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ABSTRACT

ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY APPLICABLE  
TO THE LOCAL PASTOR IN THE NORTH  
PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE OF  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

by

Michael G. McBride

Chairman: Garth Thompson

ABSTRACT

A Project Report

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY APPLICABLE TO THE LOCAL  
PASTOR IN THE NORTH PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE  
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Name of researcher: Michael G. McBride

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Garth Thompson, Ph.D.

Date completed: February 1984

In recent years much has been written in non-Adventist and non-clergy literature concerning role conflict and role ambiguity. Adventist perceptions of role and the importance Adventists attribute to such roles in ministry may differ from the perceptions of non-Adventist clergy and writers. Hence, a specific study of Adventist clergy was necessary to determine if such a problem exists in Adventism and if the conclusions of other studies are applicable in an Adventist context.

It was proposed that an evaluation of the current status of Adventist clergy in the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) regarding role function and performance would indicate much

frustration, conflict, and ambiguity which is detrimental to the work of pastoral ministry.

This project investigated, defined, and determined the sources and extent of role conflict and ambiguity experienced by pastors in the NPUC. It was discovered that role conflict and ambiguity are present in the working force of the NPUC and that serious consequences are engendered by the inherent dangers of role stress. Pastors exposed to excessive role strain experience such dysfunctional symptoms as tension, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disease, alienation, communication breakdown, loss of integrity, and sexual attractions and involvements. Beyond the emotional/psychological consequences, several organizational consequences are evident such as: lower levels of productivity, job dissatisfaction, a sense of job threat, a propensity to leave employment, suspicion toward administration, high levels of turnover, and less job involvement. Person variables were found to moderate the degree to which role problems create such consequences.

The most significant sources of role conflict appear to be the discrepancies that exist between: (1) The expectations that congregations have of pastors and the expectations held by administrators, (2) The actual expectations administrators have of pastors and the pastor's perception of administrative expectations.

Although the problem is serious, it is not hopeless. The findings reveal that pastors must be proactive in minimizing role stress. Several self-help strategies appear useful: negotiating responsibilities and expectations with role senders, avoiding withdrawal behaviors, checking out perceptions to verify whether

conflict is legitimate or merely inaccurate perceptions, pursuing pastoral services, physical exercise, systematic relaxation exercises, and thought-stopping procedures. Further, the theological perspective was investigated in terms of the ministry of Jesus Christ and His response to conflicting expectations and strain inherent to ministry.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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TO THE LOCAL PASTOR IN THE NORTH  
PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE OF  
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

A Project Report  
presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Michael G. McBride

February 1984



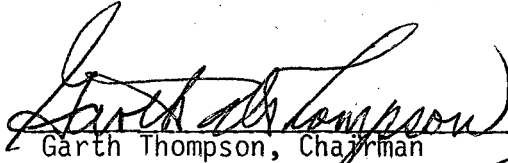
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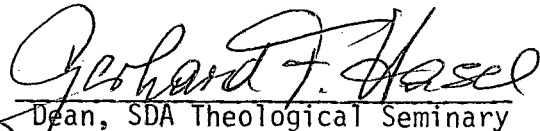
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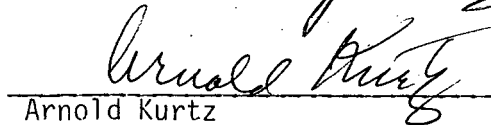
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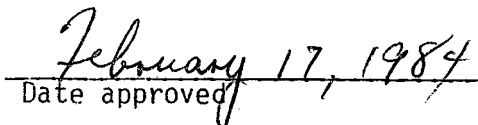
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

My employment with the Seventh-day Adventist Church began in October of 1970 as the Assistant Manager of the Washington Adventist Book Center. During my two years at the Book Center I had the opportunity to get acquainted with many young men on the pastoral staff--interns and ordained men alike. It was through the influence of some of these men that my decision was finally made to attend Seminary and enter the pastoral ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Thirteen years later only one of these men is still in the pastorate. I could readily recite the names of eighteen pastors, capable and dedicated men, who by choice are no longer in the pastorate. In addition, others could be listed who have left the pastorate because of moral problems, health problems, insubordination, loss of faith, and other equally serious difficulties. In other words, during the past thirteen years a substantial number of men have left the pastoral ministry in the Washington Conference. The Washington Conference, however, is not unique in this respect, nor the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. The problem of pastors leaving the ministry crosses denominational lines, and its effects are felt throughout the Christian Church.

Pastors especially should be particularly alarmed by these

trends. Why are so many men leaving the ministry? The issue is extremely complex. Human decisions are overdetermined; i.e., life decisions are never the result of just one influence, even though one might have been sufficient cause to tip the scales to make a final decision. There are, however, priorities among causes. In the United Church of Christ study conducted by Jud, Mills, and Burch, some of the dominant reasons why men left pastoral ministry were identified and prioritized as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Sense of personal and professional inadequacy	17.1%
2. Unable to relocate when necessary	14.7%
3. Problems of wife and children	13.2%
4. Opportunity to put training and skills to the fullest use	9.3%
5. Personal illness or breakdown	8.5%
6. Dissatisfaction with parish work	7.8%
7. Lack of church's spiritual growth and relevance	7.8%
8. Divorce or separation	7.0%
9. Money problems	6.2%
10. More attractive job opportunity	5.4%
11. Other reasons	3.1%

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of this list is the multiplicity of reasons cited. No one overruling reason why men leave the ministry exists.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the majority of dominant reasons indicate some underlying hazards inherent to the work of pastoral ministry.

In the same study, ex-pastors were asked what difference it had made in their lives to be out of the ministry and involved in secular work. The results are revealing:

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald L. Jud, and others, Ex-pastors: Why Men Leave the Parish Ministry, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. The working conditions are better. They have more money, more security, more time for the family, better housing, etc.                             | 21.4% |
| 2. Personal factors are better. They are less tense, happier.   | 23.0% |
| 3. The new job is more satisfying, more fulfilling. They use more skills.   | 22.2% |
| 4. There is a change in the role expected of them. Perfection is not expected. They feel more human. People relate to them on a more realistic basis. | 11.1% |
| 5. No difference in life.   | 4.0%  |
| 6. There is a lack in my life now.  | 6.3%  |
| 7. Not enough data.   | 12.0% |

According to the authors, "When person after person feels happier, freer, more rewarded, more human, more secure and more satisfied after he leaves an occupation, regardless of why he left, we begin to suspect some inherent strains within that occupational system."<sup>1</sup>

Pastors experience some unique kinds of stress and tension in connection with their work. Of 4,908 pastors in twenty-one Protestant denominations, 75 percent reported one or more periods of "major stress" in their careers. Sixty-seven percent of these involved stress that was characterized as "severe." Two out of three times the source of the stress was identified with the minister's work in the local church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jud and others, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar W. Mills and John P. Koval, Stress in the Ministry (New York: Ministry Studies Board and IDOC, 1971), p. 54.

There are, of course, many causes of stress in the ministry. However, the source of stress least understood is related to the issue of roles. I believe that understanding the concepts of role conflict, role ambiguity and related issues, and coping with the pressures engendered by the ambiguity of these roles and issues is essential to the pastor's mental health and his effectiveness in the ministry.

#### Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to study, define, and determine the sources and extent of possible role conflict and role ambiguity experienced by pastors in the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The study focuses on the evaluation of field data and the implications of suspected role problems with respect to the emotional/mental health needs of clergy. In this context suggestions of some possible strategies for the resolution and/or minimization of role conflict and ambiguity are sought.

An evaluation of the current status of Adventist clergy in the North Pacific Union Conference regarding role function and performance indicates much frustration, ambiguity, and conflict that is detrimental to the work of pastoral ministry.

#### Justification for the Project

It has been my experience that Seventh-day Adventist pastors frequently refer to the pressures and frustrations of ministry. The terms "pressures" and "frustrations" indicate a general lack of awareness as to what clergy are actually experiencing in the pastorate. The use of these terms suggests that pastors are

nebulously referring to the problem of role conflict and ambiguity. If this is true, an awareness of the actual problem and its implications for ministry is needed in the Adventist pastorate. Such an awareness can be partially realized through research projects and studies similar to the one here undertaken.

Further, there seems to have been no field study conducted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church with respect to the possible problems and conflicts of roles. It is my hope that this project will serve as a catalyst in the field to stimulate awareness of the issue and the implementation of ideas that will enable local pastors to function in a happier and more effective ministry.

Finally, I would justify the project on the basis of a deeply held belief that men have dropped out of pastoral ministry because they have found role confusion too great a burden to bear. The literature focusing on non-Adventist clergy seems to support this belief. According to Jud, Mills, and Burch, "Many more are considering dropping out, and they will unless help comes sure and swift."<sup>1</sup> If pastors are giving consideration to dropping out of the Adventist ministry, this study is justifiable on the basis that it may provide help for pastors as they try to identify and resolve problems that have the potential of jeopardizing their ministry.

In recent years much has been written in non-Adventist literature concerning role conflict. Adventist perceptions of roles and the importance they attribute to such roles may differ from the

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<sup>1</sup>Jud, p. 120.



perceptions of non-Adventist clergy and writers. Hence a specific study of Adventist clergy is necessary to determine if such a problem exists in Adventism and if the conclusions of other studies are applicable in an Adventist context.

## CHAPTER II

### PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN ROLE CONFLICT AND AMBIGUITY

#### Definition of Terms

It is difficult, if not impossible, to enter into a useful discussion of role conflict and role ambiguity without a working knowledge of several technical terms from role theory. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and define some of the major concepts that underlie the central issues of this project. The following elements are of special interest and provide a foundation and background to the context of this study: objective versus psychological environment, organization, office, role, role conflict and role ambiguity.

#### Objective Versus Psychological Environment

One of the first distinctions necessary in any discussion of role theory is that of the objective and psychological environments. The objective environment of a person consists of "real" objects and events verifiable outside of a person's consciousness and experience. On the other hand, it is the conscious and unconscious representations of the objective environment that constitutes the

person's psychological environment.<sup>1</sup> Like all persons, pastors live in an objective world. Yet as humans, they are also "experiencing beings" with the capacity of individual perception. Since all human experience is cognitively mediated, interpretation and meaning is, therefore, attributed to all human experience creating thereby the psychological environment. Pastors often respond and behave not on the basis of circumstances and events in the ministry but rather to the meaning and interpretation they give to those events and the objective environment.<sup>2</sup>

### Organization

Pastors, like all members of the working force, function within the context of a social network known as an organization. Roles must be viewed in this organizational setting. An organization, for the purposes of this paper, shall be defined as an open, dynamic system that is characterized by a continuing process of input, transformation, and output. The denominational framework is the organization in which a pastor holds a job and it exists in his objective environment in contrast to the psychological organization that exists in his mind.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Kahn and others, Organizational Stress: Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity (John Wiley & Sons), 1964, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>A. D. Hart, Feeling Free: Effective Ways to Make Your Emotions Work for You, (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), p. 44, 45.

## Office

One of the first and primary tasks in linking the pastor and his organization is to locate the individual in the total set of ongoing relationships and behaviors comprised by the organization. The key concept within role theory for this linking is that of office. An office may be viewed as a unique point in organizational space. Organizational space is a structure of interrelated offices and the pattern of activities associated with them. The term office is basically a relational concept which helps define one position in terms of its relationship to others and the system as a whole.

## Role

A third term from role theory that provides a foundation for this study is that of role itself. Connected with each office is a set of activities which are regarded as potential behaviors. These activities constitute the role to be performed by any person who occupies that office. The term role is itself borrowed from the theater and is used to make clear that the expected behavior relates to the position of the focal person and not the person who occupies the position.<sup>1</sup>

Several sub-categories of the role concept are helpful in shaping the notion of role as it relates to the broader issues of this paper.

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<sup>1</sup>Donald P. Smith, Clergy in the Crossfires: Coping with Role Conflict in the Ministry, (Westminster Press, 1974), p. 23.

### Role sets

Each office in an organization is directly related to certain others, less directly to still others, and is perhaps only remotely connected to the remaining offices included in the organization.<sup>1</sup> Each position generally involves the fulfilling of several role expectations in relation to more than one person. Thus, a minister, for example, is expected to play many different roles. Those persons who relate to a pastor in the performance of his ministerial roles are part of the role set of his position as a minister.

According to Smith, the minister's role set would include, for example, the conference executive who expects him to emphasize the importance of benevolent giving to the conference and a local board member who expects him to give priority to the building fund so that the mortgage payments can be made on time. Also, in his role set would be parishioners, elders, deacons, or other church officers, fellow ministers, neighboring clergy, officers of the denomination, and community leaders.<sup>2</sup>

### Role expectations

According to Kahn,<sup>3</sup> all members of a person's role set depend upon his/her performance to some extent. They are either rewarded by it or they require it in order to perform their own

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 23.

activities. Since they have a personal stake in his/her performance, they develop a set of beliefs and attitudes about what he/she could do or should not do as a part of his/her role. The prescriptions and proscriptions held by members of a role set are designated as role expectations.

Smith concurs with Kahn's observation and further suggests that "expectations are an essential part of the role concept. Each role has expectations related to it, such as what a person should do or refrain from doing, how one should behave in relation to others, what kind of person one should be, and even what one should think and believe."<sup>1</sup>

#### Sent role

Role expectations for a certain office and its occupant exist in the minds of members in the role set, thereby representing standards in terms of which they evaluate performance.

It is important to point out, however, that the expectations do not remain in the minds of members of the role set. The expectations of the role set tend to be communicated in many ways. Sometimes they are communicated or sent directly, sometimes indirectly.

#### Role senders and receivers

The one who expects something of the role player is sometimes called a role sender. The minister or person playing the role is

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 23

called the role receiver. According to Smith, these terms emphasize the fact that role expectations involve communication, both verbal and non-verbal. A role always involves reciprocal expectations of both sender and receiver. These mutual expectations may be commonly understood or communicated subtly or even explicitly.<sup>1</sup>

### Role pressures

The many acts which make up the process of role sending are not merely informational. They are actually directed attempts to influence the focal person and are designed to bring about conformity with the expectations of the sender.<sup>2</sup> Such pressures come from both formal and informal sources and they may or may not be legitimate. The pressures may be prescriptive or proscriptive, punitive or benevolent, subtle and indirect or direct and blatant.

The attempts to pressure and/or influence varies in degree of intensity from one person or group to another, depending upon the importance of the issue to the sender, the resistance encountered, etc.<sup>3</sup>

### Role forces

The members of a person's role set and the pressures which they direct to the focal person are part of his objective environment. In the context of ministry, to consider a pastor's compliance or

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 75

<sup>2</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 76.

deviation from his sent role, takes us far beyond the objective organization and environment. Each pastor responds to the organization in terms of his perception of it, which may differ considerably from the actual organization. This means that a pastor responds not to the objective organization in his objective social environment, but to that representation of it which is in his psychological environment.

For any given pastor, there is not only a sent role consisting of the pressures which are communicated by members of his role set, but equally important, a received role which consists of his perceptions and cognitions of what was sent. How closely the received role corresponds to the sent role is a question that must be determined by each focal person and the role senders.

According to Kahn, "it is the sent role by means of which the organization communicates to the person the do's and don'ts associated with his office. It is the received role, however, which is the immediate influence on his behavior and the immediate source of his motivation to role performance. Each sent pressure can be regarded as arousing in the focal person a psychological force of some magnitude and direction."<sup>1</sup> These psychological forces are defined as role forces.

#### Role Conflict

Smith argues that role conflict occurs when two or more role expectations interfere with each other or contradict one another

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 16.



altogether.<sup>1</sup> In a mild role conflict, the fulfilling of one experience may merely make it difficult to fulfill another. However, in a serious conflict the compliance with one expectation may make it completely impossible to comply with another. The notion of conflicting expectations is of particular interest because of the state of psychological conflict that is created.

According to Kahn, nearly one half of the male wage and salary workers in their sample are confronted with role conflict. Forty-eight percent report that from time to time they are caught in the middle between two sets of people that want and expect different things from them; 15 percent suggest this to be a frequent and serious problem; 39 percent report being troubled at times by thinking that they will not be able to satisfy the conflicting demands of the various people over them.<sup>2</sup>

Even more common are conflicts induced in part by pressures from people outside the organization. These types of conflicts account for 59 percent of all conflicts reported in the national sample.

One particular form of role conflict representing a significant number in the work force in general and in the ministerial force in particular is role overload. Forty-five percent of male wage and salary workers indicate being troubled about feelings that they have too heavy a workload--one they cannot finish

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 56.

during an ordinary workday. Moreover, 43 percent are distressed by thinking that the amount of work they have to do may interfere with how well the work gets done.<sup>1</sup>

Conflicts between the demands of the role and such personal properties as needs and values and personal abilities also arise in considerable numbers. The feeling that one has to do things on the job which are contrary to one's better judgment is a source of concern to 45 percent of the men in Kahn's sample and 22 percent were bothered by the feeling they were not qualified to function in their job.

Problems of occupational role conflict abound in American society in the 1980's. For many, these problems are mild and infrequent irritants. However, for others role conflict is a chronic stress and for still others the personal costs are disastrous.

#### Role Ambiguity

If a person is to perform his job adequately, he must have certain kinds of information at his disposal. This is true of members of every organization and certainly applies to pastors also. Communication and informational processes are matters of concern to all organizations and serve as criteria for organizational effectiveness. Moreover, the availability of role-related information may also have profound implications for the emotional well-being of the worker.

Role ambiguity is the degree to which required information is available to a given organizational position. If information is

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 59.

communicated clearly, a sense of confidence and an experience of certainty with respect to his role requirements and his place in the organization is facilitated. However, if that information is lacking, ambiguity is experienced.

Kahn argues that the ambiguity experienced is predictably associated with tension and anxiety although modified by various properties of personality.<sup>1</sup>

When the expectations of others are unclear or confusing, the focal person experiences role ambiguity. The less accurate the information a minister has regarding the roles he is expected to play, the greater is the ambiguity. The more accurate his information regarding expectations, the greater his clarity of roles.

#### A Contextual, Interdisciplinary Review

This contextual study considers in addition to clergy studies, research that focuses on role conflict and role ambiguity within other professions. Ministers are not unique in their experience of role problems and much can be learned from a wide body of non-clergy literature that provides a broader base for understanding role issues that impact on the clergy. I do not argue that this body of literature can perfectly generalize to the ministry. Nevertheless, it is suggested that the pastor's unique vulnerability to role conflict and role ambiguity is such that many conclusions from a diverse body of research has more than casual implications for the work of ministry. It is therefore argued that

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 25.

role forces and pressures are so great for the minister that he is immersed in the consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity to an even greater extent than men and women in other professions. Before launching into a review of the literature it is necessary to develop this concept of the pastor's unique vulnerability.

### The Pastor's Unique Vulnerability

It is virtually impossible to design a work position that has no elements of role conflict and role ambiguity. With sophisticated technology and growing complexity in the labor market as well as in domestic matters, every person is confronted by the consequences of role stress in varying degrees. To that extent the problem is almost universal. For example, Kahn reports that only one out of six men in the labor force are free from job tension.<sup>1</sup> The tensions range from mild to severe imposing heavy costs on the organization and the person.

Nevertheless, it is my contention that inherent risks are built into the profession of ministry that cause ministers to be even more vulnerable than the public at large. Several factors must be considered to determine why ministers are more vulnerable and face role problems that are more severe.

First, ministers act out a wide variety of roles and each role requires many diverse skills necessary to function in those roles. The following description of the model pastor touches the heart of the issue: He preaches exactly twenty minutes and then sits

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 55.

down. He condemns sin but will never hurt anyone's feelings. He works from eight o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock in the evening in every type of work from preaching in the pulpit to custodial services. He is twenty-six years old and has been preaching for thirty years. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all his time with older folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes fifteen calls a day on church members, spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched, and is never out of his office.

