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The Stressors Black Pastors Experience : A Counseling Perspective

Robert C. Rogers

The Stressors Black Pastors Experience: A Counseling Perspective

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Robert C. Rogers

Montclair State University

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Dissertation Chair: Dr. Dana Levitt

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We hereby approve the Dissertation

The Stressors Black Pastors Experience: A Counseling Perspective

of

Robert C. Rogers

Candidate for the Degree:

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Graduate Program:

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Certified by:

[redacted]

Dr. Scott Herness
Vice Provost for Research and
Dean of the Graduate School

5/16/22

Date:

Dissertation Committee:

[redacted]

Dr. Dana Levitt
Dissertation Chair

[redacted]

Dr. Michael Hannon

[redacted]

Dr. Pablo Tinio

Abstract

Researchers have described the clergy profession as one of several occupations for which stress exists as an integral part of their job, which can impact their well-being. The research has investigated this topic of pastoral stress from a color-blind, etic perspective without regard to the multicultural factors of racial identity and ethnicity. While Black pastors exist as a major subset of clergy nationwide, the exploration of stressors Black pastors experience and the relationship between their specific vocational stressors and wellness has been rarely studied. This study seeks to fill the gaps in the literature by targeting Black pastors from historically Black denominations as well as Black independent and nondenominational churches in its sample. Utilizing the ABC-X stress model along with hierarchical regression and path analysis, this study identified clergy distress (A-factor) experienced by Black pastors with pastors in medium and large congregations having significantly higher clergy distress than pastors in small churches. The coping strategies (B-factor) of stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry provided some protection against clergy distress. Black pastors further experienced some irritation (C-factor) from clergy distress, but only stress management provided protection against it. None of the coping strategies contributed to satisfaction with life (X-factor). The best safeguard against clergy distress and irritation was a joint praxis of spiritual well-being in daily life and stress management. In their own words, Black pastors identified major stressors they experienced in the church and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Black pastors further identified their levels of stress during the pandemic, social protests against racial injustice, and the number of additional areas of stress they experienced.

Keywords: clergy, pastor, stress, Black pastor, Black church, occupational distress

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to memories of three exemplary pastors and church leaders, whose years of service demonstrated faithful, dedicated servanthood, consistent closeness to God, and committed pastoral leadership and care for their congregations.

Rev. Gordon A. Rogers, 1919-1995, my father.

Rev. Clarence Williams, 1930-2018, District Superintendent.

Rev. Hubert Burwell, Jr., 1947-2020, close friend and colleague.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

There are over 300,000 persons serving as Protestant pastors in various denominations in the United States (Statista, 2009; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) defined the work of clergy to "conduct religious worship and perform other spiritual functions associated with beliefs and practices of religious faith or denomination [and] provide spiritual and moral guidance and assistance to members." The term clergy is a broad or umbrella term for persons who are officially commissioned, trained, and ordained by religious organizations to perform religious/spiritual services and/or provide leadership within the boundaries of their respective religious institutions. This term may apply to Jewish rabbis, Catholic priests, Muslim imams, Protestant pastors, and institutional chaplains. This study focuses on Protestant pastors working in congregations. The terms clergy and pastor may be used interchangeably in this document to refer to the population of interest in the study.

The work of pastors includes, among other responsibilities, preaching and teaching; program planning; supervising employees such as secretaries, other administrative staff, and custodians; training congregational leaders; coordinating volunteers; counseling members; responding to crisis situations of members; and providing pastoral care to members and families in times of sickness and death (Adams et al., 2017; Carroll, 2006). The work of pastors further includes representing the congregation in community affairs and serving the larger community by providing leadership and responding to social issues and problems. Hulme (1985) described pastors as the "managers or executive directors of their congregations" (p. 11). Therefore, pastors perform various roles within a church and community depending upon its size, location, and the needs of both the members and community.

Researchers have described pastors as one of several occupations for which stress exists as an integral part of the job (Adams et al., 2017; Darling et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2003). Adams et al. (2017) found the pastoral profession similar to social work, counseling, and teaching through their high levels of emotional involvement and interpersonal engagement with clients and students. Adams et al. described a similar comparison with emergency personnel and police in that all three professions experienced schedule unpredictability, frequent crisis response, and stress-induced physiological arousal. Moreover, pastors experienced similar levels of emotional exhaustion as social workers, counselors, and emergency personnel and lower levels of exhaustion than police officers and teachers (Adams et al., 2017). Epperly (2014) stated, "Ministry has always been challenging and potentially hazardous to the pastor and her or his family" (p. 22).

The challenges and stressors of pastoral ministry may affect pastors in different ways and, in the most extreme, may include burnout, leaving the ministry, or suicide (Doolittle, 2007, 2010). For example, Turton and Francis (2007) acknowledged the impact of work-related stress on Anglican pastors in England who suffered acute anxiety, depression, nervous breakdowns, and suicidal ideation. In another example, the *Washington Post* reported that Pastor Jarrid Wilson, associate pastor at Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, committed suicide in 2019 (Stone et al., 2019). Wilson had attempted to combat the stigma of mental illness by sharing his own struggles with depression and suicidal ideation and creating a nonprofit organization to provide resources for church people dealing with different areas of mental illness (Stone et al., 2019). On the day of his death, Wilson wrote social media posts concerning suicide, depression, and PTSD and indicated that he was conducting a funeral of a woman whose cause of death was suicide (Stone et al., 2019). The *Washington Post* further reported that

another pastor at age thirty, Andrew Stoecklein in California, had also committed suicide (Stone et al., 2019). These examples raise the questions of what stressors, mental health challenges, and psychological and physical strain pastors contend with and how all of these factors influence their degree of mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness while functioning in their pastoral roles.

Stress

The common use of the term "stress," in its noun and verb forms, finds expression in daily discourses, yet there may not be a common understanding of its definition and derivative meanings. Beginning with Selye (1974) who was a pioneer in researching stress, researchers have categorized stress in various ways. For example, Selye classified stress in positive and negative terms where negative stress, like losing a job, was denoted as distress and positive stress, like having a baby, was identified as eustress. As researchers continued to explore the dynamics and dimensions of stress, various classifications evolved. For example, acute stress involves experiencing a stressor in a brief, time-limited fashion (American Psychological Association, 2017b; Heid, 2019). Chronic stress involves ongoing strains and difficulties (Thoits, 2010) and “persistent and pervasive exposure to stressful event consequences" (APA, 2017b, p. 50). Heid (2019) acknowledged that chronic stress is a significant risk factor for various diseases and disorders. Daily stress involves everyday living challenges, inconveniences, and hassles, such as paying bills, waiting for a late train or bus in the rain, or grocery shopping and depends on one's resources and appraisal of the situations (APA, 2017b; Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Network stress is the stress one experiences when family members or friends experience non-life-threatening events (APA, 2017b). Stress clustering exists as the intensification of an individual's total stress due to experiencing stress in more than one area of

life (APA, 2017b). Stressful event sequences are a "series of stressful events over a period of time following an initiating [stressor] event" (APA, 2017b, p. 51). Vicarious trauma is the stress experienced by an individual when someone connected to them experiences trauma (APA, 2017b; Harrell, 2000).

The American Psychological Association (APA) has conducted an annual, nationwide survey since 2007, entitled *Stress in America*, of over 3,000 adults to assess the types, amounts, and impacts of stressors in the United States (APA, 2016). In the 2014 survey, the top stressors participants identified were job pressure, money, health, and relationships. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of participants acknowledged that they experienced physical symptoms and 73% of participants reported psychological symptoms caused by stress. Forty-eight percent (48%) reported that stress negatively affected their professional and personal lives while 30% reported being constantly affected by work stress (APA, 2014). The APA 2019 survey found that, while their overall stress levels may have slightly changed from 2015-2019, respondents identified specific societal issues as significant sources of stress, such as health care, mass shootings, the 2020 presidential election, climate change, violence and crime, immigration, discrimination, sexual harassment, and acts of terrorism. When asked to identify the personal stressors they experienced, 60% identified money and 64% identified work as the most significant and reported sources of stress (APA, 2019a).

