities;
due observance of the discipline of the Church;
the enhancement of the Minister's own gifts for the work
of ministry;
pioneering new expressions of the gospel and encouraging
effective ways of fulfilling the mission of the Church.

Also, people who feel that God may be calling them into ministry now have to
undertake a Period of Discernment. Further reference to these will be made later in the
thesis.

**Conclusion.**

From its formation the Uniting Church has experienced imbalances of resources and
personnel between the synods and between presbyteries, impacting on the way
presbyteries have exercised pastoral care of ministers. Geography has also affected the
way presbyteries operated. The impact of declining and ageing congregations across
the whole denomination has resulted in a serious decline in finances for the majority of
the presbyteries and synods and appeared to have exacerbated the difference between
synods in the resources available. This is shown in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
being able to afford to fund three presbytery ministers per presbytery and presbyteries in
other synods struggling to fund even one presbytery minister. The trend of decline has
also resulted in many congregations being unable to afford a minister and thereby
forced a change in the pattern of the exercise of ministry. The decline in membership of
the Uniting Church would also indicate that its strategies of mission and discipleship to
the wider community generally have not been effective when compared with
denominations such as the Assemblies of God. This impacts on ministers and their
ministries and presents challenges to the Church on the way it pastorally cares for its
ministers.

In summary, trends in the Uniting Church that impact on the exercise of pastoral care of
ministers are (a) a declining membership and declining financial resources, (b)
increasing demands by Assembly on Presbyteries without a corresponding provision of
resources to enable presbyteries to meet those demands, (c) increasing use of presbytery ministers in the pastoral care role and (d) an increasing use of lay pastors and lay ministry teams.
CHAPTER 4.
RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

It was seen in the first chapter that the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia had been experiencing serious problems of stress among its ministers and a lot of time spent in presbyteries and Synod resolving conflict in congregations, particularly between congregations and their ministers. There were also issues in other Synods of the Uniting Church that pointed to the need for research. The Literature Review highlighted the issue of expectations causing stress for ministers. It also highlighted the need for ministers to develop their spirituality and do more for their self-care. The review showed that most beneficial support for clergy came from congregations and family and that this was the preferred source of support by clergy. From the historical review of the Uniting Church it was seen that some presbyteries struggled to be able to provide the pastoral care to ministers because of a lack of resources. This was exacerbated by a decline in church membership and ageing congregations. This appears to have resulted in differing expectations between ministers and congregations. On the one hand the ageing congregations wanted a maintenance ministry and on the other hand many ministers wanted a missional ministry. The result of this appears to have been increased stress on ministers. An increasing number of presbyteries appointed presbytery ministers with a delegated responsibility of pastoral care for the ministers. This would seem to have been beneficial but it has not stopped the disparity in expectations and the resulting dissonance and stress on ministers. Given the results of the reviews of the literature and the history of the Uniting Church, there was a clear need to examine the provision of pastoral care to ministers by presbyteries and determine whether it was possible to improve that provision.

Theoretical Framework

In developing a framework for this research the question is, "What is it hoped to achieve?" The simple answer is a question in itself, "Can we improve on the present pastoral care of ministers?" This leads to other questions:

a. How do presbyteries provide pastoral care now?

b. Within that, what preventative measures are used as part of the pastoral care process?
c. What role do the individual ministers play in this process?
d. What measures are used to assess the effectiveness of the pastoral care given?

From the working hypothesis on page 8 and the Conclusion of Chapter 1 it can be seen that the nature of the study would need to be exploratory and descriptive. Using the survey strategy, the study would examine the way that pastoral care is exercised in selected presbyteries in the Uniting Church in Australia.

Qualitative Research Method
As a result of the foregoing the Qualitative Research method was used. This allowed the methods to evolve in the course of the research. While a framework was set out for the research it was clear that such studies as this research entailed would need to be able to cope with the "unplanned". Information received as a result of the research could also point to the use of additional methods to fully evaluate the information received. The reason for using this approach was that it would allow judgement to be made from the information received on the effectiveness or otherwise of different approaches to pastoral care.

Grounded Theory Approach
Given the nature of the research, it was decided to use the grounded theory approach because the theory would come out of the data that is collected. In other words, the data is allowed to speak for itself. The approach used is a recursive approach in that data is collected and analysed and the results of that analysis guide further data collection and analysis. As data is analysed it is coded and examined, allowing a re-structure and re-grouping of data to provide categories of information that allow the construction of a theory. The information collected would mainly be field-based, consisting of structured interviews (insofar as it has a set number of questions for comparative purposes). The interviews were recorded so that the full content of replies would be available for analysis and interpretation. While notes were also taken, it was not possible to write down everything that was said during each interview.

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Coding
From the foregoing it is clear that the analysis of data would have to be open coded and that categories would be created from the observation of common features in the data. This can lead to the need to refine the methodology to further explore the information given. To quote Leedy and Ormond\(^2\), interconnections will be made among categories and sub-categories of information, referred to as axial coding. Similarly, the questionnaire was in the category of semi-structured. This was because a number of the questions were open-ended and allowed a broad range of answers to be given by the interviewees.

Structure
The structure of the research within the grounded theory approach was based on a combination of interviews that in turn were based on a standard questionnaire, on the examination and analysis of presbytery documents to support the interview answers and on supporting information from research sources such as Assembly and Synod documents. While the information would, in the main, be qualitative, there would also be some quantitative data sought.

Content Analysis
It was planned that part of the data collected would be the perusal of PRC minutes and reports to presbytery to be able to confirm what was told in an interview. As with the interview information collected, the information in the minutes and reports would be analysed and categorised according to key words, phrases and headings used. The results would be compared to answers given at interviews and also to determine what other information became available that was not mentioned in the interviews.

Confidentiality
Given the small number of presbyteries involved, it was decided and agreed with presbyteries that the identity of each would be hidden and only a code number would be used for each presbytery. Likewise the identity of each person interviewed would not be reported and only identified by a number. It was felt important to maintain confidentiality in the reporting. Given that the Uniting Church in Australia is a relatively small denomination compared to such as the Presbyterian Church of the USA

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or the United Church of Canada, it would be possible for people with knowledge of the presbyteries to write down a list of persons who would have been interviewed once the presbyteries were known. Speculation would then ensue on what people might have said. This would have a detrimental result for both the persons involved in the research and the research conclusions.

**Planned Method of Collection**

Within the scope of the study, it was planned to visit and interview representatives from (a) the Uniting Church Presbyteries and (b) Synod staff and (c) the listed Christian Traditions about the structures, methods and procedures relating to the pastoral care of ministers.

*Presbyteries:*

As mentioned previously, meetings were to be arranged with individual Presbyteries to conduct interviews with their Presbytery Ministers and the Pastoral Relations Committees.

*Synods*

Meetings were to be held with key persons in the four Synods that participated in the research.

*Support Ministries:* approaches were to be made to Support ministries such as, ‘Barnabas Ministries’, ‘Alongside Ministries Inc.’ and ‘John Mark Ministries’. Each of these organizations provide pastoral care to ministers but none are directly responsible for ministers. A minister has to be either referred to them or the minister contacts them as part of his/her self-help response. Barnabas Ministries and Alongside Ministries were able to provide useful information on their work and method of operation.

*Other Christian Traditions:* Initial contacts were followed up to obtain previously mentioned data.

A literature search was continued during the course of the research so that up-to-date information and data could be obtained.
Sources of Data

Qualitative Data
This was sought from different sources within the Uniting Church in Australia. The primary research information came from the interviews with presbytery personnel i.e. presbytery ministers and members of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC). As previously indicated there are the legislative requirements with regard to the exercise of pastoral care by presbyteries and by individual ministers. These are contained in the Uniting Church “Basis of Union”, Constitution and Regulations. Other denominations have similar requirements.

Information on methods, systems and procedures used by Presbyteries were to be broken down into components. This would allow comparison between Presbyteries. Answers to the following questions were sought from within the data to be collected:
What are the key components of pastoral care of ministers?
What preventative measures exist, if any?
What are the responsive processes?
Who makes the responses and how?

Quantitative Data
It was expected that quantitative data would be obtained from different sources:

Presbytery Interviews
One question in the Questionnaire would seek quantitative answers.

Research Organisations:
The NCLS has collected and published data related to the research topic and has additional information. Initial approaches were made to the organization with an initial affirmative response but subsequently a negative one.

UCA Beneficiary Fund

The UCA Beneficiary Fund is not a research organization but collects and analyses data on its membership. An approach was made to the Fund and a positive response was received. It was hoped that this fund may be able to provide data on:

i) ministers who have suffered from long-term sickness (over two months) and the cause of the sickness.
ii) Ministers who have retired early
iii) Those who have resigned and left the fund
iv) The funds would also be able to provide information by State, if not by postcode.

It was able to provide information on the first three categories.

**Preparation for the Research**

To determine whether or not the researcher would have a research programme, contact was made with all the Synods in Australia and positive responses were received from them all. Contact was also made with the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of the USA and the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom because these denominations had a similar structure to the Uniting Church in Australia.

**Researching the Presbyteries**

*The Planned Research*

Within the files of Presbyteries it was hoped that there would be information that may show the level of pastoral care exercised by the Presbytery and by whom e.g., Presbytery Minister, PRC members, an independent minister or other person. They may record the frequency of contact by Presbytery or its members. They may also report ministers in crisis. Categories possible may be;

i) ministers suffering from serious sickness  
ii) ministers who have retired early through sickness or stress 
iii) ministers who have resigned from the UCA and the reason  
iv) incidents of role dissonance and the type – personal or minister and congregation, minister and Presbytery

The minutes of meetings analysed over five years were expected to provide a lot of information on topics dealt with and the frequency of the same.

For the interviews, the questionnaire was designed to provide a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire is to be found at Appendix 3 on page 209. The quantitative data relates to one question only. Within that question it was be expected that the persons interviewed would make comments apart from giving figures.
There are fifteen questions in the standard questionnaire. They can be divided into the following groups:

Q. 1-5 The understanding and exercise of pastoral care
Q. 6-8 Preventative Measures
Q. 9-11 Types and frequencies of crises
Q. 12-14 Changes to the provision of pastoral care
Q. 15 The ideal

Each group was dealt with separately and then all drawn together.

Categories of Presbytery

Reviewing the different presbyteries in Australia, it would appear that they fit broadly into three categories:

a. City - where the boundaries are contained within city limits
b. City and Rural - where within the presbytery bounds there are both a city (or cities) and rural areas

c. City, Rural and Remote - where there is one city or a large town within the boundaries of the presbytery and the area may also be serviced by smaller regional towns.

The Actual Research

Description of the Sample and Its Analysis

The bulk of the research was in three parts (a) reviewing minutes of PRC and PRC reports to Presbytery (b) interviewing three persons on the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee and (c) having an informal meeting with members of the Presbytery PRC.

Thirteen presbyteries drawn from four synods took part in the research. A fifth synod contributed information but did not have the same involvement as the other synods because it was a ‘presbytery and synod’. There are six synods in the UCA and two of them are the “Presbytery and Synod of...” and therefore were excluded from the research. The presbyteries can be divided into three categories i.e.

City 4 presbyteries
City and Rural 4 presbyteries
City, Rural & Remote 5 presbyteries
Due to the limitations placed on the research, in the four synods represented there are a total of 29 presbyteries. These can be divided into:

City: 10  City & Rural: 11  City, Rural & Remote: 8

The sample size for each category, expressed as a percentage of the total number of presbyteries in each category is: City 40%  City & Rural 36.4%  City, Rural & Remote 55.5%

An overall percentage of the sample size is 44.8%. Statistically, this is strongly representative of the whole. While there is an imbalance between the three categories, each is sufficiently representative of the category to provide data that could be seen as reliably representative of that category and overall, representative of the whole.

There were four variations of organisation structure between the presbyteries but all have been assumed to be the same to help to maintain confidentiality. The differences were shown in Chapter 3.

Number of respondents to the questionnaire: 3 from each of 10 presbyteries, 2 from 1 and 1 from 2, giving a total of 34 respondents.
Number of Presbytery PRCs participating in an informal meeting: 10 presbyteries.

*The Views of Ministers of the Word.*

While the decision was made not to interview ministers, all but two of the interviewees were Ministers of the Word. Following a conversation with the Chairperson of a Zone, all the ministers in that zone were asked to complete the questionnaire. The answers were similar to those of the interviewees but were not included in the research results. However, they did act as verification of what the researcher was being told.

*Methodology Refined*

The minutes of meetings and reports to presbyteries did not provide sufficient information to be used to corroborate answers to the questions in one interview. It was therefore decided to increase the number of interviews to three for each presbytery participating, interviewing the presbytery minister plus two members of the PRC. There would be three sets of answers to the same questionnaire and by comparing
the answers one would expect to obtain a certain level of corroboration or otherwise. This proved to be the case.

**Informal Meeting with the PRC**

It was also recognised that people often give answers at an interview and later reflect and think of other information. Since people are different then it is possible to give different answers to the same question, not realising the importance of some information. Since the researcher has to remain objective it was not permitted to 'jog' a person's memory about information during the course of an interview. It was therefore requested that the researcher be able to have an informal meeting with the PRC of each participating presbytery. It was also requested that prior to the meeting the researcher be permitted to read the PRC reports to presbytery for the last five years. From these and the interview answers a series of discussion questions were framed. The purpose of the discussion questions was to stimulate discussion about the subject of pastoral care and indirectly provide further information to support the answers given at the interviews. The discussion topics with Pastoral Relations Committees were based on (a) answers given by questionnaire interviewees, (b) information gathered from PRC meetings minutes (where these were allowed to be viewed) and (c) PRC reports to Presbytery. Five presbyteries gave access to both the minutes and the reports, five gave access to the reports only and from three no records were made available. At no time were the topics the same as the questions in the standard questionnaire. The informality allowed people to speak freely without the concern of being put on record, as would have been the case with a formal meeting. In the majority of cases this led to interesting, and at times robust, discussion. The meetings were a valuable source of information.

**Analysis of Information**

*Quantitative Data*

This was analysed into categories and grouped. It had been hoped to be able to note trends from the analysis of that data but it was not possible to do that. Data came from the memory of each interviewee and not from records. It was also not possible to get interviewees to give figures year by year for the previous five years. Variations in answers by people from the same presbytery showed that data was to some extent subjective. The data had to be used with caution.
Qualitative Data

This was analysed and broken down into categories and sub-categories. Interviews were broken down into elements of action so that key elements were highlighted and further research undertaken if it was within the scope of this study.

The two sets of information were then compared. It was thought that distance and isolation, for example, could be factored in to provide a suitable balance to the picture. Using the researcher’s knowledge and experience as a minister in the UCA it would have been possible to provide reasonably accurate allowances for these factors. In reality, isolation did not feature strongly in the data collected.

Analysis of Data

The information gathered was then analysed and recorded in tables. Tables of the analysis of the answers given to the questions in the questionnaires were completed first. A separate table was completed for each question. These are Table A. A comparison was then made with the information gathered at the informal meeting of the PRC. With three respondents to questions from most of the presbyteries the answers to the questions varied, partly because people describe things in different ways. Where it was clear that the answers had enough similarity they were classified as a single element. In some instances it was clear that an answer given to one question belonged with the answers to another question and in such cases the answer was transferred. In tabulating the analysis, the elements were listed row by row and the presbyteries in columns. In the table of the initial analysis, where more than one respondent from the same presbytery gave the same answer, a stroke for each respondent was put in the same square. Thus, there could be up to three strokes in a square. The total column referred to the number of presbyteries recording a particular element, rather than the total number of respondents for that element.

The initial ‘elements’ were then grouped by similarity and recorded on a second table (Table B) for each question. The element numbers from table A that comprised the group are shown after the group description. In this table only one stroke is recorded for a presbytery. Again, the “Total” column refers to the number of presbyteries. Where an element would appear to fit into more than one category, because of its wording, only one category was chosen. In further analysis these elements were broken down and put into more than one category as applicable. This was particularly
necessary for Question 2, which asked for a definition. The prioritising of the information has initially been based on the results of the questionnaires and the strength of responses to the questions, thus “Professional Supervision” was listed by all presbyteries as one way of providing pastoral care and is reviewed first. Other points are reviewed in relation to the strength of response, irrespective of the question number. An illustration of how the analysed data was classified and tabulated is found at Appendix 4 on pages 211 - 213.

Meetings with Synod Personnel
Meetings were held with the Moderator of one Synod and the General Secretaries of two other Synods. The meetings discussed how pastoral care was exercised at Synod level in support of the presbyteries. Meetings were also held with the Human Resource Officer of one Synod and the resources developed to assist both presbyteries and ministers in pastoral care and self-care.

Denominations with Comparable Structures

United Church of Canada
This denomination had a similar composition at union in 1921 as the Uniting Church in Australia had. Its basic structure is the same and it has a similar geographical dispersion to the Uniting Church in Australia. Therefore it is of value to research it for comparative purposes. Initial research was through the Church’s extensive web-site and links. This produced a survey report that yielded both qualitative and quantitative data. Meetings were held with the members of the new unit on pastoral care at General Assembly, Ministry Personnel Policies and Programmes and it was hoped to return to Canada to conduct research and interviews with United Church of Canada personnel at Conference and Presbytery levels. Subsequent attempts to arrange this failed and most of the information was obtained through library and internet sources. An interview was held with a UCC minister who was on sabbatical in Australia.

Presbyterian Church (USA)
Although a much larger denomination in terms of membership, this denomination has the same basic structure as the Uniting Church and is experiencing similar problems, such as having a large number of small congregations unable to afford a minister.
Following attendance at the Presbyteries Pastoral Care Network conference in October 2008, correspondence was developed with individual members of the Network and information on the structure and working of the Presbyteries obtained through those contacts. Research was also carried out through the denomination’s web-site. Some qualitative and quantitative data was obtained to supplement the knowledge gained at the conference and through the individual contacts.

*United Reformed Church in the U.K.*

This denomination came into being only four years before the Uniting Church in Australia and its original structure was very similar. It has experienced the problems of uniting denominations just as the Uniting Church has and over a similar period of time. This made it a valuable denomination to research. When it was determined that it was not going to be possible to do on-site research with the United Church of Canada, approaches were made to the Moderator of the Assembly of the United Reformed Church and it was arranged for the researcher to conduct library research at the Westminster College in Cambridge. Attempts were made to arrange meetings with Synod Moderators but these were not successful. Interviews were held with an Assembly Moderator, a Director of Pastoral Studies at the college and a minister of a pastorate. Research was also carried out on the URC web-site.

*Interim Report/Discussion Paper*

To encourage the supply of information from presbyteries an interim report/discussion paper was prepared and circulated to all the participating presbyteries. Only one response was received and, on the advice of the supervisors, a proposed second interim report/discussion paper was not proceeded with.

*Conclusion*

Results have vindicated the decision to adopt the Grounded Theory approach within the Qualitative Research Method. In the process of carrying out the research it was necessary to adjust the process of collecting the data, which would not have been possible with a more rigid research approach. Sufficient data was collected to give meaningful results and provide a picture that was able to portray the reality of pastoral care to ministers compared to the formal expectations which are those set out in the
Regulations and Code of Ethics and the By-laws of a Synod. They are also those set out by individual presbyteries such as "Guidelines on Professional Supervision". Having the flexibility allowed in this approach, it was possible to gain greater insights into the pastoral care processes than would have been possible otherwise. Information and data gathered from written sources both in Australia and overseas provided valuable insights and a useful comparison with the data collected from the Uniting Church presbyteries. The results are laid out in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 5.
RESEARCH ANALYSIS – UCA PRESbyterIES

Introduction
The research methodology set out to achieve the research objectives and provide answers to the questions posed in Chapter 1. The analysis and tabulation of the data demonstrated that this has been achieved. Further grouping of the answers was examined but found to not be practical beyond the first grouping since it could distort the findings. The analysis results are reported within the five question groupings as set out in Chapter 4. An additional grouping is that of the responses in informal meetings with PRCs. Findings are then set out under different categories related to the research findings.

Results of the Questionnaires Analysis

Group 1: The Understanding and Exercise of Pastoral Care
The first question was, “How does your presbytery provide pastoral care to ministers?” After grouping the elements, there were 13 categories of pastoral care. One category appeared for every presbytery i.e. the Professional Supervision Programme. Second was Collegiality from 11 presbyteries and third The presbytery minister contacts/meets with ministers regularly (from 10 presbyteries). This was followed by Ministers to attend Presbytery and other meetings (from 9 presbyteries) and The Presbytery Minister as Primary Carer from 8 presbyteries. The promotion of self-care by ministers ranked low in the answer categories. The top eight categories are tabled below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Pastoral Care</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Supervision Programme</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery Ministers contacts/meets ministers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers to attend presbytery meetings</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery Minister as primary carer</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC actively aware of situations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC involved in pastoral care</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual pastoral review with/of minister</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1
It is interesting that the UCA Regulations do not express professional supervision in terms of pastoral care but see it more in terms of self-care. Several of the Pastoral Relations Committees were emphatic about the benefits of professional supervision as a preventative measure and its contribution to the pastoral care of ministers. The role of a presbytery minister as pastoral carer features strongly and this is seen as an important position to the life of presbyteries. Not all presbyteries subscribe to that role for the presbytery minister and offer a different model. Collegiality features strongly and from the research was shown to have real benefits to the overall health of a minister and the exercise of ministry. It is something that needs to be discussed in the context of the congregation and the presbytery in terms of pastoral care.

The second question, “How would you define pastoral care?” produced 37 definitions. These were grouped into 11 categories, the highest ranking being, “Caring for the spiritual, physical, emotional” from 6 presbyteries. In all cases, not one definition encompassed the definition used for this thesis. The majority encompassed only part. In asking open-ended questions, the interviewer is unable to prompt the respondent on any aspect and therefore the result is not surprising. Few people will be precise in giving a definition and often a respondent assumes aspects are a “given”. This is borne out by the informal discussions with PRCs where it is possible to be more flexible in one’s approach. It is also why re-grouping of answers is important as a combination of the three answers from a presbytery may provide a more complete answer. It became clear that all of the presbyteries involved in the research were trying to meet all aspects of the thesis definition.

The third question, “Is responsibility for pastoral care divided between a presbytery minister and the PRC,” produced a mixed set of answers. This required a simple “Yes/No” answer but in many cases this was not so. It was interesting that for three presbyteries one of the three respondents had the opposite answer to the other two and in two cases it was the presbytery minister differing with members of the PRC in their understanding of the situation. In grouping the answers, ten of the presbyteries had a “Yes” and six had a “No”, illustrating the differences in understanding of respondents. Analysis of information from the meetings with the Pastoral Relations Committees can give a better understanding.
“If so, how is it divided,” is the fourth question. Twelve of the presbyteries had a response that said that the PRC had a direct involvement in the pastoral care of ministers. Eight of those said that the division of care depended on the issue and four presbyteries said that the presbytery minister provided most of the pastoral care. From this analysis it is clear that the majority of presbyteries participating in the research share pastoral care to a greater or lesser extent between the presbytery minister and the PRC.

The fifth question asked, “Are other people/committees involved in the pastoral care of ministers?” From the grouped answers there were two categories of equal standing, each mentioned by six presbyteries. These were (a) Church Councils and Congregations and (b) Fellow ministers and colleagues. Combining the two raised the number of presbyteries to eight. Of the thirteen, only two had a clear “No” to this question. Two others had answers that excluded the “grassroots” level and confined pastoral care to the presbytery level. Whether the respondents believed that to be the case or took a narrow view in light of the topic can only be determined from other sources of information. It is interesting that the majority of the presbyteries emphasise pastoral care at the “grassroots” level even though the responsibility is that of the presbytery.

Group 2: Preventative Measures

In Question 6 the research sought to find out what systems and procedures were used by presbyteries as part of a process of maintaining the health of ministers and congregations. From the answers it was clear that a number of respondents were not clear on the difference between a system, a procedure, a method, policy or a structure. The Uniting Church has regulations which effectively require presbyteries to put in place systems and procedures to ensure that those requirements are fulfilled. These include the Minister’s Annual Return to Presbyteries, Code of Ethics requirements, complaints against ministers and the conduct of 5-yearly consultations with ministers and congregations. There are only nine instances where two respondents from the same presbytery listed the same element of answer to the question. From the answers there were twelve elements of systems identified from eight presbyteries that related to the Presbytery Minister. This was the highest ranking. Similarly, there were twelve elements from eight presbyteries for “Presbytery/PRC related systems. Only four of the presbyteries were represented in both categories. Five respondents said that there were
no systems or procedures in place in their presbytery but for four presbyteries that was in contradiction to the other respondents from the same presbytery. This emphasises either a lack of understanding on the part of some respondents to what systems and procedures are or how presbytery is functioning. However, respondents from seven presbyteries did say that there were systems specified by UCA Regulations. The grouped results are set out below.