This humorous description of a model pastor addresses the impossibility of meeting all the expectations, performing all the roles, and possessing all the skills necessary to minister. Further, it underscores the dilemma of role overload, i.e., the number of roles performed and the amount of time invested by a pastor in his work. In response to the question "What is a pastor?" we could say he is a priest; a preacher; an evangelist; an educator; an administrator; a psychiatrist or, at least, a counselor; an interpreter of the meaning of life; a scholar and theologian to his people; a promoter; a man of superior wisdom; a financier, etc.<sup>1</sup>

A pastor is so many things to so many people, he often gets lost in the maze of his own roles. He is like an octopus who is into everything. His tentacles reach in every possible direction.

This dilemma, however, is even more complex. In order to

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 15.

perform these roles the pastor is required to have a tremendous number of skills. These skills include spiritual skills; communication skills; relation-building skills; administrative skills; exegetical skills; homiletical skills; teaching skills; counseling skills; public-relation skills; etc. In other words, a pastor must possess all the skills of a corporation president at one-tenth the salary and with no chain of command.

Secondly, in addition to the wide range of roles and skills pastors' perform, their role problems are more severe than other workers because their work is performed in positions of high visibility. Unlike most other professionals, the minister is most continually under observation by his clients.

Many pastoral-role performances are in public. Pastors often live in situations where their personal lives are likely to be observed. Their home life is not regarded with any degree of privacy. Further, their days off are not respected unless they leave town, and their social life may often be with their members.<sup>1</sup> Smith observes: "Role enactment that is observable by a variety of persons makes the role more vulnerable to positive and negative sanctions from audiences than does role enactment that is restricted from observation."<sup>2</sup>

High visibility leads to a third reason why the minister's role problems are more serious than other workers. Under such conditions of high visibility, there becomes an almost complete

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

identity between the pastor's self-image and the role he plays. By definition a role relates to the position of the person and not the person who occupies the position. The task of separating person and position for a pastor is a difficult task. The task becomes more difficult as the years of service increase. It is no strange phenomenon that clergy often have trouble adjusting to retirement. When one's work and one's person come to be viewed as synonymous, the ego-pattern has become too much involved.<sup>1</sup> When a minister retires and loses his position and role, he frequently suffers a loss of identity. For this reason many workers continue to work after their formal ties to the organization are severed.

A final reason why clergy are more vulnerable to role conflict and role ambiguity than other workers and professionals is their unique office in the organization. Much role conflict stems from the fact that pastors are caught at the interface of the church between the organization and the local congregation. Programs and directives filter down through the formal lines of organizational authority through the pastor to the local congregation. However, it is equally true that the local congregation holds values and initiates programs that may be in conflict with the organization. The pastor may find himself trapped at the interface. To whom shall he listen? Which master shall he serve?

Perhaps more than any other professional, the pastor carries on his career in the midst of mixed signals. The world leaders talk

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<sup>1</sup>Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 169.

in terms of the local church existing for the sake of being world oriented. (Ingathering, offering schedules, promotional items, world mission emphasis all remind a pastor of this orientation. The "finish the work statement" reminds pastors of many important areas of work and emphases ranging from family life to evangelism.) The local and union conferences also have valid concerns for the church and are preoccupied with institutional success and growth. They attempt to keep the eyes of the pastor fixed on growing memberships and money. The specialized departmental directors continually remind the pastor of the importance of their particular work. Meanwhile, the pastor is the recipient of many role expectations from church members. Within the congregation are people of all ages and from many different backgrounds. There are children, young people, young marrieds, middle-aged, and senior citizens. There are the zealots and the Laodiceans, the far-outs and the far-ins, the rich and the poor, active groups that want to change everything and the "we've-never-done-it-this-way-before" groups. All expect something different from the pastor, and in times of crisis they often feel they have been betrayed.<sup>1</sup>

The dynamics described above between the organization, the church, and pastor can best be termed the hourglass effect with the pastor at the interface where the pressures of the grinding sand are experienced from both directions.

Smith best summarizes this dilemma as follows: "For most

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, Stress in the Ministry, p. 120.



clergymen today role conflict and role ambiguity are not matters of mere academic curiosity. They are the heart of the most difficult problems that the minister faces. The pastor's work is plagued by so many voices speaking with insistence in his ears. The pastoral work, more than any other, is carried on in the midst of conflicting expectations and mixed signals."<sup>1</sup>

#### Emotional and Psychological Consequences of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

An examination of literature reveals that role conflict and role ambiguity lead to some serious personal consequences for those who are caught in the crossfire. Whether or not a pastor experiences each of the consequences discussed below and the extent to which they affect him varies with the individual. Nevertheless, the literature suggests that role problems can and do have a deleterious effect on the mental health of one who suffers under the influence of unsolved role conflict and ambiguity. Several consequences surface in the literature which must be addressed. These include: tension and anxiety; psychosomatic disease; alienation and the breakdown of inter-personal relations and communication; sexual attraction and involvements; and learned helplessness.

#### Tension, anxiety, and emotional turmoil

Recent research makes it clear that it is quite common for parish clergy to experience stress in connection with their work. Mills and Koval state that of 4,928 ministers in twenty-one

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 13.

Protestant denominations, 75 percent reported one or more periods of "major stress" during their pastorate work. Two-thirds of these periods involved stress that was reported as "severe." Significantly, two of three times the source was identified with the minister's work in the local church. The authors state that almost 30 percent of all ministers specify this as growing out of personal or ideological conflict with the parishioners. Further, 18 percent report frustration, overwork, or lack of achievement as stress-producing and another 19 percent describe conflict within the congregation, financial or community troubles of the church, or state problems as sources.<sup>1</sup> This stress is not exclusively related to role conflict or ambiguity, however, much of it may be and is, therefore, worthy of consideration.

Other studies do, however, indicate the connection between role conflict and tension more specifically. Kahn, for example, found various forms of emotional turmoil connected with role conflict and ambiguity in his 1964 work. He states that:

Anxiety, tension, frustration and a sense of futility have long been associated with psychological conflict. These symptoms should be similarly related to objective role conflicts to the extent that these conflicts are internalized, that is to the extent the objective role pressures generate conflicting psychological forces in the person.<sup>2</sup>

In this same study, only 28 percent of those in low conflict roles mentioned any feelings of conflict in the interview, while 58

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<sup>1</sup>Mills and Koval, Stress in the Ministry, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 65.

percent under high conflict discuss the problem of anxiety, tension, frustration, and futility. Frequently, these emotions are reported by this group as being severe and taxing. According to Kahn, persons exposed to the corresponding internal motivational conflicts tend to be conflicted in the psychiatric sense of the term as well as in the social psychological sense in which role conflicts are defined.<sup>1</sup>

Tension increases under high degrees of conflict. Under such conditions the person tends to worry more about and feel more disturbed by various conditions and events in his work life than does one whose role involves less conflict. In 1976, Sentra studied role conflict and role ambiguity perceived by audit seniors in a large public accounting firm. The purpose of his investigation was to examine the effects of role conflict and ambiguity upon the senior and to identify the factors with the potential to contribute to his perception of role conflict and ambiguity. It was discovered that both role conflict and role ambiguity were significantly related to the personal consequence of high job-related tension.

More intense and debilitating emotional reactions are sometimes found. Some people experience a rather marked sense of futility. A loss of self-esteem is often apparent. Others show symptoms of acute anxiety, of confusion and indecision, which may leave them immobilized for a period of time. For a few, symptoms of hysteria and psychosomatic disorders seem to be connected to the tensions engendered by role conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

In a 1975 study by Beehr<sup>1</sup>, the relationship between role ambiguity and six potential role strains were investigated; job dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, depression, work-related illnesses and injuries, fatigue, and somatic complaints. The study further attempted to show that the relationship between role ambiguity and role strain is moderated by characteristics of the person in the role and by the characteristics of his environment; his tolerance for ambiguity, his motivation to do a good job, his involvement in the job, his degree of internal control, the perceived cohesiveness of his work group, the perceived supportiveness of his supervisor, and the perceived autonomy of his job. Finally, the study investigated the possibility that two role stresses, role overload and under-utilization of skills, are intervening variables in the relationship between role ambiguity and role strain.

Interviews were conducted with 651 employees at all levels of five work organizations: a hospital, a printing company, two automobile-parts manufacturers, and a research and development company.

For the entire sample, role conflict and ambiguity were correlated significantly with all proposed role strains except (1) Somatic complaints and (2) Work-related illnesses and injuries. However, somatic complaints were correlated significantly with role ambiguity for people who were intolerant and inflexible.

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<sup>1</sup>Terry A. Beehr, "Perceived Situational Moderators of the Relationship between Subjective Role Ambiguity and Role Strain," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 61 (1975):35-40.

Beehr concluded that role ambiguity is a role stress, that characteristics of the person and his subjective environment moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and role strain and that role overload is an intervening variable in the relationship.

It should be abundantly clear from Beehr's research that like role conflict, role ambiguity has serious personal consequences for one's mental health and emotional stability. Low self-esteem, depression, fatigue, and job dissatisfaction are all symptomatic of psychological conflict. Again, the degree to which any individual experiences these conflicts is moderated by intervening variables. This consideration is addressed more specifically below.

#### Psychosomatic disease

A secondary consequence of the stress, tension, and anxiety experienced as the result of role conflict and role ambiguity is psychosomatic disease.

The term "psychosomatic" was first used in 1927 by Felix Deutsch to describe the mind-body interactions in illness. The first major publication on this topic was published in 1935 by Helen Dunbar. The basis for the psychosomatic is that the mind plays an important role in many different diseases. Chronic stress, tension, and anxiety predispose persons, including pastors, to physiological consequences. All psychosomatic diseases affect the structure and function of the human body.

According to Girdano and Everly, there are two basic types of

psychosomatic diseases: (1) the psychogenic and (2) the somatogenic. Psychogenic psychosomatic disorders refer to a physical disease caused by emotional stress. There is a structural and functional organ damage, yet no microbial invasion or natural degenerative processes. This phenomenon has been traditionally considered as physical disorders of presumably psychological (emotional) origin. Backaches, skin reactions, peptic ulcers, migraine headaches, and some respiratory disorders are a few common examples. Bronchial asthma is a condition which often falls into this category. The psychogenic psychosomatic disease process is as follows: environmental demands lead to perceived stress which leads to chronic physiological arousal finally leading to structural and functional disease.<sup>1</sup>

The second type of psychosomatic disease is the somatogenic disorder. This disorder is less clear-cut conceptually. However, the general notion is that emotional disturbances such as anxiety, anger, fear, and frustration increase the body's susceptibility to organic diseases.

Stress, therefore, can function as a catalyst for some already present organic diseases to (1) allow the organic disease to establish a "foothold" in the body from which to spread, or (2) accelerate the rate at which some disease may spread throughout the body. Thus, almost any organic disease may have a somatogenic

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Girdano and George Everly, Controlling Stress and Tension: A Holistic Approach (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979), p. 10.

psychosomatic component, depending, of course, on the individual's emotional, psychological make-up.<sup>1</sup>

The concept of somatogenic psychosomatic illness has far-reaching implications. It may explain the mysterious phenomenon of "spontaneous remission," the sudden and unexplained disappearance of a disease. Perhaps the only reason the person contracted the disease was that his or her immune system was only partially functional because of some adverse stress response. The person fully recovers because the body can fight the infection with its entire immunological arsenal. The somatogenic phenomenon may also explain the "spontaneous relapse" where a person, thought to have recovered suddenly develops the full-blown illness again without significant reexposure to the disease.

According to Girdano and Everly, the somatogenic psychosomatic concept, though relatively new to Western medicine, represents one of our most significant advances in the study of mind-body interactions because it implicates stress in diseases from the common cold to cancer.<sup>2</sup>

Given to stress, tension, and anxiety generated by role conflict and role ambiguity, pastors must recognize the possibility of physiological disease and illness that results from the mind-body interactions. (Since "sick-days" reported on the worker's monthly report may not be highly reliable, perhaps conferences should be more

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

conscious of medical reimbursements in the light of such evidence and consider the possible origins of these illnesses as related to the worker's reaction to stress.)

### Learned helplessness

According to Walter Mischel, learned helplessness is a "condition to animals and humans which results from exposure to inescapable painful experiences in which passive endurance persists even when escape becomes possible."<sup>1</sup>

The natural response of organisms faced with the threat of pain or punishment is to try to avoid or escape the aversive stimulation. If people or animals are forced to experience uncontrollable events, i.e., when they learn that negative or traumatic outcomes are uncontrollable, a state of learned helplessness may develop.

Seligman and his associates first observed that after dogs had been given uncontrollable electric shocks, they seemed to transfer their expectations of helplessness to a new situation in which the shock was in fact avoidable. The behavior of these dogs who had "learned helplessness" sharply contrasted with dogs who had not been given the experience of uncontrollability. The helpless dogs easily became passive; they "wilted," became submissive, and gave up with relatively little effort in the new situation when shock again occurred but was controllable. The non-helpless dogs, however, ran

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Mischel, Introduction to Personality, 3rd ed. (New York: CBS Publishing, 1981), p. 588.



around until they found the response that allowed them to escape the shock.<sup>1</sup>

Learned helplessness, as a construct and as a theory of depression, has been observed also in people. The overall results suggest that after people experience uncontrollable negative events they may stop further efforts and exhibit helplessness even in new situations that objectively can be controlled.

(Many pastors repeatedly experience role conflict as a negative and psychologically painful reality. If the conflict continues over an extended time period and becomes severe enough, some pastors perceive the situation as uncontrollable, and this leads to depression and a sense of hopelessness. In this state a pastor virtually accepts whatever a situation dictates. Such a condition is the very opposite of the sense of mastery and spirit-led confidence that pastors should experience when they are assured they can cope with the conflicts and problems of their lives.)

#### Interpersonal relations, alienation, and communication

The impact of role conflict and ambiguity only begins with the emotional experience of the person. Unfortunately, the effects of conflict also extend into one's interpersonal life. Social relations with one's work associates tend to deteriorate under the stress of conflict. Also, attitudes toward those role senders who create the conflict become worse.

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Seligman, Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death (San Francisco: Freeman, 1975), p. 17.

Kahn measured three types of attitudes toward role senders: trust, respect, and liking. It was discovered that when role senders impose conflicting pressures on a focal person, his/her trust in their cooperativeness is undermined. Further, under conditions of high conflict there is apt to be little indication that others are looking out for one's welfare; the focal person may question whether they would be willing to go out of their way to help him. In the extreme case his doubt may go well beyond the reality of his associates untrustworthiness. Something very much like paranoid suspiciousness may develop, in which the person attributes worse intentions toward him than are in fact held. Even short of their extreme reaction, the absence of trust makes it unlikely that the person will openly seek his role senders and find a mutually satisfactory resolution to their conflict. A considerable degree of mutual trust is required for free and open communication and for problem-solving skills to be exercised.<sup>1</sup>

Not only does the focal person under conflict trust his role senders less, Kahn concludes he also likes them less personally and holds them in lower esteem.<sup>2</sup> Further, people tend to communicate less with others under strong conflicts than when they are relatively free of conflicts. The curtailment of communication results from the fact that role pressures are exerted by oral communication from role senders. When these prove stressful, the stress can be reduced by

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

withdrawal and avoiding interaction with those who create the conflict.

These kinds of responses to role conflict make it unlikely that the person under conflict will seek out the counsel and cooperation of his role senders in finding solutions for his problems.

Many, if not most, of a pastor's social interactions are with role senders, either church members, fellow pastors, or administrators. To the extent that pastors experience role conflict and role ambiguity we can expect to see a deterioration in social and interpersonal relations which will be replaced by withdrawal, suspicion, lack of respect, decrease of liking, and less communication. In the most extreme instance a pastor may go through the motions of social involvement when psychologically he feels like a social isolate.

Alienation is still another consequence of role stress. It has been suggested in a recent study by Canaday<sup>1</sup> that feelings of alienation might be the result of role multiplicity and role conflict. The connection between role conflict and alienation was studied with a population of public-school principals. Canaday investigated the relationships between: (1) the principals' perception of role multiplicity, (2) the principals' perception of role conflict, (3) the principals' feelings of alienation, and (4) the principals' feelings of powerlessness and social isolation. Controls for race,

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<sup>1</sup>John Canaday, "A Study of the Relationship between Role Multiplicity, Role Conflict, and Alienation among Public School Principals," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1977. Dissertation Abstracts International 38 (9-A) (1977):5146.

social class, identification, social participation, age, religion, sex, and job satisfaction were included.

The most significant findings pertaining to this study were as follows: (1) role conflict and multiplicity do lead to feelings of alienation and (2) job satisfaction is inversely related to feelings of alienation and role conflict.

#### Sexual attraction and involvement

The connection between sexual attraction and involvements with role conflict and ambiguity may not be readily apparent to the reader. In fact, it might at first appear to be a wild unwarranted leap or at least academic acrobatics to arrive at such a relationship. Nevertheless, the literature indicates that, like psychosomatic disease, sexual attraction as misattribution is a secondary consequence of stress, tension, and anxiety. Studies on human emotion and the cognitive-labeling theory support this relationship.

In 1962, Schacter and Singer<sup>1</sup> reported the results of two experiments which suggested a parsimonious and predictive explanation for human emotions. According to their view, an individual first becomes aware of diffuse sensations of arousal, anxiety, or tension. If there is no immediate explanation for this arousal, he or she labels this state and describes those feelings in terms of the interpretations of cognitions available. If, however, the person does have an appropriate explanation for the arousal, no other

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<sup>1</sup>S. Schacter and J. E. Singer, "Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State," Psychological Review (1962, 69):379-399.

explanation is sought. Schacter and Singer propose, therefore, that the experience of an emotion is dependent on physiological arousal and appropriate cognitive label for that arousal.

A rather ingenious study was conducted by Schacter to test this cognitive-labeling theory. Subjects were told that the study sought to learn how a certain drug--"Suproxin"--affected vision. They received an injection of suproxin and were asked to wait in another room with an experimental confederate while the drug supposedly took effect. In reality, the bogus drug was either epinephrine, which creates feelings of arousal, including a racing heart, flushed face, and trembling, or an inert placebo which had no physiological effect. Of the subjects receiving the epinephrine, one group was told the actual effects of the drug. Another group was labeled epinephrine ignorant and was told nothing regarding the drug's effect. A third category of subjects was told that the injection would result in various irrelevant sensations, such as numbness in the feet, etc. This group was labeled epinephrine misinformed. The placebo-condition subjects, like the epinephrine-ignorant ones, were told nothing about the possible side effects.

After receiving the injection together with an explanation (or lack thereof) of internal sensations, the subjects were escorted to another room and introduced to the experimental confederate. The confederate had purportedly also received an injection and was waiting for the "vision experiment" to begin. In reality, the confederate was hired to make an emotion-related cognition available to the naive subject. As soon as the experimenter left, the confederate began acting in a gleeful manner. During the waiting

period he performed playful antics. Hidden observers, during this period, recorded how much euphoric behavior the subject initiated or engaged in. Following the experiment, subjects completed a questionnaire assessing their perception of their emotions during the study.

The findings supported the cognitive-labeling theory. That is, the subjects in the epinephrine-informed condition could explain any feelings of internal sensation as being due to their injections. Subjects in the epinephrine-ignorant and epinephrine-misinformed conditions, however, could not explain their arousal sensations. The most available interpretation was the euphoric behavior of the confederate. Consequently, after the subjects in these two conditions became aware of their arousal, they could label it as euphoric or excitement.