Work-Related/Vocational Stress

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 1999) defined job stress as the "harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker" (p. 6) and noted that it results "from the interaction of the worker and the conditions at work" (p. 7). Occupational

stressors occur in a workplace environment and may negatively influence the wellness of employees by causing psychological and physical strain, such as anxiety, tension, depression, headaches, body aches, high blood pressure, and illness (Beehr et al., 2001). Occupational or workplace stressors may find their source in organizational dynamics, working relationships, interpersonal conflict and miscommunication, demands and expectations people may hold, discrimination, sexual harassment, heavy workloads, low or unequal pay, lack of promotion or career advancement, and lack of social support (APA, 2018; Beehr et al., 2001). These stressors experienced in work environments may be acute or chronic (Ford et al., 2014).

Lazarus (1999) applied his stress model of the person-environment interaction to workplace settings and emphasized the individual nature of how workers appraise and cope with workplace stress. In understanding workplace stress, it is important to pay attention to the individual's personal agendas and work-related values and goals and how these may be compatible or conflict with workplace demands (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus further acknowledged that "patterns of coping varied in the same person from one stressful experience to another" (p. 8). In agreement with Lazarus, Troup and Dewe (2002) described the transactional view of stress as the interaction between the worker and their environment and their influence on each other.

The perception and assessment of the workplace environment and dynamics may lead workers to appraise the same situation differently. For example, a workplace challenge is different from stress in that a challenge lies within the realm of the worker's resources and capabilities, even though they might be stretched (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; NIOSH, 1999). What may be a challenge for one employee may be a stressor to another due to the latter’s lack of resources and capabilities. NIOSH (1999) reported these statistics on job stress by workers:

> (1) 40% described their job as very or extremely stressful, (2) 29% felt quite a bit or extremely stressed at work, (3) 25% saw their jobs as the number one stressor in life, and (4) 75% believed they had more work stress than the previous generation. (pp. 4-5)

While this NIOSH data is somewhat dated, its value may lie in its historical perspective in identifying past perceptions of the impact of workplace stress and raises the question of how today's workers appraise their job stress levels. For pastors, congregations, which are organized faith communities, comprise the workplaces where they perform their professional roles and responsibilities. Church buildings are the structures and physical locations where congregations gather and operate, but in reality, the work of pastors centers on their relationships and interactions with church and community members. This fact has been especially demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic where church buildings were closed, but pastors still worked and addressed the needs of church members and the communities where the church buildings were located.

Pastoral Stress

Pastoral stress is the stress that pastors experience from their interactions within their church work environments in working with members when their cognitive appraisals of encounters lead them to perceive harm/loss, threat, or challenge with possible insufficient resources to cope with or manage the situation effectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For example, pastors experienced the stress of harm/loss when state governments mandated the closure of houses of worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pastors experienced the stress of threat by the possible death of members who had contracted the coronavirus without pastors being able to provide their in-person pastoral duties of spiritual support in times of sickness and crisis. Moreover, pastors faced the stress of challenge of how to reopen their houses of worship

according to Center of Disease Control (CDC) and state government guidelines. Pastors may even further experience the challenge of being a peacekeeper between individuals and/or groups with conflicting views, agendas, or personalities regarding congregational issues (Hill et al., 2003). As the leaders of their congregations, pastors experience similar stressors as other managers or executive directors in the nonprofit sector, such as working with volunteers, fundraising, promoting its programs to target audiences, and managing daily operations (Hulme, 1985).

Pastoral stress can manifest in different ways for pastors in interactions with their congregations and work environments. According to Pappas (1995), stress was equivalent to conflicted or opposing energies where the energy of the pastor ran counter to the energy of members, the congregation as a whole, or persons or systems outside the congregation. For example, the expectations of the pastor may clash with the expectations of individual members or the congregation as a whole. A pastor may preach what she/he considers a powerful sermon on the need for social justice in the United States, but then the pastor is confronted publicly by members who strongly disagreed with the sermon. Pappas further defined pastoral stress as the "internal pain and/or confusion that occurs when energies cross instead of align" (p. 6). Moreover, Epperly (2014) and his network of Facebook pastor friends identified stress in the following areas: (1) using technology and social media and its influence on their ministry and accessibility, (2) not enough time to get work done, (3) members' expectations and perceptions of their pastor's authority, (4) lack of member involvement in church life and ministries, (5) maintaining appropriate boundaries with members, (6) managing personal and church finances with the question of always if there is ever enough, (7) the world becoming smaller and what is happening in one part of the world affecting other parts, (8) pastors moving without establishing

long-term roots in one location, (9) competing religious and spiritual alternatives to the traditional church, and (10) the conflict between what the church is supposed to be and do according to Biblical guidelines versus what the church actually is and how it functions.

Dorn (1992) posited that work environment experiences of occupational stress can influence physical and emotional health. Indeed, pastors who continually minister to congregants and serve the community "while ignoring, dismissing, or minimizing their own needs for balance and self-care" (Lawson et al., 2007, p. 5) may place themselves at risk of becoming less effective or even jeopardize their wellness (Chandler, 2009, 2010; Epperly, 2014; Oswald, 1991). For example, high levels of stress along with ineffective efforts to manage stress may lead to a pastor's reduced capacity to empathize and be present with members, which is described as compassion fatigue (Lawson & Myers, 2011).

Chandler (2009) further acknowledged a pastoral tendency of "self-denial of one's legitimate needs in favor of saving or rescuing others" (p. 274). There was also a proneness to burnout while experiencing stress through unrealistic expectations, time demands, isolation, and loneliness, all of which significantly impact the wellness of pastors (Chandler, 2009, 2010). Proeschold-Bell and Byassee (2018) found that some pastors needed permission to take a day off and practice other forms of self-care. Moreover, Wimberley (2016) raised the concern of the mental health among Black pastors and how it might affect the well-being of members after finding some possible indication of depression among a small sample of pastors using the Beck Depression Inventory-II. Chandler (2010) acknowledged that pastors neglect their own need for spiritual growth while encouraging congregants' spiritual development. While Lawson et al. (2007) acknowledged the importance of counselors being aware of their level of wellness, the challenges to obtaining optimal wellness, and being actively engaged in maintaining their self-

care, the same needs for awareness and proactivity may apply to pastors in general and Black pastors in particular.

Problem Statement

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), Frazier (1964), and Gates (2021) have documented the historical existence and ministerial functioning of Black pastors since the 18th century. Lincoln and Mamiya further presented an historical analysis of seven predominantly Black denominations, which have been in existence since the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries: African Methodist Episcopal (AME); African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ); Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME); Church Of God In Christ (COGIC); National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA); National Baptist Convention (NBC); and Progressive National Baptist Association (PNBA). Moreover, Black churches within each of these denominations have functioned as one of the foremost influential institutions in Black communities across this country (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). While Black pastors have been leading Black churches and serving in Black communities since the inception of the Black Church in the 18th century, there is little research on the culture-specific vocational stressors experienced by Black pastors.

The absence of Black pastors from the research on pastoral stress seems puzzling as there is data regarding the number of Black churches and their total membership by denomination, which was published in the 2012 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches as depicted in Table 1. While this data may be somewhat dated, it acknowledges the existence of Black pastors serving Black churches. An updated estimate of total aggregate numbers for Black denominations came from the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC), which is a collaboration of the leaders of eight historically Black denominations: African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church, Christian

Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church, Church of God in Christ (COGIC), Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International (FGBCFI), National Baptist Convention of America (NBCA), National Baptist Convention USA (NBC USA), and Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC). The CNBC claims to represent 80% of Black Christians, which includes 15 million members and 30 thousand churches (CNBC, n.d.). Through their dialogue and concerted action, the CNBC seeks to continue the Black Church's historic role of improving the lives of Black people and the vitality of the communities where member churches are located by addressing local and global challenges, important social justice issues, and public policy matters (CNBC, n.d.). This updated data on Black churches further raises concern about why Black pastors have not been targeted in the pastoral stress research but only included in the aggregate.

Table 1

Black Church Demographics by Number of Churches and Total Membership

Denomination (year of data)	# of Churches	Total Membership	2020: Total Membership
African Methodist Episcopal Church (2009)	4,100	2,500,000	
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (2010)		1,400,000	
Christian Methodist Episcopal (2006)	3,500	850,000	1,200,000
Church of God in Christ (1991)	15,300	5,499,875	6,500,000
National Baptist Convention of America (2000)		3,500,000	
National Baptist Convention, USA (2010)	10,358	5,197,512	
National Missionary Baptist Convention of America (1992)		2,500,000	
Progressive National Baptist Convention (2009)	1,500	1,010,000	

Note. Empty cells indicate that the information could not be found. Adapted from 2012 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches. Retrieved from https://www.yearbookofchurches.org/.