Q.6 What systems/procedures are in place as part of the pastoral process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Answer</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presbytery/PRC Related Systems</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems of Presbytery Minister</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCA Regulations specified systems</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No systems or procedures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Question 7 asked “What preventative measures are in place to minimise the risk of crises for ministers?” The most frequently occurring response was “Professional Supervision”. This would appear to show the importance of it in the minds of presbyteries. When the elements were grouped, the most frequently occurring was “Specialists working with ministers” at ten presbyteries. This included professional supervision. It would appear that there is a heavy reliance on what could be called “external support”. Eleven elements across seven presbyteries referred to the “Activities of the Presbytery Minister” as being preventative in nature. At equal placing with seven presbyteries was the grouping, “Training”, with nine elements. Three of those elements referred to Code of Ethics training, one to CEM and two to pastoral training within the presbytery. The other forms of training were external to the presbytery.

The third question (Question 8) in this group asked how presbytery was alerted to pastoral needs. There was a great diversity of replies but gave clear information when the elements were grouped together. The largest grouping of elements (nine presbyteries) was for “By people contacting presbytery”. The second highest (at eight presbyteries) was for “From the minister personally”. The efforts of the “presbytery minister” was an equal third with two other groupings.
Q.8 How is the presbytery alerted to pastoral needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By contact to the presbytery</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the minister personally</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Presbytery Minister’s work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through PRC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth/grapevine</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

Group 3: Types and Frequencies of Crisis

Question 9 sought to know the types of crises that a presbytery had had to deal with over the last five years and question 10 asked the number of occurrences of each type of crisis during that period. The interviewees opted to answer both Questions 9 and 10 together. None of the presbyteries participating in the survey kept statistics on the numbers and types of crises. Each person interviewed went from personal memory and in the majority of cases the interviewees of each presbytery came up with different figures to each other for each type of crisis. From past research a list of commonly experienced crises were listed and the presbyteries were content to use that list and add other types that came to mind. In developing a table of results the range of the occurrences, from lowest to highest of the figures stated by interviewees, was prepared. The mid-point of each range was also calculated and a ranking made based on all three figures. The results provide useful information even though they are not statistically valid. It was clear from conversations that many potential crises are averted because of presbytery intervention and these are not recorded.

Categories of pastoral crises dealt with in the past 5 years ranked in order of frequency of occurrence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Crisis</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Problem between minister and congregation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Problem of role definition and identity for minister</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family crisis of minister</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Health</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Minister burned out</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Issues between minister and Uniting Church</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Other issues’ could not be ranked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

88
By far the highest figures for a type of crisis were for “Problems between minister and congregation”. At each end of the range they were twice as high as the next most frequently occurring crisis. At the high end of the range this is an average of one per year per presbytery. There is no pattern in relation to the type of presbytery – whether city or country. Given the processes the UCA goes through to ensure that the minister and congregation are truly “called” to each other, this could be seen as a high figure. An analysis of the causes of these problems could be helpful to the UCA. If there is shown to be a high proportion of one type of problem occurring then this is an area to be pursued.

The next highest type of crisis is “Role definition and identity for the Minister”. This brought interesting comments from meetings with PRCs. One comment was that the ministers are not trained by the colleges on the realities of congregation life. Again, an analysis of ministers by age, sex, personality type, years in ministry and specific issue could be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Crisis</th>
<th>Rankings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem between minister and congregation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Crisis of Minister</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister burns out</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem of role definition for minister</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues between minister and UCA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Question 11 asked “What have been the results of presbytery involvement?” Seven presbyteries had positive and negative results. When the positive elements were compared then twelve out of the thirteen presbyteries could be said to have positive results in dealing with the crises.

Group 4: Changes to the Provision of Pastoral Care
This group covered the questions 12-14. The highest ranking in Question 12 was for changes to the role of Presbytery Minister at 7 presbyteries. The next highest ranking
was changes to the Pastoral Relations Committee with 5 presbyteries. When the two were put together the total rose to 10 presbyteries. Ranked third at 4 presbyteries was “improved professional supervision”. At the same ranking of 4 presbyteries was the statement of “No changes”. Three of those presbyteries had listed changes so it is clear that there are some inconsistencies between the answers given by respondents of the same presbytery. In presbytery 2 one of the respondents put, “Not to the respondent’s knowledge. This leave it open to the possibility of changes having occurred – and so cited by the other two respondents. In Presbytery 3 two of the respondents had said that there were no changes but the comments of the third stated changes in the style of the Presbytery Minister. There was a change of presbytery ministers during the course of the study and not all respondents were interviewed before the change. This could explain the difference. Organisational, there was no change. Similarly, in Presbytery 5 two respondents had said that there had been no change and one cited changes in the way the presbytery minister exercised the role from previously. Organisationally, there had been no change. In the grouping, “Changes to Presbytery Structure” only two presbyteries were listed but from other sources it was clear that the result should have been four. Question 13 asked, “Why were changes made?” Six presbyteries stated that the changes were made to improve pastoral care. Question 14 asked, “What was the result of those changes?” Six presbyteries stated that the ministers were happier and more satisfied. When the element, “Positive improvements in the presbytery” are added, the total number of presbyteries rises to nine.

Group 5: The Ideal

The highest ranking element was “Pastoral Care provided apart from PRC.” This would reflect the recognition by members of PRCs that the demands on the committee is far greater than it can do by itself. Eight presbyteries expressed this ideal. Two elements tied for second highest ranking, each with seven presbyteries. These were “Improving the use of Professional Supervision” and “Improved self-care by ministers”. When the two are put together, the number of presbyteries rises to ten.
**Q.15 In an ideal situation, what would you like to see happening with pastoral care**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>No. of Presbyteries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Care provided apart from the PRC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the use of Prof. Supervision</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved self-care by ministers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy changes to help ministers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased interaction of ministers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6**

It would appear from this that there is a management problem in the implementation of the UCA Regulations. A study on Professional Supervision across the Uniting Church by Rev. Beth Seaman indicated that less than 50% of ministers were having regular supervision.\(^1\) While some presbyteries do this well, others are very poor in their management of it.

**Group 6: Other Comments**
There were only four presbyteries whose respondents made comments. Six elements of the comments referred to a minister taking responsibility for a particular matter. Another six related to issues or problems for the Presbytery Minister. The other elements couldn’t be grouped.

**Group 7: Informal Meetings with PRCs**
Discussions covered a wide variety of topics – all related to the issue of pastoral care. Several topics were tabulated but not all. A majority of presbyteries were concerned at the level of responsibility placed on PRCs, stating or implying that it was not possible to meet all of the requirements. This particularly applied to the 5-year review as laid down in UCA Regulations. The most frequent response was that they did not have the resources to meet the requirement. This is borne out by the comments on the fact that a presbytery will fail to effectively implement Professional Supervision or CEM or the Annual Return by Ministers to Presbytery. One presbytery, in conjunction with its Synod, developed a ‘Pastoral Dialogue’ model which is planned to be done annually by specially trained teams. Another presbytery is also implementing it. One presbytery meets with ministers individually every two to three years.

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Professional Supervision featured in most of the conversations. Three presbyteries were concerned about the difficulty experienced in finding supervisors of the necessary quality and availability. Four presbyteries stated that they appoint a co-ordinator for professional supervision. At least three presbyteries commented on the “lone ranger” attitude of many ministers and their resistance to having professional supervision. In one presbytery professional supervision has been in place for nearly ten years and is working effectively.

Collegiality was seen to be developed through Presbytery Retreats and live-in presbytery meetings. Two presbyteries have organised ministers to meet in groups voluntarily with the specific aim of building collegiality and mutual support.

With the Annual Report to Presbytery by ministers, five presbyteries said that they don’t do it and five that they did. The content of the return varied by presbytery, two using it specifically as a preventative measure in pastoral care. One presbytery doesn’t do it formally but the presbytery minister meets each minister during travels around the presbytery and at presbytery meetings. Yet in another presbytery the PRC meets with ministers during the year, first asking the minister to make a list of points for discussion and then discusses their ministry with them.

The responsibility for pastoral care was stated as being delegated to the presbytery minister in six presbyteries. Three of those presbyteries relied on the presbytery minister to identify problems and issues. Two that have zones relied on the zone leaders. In three presbyteries the PRC was responsible for the pastoral care of ministers. One of these delegated the responsibility to the Church Council of the pastorate. In one PRC it was pointed out that the further away from a main population centre a congregation was, the more it cared for its minister. Pastoral care of ministers by congregations was encouraged by the presbytery.

One issue that was discussed at most of the meetings was that of pastoral care and discipline. Under Regulation 3.4.38 the PRC has to both provide pastoral care to ministers and deal with breaches of church discipline. In three presbyteries where the presbytery minister is responsible for the pastoral care of the ministers, that person does not deal with matters of discipline. This is dealt with by the Chairman of Presbytery.
Some PRCs felt that both discipline and pastoral care go together and saw it as part of the exercise of episcopate.

Areas of Findings

Organisation and Management

Assembly Requirements
Some of the Assembly requirements are discussed under “Preventative Measures” rather than in this section. These include Professional Supervision and Continuing Education for Ministers.

The Settlement process in the UCA
This is examined because there are findings that could suggest that the present UCA method may have weaknesses.

The UCA process requires that ministers and congregations complete a profile which attempts to give a picture of each. When a congregation is looking for a minister it forms a Joint Nominating Committee (JNC). This committee has at least two representatives from the presbytery as part of its membership and up to five members of the congregation. The Synod Settlements Committee has representatives from each presbytery and it assesses the most likely match of ministers and congregations, sending three names and profiles to the JNC. The JNC will invite one minister to meet with it and there could be more than one meeting as the minister and JNC explore their understanding of the ministry to be exercised. If agreement is reached then the JNC takes the name to the congregation for its approval. In all of this the congregation does not meet the minister. A letter of call is then sent by the Synod to the minister for acceptance. Once the minister signs his/her acceptance then arrangements are made for the induction and commencement of the ministry.

In the UCA the placement of ministers remains a Synod responsibility with Presbytery representatives meeting to make recommendations for placements through the Placement Committee. It is presbytery itself that corporately exercises the episcopal role to ministers. Under UCA Regulation 3.5.17 (a) a Synod Moderator is required “to give general and pastoral leadership to the Ministers and people within the bounds.”
The Tenure of the Settlement

In the UCA the Regulations state that there is a basic settlement period of ten years. This can be extended by a further five years at a time by the presbytery if both the congregation and minister agree to do this. It should be noted that in some presbyteries the basic term of ministry is still understood to be five years, as it used to be in the earlier years of the UCA. Ministers are reviewed in the fourth or fifth year and ninth or tenth year of the settlement, depending on presbytery practice.

Five-Yearly Review

This is required under Regulation 3.4.5. and under 3.4.5(c) the Regulation requires the consultation to be carried out with a congregation every five years. For many presbyteries, this is physically not possible. One has sixty congregations which would mean it has to conduct one consultation every month. When a member of PRC is required to lead the consultation team this becomes too much unless there is a very big membership of the PRC. As previously mentioned, two presbyteries have introduced “Pastoral Dialogue” which is aimed to take place annually. This is a meeting between the minister, a member of the congregation and Presbytery representatives. One presbytery is training teams to carry out the Pastoral Dialogue, the team members are not members of PRC. This approach enables a presbytery to have earlier warning of issues that may be developing. As was stated at one meeting, “When an issue is found out at the five-yearly consultation it is usually too far gone to retrieve the situation.” Properly used, it could be a “progressive consultation”. One synod supplements the five-year review with a “Vitality of Call” review in a minister’s 4th, 7th and 9th years.

Annual Report to Presbytery by Ministers

Ministers are required to report annually to the Presbytery on the way in which he/she has fulfilled the duties of a minister as set out in the Regulations (Reg. 2.4.4.). From the questionnaires and meetings with PRCs five presbyteries received a report either verbally or in written form and five said that it wasn’t being done at present. One of those meets with each minister every two years and the presbytery minister is in regular contact. It could be argued that the requirement is effectively being fulfilled. Another presbytery receives an annual written report from each minister but it has an emphasis on self-care as well as requiring information on the exercise of ministry. For three presbyteries there was not a specific question on the Annual Return and no mention was made of it in either questionnaire answers or discussions. From the conversations with
participating presbyteries it was clear that the presbytery ministers and PRCs generally had a good knowledge of how each minister was exercising their ministry. It could be argued that if this is so then a written record from PRC would meet the requirement. However, the value in a minister completing a report is that it encourages reflection by the minister on the exercise of his/her ministry over the past year. What could be more helpful would be to link it into planned goals that a minister may have.

Presbyteries
Each Presbytery has a Standing Committee which meets to make decisions in between Presbytery meetings. At times this committee will be involved in making decisions on the recommendation of the PRC. The chairman of Presbytery and the Standing Committee, chairman of PRC and the Presbytery Minister generally maintain close liaison. By nature of the role, the Chairman of Presbytery is in touch with many parts of the presbytery and will become aware of situations developing that may need to involvement of the PRC and the committee is usually advised accordingly. In one presbytery the PRC makes each member of the committee responsible to liaise with two congregations and report back to the PRC. It was said that a number of presbyteries have this arrangement but not all are diligent in the application. The value of such an arrangement is that is spreads the workload across a number of persons and can alert the PRC more quickly to any problems arising.

Four presbyteries participating in the research have divided the presbytery into zones and a fifth was divided into districts. Each zone has a chairperson and part of the pastoral care responsibility goes to that person. In one presbytery it was stated that a zone meeting had the same force and authority as a full presbytery meeting. The value of the zones is that there is de-centralisation which should result in better communication. The use of zones occurred in both 'city' and 'rural and remote' presbyteries.

Pastoral Care in Practice

Division of Responsibilities
When the question was asked as to whether responsibility was divided between the presbytery minister and the PRC, eleven presbyteries had “yes” in the answer and six had “no”. It was clear that individual respondents had different views. When compared with the question on how it is divided, responses from three of those presbyteries
indicated that it depended on the need. From discussion with the PRCs it became clear that in reality in some presbyteries the responsibility for pastoral care of ministers was delegated to the presbytery minister as “pastor to the pastors”. In all cases the responsibility for pastoral care between ministers and congregations is a delegation from the presbytery to the PRC. This is clearly laid down in Reg. 3.4.38(c)(i). In the majority of the presbyteries participating in the research the presbytery minister was the primary pastoral carer but in two the presbytery minister had no responsibility for, or official involvement in, pastoral care. One presbytery had a deliberate policy of giving parish councils the responsibility for the primary care of ministers. While a presbytery minister may be said to be the main provider of pastoral care it does not necessarily mean that the responsibility for it has been delegated to that person. This appears to be where there is some misunderstanding. When referring to parish councils and congregations it is to be noted that at the induction service of a minister the congregation promises to care for the minister and his/her family. This is not what could be called a “legal” responsibility, as laid down in UCA Regulations, but it is a responsibility nevertheless. Several presbyteries are divided into zones and the chair of each zone assumes a pastoral responsibility for the ministers and congregations in the zone. There was close liaison between the zone chairpersons, the presbytery minister and the presbytery chairperson. This can only be seen as a positive approach. It means that the presbytery minister is not required to “do it all”.

One presbytery stated that Synod became involved in pastoral matters from time to time, particularly when there was a crisis that had gone beyond the ability of presbytery to handle. A positive note is that at least one synod has been developing tools that both presbyteries and ministers can use to ensure the health of ministers and congregations. This is an important role that can be played by synods.

_Episkopé_

Regulation 3.4.4 (a) states that the Presbytery shall give attention to “the pastoral and administrative oversight of all Ministers and pastoral charges within the bounds.” This places the responsibility for “episcopate” on the presbytery and as such it is a corporate episcopate. The pastoral relations aspect of episcopate is delegated by the Presbytery to the Pastoral Relations Committee (Reg. 3.4.38 (c)(i)). In the majority of presbyteries participating in the research a presbytery minister was appointed and in at least six of the presbyteries the pastoral care of ministers was delegated to the presbytery minister.
Overall, it would appear that this is the preferred form of this aspect of episcope by the majority of presbyteries participating in the research. The effectiveness of this role depends very much on the individual. From comments in interviews and informal meetings, there have been good and not so good presbytery ministers in relation to the pastoral care of ministers. In two presbyteries, the Presbytery Minister was not responsible for Pastoral Care but had other responsibilities in relation to the life and witness of the presbytery. In both cases the PRC exercised the pastoral care. In one case a Pastoral Care Officer was appointed to develop collegiality among the ministers and alert PRC to pastoral issues that arose. Effectively, the pastoral care of a minister was exercised by that minister’s peers. The other presbytery put the responsibility for the pastoral care of the minister onto the Church Council. When a matter was more than a Church Council could manage then it was referred to the PRC. Members of the PRC were drawn from different geographical parts of the presbytery and kept in touch with ministers and pastoral charges in their area. This approach is particularly valuable in a widely dispersed presbytery. In each case we see that full episcope remains the responsibility of the presbytery as a corporate body and it is not delegated to an individual. It was seen that effective pastoral care results from built relationships and trust irrespective of who exercises it.

**The Pastorate**

While the minister is responsible to provide pastoral oversight to the pastoral charge, there does not appear to be anything in the Regulations about a pastoral charge’s responsibility to care for the minister and the minister’s family. This is contained in a commitment the congregation makes during the service of the minister’s induction. The wording is as follows:

Will you honour (name of minister) as your pastor and leader;  
will you listen for God’s word in his preaching;  
will you welcome him into your homes;  
will you provide for him that which is necessary for his physical welfare;  
and will you at all times support him with your love and prayers?  
We will, the Lord being our helper.

The large number of cases of role dissonance between minister and congregation points to the fact that it is not always lived up to.

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As mentioned in the previous paragraph, one presbytery places the responsibility with the Church Council of the pastorate and is supported by PRC. This appears to work very well.

**Preventative Measures**

*Professional Supervision*

As previously stated, it is technically "Self-Care" under the UCA Code of Ethics (Clause 3.8) and presbyteries are responsible to ensure that ministers undertake to receive professional supervision. That makes it a "management" issue and not a "pastoral care" issue. Indirectly the benefits of professional supervision have been seen in the lives of ministers and the conduct of their ministries. As such, presbyteries see it as preventative pastoral care and Pastoral Relations Committees have the responsibility of administering the programme (refer Reg.3.4.38(c)(iii)).

There is a wide variety of approaches to the implementation of professional supervision. One presbytery has had a programme for over five years. It has a list of approved supervisors and ministers receive a grant to pay the professional supervision fees. The co-ordinator of the programme meets with the supervisors each year and holds a workshop for them. Having professional supervision has become a condition of being in a placement in that presbytery. At the other end of the scale a presbytery has said that it is difficult to find suitable professional supervisors and does not monitor it strongly. Again, another presbytery allows a minister to choose a person to be his/her supervisor and notifies the presbytery of the choice. The supervisor may be another minister. Again, another presbytery has modified it to be more oriented to pastoral care.

There is a diversity of opinion on what aspects of a minister's life it should cover. A key point to emerge from the research is that all matters discussed between a minister and supervisor will remain confidential to the two of them. This means that the presbytery is reliant on a minister being prepared to be open and honest with the presbytery about any problems or issues that may be developing. Realistically, the presbytery needs to be able to identify any issues or developing problems by other means and emphasises that personal relationships outside the professional supervision need to be developed between minister and presbytery.
One feature that stood out strongly was that there are still a lot of ministers resisting professional supervision. The majority of presbyteries are reluctant to take action to make such ministers comply with UCA Regulations. From sources other than the direct research of this project it became clear that the word *supervision* may have been a poor choice by the UCA. For many ministers who did not come out of a social services background a supervisor is a person who directs the work of others and is an *overseer*. For those ministers to be told that they are to have a supervisor means that someone will supervise their exercise of ministry. Many of them would react negatively. For many in the reformed tradition that is rather close to having bishops, which is generally opposed by members of the UCA. The general feeling appears to be that professional supervision was brought in by the UCA and other Christian denominations to avoid the risk of the Church being sued and made liable. If this is true then it would indicate to many ministers that the primary purpose of professional supervision was a desire to safeguard the Church from legal action rather than being concerned for the well-being of ministers. Such a view, whether true or not, could be expected to create a negative reaction in many ministers because it places financial concerns ahead of the genuine well-being of ministers. The comment by more than one presbytery is that the ministers who avoid professional supervision are the ones who get into trouble and create a crisis of pastoral care, indicating that professional supervision is a valuable preventative measure.

From the evidence it appears that professional supervision is beneficial to the life and ministry of a minister and reduces the risk of issues developing to a crisis level. Therefore it is to be encouraged.

*Collegiality*

In the grouped elements of the first question *collegiality* rated second in the number of presbyteries that saw it as an important aspect of pastoral care. There was a wide range of ways to achieve collegiality, with 8 separate elements listed. Certainly, it is important as a preventative measure. It was interesting to note that distance did not prevent the exercise of collegiality. On the face of it, distance would appear to be an isolating factor (and for some ministers it is) but in general there appeared to be a greater strength of collegiality in the rural and remote areas than in the city and suburban areas. It was stated that ministers in these locations were more conscious of the problem of isolation and took steps to overcome it. From attendance by the
researcher at some presbytery meetings as well as the meetings with the PRCs there was a greater sense of collegiality exhibited and expressed by ministers in rural and remote placements.

Collegiality is seen to be achieved by ministers meeting socially, keeping in touch by telephone and internet, groups of ministers meeting formally and informally. Two presbyteries stated that they are deliberately moving to have all ministers in team ministries so that a team of ministers would look after several congregations. Apart from building teams based on different gifting of ministers the members of the team would provide mutual support and be exercising collegiality. The purpose of doing so is that relationships can be built up between ministers to the point that they will confide in each about their problems and issues. Some presbyteries deliberately set up links for ministers e.g. luncheons and groups that may do Bible study. Like professional supervision, it was commented that the practice of collegiality is an effective preventative measure and an important part of the pastoral care process. One presbytery has long-term plans to have all ministers inducted into presbytery roles and not be inducted into pastorates. This will effectively be collegiality as well as an exercise in team ministry.

Ministers to attend Presbytery and other Meetings
While ministers are automatically members of presbytery (Reg.3.4.15b) not all ministers attend. Some have good reasons for not attending from time to time but it was stated that some deliberately avoid attending. Nine of the presbyteries encouraged ministers to attend the presbytery meetings, retreats and other formal gatherings. The main purposes of doing so were to build collegiality and also to be able to meet with the ministers. Attendance at such meetings was seen as an aspect of pastoral care.

Building Relationships

The Presbytery Minister regularly contacts/meets with Ministers
Ten presbyteries claim that the presbytery ministers is in contact with ministers regularly, either by telephone, internet or face-to-face. Given that presbytery ministers also have to care for congregations, this can be a big burden on some presbytery ministers. One Synod has a system whereby it funds three presbytery ministers per presbytery and one of them is responsible for pastoral care only. While this may seem a
real advantage for a presbytery, it does depend on the size of a presbytery in terms of numbers of ministers and congregations. One presbytery had six times the number of congregations and ministers than another participating in the research. In such a situation it goes well beyond the capability of one person to provide effective pastoral care to all. Having one person responsible for pastoral care has its strengths and its weaknesses. When a person is able to relate well to people and build up a good relationship with them then there is a level of trust develops that enables a minister to confidently tell of any problems or crises. If a presbytery minister is not able to build that level of trust then the role becomes a weakness. Regular contact is important if relationships of trust are to be built up. A weakness is also that a presbytery can become dependent on one person and if that person suddenly goes out of the equation for any reason then it will take time to recover the former situation. Eight out of the thirteen presbyteries (over 60%) listed the presbytery minister as the primary carer. It is noted that much of the knowledge they gain remains confidential but several of the presbytery ministers kept key persons in presbytery aware of possible problems or crises without betraying confidentiality. This reduces the risk of a presbytery not being able to maintain pastoral care when it is needed. It should be noted that at least one presbytery minister is in regular contact with ministers but not as a pastoral carer. If concerns are observed then the information is passed to the PRC.

_Self-Care_

Self-care is a requirement of ministers under the UCA Code of Ethics clause 3.7 (2008 Edition). It lists four points for which a minister must take responsibility. These are:

(a) To maintain their physical, spiritual and emotional health;
(b) To participate in supervision;
(c) To give adequate priority to their relationship with their family;
(d) To nurture personal relationships which assist them in their wholeness.

While many ministers seek to fulfil the requirements, there is a significant proportion that do not. From comments at informal meetings, it would seem that personal health is the one with least attention paid to it by ministers.

Self-care appears to be getting increasing attention by presbyteries. One presbytery minister gave every minister in the presbytery a copy of the book, _Going the Distance_.