These results indicate that people first become aware of their arousal and then seek an appropriate explanation of it. Such diverse emotions or need states as interpersonal attraction, love, aggression, and crowding have been posited as resulting from the labeling of generalized internal arousal. Further, these results demonstrate the problem of misattribution, i.e., that arousal from an irrelevant source can be attributed to any available label.<sup>1</sup>

A recent study by Dutton and Aaron<sup>2</sup> clearly demonstrates how misattribution or labeling of an internal state led to interpersonal

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<sup>1</sup>S. Schwartz, "Introduction to Social Psychology," (Class notes, University of Wisconsin, 1982), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

attraction. Over the Capilano River in British Columbia, Canada, are two bridges. One is a narrow, swinging, wobbly suspension bridge which hovers 230 feet over a rocky canyon; the other is a safe, solid bridge only ten feet above a calm brook. Dutton and Aaron had an attractive female approach male subjects while they walked across one of the two bridges. She asked the subjects to complete a short questionnaire pertaining to some pictures of people. In addition, she gave each male subject her phone number in case he ever wanted to know the final results of the study. Dutton and Aaron predicted that the subjects who were on the high bridge would be more physiologically aroused than those on the lower bridge. This increased arousal would be attributed to the female experimenter as interpersonal and sexual attraction. The predictions were confirmed in two ways. First, the subjects on the high bridge tended to see sexual themes in the pictures. More important, however, 50 percent of the subjects on the high bridge later called the woman, whereas, only 12 percent of those on the low bridge did so.<sup>1</sup>

Pastors frequently work with women in the church on diverse projects and programs. Many useful inferences can be made from the cognitive-labeling theory to understand how role conflict and role ambiguity can effect these working relationships. Further, this theory can provide insights into some of the disastrous entanglements that emerge from some pastoral counseling with women.

As has been proposed, role conflict, role ambiguity, role multiplicity, and role overload all lead to a state of tension and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

anxiety. Rollo May even suggests that the religious worker works at a tension. He appears not to relax as often as other people in different vocations. He tends to carry his tension through a twenty-four-hour day. Sometimes this tension is so great that he finds it difficult to take vacations or holidays without a sense of guilt.<sup>1</sup>

Working at such a persistent level of tension creates a state of physiological arousal. Unfortunately, many pastors are "epinephrine ignorant." That is, they fail to appropriately label the source of that arousal and, when working with certain women, tend to misattribute it's source and interpret it as sexual attraction.

Several conditions may predispose pastors to sexual vulnerability. May argues from clinical observation that the typical religious worker has not solved the problem of his sexual adjustment with any particular degree of success.<sup>2</sup> Rassieur contends that in addition to one's personal preferences, situational factors such as sexual subject matter, satisfying the important needs of a woman in counseling, and becoming aware of a woman's sexual availability can account for a pastor's becoming sexually attracted to a female.<sup>3</sup> If, in addition to these dynamics, the heightened sense of anxiety through role conflict is interjected, the pastor is confronted with an additional source of temptation and increased

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<sup>1</sup>May, The Art of Counseling, pp. 168, 169.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>3</sup>Charles L. Rassieur, The Problem Clergymen Don't Talk About, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976):20-25.



vulnerability. To that extent many moral problems faced by the church committees may, in the truest sense, be vocational hazards.

### The integrity dilemma

Eugene Kennedy addresses the psychological consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity from the perspective of tensions that are created between the church organization on one hand, and the conscience and personal integrity of the clergyman on the other. Although Kennedy writes in the context of the Roman Catholic priesthood, the positions he takes are useful to other Christian fellowships.

According to Kennedy, the religious personnel of the church find themselves in the same position with other men whose cultural protection has been removed. The changing roles and expectations of clergy have caused clergymen to search for new values or, in many cases, new and deeper understanding of the values by which they lead their lives. "When the familiar and previously unquestioned positions of life are suddenly un nourishing, when clergymen experience liberation from fears that were once powerfully controlling, they search for richer principles to sustain their commitment to life."<sup>1</sup>

As the pastor wrestles with the tension of new, changing values and the traditional, unquestioned heritage, the discrepancy between himself and his denomination and/or local congregation becomes

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene C. Kennedy, "Psychological Consequences in Role Conflict among Clergy," Ministry Studies 2 (October and December 1968):50-51.

striking. A pastor may study and grow at a much more rapid rate than his congregation. The concepts he presents and even the language he uses may widen the gap. The manner in which he speaks and ministers may not have the "familiar ring" of a favorite pastor who served fifteen years earlier. A pastor may have taken a call to a particular congregation because he felt that his theology, values, attitudes, and beliefs were compatible with that of the parishioners. Meanwhile, he has been growing in his understanding of the faith to a point beyond which they are prepared to go or capable of accepting. Smith contends that the pastor faces the necessity of either quietly moving to another parish (if possible), of making an open break and leaving the ministry altogether, or of compromising with his own convictions. "These alternatives are not easy ones, especially when one realizes (1) that it is almost impossible for ministers in certain situations to receive a call to another congregation; (2) how traumatic it can be to leave a calling in which one's personal and occupational identities are necessarily linked to his religious identity, so that all three stand or fall together; and (3) that it is hypocrisy to compromise one's convictions. This is seen by the man of integrity as the greatest of all sins."<sup>1</sup>

Kennedy suggests that the integrity dilemma is not only a problem for the marginally adjusted personality. He believes that the neurotics may react early to a problem which, sooner or later, affects all men. The healthy persons have been able in the past to endure a great deal of stress and strain because of their inner

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, pp. 215, 216.

strength. However, the process of cultural change is so rapid now that the healthy and sensitive person is particularly vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

I would argue that this is the kind of psychological pressure under which the most sensitive and open pastors are now operating. "It is the most capable and understanding pastors that are exposed to the unique suffering that goes with understanding what is happening to them. They live at the precise point of conflict between old norms and new aspirations in the open space between the disintegrated cultural model of the past and the as yet undesigned styles of life for the future."<sup>2</sup>

The most sensitive to the stress and conflict are often people of deep faith and dynamic motivation. This tends to exacerbate the pain of conflict when they feel that there is not enough flexibility within the framework of the church.

Role conflict and role ambiguity often tend to heighten and exaggerate any discrepancy in values that exist between the pastor and the church he serves, thus creating the integrity dilemma.

#### Organizational Consequences of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

Role conflict and ambiguity adversely affect the individual not only on the emotional and psychological level. Organizations also suffer from the personal struggles faced individually by employees within its working force. The literature suggests that

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<sup>1</sup>Kennedy, "Psychological Consequences," p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

organizational life is negatively affected. These negative consequences make behaviors dysfunctional to the smooth operation of the organization. To that extent churches in general and the Seventh-day Adventist church in particular, should take more seriously the consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity, not only out of concern for the individual worker but also in light of the successful accomplishment of the goals and mission of the church.

#### Withdrawal behaviors

In a recent study, Gupta and Beehr examined the relationship between four job stressors (role ambiguity, role overload, underutilization of skills, and resource inadequacies) and two employee-withdrawal behaviors, namely, absenteeism and turnover.

Stress, by definition, is extremely aversive to most employees, creating a noxious situation in the work environment. Various examples from any number of psychological theories (e.g., field theory, balance theory, reinforcement theory) can be drawn upon to demonstrate that individuals tend to avoid situations that are aversive to them. If the work organization is noxious, it is logical that the individual tries to avoid it by being late, being absent, quitting, or withdrawing in some other way.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it would be expected that the higher the stress, the more unpleasant the work situation would be and the more the individual would try to escape.

Gupta and Beehr obtained data through personal interviews and

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<sup>1</sup>Nina Gupta and Terry Beehr, "Job Stress and Employee Behavior," Organizational Behavior and Human Performance 23 (June 1979):373-385.

company records from 651 employees in five organizations. Analysis of the data indicated that job stress is related to employee-withdrawal behaviors. An indirect relationship can be posited between job stress and withdrawal based on the intervening effects of job dissatisfaction.

(In many organizational settings, records pertaining to tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover are relatively easy to access. Unfortunately, such records are virtually impossible to keep for the ministry. Withdrawal behaviors are less easily observed due to the self-regulating nature of the pastor's schedule.

I have been personally acquainted with several situations in which pastors have engaged in sidelines, time-consuming hobbies, and other withdrawal behaviors which have been undetected by administrative and local congregations. Such practices are costly to the church organization and detract from the overall effectiveness and performance of the pastor.

Further, the relatively high degree of mobility in the Seventh-day Adventist church may merely cover the underlying problem. It may be useful to view frequent moves and turnover in the church not as a sign of "the great advent movement" or the "call of the Lord" but as a possible indication of unresolved stress issues that culminate in withdrawal behavior that provides a temporary, acute resolution to a persistent, chronic problem.)

A high incidence of withdrawal behavior may be taken as an

indication that a company is having problems with its human organization.<sup>1</sup>

#### Job involvement variables

In a 1977 study of elementary-school principals, Edward examined the relationship of role conflict and role ambiguity to the job involvement variables of job participation, job satisfaction, job threat, anxiety, and propensity to leave. His major findings are revealing. All relationships between role conflict and role ambiguity and the four job involvement variables were found to be significant and in the predicted direction. Specifically, role conflict and role ambiguity correlated negatively with job participation and job satisfaction and positively with job threat, anxiety, and propensity to leave. Job participation and job satisfaction were both significantly correlated in a negative direction with job threat, anxiety, and propensity to leave.

Edward further discovered that neither role conflict nor role ambiguity diminished as the principals gained in age, amount of training, length of experience, or breadth of experience as a principal. In addition, the amount of role conflict and role ambiguity experienced by the principals was not affected by the size and complexity of the principal's employing corporation or the principal's sex.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gupta and Beehr, p. 385.

<sup>2</sup>C. Edward, Dissertation Abstracts International Dec. 1977, Vol. 38 G-A, p. 3173.

In a 1974 study, Hamner, and Tosi argued that role conflict and ambiguity were related to low levels of job satisfaction, low confidence in the organization, and a high degree of job-related tension.<sup>1</sup> Tosi found that role conflict was positively related to job threat and anxiety and significantly related in a negative direction to satisfaction with job.<sup>2</sup> As with role conflict, Kahn found that high levels of role ambiguity were related to low levels of job satisfaction, low confidence in the organization, and a high degree of job-related tension.<sup>3</sup> Rizzo, House, and Lirtzam, cited by Kahn, examined role conflict and ambiguity and they found that both tended to correlate with the propensity to leave the organization and negatively with influence in the organization.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear from the studies cited above that role conflict and ambiguity result in undesirable consequences for organizations as well as employees. If role stress tends to create a climate of suspicion toward administrations and the organization, causes workers to feel they want out, leads to job dissatisfaction, and

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<sup>1</sup>W. Hamner and H. Tosi, "Relationship of Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity to Job Involvement Measures," Journal of Applied Psychology 59 (1974):497-499.

<sup>2</sup>H. Tosi, "Organizational Stress as a Moderator of the Relationship between Influence and Role Response," Academy of Management Journal 14 (1971):9-20.

<sup>3</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, pp. 84, 85.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

results in tension and low confidence in the organization, administrators should take note of the disastrous effects such a problem can have on the church and ministry.

A final job-involvement variable that has negative consequences for the organization in light of role conflict and ambiguity is pastoral performance. Studies of psychological stress indicate that there is an optimum amount of stress in terms of its effect on performance. Optimal stress levels, sometimes called eustress, are defined as the maximal point where stress increases and health and performance also increase. Overload, otherwise known as distress, begins where stress continues to increase while health and performance begin to decrease.<sup>1</sup> Graphically, performance under stress follows an inverted U-shaped function, according to Anderson. This type of relationship between stress and performance, often referred to as the Yerkes-Dodson law, has been demonstrated in a number of laboratory studies under different types of experimental conditions.<sup>2</sup>

According to Anderson, research in the area of stress and performance has demonstrated that effectiveness of performance over a continuum of stress levels generally follows this inverted U-shaped function.<sup>3</sup> Again, the basic assumption is that a threatening or

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<sup>1</sup>Girdano and Everly, Controlling Stress and Tension, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Carl R. Anderson, "Coping Behaviors as Intervening Mechanisms in the Inverted Stress Performance Relationship," Journal of Applied Psychology 61 (1976):30-34.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



stressful stimulus increases performance effectiveness to a certain point and thereafter performance tends to decrease.

In Anderson's study of owner-managers who perceived high stress in their organizations, Anderson discovered that substantially different coping patterns were used by them than by managers perceiving either moderate or low stress levels. It was found that anxiety associated with high stress leads to emotional and defensive coping mechanisms and insufficient attention to problem-solving coping mechanisms resulting in lower levels of performance.

#### Person Variables

Kahn pointed out an important relationship between attributes of personality and the experience of role conflict and ambiguity.<sup>1</sup> It is, therefore, necessary to consider the person variables, or personality characteristics, of a pastor as those variables interact with the situational forces of role stress.

Kahn suggested that a consideration of person variables is significant for several reasons:<sup>2</sup> (1) person variables effect the expectations role senders hold toward the pastor or focal person and thus determine the kinds of pressures they exert on him; (2) these variables mediate the relationship between the sent role pressures and the focal person's experience of them, thus producing differential emotional reactions to stress; (3) personality factors lead to individual differences in the technique used to cope with

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

stress; and (4) the nature of one's experience in a role and the behaviors elicited and reinforced, thereby, can lead to changes in personal attributes.

Hater, in a 1978 study, predicted that role conflict and role ambiguity would be related significantly to situational variables, person variables, person by situation interaction, and individual outcome variables. The results of his study suggested that perception of role conflict and ambiguity involved correlates which have been generally ignored in past research, namely, person variables. There has been a tendency in role research, therefore, to neglect personality characteristics of the focal individual.<sup>1</sup>

A study by Thomas Lyons confirms the importance of individual differences as they relate to role pressures. This study was the first report of subjective role clarity relating to both observed withdrawal behavior and the respondents' attitudinal statements.

The perceived role clarity of 156 staff registered nurses was negatively related to their voluntary turnover, propensity to leave, and job tension, and positively to their work satisfaction. When the sample was dichotomized on the basis of their expressed need for clarity, the correlates of role clarity to volunteer turnover, propensity to leave, and work satisfaction were non-significant for the low-need-for-clarity nurses and significantly higher for the

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<sup>1</sup>John Hater, "Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity as Psychological Climate Variables," Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1978. Dissertation Abstracts International 39 (12B) (1979):6197.

high-need-for-clarity nurses.<sup>1</sup>

It can be inferred from these two studies that individual differences, i.e., person variables, impact on issues of role clarity, and role ambiguity. However, in addition to the fact that individual differences impact on the dynamics of adjustment to role conflict and ambiguity, they also contribute significantly to the generation of environmental stress. Emotional reactions to stress are largely controlled by personal attributes; and the mechanisms available for coping with the stress and its emotional consequences are well rooted in properties of personality.

Kahn<sup>2</sup> made an intense study of dimensions derived from standardized questionnaires which impact on role conflict and role ambiguity. Each person in the study completed a broad battery of objective personality instruments containing a total of 323 items and twenty-five scale scores. Items were drawn from the Minnesota Multi-Plasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), the California Personality Inventory (CPI), Cattell's IPAT Anxiety Test and Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), the Corwell Medical Index (CMI), the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, and from previous work at the Institute for Social Research (ISR).

Through factor analysis, a means of data reduction and simplification, five factors were identified: Factor I - neurotic

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<sup>1</sup>T. Lyons, "Role Clarity, Need for Clarity, Satisfaction, Tension, and Withdrawal," Organizational Behavior and Human Performance 6 (1971):99-110.

<sup>2</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, pp. 249-333.

anxiety versus emotional stability; Factor II - favorable versus unfavorable regard; Factor III - flexibility versus rigidity; Factor IV - extroversion versus introversion; Factor V - aggressive independence versus genial responsiveness.

Several findings from this study have a bearing on the relationship of person variables and our understanding of their relationship to role conflict and role ambiguity.

#### Neurotic anxiety

At any given level of conflict, the reaction of relatively neurotic persons is more intense than that of less anxiety-prone individuals. Although the neurotic's hypersensitivity exposes him to greater strain than that of his non-neurotic counterpart, neurotic and non-neurotic reactions to role conflict and ambiguity are substantially similar. However, sufficient environmental stress may produce neurotic symptoms even in those who show little predisposition to neurotic anxiety.

#### Extroversion - introversion

According to Kahn, the introverted personality is not necessarily incapable of close personal relationship with others, but under stress he reduces his contacts with others and becomes less susceptible to their influence. Coping by withdrawal, however, tends to be an ineffective response, because role senders, in an effort to control the introvert's behavior, only intensify their attempts to influence him. As he loses touch with his role senders, his behavior becomes more unsatisfactory toward them. The introverted person, particularly when seen by others as unsociable and highly independent,

often faces strong role conflicts and suffers a high level of tension.

### Flexibility - rigidity

A variety of traits differentiate the rigid personality from the flexible personality. The rigid pattern tends to be innerdirected, dogmatic, and authoritarian in interpersonal relations. In contrast, the flexible pattern tends to be other-directed, open-minded, and maintains collegial relations rather than authoritarian.

The Kahn study indicates that the principal mode of organizational involvement of the rigid person is wholehearted dedication to the responsibilities assigned to him by official agents of his organization. Further, he prefers his responsibilities to be well-defined and relatively stable. The involvement of the flexible person, however, centers around variability of experiences, opportunity for introducing significant changes, and the cultivation of colleague relations.

It was discovered that the other-directedness of the flexible person exposes him to role conflict and role ambiguity more than the rigid one. The flexible person frequently finds it difficult to say "no" to role senders and promises more than he can deliver because of his need for recognition and appreciation. However, when the rigid person experiences conflict, it is more likely to be a function of his having accepted unquestionably from his superior an excessive amount of work and his reluctance to compromise his performance standards by doing an inadequate job.

Not only is the flexible individual more frequently exposed to role conflict, but he is also more likely than a rigid one to

respond to conflict by experiencing a high degree of anxiety, worrying about what is in store for him, and what he can do to make things right. By contrast, the person who is rigid is more likely to react to conflict by an abrupt rejection of the role sender creating the conflict. The flexible person who cannot reject that easily continues to comply in word to those role expectations which he can no longer fulfill in deed.

#### Achievement and security orientation

Status-oriented, achievement individuals are highly involved in their work, are oriented toward prospective advancement in the organization, and are perceived as relatively independent by their associates. On the other hand, the security-oriented individual is seen as more dependent, worrying more about being liked by others, and attributing high power to them.

In spite of the status-achievement values of most organizations, the organizational environment is a more hostile one for the status-oriented person than the security-oriented individual. Strong pressures are likely to be exerted, particularly on those whose status-striving has a compulsive character. Status-oriented individuals react strongly to the effects of role conflict, responding to ego-threatening pressures from role senders by an increase in tension and a decrease in their affective attachment to role senders. The security-oriented person, on the other hand, has somewhat blunted affective reactions to role conflict. His dependency upon role senders is such that even when these senders create difficulties for him, he is unable or unwilling to reduce his attachments to them.

Unique person variables of religious workers

Finally, in this discussion of person variables, we must consider the personality characteristics that appear to be common to religious workers and which can compound the consequences of role conflict and ambiguity.

Rollo May suggests that the typical religious worker appears not to relax as frequently as people in other vocations and does not have as many avocational interests. He is apt to throw himself entirely into his job, even taking conscious pride in this fact. Based upon his clinical work and observations, May argues that religious workers labor at a tension through twenty-four hours of the day since his job is one that is not limited by working hours. The tension is frequently so great that it is difficult to take time off for vacations and holidays without a sense of guilt.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the typical religious worker is careful about details in social as well as vocational matters. He also has a great desire not to fail. The dread of failure, though normal when connected with important matters, is exaggerated in the pastor and connected with minor and unimportant things.