In addition to these eight denominations, there are other Black denominations, fellowship groups, and churches, which comprise the Black Church landscape, such as the National Missionary Baptist Church Convention, United Holy Church of America, United Pentecostal Churches of Christ, Covenant Kingdom Ministries International, All Nations Covenant Assemblies, Lively Stone Church, Kingdom City Church, Pilgrim Assemblies International, and Apostolic Pentecostal Church (Pew, 2015). Moreover, there are independent Black churches, which may have names like major denominations (e.g., Baptist, COGIC), but have no connection with them and are unaffiliated and nondenominational Black churches. This myriad of Black denominations and churches reflects the diversity and division within the Black Church. More specifically, there is great diversity within the Black population in terms of their cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, and religious/spiritual needs, which leads persons to seek a church relevant to their cultural background and befitting to their needs. In addition, it is an integral part of Black Church history that disagreement and conflict have resulted in denominations and local churches splitting to form new ones. For example, in one suburban town two new Baptist churches came into existence from members leaving the one large Baptist church; while in an urban city two new COGIC churches came out of one large COGIC church. The existence of these diverse Black churches further raises concern about the lack of inclusion of Black pastors in this area of research.

While Black pastors exist as a major subset of pastors nationwide, the exploration of stressors Black pastors experience and the effect of their specific vocational stressors has been

rarely studied. Given the systemic exclusion of historically Black denominations and Black pastors from this area of research, White Christianity seems to have been considered the norm for religious expression in America and White pastors the norm for the pastoral profession. DiAngelo (2018) asserted, "Whiteness rests upon a foundational premise: the definition of whites as the norm or standard for human, and people of color as a deviation from that norm" (p. 25). This foundational premise exists not only in religion but also in other areas of American culture such as beauty and fashion. The exclusion of Black pastors from this area of research further reflects our society's underlying ideology and modus operandi of White superiority and Black inferiority (DiAngelo, 2018). Furthermore, the absence of Black pastors and the Black Church from the research on pastoral stressors seems synonymous with American history being written without the inclusion of Native Americans and African Americans.

There is much research across White denominations and denominational-specific populations concerning the vocational stressors pastors experience; however, in most studies, only a small subset of the samples may have been pastors of color (Darling et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2003; Lee, 2000; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994, 1998). Researchers have investigated this topic of vocational stress from a color-blind, etic perspective without regard to the multicultural factors of racial identity and ethnicity. Even more recent research has continued to focus on the occupational stress and its impact in participant samples of primarily White pastors in White mainline denominations (Hough et al., 2019; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Terry & Cunningham, 2020; Webb & Chase, 2019). Darling et al. (2004) and Hill et al. (2003) acknowledged the importance of future research including populations with various ethnic and racial backgrounds. The American Counseling Association *Code of Ethics* (ACA, 2014) acknowledged that "honoring diversity and embracing a multicultural approach in support

of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts" (p. 3) as one of the profession's fundamental core values. The ethical principle of justice, which implies fairness, rightness, and equity, is relevant to this area of study due to mostly White voices – and primarily White, male voices - have been heard in the past research.

The voices and stories of Black pastors have recently come to light in the news media concerning the impact of stressors they have experienced. Cooper (2019) reported that the pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, resigned due to the physical and mental toll pastoral stress had on him, which included symptoms of a depressive episode and feeling empty inside. Cooper further reported on the stressors experienced by other Black pastors in that same area. One pastor suffered an anxiety attack, which hospitalized him, while he also acknowledged not having taken a vacation in his first few years of being a pastor. Another pastor realized the negative impact of his pastoral stress, his limitations, and need for time off, which led the church to grant him a six-month sabbatical (Cooper, 2019).

Rev. Dr. Howard John Wesley, pastor of the Alfred Street Baptist Church in Virginia, acknowledged to his congregation, the *Washington Post*, and *CBS This Morning* that after eleven years of continual pastoral work he was tired and was taking a sabbatical (Bailey, 2019; Brown & Patrick, 2019). He further acknowledged, "I feel so distant from God...One of the greatest mistakes of pastoring is to think that because you work for God, you're close to God" (Bailey, 2019). Wesley described the stressors in being a pastor as including being on-call 24 hours each day of the week, preaching each Sunday, being present with members through their life struggles, conducting funerals, and growing the congregation (Bailey, 2019). Furthermore, Pastor Wesley was emotionally shaken by the suicide of Pastor Jarrid Wilson in California, which received national attention and served as a wakeup call for himself (Stone et al., 2019).

Wesley's public honesty and transparency about his pastoral stress and need for self-care brought attention to this problem. The question remains regarding the extent and impact of the types of stressors Wesley and other Black pastors have described on their personal wellness.

Pastoral Stressors and the Coronavirus Pandemic

While Black pastors have helped Black people survive historically in the worst of times (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990), the COVID-19 pandemic brought a new, unexpected threat to the survival of Black people. The first COVID-19 case discovered on January 21, 2020 in the United States involved an individual who had returned to Washington State from Wuhan, China. The first COVID-19 case in New Jersey was discovered on March 4, 2020, and within one month's time there were reported 34,124 cases and 846 deaths. The death total by April 4, 2020 exceeded the number of New Jersey citizens killed in the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001. By May 27, 2020, the United States had 1.7 million COVID-19 cases and reached the milestone of 100,243 deaths. Over the course of the next several months, the United States achieved other ominous milestones, such as 250,000 deaths by November 18, 2020, over 400,000 deaths and 25 million COVID-19 cases by January 23, 2021, and over 500,000 deaths by February 22, 2021 (COVID Tracking Project, n.d.). By December 15, 2021, the United States reached the milestone of 800,000 deaths (Bosman et al., 2021).

Black pastors had to find new ways to support church and community members when COVID-19 hit Black communities with higher rates of infection and death in many states and major cities, where such rates were connected to underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and chronic lung disease whose prevalence is higher in Black Americans (Eligon et al., 2020; Villarosa, 2020). The coronavirus provided more evidence of implicit bias in medical treatment where Black people were less likely than Whites to be tested and treated for

COVID-19 (Eligon & Burch, 2020; Villarosa, 2020). The impact of COVID-19 on Black people was further evidenced by data indicating that (1) Black Americans were two times more likely to die from COVID-19 than other races; (2) 11% of Black Americans reported being close to someone who died from the virus versus 4% of White Americans; (3) Black people had a higher unemployment rate than Whites (16.8% versus 12.4%); and (4) a higher percentage of black-owned businesses (41%) than White-owned (17%) shut down during the pandemic (Associated Press, 2020; Leatherby, 2020; Stolberg, 2020).

While Black pastors dealt with the life-threatening reality of COVID-19 on church and community members, they also became concerned about the impact on Black churches. While much of churches' life and work have traditionally been carried out through interpersonal presence and contact, the government's restrictions on social gatherings forced all churches to close their doors indefinitely and switch to online services. DeSouza et al. (2021) underscored the historic significance of the closing of Black churches and the emotional, spiritual, and social impact on church members: “Yet, for the first time in our history, African Americans must cope with the contextually valid fears of COVID-19 without physical access to our religious havens to alleviate mental distress” (p. 9).

As a result, Black pastors worried about (1) staying connected to members who they could not see at church services, (2) providing spiritual, emotional, and other needed services to members when they could not come to the church, (3) keeping members connected to each other so that no members, especially seniors, were isolated, and (4) keeping the church afloat or solvent financially, especially since members could not gather on Sundays when offerings are received. Black pastors in New Jersey became increasingly concerned about the survival and future of their congregations and began to reach out to one another on how to cope with this new

situation. Through a snowball effect with more than 200 Black pastors mostly from New Jersey and some from New York gathering on a conference call on March 16, 2020, these pastors explored ways of how their churches could continue to operate and even survive in the growing pandemic.

Some Black pastors further acknowledged feeling stressed about fulfilling their pastoral responsibilities in the midst of this pandemic. For example, how does a pastor provide pastoral presence and support to hospitalized dying members who cannot have visitors but must die alone? After that member dies, given the restrictions on funerals, how can the member's biological family, church family, friends, and neighbors engage in remembering and celebrating their life? Pastoral stress quickly manifested in the form of grief for and loss of church members and clergy colleagues who died during the pandemic. How did Black pastors find the time to grieve the loss of their church members, clergy colleagues, close friends, and even family members to COVID-19 when they were so busy comforting others and still performing their pastoral responsibilities? How did Black pastors cope with the stress of so many losses at the same time? One African Methodist Episcopal (AME) pastor from Texas shared in a LinkedIn message with me that "we are as a whole dealing with so many challenges. As leaders we battle with our own care but worry more about others and this is too taxing." One fundamental question continues to exist as to who pastors the pastor and from where Black pastors receive support and empowerment to keep functioning effectively in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need to identify and understand the stressors Black pastors experience.