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by Peter Brain. This book is written primarily for clergy and majors on self-care. Two presbyteries stated that they conduct regular Code of Ethics workshops that all ministers are expected to attend. At least two presbyteries check on a minister’s support network, ensure that they take leave and have days off regularly. Self-care related action is when a minister contacts the presbytery minister and asks for a meeting or requests a review before the official period is up. One PRC said that it believed that a minister’s self-care should be taken care of through Professional Supervision. Another presbytery said that a protocol on self-care is being attached to all placements. If a minister does not exercise self-care then the PRC will act and charge the minister with a breach of the Code of Ethics.

Continuing Education for Ministers
The continuing education for ministers is a matter of growing concern for presbyteries and the responsibility has been given to the PRC by some presbyteries. There was concern expressed that in the past some ministers have used CEM to study hobbies and subjects not related to their ministry. In some of the presbyteries participating in the research ministers have to prepare a 5-year programme for their CEM and sign a contract to that effect. In most of the presbyteries ministers are now being encouraged to pursue studies that relate to their ministry. The benefit of a minister engaging in suitable studies is that the congregation sees how it may benefit and is supportive. The minister has both direct and indirect pastoral benefits from suitable study. It better equips the minister in the exercise of ministry, thereby increasing the personal satisfaction factor and the pastoral charge is more supportive when it sees the benefits that flow into the exercise of ministry in it.

Issues of Concern

Role Dissonance with Minister and Congregation
There are two main types of role dissonance, one is that between the minister and the congregations which comprise the placement and the other is the difference between a minister’s expectations of ministry and the realities of that ministry.
In the first type of role dissonance there are four elements from the analysis that fit into this category. From one presbytery a view was presented that role dissonance is inevitable and cannot be prevented because each person has their own idea of what the

minister's role should be. Such a statement implies that the process of developing
congregation and minister profiles and of going through the Joint Nomination
Committee process for the "call" of a minister by a congregation are immaterial to a
person's expectations of a minister's role in that congregation. There is a measure of
truth in such a statement. It would appear that many a person expects a minister to
provide the ministry that is desired by that person irrespective of what has been agreed
through the "call" process. Such a situation indicates that there has been a lack of
consensus and/or honesty in the congregation when its profile has been prepared.
Another presbytery made the observation that the further a congregation is from the
city, the more it cares for its minister. It is not possible to support this from the research
data but during attendance at presbytery and PRC meetings there was an observable
difference between the different types of presbyteries and comments by persons would
seem to support that statement. Certainly the doctoral thesis, "Country Life and the
Church" by former CSU student, Rol Mitchell⁴, demonstrates the strong sense of
community that exists in rural communities and which cares for its members. A third
presbytery pointed out that the relationship between a minister and a congregation is
inherently dangerous because dependencies by both can develop and lead to a crisis.
The longer a minister's stay in a placement, the more likely this could be to happen.
Here, the need for ongoing contact by presbytery would be necessary to identify and
deal with such situations before they become a crisis. Another comment by a
presbytery states that a situation that is developing will be out of hand after five years
(the time laid down for a consultation with a congregation). It was also pointed out that
ministers and congregations have the ability to hide growing crises. If there is not a
strong relationship between the minister and presbytery and between the congregation
and presbytery then this becomes easier to do. It would seem that it is important for
presbytery to build strong relationships with both the minister and the congregation to
help avoid such situations. Strong relationships build trust and open-ness between
parties.

**Role Dissonance of Minister with Self**

Role dissonance through the minister's expectations of ministry and the realities was
expressed by several presbyteries. Two expressed concern at the divergence between
what was being taught in the college and what the reality was in the congregation. In
the United Reformed Church in Great Britain, an exit student has a mentor for the first

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year to help in the adjustment to the realities of congregation life. Some UCA presbyteries do the same thing. It was commented on at more than one PRC informal meeting that one problem facing the colleges is the amount of studies required by the Ministerial Education Council and how to fit it all in the time-frame laid down for the course of study. (This appears to be another case of the Assembly making demands beyond available resources.) Whatever the reason, it would appear that some consideration is needed on how to deal with this issue. Another presbytery expressed the need to give a minister training on how to exercise ministry within the context of a congregation. An example of this is an issue cited by another PRC of suburban ministers accepting a “call” to a rural area and not being able to cope with the different culture of rural life. Conversely, ministers whose main experience is with rural congregations and going to a suburban “call” can find the suburban culture very different to the rural one. This may not be role dissonance but one of cultural adjustment. It can, however, lead to role dissonance with the congregation. It was also pointed out that ministers must have a good sense of who they are in God and also have a good understanding of themselves if they are to achieve a good relationship with a congregation. From all accounts it would appear that many exit students are vulnerable and unsure of themselves when they leave college. If that is so then it may point to a weakness in the discernment period and the process of training to be a minister. Lack of self-knowledge by a minister may also point to too much “doing” and not enough “being”.

There are issues related to role dissonance that may not fall directly under that category. Two of the elements are very similar. One is that of ministers who don’t want to be accountable and ministers who are “lone rangers” and have a culture of “resistance.” Some ministers would more than likely fit both descriptions. The “lone rangers”, on the other hand, may be very accountable in the way that they exercise their ministry in their settlement but resist the wider Church involvement. There is a type of role dissonance in relation to the wider Church. It was stated from one presbytery that it was the “lone rangers” who exhibited more problems than ministers who participated in collegiality. The fourth comment was that ministers “are a bloody-minded mob and can hinder crisis prevention.” Again, this is a type of dissonance when set in the context of the wider Church.
In the first category, it would seem that the key to prevention, or at least minimisation of the risk, lies in a presbytery’s ability to build strong and positive relationships with both minister and congregation. Part of the key to the second category would appear to be in the preparation of a person for ministry, in a person’s sense of identity and in their being equipped to minister effectively.

*Family Crises*

The issue of Family Crises is one that cannot normally be predicted, particularly when it is a death, accident or sickness. In all cases it would appear that there was strong support from both the congregation and the presbytery. The three types of crises listed were the most frequently mentioned.

*Health*

In several instances the issue of health was linked to the issue of Dissonance, particularly between minister and congregation. Statistics obtained from one Synod Insurance Office showed a substantial increase in recent years to stress-related health matters. In all the cases the stress related to the exercise of ministry in pastorates. This must be a warning to presbyteries.

*Other Issues*

*Defining Pastoral Care*

Different definitions were grouped according to the closeness of the meaning. Two groupings, “Care of whole person” and “Caring spiritual, physical, emotional” could be seen as almost the same thing. Combined they represent nine presbyteries out of the thirteen. One element in the fourth group, “Referring to health of minister” could also be added and bring the total to ten. This is a very positive result.

*Isolation*

For presbyteries with rural and remote regions, communication can become a problem. At least two reported increased use of Skype, where there can be face-to-face communication despite the distance. Other methods are to send out regular newsletters of happenings in the presbytery and to keep all ministers informed. More than one presbytery stated that ministers will regularly contact the presbytery minister for a conversation about their ministry. This is an indication of the effectiveness of the
pastoral role being performed by the presbytery minister and the fact that trust and confidence in the presbytery minister existed. Effective communication builds relationships and allows trust to develop between presbytery and ministers and congregations. This is part of effective pastoral care.

Conclusion
The research objectives in relation to the Uniting Church were achieved. The research provided a good picture of how pastoral care of ministers is exercised by the presbyteries participating in the research, including the methods used in providing pastoral care. The differing structures and methods did not appear to make a lot of difference to the rankings of the presbyteries in terms of the numbers of crises dealt with. The research has also been able to answer the guiding questions set out in Chapter 1. The evidence indicates that a key factor influencing the exercise of pastoral care is the availability of adequate resources, both human and financial, to fulfil the task. Distance proved not to be the problem that it was expected to be. The strength of relationships had an impact on the effectiveness of pastoral care, irrespective of which of the three classifications a presbytery was in.

At Assembly level, the Uniting Church has legislated a number of preventative measures to improve the quality of a person’s ministry. Effective implementation of the measures appears to be a problem for some presbyteries. Presbyteries are clearly making great efforts to improve the pastoral care of ministers but overall are under-resourced to fulfil their obligations.

Since the Grounded Theory Approach to the research was used, the following theory could be constructed as a result of the evidence collated:

The most effective pastoral care is that which comes from built relationships, particularly at the local level, and from a framework of preventative measures that are properly implemented by the presbytery. These should encompass the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental needs of the minister. It is also enhanced when there is a unity of expectations by the Church, minister and congregations. Where this is difficult to achieve, the role of ministers in the Church would need to be re-considered.
CHAPTER 6
THE EXPERIENCE OF COMPARATIVE DENOMINATIONS

Introduction
It is helpful to consider the experience of other Christian denominations that have a similar structure to the Uniting Church. It may be possible to learn from their experience. To quote James Haire, "The closest DNA to the Uniting Church in Australia is the United Church of Canada." It came into being about fifty years before the UCA and had a similar composition at union. It has other similarities in that it is in a land that has high concentrations of population in a small area and large areas that are thinly populated. The largest denomination was the Methodist Church, followed by the Presbyterian Church and the smallest was the Congregational Union. Another denomination to consider is the United Reformed Church of Great Britain. Apart from having a similar structure, the United Reformed Church (URC) came into existence less than five years before the Uniting Church in Australia. It has, therefore, had to go through similar strains of adjustment as the Uniting Church. It is interesting to note that the URC structure reflects a blend of the uniting denominations. Similarly, one sees a blending of structures in the UCA and the UCC, reflecting the strengths of each of the uniting denominations. This is also reflected in the "living out" of the structure, rather than in the structure itself. A third denomination worth reviewing is the Presbyterian Church (USA). It has a similar structure to the UCA and is spread across a large land mass. More than half of its congregations have less than one hundred members, making much of it comparable to the UCA.

To ensure that these three denominations were genuinely comparable with the UCA the formative and regulatory documents of each were checked, particularly in relation to the parts of all three that deal with the responsibilities of presbytery/district for ministers and congregations in relation to pastoral care. It can be seen by referring to the UCC By-laws, clauses 332, 338 and 339; PCUSA Book of Order Part 2, G.30301 and G.30303; URC The Manual, Section 2.(3) that when they are compared with the UCA, all four denominations essentially have the same responsibilities and are exercised in a similar way. The differences in implementation are described in the following pages.

Of the three denominations, a greater amount of information was obtained from the URC, although useful information was gathered from all three. As a result, more is
written about the URC than the other two denominations. Each denomination is considered firstly in a descriptive manner and then analytically. Comparisons between the Uniting Church and the three denominations are made in the following chapter.

United Reformed Church in the U.K.

History
The United Reformed Church (U.R.C.) was formed on the 5th October, 1972 from Congregational and Presbyterian congregations in England. The Re-formed Association of the Churches of Christ joined in 1982. This was followed by the admission of the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1999. The structure of the URC is similar to that of the Uniting Church and therefore useful to examine and compare with the Uniting Church.

Declining Membership Numbers and Finances
Membership in the URC has declined substantially over the life of its existence. It has halved according to one report. Statistics available from reports show that in January 1973 the URC comprised:

2080 Churches (Congregations) 192,136 Membership
1088 Ministers in Charge

As has been noted, while membership dropped by fifty per-cent the number of congregations declined by only ten per-cent. This would give 1772 churches and a membership of a little over 96,000 members. This is an average of 54 members per church. One report quotes a need of 300 members to support a minister. That is an average of about six congregations needed to support each minister. This has had an impact on ministry. There was a belief by many ministers and congregations that ministry was exercised on a “one minister, one congregation” basis. Indeed, the Basis of Union and the Manual seemed to imply this. There has also been a substantial drop in the number of ministers and has led to the need to have a minister being prepared to pastor more than one congregation. That has led to pressures and stresses for both minister and congregations. The 1974 Report to General Assembly expressed concern that there were nearly 150 vacant pastorates actively seeking ministers and insufficient ministers to meet the need. By 1975 the moderators are expressing a concern about the

1 General Assembly Reports 1974 Appendix A
finances of the Church and that it must *either raise a lot of money or concentrate our work in fewer units*.\(^2\) In the same report a concern is expressed that they, the moderators, *often visit churches pitifully reduced in membership and almost entirely composed of elderly people.* This is mentioned again in the 1977 report to the General Assembly when they write, "the time has come to call a halt to our near-obsession with declining church membership figures and with the rate at which local churches are closing." Here are two issues also experienced by the Uniting Church in Australia. While they may not be related to the pastoral care of ministers in one sense, they are stressors that can impact on ministers and their health. The decline in membership and subsequently, in resources, has had an impact on ministers. This is reflected in the increasing levels of stress experienced by ministers. There has also been a substantial reduction in the number of ministers, leaving fewer to minister to a little reduced number of congregations and a greatly reduced membership. Increasingly, ministers have had to pastor several small congregations that may be disparate in nature. This is evidenced from General Assembly papers. In the same way, the exercise of pastoral care of ministers has changed.

**Formal Structure**

At union in 1972 and until 2005 the structure had four levels of government as follows:
The basic unit is the **Congregation**. It is governed by the Church Meeting and the Elders Council. Elders are chosen by the congregation. They are then ordained and inducted to their congregation for such period as is determined by the Church Meeting at their election.

The **District** was comprised of a number of congregations. Its membership was comprised of all ordained ministers in settlement with the member congregations and a representative number of elders from the congregations.

At the next level was the **Province**, now known as the Synod. It was responsible for a number of Districts and its membership comprised of all the ordained members of the District Council and lay members elected by the District Council from its membership. All property and resources within the Synod are the property of the Synod. (The wealth of a Synod has a bearing on how it exercises its ministry to ministers and congregations.) It was commented by a URC minister that thirteen different churches

have developed. This indicates the level of autonomy that a Synod has within the URC.

The fourth level of government is the General Assembly. This is the supreme body for decision-making in the URC. At union it was composed of twelve Provinces in England and Wales. Today there are thirteen Synods but with different boundaries to those at union. There is a Synod of Wales and a Synod of Scotland, representing the national aspirations of those people. Within England there are eleven Synods. Refer to the map that is appended. In 2005 the General Assembly decided “that there be one level of council between the General Assembly and the Local Church”. District Councils were abolished. The use of the term “Province” was changed to “Synod”. Since “Synod” was the term enshrined in an Act of Parliament, nothing changed legally. Previously, the meetings of the Province were known as Synods and this term is used in the legislation. Effectively, the Districts in each Province were merged into one to become the “District and Synod of ...” and the responsibilities of the District were absorbed by the new Synod. Acts of the Synod are automatically acts of their respective Districts also. Again, since Districts were enshrined in an Act of Parliament, it was necessary to arrange matters so that the legislation would not need to be amended. One of the main reasons for the change would appear to be the very large drop in membership of the URC. Another was the need felt by many members to improve and simplify the decision-making processes of the Church. A concern expressed during the research on the UCA was the high level of bureaucracy in the Uniting Church and the slow process of decision-making.

Areas of Findings

Organisation and Management

Only those aspects that relate to pastoral care are written up here.

At the General Assembly level there is a Ministries Department which has a range of functions related to ministry and it works in support of the pastoral responsibilities at Synod level.

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Placements/ Settlemnts Process

The URC has an approach that is similar in some respects to the UCA. The thirteen Moderators and the General Secretary meet regularly and during these meetings they spend a lot of time matching ministers and pastorates. This is similar to the Settlements Committee in the Queensland Synods except that it is done at a national level. Congregations are free to seek out and call a minister without reference to the Synod but it would appear that the majority seek the help and advice of the Synod Moderator. While they can only make recommendations to both ministers and pastorates it would appear that in the majority of cases their suggestions are taken up, with approximately half leading to a “call” after the first meeting. This is arguably good preventative pastoral care. It shows concern for both the pastorate and the minister and seeks to lead to a pastoral outcome that is beneficial to both.

The ‘Call’ Process and multi-church pastorates

The 1988 report of the PRC raised a concern that relates to ministers who pastor more than one congregation. The report urged all those involved in the “call” process to get a full understanding of the strains that may be experienced by the minister in that placement before a minister is called. It pointed out the need for an understanding between the churches (congregations) that would be pastored by the same minister. This does, of course, raise the question of the provision of pastoral care to the minister and his/her family by the congregations. How would this be done? No reference to this was found in the records. Yet the local church is still seen by the Moderators as the primary provider of pastoral care.

Terms of settlement

Unless it is specified in the “call” there is no time limit to the length of a minister’s settlement in a particular pastorate. Effectively, the minister may spend the whole of his/her ministry in the one pastorate.

Church Reviews

These are carried out every five years and will also be tied into the declaration of vacancies.

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Code of Ethics
This is an ongoing process of development at present, according to one lecturer of the URC. The URC currently has Guidelines for ministers and staff. It could be debated as to whether this is a pastoral issue because the codes are something prepared by the Church, partly as a protection against litigation. At the same time it provides both guidelines and boundaries for ministers to work to. In this sense it becomes pastoral. The URC has written “Section O” to the Manual (a separate document to the Guidelines) which deals with “ethics” and how the Church should respond to failures in discipline.

Pastoral Care in Practice

The Pastoral Responsibilities.
The Congregation has a pastoral responsibility for all its members. The life of the Congregation is governed through the Church Meeting. The Elders Meeting is “To care for people in all the dimensions of human need, but particularly as they seek hope, meaning and forgiveness.” The Elders were each to be responsible for a number of members of the congregation and an elder was to be appointed to be responsible for the pastoral care of the minister and his/her family. The pastoral care of ministers is, in the first place, at the level of the congregation. In the same report a concern is expressed about the pastoral care of ministers and their families, i.e.

We gladly accept our responsibility for a ministry to ministers, but inevitably the day to day care of ministers rests with the local church, and especially with the elders. We wonder if elders always remember that their pastoral obligations include the minister, his wife and family.

The report goes on to describe ways that the elders and the local congregation can encourage, maintain and strengthen the minister. It goes on to point out that it is only a thoughtless minority and that the majority of congregations do well in their pastoral care of the minister. It seems clear that for the United Reformed Church (URC), the congregation has the prime responsibility of pastoral care for the minister. As such this points to the need to ensure that elders and congregations understand their pastoral role to ministers and in their 1978 report the moderators write,

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4 General Assembly 1991 Reports, p. 117, Ministries Dept. Report, Appendix 3 “Patterns of ministry in the URC”.
We wish to encourage the holding of Training courses and conferences for elders since in many churches little progress has been made in developing the pastoral office of the elder.\textsuperscript{6}

Programmes of training for Elders were developed to help Elders to understand their role.

In the same paragraph the moderators mention the loneliness of many of the ministers and this indicates that there is a failure by congregations, and particularly elders, to understand their pastoral responsibility to ministers and their families.

When Districts existed, the first listed function was:

(i) To exercise oversight of the ministry\textsuperscript{7}

Each District had a Pastoral Committee that had a pastoral responsibility, exercised on behalf of the District Council, for both ministers and congregations. It was expected to be in contact with congregations and ministers on a regular basis.

Members of the Provincial Council were to meet annually and were known as the Synod. Each Province had a Moderator appointed for seven years by the General Assembly. The moderator was automatically a member of each District Council.

Moderators saw that one of their responsibilities was to be “Pastor to the pastors.”\textsuperscript{8} The Moderators meet each month and they report that the primary discussion is about the placement of ministers seeking a placement and congregations seeking a minister (as reported by the moderators to the General Assembly). Moderators make recommendations to ministers and to congregations on suitable placements but the call to and acceptance by a minister is the decision of congregation and minister. The District Council would give or withhold concurrence and would be responsible for inductions, with the moderator presiding. This is now done by the Synod in the name of the District Council that used to exist. When difficulties arose for a minister the Elders Council and congregation would seek to help. When this was insufficient then the Pastoral Committee of the District Council and the Synod Moderator would become involved.

\textsuperscript{6} General Assembly Reports 1978, p. 15, para. 4.
\textsuperscript{8} The URC Manual, 1984 Edition, p. 20, clause 3(d): “The Moderator shall exercise a pastoral office towards the ministers and Churches within the Province.”
By the 1983 General Assembly it was clear that for some cases this was not enough and the Pastoral Reference Committee was set up to provide additional support. This committee had an initial life of three years but it became clear that this was not enough and the committee still exists to provide a valuable service to the URC and the ministers that are referred to it. It is interesting to note that the District Pastoral Council was responsible for the pastoral care of both ministers and congregations. The Eastern Synod web-site shows that its Pastoral Committee is responsible for pastoral care to congregations only and that the pastoral care of ministers is reserved to the moderator.

Preventative Measures

Professional Supervision

The URC does not have “Professional Supervision” as the UCA does. It does have a programme called “Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal”. While this scheme has been approved by the General Assembly it is not compulsory for ministers to do it but is voluntary. Ministers will generally set a self-appraisal up themselves, finding a suitable person to accompany them on the exercise. It is expected to be carried out every five years. Making this compulsory for every minister is being considered. An extract from URC documents follows that describes the process.

Ministerial Accompanied Self-Appraisal

In 1997 the Assembly approved a scheme of ministerial accompanied self-appraisal.

The aims of the scheme are:

i) to affirm ministers in their work and encourage them to follow God's calling with a renewed sense of vision.

ii) to aid the continuing personal and professional development of ministers in ways which are of benefit to them and to the church they serve as they take stock of their ministry thus far and identify areas on which to build and areas of need which should be addressed, become realistic about strengths and weaknesses, set goals for work and personal development, identify training and personal development needs and ways of addressing them and become aware of sources of support.

The style of appraisal.

i) each individual will be asked to embark on the exercise of accompanied self-appraisal in the light of the promises made upon ordination (Schedule C)
ii) The exercise should be seen as supportive and non-threatening, but for it to be effective it is important that it is objective and acknowledges both strengths and weaknesses.

iii) For this reason the task of appraisal will be shared with a person, an appraisal companion, who has received appropriate training in attentive listening and questioning.

iv) This scheme is not about checking one person’s performance against some measurement of ministerial tasks. This would need such a standard to exist and in any case responsibility for carrying out the total ministry in any one situation does not lie with the minister alone but also with the Elders and other members in a local church or colleagues in a team or chaplaincy. We encourage such appraisal but believe it lies within the context of a District Visit.

(General Assembly 1997)

The scheme of ministerial accompanied self-appraisal will be monitored and reviewed under the auspices of the Ministries Committee together with administrators from each Synod.

Collegiality

The issue of the loneliness of ministers and their families arose more than once in reports and appears to be an ongoing problem, not always caused by the churches but sometimes by the ministers themselves. In their report to the 1980 General Assembly, the Moderators point out that it is the local congregation that has the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of ministers and their families (para. 11). To help to overcome the problem the Moderators are encouraging ministers and spouses/partners to meet in groups to combat the loneliness. This is an expression of collegiality. They have also been encouraging ministers to build relations with other clergy in their area. This is not only an expression of ecumenism but a form of collegiality.

Attendance at Meetings

This is an expectation of ministers because they are automatically members of the Synod.

Self-Care

There is a concern about ministers over-working. As a result of concerns being expressed by elders and others about this and ministers not taking the necessary breaks,
a set of guidelines were produced and approved in 2010 and both ministers and churches are being encouraged to use them. Adding to the impetus for this was the fact that there had also been a high number of ministers burning out over the years.

*Continuing Education for Ministry (CEM)*

In the URC this is known as Continuing Ministerial Education (CME). There are three stages to CME:

1. Pre-ordination training (EM1)

2. Post-ordination training (EM2). This done over three years and is done as a group. The trainee is supervised by the Moderator and a senior colleague who is also a mentor. It is reported that this programme is being “really beefed up”.

3. EM3. This third phase is ongoing life-long support. A minister is encouraged to take at least one, and preferably, two weeks per year of supervised training e.g. a Spring or Summer School. There is an allowance of 750 British pounds per minister. This study can be done through the Synod and it will look at the needs of the minister.

It was also commented that if every minister applied for the funding for EM3 there would be a financial crisis. From this comment it can be assumed that there would not be enough funds available to meet such demand. Clearly, it would be difficult for the URC to ensure that every minister does CME as recommended.

Every ten years a minister is expected to take a three-month sabbatical of study and relaxation. This programme is normally managed through the Synod Training Officer. A minister cannot do any type of study but is encouraged to do studies that will benefit his/her ministry.