According to May, religious workers follow the "all or none" law, throwing themselves into whatever they do with full vigor, but with great difficulty responding partially to situations. In other words, they cannot partialize their work by dividing it into smaller,

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<sup>1</sup>May, The Art of Counseling, p. 168.

more accomplishable units.<sup>1</sup>

Where there is great tension, a fear of failure in small things, and an unusually great concern for details, there is also likely to be strong ambition. The religious worker often seems to have an exaggerated ambition and is often convinced of the indispensability and importance of his work. A normal conviction of the importance of one's work is healthy. However, if the person works with a never-relaxing tension, he is likely to have as his motive ego-striving and not the unselfish desire to serve and minister. May terms this the "Messiah Complex."<sup>2</sup>

Further, religious workers apparently have not resolved the problem of personal sexual adjustment. It seems some persons in religious vocations do not feel normal attraction for members of the opposite sex. Such apparent quiescence of the sexual urges may be evidence of misdirection which may result in impulses springing forth in more troublesome forms.<sup>3</sup>

(On the basis of May's observations, it can be argued that the typical religious worker throws himself into his work, is especially careful of details, is apt to shelve the sex problem and view it as distinct from his normal life, and may exhibit an exaggerated opinion of the importance of his work. These are all symptomatic of what has been termed the "compulsive neurosis." This

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<sup>1</sup>May, The Art of Counseling, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 171.



is the neurosis of the person who feels compelled to certain detailed forms of behavior that are not generally regarded as important.)

To the extent that these personality characteristics are present, they interact with the situations of ministry and with role conflict and role ambiguity. These variables mediate the relationship between the sent role pressure and the pastor's experience of them within the psychological environment.

### Clergy Studies

One classic study of role conflict within the American Protestant parish ministry was conducted by Samuel Blizzard.<sup>1</sup> In the Blizzard research, 690 clergymen were asked to rate six practitioner roles (preacher, pastor, priest, teacher, organizer, administrator) from three perspectives: importance, effectiveness, and enjoyment. These ratings were then compared with a detailed time study of 480 rural and urban ministers.

It was assumed by Blizzard that when a subject rated the tasks in order of importance, he would reveal his concept of an ideal ministry and the goals he has as he functions in the parish. By rating the importance of each role, he would state the norms of the minister's professional behavior held by the church as an institution.

In the second stage of the self-analysis procedure, the clergymen were asked to evaluate their enjoyment in performing their professional roles. Their sense of enjoyment was viewed as another

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma," The Christian Century 73 (1956):508-509.

index of motivation in the multiplicity of ministerial roles. The third step was a self-evaluation of the pastor's effectiveness in the roles.

After evaluating these data, Blizzard did a time study regarding the pastor's actual use of his time during the workday.

Several significant findings emerged from this study. First, ministers felt most effective as preachers, although their sense of enjoyment in this role was not as strong as the importance they attached to the role. Their next most effective role was that of pastor and their sense of enjoyment was stronger for this role than the importance they attached to it. From most effective to least effective, pastors listed preacher, pastor, teacher, priest, administrator, organizer. From most important to least important the pastors listed the roles as preacher, pastor, priest, teacher, organizer, administrator. Enjoyment was listed as pastor, preacher, teacher, priest, administrator, organizer.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most striking finding in the Blizzard study is the discrepancy between the amount of time spent in administration and the low importance, effectiveness, and enjoyment ascribed to it. Pastors spent more time in administration than any other activity in spite of the fact that they considered administration least important of all activities.

Commenting on Blizzard's study, Smith states: "Ministers did not enjoy administration very much, and felt they were not very

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 47.

effective in it. The frustration that is suggested by such a disparity seems to be born out by almost every study that is made on the subject. Clergymen, on the whole, do not like their organizational and administrative responsibilities, believe that these duties are not important, and feel they do not do such things well, yet they find themselves spending more time in them than in anything else."<sup>1</sup>

According to Smith, an Episcopal study confirmed the finding of conflict in the administrative role.<sup>2</sup> Parish priests were asked to check their five most important activities and five least important activities from a list of thirteen different clergy activities. Once again, administration took the most time but ranked tenth among activities that are least important and seventh on the list of activities that are least enjoyed.

Another area of conflict identified in the Episcopal study is that of intellectual activities. Reading and study rank second in enjoyment but between fourth and fifth in time spent.

Blizzard's study of urban ministers found them spending twenty-seven minutes a day in sermon preparation. Yet they have a scholarly image as a role model. When pastors were asked to name any persons whom they admire or who have greatly influenced the way they think and act as a minister, almost one-half mentioned seminary professors and a greater proportion mentioned well-known authors.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 46, 47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 47, 48.

They have the scholar image of their mentors. However, they spent the major portion of their time as practitioners rather than scholars of religion.<sup>1</sup>

Smith summarizes the dilemma as follows: "Imagine a scholar or author limiting himself to a little over an hour a day in study! What a conflict he would have between his own expectations and those imposed on his work. It is no wonder ministers are frustrated by administration."<sup>2</sup>

One final discovery from the Episcopal study, that is worthy of consideration pertains to the use of time. Of the time that a minister spends in parish activities, 62 percent was concerned with the five activities he liked least. Unfortunately, the five activities that were liked most and considered most important took up less time in the average work week than those five activities which were viewed as least important.

From these studies, it is clearly evident that role conflict and role ambiguity are built into the structure of a pastor's work. Frustrations, conflicts, dilemmas are all present as pastors attempt to serve their Lord and His church. How they use their time, what they consider as important, where their effectiveness centers, and how much they enjoy their roles serve as criteria to evaluate the scope of role issues.

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<sup>1</sup>Blizzard, "Role Conflicts of the Urban Ministry," The City Church 7 (1956):13-15.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 48.

### Types of Role Conflict

In Edgar Mill's review of role-theory literature, he finds there are many ways of conceptualizing conflicting norms. According to Mills, however, it is possible to reduce these to essentially three broad categories. To some extent there is overlapping, but they are clearly different in focus. These categories would include: (1) differing levels of external obligations; (2) the conflict between internalized norms and needs or pressures in the external situation; and (3) internalized conflict.<sup>1</sup>

#### Externally Structured Role Conflict

Within the theories of externally structured role conflict, it is useful to conceive of the pastor's role as caught in the crossfire of the essentially bureaucratic norms of his superiors, the professional norms of his peers, and the popular norms of his lay clientele.

A somewhat different orientation to externally structured role conflict is that of the minister as a subcultural link. In this approach, the minister performs a linking function between many subcultures and by the nature of his job is subjected to intense conflicts of expectations from the various subcultures he serves.

Both of these ways of describing role conflict focus upon the minister as one whose position inevitably involves him in multiple role-relationships dealing with divergent expectations from

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar W. Mills, "Types of Role Conflict among Clergymen." *Ministry Studies* 2 (October and December 1968):13-15.

significant role senders in his immediate environment.

#### Conflict between Internal and External Norms

Another major kind of role conflict describes the tension between norms and values internalized by the pastor and those arising out of needs or pressures in his work situation. The most famous of these conceptualizations is that of Samuel Blizzard<sup>1</sup> who describes the dilemma of the pastor as being forced by external pressures to spend time doing what he least values and feels least prepared to do well.

Every pastor feels that a core of role activities exist to which he is oriented and in which his competencies exist. He also tends to identify a series of peripheral concerns of lesser importance. When the pastor spends more time with peripheral roles and issues he experiences intense conflict between his own internalized values and the expectations of his constituency.

#### Conflict between Internal Norms

The third mode of conceptualizing normative conflicts places the primary tension within the pastor himself. By internalizing mutually incompatible values and expectations, the minister creates a continuing struggle within himself over the satisfactory performance of his work.

In his discussion of this "intrapsychic conflict," Mills argues that it is necessary to speak of conflicting models of practice. An example of this kind of conflict is "post seminary

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<sup>1</sup>Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma", pp. 508,509.

reality shock" which comes with the discovery that the academic model of ministry is largely irrelevant to the tasks of church leadership. The more successful a seminarian is in his academic work, the more deeply committed he is to the academic model and the sharper is the reality shock.<sup>1</sup>

Closely related to the conflict of models is the disparity between achievement and service motives as criteria for decision making about role activities. Most clergymen have deeply internalized the ethic of self-denial and loving service, yet throughout American society, not least in the church, achievement is supremely valued and is rewarded by advancement. To the degree that these are internalized, they create personal strains for the pastor.

#### Other Descriptive Categories

In addition to the summary categories suggested by Mills, Kahn has used other descriptive categories that sharpen the focus of role-conflict types. The overlap between Mills and Kahn is obvious but worthy of consideration. Kahn's discussion focuses on four types of role conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Kahn suggests that the first type of role conflict might be termed intra-sender conflict. In this category we find that different prescriptions and proscriptions from a single member of the role set may be incompatible. For example, a head elder in a congregation may have two conflicting expectations of a pastor, i.e., a pastor should

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<sup>1</sup>Mills, "Types of Role Conflict among Clergymen.", pp. 14, 15.

<sup>2</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, pp. 20-25.

be forgiving, tolerant, and flexible in relating to members, yet rigidly supervise the congregation to insure that the standards of the church are maintained.

A second category of role conflict is inter-role conflict. In this category, role pressure associated with the membership in one organization is in conflict with pressures stemming from membership in another group.

A third type of role conflict identified by Kahn is inter-sender conflict. In this instance, pressures from one role sender oppose pressures from one or more other senders. For example, the pastor may experience role pressure from his conference president for closer supervision of the church and its program but pressure for looser supervision by the church board.

The final role conflict type suggested occurs when role requirements violate moral values, personal convictions, and norms. This category closely parallels Mills conflicting internal-norms type.

From these basic types other complex forms of role conflict sometimes develop, e.g., role overload. Overload could be considered as a type of inter-sender conflict in which various role senders hold quite legitimate expectations that a pastor perform a wide variety of tasks. However, it may be virtually impossible for the pastor to complete all tasks within given time limits. The pastor is likely to experience overload as a conflict of priorities. That is, he must decide which pressures to comply with and which to hold off. If it is difficult or impossible, he may simply be taxed beyond the limit



of his abilities.<sup>1</sup> To that extent, role overload involves a kind of person-role conflict.

In summary, it should be emphasized that with all types of role conflict there is one central characteristic. Members of a role set exert role pressures to change the behavior of a pastor. When these pressures are generated they do not enter an otherwise empty field; the pastor is already in role, already behaving and maintaining some kind of equilibrium among the forces and motives which he experiences. Pressures to change represent new and additional forces for which he must cope. This threatens the existing balance. Moreover, the stronger the pressures from role senders toward changes in the pastor's behavior, the greater the conflict created for him.

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, *Organizational Stress*, p. 25.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CURRENT STATE OF ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY IN THE MINISTRY OF THE NORTH PACIFIC UNION CONFERENCE

#### A Model for Evaluating Role Conflict

In order to study and determine the sources and extent of possible role conflict experienced by pastors in the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) of Seventh-day Adventists, the model used by Samuel Blizzard in his classic 1956 study<sup>1</sup> has been modified. Pastors in the NPUC were asked to rate nine practitioner roles from six different perspectives: importance, effectiveness, enjoyment, time spent, importance to local congregation, and importance to conference administration. This model, however, differs from Blizzard's work in several respects. First, unlike the independent time study conducted by Blizzard, this study asked for a pastoral estimate of time spent, i.e., the pastor's perception of how he utilizes his time. It is believed that such an estimate may represent a more accurate statement of conflict since it reflects the pastor's psychological environment. Secondly, this study is concerned with the pastor's perception of how two corporate role senders, the local church and the conference administration,

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel W. Blizzard, "The Minister's Dilemma," The Christian Century 73 (1956):508-509.

prioritize the importance of his work roles. Finally, a larger set of roles has been utilized in this study to capture most accurately the flavor of the Adventist ministry.

For the purposes of evaluation and analysis, nine roles were identified within the work of pastoral ministry: counselor, preacher, teacher, visitor, administrator, public evangelist, personal evangelist, denominational representative, and social worker. These various roles were defined as follows: (1) Counselor - helping distressed people with their personal, religious, and family problems; (2) Preacher - speaking from the pulpit (and elsewhere) and helping people develop their faith through the spoken word, i.e., by conducting worship services; (3) Teacher - classroom and program participation in religious education--including Bible classes for the church, the need for study, preparation, writing and/or research; (4) Visitor - calling at the home of members or at their place of work in a systematic program to meet each member as pastor; (5) Administrator - planning, organizing, and implementing the work of the church; working with boards and committees; coordinating activities to accomplish the mission of the church; (6) Public Evangelist - bringing the faith and message to people through public meetings, calling on the unchurched in the community, calling on prospective new members; (7) Personal Evangelist - bringing the faith and message to people through Bible studies and personal approaches, calling on the unchurched in the community, calling on prospective new members, and training laymen; (8) Denominational representative - carrying a fair share of denominational responsibilities and carrying out denominational programs; enlisting

denominational resources for use in the local church; representing all phases of the church to the local congregation; (9) Social Reformer - develop, participate in, and execute programs for social and community improvement.

One hundred and seventy-five pastors were surveyed. They were to assume a congregational size of 200-250 members and that they had served in their district at least eighteen months to provide a common basis for their responses. One hundred and thirteen pastors responded (approximately 65 percent of the sample).

As in the Blizzard study, it was assumed that when the ministerial subjects rated the roles in order of importance, they would reveal their concept of an ideal ministry and the goals they have as they function in the pastorate. The effectiveness measure was designed to ascertain the minister's level of personal involvement in relation to each professional role. Each pastor's sense of effectiveness can be regarded as a clue to his ministerial motivation. The enjoyment measure was designed as an index to assess the pastor's sense of enjoyment derived from role performance. These three categories look at the ideal goal, personal involvement, and motivational factors in role performance. As stated earlier, the time-spent category gives evidence of how pastors perceive these to be expressed at the operational level of church ministry.

In addition to pastors, all of the conference presidents, treasurers, and executive secretaries of the NPUC were surveyed and were asked to rate the same nine roles according to the importance they would attribute to each. Fifteen administrators responded representing--a 100 percent response.

Finally, 200 members' names were randomly selected by the NPUC computer center from the membership lists of the union. Each member was surveyed and asked to rate the same list of roles according to importance. After numerous follow-up letters and phone calls, a 100 percent response was secured. (See Appendix)

The conference and constituency data would make possible a comparison between the pastors' perception of expectations and the actual expectations of these two corporate role sets.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the data generated from the surveys. Table 1 evaluates the rank order of roles based on the cumulative data of the three groups surveyed. Table 2 reports the mean scores for each role and is useful in evaluating the major sources of role conflict and relative degree of conflict generated. Each role category can be compared across groups and total conflict scores determined by taking a sum of the differences across the nine roles.



TABLE 2  
MEAN SCORES FOR EACH ROLE

Roles	Mean Scores for Various Categories							
	Importance	Effectiveness	Enjoyment	Time Spent	Perceived Conference Importance	Perceived Congregational Importance	Actual Conference Importance	Actual Congregational Importance
Counselor . . . . .	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.4	6.7	4.2	5.3	3.2
Preacher . . . . .	2.1	2.4	2.0	3.2	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.1
Teacher . . . . .	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.8	5.2	4.3	4.4	4.2
Visitor . . . . .	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.5	4.3	2.4	3.4	4.6
Administrator . . .	4.6	4.2	5.1	3.4	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.5
Public Evangelist .	5.7	6.5	5.7	6.7	3.0	6.7	3.9	5.0
Personal Evangelist	2.7	3.5	3.4	3.7	2.2	4.2	1.7	3.6
Denominational Rep.	7.4	6.5	7.3	6.6	4.6	6.9	6.1	6.6
Social Reformer . .	7.7	7.4	7.4	7.7	7.2	7.9	7.9	7.1

#### Evaluation of the Data

As the data are considered, several important findings surface that confirm the hypothesis that role conflict does, in fact, exist in the ministry of the North Pacific Union. Several specific roles warrant the reader's attention.

## Administration

One significant finding generated from this study is the existence of "the administrative dilemma" among the clergy of the NPUC. This is consistent with the findings of the Episcopal study and Blizzard's study cited above. The Adventist pastors sampled report that they spend more time in the administrative role than all others except the preaching role. Nevertheless, these pastors report considerably less enjoyment in the performance of this role than most other roles. The enjoyment rating (6) and the time spent rating (2) reveal a significant conflict for the ministers of the NPUC.

Further, these pastors tended to overestimate the importance attached to this role by both conference and congregation. Although pastors perceived that conference administrators place the same degree of importance on this role as did the pastoral staff and the congregation considerably more, in reality the administration tended to view the role as being less important than the pastors' evaluation while the congregation tends to see the administrative task as equal to the pastors' evaluation.

In terms of the mean scores in table 2, pastors seem to be experiencing some of their greatest conflict in this role. The mean difference between enjoyment and time spent (1.7) and between importance and time spent (1.2) are relatively high in comparison to other role comparisons.



## Counseling

Another source of significant conflict revealed in the data is the counseling role. Pastors tend to rate the importance of this role (6), their effectiveness in the role (6), their enjoyment of the role (5), and the time spent in the role (6), at a consistent level. There is, however, a considerable discrepancy between the importance placed on this role by conference administration (7) and the congregation (2). The church members surveyed indicated that next to preaching, this is the pastor's most important role. The conference administration places it very low (7) on their list of priorities.

Unfortunately, the gap is widened on the basis of the pastor's perception of his two major role senders. The pastors surveyed tended to perceive the administration as being less enthusiastic about counseling (8) than they were in reality (7). However, their perception of the congregation's evaluation (4) was even less accurate.

The pastors feel as effective in their counseling work (6) as the level of importance they attribute to it (6). It would appear that pastors are spending more time in counseling than is warranted by the value placed on this role by administration and yet considerably less than is actually needed by their members.

The mean differences, noted on table 2, between the importance of counseling from the pastor's perspective (4.9) and the importance of this role to the congregation (3.2) is 1.7 and, comparatively speaking, is one of the single highest sources of conflict.

### Public Evangelism

The role of public evangelism represents a third area of role conflict for pastors of the NPUC. Importance, effectiveness, and enjoyment were each rated low (7). Only two roles (denominational representative and social reformer) were rated lower. The pastors surveyed, therefore, do not consider public evangelism very important, they find little enjoyment performing the task, and do not consider themselves very effective in relation to other roles. The amount of time they spend in public evangelism is even less (8).

The congregation appears to be in agreement regarding this role and rate its importance at 7.

However, as we observe the administration's ranking of public evangelism and the pastor's perception of the importance attributed by the administration, we discover another discrepancy that suggests role conflict. Pastors perceive that their "employers" rate the public evangelism role as the second most important role. This perception could singly generate tension and anxiety in the minds of some pastors. The data seem to confirm not only the perception but also the reality of role conflict. Church administrators rated the public evangelism role fourth in order of importance. Some of the perceived role conflict could be minimized by more accurate communication between pastors and administrators. Nevertheless, such communication probably would not eliminate such tensions.

It is important to note that a mean score differential of 1.8 exists between importance to pastors (5.7) and importance to administration (3.9). This represents one of the highest conflict scores on any measure of the data. The difference between importance

to pastor (5.7) and the perception of importance by conference (3.0) is 2.7 and signifies the highest conflict score in the data.

### Personal Evangelism

In contrast to the arena of public evangelism, pastors consider the task of personal evangelism to be a very important role, rating its importance as the second highest. In this respect, pastors are nicely aligned with the rankings of both conference and congregational expectations. Administration ranks personal evangelism as the number one role while the congregation ranks it as third. Although the pastors tended to devalue the congregation's evaluation of this role (5), they accurately perceived this role to be of number one importance to administration.

The primary focus of role conflict in this category is time spent. Pastors rate personal evangelism as second in importance yet it ranks fourth in time spent. Apparently other "less important" roles such as administration and visitation are preventing pastors from devoting more time and attention to this aspect of ministry.