Pastoral Stress and Racial Inequities and Injustice

Before the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Black people have experienced and survived an unwavering pandemic of racism, racial injustice, and oppression from 1619 to the

present, which has threatened not only their physical lives through death but also all dimensions of their wellness - social, economic, mental, emotional, and physical - if they survived. Black pastors have been one constant resource and source of support, who have been instrumental in the survival of Black people over generations in a society of white supremacy, racial injustice, and inequities. Since this study focused on a Black population, the importance and significance of race needs to be acknowledged, especially given the health disparities evident by race (DeSouza et al., 2021; Hicken et al., 2014; Sternthal et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2010). For example, comparing the number of stressors experienced by race, Blacks experienced more stressors than Whites and Hispanics across the accumulation of acute life events, employment stressors, financial stressors, life discrimination, job discrimination, relationship stressors, early life stressors, and community stressors, as well as experienced a higher co-occurrence or clustering of two or more stressors than Whites (Sternthal et al., 2011). Sternthal et al. (2011) reported that all of the above stressors were significantly associated with poor self-reported health and depressive symptoms, while life events, financial stressors, and relationship stressors were associated with an increased risk of chronic illnesses and functional physical limitations. Indicating a relationship between stress and health, APA (2016) reported that 46% of Black adults reported having both very high stress and fair or poor health while Blacks with low stress (22%) reported having fair or poor health. A similar finding existed for Latinx adults with 35% reporting very high stress and fair or poor health while only 19% with low stress indicated fair or poor health (APA, 2016). By virtue of their race alone, Black pastors may experience more stress than White pastors.

Racial discrimination exists as a stressor, which may be acute or chronic depending on the social context. Racial discrimination provides an additive effect whereby Black people and

people of color experience stress proliferation in which one stressor can lead to additional stressors being added to other areas of an individual's life or aggravate existing stressors (Thoits, 2010; Williams, 2018). For example, discrimination in employment may lead to unemployment or under-employment which in turn may lead to financial and housing stressors, both of which may prohibit access to needed prescription medication or healthy foods. Lacking access to resources can potentially make it harder for racial/ethnic minorities and low-income persons to cope with stressor events (APA, 2017). These stressors are known to contribute to the onset, development, and progression of depression and other adverse mental health outcomes. "Both race and SES influence stress exposure, as these social status variables affect the demands people face and their access to the resources necessary to meet those demands" where a greater degree of stress exposure may be a factor in various health disparities (APA, 2017, p. 10). Racial discrimination correlated positively with both depressive and anxiety symptoms as well as psychological distress (Williams, 2018). DeSouza et al. (2021) acknowledged the negative effects of racism on both mental and physical health, but especially on mental health. Black pastors have historically helped church and community members cope with, respond to, and survive through racial discrimination incidents and systemic practices. Yet, how do Black pastors cope with stress caused by racial discrimination?

We have seen how much race matters through the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, Jacob Blake, Amadou Dialllo, Eric Garner, Philandro Castille, Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, Daniel Prude, Elijah McClain, and Manuel Ellis and the systemic manifestations of White supremacist ideologies (Liu, 2017). Further evidence that race matters is seen in the daily experiences of racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2019) and the multidimensional impact of racism on people of color (Brondolo et al., 2016; Carter, 2007;

Hanna et al., 2000; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2016; Williams, 2018; Williams et al., 2010). As an integral component of their lives experienced by people of color, Harrell (2000) defined racism-related stress as "the race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten well-being" (p. 44). Harrell identified six types of racism-related stress: (1) racism-related life events, such as driving while Black and jogging while Black, (2) vicarious racism experiences, which are reported in the media such as the deaths of so many Black people by law enforcement, (3) daily racial microaggressions, such as a Black student being viewed as an intruder in a dormitory, (4) chronic social stress resulting from structural/institutional racism such as poor quality housing and schools in minority neighborhoods, (5) collective minority group experiences, such as repealing of voting rights and dismantling of affirmative action, and (6) transgenerational transmission of racism-related history and incidents of trauma. Given their own racial identity, Black pastors themselves may be vulnerable to any of these types of racism-related stress.

While it is in the realm of possibility that Black pastors may experience any or all of these types of racism-related stress, it is worth noting that, in their leadership role and connection with church members, Black pastors have been called upon to provide emotional and spiritual support to church and community members. The Ahmaud Arbery trial provided a key example of the role and influence Black pastors have within the social justice arena. Just their mere presence in the courtroom, by sitting with the Arbery family, caused the defense attorney to request a mistrial and seek to ban any Black pastors from further being in the courtroom, which the judge denied (Fausseet & Mzezewa, 2021; Knowles, 2021). Rev. Al Sharpton stated that the presence of Black pastors in part was to provide spiritual strength and community support to the

family to help them bear their pain (Knowles, 2021; Sayers et al., 2021). On Thursday, November 18, 2021 hundreds of Black pastors along with a few White pastors gathered outside the courtroom for a rally to offer prayers and show support for the family (Collins, 2021). Black pastors have used prayer rallies historically to undergird their strategies during social protests (Collins, 2021). Most importantly, Black pastors' presence in social justice protests have provided leadership, needed attention, and a rallying point for community support.

It is further possible that Black pastors may experience vicarious racism-related stress through church and community members sharing their own experiences of racism-related stressors and encounters with law enforcement (Harrell, 2000). Moreover, church members, the community, or the media may seek out Black pastors to comment publicly on both vicarious and collective racism experiences to provide meaning and perspective on these instances of racial injustice. Alternatively, Black pastors may decide to address these incidents in a Sunday sermon. Such a burden of responsibility may increase the stress that Black pastors experience.

Black people demonstrate greater vigilance for discrimination than Whites where such vigilance is positively correlated with depressive symptoms (Williams, 2018). Thirty-one percent (31%) of Latinx adults and 29% of Black adults anticipated poor service or harassment and also reported giving more attention to how they were dressed in order to get good service and avoid harassment (APA, 2016). Blacks have been found to have a higher prevalence of hypertension than Whites as well as a higher level of vigilance against racial discrimination (Hicken et al., 2014). Hicken et al. (2014) found that a higher level of vigilance was associated with higher incidence of hypertension. Blacks experienced more emotional and physical stress symptoms than Latinx, Whites, and other races from their racist encounters (Anderson, 2013). The experience of emotional and physical stress led racial minority group members to having a

higher number of poor mental and physical health days (Anderson, 2013). Black pastors may experience such discrimination in their daily lives outside of their pastoral roles, such as going to a mall dressed casually and then followed by security as a potential shoplifter.

Sawyer et al. (2012) found that minority group members just thinking about and expecting a discriminatory encounter experienced higher blood pressure, heart rates, and stress-related emotions. Sawyer et al. also reported that "anticipating prejudice or discrimination because of one's social identity can increase vigilance, or hyperawareness for cues of mistreatment" (p. 1020). Further, these researchers reported that the stressor of anticipated discrimination influence people's mental and physical health to such a degree to "be a contributing factor to racial/ethnic health disparities in the United States" (Sawyer et al., 2012, p. 1020). When the vigilance is chronic, then persons may experience health-related problems resulting from the body's inability to effectively manage and turn off its stress response system (Sapolsky, 2004; Sawyer et al., 2012; Seyle, 1974). Black pastors are not immune themselves to having such vigilance, and yet, at the same, they support both church and community members who live with such vigilance.

Racism and discriminatory-related stress increase the stress burden on minority groups, which negatively impacts their physical and mental health (DeSouza et al., 2021; Thoits, 2010). Black pastors are not exempt from their own experiences of racism and discrimination, and the impact these have on their emotional, mental, and physical well-being. However, the demands of their pastoral responsibilities and high-profile leadership roles require Black pastors to persevere and provide a public example of resilience, endurance, patience, and strength for church and community members, all of which may increase their stress. Further research can help to clarify and understand the types of stress experienced and coping strategies employed by Black pastors

during such critical times as the COVID-19 pandemic, incidences of racial injustice, and Black unemployment, especially when these may be clustered with other types of pastoral stress and personal life stressors.