*Issues of Concern*

A number of issues have been dealt with over the life of the URC and these have been identified from General Assembly Reports and Minutes. Little was found in libraries and on the Internet of records of the Synods (Provinces) and Districts. Being appointed by the General Assembly, the Provincial (subsequently Synod) Moderators report

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9 Comment made by Director of Pastoral Studies, Westminster College, in July, 2011.
annually to the General Assembly. Their reports contain information relevant to the pastoral care of ministers. By reviewing their reports to successive General Assemblies (held annually) a picture emerged of the pastoral issues relating to ministers. Further information came from the Pastoral Reference Committee reports to the General Assembly. The statistics from those reports indicate that an average of nine cases a year are dealt with by the Committee. The figures shown are:

1986 16 cases in the last year
1989 50 cases since Committee formed (6 years)
1996 120 cases since the Committee’s inception in 1983

In the 1996 report the comment was that “this may only be the tip of an iceberg of ministerial difficulties, since many problems are not referred to it.” It was not possible to assess the extent of ministerial problems due to the lack of information available from other sources that were researched. Two points can be picked up from the report of 1986. One is that “many of the ministers and churches are under strain, domestic, vocational, financial and personal.” The second point that is important to this study is that “more fraternal groups could help to support those under stress and at early stages might well save difficulties from developing into acute problems.” This statement would appear to indicate that the pastoral care by the elders of congregations for its ministers is not adequate and that ministers should find support from fellow clergy. By 1990 the emphasis in the report by the moderators is on Pastoral Care, not just of and by ministers. An important point that the report makes in paragraph 11 is that “Churches seem better able to cope with rapid change when pastoral relationships are strong.”

There is an emphasis on the role of elders in pastoral care. The tone throughout the report is on the need to build good relationships with each other, both in the congregation and in the community. It also notes the increase in the training of elders and other pastoral visitors by a number of churches. The emphasis here seems to be on what the “congregation” is doing, not something directed by the Province or General Assembly. Where a local congregation is investing effort and resources into equipping for pastoral care it is likely that the minister is also being cared for in an appropriate way.

**Role Dissonance**

The problem of “role dissonance” is expressed in the Moderators’ Report of 1986. In paragraph 8 it contrast the demands on ministers and the expectations of congregations.

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The Pastoral Reference Committee’s 1991 report expressed concern that relationships between some ministers and congregations broke down to the point of being beyond healing; this despite the efforts of Districts and Moderators. This points to issues building up before Synod comes to know about them and being able to get involved. An article in the January 2006 issue of “Reform” (page 15) refers to a growing gap between a minister’s expectation of what he or she will do in ministry and what they actually do. Part of this problem is the compounding effect of pastoring several small congregations, each with expectations of a minister that may be different for each congregation and different from what was believed at the time of the ‘call’.

Another type of role dissonance is that of a changing society and what could be called the “secularisation of ministry”. This was an issue mentioned by the Moderators early in the life of the URC. The 1974 report noted that many of the ministers had a different understanding of their role in society than was the common view a decade previously. The report also expressed concern that if a minister refused to move from his present pastorate because his wife held a good job in that locality such refusal may harm the Church\textsuperscript{11}. Here are seen changing patterns of ministry influenced by a changing society. Apart from the pressures on ministers, the moderators record in their reports concerns about ministers who seem to be placing personal priorities ahead of the leading of the Holy Spirit. Their 1982 report to the General Assembly expresses concern about ministers who define the geographical limits within which they will move or specify the type of community that they are prepared to move to. The moderators also referred to ministers who see ministry moves as a career development by expecting each move to be to a larger congregation. In paragraph 7 of their 1986 report the moderators express concern that ministers are not prepared to consider pastorates of certain types or location due to attitude of “one minister to one congregation” whereby ministers clearly would not consider a pastorate of multiple congregations. Again, in 2005, the “Catch the Vision” paper refers to ministers who would do anything but serve in a local pastorate (para. 41). These issues all point to an increasingly secular attitude by some ministers to ministry. The extent and frequency of such issues being mentioned by the moderators suggests that the problem is fairly widespread. On the other side, this may indicate that those ministers had a bad experiences of being a minister in a pastorate and the cause of that experience may indicate whether the problem lies with the minister or the congregation, or both. Fairly

\textsuperscript{11} General Assembly 1974, pp. 22-23; The Moderators’ Report.
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early in the life of the URC the Church Life Dept. reported to the General Assembly that "we see a real need. It is for depth in Church life."12 In 1980 the Moderators expressed their concern that "the spiritual life of ministers and laity alike needs deepening."13 When these comments are put against other concerns that have been referred to then it points to a problem for the Church as a whole. Pastoral care (as may be understood from the New Testament) must be affected adversely where there is a decline in spirituality and an increase in secularisation. It could be argued that this is a role dissonance which denies the reality of the true "call" of the Holy Spirit on a life. It is a problem that is manifesting in more than one Christian denomination.

Family Crises
The main issue to be found in the records related to the breakdown of ministers' marriages. It featured strongly in both Moderators' and the Pastoral Reference Committee reports. There are several indicators of the problems. There is the changing pattern of society that has its influence; the need for spouses to provide an income to supplement the stipend of the minister; reluctance of ministers to move because the spouse has a better-paid position; a person entering the ministry well after marriage and the changes causing difficulties. All these issues appear in reports and papers of the URC. In the 1986 report the Moderators write in paragraph 11 of the concern at the number of marriage breakdowns of ministers14. The problem of marriage breakdowns of ministers appears more often in the reports of the Pastoral Reference Committee of the General Assembly. This appears to have been an ongoing problem and concern within the URC.

In its 1988 report to the General Assembly, the Pastoral Reference Committee raised the concern that there was an increase in the number of marital breakdowns for ministers. This raises the question of what stresses and strains the marriages were experiencing and whether they were related purely to ministry or whether other factors were involved. It also raises the question of how effective the pastoral care was at the local church and at the district level.

12 General Assembly Reports 1975, p. 42; Church Life Department.
14 General Assembly Reports 1986, p.76.
Marriage breakdown featured again in the Committee’s 1991 report where it reported that it occupied a large proportion of its time. With regard to the marriage breakdown problem, it points to continuing stresses in the ministry. This is five years after it was first mentioned by the committee and apparently the situation has not improved. The issue of stress contributing significantly to marriage breakdown appears in the February 2006 issue of “Reform”, the URC monthly publication. In July, 2011, a former Moderator of the General Assembly stated that marital breakdown was a major problem for the URC. Part of the cause was stated to be a person entering ministry after marriage and the partner/spouse not sharing that sense of “call” to ministry. This would suggest a possible weakness in the candidating process.

*Stress*

This has been a recurring theme throughout the life of the URC. It is reflected in reports and has had papers commissioned to be written on the issue. The stressor of ministers pastorally caring for small congregations is pointed out again in the 1979 report. The report states that:

> there are twice as many buildings as ministers but less than 200 members to a minister ... but the members being principally gathered together in small groups makes difficult the provision of pastoral care for all.\(^{15}\)

The last report that references are taken from is 2007. The committee was concerned enough about the stress being experienced by ministers to commission a series of articles in the URC magazine, “Reform”, in the first months of 2006.\(^{16}\) Those articles highlighted a number of issues causing stress, some of which have already been mentioned. It is interesting to note that the paper on Stress published by the URC in 2006 highlighted the same issues nineteen years earlier. It raises the question as to why this is so. Is the training for ministry lacking in what it teaches? Is the change in society such that the churches are unable to cope with the level of change and there remain the issues that maintain high levels of stress in ministers?

*Changed social norms*

This a term used by the Moderators in their 1989 report to the General Assembly. It appeared to be referring to ministers engaging in sexual relationships with a person of the same sex. No mention was made by the Moderators of how this issue was dealt

\(^{15}\) General Assembly Reports 1979, p. 23, para. 7.

\(^{16}\) General Assembly Reports 2006, p. 117, para. 3.
with. It could be assumed that it would have been a difficult pastoral situation for both congregations and clergy alike. The 1989 report to the General Assembly raised the concern of "changing social attitudes to sexuality, divorce and companionate relationships outside of marriage." The committee noted that some ministers had sought to have a similar liberty within the changed social norms and this had been "costly for the Church." The committee went on to recommend that the Church consider these issues and define what its attitude would be to the changed norms.

**Financial Pressures on Ministers**

Two aspects came out of reports on this issue. One was the minister engaging in secular employ to supplement the stipend and the other was of the spouse doing so. The Moderators point out in their 1974 report that if a church calls a minister then it is responsible to ensure that he is maintained in an adequate way (p.22). In paragraph 13 of the 1979 report the Moderators express their concern that some ministers have a secular occupation to earn additional income to supplement their income from the exercise of ministry. This situation can be a major stressor for a minister. The moderators imply that such action is a necessity and therefore suggests inadequate stipend and allowances being paid to ministers. It was not possible to verify this from reports and records available. The General Assembly subsequently put a limit to the number of hours a full-time stipendiary minister should work. It was ten hours per week. The concern was that more hours would affect the level of effective ministry the minister would be able to exercise.

**Other Issues**

**Selection process for candidates for ministry**

Concerns expressed by the Pastoral Reference Committee in more than one report indicate that there are weaknesses in the selection process. This has led to people not fully suited to the demands of ministry being trained and ordained and then unable to cope with the life of ministry. In 1992, the committee’s report raised the issue of candidating procedures and observed that the Church was not being as careful as it could be in the process. It raised the matter again in 1996 after a statistical analysis had been done on the cases dealt with by the committee. This time the committee made some recommendations to the Ministries Committee:

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17 General Assembly Reports 1989, p. 124, para. 7.
including the need for care in assessing candidates, the particular vulnerability of ministers in the early stages of ministry, and the need for ongoing care and appraisal.\textsuperscript{18}

The results of this can be seen in the programme of Continuing Ministerial Education (CME). There is now a three-phase programme aimed at helping students and ministers.

\textit{Conclusions to be Drawn}

A comment was made that the URC has become quite good at dealing with crises but does preventative very poorly.\textsuperscript{19} The emphasis on the local church having the prime responsibility for pastoral care of ministers reflects the dominant model of church government prior to the formation of the URC. It is not possible to change ministers and congregations overnight and it was commented by a former Moderator that “Independency is still strong in England.”\textsuperscript{20} There are several very positive things to be learned. From the Moderators’ reports to the General Assembly, it would appear that the majority of churches provided the pastoral care that was required for ministers and their families. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain statistics to support that statement. The provision of training for elders by Synods is important. Elders (and their equivalents) have always had an important role in the Christian Church. The three phases of CME for ministers are likewise important, there being an emphasis on training ministers in self-care while they are at college. However, given the continuing concern about the stress on ministers it would appear that the training is not as successful as one would hope. Possibly the most important introduction has been that of a more uniform approach to Accompanied Self-Appraisal for Ministers. While it is still voluntary it is gaining more support and may become mandatory. This is similar to the “Professional Supervision” requirement of the Uniting Church.

It was stated by a former Moderator to the General Assembly “that there was a fairly high satisfaction rate in the URC and a lot of the system works extremely well.” The impression was gained from reports and individual comments that it worked better when there was a District Pastoral Committee that related to ministers and congregations. The smaller number of congregations to be cared for at District level compared to Synod would make it easier to build strong relationships. The increasingly

\textsuperscript{18} General Assembly Reports 1996, p. 153, para. 2.
\textsuperscript{19} Rev. N. Thorogood, Director of Pastoral Studies, Westminster College.
\textsuperscript{20} Meeting with Rev. J. Marsh, former Moderator of General Assembly in July, 2011
administrative role of the Synod Moderator makes it harder for that position to build
strong relationships with all the ministers and would limit the extent to which the
“pastor of pastors” role can be exercised. Wealthier synods are able to employ a person
to exercise the “pastoral” role of the moderator but it may be only a partial answer.

The building of relationships appears to be the key; relationships where a minister and
family feel cared for and able to talk about stresses and issues with the people that care
for them. Ideally, this should be the congregations of the pastorate. Realistically, it
should at least be fellow clergy who experience similar stresses and strains and
understand the issues causing them. The difficulty in assessing the value of the URC
experience is the lack of information on how Synods actually operate and also the
dearth of statistical information to place against statements in reports.

The United Church of Canada (UCC)

History
The United Church of Canada (UCC) was formed in 1925 from the Congregational and
Methodist Churches in Canada plus 70% of the Presbyterian Church. It is the largest
Protestant denomination in Canada with a total membership of 510,672 persons in 2009.
Of the three uniting denominations, the Methodist Church was by far the largest, with
the Presbyterians next and the Congregationalists much small than the other two. As
such, the structure reflects very much the two larger denominations. The structure of
the UCC is very similar to the Uniting Church in Australia and therefore bears
comparison.
Like the Uniting Church in Australia, the UCC has suffered from decline in
membership and resources. In 1965 it had an approximate membership of 750,000
persons. By 2005, it had dropped to 573,000. With a membership of approximately
511,000 in 2009, there has been a reduction of 32% in membership in the intervening
years.

Formal Structure
The basic unit of organization in the UCC is the pastoral charge. This can comprise one
or more congregations. Each Pastoral Charge is governed by a session, a church board
or a church council. Reporting to the local governing body, there is a Ministry and
Personnel Committee that exists to support the minister and staff.

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21 UCC Web-page: www.united-church.ca

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The next level is the Presbytery, comprising a number of congregations. All members of the “Order of Ministry” (ordained ministers) who are in settlement are automatically members of the presbytery. Interestingly, all retired ministers are also members of presbytery. Lay members are elected by congregations at roughly one representative per one hundred members of the congregation. The presbytery is responsible for the pastoral care of both ministers and congregations and is seen to exercise an episcopal role. One of its committees is the Pastoral Relations Committee to which is delegated the pastoral role.

Presbyteries are grouped into Conferences on a regional basis. It also has a pastoral role and its full-time staff work with both presbyteries and pastoral charges.

The highest level of the Church is the General Council. It meets every three years to set Church policy. In between the triennial meetings the UCC is governed by an Executive and a Sub-Executive. Policy for the UCC is implemented through four permanent committees of the General Council. There is a permanent staff that is divided into different departments. Pastoral Relations and Ministry Support are the responsibility of the Human Resources Unit (See footnote 3). The U.C.C. is divided into thirteen Conferences, which are divided into a total of ninety Presbyteries. There were 2,240 pastoral charges and 3,255 individual congregations in 2010.  

**Areas of Findings**

**Organisation and Management**

General Assembly Requirements. According to by-law 244 every pastoral charge is to have a Ministry and Personnel Committee. It is responsible to provide support to the pastor and staff of the Pastoral Charge. It is responsible to review remuneration and working conditions, consult with pastors and staff about continuing education and also to review the effectiveness of staff. Effectively, the responsibility for the pastoral care of the minister lies at the pastoral charge level and not at presbytery.

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22 Basis of Union, clauses 6.1.1-3.  
23 UCC Web-site: www.united-church.uc
At the Presbytery level, there is a Pastoral Relations Committee that is responsible for the pastoral care of the members of the Order of Ministry and the pastorates within its bounds (By-law 389). Also at the Presbytery level there is a standing committee known as the “Oversight of Pastoral Charges Committee”. Its responsibility is to request and review annual reports from Pastoral Charges and to make a triennial visit to each pastorate within the presbytery. The visit is to “offer support, encouragement and counsel, and thus to demonstrate and to exercise an aspect of the episcopal function of the Presbytery.” (extract of By-Law 332(d). After receiving and reviewing the Annual Report, the Committee prepares a report to Presbytery with recommendations for action to be taken if required. Presbytery then reports its actions on the Pastorate’s Annual Report to the Conference. This is an interesting separation of responsibilities between the two committees that each exercise a part of the episcopal function. It underlines the difference between pastoral concerns and management concerns.

It is the responsibility of the Conference to see that “every Pastoral Charge has a pastorate without interruption” (By-law 425). It is also required to see that every member of the Order of Ministry has a pastoral charge. This is effected through a Conference Settlement Committee.

Placements/Settlements Process. The presbytery is required to first set up a Joint Needs Assessment Committee and it must do its work before the Joint Search Committee is set up. Membership is of both the presbytery and the pastorate. This approach enables the congregation to be involved in the assessment and discussion on points of difference that can take place. Once there is agreement on the needs then the minister with the particular gifts that are needed can be sought. It would seem that this approach must contribute significantly towards the 87% satisfaction rate of ministers with their pastorates. Over this the Conference has a part in the approval process before the ‘call’ is finalised. Before a pastoral charge is filled the presbytery will set up a Joint Needs Assessment Committee followed by a Joint Search Committee (by-laws 052 and 054 respectively). The Presbytery also has a Pastoral Relations Committee and it is available to members of the pastoral charge (by-law 042). Through it the Presbytery exercises its episcopal function to ministers and congregations. These visits are made
to “assess their religious life and overall health.” The congregation is expected to carry out a full self-assessment over a five-year period.

Term of Settlement. According to by-laws 040-041 there is no time limit to the pastoral relationship between a minister and the pastoral charge. To quote the Basis of Union 9.1: “The pastoral relationship, when initiated by call and/or settlement, shall be without time limit.” A minister could therefore be with one pastoral charge for the whole of his/her ministry if both pastor and charge are satisfied.

Code of Ethics. The “Ethical Standards for Ministry Personnel” were first drafted in 2005 as a result of responses to a questionnaire sent out to members in 2004. The present code is divided into eight headings:

- Competence
- Conflicts of Interest and Perceptions of Bias
- Personal Relationships and Professional Conduct
- Professional Relationships
- Relationship with the Law
- Relationships with Persons Served
- Responsibilities of the Role
- Self-awareness

These are contained in a brochure that is provided by the General Conference. On the reverse side are printed “The Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel.”

**Pastoral Care in Practice**

**Division of Responsibilities**

Episcopacy. This is the responsibility of the Presbytery, as previously mentioned. However, the Conference also has a responsibility. In terms of personal episcopacy, this has been exercised by the Conference Minister. The reality was that with other responsibilities, it was not possible for that person to exercise personal episcopacy effectively. The responsibility is being passed to the presbytery. When one examines the structure of the UCC it would appear that to all practical intents and purposes the episcopate is exercised by the congregation in the main.

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The Pastorate. The Ministry Committee at the pastorate level has the day-to-day responsibility for the care and well-being of the minister. In the majority of pastorates this is clearly being done effectively.

**Preventative Measures**

*Professional Supervision*
During the course of the research a model and programme for “Supervision” of ministry personnel was being developed by the Ministry… of the General Assembly. The team has received co-operation from the researcher in sharing information on the UCA model.

*Collegiality*
There does not appear to be a high level of collegiality between ministers in the UCC. Practice would seem to vary and it appears to be left to ministers to determine whether collegiality is exercised. There was enough concern by the General Assembly to pass a motion requiring action to be taken on the issue. As a result of this peer mentoring groups are being encouraged in the Toronto Conference, at least. It was also stated that ministers who are individualists are the ones that get into trouble. They have a distrust of colleagues.

*Self- Care*
The document, “Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel”, part 8 is on Self-Care. To quote:

- Ministry personnel are responsible for maintaining a healthy balance in their own lives. Accordingly they
  a) Maintain their own physical, emotional and spiritual well-being
  b) Nurture supportive personal and collegial relationships
  c) Manage time for work, family, friends, personal development, and renewal

It would appear that not all aspects of this are maintain by ministry personnel.

* Continuing Education for Ministers*
Under By-Law 039 a minister is entitled to three weeks study leave per annum. It is to be arranged through the Pastorate, Presbytery and Conference. There is no reference to

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25 Interview of the Conference Minister for Personnel Policy and Support, Toronto Conference.
26 Ministry Personnel Support, United Church of Canada, leaflet CH10515.
whether there are limits or expectations as to what a minister may study during study leave. With sabbatical leave, a minister must submit a detailed plan of study and it must be related to the ministry. This can be taken after five years in the pastorate and must be not less than three months in duration.

**Issues of Concern**

In 1998 the UCC contracted the WarrenShepell Group to provide an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EAP) to its United Church benefit plan members. As a result of a report by WarrenShepell to the 2003 General Council that the programme had received very heavy use, the Isolation in Ministry Steering Group was formed. That group commissioned the WarrenShepell Group to carry out a survey of UCC ministry personnel to measure the levels of isolation and also measure other factors in ministry. Sixty-two percent of clergy surveyed responded and completed the survey. The results proved very interesting.

Composition of Respondents: 70% were people who had received a ‘call’ to their pastorate while 20% were appointed to theirs. The other 10% comprised chaplains and staff not in pastoral settlement. Nearly 70% had served in the UCC for ten years or more and nearly 80% worked full-time. The conclusion drawn by the researchers was that overall the isolation levels were low. Quoting from a report by the Manager, Ministry Personnel Policies and Programmes, dated September 2008, there are a number of positives findings by the research. 87% were satisfied with their pastoral charge. 85% were happy with the UCC as a place to work and 78% were satisfied with the UCC as and employer. Again, 80% said that it would take a great opportunity to make them leave the UCC. 90% are satisfied with their vocation as a minister.

Contrasting with the high level of satisfaction with UCC pastorates, are some negatives.

There were sufficient concerns about the results for the General Council to pass eight resolutions to improve matters. The Ministry Personnel Policies and Programs Unit is currently working on these eight resolutions.

*Role Dissonance*

41% felt pressure to serve in roles outside traditional ministry and 59% had difficulty balancing work and non-work demands. Almost eighty-five percent of the respondents generally felt supported by others. It found that the greatest impact on feelings of isolation and on psychological well-being was the experience of the pastoral charge and not the denomination. Measures of lack of respect and recognition, when they were high, occurred between minister and their pastoral charge and not colleagues or the denomination. Contrasted with this must be the 87% who are satisfied with their pastoral charge, showing that the problem relates to no more than 13% of ministers and then in varying degrees.

Family Crises
No information was found on family crises.

Health
72% felt that they had too much to do and 61% said that there was not enough time to think and contemplate their role in ministry. Over 78% of respondents worked more than 40 hours per week and of those 45% worked more than 50 hours per week. The researchers found that the depression, stress and anxiety scores for the average UCC minister were higher than average when compared to the general population.

Conclusions to be Drawn
From the information available, the evidence points to the strength of relationships generally between the minister and the members of the pastoral charge. The pastoral care provided at the pastoral charge level would appear to be a major contributing factor to the high levels of satisfaction experienced by the ministers in placement.
Organisationally, there appears to be a real involvement in the pastoral care of ministers at all four levels of the Church. This also may be a contributing factor to the positive results in the WarrenShepell report. There are clearly things to be learned from the United Church of Canada.

In January, 2011 the UCC launched an on-line survey for ministry personnel Pastoral Relations and it is looking at "effective leadership and healthy pastoral relations". Information is still being gathered and analysed.

\[28 \text{www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pastoral/survey}\]
The Presbyterian Church (USA)

History
The Presbyterian Church (USA) was formed in 1983 with the merger of the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the USA. This healed a division that went back to the American Civil War. The Research Department has reported that over those twenty-five years of combined existence there was a loss of nearly one million members, which is a loss of over 30%. In recent years it has been losing membership at the rate of approximately 3% per annum. In 2009 its membership was a little under 2.1 million persons. In that year the median age of its members had risen to 61 years with 80% of its worshippers aged 45 years or older. The denomination has over ten thousand congregations. The number of congregations in the 25-year period fell by 7.8% and the trend is for an increasing loss in the future. Half of its membership is held by 1,500 congregations (an average of 1400 per congregation) while over 5,400 congregations have less than 100 members. The same report states that there are 13,400 active ministers and of those, over 6,000 are not serving as installed pastors. At the same time there are over 2,200 congregations without a pastor.29

Formal Structure
The denomination has a General Assembly that is divided into sixteen synods (regional governing bodies), one hundred and seventy-three presbyteries (district governing bodies) and over ten thousand congregations. The General Assembly has a number of permanent committees. Within these there is an Office of Vocations which has an interest in the pastoral welfare of ministers. The Board of Pensions also provides support through grants to presbyteries seeking to implement programmes that improve the well-being of ministers30. This denomination also has a connexional system of church government.

The primary unit of the Church is the congregation. It elects elders which, with the minister, form the Session. This is the first “Court of the Church”. The Session is responsible for the spiritual life and discipline of the congregation. The minister is also known as a “teaching elder”. A “ruling elder” in a congregation has a ministry of

30 Web-site of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA).
discernment and governance. The ministers are automatically members of the presbytery, hence the term “connexional”.

The Presbytery is responsible for the life of the congregations within its bounds. It has a Board of Management and it usually has an Executive Elder. This is a full-time person in the employ of the presbytery.

Also at the presbytery level is a Committee of Ministry (C.O.M.) and it is responsible for the pastoral care of both pastors and congregations. To quote from the Book of Order, “The Committee on Ministry is to serve as pastor and counselor to ministers, to facilitate relations between congregations, ministers and the presbytery; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery.” The Book of Order requires that the membership of the committee be at least six persons, three ministers and three elders. Where the size of the committee is increased the presbytery must maintain the ratio of ministers and elders.

Presbyteries are grouped into regional Conferences. Again, the ministers are automatically members of the Synod.