### Teacher

The teacher role is yet another category that gives evidence of role conflict. Next to preaching, the teaching role provides the greatest amount of enjoyment for the pastors sampled. Moreover, pastors identify this role as their second most effective. According to their responses, however, this role is ranked fifth in terms of time spent. Unlike the administrator role which ranks low in enjoyment and high in time spent, the teaching role ranks high in

enjoyment but low in time spent. These upside-down priorities indicate unquestionable role conflict.

Teaching ministries are, therefore, high on the pastors list of preferred roles. Unfortunately, the conference administrators and the congregations place a different evaluation on the teaching role.

The church membership ranks this role as fourth in importance while the administrators rate it fifth. The pastor's perception of the congregation's and administration's evaluation ranks the teaching role as sixth and seventh, respectively. A high mean conflict score of 2.1 exists between the enjoyment pastors experience from the role and the importance they perceive administration attributes to this role.

#### Visitor

A final area of role conflict identified in the data centers in the visitation role. Once again pastors rate rather consistently the importance of this role (4), their effectiveness (3), their enjoyment in the role (4), and the time spent (3). The conflict is quite apparent, however, when we compare the pastor's perception of the importance attached to this role by the congregation as opposed to the congregation's actual rating. Whereas pastors consider visitation the second most important role from a congregational perspective, the congregation actually ranked it as sixth. Member visitation is far less important to the congregation of the NPUC than preaching, counseling, personal evangelism, and teaching. This inaccurate perception could certainly contribute to role tension as pastors typically respond and behave on the basis of their perceptions.

### Other Considerations

The interpretation of this data is based on rankings and averages. It must be kept in mind that the above considerations represent only a small glimpse of the role conflict experienced in the pastorate. If there were unanimity among 95 percent of a congregation with respect to a given role, the remaining 5 percent, especially if they were significant role senders, could offset what would appear to be minimal conflict. Further, averages tend to camouflage the fact that many members rated all roles consistently high. Such a failure to differentiate between role heightens the sense of ambiguity experienced by pastors. It would appear that role conflict has been clearly demonstrated from the data. However, the picture is much more complex than the figures would indicate.

### Sources of Role Conflict and Relative Intensity

Although general types of role conflict are discussed above, we will now consider and identify specific sources from which the pastor's greatest role conflicts are generated. Eight sources are basic to this discussion: (1) a comparison between the amount of enjoyment a pastor experiences in a given role and the amount of time spent in the role; (2) comparison between the importance attributed to a role by a pastor and the amount of time spent in the role; (3) comparison between the importance attributed to a role and the pastor's evaluation of his effectiveness in the roles; (4) comparison between the importance attributed to a role by a pastor and the importance attributed to the role by the congregation; (5) comparison between the importance attributed to a role by a pastor and the

importance attributed to the role by church administration; (6) comparison between the importance pastors perceive in congregational rankings of roles and the actual importance attached to the role by the congregation; (7) comparison between the pastor's perception of conference administrators ranking of roles and the actual importance attached to the roles by administrations; and (8) comparison between conference rankings of importance and congregational rankings.

In addition to a consideration of the sources, data will be presented to suggest the relative degree of conflict generated from the sources. To evaluate these various sources the mean scores are taken from table 2 for each role across categories and categories are compared to arrive at a differential conflict score for each role. The sum of conflict scores for each comparison represents a total conflict score for the various sources mentioned above. A comparison of total conflict scores for the eight sources make it possible to determine the relative extent of role conflict and from which sources conflict is the most intense. Tables 3 through 10 summarize the data.

TABLE 3  
CONFLICT SCORES (ENJOYMENT/TIME SPENT)

	Enjoyment	Time Spent	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.8	4.4	.4
2. Preacher . . . . .	2.0	3.0	1.0
3. Teacher . . . . .	3.1	3.8	.7
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.8	3.5	.3
5. Administrator . . . . .	5.1	3.4	1.7
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	5.7	6.7	1.0
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	3.4	3.7	.3
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	7.3	6.6	.7
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.4	7.7	.3
Total Conflict Score			<u>6.4</u>

TABLE 4  
CONFLICT SCORES (IMPORTANCE/TIME SPENT)

	Importance	Time Spent	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.9	4.4	.5
2. Preacher . . . . .	2.1	3.0	.9
3. Teacher . . . . .	3.1	3.8	.7
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.8	3.5	.3
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.6	3.4	1.2
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	5.7	6.7	1.0
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	2.7	3.7	1.0
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	7.4	6.6	.8
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.7	7.7	.0
Total Conflict Score			<u>6.4</u>

TABLE 5  
CONFLICT SCORES (IMPORTANCE/EFFECTIVENESS)

	Importance	Effectiveness	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.9	4.7	.2
2. Preacher . . . . .	2.1	2.4	.3
3. Teacher . . . . .	3.1	3.0	.1
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.8	3.4	.4
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.6	4.2	.4
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	5.7	6.5	1.2
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	2.7	3.5	.8
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	7.4	6.5	.9
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.7	7.4	.3
Total Conflict Score			<u>4.6</u>

TABLE 6  
CONFLICT SCORES (IMPORTANCE TO PASTOR/CONGREGATION)

	Importance to Pastor	Importance to Congregation	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.9	3.2	1.7
2. Preacher . . . . .	2.1	2.0	.1
3. Teacher . . . . .	3.1	4.2	1.1
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.8	4.6	.8
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.6	4.5	.1
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	5.7	5.0	.7
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	2.7	3.6	.9
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	7.4	6.6	.8
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.7	7.1	.6
Total Conflict Score			<u>6.8</u>



TABLE 7  
(CONFLICT SCORES (IMPORTANCE TO PASTOR/CONFERENCE))

	Importance to Pastor	Importance to Conference	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.9	5.3	.4
2. Preacher . . . . .	2.1	1.9	.2
3. Teacher . . . . .	3.1	4.4	1.3
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.8	3.4	.4
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.6	4.5	.1
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	5.7	3.9	1.8
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	2.7	1.7	1.0
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	7.4	6.1	1.3
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.7	7.9	.2
Total Conflict Score			<u>6.7</u>

TABLE 8  
CONFLICT SCORES (PASTOR'S PERCEPTION/IMPORTANCE CONGREGATION)

	Pastor's Perception of Congre- gation	Importance to Congregation	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	4.2	3.2	1.0
2. Preacher . . . . .	1.9	2.0	.1
3. Teacher . . . . .	4.3	4.2	.1
4. Visitor . . . . .	2.4	4.6	2.2
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.2	4.5	.3
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	6.4	5.0	1.4
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	4.2	3.6	.6
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	6.9	6.6	.3
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.9	7.1	.8
Total Conflict Score			<u>6.8</u>

TABLE 9  
 CONFLICT SCORES  
 (Pastor's Perception of Conference/Importance to Conference)

	Pastor's Perception of Conference	Importance to Conference	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	6.7	5.3	1.4
2. Preacher . . . . .	3.2	1.9	1.3
3. Teacher . . . . .	5.2	4.4	.8
4. Visitor . . . . .	4.3	3.4	.9
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.3	4.5	.2
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	3.0	3.9	.9
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	2.2	1.7	.5
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	4.6	6.1	1.5
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.2	7.9	.7
Total Conflict Score			<u>8.2</u>

TABLE 10  
 CONFLICT SCORES  
 (Importance to Conference/Importance to Congregation)

	Importance to Conference	Importance to Congre- gation	Conflict Score
1. Counselor . . . . .	5.3	3.2	2.1
2. Preacher . . . . .	1.9	2.1	.2
3. Teacher . . . . .	4.4	4.2	.2
4. Visitor . . . . .	3.4	4.6	1.2
5. Administrator . . . . .	4.5	4.5	0
6. Public Evangelist . . . . .	3.9	5.0	1.1
7. Personal Evangelist . . . . .	1.7	3.6	1.9
8. Denominational Rep. . . . .	6.1	6.6	.5
9. Social Reformer . . . . .	7.9	7.1	.8
Total Conflict Score			<u>8.0</u>

A comparison between the pastor's ranking of importance versus effectiveness reveals the lowest total conflict score of 4.6. Generally speaking, pastors feel effective in their various roles to the extent that they believe these roles are important. The greatest single conflict within this source is public evangelism (1.2). Comparing enjoyment versus time spent and importance versus time spent we discover equal total conflict scores (6.4). An examination of the total conflict generated between a pastor-conference comparison (6.7) and a pastor-member comparison (6.8) suggests a similar degree of conflict. Pastors seem to experience slightly more conflict from congregations than from conference administrations, but the difference is negligible.

Another source of role conflict focuses on pastoral perception. The pastor's perception of conflict may be realistic, irrational, exaggerated, accurate, or distorted through their psychological processes. His perceptions give interpretation and meaning to events, activities, and situations which, in turn, lead to corresponding consequences and responses. It is critical to understand that cognitive, psychological processes lead to emotional and behavioral outcome.<sup>1</sup> It does not matter whether the perceptions are accurate or distorted, they become reality in the mind of the pastor.<sup>2</sup>

The data reveal that the total conflict score based on the

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<sup>1</sup>H. M. Burks and B. Steffire, Theories of Counseling (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>A. D. Hart, Feeling Free: Effective Ways to Make Your Emotions Work for You (Old Tappn, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), pp. 44, 45.

difference between the pastor's perception of the congregation and the congregation's actual ranking is 6.8. This conflict score is identical with the total conflict score representing the differential between the pastor's own ranking of importance and the actual rankings by the church membership. Pastors do experience role conflict from their congregations and are reasonably accurate in their perception that the conflict is real.

An evaluation of the pastor's perception of conference ranking of importance, however, reveals significant distortion. Pastors are experiencing much greater conflict based upon their perceptions and interpretations of administration than is justifiable--based upon the administration's actual ranking. The role conflict pastors experience at this level is real. Nevertheless, the perception of administration greatly intensifies role conflict leading to many of the negative emotional and psychological consequences discussed in chapter 2.

Church administrators place greater importance on counseling, preaching, and teaching and less importance on public evangelism and denominational representation than pastors realize. This evidence would suggest that greater communication concerning roles and expectations by conference officials could significantly reduce a major source of role conflict for the clergy of the North Pacific Union. A total conflict of 8.2 indicates that the pastor's beliefs about conference expectations is the primary source of role conflict.

It must be remembered that the administrators have ranked these roles in order based upon the instructions given on the survey. However, like some members, some administrators have high and undifferentiated expectations of their pastors that contribute to the

sense of role conflict and ambiguity. One administrator's comment characterizes the lofty yet unrealistic expectations of some administrations: "There is no way I can rank these. It is like placing a rank order on your heart and your brain--it would not serve a useful purpose to thus discriminate. The pastor must be all of these and if he is going to carry out the mission of the church be strong in all areas. . . ."

Although such a statement is a pragmatic expression of an administrative ideal, it sends ambiguous signals to pastors and creates a sense of inadequacy with respect to one's work.

Another source of role conflict, and undoubtedly one of the most troublesome, is that represented by the differences that exist between the congregation's and administration's ranking of clergy roles. This category, referred to above as the "hourglass effect," places the pastor at the interface of the organization between two role senders with greatly conflicting expectations. Expectations funnel down from administration and are simultaneously channeled up from the church membership. The pastor is caught at the interface between these two groups and must live amidst conflicting signals represented by a total conflict score of 8.0. Schwartz terms this stressful interface as the boundary-role position.<sup>1</sup>

In this boundary-role position, it is difficult to perform effectively, because the person filling this role must deal with

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<sup>1</sup>S. Schwartz, "Introduction to Social Psychology," (Class notes, University of Wisconsin, 1982), p. 30.

a diversity of cross-pressures. The example of a labor negotiator representing a union during a strike illustrates the dilemma. A negotiator first faces the demands of the opposing negotiator who represents management. Pressure toward agreement with management may stem from the intrinsic merit of its position or from positive personal bonds with representatives of management. In addition, the labor negotiator faces pressures to conform to the expectations of his own peer group, the union. His position effects the extent to which he compromises on the issues. Finally, the negotiator must cope with outside parties that demand a constructive resolution to the ongoing strike. Such a resolution must be mutually acceptable, responsive to the issues at hand, and not harmful to the interests of the wider community.<sup>1</sup>

Because he deals with the external systems, the representative occupies a psychological and social "location" both within his own group and within the "out" group.

The boundary-role position imposes special pressures on its occupant. A pastor, for example, feels and is perceived as more distant from his own group (local congregation) than other members, since he is both physically and psychologically closer to the agents of an external and sometimes opposing group (the conference). He must not only represent the position of his church to the conference but communicate the attributes and positions of the conference to the church. Some individuals in the church may, therefore, question his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-32.

loyalty and desire to monitor what he is doing and to limit his freedom of action. In addition, the pastor may experience role conflict from incompatible and conflicting demands.

### Self-Concept

Finally, in this discussion of role conflict sources, we must consider the pastor's self-concept as a key ingredient. One primary source of role conflict is the pastor's self-concept as it interacts with a specific congregation and community. The self-concept is the way a pastor looks at himself. It is the minister's view of his own personality and what he believes about himself as a professional man and as a person with family, community, and societal responsibility. His self-concept includes his feelings, goals, ideals, hopes, and ambitions--the way he looks at himself in relation to anything he does.<sup>1</sup> How a pastor thinks of himself has to a large extent influenced his occupational choice and what he does. "The self-concept is a major determinant in an occupational choice and such a choice is the implementation of a self-concept."<sup>2</sup>

A person who becomes a minister begins to form his image of the clergyman relatively early in life. His socialization into the profession was initiated when he first heard a person called "reverend" or recognized a person as a minister. All of his

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<sup>1</sup>Blizzard, "The Parish Minister's Self-Image of His Master Role," *Pastoral Psychology* 9 (December 1958):27.

<sup>2</sup>Glen E. Whitlock, "Role and Self-Concepts in the Choice of the Ministry as a Vocation," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 17 (Winter 1963):208.

experiences and interactions with the clergy prior to ordination helped him to derive an image of the ministry and perhaps of himself professionally as a clergyman. His call to be a pastor, his theological education, and his ordination are additional stages in his professional socialization. According to Blizzard, post-ordination experiences contribute to the maturation of his self-image as a pastor. He will be testing out role models that have been an inspiration for him or that his teachers have described. Additionally, he will have derived by trial and error new facets for his own role image.

The lack of systematic knowledge about the image that ministers have of themselves and the image that laymen have of ministers has been a major handicap for the church. Further, it has hindered ministers in being fully effective, parishioners in knowing the full potential of their pastor's professional service, theological educators in preparing ministers realistically for the pastorate and denominational administrators in using clergy resources wisely.

#### The Pastor's Subjective Evaluation

The average pastor is frustrated.<sup>1</sup> In an attempt to better understand that frustration the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies set out to study the frustrations of a sample of selected ministers. The study was completed by R. Lewis Johnson and was underwritten by the Lilley Endowment Fund. Through the use of a

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<sup>1</sup>Charles W. Stewart, "What Frustrates a Minister," *Christian Advocate* 9 (1965):9.



questionnaire and statistical analysis of the results a number of discoveries were made regarding the Protestant minister's frustrations.

According to Stewart, who served as director of research at the institute, most frustrations (35 percent) were related to the minister's work. Men felt difficulty in fulfilling various professional functions which they regarded as extremely difficult or unpleasant.

The next most frequent source of frustration (25 percent) was the people for whom and with whom the minister works. Lack of integrity, irresponsibility, and indifference were listed as characterizing some of the difficulties experienced with parishioners.

The third source of frustration (13 percent) was a personal sense of inadequacy, i.e., lack of discipline, impatience, and hostility. A fourth source of pastoral frustration (12 percent) was the pastor's lifestyle. The pressures on the minister's wife and family, lower salaries, and the difficulty in studying with conflicts are always present.

Finally, conflicts and discrepancies between the state of the church and the minister's role accounted for 8 percent of the statements. According to Stewart,<sup>1</sup> although this figure is relatively low, other studies indicate they are experienced with greater intensity.

These results are based upon an objective questionnaire to which ministers responded. Although the instrument tapped some

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

legitimate areas of frustration, the pastor must respond according to the categories designated by the researchers. For that reason, the survey chosen for this study includes an open-ended question to provide pastors an opportunity to express frustrations in their own categories. It is my belief that Adventist pastors tend to describe role conflict in terms of pressures and frustrations. Consequently, this subjective response should provide additional insights into the subjective experience of role conflict and role ambiguity.

It becomes apparent that some striking similarities and differences exist between the Institute's findings with Protestant clergy and the responses by Seventh-day Adventist clergy.

#### Role Overload

The most significant and serious source of frustrations in the Adventist ministry of the North Pacific Union is role overload. Thirty-nine percent of the pastors expressed frustrations which originate in role overstimulation. "Overload may be defined as a level of stimulation or demand that exceeds the capacity to process or comply with those demands."<sup>1</sup>

Pastors may ask themselves several questions to determine whether role overload is a pressing cause of stress in their ministries: (1) Do I find myself with insufficient time to complete my work? (2) Do I find myself becoming confused and unable to think clearly because too many things are happening at once? (3) Do I wish

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Girdano and George Everly, Controlling Stress and Tension: A Holistic Approach (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1979), p. 68.

I had help to get everything done? (4) Do I feel that people around me simply expect too much from me? (5) Do I feel overwhelmed by the demands placed upon me? (6) Do I find my work infringing upon my leisure hours? (7) Do I get depressed when I consider all the tasks that need my attention? (8) Do I see no end to the excessive demands placed upon me? (9) Have I skipped a meal so that I can get work completed? (10) Do I feel I have too much responsibility?

If a pastor has experienced these situations frequently he is in role overload.

Girdano and Everly further characterize role overload by asking:

Have you ever felt that the pressures of life were building up so that you could no longer meet their demands? Perhaps you felt as though there simply wasn't enough time in the day for you to accomplish all of the things that needed to be done. During this time you may have noted a decline in your social life and more self-centeredness. Perhaps you lost sleep and became tired and irritable. You may have even become more susceptible to colds and flu. If any of these things sound familiar chances are you are a victim of overload.<sup>1</sup>

In a state of role overload, some aspects of life are placing excessive demands on the person. When these demands are greater than the person's ability to comply with them, the person experiences distress. The brain can process only a limited number of incoming messages. If a person is forced to exceed the natural processing capabilities, this leads to a breakdown of the system.

Girdano and Everly suggest that four major factors contribute

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

to the excessive demands of role overload. These factors include (1) time pressures, (2) excessive responsibility, (3) lack of support, and/or (4) excessive expectations from yourself and those around you. Any one or a combination of these factors can result in frustration and stress from role overload.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that nearly 40 percent of the pastors in the NPUC sample have expressed overload symptoms might suggest that a significant number of men are beyond the optimal stress level that guarantees peak performance. Rather, the distress caused by role overload may indicate lower levels of performance and significantly higher levels of anxiety, job dissatisfaction, etc.

The following statements made by pastors of the North Pacific Union are representative of the role overload they experience.

1. Lack of time-too much time spent on certain families, school problems, denominational problems, etc., time I would rather use giving Bible studies.
2. The "to do" list never ends. That makes it very difficult to feel good about a job well done.
3. There just doesn't seem to be enough time.
4. Finding time to meet all the pastoral roles effectively is impossible.
5. Meeting all the demands of the people.
6. My greatest stress comes from pressures to accomplish more than is realistically possible. . . . My family, my personal spiritual life, and my physical health usually

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

take a back seat to church programs, other people's needs, and administrative detail. . . . Put another way, the impossibility of fulfilling all roles effectively, or at all, due simply to time constraints, is a great source of stress.