Black pastors have served a fundamental role in the survival, healing, empowerment, and development of Black people (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Black pastors are a unique population, as they are religious and community leaders whose power and influence are experienced not only in their respective churches but also in the communities where they serve. While they have a significant influence in the lives of people, it is important to understand what stressors influence them, their leadership ability, interpersonal skills, the quality of the work that they do, and their quality of life. At the same time, pastors are human beings in their own respective psychosocial developmental stages with each having their own unique physical environment, relationships, psychological world, and spiritual connection. While church members may fail to see their pastor's humanity, frailty, or brokenness (Oswald, 1991; Wimberley, 2016), as counselors, we view pastors as persons, who experience similar existential realities as the members they serve.

With our commitment to wellness, we view pastors as having the potential to overcome obstacles to growth, fulfill their potential, and live authentic and meaningful lives (Vos et al., 2015). However, who pastors the pastor and nurtures their emotional and spiritual development to assist them in living productive lives? Their effectiveness as pastors may be affected by the stressors they experience and the coping strategies they may or may not implement. Echoing the sentiments of Pastor Howard John Wesley, Oswald (1991) characterized pastors' experiences by stating, "In addition to being there for people through all the joys and traumas of their lives, we are expected somehow, by magic, to keep everybody happy and make our congregations grow"

(p. 26). Oswald further posited that pastors are likely unaware of the number and intensity of stressors they experience daily.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions: What vocational stressors do Black pastors experience? What is the relationship between these stressors and the emotional and mental wellness of Black pastors?

The study partially replicated the research of Darling et al. (2004), which examined how stress and coping strategies affected the quality of life for pastors and their spouses utilizing family stress theory. Hill (1949) conceptualized family stress theory with the ABC-X model where: A represents the initial stressor event; B equals the family's coping resources; C equals the definition of the stressor event; where the combination of these factors leads to X, the level of crisis or stress experienced.

Darling et al. (2004) utilized the following predictor and criterion variables into the ABC-X model: A equaled family stress and compassion fatigue; B represented coping and spiritual resources; C stood for psychological strain, physical strain, and sense of coherence; and X described quality of life. Paralleling Darling et al.'s study and utilizing the ABC-X stress model, this study will seek to identify clergy distress (A-factor) and stress management and spiritual coping strategies (B-factor), assess the influence of the stressors on the psychological strain experienced by pastors (C-factor), and evaluate the effect of the stressors, coping strategies, and psychological strain on pastors' satisfaction with life (X-factor). The use of this theoretical framework will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Significance of the Study

While Black pastors have been instrumental in the survival of Black people historically, pastoral stress poses a threat to their well-being and possible survival. Black pastors' roles in the lives of Black people have been continuously documented in Black history (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990), yet their wellness has not garnered adequate attention in the pastoral stress research. As Gates (2021) asserted that the Black Church is fundamental to the Black experience in American history, it naturally follows that Black pastors have been fundamental, not only to the Black Church and Black history, but also to American history from slavery to the present. This study holds significance in that in the present study Black pastors identify themselves the stressors they experience and seek to ascertain the cost of these stressors on their emotional and mental wellness. This study will bring a multicultural perspective to the pastoral stress research by (1) including a population sample, Black pastors – male and female, which has been omitted from the research and (2) comparing and contrasting this study with previous research.

Based upon a story in the Talmud of where Rabbi Yoshua ben Levi could find the Messiah, Nouwen (1972) depicted both the Messiah and pastors as wounded healers, who have bandaged up their own wounds so that they were prepared to serve others as the need appeared. Nouwen's depiction, which has been popular among clergy across denominations, contains these important factors: (1) the Messiah (or wounded healer) is sitting among the poor and at the city gate, which symbolizes the healer's own humanity and connection with everyday people; (2) the Messiah realizes that he/she has wounds as his/her fellow citizens, even though his/hers may or may not be similar; and (3) the Messiah realizes that his/her wounds need attention and care first in preparation to heal others. This metaphor of pastors as wounded healers

brings further significance and purpose of this study. Black pastors lead and serve church and community members as fellow human beings, both experiencing existential realities of life, with the pastors' God-given leadership role of promoting the wellness and survival of Black people. Yet, Black pastors have their own wellness and survival to contend with but, as the research indicates, pastors tend to place the wellness of others before their own (Chandler, 2009, 2010). At the same time, Black pastors have their own wounds, issues, and stressors which may require self-care; however, unless they are aware of them, they will not be addressed. The significance of this study lies in its potential to help Black pastors: (1) identify the stressors they experience and how those stressors may influence their wellness and ability to serve and (2) evaluate their stress management and spiritual well-being strategies used to combat stress. Unless Black pastors address their stressors with the appropriate coping strategies, they may not be able to lead effectively and help church and community members. As such, using Nouwen's symbolism, Black pastors may be wounded, but may not be healers.

This study may benefit Black pastors, lay leaders, members, and Black Church denominational executives by applying a systems perspective, which may help them to: (1) identify congregational and denominational sources of pastoral stressors, (2) understand the influence these stressors may have on pastors and congregations, (3) evaluate the social and congregational contexts and dynamics in which the stressors function, and (4) identify collective strategies to combat stress, conflict, and dysfunction within congregational systems (Friedman, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Oswald, 1991; Pappas, 1995; Steinke, 1993). This study can potentially encourage reflection and discussion within historically Black Church denominations, their member congregations, and other predominantly Black churches concerning the emotional

and mental health needs of Black pastors and how to assist and support them to live healthier lives.

Positionality of the Researcher

As the researcher, I have served for 27 years and presently serve as a Black pastor of a Black Pentecostal congregation of approximately 150 members, located in a suburban area. The congregation is affiliated with the Church Of God In Christ, the largest Black Pentecostal denomination world-wide with over six million members located within the continental United States and several foreign countries. I grew up within this same congregation where my deceased father served as pastor for 30 years and my mother was the pastor's wife or first lady, piano player, Sunday School teacher, deaconess, and missionary. As part of the first family, my three siblings and I were raised in the church and taught its values and doctrines. Without a choice, we were active participants in the life of the church attending its services and programs faithfully, which included Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening worship services, Sunday School, weeknight prayer service, choir rehearsal, and children/youth activities.

In my tenure as pastor, I have experienced several pastoral stressors, such as members not accepting change or new programs, personal and family criticism, personality differences, raising money for new church construction, miscommunication and conflict, time demands limiting family time, isolation, and loneliness. I acknowledge that my experience of pastoral stressors is uniquely mine, based upon my primary and secondary appraisals of the interpersonal dynamics in the church and the problem-focused and emotion-focused problem-solving strategies I implemented. I further acknowledge that any other pastor facing similar church work dynamics might appraise their situations differently and engage in different problem-solving and emotion-focused strategies available to them. The purpose of this study was to objectively identify the

church work-related stressors Black pastors may experience, which may be similar and/or different from my own experience. While my pastoral experience informs me of the Black Church and Black pastors' roles and responsibilities and may allow me to identify and empathize with study participants, my experience with pastoral stressors is not under study here.

Based on my experience of serving in White mainline churches during my seminary training years and beginning in my ministry career, I believe that serving as a Black pastor in a Black church is different than serving in a White church. I have worked in ecumenical and interfaith congregation/clergy associations where I either have led or participated in activities/programs to build relations amongst congregations, combat racism, and promote social justice. From these experiences and relationships, I acknowledge the similarity of pastoral roles which Black, White, and Latinx pastors share. However, I approach this study with the belief that the existential experiences and realities of being a Black pastor are significantly different from a White pastor.

I believe that the Church is a God-established, imperfect religious/spiritual institution whose purpose is to transform lives, promote spiritual identity and development, encourage emotional and psychological wellness, and be a prophetic voice and catalyst for social justice in the world. Furthermore, I believe that the Black Church is a powerful community institution and plays an important role in the survival and empowerment of Black people. Since the literature has focused primarily on White clergy, in addition to my intellectual curiosity, I believe that it is a matter of justice, according to our ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014), to seek to study the experiences of Black pastors.

A concerted effort to reduce researcher bias has been implemented through keeping a researcher journal to record thoughts, feelings, and impressions. Moreover, I created and used a

critical friend's group to review drafts, receive feedback, challenge assumptions, bounce ideas off of, and keep me focused and objective.