The General Assembly is the highest authority in the Presbyterian Church (USA). It does not see itself as a series of inter-connected councils, as the UCA does.

Para-Organisation

While not part of the formal structure of the PCUSA, within the Church there is an organization that came into being as a direct response to concerns for the well-being of ministers. It is the Presbytery Pastoral Care Network. It is having a positive and growing influence within the denomination, hence its inclusion here.

*The Presbytery Pastoral Care Network (PPCN)*

To quote from a PPCN Newsletter:

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31 Book of Order Part II, Clause G-2.03.
33 December 2010 Newsletter, p. 3.
The origins of the Presbytery Pastoral Care Network (PPCN) date to the early 1990’s. At that time, a small group of presbytery executives and associate executives agreed to meet annually in advance of the church-wide staffing conference to discuss issues relating to the pastoral care of ministers. The first national gathering of the PPCN took place in Philadelphia in 2000.

The Network is open to ministers of the PCUSA. It provides professional development, support and resources for those caring for ministers throughout the PCUSA. Much of the information gathered on the PCUSA has come from the PPCN and its members. The PPCN holds a conference every year and encourages members of COMs to attend. The need for such an organization reflects the reality of pastoral care of ministers. The majority of the ministers who attend are involved at presbytery level or have caring ministries for ministers.

The Research Unit of the General Assembly does not appear to have gathered data on the different types of crises and frequency experienced by presbyteries but an indication of concerns can be gleaned from the PPCN newsletters and resources. In recent times its consultancies to presbyteries appear to have been mainly on the development of ways for presbyteries to provide better care for ministers.34

Areas of Findings

Organisation and Management

From the perspective of pastoral care, it is the Presbytery that has the prime responsibility and this is delegated to the Committee on Ministry (COM).

The Advisory Handbook refers to four ways that a COM may structure itself. One way is to meet as a whole committee. Another way is to have functional sub-committees. A third way is to have geographical sub-committees and a fourth approach is to appoint from within its ranks ‘Permanent Liaison Generalists’. A minister and elder may be given responsibility to care pastorally for a church and minister. Whichever approach is taken, the ratio of minister and elder must be maintained. Not all of these committees are able to cope with the demands of the role. The extent of the duties makes it difficult

for a COM to fulfill its list of duties to the ministers, congregations and other levels of the Church. Part of its duties are that it is required to regularly visit and consult with each minister in the presbytery and report to presbytery on the type of work each minister is engaged in. It is also required to visit every Session every three years.\textsuperscript{35} Depending on the size of the presbytery, this may prove difficult to do. As a result there appears to be a growing use of retired ministers to be "pastor of pastors" in their presbyteries\textsuperscript{36}. Some of these are paid expenses by the presbytery to perform this function. Other models are also in use for providing pastoral care to ministers. One is the "pastor-to-pastor" as a specific staff position. A second model is where the Executive Presbyter has pastoral care of ministers as part of his/her job description. (This is similar to a number of presbytery ministers in the UCA.) A third model is the use of volunteers who provide pastoral care to pastors. The fourth model is one where the presbytery appoints a task force or committee and gives it specific responsibilities for the care of pastors. The model used may depend on the resources available to a presbytery.

Whichever model is used by a COM, it is clear that they have not been adequate to meet the needs of ministers and congregations. The Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, for instance, in 2006 had five hundred pastors and educators. The Pastoral Team appointed by the COM had nine members, all volunteers. The members of the COM all serve in a voluntary capacity. Ministers who serve may be in a full-time pastorate and paid by that pastorate but they receive no payment from the presbytery for taking on the extra duties. Ministers and elders alike have to balance their time to be able to perform the duties that are part of being a member of the COM. As a result a number of presbytery executives acted to provide a supporting role.

\textit{Placement/Settlement Process}

In the PCUSA the congregation works with the presbytery in seeking and calling a new pastor. The congregation elects a "Pastor Nominating Committee" (PNC) which is responsible to identify and meet with a minister and take a name to the congregation and to the presbytery. The presbytery appoints a liaison person to work with the PNC. The congregation completes a Church Information Form (CIF) and submits it to the Presbytery. Ministers seeking a settlement likewise complete a Personal Information

\textsuperscript{35} Book of Order, Clause G-11.0502.
\textsuperscript{36} PPCN Conference Notes 2008.
Form (PIF). Both of these are sent to the Church Leadership Connection. This is a unit at the denomination’s head office and it matches ministers and congregations and offers its suggested matches to a congregation. Part of the process is for a congregation to invite a minister that it is interested in calling to spend time with it so that each can meet and assess the other.

Terms of Settlement
The normal settlement period is open. A minister may remain in the settlement as long as minister and pastorate are happy for it to continue.

Code of Ethics
The 210th General Assembly (1998) approved “Standards of Ethical Conduct”. Called “Life Together in the Community of Faith” it has three categories of standards of conduct:

A. for members;   B. for Employees and Volunteers and   C. for Ordained Officers

It covers similar points to the UCA Code of Ethics but appears to make the statements with greater brevity. Section 1 point 5 makes a statement about maintaining a balanced lifestyle. This is effectively referring to Self-Care. Section 2 point 7 relates to knowing one’s limits and being prepared to refer people on to others better qualified. Point 13 in the same section makes reference to participate in continuing education and seek help in developing one’s ministry. While the style and wording are different there is the same intention.

Pastoral Care in Practice
In practice, there have been a lot of concerns that the pastoral care exercised by COMs was not effective. As previously stated, it resulted in the formation of the Presbytery Pastoral Care Network in 2000 and it has exercised a very useful role in creating more awareness in the PCUSA of the need to improve the pastoral care of ministers.
Preventative Measures

Professional Supervision

There is no reference to this per se but presbyteries encourage ministers to take courses to improve their skills in ministry.

Collegiality

In 2002 the Savannah Presbytery set up its first Clergy Support Group. Its purpose was to address issues of isolation, and stress in ministry and provide a place where clergy could be open and honest about issues that concerned them. Collegiality (or Clergy Support Groups) is being promoted by the Board of Pensions "Office of Health Promotions." This group meets monthly and runs for ten months of the year. It has a facilitator to encourage participants and guide proceedings. In 2008 the group had 13 participants. The Mission Presbytery set up a similar group in 2005. Given that the Board of Pensions supports these groups and even provides grants to run them it could be assumed that a good number of other presbyteries have also set up such groups.\(^\text{37}\)

The Board of Pensions Office of Health Promotions proposed the following objectives for such Support Groups:

- Building a mutual support group for pastors to address issues of isolation, stress management, professional development, and trust one another in a disciplined and consistent manner.
- Promoting clergy self-care and encouraging personal emotional and spiritual growth among pastors serving churches in the same region.
- Inviting pastors to take responsibility for their success in ministry and providing for healthier relationships with their congregations and peers in ministry.\(^\text{38}\)

From other correspondence attached to the paper it would appear that this is a successful model of collegiality.

Self-Care

As previously mentioned, the Code of Ethics expects a minister to "maintain a balance among the responsibilities of office" and includes the "spiritual, physical emotional and intellectual renewal". Thus the General Assembly expects ministers to exercise 'self-care' in an effective way. The Board of Pensions also has programmes promoting healthy lifestyles by clergy.

\(^{37}\) Paper presented by Dr. Alan Baroody at the 2008 PPCN National Gathering; paper entitled, "Combating Clergy Isolation and Loneliness in Ministry."

\(^{38}\) Letter sent out to participants in the Savannah Presbytery Clergy Support Group, 8th August, 2005.
This has also been a theme of the PPCN at at least two of its annual gatherings and also in its newsletters.

*Continuing Education for Ministers*

The Presbytery of Western Reserve, for instance, has minimums of both time and money for Clergy Continuing Education written into the “minimum terms of call”\(^{39}\). This presbytery recommends that the clergy consult with their session or other governing authority as to how resources might be best spent. Within the guidelines the presbytery has the expectation that the outcomes of a minister’s continuing education will be “to equip the individual to serve his/her constituents more effectively.” Two weeks per year are allowed for continuing education and sabbatical leave after seven years continuous service at a particular church. It makes the point that this is not a right of ministers but a gift from the congregation. This leaves open the question of whether a congregation can refuse to give a minister sabbatical leave.

*Additional Preventative Measures*

The PPCN web-site lists a number of resources for use by presbyteries and ministers. To compile these it draws on the experience of presbyteries and Executive Elders. It also provides consultation services to presbyteries. All of its work can be classed as “preventative”, hence its inclusion here.

To get an understanding of the issues that the PPCN considered important it is useful to look at the conference themes over the last few years:

2002: Never call them jerks - Healthy Responses to difficult behavior

2003: Transforming Presbyteries into caring communities – can a presbytery be a caring place for ministers?

2004: Promoting Clergy Wellness in ministry

2005: Beyond potshots and bullseyes: Building healthy Pastor-Parish Relationships through a Mutual Evaluation Process

2006: Hurricanes, Earthquakes and Trauma in the Pastorate: Caring for the clergy in times of crisis.

2007: From surviving to thriving: Four key practices for clergy wellness

2008: Shifting from Crisis Management to Prevention

2009: The COM’s Role in maintaining Excellence in Ministry

2010: Supporting Ministry/Leaders: Coaching, Mentoring and Spiritual Direction. When the themes are compared, there are three that refer to clergy health and well-being, two are concerned with preventative approaches and two with ‘caring’. Three conferences, 2005, 2006 and 2008, indicate that there is a sufficiently high level of crises (including role dissonance or conflict) in pastorates to warrant the topic to be dealt with three years out of four. Unfortunately, there are few papers from the conferences. It has not been the practice of the PPCN to record presentations or ask for papers that could be made available to others. The contents of the newsletters also give indications on the areas of concern although no statistics are available in them. In the last three years the most frequently occurring theme has been that of the health of pastors. It is clear that there is real concern for the health of the clergy.

In 2009 the PPCN released a resource called the “Toolbox”. It is a web-based resource for Committees on Ministry and for Pastors. It has three main sections, one for the Pastor-Educator, one for the Congregation and one for the Judiciary Care (the Presbytery and COM). Each of these main sections is divided into six sub-sections dealing with Physical Health, Emotional Health, Financial, Family, Spiritual and Vocational. When launched the Toolbox was 65 pages in length. It has grown to 103 pages and is proving a valuable resource to the PCUSA.

A recently developed ‘Preventative’ tool for use by presbyteries is the “Healthy Clergy Make Healthy Congregations” (HCMHC) programme. It has been developed by the Presbytery Pastoral Care Network and is a two-year programme that can guide congregations in actively caring for their clergy. The programme emphasises six dimensions of the care of clergy i.e. physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, family and vocational health.

**Issues of Concern**

**Role Dissonance**

It was reported that exit students from the theological seminaries would not consider either a congregation under one hundred members or a rural congregation. Their “first call” had to be over one hundred members, the next over two hundred and so on. Many were seeing the ordained ministry as a career instead of a “call” upon their lives. This relates to the issue of “role dissonance”.

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Family Crises

No statistics were found on the frequency of family crises. In relation to “family” the emphasis was found to be on the spouse of the minister and the difficulties experienced in being married to a minister in a congregation settlement.

Health

This is one area of concern to the Board of Pensions as well as the PPCN. It promotes clergy well-being and programmes supporting clergy health. In the April, 2009 issue of the PPCN newsletter, an article by the editor referred to the rising weight of clergy. He wrote,

In the past 17 years, the average weight of pastors increased and that the share of pastors who are obese has doubled in that time period. There is evidence that this tendency towards obesity affects mental health.

The editor went on to write,

On the positive side, the same report found that 21 percent of Presbyterian clergy are in formal weight loss programs and 39 percent belong to fitness centers.

This could indicate that the promotion of better health by the Board of Pensions is having positive results on the clergy.

Other Issues

Two other issues that concern Board members of the PPCN were raised by them in discussion with the researcher. One deals with the matter of remuneration for pastors and the other with the understanding of “call” by ministers. The local congregation is responsible for paying the minister but that is not always its first priority. In some cases if the rates are due and there is not enough to pay both then the rates get paid and the minister doesn’t. The matter was serious enough for several presbyteries to be arguing for a centralized pay system. The pastoral responsibility of the congregation for the welfare of the minister was being denied. As related under “Role Dissonance”, a number of ministers see ministry as a career and not a “call” by God on their lives. This can only have a negative affect on the Church in the long term.

Conclusions to be Drawn

Organisationally, there appears to be a heavy emphasis on the roles of the General Assembly and the Presbyteries. A number of presbyteries have made serious attempts
to provide adequate pastoral care to ministers but with increasing drop-out rates by ministers in the early years of ministry it would seem that those attempts are not enough. However, some presbyteries, like Greater Atlanta, appear to be successful in what they are doing. At the congregational level, an impression is left of many congregations taking a more worldly approach to the role of the Church and are treating the minister more as an employee than a person sent by God. Similarly, the attitude of many “first call” ministers appears to more worldly and secular than one would expect from one called by God to be a “guardian of the apostolic faith”. The term used by the URC of “secularisation of the Church” would seem to apply here also. No doubt there are many ministers and congregations to whom this term would not apply. This is evidenced by the roles played by the PPCN, the Office of Vocations and the Board of Pensions in the Church, as referred to in these pages.

**Common Conclusion from all three denominations**

In all three denominations there was involvement in pastoral care by the Assembly/General Assembly and each had an office/department responsible for those matters. All three have pastoral care responsibilities at the presbytery/synod (URC) level. In both the URC and the UCC responsibility for pastoral care of ministers is built into the structures of the respective churches. Secularisation was expressed as a problem by both the URC and the PCUSA. All three denominations noted concerns about stress on ministers.

Out of all the information gathered, there are useful ideas that could be used by the UCA.
CHAPTER 7.
COMBINED FINDINGS ON THE FOUR DENOMINATIONS

Introduction

The four denominations have things in common and also differences. Those differences may have been brought about by history, culture and the tide of events. It is useful to compare all four under the headings that have been used in the two previous chapters and note those differences. From this it may be possible to draw conclusions that would be of benefit to the UCA.

History

Decline in Membership and Resources

There are several things in common but the first is that all are classified as "Mainline Denominations". These are Christian denominations that have been long established and accepted as part of the main body of the Christian Church. All four denominations have suffered decline, three since their formation and the fourth since the mid-1960’s. Given that the United Reformed Church (URC) came into being in 1972, the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) in 1976 and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)(PCUSA) in 1983, it could be said that all four have experienced decline over a similar period of time. The United Church of Canada (UCC) came into being in 1921 but its decline occurred from the 1960’s onwards.

The URC was able to put figures on the decline and it was noted that the number of congregations declined at a much smaller rate than the decline in membership. This is also true of the UCA and the PCUSA. The number of congregations declines slowly because a congregation will normally seek to stay in existence as long as it can. When there is a decline in membership of most congregations, the overall decline in membership is represented much more sharply than the congregations. This creates stresses in congregations, ministers and the other courts of the Church. Ministers who were used to having a single congregation find they have to adjust to pastoring multiple congregations. This is particularly so for the UCA and the URC. Presbyteries and Synods find difficulty in resourcing committees and boards due to a reducing human resource.
Formal Structure

There are continuing complaints by members of congregations about the lengthy decision-making processes in the UCA. Two synods, South Australia and Western Australia merged all of their presbyteries into one and became the “Presbytery and Synod of... .” An important factor was the reduced financial resources available to continue to operate on four levels of government. Similar complaints were made in the URC when it had Districts as well as Synods. It is interesting to note that the UCA refers to itself as having a series of inter-related councils each with its own area of responsibility, theoretically suggesting that it is not four levels of government but rather four areas of government. For all four denominations the system of government would be termed as “connexionial” i.e. where all the congregations are connected through their leadership, ordained and lay, to the other courts of the Church. These are the presbyteries, synods/conferences and Assemblies. In terms of pastoral care for the clergy, this is theoretically a good model although the evidence is that in reality this is not necessarily so.

Areas of Findings

Organisation and Management

Comparing the involvement by different levels of the Church in pastoral care and the ministry is interesting.

UCA: Synod, Presbytery with the PRC and often with a Presbytery Minister.

URC: General Assembly with its Ministries Dept. and Pastoral Reference Comm., Synod with Moderators as pastor of pastors and Pastoral Comm. for congregations, Elders in the Congregation

UCC: Gen. Council with Human Resources Unit, Conference, Presbytery with Pastoral Relations Comm., Pastorate with Ministry & Personnel Committee

PCUSA: Gen. Assembly with Dept. Vocations and Board of Pensions, Presbytery with COM.
The only denomination with a strong involvement in pastoral care of ministers at all levels of the Church is the UCC. Next would be the URC with UCA third and PCUSA last.

Placements/ Setlements

It is helpful to compare the processes to have a minister “called” to a congregation and the term of settlement.

The completion of profiles is common to both the UCA and the PCUSA. In the UCA it goes to Synod via the Presbytery and in the PCUSA it goes to the General Assembly office. For all four denominations, available ministers and pastorates seeking pastors notify a “court of the Church”. In the UCA it is the presbytery; in the URC the Synod; in the UCC it is both the presbytery and the Conference; in the PCUSA it is the Presbytery. From this point there are differences in approach.

In the UCA the congregation and Presbytery form a Joint Nomination Committee and receive names from the Settlements Committee, which a congregation can follow through or reject. In the URC a congregation is free to approach a minister without reference to the Synod but it would appear that in the majority of cases the congregation accepts the names put forward by the Moderators’ Meeting, effectively at General Assembly level. The UCC is different. Firstly, a Joint Needs Committee is formed between the pastorate and the presbytery. Once the need is determined then a Joint Search Committee is formed. Conference is kept informed. In the PCUSA the congregation appoints a Pastor Nominating Committee and Presbytery appoints a liaison person to work with the PNC. Suitable names are provided by the General Assembly office.

Overall, the UCC appears to have a more effective approach to the provision of pastoral care for ministers and this is reflected in the ministers’ satisfaction rate of 87%. A key here may be the use of a Joint Needs Committee. When a congregation completes a profile it can effectively write what it wants to but in the UCC case the result is from both the congregation and presbytery. There is more likely to be greater honesty, even though the presbytery can add its own comments to a profile.
Term of Settlement

The UCA has a maximum initial term of ten years for a minister to be in the same pastorate. The Presbytery can then approve five-year extensions. By contrast, in the other three denominations a minister can stay with the same pastorate for the whole term of his/her ministry if both minister and congregation are happy for this to happen. With such a possibility both minister and congregation could be expected to have a greater sense of commitment to each other. With a finite period there is a different attitude. Members of the congregation see that they will have a succession of ministers who can never be fully part of their community. This can be seen as providing a greater risk of role dissonance between minister and congregation. It may be time for the UCA to review this policy.

Multi-Congregation Pastorates

The URC highlighted the problem that can exist of congregations in multi-congregation pastorates having different aspirations to each other and different expectations of a minister. In the UCA this is theoretically solved by having a common Church Council but may not be so in practice when the members of congregations may not agree with the view of a combined Church Council. This is where the value of the Joint Needs Committee of the UCC can be seen. There is more likelihood of such differences being identified and worked through before the search for a minister begins. To do so can substantially reduce the risk of role dissonance between minister and pastorate.

Duration of Settlement

Of the four denominations, only the UCA does not have a settlement with no limit on the length of the settlement. Indications from both the URC and the UCC suggest that this is a contributory factor towards a positive and satisfactory ministry. It may be worth a serious reflection by the UCA as to whether it should change.

Regular Reviews on the Life of Congregations

Like the UCA, the URC has one every five years. The UCC requires pastorates to complete an annual return which is sent to the presbytery. The presbytery adds its comments and forwards it to the Conference where it is reviewed and decisions made on what action, if any, should be taken. In one synod of the UCA a ‘pastoral dialogue’ has been introduced. This will be conducted annually, having the minister, a pastorate
representative and presbytery representatives. It would seem that this is an improvement on an annual return in terms of pastoral care.

**Pastoral Care in Practice**

**Differences in the Provision of Pastoral Care**

In the UCA the Presbytery PRC has the main responsibility for pastoral care of both ministers and congregations. In some presbyteries the pastoral care of ministers is given to the Presbytery Minister. Support in the way of resources comes from Synods. In the UCC the emphasis is at the level of the congregation. The congregation's Ministry and Personnel Committee is directly responsible for supporting the minister and staff. The Presbytery has a Pastoral Relations Committee but the emphasis is at the level of the congregation. Likewise, the URC sees the congregation as having the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the minister. The Synod Moderator is "pastor pastorum" but the emphasis is with the congregation. In the UCC there is an 87% satisfaction rating by ministers with their placement and in the URC it was reported that the majority of congregations care for their ministers well. The Presbytery in the PCUSA has the primary responsibility for the pastoral care of ministers. This is delegated to the Committee On Ministry (COM) but it has wide responsibilities. A number of presbyteries have created Pastoral Care Teams that care for ministers in a voluntary capacity and report to the COM. This is only possible where there is the human resource to support the model. The PCUSA is a much larger denomination than the other three. It is likely that many congregations in the UCA also care for the minister well but this is not set into the structure of the denomination.

**Episkopé**

While episkopé is primarily the corporate responsibility of the presbytery, it is exercised in different ways. All four denominations exercise episcopate at both presbytery and conference/synod level. In the URC and two synods of the UCA the presbytery and synod are combined.

Episkopé has been a subject of much discussion in the UCA¹ (refer to UCA literature; e.g. Stuart Murray report to the 1988 Assembly) particularly in relation to personal episkopé. While there is a lot of support for the role of a pastor to pastors, the

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¹ Refer to pp. 12-14 of Chapter 3 of this thesis which lists the papers to the 4th and 6th Assemblies and a number of published articles.
indications in the UCA are that personal episcopé would not be well received by many of its ministers. Episkopé means ‘overseer’ and therefore the role would be one of exercising discipline over ministers as well as being ‘pastor pastorum’. One of the indicators is the resistance by many ministers to having a professional supervisor. In the UCA the presbytery ministers do not appear to exercise discipline over ministers. This is generally the role of the PRC or the Chair of Presbytery in the UCA, at least in the early stages and before it may be referred to a Synod Disciplinary Committee. In the URC the Moderators are expected to deal with discipline, in the initial stages at least, as well as be pastor to pastors. In both the URC and the PCUSA discipline is dealt with by committee. The key to a successful “pastor pastorum” relationship is building trust. This is more easily done when the discipline component is taken out of the equation.

Preventative Measures

Professional Supervision

Of the four denominations, the UCA is the most advanced in terms of professional supervision. The URC has something similar but not as detailed nor mandatory. The weakness for the UCA is that it is another requirement to be administered by the presbytery, many of which are under-resourced and over-stretched. Indirectly, good supervision is proving to be a real benefit to ministers. From a pastoral care perspective, ensuring that all ministers receive good supervision should be a goal, not just of the presbytery, but also the synods and Assembly of the UCA.

Collegiality

The most developed models of collegiality appear to be in the PCUSA and in Presbytery No.12 of the UCA participating in the research for this thesis. The former is partly funded by the Board of Pensions and the latter from Presbytery funds. In each case it requires one or more persons to organise and follow through to ensure the maximum benefit can be gained by ministers from participation. That can be costly until collegiality becomes part of the make-up of ministers.

Self-Care

Three out of the four denominations require ministers to exercise self-care, two within their Codes of Ethics and one in their “Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel”.

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The fourth, the URC, doesn’t appear to have it written into the Code specifically but has issued guidelines to prevent ministers from over-working. While a minister is responsible for his/her own self-care it is clear that many do not take that responsibility seriously. It then becomes necessary for pastoral care to be exercised by both presbytery and pastorate to encourage a minister to be serious about it. While there would be cost involved, it would not be unreasonable for ministers to have an annual medical check-up, given that they are in an occupation known to have high stress levels.

Continuing Education for Ministers

While all four denominations encourage continuing education and provide for annual study leave, the most comprehensive approach appears to be that of the URC with its three stages that starts at pre-ordination and carries on through a person’s ministry life. Three offer sabbatical leave for the purpose of study, such programme to be agreed by the presbytery and conference/synod. The UCA has long service leave but that is not required to be used for study. Since long service leave is really an anachronism from colonial days in Australia, would it be better converted to being sabbatical leave? It may be argued that long service leave is necessary to be able to relax and refresh but the same appears to be achieved during sabbaticals. From the perspective of pastoral care, this is of real value. Successful study improves a person’s sense of well-being as well as equipping them to be more effective in their ministry.