7. The major pressure comes from the amount which needs to be done in the available time. There are just so many needs to fill even in the areas where I have something to contribute.
8. The expectations of some church members of being the "all-things-in-every-situation-all-the-time pastor." i.e., expectations that no one individual in twenty-four hours could accomplish.
9. To use Peter Wagner's terminology, I believe the pastors are expected to be "omnicompetent." This is expected by administration and I believe it is also expected to a degree by the congregation. This results in frustration for me because I can't be all of these things to the degree I feel I am expected to do them.
10. Too much to do.
11. Pressure is equal to not having enough time to do all that needs to be done and is expected of the pastors by church members.
12. Pressure is the lack of time to do all that seems necessary for the smooth operation of a total church program. Expectation of the congregation is too high.
13. While I feel I manage time well, there is always the gnawing frustration of not having enough time for personal reading, research, and study. . . . It is nice to have time to do it for personal enjoyment and fulfillment.
14. Time for family activities, exercise, personal improvement in areas of work. Not enough time to accomplish every important concern.
15. Great pressure to be very effective at preaching, administration, counseling, visiting, soulwinning--and frustration with knowing quite clearly my limitations. I suppose a "summary" frustration is the difficulty I feel in trying to balance "desk" work with "people" work; both are essential and both seem to demand eighty hours a week.

16. Balancing my work schedule to include family time, recreation time, and personal time on a regular basis.
17. Time pressures--never feeling there is adequate time to prepare a plan.
18. The most significant frustration at the present is the multiplicity of responsibilities I am confronted with.
19. Work load--demands of church, conference, and community are too much for the staff provided.
20. Time to unwind, relax--conference programs, church calendars, etc., seldom take into account that a pastor needs a break.
21. The multitudinous demands placed on my time--from the church both local and conference.
22. The pressure of always having more to do than it is possible to get done in any given day.
23. The lack of time for all I know I should be doing and of what is expected of me by the congregation and administration.
24. Too many irons in the fire to get any red hot.
25. In most of the years of my ministry I have had from two to five churches and companies in my district. Most frustrating has been the problem of spreading my efforts over the large territory.

Clearly the response of the North Pacific Union clergy indicates serious concerns in the role overload.

#### Administration

The second greatest source of frustration to pastors in the NPUC is administration. Twenty-seven percent of the clergy responded to stresses and frustrations experienced in various ways with church administrators or administrative issues. A sample of representative

statements focusing on this frustration proves helpful to our understanding of this issue.

1. The failure of administration to be open and up front about my future value to their program. One develops near paranoia trying to plan a stable pastoral ministry while also trying to second guess administration's intentions. Administration does not appear to be willing to make itself vulnerable while demanding open vulnerability on the part of the worker.
2. It is the administrative politics I resent and feel pressured by, not the work.
3. Not knowing what the conference administration expects of me. The only job description I have seen is very long with no prioritizing.
4. Conference personnel not being sympathetic. Most have not been a pastor for at least five to ten years, if at all.
5. Conference president with a one-tracked mind.
6. Lack of feedback on my work from my conference president and no adequate measuring device to test my effectiveness in each role.
7. A conference-initiated time schedule that seems to be feasible for my emotional and physical resources. They suggest a sixty to seventy hour week--I feel guilty when I can't do it but become exhausted when I try.
8. The conference administrators are too distant and I am afraid to express my needs to them. Yet there is no one with whom I associate regularly whom I can unload on without breaking confidences or producing interpersonal problems.
9. Often my day off is interrupted with conference meetings and business.
10. Lack of support from conference administrators at times of conflict.
11. Conference pressures to have numbers in baptisms.

12. I am frustrated at the apparent disparity between the aims/goals of our church body and the top-heavy administration of that body. I think we are spinning our wheels in North America because of that self-supporting bureaucracy.
13. The demands of the conference administration leave little time to do everything else; particularly creative things.
14. Unrealistic conference expectations.
15. My one major frustration is handling all the meaningless and useless directives from the conference office. I am a professional and know what my churches need and I want to be allowed to provide that need. So much of what comes from the top is not useful.
16. My greatest frustration is with the conference administration's unwillingness to recognize that the desires and needs of the congregation are different than the conference's.
17. The conference's unwillingness to find ministries that help develop the church internally is frustrating. The conference fails to realize that evangelism is building a strong local program. This program is necessary if the church is to remain strong. Public evangelism is not the answer for the local church. It can help, but it shouldn't be the central part of the church program. When the conference recognizes this the conflict will subside.
18. The lack of awareness and sensitivity church administrators have for pastors and church needs.
19. I am frustrated by an administration that to me, at least, is putting practically a total emphasis on public and personal evangelism. While I don't deny the importance of these roles, I feel it's unfair that those who are strong in these areas are smiled favorably upon by administration, while ministers who have strengths in other areas are not being recognized nor regarded for their talents.
20. The frustration of constantly being on the move--being moved from district to district to meet the conference's needs.
21. The conference emphasis on public and personal evangelism while the members' demands for your



time in other areas are strong. I too, would like to spend more time in evangelism, but the members need counseling, leadership, good preaching, etc. As a pastor, if you are into public evangelism you have to let many other areas slide.

22. Feelings of failure when it comes to having all the baptisms that I think the administration would like me to have. I know I'm doing my best, but do they?
23. Conference pressures to accomplish their desired results.
24. My frustration is the implementation of the multitudinous conference programs down in the grass roots level. The programs are well thought out in theory; but the practical and experimental part which is left entirely to the pastor and congregation are very hard to put into practice because of time and interest of church members. When I was in college, the head of the Bible department told us that we would be judged by two concepts if we were able to receive a call to the ministry-- baptisms and ingathering! These two concepts are still the overall bottom line of judging a minister. If he is outstanding in these, he will certainly make it up the ladder and become a conference administrator somewhere.

Although each of these responses reflect frustrations that appear to center in administration, it is readily apparent that there is no unanimity with respect to the primary source of administrative irritation. Further, it is clear that some of the expressed frustrations may not be valid. However, it is not the validity of the frustrations that leads to disfunctional consequences. The pastor's perception of administration is as potent in terms of creating reactions and responses as the reality. Any administrative action or behavior must be cognitively mediated. In other words, pastors must provide a meaning and interpretation before an emotional reaction can be generated. In this respect, Hart argues that it is

absolutely essential that we realize three important facts about the way we perceive things: (1) It is not the facts of a situation that determine how we react but our perception of the situation. (2) The way we perceive something may be quite different from what actually happened. (3) We must always give others credit for the way they perceive things and not insist that it is only the facts that are important.<sup>1</sup>

Whether they are accurate or not, the pastoral responses certainly betray a serious lack of communication between pastors and administration. In a climate of role conflict and ambiguity which generates tension, suspicion toward administration, job dissatisfaction, etc., it is predictable that such expressed frustrations would be present in the pastorate.

#### Member Apathy

The third source of frustration among Adventist clergy in the North Pacific Union is member apathy. Twenty-five percent of the pastors cited this problem as a major source of conflict and frustration. These results would be compatible with the 1962 study conducted by the Institute for Advanced Pastoral Studies. In that study 26 percent of the pastors experienced frustration in their work as the result of indifference. Indifference was defined as complacency and lethargy, the failure of laity to transfer the talent

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<sup>1</sup>A. D. Hart, Feeling Free: Effective Ways to Make Your Emotions Work for You (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979), p. 55.

they use in business to their work as officers of the church.<sup>1</sup>

Stewart suggests that some members lack interest in personal growth and in those areas of thought and life in the church that would deepen their faith. He believes that some need to discover a real focus of interest, such as evangelism, missions, a church school.<sup>2</sup>

Pastors of the NPUC would concur with the Institute's findings. Notice the manner in which they express frustrations with the matter of apathy and indifference.

1. My frustration is the Laodicean attitude of my congregation--not seeming to be able to move them for the Lord very fast!
2. The stress of dealing with officers who are not committed and could care less for the finishing of the work of God.
3. The lack of support for a personal witnessing program.
4. Spiritual infidelity. Indifference and inactivity among laity. Lack of initiative to lead or follow.
5. The lack of interest by the members for the overall program of the church.
6. Lack of motivation in members.
7. My greatest frustration is the church's apathy and indifference toward soul-winning. The leaders in the church take very little responsibility in the total church program.
8. Infectious Laodiceanism.

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<sup>1</sup>Stewart, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

9. Inability to motivate an indifferent church in soul-winning.
10. The unwillingness of our people to take leadership roles. They are busy with their own pressures and stresses.
11. The greatest frustration for me is seeing the lack of personal dedication members have for their church, and how to activate them.
12. Unwillingness of members to sacrifice time, money, and themselves. Money is the easiest.
13. Creating situations where members will involve themselves with both church and community needs.
14. People who lack a vision for the growth of the church--who are content with the same old form and ceremonies.
15. Frustration--inertia of church body--lack of commitment in members lives.
16. It is very difficult to deal with apathy. Love is easy. Hate and attack can be handled. But apathy leaves the pastor totally frustrated.

Behind the symptomatic picture of indifference is often the minister's concept of his own centrality in the group and his membership's lack of appreciation for his status. This can lead to their refusal to cooperate with his plans and programs. The result is ambiguity and conflict of purpose between the minister and the laity concerning leadership and membership roles in the church.

It is worth noting that 91 percent of all clergy responses fall into the three categories of overload, administration, and member apathy. These three areas of frustration are no doubt interrelated to the extent that an increase in frustration for a given category would certainly lead to the perception of increased frustration in other categories. For example, if administration imposed certain goals or programs, this could lead to an increased

sense of role overload and also an increase in the perception of member apathy if members failed to support the new programs.

Pastors cited other areas of frustration. These categories are of equal significance although fewer responses were made. It might be suggested that the three overwhelming categories are so intense that other frustrations are affected or created by these three.

#### Family Concerns

1. I think a significant problem is the pressure my family, especially my wife, feels towards the pastoral role and the frustration of living up to the expectations.
2. Being fair with my family--spending enough time with them.
3. A difficult frustration I wrestle with is problems in my own family.
4. To provide time for my family life with the multitude of pastoral responsibilities.
5. I'm frustrated by the problems created in my relationship with my wife because of the stresses and pressures of ministry.
6. I get angry because of the pain my wife suffers for me when irrational and unreasonable members make personal attacks.

#### Loneliness

1. Loneliness of the job is a real problem. There are no people who allow full disclosure of the pressures. Everyone is evaluating everyone else. There are no pressure-release valves.
2. The more years I spend in the ministry the lonelier I become. In a sea of people I have become an island of loneliness.

3. I am frustrated because when I can find time off others are working. I can't get close to others because of the schedule and the demands on my time.
4. I have moved so frequently that I am a very lonely person.

### Theology

1. There are many frustrations in the ministry. One of the biggest now seems to be the constant threat that if you say anything from your pulpit that may irritate some of the congregation, they will accuse you of being a follower of Ford, etc., and that will mean administrative investigation. It seems that in order to have unity, the hierarchy has resorted to the letter of the law which is killing the life giving spirit of the law. Would that we could have the same attitude of Melancthon (reportedly) when he said, "In necessary things unity, in doubtful things liberty, in all things charity."
2. Our theological blinders seem to be on.
3. The greatest stress today, as never before, is that a pastor cannot share Biblical thoughts. He is questioned as subversive if he is not right down the line of old denominational statements and standards.
4. Pressures from my more conservative parishioners to be theologically orthodox when I consider myself to be.
5. Cannot teach what the Bible teaches because the church has a credalized statement and set of beliefs and has canonized Ellen G. White as a divine interpreter of Scriptures.
6. The current theological atmosphere of suspicion and name calling that very definitely goes on. Morale is low for pastors who want to perform in a manner that is pleasing to superiors but find it difficult to do so and still maintain personal convictions that may hold no harm for the work but are nonetheless considered unacceptable.

## Member Criticism

1. The wild idea I can please everyone and not get any criticism from church members.
2. Unkind criticism of certain members.
3. Tensions from church members who are critical.
4. Members who feel they can tell you how bad you are doing things, but have no commendations.
5. Concern that my ministerial work and program is acceptable when some problem members call the conference president too readily.
6. Member criticism is literally eating me alive. I don't know how long I can survive.

## Personal and Professional Growth

1. The lack of freedom to grow intellectually in "untypical" ways, (i.e., MPH D Min. "OK" but M.S., PhD. "No").
2. I believe the great need of our church leadership (pastors/scholars/administrators) is a spiritual one. Renewal of spiritual strength is obviously needed. And I believe we should set up retreat centers where pastors, teachers, and administrators can go for a week of growth and renewal under expert guidance of loving and caring retreat specialists as the Roman Catholic Church runs.
3. I am frustrated because I feel a need to update my own abilities, especially to equip the people for a more fulfilling Christian experience.
4. Not taking enough time for deep study in areas of personal and professional growth.

## Addressing Domestic Problems in the Church

1. Dealing with broken marriages and families is a real frustration.
2. I would admit that marital problems give me the greatest concern.

3. Marriage problems that seemingly refuse to be healed.
4. Divorce - Separation.
5. My greatest frustration is marriage and family problems.
6. Frustrations of attempting to solve marriage problems in the church.
7. Family problems of church members.
8. Marital counseling.

#### Administering the Church

1. Hard to keep widely varied programs moving in smooth balance.
2. Hard to motivate members to minister and take their share of the load.
3. Not being able to be a better administrator.
4. The most frustrating aspect of my ministry is administration: How to get the church to implement its plans; How to delegate and know it will get done; How to raise the church's sight that we are capable of accomplishing much more.
5. Lack of leadership--cooperation--in church planning. Not able to plan objectives due to unwillingness of influential leaders.
6. My only real frustration is in with my own limitations. Some self-discipline, organization, and long-range attainable goals would help and I'm trying.
7. Power struggles in the church that frequent the congregation and how to administratively handle them.
8. Church discipline involving divorce/remarriage/adultery situations--extremely frustrating and the number one cause of discouragement in my ministry.
9. Factions in the church laity and how to administratively resolve them.



CHAPTER IV  
STRATEGIES FOR MINIMIZING ROLE CONFLICT  
AND ROLE AMBIGUITY

The problem of role conflict and role ambiguity in the ministry is unavoidable to the extent that it continually confronts the pastor in his work. As Blizzard has stated, "The ministry is a free profession with diffuse role definitions in a voluntary institution. Diversity of role performances and lack of clarity is to be expected."<sup>1</sup> Such role-related issues are particularly unavoidable because of the nature of the organization in which a pastor works. The church has a deeply rooted religious heritage and a complex set of interrelationships with specific values, personalities, experiences, and expectations that interact with structures and systems of considerable complexity.<sup>2</sup> Before we discuss alternative proposals and courses of action for minimizing and managing role conflict and ambiguity, it is necessary to acknowledge that no simplistic, clear-cut solutions exist. The problem, by its very nature, can never be eradicated.

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<sup>1</sup>Blizzard, "Role Conflicts of the Urban Ministry," p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, p. 83.

Nevertheless, in spite of these complexities, there are certain strategies a pastor can implement to minimize and reduce role-related problems. In this chapter some specific proposals of a personal/psychological and theological nature to assist pastors in the management of role conflict and role ambiguity are offered.

### Personal/Psychological Considerations

#### Negotiate with Role Senders

One key strategy for minimizing and managing role conflict is to negotiate with role senders. In Katz's study of 121 employed, married, working women with children, it was discovered that role conflict was minimized by the self-coping strategy of negotiating responsibilities with role senders about expectations and roles.<sup>1</sup> This same strategy appears to be quite useful in the ministry, also.

The negotiating strategy can be implemented any time in a pastor's ministry, but it is particularly useful when a pastor is considering a call to a new congregation. Smith argues that in considering a call, both the minister and local congregation should give very careful consideration to such questions as: What is the meaning and purpose of the church? What is the mission of this particular congregation? What do the people of this congregation expect in a minister? Are those expectations relevant to their goals? Does the minister share the understanding and goals of the

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<sup>1</sup>M. Katz, "Antecedents of Coping Behavior in a Role Conflict Situation." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1978. Dissertation Abstracts International 39 (3B) (September 1978), p. 1543.

congregation? Do their expectations fit reasonably well with his expectations, with his professional concerns, spiritual needs, predispositions, and style of ministry?<sup>1</sup>

These issues must be faced systematically, directly, and in sufficient depth to make certain that a congregation and pastor have uncovered any serious potential problems that might develop in their relationship after it is established. It is advantageous to the pastor that every possible expectation of any importance be openly acknowledged, and every possible hidden agenda considered before making a decision to accept a call.

Where possible, the pastor should always request the opportunity to meet with the church board, board of elders, and/or any other formal or informal leadership groups within the church structure to consider the questions stated above. The pastor should also initiate a similar process with the administration of the calling conference. Once again, the pastor should be sensitive to any marked discrepancies between the goals and expectations of a church and those goals and expectations of conference administrators. Cautiousness regarding such discrepancies can minimize the potential for role conflict and ambiguity.

Another useful tool in negotiating with role senders is the list of pastoral roles presented in chapter 3. The use of this list for negotiating purposes can be helpful in the early stages before accepting a call, but is also useful anytime during a

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 85.

pastor's tenure when conflict and ambiguity are evident. In using this procedure the pastor presents the list of clergy roles to the congregation, board, elders, or any other target group from which the conflicts arise and asks them to rank the roles in order of importance. After the rankings are completed, the pastor asks the various role senders to share their list with the group. After several lists are presented, it becomes evident that rather significant differences of opinion exist among the members of the group. The pastor allows the group to discuss, disagree, and argue for their various positions until it is clear that unanimity is impossible. The pastor takes this opportunity to discuss the issue of ambiguity and role conflict and calls attention to how their confusion affects his ministry and perception of his work roles. The pastor then presents his role priorities and explains his position on clergy roles. He shares with the group role issues such as importance, effectiveness, enjoyment, and time spent in the various roles. As objectively as possible he presents his strengths and weaknesses. He informs the role senders what they can expect of him, what he does well, and what roles must be fulfilled or supplemented by other individuals or through other means.

Such a dialogue facilitates increased consensus and understanding. In a 1968 study, Higgins and Dittes<sup>1</sup> discovered that such discussion of the minister's role by clergy and laity

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<sup>1</sup>Paul S. Higgins and James E. Dittes, "Change in Laymen's Expectations of the Minister's Role," Ministry Studies 2 (February 1968), pp. 6, 7.

facilitates increased consensus among laymen concerning the role expectations of the minister and increased agreement between the minister and the laymen. It was found that a significant increase in the amount of agreement resulted between pastor and people, but only in the subjects discussed. In general, it was discovered that the more discussion given to any role subject, the more agreement developed. The largest changes came in members' understanding of the importance of study to the minister; the necessity of reduced emphasis on routine visitation; and an increased importance given to the training of lay leadership.

Merton<sup>1</sup> in his work on the analysis of roles enumerates a number of social mechanisms that operate to reduce role conflict. He suggests that one mechanism useful in role negotiation is to make role conflict observable to the role senders. Merton argues that because role senders frequently are not aware of the expectations of others in the role set, they tend to operate on the unfounded assumption that their attitudes and expectations are either uniformly shared by others, or that they are not shared by others at all. The minimization of role conflict, therefore, is made possible by finding occasion to bring together those who are sending incompatible role pressures in such a way that they will discover the conflict which their expectations produce. It is assumed that responsible persons, if they have a chance to feel the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, 1967, New York: Free Press, pp. 371-379.

problems themselves, will see that the time and resources of their pastor must be allocated very carefully.

In summary, the negotiating process is intended to insure a thorough procedure for clarifying role expectations and matching these expectations with potential role performance, thus reducing or minimizing ambiguity and unnecessary conflict. The procedures stated above are useful in realizing successful negotiations.