Personal Counseling Framework

My counseling theory frameworks of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and existential counseling provide a lens through which I approached this study. CBT posits that dysfunctional thinking and cognitive distortions cause psychological disturbances and mental illness (Beck, 2011). CBT is based on the cognitive model that a situation will trigger a person's automatic thoughts and interpretation of the situation, which will then lead to the person's emotional, behavioral, and physiological reactions (Beck, 2011). The client's automatic thoughts are undergirded by core beliefs, which are generalized beliefs of how the client sees themselves and their place in the world and fall into three categories: helpless core beliefs, unlovable core beliefs, and worthless core beliefs (Beck, 2011). CBT further posits that clients develop conditional assumptions and rules as their copings strategies which help to protect them from the activation of their core beliefs (Beck, 2011). My CBT counseling orientation naturally draws me to examine what pastors think about their interactions within their church environments and how their thoughts, beliefs, values, commitments, and agendas (both personal and church) influence their cognitive appraisals of their encounters as well as their actions and reactions.

Existential counseling holds certain existential philosophical assumptions, such as (1) people need meaning and purpose in life in order to live effectively; (2) people have the ability to choose and exercise freedom; (3) people have human potential which they can actualize by taking responsibility for their choices and how they live; (4) life is filled with challenges, realities, and the givens of life, which persons need to face in order to live meaningful lives; (5) a phenomenological view of life is necessary to understand another's lived experience; and (6)

each person's lived experience happens in a social context and location (Vos et al., 2015). My existential counseling orientation leads me to focus on the dynamics of Black pastors' interactions in their church work environments and their dynamic influence on each other, as well as what meaning pastors give to their work experiences. I am further concerned about the question of pastoral identity, specifically regarding how pastors see and understand themselves as pastors, what meaning their identities hold for them, how their pastoral identity intersects with other social identities (e.g., race, gender, age, marital status, SES), and how salient each identity is. Moreover, I am interested in what choices do pastors make and on what basis (e.g., beliefs, values, commitments) they are made to fulfill their roles and responsibilities.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and overview of this study, including defining stress, workplace or vocational stress, and pastoral stress. Chapter 1 further presented the problem statement, research question, significance of the study, and the positionality of the researcher. Chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework used in this study and a review of the literature on the Black Church, the work of Black pastors, stress, pastoral stress, how pastoral stress may impact wellness, and what coping strategies pastors have employed. Chapter 2 will further identify gaps in the literature, why this study is necessary, and how this study seeks to fill those gaps. Chapter 3 will present the methodology used for conducting this study including the target sample, hypotheses, the assessment instruments, the data analysis plan, and the ethical issues inherent in this study. Chapter 4 will present the study's results and findings while Chapter 5 will discuss the meaning and implications of the results, implications, suggestions for future research, and the study's conclusions.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms are found in this study.

Bishop: a denominational leader who oversees a group of congregations and to whom pastors report and are accountable.

Black Church: refers to the collective identity, shared history and culture, and relationship to Black people, which individual Black churches possess (Douglas & Hopkins, 2001).

Church or congregation: a community of faith organized around a specific set of beliefs, doctrines, practices, and internal organizational structure, maybe affiliated with a denomination or may function as an independent religious institution.

Church family: name given to a congregation that signifies the supportive nature of the congregation as an extended family for members.

Church home: represents the community of faith where a family or person becomes a member, attends its services, and participates in the activities and programs of the church. The idea of a church home (also called a home church) connotates where is one is welcome and connected.

Church Mother: a title given to senior citizen age women, who have served faithfully in the church for a long time, designating their wisdom and nurturing nature.

Deacon/Deaconess: a title given to a man/woman who help care for the members of the congregation in times of hospitalization, sickness, bereavement, and special needs.

Deacon Board: a board of deacons who provide leadership within a congregation and work with the pastor.

Denomination: a body of congregations organized around a set of religious beliefs or doctrines, practices and rituals, and a hierarchical system of authority; establishes the qualifications for persons serving as pastors, verifies that these qualifications have been met, and then ordains the person to serve as an authorized clergyperson in a pastoral role within a congregation.

Emotion-focused coping: Strategies used to manage one's emotions to prevent being overwhelmed by stress emotions, such as anger, anxiety, panic, etc. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Housing allowance: the portion of a pastor's compensation earmarked to pay for housing expenses, which is tax exempt from income taxes (www.clergytax.com/what-is-the-housing-allowance).

Independent church/congregation: a community of faith not affiliated with a specific denomination; may also be called a nondenominational church.

Megachurch: a congregation with an average weekly attendance of 1,000+ members (Carroll, 2006).

Missionary: a woman in the church who feels called to reach out to nonchurch members through acts of kindness and practical help, such as providing food and clothes, home or institutional visitation.

Pastor: a clergyperson commissioned and authorized to serve as the spiritual/religious leader of a congregation by a religious organization often referred to as a denomination.

Pastor's spouse: If the pastor is a male and married, the pastor's spouse is known as the Pastor's Wife or First Lady. If the pastor is female and married, the pastor's spouse is known as the Pastor's Husband or First Gentleman. The First Lady or First Gentleman will often have a special seat either in the pulpit with their spouse, the front pew, or in some other designated seat.

Pastor's Family: consists of the spouse and the children related to the pastor. The pastor's family is called the first family; children are called either the pastor's kids or the preacher's kids.

Primary stress appraisal: a cognitive process in which an individual assesses a situation or interaction, such what is happening, who is involved, its significance, and potential consequences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Problem-focused coping: Strategies used to solve problems causing a stressful interaction (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Secondary stress appraisal: a cognitive process to assess one's coping resources, which occurs after assessing the situation through primary stress appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Social support: having "supportive relationships in four domains of family, congregation, denomination (e.g., other pastors, supervisors), and community (e.g., friends outside the church)" (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003, p. 250).

Stressor: life events and experiences which persons encounter in their environments and may lead to emotional, physiological, and/or behavioral reactions (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; McCubbin et al., 1980; Sapolsky, 2004).

Sunday School: is a time of religious instruction, Bible study, and new members orientation on Sundays either after an early morning worship service (7:45am or 8:00am) or before a late morning worship service (10:30am, 10:45am, or 11:00am) with classes for different ages.

Sunday School Teacher: a layperson within the congregation, who is called and gifted to teach the Bible in the Sunday School hour.

Wellness: "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community" (Myers et al., 2000, p. 252).

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in this study and a review of the literature relevant to the research question, which includes an overview of research concerning the Black Church, the role of Black pastors, the concepts of stress and pastoral stress, and coping strategies pastors may use. Finally, the literature review will conclude with an analysis of the relevant research and the applicability to the current study.

Theoretical Framework

Family stress theory serves as the theoretical framework to analyze the experiences Black pastors have with stressors in Black churches. Hill (1949, 1958) conceptualized family stress theory with the ABC-X model where A represents the initial stressor event, B the coping resources the individual or family activates, C how the individual or family defines and interprets the stressor event, all of which leads to an outcome - X, whether it be negative as in stress, a crisis, or a positive outcome as in the enhancement to their lives. For example, a pastor may experience the pastoral stressor of work overload and excessive time demand of long working hours (A-factor), which may diminish time spent with the family.

The stressor event may be a situation, circumstance, or life event which has the potential of producing change in "boundaries, goals, patterns of interaction, roles, or values" for the individual, family, or church (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983, p. 8). Depending on the nature of the stressor event, it may produce a hardship by placing strenuous demands on the individual or family, such as losing a job, a medical emergency, sudden illness of a family member, or death of a loved one (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The individual's or family's coping resources (i.e., the B-factor) include personal resources, family system resources, social support, and family coping resources (McCubbin et al., 1980). Personal resources include financial resources,

cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, health, psychological resources, self-care, stress management, and spiritual resources (Chandler, 2009; McCubbin et al., 1980). The family system resources refer to family cohesiveness, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities (McCubbin et al., 1980). The family's coping resources include behaviors to reduce the impact of stressor events, maintain family cohesion, strengthen individual members, and increase social support (McCubbin, 1979). The individual's or family's coping resources (B-factor) are intended to prevent a crisis from occurring (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

The C-factor in the ABC-X model represents not only the definition of the stressor event but also the individual's or family's perception of the intensity, seriousness, potential impact, interpretation, and meaning the event holds (Hill, 1949; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The stress that people may experience does not necessarily reside in the stressor event but results in part from this C-factor in how one makes sense and meaning of the event. Therefore, the resulting impact of stress (X-factor) equals the combination of the stressor event (A-factor), the resources to cope with it (B-factor), the definition and interpretation of the stressor event (C-factor), and the perception of the degree that one is or is not able to cope and manage (Hill, 1949; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The combination of the A+B+C factors leads to the outcome, the X factor, which may be a crisis, challenge, non-event, or a positive outcome (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Lee and Iverson-Gilbert (2003) used the ABC-X model in their examination of the impact of personal criticism, boundary ambiguity, presumptive expectations, and social support on pastors' wellness, life and marital satisfaction, optimism, and burnout. The stressors (A-factor) included personal criticism, family criticism, boundary ambiguity, and likely expectations (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). Family resources (B-factor) were social support, which included

the pastor's social network, family, church members, denomination, and community. The definition and perception of the situation (C-factor) reflected the pastor's attitudes towards ministry. The X-factor equaled the pastor's well-being (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). Darling et al. (2004) examined how stress and coping strategies impact quality of life for pastors and pastors' spouses utilizing family stress theory. Darling et al. inserted the following predictor and criterion variables into the ABC-X model: A equaled family stress and compassion fatigue, B represented coping and spiritual resources, C stood for psychological stress, physical stress, and sense of coherence, and X described quality of life.