Issues of Concern

Role dissonance

From the research questionnaires on the UCA the highest frequency of crisis was that of role dissonance between a minister and the congregation. The actual causes were not identified through questionnaire answers but indications came from the informal meetings with the PRCs. One is the expectations of a minister on how he/she will exercise their ministry and what the congregation expects. Mentioned several times were the expectations of ministry given by the theological college to students and the fact that exit students are not really prepared for the realities of congregational ministry. Similar comments have appeared in the literature of the PCUSA and from discussion with members of the PPCN. Part of the problem appears to be the way students are trained for ministry. From observation, it is interesting to note that the attitude of congregation members is much more tolerant toward students than it is towards
ordained ministers. This being so, students would gain a different understanding towards congregation ministry when they do 'practicum' than is the reality in settlement.

With the UCC, role dissonance appeared to be more that of a minister and their expectations of their ministry rather than a difference with the congregation. Clearly, there are some cases between minister and congregation but these do not appear to be frequent. In the URC an average of nine cases a year are referred to the Pastoral Reference Committee but the majority of cases are resolved at Synod level. While no figures are available, it would appear that there is a reasonably high level of cases a year in the URC. In one Moderator's Report to Assembly they reported that many ministers would prefer to serve in any role other than in a congregation. This presents a disturbing feature in pastoral ministry. Within the PCUSA, the PPCN has had three conferences where the topic relates to role dissonance. From the research it is clear that congregations have expectations of ministers that are not shared by the ministers. In terms of personal dissonance it is important that ministers know themselves and who they are in God.

Family Crises
Reports of family crises were not found in either the UCC or the PCUSA. Within the URC the reports of the Moderators and the Pastoral Reference Committee highlights marriage breakdown significantly. One cause mentioned specifically is the spouse being unable to cope with the rigours and pressures of ministry life. Literature in the PCUSA refers to the pressures felt by spouse and family but not referred to in 'crisis' terms. In the UCA most of the family crises mentioned were unavoidable. While similar sorts of pressures to those mentioned as being in the PCUSA most likely exist in both the UCA and the UCC no information was obtained that would class them as crises. This is an area where the information gathered by the researcher points to very positive pastoral care of the minister and family during these times.

Health
Information gathered from the UCA and through the PPCN point to health problems of some ministers being caused by the stress of ministry and more particularly by role dissonance. A minister's ill health can thus be linked to other issues in ministry. The efforts in relation to pastoral care in these two areas may need greater attention. Stress
has been a recurring theme in the URC. It is most likely an important factor in the level of marriage breakdowns in the manse. The WarrenShepell report for the UCC stated that the depression, anxiety and stress scores for the average UCC minister were well above the community averages\(^2\). Again, in the PCUSA, it would appear that there are high levels of stress for many ministers.

Whichever denomination a minister is a member of, it would appear that the Christian ministry is a high stress occupation. There are indications from medical sources that other illnesses, such as cancer and heart problems can be the result, in part at least, of high stress.

**Other Issues**

*Isolation*

In the UCA there was not a lot of reference to isolation for ministers during research. The main concern expressed was the geographical isolation. This could be expected to occur in the UCC also. However, the main form of isolation discussed in the other denominations was social isolation. It is interesting to note that the WarrenShepell research concluded that the levels of isolation of ministers in the UCC was low. It was also noted that in the UCA, the more geographically isolated ministers suffered less social isolation. Both the URC and the PCUSA expressed concerns about social isolation. Both of these denominations are in more densely populated countries and this may be a factor. It may be possible that the higher the population density, the higher the social isolation. At the same time Canada has high density areas of its country and this was not differentiated by WarrenShepell. Clearly, the sense of isolation is connected to the level of connectedness with members of a local congregation and community.

*The Nature of Ministry*

In all four denominations, the changing attitudes by ministers to their understanding of their call to ministry is itself a matter for concern. In the UCA there is a discernment process that can take two years or more but it is not fully effective. While it is very much a theological issue, there are ramifications in the practical matters of the exercise of ministry. In the UCA, concerns have been expressed at presbytery level. One of these is the increasing “employer/employee” attitude that is developing with ministers instead of the “covenantal” relationship. Some talk about their “rights” and demand to be allowed to exercise their ministry as they understand it. Concerns have been

expressed that some ministers are restricting their availability in their pastorates beyond what is considered reasonable for good health. Overall, it was the increasing "secularisation" of ministry by ministers that was the concern. Similar concerns were expressed by presbytery leaders in the PCUSA and is shown in its documentation.

Many exit students have a career plan. One document from the 2008 conference stated that *only 9.5% were willing to consider a church of 100 members or less* and *only 7% were open to service in a rural area*. It was also stated that students would seek a congregation of over 100 members for their first call, then a congregation of over 200 members for their next call and so on. This would seem to deny the action of the Holy Spirit and be putting secular attitudes in place. One danger in this is that such a minister will be "performing" for the approval of man and not moving with the Holy Spirit. They may prove to be successful in secular terms but failures in terms of the Spirit. In the URC similar sentiments have been expressed, particularly through the Moderators' Annual Reports to the General Assembly.

**Conclusion**

From the research it has become clear that presbyteries have a broad understanding of what pastoral care is. This is particularly so in relation to preventative pastoral care. Each denomination has its strengths and weaknesses. The problems of expectations and stress appear to be less of a problem in the UCC than the other three denominations. In some areas of pastoral care the UCA is ahead of the other denominations but it can also learn from their experiences.
CHAPTER 8
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS FROM THE FINDINGS

Introduction
The evidence collected from the research shows different approaches to the exercise of pastoral care as well as highlighting issues of concern to the Church. It is necessary to reflect theologically to determine how practice matches the theological understanding. What is the Biblical witness to, and theological understanding of, pastoral care? Why is the role of a minister very stressful and should this be so? What does the Bible say about the issue of "expectations?"

Theological Reflection
There are a number of theories and definitions on ‘theological reflection’ as a discipline. Judith Thompson, in the book, “SCM Studyguide to Theological Reflection”, quotes five from different authors.\(^1\) Andrew Todd’s model of a classic pastoral cycle has five stages. These are: experience – analyse – reflect – decide – plan. Laurie Green’s model has four stages: experience – exploration – reflection – response. Kohl’s model also has four stages. These are: experience – reflective observation – abstract conceptualisation – active experimentation. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience could be re-arranged to be: Experience – Reflect on Scripture and Tradition – Reason. A fourth could be added i.e. Respond. Thompson summarises these into: experience – reflection – theory – action. All of these models suppose that the person reflecting theologically is doing so out of personal experience. They do not apply to a research situation where the researcher is, for the purpose of the research, an observer and not a participant. The four stages can still apply but, as Thompson states, they can be simplified to the three words, “See – Reflect – Act”\(^2\). Each definition that is a variation or development from this three word summary appears to be written to a specific purpose or situation. It is therefore appropriate to prepare a definition for the purpose of this thesis. The definition proposed is:

The process of researching and recording activities in the Church related to the pastoral care of ministers, of reflecting on such activities in relation to the Christian Scripture and Tradition and Cultural Milieu, and then to make

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recommendations for an appropriate course of action to strengthen the pastoral care of ministers.

This can be summarized in three words: Observe – Reflect – Recommend

In this exercise the researcher’s own faith beliefs and experience must be set aside and the assessment and reflection be made as objectively as possible because the research has been non-participatory rather than participatory.

More than one definition of Theological Reflection includes the words “Christian Tradition”. Jesus of Nazareth had some harsh words to say about ‘tradition’. In Matthew 15: 3 Jesus asks the question of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, “Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?” Mark, in his gospel, puts it a different way, turning the question into a statement, saying in Chapter 7 verse 8, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.” In verse 13 Jesus accuses them of nullifying the word of God by their traditions that they have handed down. In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul writes, “I was … extremely jealous for the traditions of my fathers.” (Ch.1 v.14) Again, in his letter to the Colossians, he writes, “See to it that no-one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” (Ch.2 v.8). In these two letters, Paul is taking the same stance as Jesus. In the second letter to the Thessalonians, there are two references where the NIV translates the word as “teachings” but footnotes state that they could be translated ‘traditions’. Both the KJV and the RSV translate the word as “traditions”. The Greek word is paradosis. If the former is adhered to, then they fit in with the earlier quoted understandings of Paul and of Jesus. If, however, they are translated “traditions” then a different perspective could be taken. It could mean that the emerging Christian Church is also forming traditions that its followers are required to adhere to. If this is so, could this result in being in contradiction to the teaching of Jesus? Water baptism, which was carried out by the disciples in Jesus’ lifetime on earth, is one firm tradition of the Church. In John’s Gospel, Jesus says to Nicodemus, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.” (John 3:5). The celebration of the Lord’s Supper was following a command of Jesus. Both of these acts would be classed as Traditions. It is important to differentiate between following the teaching of Jesus and traditions that have been formed subsequently by the Church. Traditions have been formed through the guiding power of

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3 All Bible references are quoted from the *New International Version* (1984), International Bible Society
the Holy Spirit but such should be periodically tested through the Holy Spirit to determine whether such tradition is meant to continue. For the purpose of this thesis, the term "Christian Traditions" will include the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. Where the word is used with a small "t" it will refer to traditions that exist in the Church but may or may not be under the guiding power of the Holy Spirit. The existence of numerous Christian denominations bears testimony to the fact that this is a theologically contentious issue. However, if the form of pastoral care of ministers is to be considered then this becomes very relevant in the Christian Church of the 21st Century. This is important in relation to the pastoral care of ministers because it can affect their self-understanding of their role in the Church and how they should teach the Faith.

Reflecting on Pastoral Care

As has been shown in previous chapters, there is a broad understanding of what pastoral care is and who should engage in it. The Bible provides an understanding of pastoral care.

Clinebell, in his book, Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counselling, points toward Genesis and Psalms to show that we human beings are meant to have a life of wholeness because we are "made in the image of God" (Gen.1:27) and made "little less than God (Ps. 8:5). Clinebell writes, "To develop our unique personhood in the likeness of the divine, is the goal of the Christian life" (p. 51). Reflecting on the Genesis story of the creation of humankind, it would seem that Clinebell makes a reasonable assumption. Jesus of Nazareth, in his ministry, told his disciples, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt.5:48). If God is perfect and we are called to be like God, then this gives rise to the notion of being "complete" or in fullness of health. Further references to the notion of perfection can be found in the Bible. Jesus said to the rich young man, "If you would be perfect, go..." (Matt.19:21). Again from the KJV, we read, "that you may stand perfect and complete in the Will of God" (Col.4:12). James, in his letter, writes, "that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (Jas. 1:4). The notion of perfection for human beings is then found in both Old and New Testaments. The admonition of Jesus is carried on in the writings of the Early Church.

Jesus, in his admonition for the disciples to be perfect, was pointing out that their lives had to go beyond the "everyday goodness" of most people because they had to be an

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4 Clinebell, Howard (1996). Basic Types of Pastoral Care & Counselling. Nashville: Abingdon Press

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example of the lived teaching of Jesus. To be perfect implies a completeness, a
wholeness, of the person. Clinebell (p.51) picks up this notion by quoting from John's
Gospel, "I am come that they might have life and have it in all its fullness." (NEB). The
NIV translates it, "... and have it to the full." This fits the quotation from the letter of
James. Pastoral care is about bringing people to wholeness, spiritually, mentally,
emotionally and physically.

In chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis we read how Adam disobeyed God and fell from grace.
As the progenitor of the human race, all were subject to suffer the same fate. Perfection
and the fullness of life were lost to humanity.

God, however, does not give up on His creation of the human race. After Adam and
Eve fell from grace, God clothed them to help them hide their embarrassment (Gen.
3:21). It is also seen in the giving of the Ten Commandments, a set of laws that bring
peace and order into the lives of ordinary people when they are obeyed (Ex.20:1-17). In
verse 6 God promises His steadfast love to those that love Him. This is a significant
statement. In Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus quotes the Shema, a summarization into two
commandments, both of which start with the word, "love".

It is written in the New Testament that "God so loved the world that he gave his only
Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
Jesus' death and resurrection were to bring reconciliation between the human race and
God. In this way it can be seen that the Love of God extended to the whole human race.
Jesus adjures his disciples to "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Jesus
passed his ministry on to his disciples (John 20:22-23), expecting them to fulfil his
commands to them. In this way, we see that the ministry of the Love of God is the
responsibility of all Jesus' disciples both then and now. As such, pastoral care is to be
exercised by all Christians toward each other.

Andrew Purves, in his book, "Reconstructing Pastoral Theology"5 writes on page 1,
"The focus is on God's ministry, which was and is and ever will be actual, and therefore
relevant and appropriate because of what it is. The Church's ministry is a participation
in that ministry, ..." He goes on to write on page 4,

5 Purves, Andrew (2004). Reconstructing Pastoral Theology – A Christological Foundation. Louisville:
Westminster John Knox Press.
Pastoral theology, then, before it is a theology of what the church or the pastor does, is axiomatically and first of all a theology of the pastoring God, a theology of the living gospel of Jesus Christ.

From this we can see that our focus must be on what God does and how and where we are joined to what God does. Effective pastoral care must be rooted and grounded in what God, in Christ, is doing through the people of the Church. In the Uniting Church, and in relation to this thesis, it is ideally what God, through Christ, is doing through the Presbytery for its ministers.

**Pastoral Care in Practice**

From the research, the responsibility for pastoral care appears to reflect different models. One places the main responsibility to exercise pastoral care with the congregation(s) of which the minister is part. Another model has the presbytery as being responsible for pastoral care of ministers. A third model has different levels of the Church sharing the responsibility in different ways. These three models can be reduced to two models in the Bible. One is the “Shepherd” model and the other the “Body of Christ” model.

**The “Shepherd” Model - Episkopê**

Whereas the “Body of Christ” model shows a corporate responsibility for pastoral care, the “Good Shepherd” model indicates a singular responsibility in the Old Testament. However, the singular is God. In Psalm 23 we read, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;..." (v.1). It goes on to say in verse 3 that the Lord does all this "for his name's sake." God will provide all the good care of his sheep, not for the sake of the sheep but for God's own name. The focus remains on God whatever God is doing. The focus of pastoral care must not be on the recipient but on God, through which the recipient will receive all that is needed for their well-being. In Isaiah 40:11 we read that God "will feed his flock like a shepherd," the verse going on to describe the caring things such a shepherd will do. Again, it is what God will do.

In John 10:11-18, Jesus refers to himself as the 'good shepherd' who is prepared to lay down his life for the sheep. In laying down his life, Jesus makes it clear that he is in control of the event and not others; having received the authority from the Father. The focus remains on what God will do. In Hebrews 13:20 Jesus Christ is referred to as,
"our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep," and in 1 Peter 2:25 is referred to as the "Shepherd and Overseer of your soul."

In Acts 20:28 Paul refers to the elders of the church at Ephesus as overseers (episkopoi) of the flock, implying that they are shepherds. A shepherd has authority over the sheep as well as caring for them. This is important to the understanding of the exercise of pastoral care by the Church. It is interesting to note that in 1 Peter 5:2 is written, "Tend the flock of God that is in your charge" and in verse 4 Jesus is referred to as the "chief Shepherd". The elders are not called shepherds but implied as such. In both quotations the elders are referred to in the plural. In the New Testament it is clear that the shepherd is Jesus Christ, whose authority is received from God. While elders are recorded as having responsibility for the flock they are not unambiguously called "shepherds". The focus remains on God the Father and Son, as in the Old Testament it remained on God.

It was noted that in the New Testament there were references to the appointment of presbyters and episkopos. It may be helpful to reflect on these positions under this heading.

_Elder:_ the term appears extensively in both Old and New Testaments. In the Hebrew and Jewish cultures, the elders were older persons who had a leadership role in the communities. The Early Church appears to have continued the practice and appointed elders in each congregation. In Acts 11:29-30 we read that the disciples sent relief for the brethren in Judea to the elders. In Acts 14:23, Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders in every church". In Acts 15 there are several references to "the apostles and elders" in the church at Jerusalem. Elders are referred to in a number of the Epistles, not all of the same author. The Greek word is _presbyteros_, from which we get the word presbytery. The elders had to be spiritually mature to be allowed to have this role. Referring again to Acts 20:28, where Paul referred to the elders as _episkopoi_, translated as overseer or bishop, it indicates that elders could also have a "ruling" function.

_Bishop:_ The references in the New Testament to this term are limited and depends on which translation is used. Looking at the Greek, we find that the word _episkopos_ (overseer, superintendent) is used five times and the word _episcopē_ (oversight) is used twice. The former is used once in Acts, when Paul addresses the elders from Ephesus
and four times in the epistles. In Philippians 1:1 Paul is greeting the bishops and two other references are to the requirements to be a bishop; the last, from 1 Peter 2:25, refers to Jesus as the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls. The word episkope is used in Acts 2:20 to describe the position vacated by the death of Judas Iscariot and in 1 Timothy 3:1 when Paul refers to the 'office of bishop' (KJV and RSV), 'being an overseer' (NIV). However, against this needs to be put the words of Jesus, in Matthew 23: 8-12, where he tells the disciples not to be called rabbi because they have one teacher and they are all brothers. He also tells them not to be called master, for they have one master. That is the Christ. This appears to be a very clear instruction that there should be no hierarchy among his disciples. Subsequent developments in the Church appear to have ignored Jesus' instruction.

The conclusion of a number of scholars is that Paul used the words, bishop and elder interchangeably and therefore there should be only one position. Paul L. Akin writes,

Scholars are virtually unanimous that in the early church the presbuteros and the episkopos were one and the same. Indeed, there is no clear evidence for a monarchical episcopate being firmly established until the early decades of the second century.6

It would appear to be that the role of the elders is to help the other Christians to grow in their faith and to guide them in the way they live that faith out. In 1 Thess. 5:12 the author refers to those "who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you." (NIV). Some may interpret that as "ruling" over the congregation but it is important to hold that statement in balance with the instruction by Jesus in Matt. 20:26 which states that any among his disciples who would be great must be servant to all and that one is not to have authority over the others. The same thing is written in Luke 22: 24 -27. From a worldly perspective, giving some people authority over others is useful and necessary but the Christian is expected to operate from a different perspective. Simon Peter was seen as a leader in the Early Church but not as a ruler. There is a real difference between the two roles. His leadership came from his relationship with Jesus and the ministry he exercised post-Pentecost. There should be only one Lord or ruler in the Church and that is Jesus Christ. Elders are to be leaders, teachers, mentors of the other members of the church and leading by example. (It is interesting to note that the PCUSA uses the term "teaching elder" for Ministers of the Word.) Paul was confident to write in his letter to the Philippians, "Whatever you have learned or received or heard

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from me, or seen in me - put it into practice." (Phil. 4:9). This would appear to be a good example for elders to follow.

From the perspective of pastoral care, the Biblical witness would indicate that each church should have elders, plural, and that they should not only exercise pastoral care of the congregation but also of each other, including the minister.

Post the Biblical period, a different structure developed that was to see one person, a bishop, as responsible for both governing and exercising pastoral care over the church(es). The organisation that is the basic pattern of the four denominations being researched is that of the presbytery, which appears to have come into being during Calvin's residency in Geneva. Despite the comments of the divines of Westminster, there is no clear Biblical warrant for the presbyterian form of church government, with its different courts. Was its evolution the result of the work of the Holy Spirit? Many would argue for that. Certainly, the episcopalian church government is Holy Spirit inspired and supported from Scripture. Irrespective of the form that church government takes and how it is organised, the key remains as to how focussed on God are those involved in the life of the Church. If a Church has serious problems with the pastoral care of its ministers, then it points to a problem of the centrality of God within the life of that Church.

The "Body of Christ" Model – the Local Christian Community as Pastoral Carers

In Acts 4:32 we read that "the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no-one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common." From this we see that Jesus' admonition to "love one another" is being put into practice. A community has emerged of people caring one for another as they try to live out the teaching of Jesus.

The term, "Body of Christ" is used by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans. In chapter 12, verses 4-5 he wrote, "For as in one body we have many members ... so we, though many, are one body in Christ." Again, in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (I Cor.12:12). Paul points out that when one hurts then all hurt and all must help to restore the one member back to health. In Galatians 6:2 Paul writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law.
of Christ." It is important to note that Jesus told the disciples to love one another. This was to be a priority over loving the people of the world. Treating fellow members in Christ like close family is not an easy thing to do, but is required by Christ. The Bible thus testifies to pastoral care being the responsibility of all members to each other. If the members of the congregation are the Body of Christ in that place, then pastoral care must be seen as an outworking of Jesus Christ through the Body to individuals in the Body. This can be confirmed by reviewing passages in the Epistles. Paul wrote to several of the churches with instruction on how they should relate to one another. Much of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contains advice on how the members should care for each other. In chapter 12 Paul uses the human body as an example of how all the members of a congregation should relate to one another, each individual being important for the health of the whole congregation. In verses 24(b) -27 Paul sums up the importance of caring for one another. He writes,

But God has combined the members of the body and given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Other passages that complement this passage are found in Romans 12:9-13; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32 and James 5:16.

Given that the minister is a member of a congregation, then the congregation has a responsibility to care pastorally for the minister.

The Organised Church and Pastoral Care

The Early Church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, gives a basic structure that developed in the early period. Jesus, during his ministry, chose twelve men to be with him and be trained by him for ministry (Mark 3: 13-18). There were a lot more disciples than the twelve. In Luke's Gospel we read in Ch. 6: 12, "... he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them,..." The larger number is also confirmed in John 6:66 where it states, "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." Late in his ministry, Jesus warned the disciples not to take titles and that they are all to be brothers. We read in Matthew 23: 8-10

But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father,
and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one
Teacher, the Christ.

If Jesus' words are to be taken literally, it raises into question the structural
developments in the Church. Leadership in the Early Church and after Pentecost was
given by some of the apostles and particularly Simon Peter. The earliest sign of a
structure came with the selection of seven men to see to the daily distribution of bread
to the widows, the deacons (Acts 6:1-6). It is noteworthy that the apostles said that their
time must be spent in prayer and the ministry of the word (verse 4). In Acts 11:1 is
written, "The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea..." indicating that at this stage
there appeared to be no formal structure among the 'believers'. The next developments
appears in Acts 11:30 where it is written, "This they did, sending their gift to the elders
by Barnabas and Saul." In the Jerusalem church, at least, elders had been appointed.
What role they had is not stated but it could be assumed that it would follow the model
of a Jewish synagogue, since the Jerusalem church saw itself as very much a part of
Judaism. Later writings of the New Testament indicated that they had a pastoral role
and that it became the practice in all Christian churches. This is discussed more fully
later in this chapter.

Post-Apostolic Period
It was noted in Chapter 4 that there is the historical development of the three-fold
ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon in the post-Apostolic period. Whether this
was the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or the human approach to management is
debatable. It would appear that the influence of spiritual gifts in the Church appeared to
be on the decline with the passage of time. There are those that argue for the three-fold
ministry being established in the Apostolic period and that, as such, it should be referred
to as a Tradition of the Church. There are those that argue against it and see it as a
tradition of the Church. This influences how the pastoral care of ministers should be
exercised.

Collegial Pastoral Care within the Presbytery
Developments in the Christian Church beyond the Biblical period showed that the
elders were also pastors and in an area of several congregations they, the 'presbyters',
would meet together, thus forming a "presbytery". In the connexional system of the
presbytery all ministers are part of the presbytery and therefore responsible to exercise
pastoral care toward each other. Ministers, as fellow presbyters, are required by Jesus to show that love and compassion toward each other that Christ showed. By the same token, a minister avoiding contact with fellow ministers would be in contravention of Jesus’ command. A minister cannot genuinely love other ministers in obedience to Jesus Christ unless relationships are built between them.

**Corporate Responsibility**

Clearly, there is more than one model of pastoral care in the New Testament. In each model, the only singular is God, implying that pastoral care is to be exercised between the saints under the guidance of the Shepherd. There is no indication in the New Testament that any one person should be pastor of a flock. It is always a corporate responsibility. It is possible that part of the stress of Christian ministry is because it is so often seen as the responsibility of an individual, by both the Church and by the congregations? It appears that that the most common model the Church uses today is that of an individual pastor caring for a congregation or congregations. The model in the Jerusalem church is one of corporate leadership and pastoral ministry, not individual. We note that Paul, on his missionary journeys and the founding of churches, did not work alone but as part of a team. In each case it would mean that members of the team would exercise pastoral responsibility toward each other. The key to doing this effectively is to move in the Holy Spirit, allowing God to be central to all that is said and done. Clearly, there were leaders in the New Testament. Simon Peter is one, Paul is another but both worked in teams. Where pastoral care is delegated to one person as “pastor of the pastors”, this would seem to contradict the witness of the New Testament. It is argued that the model that developed post-New Testament was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but is this correct? Was it really a convenient form of administration that was becoming secularized and turned into a tradition? It may have been under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a time and place but is it so for the Church today?