#### Avoid Withdrawal Behavior

It was cited in chapter two that withdrawal behaviors tend to accompany role conflict and ambiguity.<sup>1</sup> Pastors have a tendency to avoid or escape that which is the source of great psychological discomfort. Although increased communication and negotiation are vital when the pastor is experiencing role conflict or ambiguity, the research suggests that at such times communication is likely to decrease.<sup>2</sup> Further, Kahn and his associates have found that those who experience a great deal of role conflict tend to discount the importance and power of role senders, to trust them less personally, and withdraw from contact with them.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of ambiguity, withdrawal is a self-defeating practice both in the short and long run. Ambiguity is basically a

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<sup>1</sup>Gupta and Beehr, "Job Stress and Employee Behavior," pp. 373-385.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>Kahn, Organizational Stress, pp. 89-91.

lack of information, and withdrawal reduces still further the opportunity to acquire information. A far more effective technique for coping with ambiguity would be increasing the frequency of communication with others in the situation and engaging them as information gatherers and providers. According to Kahn,<sup>1</sup> the best way to find out what others expect is to ask them. It is unfortunate, however, that many do exactly the opposite. If ambiguity persists most people reach a point at which they quit trying. At this point, communication deteriorates and withdrawal begins.

This self-defeating mechanism can be viewed as a vicious cycle that increases the conflict. When one withdraws, he cuts off communication and greatly reduces the flow of information between the role receiver and his senders. This makes less data available with which anyone can work to minimize the conflict. Cooperation and negotiation become difficult, if not impossible. Finally, in frustration, the role senders increase their pressure on the pastor and invoke even stronger sanctions in an effort to make him hear and respond favorably.

One can readily see that pastors, rather than withdrawing from the issue of role conflict and ambiguity and running away from the personal discomforts, must be proactive through dialogue and communication which will minimize the pressures of role problems.

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<sup>1</sup>Kahn, *Organizational Stress*, p. 91.

According to Smith,<sup>1</sup> "The best hope for the reduction of role conflict and ambiguity is the opening of honest communication between the clergy with their theological expectations of people and the people with their organizational expectations of clergymen."

#### Check Out Perceptions

As this survey has demonstrated, there may be some variance between perceived role expectations and the actual expectations held by role senders. This discrepancy underscores the fact that many conflicts regarding clergy roles result from ambiguity and confusion rather than role conflict. When the ambiguity has been reduced, the conflict that remains may be more tolerable.

One useful method of reducing ambiguity is simply to recognize the difference between the psychological environment and the objective environment referred to in chapter 2. Since the perceived role expectation is often not the same as the actual expectation, it is important to allow for the possibility that the conflict one experiences is not justifiable. If the pastor is aware of the potential gap between reality and perceived reality, he/she is in a better position to check out his/her perceptions to determine their validity.

#### Accurate Self-Knowledge

Another strategy in minimizing role conflict and ambiguity is to possess an accurate sense of self-knowledge. If a pastor is

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 89.



to minimize ambiguity in the expectations of others, he must also minimize it in himself. Confusion tends to breed confusion. The person who is not clear as to who he is, what he believes, what his understanding of the church and ministry is, what his goals are, and where his strengths and weaknesses lie, is not well prepared to evaluate or relate to the expectations of others.<sup>1</sup>

The pastor must know himself well. What roles does he really enjoy playing? What is his role repertoire? What is his tolerance for ambiguity and conflict?<sup>2</sup> Self-evaluation, administrative evaluation, peer evaluation, career counseling, personality and vocational testing, and congregational evaluation all assist the pastor in the assessment of who he is.

#### Pastoral Services

According to D'Arcy,<sup>3</sup> there is a dawning awareness in the churches of the stress under which the clergy labor and of their need for special services. Many steps are being taken to provide a variety of personnel services for the clergy. These partial responses, although far from adequate, are constructive. Additional steps must be taken, however, to provide services such as career evaluation centers for clergy and personal counseling services.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Paul F. D'Arcy, "Consequences of Role Conflict: Summary of Discussion," Ministry Studies 2 (1968):52.

Such services also help in minimizing the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity.

Career counseling for pastors is rapidly expanding as a service offered by many denominations to meet individual and institutional needs. As greater numbers of ministers have made known in dramatic as well as subtle ways their frustration, lack of satisfaction, and sense of failure as professional persons, the Protestant denominations have turned increasingly to career counseling as a way to provide help.

The year of 1969 was particularly significant for the career counseling movement, and it has continued to expand its services since that date. According to Thomas Brown,<sup>1</sup> director of the Northeast Career Center in Princeton, New Jersey:

A pilot program of occupational counseling and consultative services began in late 1965 by the United Presbyterian church, and was joined in 1969 by the Episcopal and Lutheran churches in America. The American Baptist Convention in 1969 completed a two-year trial of a 'center for the ministry' in the Boston area and prepared to replicate the approach on the West Coast in concert with several other denominations. A center was opened in Oakland, California, in the summer of 1970 to serve approximately 250 clients annually. Various national and local units of the United Presbyterian, American Baptist, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ groups joined together to incorporate the Midwest Career Development Services. An ecumenical group in Minnesota incorporated an agency to serve that area. Also in 1969, nine denominations, with the

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Brown, "Career Counseling for Ministers," Journal of Pastoral Care 25 (March 1971):33-40.

assistance of the Department of Ministry of the National Council of Churches, formed the Career Development Council as a coordinating and evaluating body to facilitate cooperative planning; enhance observational standards and stimulate research. Delegates of small as well as 'main-line' denominations are participating in the council. The Presbyterian Church of Canada has representation and several Roman Catholic orders have observer-consultant relationships to the council.<sup>1</sup>

It is apparent that the Christian community has recognized the need for career counseling. Career counseling is one of the vital services that must be available to clergy at periodic intervals throughout their ministry. This service helps the minister know more clearly who he is, what he has to contribute as a clergyman, how he can focus his ministry, etc. Such career evaluation is essential, according to Brown, because more than 80 percent of the clients of Northeast Career Center come as the result of their confusion over their role and purpose.<sup>2</sup>

It must be clearly stated that such a service is intended for all clergymen regardless of age, background, or experience. The service should be available and applicable to a wide variety of individuals. It is also important to understand that counseling, either career or personal, is intended for "healthy and successful" pastors as well as pastors with problems who are considered "failures."

To seek counseling is not an admission of a "serious problem"

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

nor an indication that one is looking for an "exit" from the ministry. It is a time of self-evaluation, growth, and a process that can make a person more realistic in their self-appraisal and more effective in their work.

Although it is hoped that such a service might become readily available to the clergy of the Seventh-day Adventist church, at present such help is not accessible except in institutional and educational settings. If it is prohibitive for a pastor to visit such a setting and if his/her denomination makes no provision for such assistance, local colleges and universities, counseling psychologists in private practice, and local testing centers can provide counseling and evaluations that assist the pastor in his/her career or mid-career assessment.

Continuing education is another pastoral service that assists ministers in minimizing role conflict and role ambiguity. According to Smith, a significant correlation exists between high levels of stress and the expressed need for continuing education.<sup>1</sup> The period of greatest stress in the ministry appears to be the first few years after ordination. This may be an especially useful time to provide the opportunity for continuing education. Pastors would be most open to growth during this stage of intense stress.

One weakness in assessing whether continuing education is of universal benefit in the resolution of role conflict is that each

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Clergy in the Crossfire, p. 128.

pastor had different definitions of the term. In a 1978 study, Walsworth<sup>1</sup> found that there appears to be a lack of congruency among the ministers of his sample as to what continuing education really means. Walsworth's research definition contained four specific aspects of continuing education: a learning experience; meeting personal and/or professional needs; having specific goals; and following an intentional program. Only 28.4 percent of the sample included all of these points in their personal definition. Since personal definitions are clearly diverse, it would appear difficult to assess the extent to which continuing education would help resolve role conflict. Nevertheless, Walsworth's data did affirm that ministers tend to perceive continuing education as helpful in their role-conflict management.

#### Exercise and Physical Activity

The primary response to anxiety is fight or flight. This reaction helps guarantee safety in times of danger. Stress is physical to the extent that it enables a physical response to a physical threat; however, any threat--physical or symbolic--can bring about the stress response. Once the stimulation of the event penetrates the psychological defenses, the body prepares for action. Increased hormonal secretions, cardiovascular activity, and energy

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<sup>1</sup>Lowell F. Walsworth, "A Study of the Level of Participation of Ministers in Continuing Education in the West Michigan Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Its Relationship with Their Perceived Management of Role Conflict" (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1979), Dissertation Abstracts International, Vol. 39 (7-A) (January 1979):3986-3987.

supply signify a state of stress, a state of extreme readiness to act as soon as the voluntary control centers decide the best form of action. In addition, there is an outpouring of sugar and fats into the blood which are designed to feed the muscles and the brain so that they might contend actively with the stressor which has provoked the system. Dilation of the pupils occurs to give better visual acuity to take in apparent threats visually. The heart and respiration systems increase their rate to pump blood and oxygen to active muscles and stimulate control centers in the brain.

According to Girdano and Everly,<sup>1</sup> the threat we face is generally not a real threat but holds only symbolic significance to the extent that our egos and not our lives are in danger. Physical action is not warranted. Unfortunately, for the organs of the body, it is too late. What took only minutes to start takes hours to undo. The stress products are flowing through the system and will activate various organs until they are absorbed back into storage or gradually are used by the body. While these gradual processes take place the organs of the body suffer.<sup>2</sup>

Too often the response to stress is inaction. However, this is not the time to sit and feel all of these sensations tearing away at the body's system and eroding good health. This is the time to move, to use up the products, and to relieve the body of the

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<sup>1</sup>Girdano and Everly, Controlling Stress and Tension, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

destructive forces of stress on a sedentary system. The solution is to use the physical stress arousal for its intended purpose, i.e., physical movement. In our cultural society, which does not include killing lions or harming our neighbors, the most efficient use of physical arousal is physical exercise. The increased energy intended for fight or flight can be used simply in walking, running, swimming, or hiking. One can, thereby, accelerate the dissipation of stress products. If the activity is vigorous enough it can create a rebound effect after exercise that leads into a state of deep relaxation.

As pastors' undergo the general stresses of the ministry and of specific tensions and conflicts related to roles, it is critical that a regular program of physical exercise be implemented to guard against the physiological effects of such stress. It is not infrequent that pastors claim time does not permit them to exercise, nor does their busy schedule provide a systematic opportunity for such activity. Nevertheless, clergymen benefit remarkably from such a program. Seemingly insurmountable problems and conflicts are given new perspectives if pastors recognize the need to act physically through exercise when under stress.

#### Relaxation Exercises

During states of stress, the body experiences needless and excessive muscle tension. Much of the harmful, stress-producing muscle tension is extremely subtle and almost impossible to detect. If such a condition is permitted to exist for an extended period of time, a wide variety of physical disorders may be produced or

exaggerated. A few of the more common disorders are tension headaches, muscle cramps and spasms, limitation of range of movement and flexibility, susceptibility to muscle injuries such as tears and sprains, insomnia, a wide range of gastrointestinal maladies including constipation, diarrhea and colitis, urinary problems, and dysmenorrhea.<sup>1</sup>

The connection between tension in the neuromuscular system generated by stress and the dysfunctional physiological effects must be broken. The best apparent means of breaking the connection is through neuromuscular relaxation exercises. The relationship between inordinate muscle tension and disease was made hundreds of years ago, but it was not until the end of the last century that systematic relaxation programs were formulated. The names of Schultz, Sweegard, Majaschede, and Jacobson become synonymous with relaxation training and their work became the basis of most current relaxation programs.<sup>2</sup> There are literally hundreds of techniques now, but all have the same basic objective of teaching the individual to relax the muscles at will, developing a cognitive awareness of what it feels like to be tense and then what it feels like to be relaxed. If one is able to distinguish between tension and relaxation, control over tension follows effortlessly.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



According to Benson<sup>1</sup> there are essentially four components that one can extract from the age-old techniques that are necessary to bring forth the relaxation response: (1) A quiet environment--ideally, one should choose a quiet, calm environment with as few distractions as possible; (2) A mental device--this shifts the mind from logical, externally oriented thought (Benson argues there should be a constant stimulus; a sound, word, or phrase repeated silently or aloud; since one of the major difficulties in eliciting relaxation is "mind wandering," repetition of a word or phrase is a way to help break the train of distracting thoughts); (3) A passive attitude--Benson believes that when distracting thoughts occur, a passive attitude, like a mental device, can prevent "mind wandering"; and (4) A comfortable position--such a position is important so that there is no unnecessary muscular tension.

Specific descriptions of relaxation exercises and the contraction of gross muscle groups is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, the reader is referred to the Relaxation Response, by Herbert Benson, and Tension: A Holistic Approach, by Girdano and Everly, for detailed descriptions.

The important consideration is that pastors work at a tension, and role conflict and ambiguity contribute to physiological conditions that may effect their health and productivity.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Benson, The Relaxation Response. New York: Avon Books, 1975, pp. 159-161.

Relaxation is an effective coping tool which helps minimize the adverse effects of such role problems.

### Thought-Stopping

Another strategy to minimize the results of role conflict and role ambiguity is that of "Thought-Stopping."

One aspect of the religious worker's personality that appears to contribute to the effects of role conflict and ambiguity is the obsessive-compulsive neurosis identified by Rollo May.<sup>1</sup> Another term descriptive of this condition is anxious reactivity. Anxious reactivity is a vicious cycle of obsessional thoughts. Everyone experiences anxiety-producing situations which cause normal anxious arousal. However, in the anxious reactive personality, the anxious arousal persists or is rekindled after the stressor is gone. This occurs because the individual obsessively "relives" or "catastrophizes" the stressful situation in his/her mind. This cycle is self-perpetuating and feeds off the obsessional thought processes. In addition to May's clinical evaluation of the "typical religious worker," it also has been my experience that many pastors do ruminate obsessively on certain themes and/or issues.

The most effective technique for resolving this problem is "Thought-Stopping." Thought-stopping is designed to break the anxious cycle. It is a technique whereby the stressed person intentionally breaks the anxious cycle by abruptly leaving the

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<sup>1</sup>Rollo May, The Art of Counseling. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967, p. 173.

obsessional thoughts. Hart<sup>1</sup> suggests this can be accomplished in one of two ways:

1. One technique involves shouting the word STOP as soon as one becomes aware of the anxious reliving or catastrophizing. At first, the word may be shouted to oneself. If this is not sufficient, shouting out loud will successfully destroy the anxious cycle. One may then attend to less stressful thoughts.

2. Another form of thought-stopping is to switch abruptly to a pleasing, relaxing image or scene in one's mind's eye as soon as one becomes aware of the anxious cycle. The scene should be the same each time and should be a place, real or imagined, that one finds aesthetically pleasing. After dwelling on this scene for approximately thirty to sixty seconds, the person should slowly reoccupy his/her mind with real demands. If the cycle should start again, it should be broken in the same way. This procedure should be followed as many times as necessary.

#### The Role of Supervision

The final strategy for minimizing role conflict and role ambiguity cannot be implemented by pastors. Rather it is an administrative issue which must be implemented at the administrative level. This final strategy relates to the role of supervision.

In a 1976 study, Beehr looked at the perceived situation moderators of the relationship between subjective role ambiguity and

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<sup>1</sup>A. D. Hart, Feeling Free: Effective Ways to Make Your Emotions Work for You. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979, p. 157.

role strain. He suggests that even when there is stress and role ambiguity, people in roles with certain situational characteristics do not suffer as severely from the stress. This, of course, has important implications for the management of conflict and ambiguity because situational characteristics can be modified by the organization. Beehr's study indicates that autonomy is one of the most powerful situational characteristics that tends to minimize conflict and ambiguity.

On the basis of this study it would seem arguable that professional autonomy is a situational characteristic that administrators can create to assist pastors in minimizing the effects of role conflict and ambiguity. Conversely, if either the conference administration or local church leadership attempt to restrict the work and roles of clergy so as to stifle their sense of professional autonomy, stress, ambiguity, and role conflict may be expected.

In the supervision of pastors, administrators must not overlook individual differences and individual uniqueness. Each pastor, known by God from the womb of his/her mother, has a unique contribution to make in the Lord's work and needs a reasonable degree of autonomy to make his/her contribution. Professional people in general and clergymen in particular (with their God-given vision of ministry) must experience such autonomy. Beehr states that "autonomy is the strongest and most consistent moderator of the relationship between role ambiguity and role strain.

Organizations that wish to reduce the role strain associated with ambiguity should increase the autonomy in their employee's roles."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the question of autonomy, Beehr's study indicates that people with supportive supervisors might not feel some role strains even if their roles are ambiguous.

A final aspect of supervision which is helpful in minimizing role problems is involvement of a worker in the decision-making process. Flora<sup>2</sup> has discovered variables in the job environment other than demographic characteristics that play a major function in causing role conflict and ambiguity. He found that in situations where workers feel they are an integral part of the decision-making process, they are likely to experience more satisfaction with their jobs, have less anxiety, are more optimistic about their future, and desire to stay in their positions.

It would appear that a shared decision-making model should be encouraged administratively to minimize role-related problems. Pastors, no less than any other organizational employees, benefit by such involvement in the decision-making process. Administrators should take note that how they address this issue has an effect on role conflict and ambiguity among their pastoral staff.

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<sup>1</sup>Terry A. Beehr, "Perceived Situational Moderators of the Relationship between Subjective Role Ambiguity and Role Strain," p. 40.

<sup>2</sup>John Flora, "Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity in the Elementary School Principalship" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1977), Dissertation Abstracts International 38 (6-A) (December 1977):3173.

### Theological Considerations

In addition to the personal/psychological proposals which help pastors minimize role conflict and role ambiguity, a reflection upon certain theological issues further strengthens the pastor in his attempt to manage role-related problems.

The primary theological focus must be the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the role model for ministry and thus serves as a paragon upon which pastors pattern their personal and professional behavior. Since role conflict, ambiguity, stress and pressure were not unknown to Jesus during his earthly ministry, we may gain some theological insights into these matters by observing His ministry and the manner in which He dealt with His stress.

Our Lord certainly knew what it meant to live amidst conflicting roles and expectations. Jesus appeared in a context saturated with a multiplicity of Messianic expectations. The apocryphal books of Second Esdras and Baruch provide information concerning the most common Jewish expectations of the Messiah and the Messianic era. In Esdras the Messiah is presented as the lion of Judah at whose roar Rome would burst into flames and be consumed. The Messiah is also depicted as one who first annihilates the multitudes of the heathen with the fire and storm of his breath and then gathering together the lost ten tribes out of alien lands, establishes a kingdom in Palestine in which a reunited Israel can flourish in peace and glory. According to Baruch there must come a time of terrible hardship and injustice, which is the era of Rome. Then, just as evil has reached its greatest peak, the Messiah

appears. As a mighty warrior He will rout and destroy the armies of the enemy; he will take captive the leader of the Romans and bring him in chains to Mount Zion, where the Messiah will put him to death. He will establish a kingdom which will last until the end of the world. All the nations which have ever ruled over Israel will be put to the sword; and some members of the remaining nations will be subjected to the chosen people. Then there begins an age of bliss in which pain, disease, untimely death, violence and strife, want and hunger will be unknown and in which the earth will yield its fruits ten thousand-fold.<sup>1</sup>

The apocryphal works were written during the intertestamental period and tend to reflect nearly six hundred years of foreign occupation. The Jewish people emphasized the kingly nature of the Messiah to the exclusion of those prophecies that focused on the Messiah as a suffering servant (i.e., Isa 53) because of their servitude and bondage. Consequently, they held many popular and common notions regarding the Messiah that were unreasonable, unrealistic, and in opposition to the work Jesus had come to perform. This prevented many from accepting Him as the Messiah and caused others to make wrong assumptions about His person and work.

Even Jesus' disciples accepted the popular beliefs about the Messiah and were frequently at odds with one another concerning their

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<sup>1</sup>D. F. Neufeld and J. Neuffer, eds., Seventh-day Adventist Source Book (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), p. 623.

future positions in Christ's earthly kingdom. The question of who would be the greatest troubled them and they frequently rejected any notion that the Messiah's mission should end in death and a cross (Matt 16:21 ff.).