Expanding on Hill's (1949, 1958) original ABC-X Model, McCubbin and Patterson (1983) created the Double ABCX Model to depict that, in response to the original stressor event (A) and its outcome (X), especially if a crisis (X) ensued, individuals or families may (1) experience additional stressor events (aA factor), (2) obtain new or additional coping resources (bB factor), (3) change their definition, interpretation, and meaning of a situation (cC factor), and (4) as a result of aA+bB+cC, experience new outcomes (xX factor).

According to the Double ABCX Model, a person or family may have more than one stressor event which may become a "pile-up" of stressors known as the "aA" factor (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983, p. 11). The individual or family may secure new resources (bB factor) in response to the original stressor event (A) and its outcome (X), especially if it were a crisis, or the pile-up of stressors events (aA factor; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). McCubbin and Patterson (1983) described social support as an important resource, which they defined as "information that a family [or individual] (a) is cared for and loved, (b) is esteemed and valued, and (c) belongs to a network of mutual obligation and understanding" (p. 15), and which provides endurance and resilience in the face of stressor events and crises.

The cC factor exists as the new definition and meaning given to both the original outcome (X), especially a crisis, and the new stressor event (aA) and new resources (bB) being employed (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The xX factor describes the new range of outcomes resulting from the combination of original outcome or crisis (X) plus the addition of the new stressor event (aA), new coping resources (bB), and new definition and meaning (cC) given to the whole experience (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). This range of outcome includes bonadaptation, which contributes to wellness in a positive manner, and maladaptation, which detracts from wellness and contributes to negative outcomes (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

The ABC-X model serves as the framework through which we seek to understand the vocational stressors Black pastors experience and the influence of those stressors on their mental and emotional wellness. Using the ABC-X model, A represents the stressor events Black pastors experience; B, the coping resources Black pastors use, specifically stress management and spiritual resources; C, the definition and meaning of the stressor event(s) and whether it produces psychological strain; and X represents Black pastors' satisfaction with life which is the combination of the stressor events (A), coping resources (B), and definition and meaning of the stressor events (C) where A+B+C=X.

The Black Church

The Black Church is the workplace setting in which Black pastors perform their pastoral duties, exercise leadership, and experience pastoral stress. As a religious institution, owned and operated by Black people, the Black Church has served as a foundation and center of the Black community (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). The term Black Church represents the collective Christian religious experience of Black people in America and serves as an umbrella for all the variety of Black Christian religious communities of faith (Gates, 2021). The term

further refers more specifically to the collective religious identity, shared religious history, and spiritual culture connecting and undergirding Black people which individual Black churches share (Douglas & Hopson, 2001; Gates, 2021). Individual Black churches are local congregations situated in specific communities whose membership is predominantly Black in race and ethnicity (Adksion-Bradley et al., 2005). Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) described Black churches as the "most important and dominant institutional phenomenon in African American communities" (p. 92). An awareness of the Black Church's origins, role in the lives of members, community involvement, and demographics remains integral to understanding the historical, institutional, and community contexts in which Black pastors work and experience pastoral stressors.

Black Church Origins

Frazier (1964) and Gates (2021) documented the origins, growth, and development of the Black Church dating back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries while the institution of slavery was prominent. In the Southern United States, Black people attended and worshiped primarily at Baptist and Methodist churches in the segregated sections of these churches where their masters were members. In some locations, like Charleston, South Carolina, where there were Presbyterian and Episcopal churches, these White denominations permitted separate Black churches to be built for Black members (Frazier, 1964). Morris and Robinson (1996) highlighted how free Black people, in protest of the racism and oppression experienced in White-majority churches, played an instrumental role in birthing the Black Church as a separate institution from these White churches. For example, Richard Allen, after being dragged from his knees while praying in the segregated St. George Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, opened the Bethel Church in 1794, which sparked similar Black churches to be organized in other cities

(Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021). In 1816 Richard Allen and leaders from these churches established the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which in turn led to other Black people leaving White denominations and establishing Black churches. Such was the case of Peter Williams, Sr., who left John Street Methodist Church in New York City to establish the Zion Church, which led to the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) Church (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Incorporating African cultural dimensions into Christianity, African Americans created the Black Church experience (Carroll, 2006; Gates, 2021; Mamiya, 2005).

The origins of the Black Church experience were inextricably connected to and rooted in the existential realities of being Black in America, which includes a history of slavery and oppression, racial discrimination and trauma, structural racism, racial microaggressions, health disparities, racial inequities, mass incarceration, and Black males of all ages being an endangered species (Cone, 2010; Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Jones (2020) asserted,

> Christian churches have not just been complacent; they have not only been complicit; rather, as the dominant cultural power in America, they have been responsible for constructing and sustaining a project to protect white supremacy and resist black equality. (p. 5)

Jones further asserted that White Christian churches have historically and grossly distorted the Christian gospel message by portraying Jesus as blessing and sanctioning White supremacy and racial inequality, which provided moral justification for "a century of religiously sanctioned terrorism in the form of ritualized lynchings and other forms of public violence and intimidation" (p. 5).

Through its proclamation, interpretation, and application of the Christian faith – particularly the Gospel of Jesus and His message of liberation – to the Black experience, the Black Church has historically empowered its members to (1) define and value themselves favorably in the image of God and not through the eyes and actions of White supremacists and (2) reject and fight against racism and all forms of oppression in order to experience greater degrees of emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, and socioeconomic wellness (Cone, 2010; Gates, 2021; Pinn, 2010). Leading a Black church to advance racial justice and equality may add not only greater responsibilities but also more stress upon Black pastors.

Role of Black Church for Members

Religion and spirituality have historically been important components in the lives of Black people as it has been manifested in church attendance and other religious/spiritual practices, which points to the significant role of the Black Church in the lives and survival of Black people (Barnes, 2014). For Black people, Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood (2009) identified spirituality as a worldview incorporating a relationship with God, which includes a belief in God as a source of strength, help, and protection. Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood defined religion as a church connection with specific beliefs and practices while Black people may possess a spiritual worldview without a connection to a specific church body. Along with a belief in God, Black people have been socialized to believe in prayer, especially for help, strength, and provisions in times of need and crisis (Pew, 2021). Prayer can hold a place of importance and sacredness even if a person or family does not have a church connection. Boyd-Franklin (2010) acknowledged that Black people have historically used spirituality and religion as coping mechanisms and buffers in response to their daily encounters with racism, which includes the use of scriptures, spiritual messages, and hymns. Boyd-Franklin further acknowledged that such coping strategies

and survival mechanisms produced comfort, hope, resilience, courage, and determination in efforts to combat the negative effects of racial injustice and microaggressions.

The Black Church has been a safe, sacred space for its members to be nurtured and renewed emotionally, spiritually, and mentally in light of living in a racist society which continually questions and denigrates their human value and dignity (Gates, 2021; Nye, 1993). The Black Church worship service provides a cathartic and therapeutic experience in which members can freely express their feelings and shed tears, actively participate, have their feelings and daily life struggles validated, receive hope and courage, be instructed on how to live more meaningful lives, and be empowered to live in a racist world (Gates, 2021; Mamiya, 2005; Nye, 1993). Members within each Black local church provide various types and levels of social support to each other, which may include emotional support, listening to each other's stories and struggles, spiritual support through prayer, financial support through giving or loaning money, food and clothing, Christmas gifts, and sharing hugs and handshakes (Le et al., 2016; Mamiya, 2005).