Pastoral care, then, should be exercised by all members of the Christian Church for each other, whether it be at the level of the congregation or other courts of the Church. It is not the responsibility of an individual, nor should it be delegated to an individual. The focus in the course of exercising pastoral care is not to be on an individual but on God so that all pastoral care is exercised under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Again, in summary, pastoral oversight is not an individual responsibility but of a team of persons, whether it be a congregation, an Elders Council, a PRC or the Presbytery.
Expectations and Stress
It is clear from the research that the expectations of God and of people can be very different. The person called by God to be a minister is often caught in between these two sets of expectations. There are a number of examples in the Bible to this. A very clear one is in I Samuel 8: 4-8. The elders of Israel go to Samuel and ask him to give them a king. When Samuel prays to God he is told by God, "... they have rejected me as their king." The people want a human king but God wants to be their king. These are differing expectations. Samuel is caught in the middle. The expectations of Jesus’ disciples was that Jesus would restore the kingdom of David and get rid of the Roman occupation (Acts 1: 6). This was different to Jesus’ expectation. These are but two examples. Jeremiah was treated as a traitor for sharing God’s words honestly with the people. He was imprisoned. In Jer. 7: 8 he complains that being obedient to God brings him insult and reproach from the people. He even rues the day he was born (verse 14). Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, sweats drops of blood as he prays (Luke 22: 44). Both of these are examples of high levels of negative stress. From the research evidence it would appear that there will always be occurrences of differing expectations in the Church, no matter how much there are attempts to minimize them. Similarly, there will always be stress in the lives of ministers, whether positive or negative. The “Body-Life” model of the local church seeks to minimize the negative stress and ensure that expectations of both the members and minister are at one.

Preventative Measures
As with any large organization, there tend to be rules set in place to maintain the health of the organization. An example of this is the giving by God of the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel. Today, the rules tend to be more complex and the Uniting Church is no exception. It has put into its Regulations a number of measures that seek to maintain a healthy ministry for its ministers. These can be viewed as preventative measures against a minister failing to maintain healthy standards of ministry within the Church. Thus the Church exercises pastoral care through these preventative measures.
**Accountability**

Given that pastoral care is a requirement biblically and that it can be seen that the organization has to be based on the centrality of God in real terms, the response of individuals (namely, ministers) and of congregations to ensuring the centrality of God in what they do is important. From the research it appears that there are both ministers and congregations that do not want to be accountable and this manifests itself in different ways. Jesus makes it very clear that people will be held accountable for all that they say and do (Matthew 12: 36). When the Church seeks to redress the situation it is exercising pastoral care.

**Ethical Behaviour**

One measure was to produce a Code of Ethics. All four denominations have a Code of Ethics. It sets out how a minister should behave in different circumstances. This is a sad reflection on members of the Christian Faith when it is necessary that the Church Body produce a code of ethics. That it may have been deemed wise to do so in the light of the risk of the Church being sued over the behaviour of its ‘employees’ is not a real answer. It is indicative that so much of Jesus’ teaching has only lip service paid to it by members of the Church. George Eldon Ladd writes,

> Much of Jesus’ teaching was concerned with human conduct. The Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, and the parable of the Good Samaritan are among the choicest selection of the world’s ethical literature.

At the heart of Christian ethics is a person’s attitude to relationships, not only with other people but also with their Lord and Saviour. God’s approach to ethics is seen in the Ten Commandments and also in the words of the Prophets. It is summed up very well by the Shema which enjoins people to love God with all their being and other people as themselves. Jesus teaches that it is the state of a person’s heart that determines their outward attitudes and actions (Luke 6:45). It would be easy to say that “out of the hardness of ministers’ hearts” the Church has had to write a Code of Ethics but surely this points to a deeper problem that reflects the nature of the pastoral care that exists within the Church generally. The reality does not match the theology. Another aspect of ethics is how they are viewed within a cultural context of the wider community and how the Christian and the Church sees itself. It would seem that the answer still comes back to the relationship with the Living God. To what extent is God at the centre of

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every consideration? Where a person or a community of believers is focussed on God, then the attributes of God become evident in those believers and ethical issues are resolved for those people through the power of the Holy Spirit, irrespective of culture.

**Self Care**

Results of the research show that many ministers are not exercising self-care as they should. Nor are all presbyteries able to achieve the level of compliance desirable. The onus is on the minister. There are passages in the Bible that support the concept of self-care. Mark 6: 30-31 reads,

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.

In this instance it is Jesus who takes the initiative but ministers can initiate action themselves.

There are different points to make note of. One is that the apostles told Jesus all they had said and done. In terms of UCA measures, this could be seen as fitting into ‘Professional Supervision’ ministers are required to have. From a self-care perspective, it is important to be able to share everything with some-one who knows you well and whom you trust. This could also happen in the context of collegiality. It could also mean taking time out for a period of reflective prayer with Jesus, the Saviour. That could mean developing one’s spirituality. They, the disciples, then were told to come aside and get some rest. This is a role that belongs to both the presbytery and to the local elders. They need to ensure that the minister does have a day off regularly. In self-care the minister needs to make sure that such time off is taken. It should be noted that the disciples did not have time to eat. Ministers should learn to take time to eat properly and avoid the foods that can lead to long-term ill-health. Paul’s words to the Corinthians are equally applicable to ministers and Christians generally,

Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred and you are that temple. (1 Cor. 3: 16-17)

From the evidence of the research, many ministers and church members do not take these words seriously. Again, the evidence is that a penalty is paid by the minister, the minister’s family and the Church for such neglect. Likewise, members of congregations that drive ministers to a state of self-neglect are guilty of destroying the temple of God.
Paul has good words of advice to Timothy in 1 Timothy. In chapter 4 he makes the following points: (a) train yourself to be godly (v.7b), (b) physical training is of some value (v.8) and (c) do not neglect your gift. These are referring to spiritual, physical and mental health. In Ch.5 verse 23 Paul tell Timothy to stop drinking only water and drink wine for his health's sake. The point here is to be prepared to be flexible in diet to aid one's health. Paul is making the point that one must look after one's health by taking the appropriate action.

Moses can also be taken as an example of taking time out to spend time with God. To some, forty days at a time may seem to be excessive, but he did live to be one hundred and twenty years of age. In Deuteronomy 34: 7 it reads, "... His eye had not become dim, nor his natural force abated."8 Ministers can do well to study the Bible in terms of self-care.

Ministers, then, are accountable to Christ, to their pastorate and to the Church as the Body of Christ for the exercise of their 'calling'. Part of this is maintaining well-being. Another part is to deepen the relationship with the God-head. At the same time, a pastorate is also to be accountable for its exercise of pastoral care toward the minister. Since the minister is also a member of the presbytery, it is accountable for the proper exercise of pastoral care to the minister. Without this the whole Body cannot be built up.

Since pastoral care, which encompasses these measures, is the responsibility of both presbytery and congregation, then there is a responsibility by both to encourage and admonish ministers in the fulfilment of these requirements.

**Issues of Concern**
The research identified issues of concern that could be classified as dissonance. Three categories are discussed. These are cultural dissonance, dissonance between minister and congregation and dissonance between minister and self. Dissonance could be defined as differences of a negative quality between two objects.

*Cultural Dissonance and The Influence of the Cultural Milieu*

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All four of the Christian traditions that have been researched are set in what is known as Anglo-Saxon Cultures. This culture has undergone rapid change in the last one hundred years. While there has been an increased social responsibility by governments, there has also been an accepted lowering of moral standards by the societies compared to what the culture used to dictate. From the perspective of world history, there are indications that the Anglo-Saxon civilisation is in decline. The question to be asked is whether the four denominations are experiencing decline as part of the overall decline of the civilisation or whether there are other factors that can be identified through theological reflection. Statistically, the Charismatic and Pentecostal traditions have shown growth during the same period that these four ‘mainline’ traditions have shown decline. It would appear that the decline cannot be associated with the decline in the Anglo-Saxon civilisation and a reason for it must be looked for elsewhere.

The Church is facing pressures for increased secularisation of its life. This comes in different ways. One is from civil authorities. This can take the form of legislation enacted on the whole community, of which the Church is part. Examples are Workplace Health and Safety and Child-safe locations, the location of new church buildings in non-residential areas and civil controls on the design of buildings. Another issue is the risk of being sued. This has resulted in each of the denominations researched producing a Code of Ethics. In Canada, the Government requires that there be no discrimination in employment. This has resulted in the United Church of Canada having to employ non-Christians in non-religious roles in its head office in Toronto. More damaging are the pressures from within the membership of the Church (as shown in some aspects of the research). The moral decline in the secular community affects church members who want to have the same lowered standards within the church, as was referred to by the Moderators of the URC. Another example of this is observed in the documents of the PCUSA, where it refers to minister and pastorate negotiating a fair salary for the minister as pastor. This is a secular approach. A church should be prepared to make sure that its pastor is well cared for and provided for without any need for negotiation. Such an approach is supported by Paul in his first letter to Timothy where he writes that elders, especially those responsible for preaching and teaching are “worthy of double honour” (Ch.5:17-18). Reflecting on the Biblical response helps to understand the position that the Church should take if it is to be faithful to the Biblical understanding. Such encouragement is found in the Epistles. These cultural pressures,
when given in to, weaken the living out of the Christian Faith for individual Christians and for the Church.

In the New Testament there are references to how the Church should respond to these pressures. In Romans 13:1f, Paul writes, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.” There are, of course, limits. In the Early Church Christians were persecuted for not worshipping the Roman Emperor. In the preceding chapter at verse 2 Paul writes, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The influence of secular society is evidenced in the epistles. In 1 Corinthians 3:1 Paul wrote, “Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ.” Paul acknowledges that secular attitudes are in the local church. The result of this led to divisions within the church. In the Gospel of Luke is an example of worldly thinking by the disciples when they were arguing among themselves as to who would be the greatest. The difference in the disciples post-Pentecost is evident. This is a ‘before and after’ example. Post Pentecost they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This becomes a key factor when there are secular pressures to be resisted. Is God central to the local Christian community or not? Where God is not then secular attitudes appear to come to the fore. The Christian community has, therefore, to live in the secular community but not be part of it in terms of its faith and Christian life. The danger for the Church is that it will tend to adopt human approaches to pastoral care rather than that which is modelled on the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The key to this issue appears to be whether God is really central to the life and worship of a particular Christian community and whether the Holy Spirit is allowed to be active in its life. The more active the Holy Spirit is allowed to be, the more it will be able to withstand the secular pressures. A quotation from Isaiah 64:5 sums this up well, “Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.”

The key point here is that God is the focus here, not so much God’s ways. The more that God is the focus rather than the issue, the less a people of God will find their Christian walk being secularised and the pastoral care of ministers more in conformity with the Biblical witness.

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Role Dissonance between Minister and Congregation

The Church is called to be “one” and this is important if it is to effectively fulfil the commission given to it by Jesus Christ. The heart of this one-ness is seen in the prayer of Jesus for his disciples as recorded in John 17:20-23,

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

This becomes the standard by which an individual and a church’s performance can be measured. It is to be noted that the unity requires that the believers are to be “in” the Godhead and therefore united and one with the Godhead if unity is to be achieved with each other. Where there is a breakdown in the unity of the believers, it means that all or part are not living “in” the Godhead. This places the focus for all Christian action as taking place through the Godhead. Being one in Christ was taken very seriously by the Early Church. Paul, in his writings, emphasised this time and again. This can be seen in five of his epistles. A decisive text in relation to Jesus’ prayer is found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, ch.4: 4-6. He writes,

There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Here Paul emphasises the work of God in the unity, or ‘one-ness’, of the Church. This can be added to by quoting from Paul’s letter to the Philippians, Ch.2: 1-2 where he writes,

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Role dissonance between a pastorate and its minister indicates that the “body” in that place is not like-minded or of one spirit and purpose. The question has to be asked as to whether, under these circumstances, that body is united with Christ. The logic would suggest that it is not. It is certainly not one in Spirit. If it is that part of the body is no longer united with Christ then it damages the wider body of the Church. In John 15 Jesus talks of being the vine and the disciples the branches. In verse 4 Jesus says, “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit of itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

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The fruit of a minister’s or a congregation’s ministry will reflect their connectedness to the vine, Jesus. Where there is disagreement there is no good fruit. Logically it must mean a disconnectedness from Christ and a shutting out of the Holy Spirit by one or more parties to the disagreement. The spiritual life of both the minister and the congregation needs to be at a depth that engenders one-ness in Christ and becomes a witness to the world. Preventing such disunity is very much the role of the Presbyteries, which they should fulfil to the best of their ability as part of their exercise of pastoral care.

*Role Dissonance between Minister and Self.*

Where the role dissonance of a minister is with the minister’s self, then a different problem is faced. It is important that a minister knows who he or she is in God. It was identified in the research that some ministers have a problem with self-identity. According to the Gospels, Jesus knew who he was and what he was called to from a young age (Luke 2:49). Paul could be an example of a person who suffered from role dissonance of self until he met Jesus on the Damascus Road. As Saul, he believed himself called to defend the Jewish way from the influences of the ‘followers of the Way’. After he had been prayed for and baptized there was no more uncertainty of who he was in God. While the Uniting Church has a discernment process, it appears that it ends after a person is ordained. However, the discernment process is a lifetime process that is a continual relating to the Lord and listening to the Lord’s direction. Too often people become too busy to listen to the Lord speaking. It comes back to Jesus’ instruction in John 15 to remain in him. That can only be done as the focus remains on Him and not other matters.

On the same issue, there was a clear concern by many ministers on the changing role of the Minister of the Word. The Basis of Union in para. 14 (a) states that, “These will preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and exercise pastoral care so that all may be equipped for their particular ministries, ...” For much of the life of the Uniting Church this has been the role of the Ministers of the Word. Regulation 2.4.2. is an expansion of this and doesn’t really allow for the changes that have taken place. Now many lay people are exercising these functions. In the Biblical witness, there is no evidence of the celebration of the sacraments being confined to the “ordained.” Rather, this emerged in later times. In the document, “The Church, its Nature, Functioning
and Ordering”, the apostolic function of the ministers of the Church is emphasised\(^{10}\). It points to the apostles as “the foundation and definitive basis for the ministerial office...”. Similarly, in para. 3 of Clause 14 (d) of the Basis of Union it states:

... that in particular she comes into being in a period of reconsideration of traditional forms of ministry, and of renewed participation of all the people of God in the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, the building up of the fellowship in mutual love, ...

This being so, it would seem that Regulation 2.4.2. needs to be revised to reflect the Biblical witness, the aspirations of the founding documents and the reality of present day ministry. It would be more helpful for there to be “guidelines” on the exercise of ministry rather than a regulation with a fixed list. This then gives more freedom for presbyteries and ministers to be more flexible and be able to respond more fittingly to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and reduce the amount of dissonance with self by ministers.

**Conclusion**

The exercise of pastoral care towards ministers is the responsibility of every church member, whether at congregation or presbytery level. Jürgen Moltmann wrote:

“No life can be understood from its own standpoint alone. As long as it lives, it lives in living relationship to other lives, and therefore in contexts of time and with perspectives of hope.”\(^{11}\)

Theologically, the exercise of pastoral care is not an individual responsibility but a corporate one. Alistair Campbell wrote, “But given the broad scope of pastoral care and its transcendent aims, every Christian has a pastoral role to play both in everyday life and in the Christian community.”\(^{12}\) This means that it should not be delegated to one person or one person appointed to exercise it, either at congregation or presbytery level. It belongs to every member. Similarly, the minister should be cared for by the members of the congregation of which the minister is a member. Members of presbytery have a responsibility to do the same and it is acknowledged that great effort is expended in providing this pastoral care. Nor is this to denigrate the very good work that many presbytery ministers do in providing pastoral care to ministers.

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In the changed circumstances of church life, change has been forced upon the Church. This change needs to be reflected in its theological understanding of what is “ Tradition” and what is “ tradition”.

Differences in expectations are the result of one or more parties not being in tune with the Holy Spirit. While the hope is that the church will be “one” in its expectations, the reality of history is that the problem will continue in different times and places. Ministers need to be led to understand this from the time a “call” on their lives is discerned and presbyteries to find ways to be more watchful of developing situations.

It can be seen that all of the foregoing can be summed up by the quote from the URC Moderator’s Report previously referred to in Chapter 6, “the spiritual life of ministers and laity alike needs deepening.” This is not to decry the many prayerful and dedicated people in presbyteries that have been encountered during the research but it does reflect the overall picture, not only of the URC but also of the UCA, UCC and the PCUSA. However good the theology, it is to no avail without the living of it by the people of God.
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

Introduction
It is clear from the research that the Uniting Church in Australia has done a lot to provide a framework that allows its ministers to develop their lives and ministry and at the same time to be accountable to the Church. It is also clear that presbyteries have sought to provide effective pastoral care through the Presbytery Ministers and the Pastoral Relations Committees. One of the factors that appears to work against them is that requirements by Assembly are claimed by many presbyteries to be in excess of resources to deliver. One problem is that a Regulation that is discerned as necessary at one point in time can become a tradition of the Church and stultify the action of the Holy Spirit. The result for the Church is decline. In many cases the presbyteries and ministers are caught between the diverging expectations of the Assembly and the congregations. Also working against the presbyteries is the reported negative attitude of many ministers towards aspects of the framework such as professional supervision and self-care. Both the literature review and the research showed that the Uniting Church has not dealt adequately with the issues of “expectations” and of “stress”. It may require a major change of approach to the provision of ministry to deal adequately with these. Linked to this is the issue of “spirituality” (as defined in the first chapter of this thesis) and the need for it to be strengthened. It is to be noted that both the literature and research point to the congregation as the preferred place of practical support for ministers despite the very good work of presbytery ministers.

There are strengths and weaknesses in each of the four denominations studied and the Uniting Church can benefit from the strengths of the others to improve its “modus operandi” and enhance the pastoral care of its ministers. The first part of the conclusions and recommendations will be proposed on the basis of working within the existing framework of presbyteries in the UCA. The latter part of the chapter will propose a more radical approach.
Organisation and Management in Relation to Pastoral Care

The expectations of the Assembly have proved to be a burden for the majority of the presbyteries that participated in the research. Its demands on presbyteries through the Regulations, and particularly on the Pastoral Relations Committees, are too great and cannot be carried out effectively as laid down in Regulations. The requirement that each congregation be reviewed every five years is impossible to fulfil by a lot of presbyteries. From the research it was clear that five-yearly reviews are too long a period of time to be able to identify developing problems. An annual review is more likely to reveal any issues that could develop into a problem but this is clearly not possible under present resources and present methods of providing pastoral care.

Much of the pastoral care of ministers is the responsibility of the Pastoral Relations Committee. As previously mentioned, the workload is too much and therefore places additional stress on the members of the Pastoral Relations Committee. From the research it was noted that the PRCs also have responsibility for administering (a) the Professional Supervision programme (b) the Continuing Education for Ministers programme and (c) the Code of Ethics training and (d) the Annual Return by Ministers to Presbytery (Reg. 2.4.4). These are neither pastoral care nor directly pastoral relations matters and therefore could be exercised by other than the PRC. The emphasis for the PRC must be pastoral relations and it should be kept free of other matters which detract from that. It is the committee that, on behalf of the presbytery, builds up relationships between the congregations and the presbytery and facilitates the strengthening of relationships between the congregations and the ministers.

From the literature and research it is clear that episcopate in its fullest sense should remain with the presbytery. Congregations and presbyteries of the Uniting Church do not want it to be exercised by an individual. In many of the participating presbyteries the aspect of pastoral care has been delegated to one person, the presbytery minister. While many of these presbytery ministers are doing an excellent job of pastorally caring for ministers, the findings point to the congregation as the most appropriate place for the pastoral care of ministers to be exercised. Thus the role of the presbytery minister could be one of facilitating effective pastoral care. This would reduce stress on the presbytery minister. While presbytery remains responsible for pastoral care, the congregation/pastorate would exercise it.
For many presbyteries the number of congregations and/or geographical distance present problems insofar as the exercise of pastoral care is concerned. There was a wide range in the number of congregations in the participating presbyteries with city/urban presbyteries having the greatest number of congregations. At one informal discussion it was suggested that an ideal number of congregations for an urban presbytery was thirty. This would still require the PRC to conduct six five-yearly reviews a year apart from their other duties. Three participating presbyteries were divided into zones and this is a sensible approach because it relieves the pressure and stress at presbytery level without increasing cost. The size of a presbytery in terms of the number of congregations remains an issue. Synods are reluctant to have smaller presbyteries because of the need for additional human resource to fill committees and the need for the financial resources to fund those presbyteries (refer report to the Victoria & Tasmania Synod).

The “Call” process is currently flawed in that the profiles of congregations don’t always match reality and this is not always picked up by presbyteries. It means that true expectations in a congregation can be hidden. It is noted that Regulation 2.7.14 (a) requires a special consultation/mission study to be carried out by the presbytery and pastorate before a Joint Nominating Committee is formed. This process at times appears to be dealt with through the pastorate profile rather than a separate consultation taking place. It is an important process that needs to be carried out effectively because it will have a bearing on the success or otherwise of the ministry of the person called and of the congregation.

Limiting the term of a settlement for ministers has a negative impact on both ministers and congregations. It could be seen as a contributory factor to role dissonance, particularly where change is needed. Allowing an unlimited period of settlement brings a greater commitment by both parties to the ministry and to each other (rather like an “old-time” marriage). Theologically, a fixed term set by Regulation is not sustainable as it can over-ride the Holy Spirit and create a mind-set in ministers and congregations, as well as in the Church, that is negative in its affect. Similarly, putting a time limit on some pastors of three years in a position has the same affect. The assessment should not be an academic one for those pastors but what the fruit of the ministry is and monitored by presbytery accordingly. Currently it is decision-making by regulation and not spiritual discernment.
Each of the three denominations studied apart from the Uniting Church have an office/department responsible for matters relating to ministers. This involvement improved the sense of belonging in the ministers and was a valuable support to the Synods/Conferences and presbyteries. It also reduced the sense of the Assembly being “remote” from ministers. Such involvement may also give Assembly a better appreciation of problems and difficulties at the presbytery and congregation levels of the Church. With the increasing mobility of ministers between synods and particular ministry needs arising in different parts of the Church such an office would be of value. By working with presbyteries as well as synods it may be able to influence the Assembly to adopt more realistic expectations of presbyteries.

**Preventative Measures**

*Professional Supervision*

While professional supervision is not pastoral care in the direct sense, it is an aid to the health and vitality of a minister’s call and well-being. It is beneficial to both minister and Church to see that ministers participate fully. It is also worthy of note that where ministers are receiving effective council through professional supervision then the need for presbytery ministers and PRCs to provide it is reduced. Given that only one third of ministers in the Uniting Church were undertaking professional supervision in 2010\(^1\), there is a need for the UCA to take more effective action to have all ministers receiving professional supervision. However, preventative pastoral care by presbyteries should not rely on professional supervision to the extent indicated by the research because it relies on the report by the minister. It must be done by building relationships between minister and presbytery where this is not already happening.

*Collegiality*

Many ministers, particularly in rural and remote presbyteries, are participating well in collegiality. However, from the research it would appear that a large number of ministers, particularly in the urban areas, do not involve themselves in collegiality. Like those that avoid professional supervision, these ministers are the ones that presbyteries reported as experiencing difficulties in their ministries.

Continuing Education for Ministry

Synods are making strong efforts to have ministers undertake CEM that is relevant to their ministry. In some of the presbyteries participating in the research, ministers sign a five-year plan for CEM. This is a good approach and can only be encouraged because it helps to balance expectations by ministers and presbyteries.

Self-Care

The majority of ministers appear not to take “self-care” seriously. While many of the people interviewed saw the professional supervisor as being the person to discuss self-care with the minister, it does not follow that ministers will exercise self-care in an effective way. This remains the responsibility of presbytery as part of its episcopate.

Issues of Concern

Role Dissonance between Minister and Congregation

It is clear from the research that this represents the biggest problem facing presbyteries in terms of pastoral relations. A factor in this is the ageing congregations that are used to a particular form of ministry which is effectively a maintenance ministry. Ministers, and particularly those recently out of college, that have a different view of ministry act counter to the congregation’s expectations and this leads to tensions and stress for the minister. The prophetic role can also run counter to the Church’s expectations.