But as the true Messiah of God, Jesus upset surface expectations involving magical, military, and superstitious desires to meet the deeper hope for healing and wholeness. Jesus' understanding of the Messianic role resulted from His study of the Scriptures and His understanding of what God had called him to accomplish. And yet in another sense, Jesus created the Messianic role by his concrete encounters and particular confrontations with the people He came to serve. Amidst conflicting voices and mixed signals Jesus created His role and was faithful to His Messianic calling. He carried out his mission in spite of the ambiguity and role conflicts that faced him during the years of His public ministry.<sup>1</sup> The clergyman, similarly, can color the content of his role by bringing his own expectations to bear upon those of the laity. He, too, must be faithful to his sense of calling to fulfill the ministry God has given him.

The key to Jesus' success in living with conflict and ambiguity was his devotional life with God. In the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Mark notes that "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place and prayed"

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<sup>1</sup>James B. Ashbrook, "Discussion of Hadden Paper," Ministry Studies 2 (December, 1968):35.



(Mark 1:35). As His ministry progressed, Luke states that "in these days He went out into the hills to pray; and all night he continued in prayer to God (Luke 6:12). As his ministry came to its climax, Judas knew where Jesus could be found because He went out "as was His custom" to the Mount of Olives in the evening to pray (Luke 22:38). At all of the great moments and the crises in Jesus life, Luke shows us Jesus at prayer. Jesus prayed at His Baptism (3:2); before His first collision with the Pharisees (5:16); before He chose the disciples (6:12); before He questioned His disciples as to who they thought He was; before His first prediction of His own death (9:18); at the transfiguration (9:29); and upon the Cross (23:40).

Jesus knew well that He could not live without God; that if He was going to give of Himself in ministry, He must sometimes receive; that if He was going to spend Himself for others, He must summon spiritual reinforcement to His aid. In other words, Jesus knew that He could not live without prayer.<sup>1</sup>

The devotional life of Jesus is an example to the pastor who experiences the pain of role conflict and ambiguity. The pastor's devotional life is his personal counseling relationship with God. In prayer the pastor is open to receive the Lord's grace and mercy, but he also experiences the catharsis of confession. Through devotional exercises the minister may clear from his mind the confusion regarding his work and commitment. The feelings of anxiety

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<sup>1</sup>William Barclay, The Gospel of Mark (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 33.

and tension which accompany his work can be expressed in the privacy of his room. The pastor can express his stress, tensions, and pleasures to the Father secretly in prayer.

In his devotional life the pastor can get his thinking straight concerning what can be done and what cannot. Through his relationship with God, he receives the courage to do what needs to be done and the confidence to commit to God what he cannot do. From these times of prayer the pastor finds himself refreshed in spirit and restored emotionally. If the minister needs human dialogue to sustain himself and to negotiate and resolve role conflicts and ambiguity, how much more he needs the divine. The basis of this divine-human relationship is a disciplined devotional life.<sup>1</sup>

A third theological concept which helps minimize role conflict and ambiguity is peace. In the Scriptures the desire for peace often grows out of weariness with conflict and struggle. It feels good to rest from our labors and to have conflicts resolved. However, this is only one kind of peace and it is limited to the times when all problems and tasks have ceased, or we have collapsed having no other option.

But there is another kind of peace and rest available to the pastor who experiences stress and conflict in ministry. It is a peace that exists in the midst of toil and conflict. It is a peace that says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" ( 2 Cor 12:9). It is a peace that leads one

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Hulme, Your Pastor's Problems: A Guide for Ministers and Layman (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), p. 127.

beside still waters and restores souls (Psa 23:2). It is a peace with God that we have received through our Lord Jesus Christ, since we are justified by faith (Rom 5:1). When pastors believe that they and the church belong to God and that God's purposes will be worked out, even if they cannot do it by themselves, then they can relax in the peace that only Jesus can give.

Another aspect of peace that pastors can experience in their relationship with God is contentment, i.e., coming to terms with the givens of life. The apostle Paul learned the key to contentment during his second imprisonment in Rome. In his epistle to the Philippians he stated: "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content" (Phil 4:11). Paul could make such a statement as this even though he was imprisoned and did not know if the verdict would end in life or death. Similarly, Paul could write to the Corinthians: "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10). Pastors must develop the attitude and mind set of Paul by learning to be content. Perhaps one of the greatest joys of the ministry comes when the pastor no longer crucifies himself on the cross of his own idealism. Peace, contentment, and happiness can be realized only when he lets go of his intense, inappropriate, and unrealistic ideals and expectations for himself, others, and the church.

Yet another type of peace is available to the troubled pastor. This is the peace of surrender. Recently, not much has been heard about this word. Apparently, it sounds too pietistic and

seems to be in conflict with the powerful new cult of humanism. However, the surrender of ideas concerning how the church must operate, how believers should act, and how one should think and feel toward God's purposes brings a peace which Jesus promises to those who come unto Him and learn His way. Jesus said, for example, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt 11:28-30).

Not only does a surrender to God bring a sense of peace, but it makes possible the accomplishment of the Lord's will. The apostle Paul experienced nothing but frustration during his second missionary journey when he had no clear sense of direction concerning where he was to go. He was conscious only that the Holy Spirit was blocking his every intention. Yet this awareness meant that he was conscious of divine purpose even in his frustration and was willing to surrender to God's purpose. Because of this consciousness and surrender, he was open to the revelation that he was to go into Macedonia and establish the first European church.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus also experienced this peace of surrender in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was in Gethsamane that Jesus went through the greatest of his crises as the darkening events pointed to the cross. The conflicts, crises, stresses, ambiguities, and pressures of his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

ministry now reached their peak. He faced death and no one wants to die at the age of thirty-three. Jesus knew what crucifixion was like; He had seen it before. It was this garden experience that served as a turning point in Jesus' life. He could have turned back on His mission and ministry, even then. He could have refused the cross.

Nevertheless, Jesus fought the mental anguish and won. He went to Gethsemane in the dark. He came out in the light because He had talked to God. He went into Gethsamane in agony; He came out with the victory won, and with peace in His soul because God's everlasting arms were underneath Him, even on the cross. But most important, He was surrendering to a love that would never let Him go. "Life's hardest task is to accept what we cannot understand; but we can do even that if we are surrendered to God and are sure of His love."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barclay, The Gospel of Luke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 254.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study has not only recognized the presence of role conflict and role ambiguity in the Christian ministry in general, but has demonstrated significant evidence for the existence of role conflict and role ambiguity within the Seventh-day-Adventist ministry of the North Pacific Union Conference. Several clergy roles appear to be particularly troublesome vehicles for role strain. Pastors of the NPUC are experiencing the administrative dilemma. They spend much of their time working in administration even though they do not consider this role very important, do not enjoy administration, and feel very ineffective in this work. Secondly, pastors are in conflict with the counseling role. The data suggest that pastors are spending more time in counseling than is justified by the administrators' value of this role and yet considerably less than is desired and needed by the membership. Public evangelism is the third major role creating role stress. Pastors rated the categories of importance, effectiveness, and enjoyment very low for this role, yet administrators rated the importance considerably higher. The pastors' perception of the administrators' ranking, however, was even greater than the actual

ranking. This, undoubtedly, heightens the pastors' sense of conflict and stress.

To a lesser extent, three other role categories influence the total role conflict experienced by Adventist clergy of the NPUC. Pastors tend to rate personal evangelism high on their list of role priorities and are frustrated because they are spending much less time in the role than they desire. Secondly, pastors' place a high priority on teaching ministries, although both congregations' and administrations' attribute a significantly lower value to this work. Finally, the pastor's perception of the importance members place on routine visitation is much higher than members of the NPUC report. This inaccurate perception further contributes to role tension since pastors generally tend to respond and behave on the basis of perceptions.

Although unable to conceptually identify role conflict and ambiguity, the pastors' subjective self-report confirms the existence and experience of this phenomenon on a personal level.

It appears from the data that a primary source of role conflict comes from the discrepancy between the pastor's perception of conference expectations and the actual importance conference administrators attribute to the various roles. Although genuine conflict exists, the inaccurate perceptions of administration greatly intensify the sense of pressure and lead to negative consequences. The evidence would suggest that greater communication regarding roles and expectations of administration could reduce the major source of role conflict and ambiguity.

Equally distressing to pastors is the discrepancy that exists between what congregations expect from their pastors (on the average) and the expectations of conference officers. This study confirmed the notion that pastors work at the interface between the superstructure of denominational organization and the individual needs, desires, and ministry of a local congregation. Expectations funnel down from administration and are simultaneously channeled up from the church membership, thus creating the "hour glass effect." The pastor feels caught amidst conflicting signals and works at times in a contradictory and dichotomous environment.

This study further concludes that the existence of role conflict and role ambiguity translates into rather serious emotional/psychological outcomes for the individual pastor. In addition to the personal outcomes, there are certain organizational consequences that effect the efficiency of the denomination by hindering the church in the accomplishment of its goals. Pastors exposed to excessive role strain generally experience such dysfunctional symptoms as tension, anxiety, depression, psychosomatic disease, alienation, communication breakdown, sexual attractions and involvements, and a loss of integrity. These personal outcomes set up conditions for such withdrawal behaviors as absenteeism from work and high levels of turnover. Job participation and job satisfaction tend to decrease while a sense of job threat and a propensity to leave employment increase. The net result is that the pastor's job performance is lowered. Such organizational consequences are costly to the church in terms of excessive moving expenses, lowered standards for



performance, and greater difficulty in the achievement of organizational goals.

Further, the evidence suggests that certain personalities are more prone to the consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity than other personalities. The hypersensitivity of a neurotic person causes him/her to experience greater strain. Role conflict and ambiguity are also more detrimental to introverts, flexible personality types, and pastors who are status oriented.

In spite of the reality and consequences of role conflict and role ambiguity, the current state of the problem is neither helpless or hopeless. Job tension and role-related problems are a fact of life in most occupations and professions. Although the ministry is predisposed to a more significant degree of role strain because of the nature of the work and the unique ego involvement and investment of its participants, several strategies appear to be especially useful in minimizing and managing the nature of the problem. Pastors must learn to be proactive and assume responsibility for the reduction of stress and anxiety, through self-help strategies.

The strategies presented in this study include negotiating responsibilities and expectations with role senders; avoiding withdrawal behavior and minimizing contact and communication with role senders; checking out perceptions to verify whether the conflict is legitimate or merely an inaccurate perception or interpretation; pursuing pastoral services which would include such assistance as vocational counseling, personal counseling, and

continuing education; strenuous physical exercise; systematic relaxation exercises; and thought-stopping procedures to break the cycle of reactive anxiety and the obsessional thought patterns that result from role strain.

Beyond the self-help strategies the pastor must not fail to maintain a theological perspective on the issue of role conflict and role ambiguity. The pastor has been called to the ministry and service by his Lord. Jesus provides the model for ministry and although He was not exempt from conflicting roles and expectations, He fulfilled the charge given to Him by God. He found His strength in a strong prayer and devotional life. He also found peace through a surrender to the will and purpose of God and a contentment that transcended the frustration and pressures of this life.

Finally, this study indicates a need for the administration of the church to take seriously the issue of role conflict and ambiguity. Supervisory styles that make provision for greater autonomy and more participation of pastors in the decision-making processes of the church would help in minimizing the risks of role conflict. This study would also invite further research addressing the question of what the Seventh-day Adventist organization can do to assist pastors in a problem that could ultimately jeopardize the ministry of many church leaders and cripple the overall effectiveness of the church. Beyond the pastor's attempt to minimize and manage role stress, help must come quickly and surely from those individuals and committees that have the responsibility for setting policies and working for the ministry of the church.

## APPENDIX



136  
*The Seventh-day Adventist Church*  
of Madison, Wisconsin

3845 Dutch Mill Road

Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Phone (608) 224-3386

January 12, 1982

Dear Pastor:

Would you please take a few moments out of your busy schedule to assist me in a study that should provide some useful information and significant insights into the problem of role conflict and role ambiguity in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry?

As a pastor, I am acutely aware of the multitude of roles we perform, the pressures we face, and the many conflicting voices to which we must respond. Because of my awareness of this problem and my concern for the physical and emotional consequences of these pressures, I have chosen to study this issue for my Doctor of Ministry project. Your help and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Please consider carefully the roles and role descriptions on the following page. On the following pages you will find several equivalent lists. Please force rank these roles according to the instructions given at the top of each page.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please return the survey sheets to me at the Madison Church address on the letterhead above.

May the Lord continue to bless each of you in your service for Him.

Sincerely,

Michael G. McBride  
Pastor

MGM:jr

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rank the following pastoral roles according to the importance you would personally assign to each role in your ministry. Place a 1 on the line opposite the most important role, a 2 on the line opposite the second most important role, etc. If you are unable to distinguish between the importance of two or more roles, you may give them an equal rating, if necessary.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>IMPORTANCE</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rank the following pastoral roles according to the degree of effectiveness you experience in each role. Place a 1 on the line opposite the role you perform most effectively, a 2 on the line opposite the role you perform second most effectively, etc. If you are unable to distinguish between your effectiveness in two or more roles, you may give them an equal rating, if necessary.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>EFFECTIVENESS</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rank the following pastoral roles according to the amount of enjoyment you derive from performing each role. Place a 1 on the line opposite the role you enjoy the most, a 2 on the line opposite the role you enjoy second most, etc. If you are unable to differentiate between the amount of enjoyment you receive from performing two or more roles, you may give them an equal rating, if necessary.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>ENJOYMENT</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Based upon your work schedule from the previous month, please rank the following pastoral roles on the basis of the approximate amount of time you spent performing each role. Do not enter the actual amount of time but rather order the roles on the basis of rank order. Place a 1 on the line opposite the role you spent the most time performing, a 2 on the line opposite the role you spent the second most time performing, etc. If the amount of time you spent in two or more roles is equal, you may give them an equal rating for time spent.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>TIME SPENT</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rank the following pastoral roles on the basis of how you believe the conference administration would rank their importance. Place a 1 on the line opposite the role conference administration would consider most important, a 2 on the line opposite the second most important role, etc. If you feel the conference would assign equal importance to two or more roles you may give them an equal rating, if necessary.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>IMPORTANCE TO CHURCH ADMINISTRATION</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rank the following pastoral roles on the basis of how you feel your present congregation would evaluate the importance of each pastoral role in your local setting. Place a 1 on the line opposite the role your congregation would consider most important, a 2 opposite the role of next importance, etc. If you feel your congregation would assign equal importance to two or more roles you may give an equal rating, if necessary.

<u>ROLES</u>	<u>IMPORTANCE TO LOCAL CONGREGATION</u>
1. <u>Counselor</u> . . . . .	_____
2. <u>Preacher</u> . . . . .	_____
3. <u>Teacher</u> . . . . .	_____
4. <u>Visitor</u> . . . . .	_____
5. <u>Administrator</u> . . . . .	_____
6. <u>Public Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
7. <u>Personal Evangelist</u> . . . . .	_____
8. <u>Denominational Representative</u> . . . . .	_____
9. <u>Social Reformer</u> . . . . .	_____

INSTRUCTIONS: In the space provided below, please indicate and comment on what you consider to be the most significant pressures, and frustrations in your current pastoral ministry that stress you. Use the back of this sheet if more space is needed.

Are there other work roles that you feel could have been listed in this survey? If yes, please list and describe these roles as you understand them.





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*The* Seventh-day Adventist Church  
of Madison, Wisconsin

3815 Dutch Mill Road

Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Phone (608) 224-3386

January 12, 1982

Dear Church Administrator:

Would you please take a few moments out of your busy schedule to assist me in a study that should provide some useful information and significant insights into the problem of role conflict and role ambiguity in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry?

As a pastor, I am acutely aware of the multitude of roles we perform, the pressures we face, and the often conflicting voices to which we must respond. Because of my awareness of this problem and my concern for the physical and emotional consequences of these pressures, I have chosen to study this issue for my Doctor of Ministry project. Your help and consideration would be greatly appreciated.

Please consider carefully the roles and role descriptions listed on the following page. Please force rank these pastoral work roles according to the importance you would assign them. Place a 1 on the line opposite the most important role, a 2 on the line opposite the second most important role, etc. If you feel two or more roles are of equal importance you may give them an equal rating, if necessary.

Please return the second page to me at the Madison Church address on the letterhead above.

Thank you for your time and help. May the Lord continue to bless you in your service for Him.

Sincerely,

Michael G. McBride  
Pastor

MGM:jr

CLERGY WORK ROLES

1. Counselor: Helping distressed people with their personal, religious, and family problems. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Preacher: Speaking from the pulpit (and elsewhere) and helping people develop their faith through the spoken Word: conducting worship services. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Teacher: Classroom and program participation in religious education. This would include Bible classes, planning and/or teaching classes for the church, the need for study, preparation, writing and/or research. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Visitor: Calling in the homes of members or at their place of work in a systematic program to meet each member as pastor. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Administrator: Planning, organizing and implementing the work of the church: working with boards, and committees; coordinating activities to accomplish the mission of the church. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Public Evangelist: Bringing the faith and message to people through public meetings, calling on the unchurched people in the community, calling on prospective new members. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Personal Evangelist: Bringing the faith and message to people through Bible studies and personal approaches, calling on the unchurched people in the community, calling on prospective new members and training laymen. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Denominational Representative: Carrying a fair share of denominational responsibilities and carrying out denominational programs. Enlisting denominational resources for use in the local church. Representing all phases of the church to the local congregation. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Social Reformer: Develop, participate in, and execute programs for social and community improvement. \_\_\_\_\_

ASSUMPTION: For the sake of this survey, please assume the worker is pastoring a single church district of 200-250 members and has served in that congregation for at least eighteen months.



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The  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
of Madison, Wisconsin

3815 Dutch Mill Road

Madison, Wisconsin 53704

Phone (608) 224-3386

January 12, 1982

Dear Church Member:

Would you please take a few moments to assist me with a study that should provide some useful information and significant insights into the problem of role conflict and role ambiguity in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry? This issue I'm addressing in my Doctor of ministry project. Your assistance and cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

I am specifically interested in your expectations of your pastor as it relates to the work roles he performs. On the following page you will find a list of roles and role descriptions. Please consider these roles carefully and then force rank these roles on the basis of their importance to you as a Seventh-day Adventist member. Place a 1 on the line opposite the most important role, a 2 on the line opposite the second most important role, etc. If you feel two or more roles are of equal importance, you may give them an equal rating if necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please return the second page to me at the Madison Church address on the letterhead above.

Sincerely,

Michael G. McBride  
Pastor

MGM:jr

CLERGY WORK ROLES

1. Counselor: Helping distressed people with their personal, religious and family problems. \_\_\_\_\_
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9. Social Reformer: Develop, participate in, and execute programs for social and community improvement. \_\_\_\_\_

ASSUMPTION: For the sake of this survey please assume you are a member of a single church district of 200-250 members and that the pastor has served in this district for at least eighteen months.

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## VITA

Michael G. McBride was born in Seattle, Washington on May 27, 1948. After receiving his elementary education, he graduated from West Seattle High School in 1966. Mike attended the University of Washington from 1966-1970 where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration with double majors in personnel management and business education. In 1970 he was married to the former Beth Hawthorn; they have two children, Erin and Ryan, born in 1974 and 1976 respectively.

After two years of experience as assistant manager of the Washington Adventist Book Center, Mike attended Andrews University where he graduated in December of 1974 with a Master of Divinity degree.

Upon graduation from Andrews University, Mike served as the associate pastor of the Puyallup district. He was ordained to the gospel ministry at the Washington Conference Camp Meeting in June of 1977, and then pastored the Sequim Seventh-day Adventist church (1977-1981). He is currently under appointment as the pastor of the Madison, Wisconsin Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Mike's particular interests lie in preaching, counseling, and administration. He has conducted numerous workshops and seminars in marriage and family, and has a strong interest in the mental health needs of the clergy families. Mike is presently working toward a Ph.D. degree in counseling psychology from the University of Wisconsin.