Role dissonance of Minister with Self

It appeared that in the majority of cases ministers were struggling to cope with the change in role of the ordained minister. It was particularly the case for older ministers who have been used to exercising the ministry of Word, Sacrament and Pastoral Care. With the laity in many places now approved to preside at the sacraments and performing the pastoral responsibilities, these ministers question their own role in the Church. It is concluded that there needs to be a re-affirmation of the role of the ordained minister, particularly the Minister of the Word. Clearly such persons are more than preachers of the Word and the early understanding of the role needs to be re-affirmed i.e. a guardian of the Apostolic Faith. Much of a minister’s training is in fact preparing the minister to be that guardian. This came out of surveys by the NCLS and others that found that clergy felt they were well trained for preaching and teaching but not other roles. Since

14 Basis of Union, Clause 14 (a), sentence 3.
the ‘Word’ refers not only to Scripture but also to the Logos. It is clear that the ordained Minister of the Word is to be one who shares what God is saying to that congregation at that time and in that place. This is a prophetic role and requires that such a person is close to the Lord to hear what the Lord is saying. Such a person needs to be divested of anything that prevents such a relationship. The role of Minister of the Word should also be one of discipling the elders and “equipping the saints for ministry”. The UCA emphasises the training of laity through its theological institutions and them becoming qualified. However, ordained ministers should be able to provide much of that training through the years of training they received before ordination. To encourage this would give ministers a greater sense of personal identity and understanding of their role.

Nowhere within the Constitution or the Regulations are the differences in the roles of Ministers of the Word and Deacons defined. The wording in the 2008 edition of the Regulations begs the question of why there are two different ministries if for Deacons one is referred to Ministers (see page 249) and Regulation 2.4.2 implies that their duties are identical. While there are Deacons who are exercising the role of a Minister of the Word the same can be said of Lay Ministry Teams and these are not mentioned under this Regulation. The ministries exercised by Lay Ministry Teams are evidence that all of the role of Ministers as written in Regulation 2.4.2 can be carried out by the laity. This could be seen as fulfilment of Paul’s words in his letter to the Ephesians (Ch. 4 vv11-13), that the saints have been equipped “for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ”15.

Regulation 2.4.2 also appears to assume that every minister has all the spiritual gifts on offer by the Holy Spirit and does not take account of the fact that few ministers would have all the spiritual gifts required to fulfil all the duties listed in the regulation. In this sense the regulation can be seen to be part, and possibly a major part, of the cause of personal role dissonance.

Isolation
As previously mentioned, this was not seen as a serious problem by the majority of those interviewed. Geographical isolation can be reduced by the use of modern communication methods.

---

15 Revised Standard Version of the Bible
Secularisation and Spirituality

Pressures of society can have a secularising influence on the Church and its members. Government legislation particularly can force this upon the Church, as evidenced through legislation dealing with Workplace Health and Safety. The emphasis by the Church that ministers are “professionals”, as seen in the Code of Ethics, leads some ministers to adopt secular attitudes towards their ministry and this was evidenced during the research. The Uniting Church approach of paying all ministers the same is a positive way of emphasising that theirs is a “calling”, whereas in the PCUSA ministers negotiate their salary with the congregation. The latter has led to many of those ministers viewing ministry as a career rather than a calling. High levels of role dissonance (conflict) in the Church point to insufficient time and effort being spent by ministers and congregations in listening to God and thus allowing the “flesh” to dominate the “spirit”, as St. Paul would put it. Thus it can be seen that a greater emphasis on the spiritual life (as define in Chapter 1 of this thesis) of the Church needs to be both emphasised and practiced in the life of the Church.

Recommendations

Organisation and Management

Assembly and Synods need to consult with presbyteries to determine what is an acceptable workload for presbyteries and re-word Regulations accordingly. Alternatively, they should provide the resources for presbyteries to fulfil the responsibilities laid on them.

It is proposed that the Assembly of the Uniting Church set up an “Office of Ministry” to liaise with synods and presbyteries on ministry needs and ministry placements. It would also be responsible for the administration of professional supervision and maintaining the Register of Professional Supervisors.

Introduce an ‘Annual Return of Ministry and Mission’ to be completed by Congregations, reviewed and commented on by Presbyteries and finally assessed by Synods. The return would focus on the performance of congregations in relation to the vision and mission of the congregation. If both this return and the Annual Return by Ministers to Presbyteries are completed by a similar date then both of the completed returns could be discussed at an Annual Pastoral Reflection. This is recommended
rather than the Annual Pastoral Dialogue that is being introduced by two presbyteries because it will help to ensure that an Annual Pastoral Dialogue does not become a work performance appraisal. Presbyteries would add their comments to the two returns before passing them on to the Synod. The benefit of such an annual return is that the Synod will gain a good picture of what is happening in the Synod overall and help it to identify areas that need action and support. In terms of pastoral care of ministers it could also highlight potential problems and allow presbyteries to take appropriate action before a crisis develops. A sample form is at Appendix 8.

To reduce the workload of the PRC and enable it to handle only pastoral relations matters presbyteries should appoint a Ministerial Development Team/Committee to be responsible for administering (a) the Professional Supervision programme, (b) the Continuing Education for Ministers programme, (c) the Code of Ethics training programme and (d) the Annual Return by Ministers to Presbytery (Reg. 2.4.4). It should report to the Presbytery Standing Committee rather than the Pastoral Relations Committee. This will reduce the level of stress placed on the PRC. Regulation 3.4.38 (c) (vii), dealing with disciplinary matters, should not be the responsibility of the PRC. While it will no doubt become aware of disciplinary matters these should be referred to the Presbytery Chair or Standing Committee to be dealt with.

Where it is not done, presbyteries should consider the use of zones and delegate authority to the zones so that zone decisions have the force of the presbytery, as is the case with one of the participating presbyteries. This would relieve the pressure and stress at presbytery level without increasing cost.

Pastoral Relations Committees of presbyteries with a large number of congregations should recruit and train teams to be responsible for building up relationships with congregations and ministers and conducting the Annual Pastoral Reflection with the congregations (as one presbytery is doing for its Annual Pastoral Dialogue). The teams would report to the Pastoral Relations Committee.

Change the “call” process to have a Joint Needs Committee (similar to the United Church of Canada) that meets and determines a pastorate’s needs in terms of ministry before a Joint Nominating Committee is formed. This will formally comply with Regulation 2.7.14 (a) and give greater assurance of a more accurate picture of the
ministry need for that vacancy and reduce the risk of diverging expectations of ministry between minister and congregation.

Remove from the Regulations any reference to a time limit i.e. of ten years and five years, for a settlement for ministers. This will create a better sense of 'belonging' which could lead to lower levels of stress on a minister.

It is recommended that presbyteries adopt a policy of encouraging Church Councils to be responsible for the exercise of pastoral care for the ministers called to serve the congregations. Where ministers are in presbytery appointments then set up a Pastoral Care team (similar to some presbyteries in the PCUSA) to care for those ministers. Within each pastorate, adopt the UCC model of having a Ministry Committee that is responsible for the care and welfare of the minister(s) of the pastorate. It is also recommended that this be headed up by a member of Church Council, with the committee reporting to the Church Council. Alongside this, an elder or elders should be encouraged to build relationships with the minister that encourages the mutual sharing of ministry and life issues. This will substantially reduce stress and pressure on a minister as well as any sense of social isolation. To this end a training programme could be designed and offered to elders and members of Church Councils.

**Preventative Measures**

**Professional Supervision**

It is recommended that (a) a National list of Professional Supervisors approved by the UCA be prepared by Assembly and made available to all ministers, irrespective of location (b) assistance and training be given to ministers in more remote locations and professional supervisors on the use of Skype for professional supervision meetings (c) all professional supervisors supervising UCA ministers regularly attend training days which would help with understanding key issues affecting Uniting Church ministers (d) Assembly be involved in finding and having registered suitable professional supervisors. Where presbyteries currently express concern at not finding suitable professional supervisors, this should be overcome by Assembly taking on the responsibility of doing so.
It is further recommended that presbyteries be encouraged to exercise the discipline of
the Church to ensure that ministers properly engage in professional supervision and
other preventative measures. One participating presbytery is making this a condition of
“call” and failure to comply will be seen as a breach of the Code of Ethics. This is a
good policy to follow.

Collegiality
That, where necessary, Presbyteries educate ministers on their responsibility to engage
in collegiality with other ministers where this is not happening and consider making
such collegiality a condition of “call”. Failure to comply would be a breach of
discipline. Where it is not being done, encourage the setting up of peer groups for the
ministers of the presbytery, such groups meeting on a regular basis.

Continuing Education for Ministers
All ministers should be required to prepare a plan for CEM in conjunction with
presbytery and the pastorate/ sphere of settlement to ensure appropriate CEM is
undertaken.

Self-Care
Where ministers are clearly not taking self-care seriously presbyteries should require an
agreed programme of self-care to be supplied by ministers to presbytery and that
presbytery monitor its implementation e.g. through Church Councils. A sample form is
at Appendix 9. As part of a self-care programme all ministers should have an annual
medical check-up on their health.

Issues of Concern

Role Dissonance
Introduce within the Regulations, possibly at 2.4.2, a description of the roles of both the
Minister of the Word and of Deacons. It is suggested that the regulation be re-written to
allow for the fact that most ministers do not have all the gifts to fulfil all the listed
duties.

During the period of discernment identify the personality type of the candidate and put
it in the candidate’s file so that the Church is aware of the person’s potential response to
stress and potential level of pastoral care that may be needed.
Prior to completion of training for ministry, list in the personal file the observed spiritual gifts of a candidate for ordination with the type of ministry that person could be expected to exercise e.g. 2.4.2(d) is more likely to need the gift of evangelism; (e) is more likely to need the gift of teaching while (l) is more likely to need someone able to fulfill an apostolic role. It is recognised that a person develops and may change over time but observance of this approach should reduce the problem of self role dissonance.

*Secularisation and Spirituality*

Introduce a requirement for all ministers to have a spiritual director and attend at least two spiritual retreats each year. (Spiritual direction is not the role of a professional supervisor.) The spiritual director would discuss with the minister ways to develop the relationship with God and encourage the minister to follow them in an encouraging rather than directive way. Spiritual retreats would be times away from the pressures of ministry and spent in seeking refreshment and strengthening in one’s spiritual life. Presbyteries should encourage ministers to set aside one day a month for spiritual reflection and encourage congregations to allow the minister time to do this. Presbytery would need to monitor a minister’s compliance as part of its corporate episcopate.

Presbyteries should make greater efforts to see that Regulation 3.1.10 (a) is implemented by elders in the life of the congregation. It emphasises the role of spiritual oversight that elders share with the minister.

*An Alternative Model for Presbyteries*

In the Literature Review it was noted that the Whethams and Kaldor et al both recommended that the role of the clergy needs to be re-defined (page 33 of the thesis). Their reasons were quoted on page 33 of the thesis but basically it is because the laity are now performing duties once performed only by the clergy. Based on the information gathered during the research an alternative model is recommended.

With lessened membership and resources, the ability to maintain the present structure of the presbytery becomes more difficult. In the review of presbyteries by the Victoria and Tasmania Synod a model of smaller presbyteries was considered but rejected. However, this approach has advantages if the operating model is changed. The suggestion is that presbyteries are reduced in size by the number of congregations. The
size of the presbytery is reduced to be manageable by its committees in terms of Assembly requirements. This would be no more than twenty-five congregations. For example, a maximum of five reviews would be carried out each year. Each presbytery would be divided into zones, allowing for geography and the form of ministry needed. Where appropriate, Presbytery authority would be delegated to the zones so that their decisions had the force of Presbytery. (They could be ratified at a full Presbytery meeting.)

Ministers would be called by Presbyteries to be part of a ministry team which is formed on the basis of gifting of ministers and needs of the congregations in a zone of the presbytery. The personality-type of each minister would be considered in forming the team to reduce the risk of clashes within the team. Ministers would not be attached to a congregation or cluster of congregations but be presbytery appointments and operate on the basis of preaching, teaching and equipping the saints for ministry. Like Paul and Simon Peter they would go from church to church, encouraging the members in their faith and witness to the world. This is not a new model to the UCA. Resource Ministers operate in a similar manner to congregations with Lay Ministry Teams. A Joint Needs Committee would be formed to meet with the Zone congregations to determine its needs in ministry before ministers are called by the presbytery. A Zone Ministry Committee would be established to provide the pastoral care to ministers and their families. Members would be drawn from the congregations of the zone, have a representative from Presbytery and report to the Zone Executive. The committee’s role would be to ensure that issues of concern to ministers and their families are dealt with. This is not to take away from the Pastoral Relations Committee but be the local support that may otherwise reside with a congregation. With a team of ministers there should be an inbuilt collegiality and mutual caring that could encourage self-care by individual members. The team could ensure that there is time for individual ministers to develop their own spirituality. Expectations of the ministry team would be agreed at the zone level and not the level of the congregation. The problem of role dissonance between a minister and congregation hopefully would be largely eliminated. If a congregation has an issue over ministry then it would deal with the whole ministry team and not an individual minister. Where a minister may have role dissonance with self then this is something that can be shared with the team and worked through together. Stress levels in ministers should reduce from this approach.
The elders of each congregation would take pastoral responsibility for their
congregation and for leading worship and discipling the members. They would also
celebrate the sacraments. Church Council would take responsibility for mission. The
need to employ a presbytery minister would be substantially reduced. The requirements
of Regulation 2.4.2. would effectively pass from the ministers to the Church Council
and elders. Individual elders would be licensed by the presbytery to celebrate the
sacraments by the same process that occurs now. The value of this model is that the
expectations burden that is normally place on a minister by a congregation would then
be placed on the Church Council.

The Standing Committee and the Pastoral Relations Committee could be combined (as
in the case of two presbyteries participating in the research). Ministers in the presbytery
should be rotated to serve on the combined committee so that each gains an appreciation
of the issues of ministry from a management perspective. By training the ministers of
each ministry team in Resource Ministry, the need for such a person at presbytery level
would be largely eliminated.

Part of the reason for this suggestion is that the changing circumstances in the Church
require a re-think of what is Tradition and what is tradition in the Church. It can be
argued that Tradition does not require the minister to ‘administer the sacraments and
exercise pastoral care’ to equip the saints for ministry. They are required to preach and
teach and disciple people to ‘maintain the apostolic witness to Christ in the Church’.

Research in 2006 found that the Anglican Diocese of Willochra ordained people in local
congregations to exercise a specific gift in their congregation e.g. presiding at the
sacraments.\textsuperscript{16} The UCA similarly authorises (licences) lay persons to preside at the
sacraments in their local congregation in the same way ordained ministers would.

Schillebeeckx points out that the Church adopted models of Church according to the
culture and social organisation of the location in which it found itself. He also points
out that where there were “shifts in the civil administration, we see the same kind of
thing in the church.”\textsuperscript{17} The ministries of sacrament and pastoral care exercised by an
ordained person could be seen to be tradition (as defined in Chapter 8) in the light of the
changed circumstances of the Church today. This is no different to the experience of

p.13.
\textsuperscript{17} Schillebeeckx, Edward (1985), The Church with A Human Face – A New and Expanded Theology of
Ministry, London, SCM Press Ltd.
Calvin in Geneva or the Wesleys in England. Rather, ministers would exercise an apostolic ministry i.e. visiting different congregations, teaching them the faith, equipping them for ministry and encouraging the leadership of the congregations. All of this would be within the presbytery, leaving the structure of the Uniting Church unchanged.

Concluding Comments
The problem of pastoral care of ministers is clearly not confined to the Uniting Church in Australia. The stress of Christian ministry is a phenomenon that affects most of the Christian denominations across the ‘Western’ world, at least. Jesus said, “The poor you will always have with you,” (Matt.26:11a). In the same way the demands of people, both in the Church and the wider community, will always be there and greater than can be fulfilled. As such, spiritual discernment is a must for ministers and lay Christians alike. Ministers burning out, dissonance, social isolation, negative reaction to the discipline of the Church, all point to a lack of real unity in the Church and a real unity with Christ. Real submission to the pastoral care of the Godhead will lead to genuine exercise of pastoral care within the Church. Ultimately, it all comes down to the depth of people’s spiritual lives at all levels of the Church and how well they are relating to God through their Saviour. This applies as much to the way committees and councils operate as it does to individuals. These need to spend a greater proportion of their meeting time waiting on God rather than hastily getting on with ‘business’.

The research findings and recommendations demonstrate that it is possible to provide pastoral care to ministers that will be more effective in its approach thus providing a positive answer to the research question that was posed in Chapter 1. However, as previously stated, improvements are also dependent on presbyteries being adequately resourced. Also, episcopate includes the discipline of the Church, of which there is a reluctance on the part of many in the Church to enforce. Greater use of it could improve the lives and ministries of many ministers and congregations.

The working hypothesis stated on page 8, that “changes need to be made to the pastoral care of ministers by Uniting Church presbyteries so that the well-being of its ministers
can be improved” has been proven. This is not to decry the improvements already being made by presbyteries. The theory proposed on page 109 can be modified to read,

The most effective pastoral care is that which comes from a deeper spirituality and built relationships, particularly at the local level, and from a framework of preventative measures that are properly implemented by the presbytery. These should encompass the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental needs of the minister. It is also enhanced when there is a unity of expectations by the Church, minister and congregations and when presbyteries are adequately resourced to fulfil their responsibilities.
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APPENDICES

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### Appendix No.1

**Number of Times a topic is mentioned in the Literature Review**

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<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>No. Of Occurrences</th>
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<td>Expectations</td>
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<td>b. Collegiality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. Church Organisation</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Self-Care</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Personality Type</td>
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<td>Conflict</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Personal Episcope</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Honesty with Lay leaders</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>'Minister’s Time Management</td>
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Appendix 2  Map of UCA Synods.

Synods of the Uniting Church in Australia
Appendix 3  Standard Questionnaire for the Research

D.Min.: The Pastoral Care of Ministers by Uniting Church Presbyteries

Questionnaire to Presbyteries.
This research seeks to understand how pastoral care is exercised by different Presbyteries, how effective that care is, and whether there are better ways to do it.
Name of Presbytery: .............................................................................
1. Within your Presbytery, how does it provide pastoral care to ministers?
2. How would you define pastoral care?
3. Is responsibility for pastoral care divided between a Presbytery Minister and the Pastoral Relations Committee?
4. If so, how is it divided?
5. Are other people/committees involved in pastoral care of ministers?
6. What systems/procedures are in place as part of the pastoral care process?
7. What preventative measures are in place to minimize the risk of crises for ministry agents?
8. How is Presbytery alerted to pastoral needs?
9. What categories of pastoral needs has Presbytery dealt with in the last 5 years?
   Some suggested categories (feel free to write your own):
   a. problem between minister and congregation
   b. family crisis of minister
   c. minister burned out
   d. problem of role definition and identity for minister
   e. issues between minister and the Uniting Church
   f. health
   g. other
10. How frequently have these different categories occurred?
11. What have been the results of Presbytery involvement?
12. In the last 5 years has Presbytery changed the way it provides pastoral care?
13. Why were changes made, if any?
14. What do you think has been the result of those changes?
15. In an ideal situation, what would you like to see happening with pastoral care?
Are there other comments or additional information you would like to provide?
D. Min. Thesis: The Pastoral Care of Ministers by UC Presbyteries - Analysis of Questionnaires

Question: 1 How does your presbytery provide pastoral to ministers?

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<td>37 Encourage connectedness, groups etc.</td>
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<td>46 Provide funding to attend C.E.M.</td>
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<td>48 Live-in Presbytery</td>
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<td>Check minister has a support network</td>
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<td>Ensure annual leave is taken annually</td>
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<td>Spend time with ministers not in collegial groups</td>
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<td>Arrange for elders to care for their minister</td>
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<td>Each member of PRC to liaise with congregations</td>
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<td>PRC Convenor keeps in touch with ministers</td>
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<td>Intentionalise collegiality eg at Inductions</td>
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<td>Small social networks of ministers</td>
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<td>A pastoral carer assigned to minister when in difficulties</td>
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<td>PRC get involved when Church Council can’t handle</td>
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<td>Annual Report by ministers to presbytery</td>
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Table No. 1B
Page 1 of 1 Pages

D. Min. Thesis: The Pastoral Care of Ministers by UC Presbyteries - Analysis of Questionnaires
First Grouping: Question: 1 How does your presbytery provide pastoral care to ministers?

<table>
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<th>Element of Answer</th>
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<td>1 Professional Supervision programme (1, 45)</td>
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<td>2 Collegiality (Elements 2, 3, 9, 10, 37, 41, 66, 68)</td>
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<td>3 PRC actively aware of ministers’ situations (6, 21, 22, 62, 64, 65)</td>
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<td>4 Annual pastoral review with/of minister (5, 33, 49, 50)</td>
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<td>5 Pres. Min. contacts/meets ministers regularly (7, 42)</td>
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<td>6 Local pastoral care of ministers promoted (29, 61, 63)</td>
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<td>7 Ministers to attend Presbytery and other meetings (12, 17, 27, 44, 48, 53)</td>
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<td>8 Programmes encouraging ministers to self-care (13, 14, 15)</td>
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<td>9 Division of pastoral care responsibility (18, 19, 20, 36, 59)</td>
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<td>10 Presbytery Minister as primary carer (16, 26, 30, 35, 67)</td>
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<td>11 PRC involved in pastoral care (22, 24, 31, 39, 43, 51, 52, 64, 65, 70, 71)</td>
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<td>12 Self-care related action by ministers (32, 38, 54, 58)</td>
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<td>13 Checking ministers’ self-care (55, 56, 57, 60)</td>
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<td>14 Other presbytery initiatives (21, 23, 25, 34, 40, 46, 47)</td>
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<td>15 Presbytery Minister visits congregations 12-18 months (11)</td>
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<td>16 Mentor/lay person to support minister in crisis (8)</td>
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<td>17 Synod involvement at times (4)</td>
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Appendix 5  Map of the Synods of the United Reformed Church

Synods

1  Northern
2  North Western
3  Mersey
4  Yorkshire
5  East Midlands
6  West Midlands
7  Eastern
8  South Western
9  Wessex
10 Thames North
11 Southern
12 Wales
13 Scotland
The Thirteen Conferences of The United Church of Canada

Legend:
- British Columbia
- Alberta & Northwest
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba & NW ON
- Manitou
- London
- Hamilton
- Toronto
- Bay of Quinte
- Montreal & Ottawa
- Maritime
- Newfoundland & Labrador
- All Native Circle (includes presbyteries in AB, SK, MB, ON, QC)
Presbyteries and Synods

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has over 11,000 congregations which are organized into 173 presbyteries (district governing bodies) and 16 synods (regional governing bodies).

Synod of Alaska-Northwest
Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico)
Synod of the Covenant
Synod of Lakes and Prairies
Synod of Lincoln Trails
Synod of Living Waters
Synod of Mid-America
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
Synod of the Northeast
Synod of the Pacific
Synod of the Rocky Mountains
Synod of South Atlantic
Synod of Southern California and Hawaii
Synod of the Southwest
Synod of the Sun
Synod of the Trinity
Appendix 8

Proposed Annual Report of Ministry & Mission by Congregations
(To be completed and discussed with Presbytery representatives during the Annual Pastoral Dialogue)

1. What is the current vision of the congregation?

2. What were its goals for the last year?

3. What has the congregation done in the last year towards the vision and goals?

4. How has the spiritual life of the congregation progressed in the last year?

5. What has the congregation done to complement the role of the minister?

6. What are its goals for the year ahead?

7. How does it plan to achieve them?

8. What role do you expect the minister to play in achieving the goals and what will be the congregation’s role?

Signed: ...........................................

Date: .........................................

(Chair, Church Council)
Appendix 9

Proposed Annual Report of Self-Care by Ministers

It is suggested that this report is completed at the same time as the Annual Report by Ministers to Presbyteries and discussed at a pastoral conversation. The need for ministers to maintain a healthy life-style should be stressed and this form to be seen as a help to ministers rather than a policing by ‘presbytery’. This form could also be used in meetings by a minister with a professional supervisor to encourage the minister to adopt a healthy life-style.
Annual Report on Self-Care (to be completed and submitted at the same time as the Annual Report by Ministers to Presbytery).

This report is designed to be an incentive to ministers to actively practise self-care. It covers the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional aspects of a person’s life.

Name:........................................................................................................
Settlement:............................................................................................

What do you do to maintain your spiritual health? .........................................................
........................................................................................................................

If you are finding this difficult to maintain, what prevents you from maintaining spiritual health?
........................................................................................................................

Are you having an annual medical check-up? Yes/No.

When was your last medical check-up? ........................................................................

What was the result? .................................................................................................

What physical activities are you doing to maintain fitness and how frequently do you do them?
............................................................................................................................

Are you maintaining a healthy diet and eating habits? Explain. .................................
............................................................................................................................

On average, how many hours a week do you work? ................. hours.

Are you able to take your day off regularly? Yes/No. If ‘No’, what is preventing it?
............................................................................................................................

What annual leave have you taken in the last twelve months? .................................

Was it spent in a relaxing and refreshing way to ‘re-charge’ yourself? ......................

How do you maintain a balance between ministry and your private life e.g. time with family?
............................................................................................................................

Are there any pressures or stresses that you are finding a problem? Yes/No. If ‘Yes’ what are they?
............................................................................................................................

Is there anything you wish to add? .............................................................................

Signature ................................................................. Date .................................