Through attendance, participation, and active involvement in worship services, church ministries, and programs, Black church members reap many benefits. Mattis and Grayman-Simpson (2013) acknowledged that church attendance provided support, encouragement, and spiritual strength, all of which lowered psychological distress for those who attended frequently, while Le and colleagues (2016) reported that such support strengthened members' coping abilities and had a significant association with positive mental health outcomes. Ellison and colleagues (2001) found that the frequency of church attendance was inversely related to measures of psychological distress whereby persons who attended church services regularly and more frequently reported fewer adverse effects of daily stressors and fewer health problems.

Ellison and colleagues (2008) reported that Black adults who received a great amount or quite a bit of religious guidance for daily living reported less psychological distress from racist encounters than other Black adults receiving little guidance. Further, they found that those Black adults attending services more than once a week reported the fewest negative effects from racist encounters. In accordance with the previously mentioned findings, Bierman (2006) found that African Americans' attendance at worship services in a Black church buffered against negative affect, such as feeling depressed, anxious, hopeless, worthless, and pessimistic and further found that this buffering effect was greater for African Americans than Whites. For example, attendance and participation in Black church services provided emotional, social, and spiritual support for Black cancer patients to make meaning of and cope with their battle with cancer (Holt et al., 2011). Holt and colleagues (2018) found that positive religious support of being loved, cared for, and receiving help if sick from church members was associated with lower depressive symptoms and lesser heavy drinking while negative interactions with church members led to more depressive symptoms.

Nye (1993) extracted from Frazier's (1964) history of the Black Church six functions the Black Church has served in the lives of Black people: "an expressive function, a status function, a meaning function, a refuge function, a cathartic function, and an other worldly orientation function" (p. 105) where a function is defined as "the special purpose or activity for which a thing exists or is used" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The expressive function described the Black Church as a place where persons expressed their emotions openly and freely (Nye, 1993), which was not possible to a large extent in a repressive, racist environment. While Black people were considered unequal, uneducated, and inferior in segregated society, the status function in the Black Church placed value, importance, and dignity upon each member (Nye, 1993). A person

may have been a field hand or a house servant to White people, but in the Black Church they may have been a minister, deacon, or deaconess, and in every case a child of God. When Black people could not vote in mainstream society, they could vote in the Black Church (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021). The meaning function of the Black Church helped people to better understand their lives and find meaning, truth, and hope in their existence to survive (Nye, 1993). The cathartic function of the Black Church allowed members to "release...pent-up emotions and frustrations felt by an oppressed minority" (Nye, 1993, p. 105). The other worldly function provided meaning and hope for a better life in heaven where members would experience the end of their suffering and marginalized existence (Nye, 1993). Black churches continue to serve these functions in contemporary society.

Extending Nye's (1993) depiction of the functions of the Black Church, Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood (2009) added the social function and child-rearing/socialization function. The social function includes opportunities to meet, interact, and network with persons of similar racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, which further provides support, empathy, and identification with those who share similar life experiences. For some Black people who are not religious and/or spiritual, this social function exists as a primary reason to be connected with the Black Church (Boyd-Franklin, 2010). Mamiya (2005) acknowledged the importance of the Black Church membership connection when he stated, "Often the third question in social gatherings, after name and occupation, is what church do you belong to?" (p. 4). The child-rearing and socialization functions provide support to those raising children, especially single parents, by the church offering programs for children and youth, such as educational, recreational, religious, and child-care activities (Boyd-Franklin & Lockwood, 2009). In addition, children and youth may be mentored and supported by older members, who adopt them as Godchildren.

Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood (2009) acknowledged the concepts of "church home" and "church family" as important constructs within the Black Church, which provide more insight into the role of the Black Church for members. The church home depicts the church as a close-knit community of faith where a family or person becomes a member, attends its services, and participates in the activities and programs of the church. The idea of a church home (also called a home church) connotes where one is welcome and connected. When a person or family moves to another city where they cannot get to their home church, they will seek to find another church home. When college students go away to college, they often look for a home church away from their church home. Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood further acknowledged the Black Church as a "church family," which signifies the supportive nature of the congregation as an extended family for members. In some Black congregations, members are given the title of "brother" or "sister" while the pastor, especially older pastors, is described as the "spiritual father" of members. Senior citizen age women, who have served faithfully in the church for a long time, are often given the title of "church mother" designating their wisdom and nurturing nature. The person is called “Mother” with their last name (e.g., Mother Jones). The Black Church, as both a church home and church family, provides fellowship and social events whereby members can build relationships and deepen their connection with other church members (Boyd-Franklin & Lockwood, 2009; Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 2005).

The Black Church meets the diverse needs of its members through its worship services, ministries, and programs with its developmental focus across the lifespan. The Black Church provides (1) support and encouragement, (2) opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, (3) connection and community with fellow members combating isolation and loneliness, and (4) empowerment to face the daily issues, problems, and challenges in a racist world. For Black

churches to meet the needs of its members, Black pastors, as spiritual leaders and administrative overseers, provide operational oversight and approval for the various activities, programs, and worship services which are implemented to meet the needs of members. While the positive benefits of membership in a Black church seem evident, the cost of producing those benefits that meet the needs of members and support their spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being may not be so evident, especially to members and even to pastors themselves. This aspect may be the hidden cost of leadership: the time, demands, responsibilities, and pastoral stress upon Black pastors to oversee the operation of the church and implement programs that address the various needs of members and the community.

Black Church Community Involvement

As the leading institution in many Black communities, the Black Church serves the community through various programs, which are as diverse as the needs and issues facing its communities and residents. Such community programs have included daycare centers, before and after school programs, tutoring programs, voting empowerment (e.g., education, registration, and getting out the vote), health education and screenings, counseling centers, food pantry, sponsoring AA and NA meetings, mentoring programs, and services to inmates (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mamiya, 2005). Black churches have further served their communities through economic empowerment agendas, such as the creation of 501c3 community development corporations (CDCs) and credit unions, financial literacy programs, building affordable housing to promote home ownership, and building safe and quality housing for senior citizens (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mamiya, 2005). In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, Black churches, such as at the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Bronx, NY,

and Grace Baptist Church in Mt. Vernon, NY, served as sites for COVID-19 testing, flu shots, free food and meal distribution, and pop-up vaccination centers (Millman, 2021).

Since its beginnings in the mid and late 18th century, the Black Church has a long history of impacting the lives of Black people in Black communities (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Robinson et al., 2018). The Black Church became a visible stabilizing presence, central influence upon community life, and provided moral guidance and ethical values to community members (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Through the church, members contributed financial resources not only to build their own churches, but also to support the community in times of need, which were known as mutual aid societies that provided financial support in times of sickness and death (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021). The Black Church further promoted education first through Sunday Schools and then opening primary and secondary schools, especially in the Southern states (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Colleges and seminaries for Black students came into existence through the work of Black denominations, like the AME Church and AME Zion Church (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). In addition to establishing educational institutions, the Black Church even established hospitals (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Robinson et al., 2018).

The Black Church has played an important role in addressing many issues and problems in the lives of Black people through social activism and community/political engagement in a variety of ways (Gates, 2021; Morris & Robinson, 1996; Wong et al., 2018). In their study of Black rural churches, Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) found evidence of Black rural churches working with social service and nonprofit agencies to address community problems, such as senior citizen issues, police-community relations, tutoring and educational needs, health-related problems, food and hunger needs, and youth programs. Black rural and Southern churches

participated in civil rights organization activities, provided their churches as meeting places for different community events, and helped to register, educate, and get out Black voters (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Similarly, Lincoln and Mamiya found Black urban churches helped address community problems by working with community agencies, especially with civil rights organizations and youth agencies. Black urban churches participated in government-funded programs, such as Headstart, food programs, job training, day care centers, federal housing, and educational programs (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Moreover, the Black Church has played a prominent role in advocating for the civil rights of Black people (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Robinson et al., 2018).

Black churches have been involved in health education, promotion, and screenings in different areas of the country and more so in low-income areas with minority populations (Carter-Edwards et al., 2012). Black pastors play a key role in leading their congregations in specific program areas, such as health and education, and approving the implementation of programs in line with the church's vision (Carter-Edwards et al., 2012). Wong and colleagues (2018) reported that Black churches have played a major role in addressing alcohol and drug-related problems which are experienced by church and community members through counseling by pastors, sponsoring and hosting Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) programs, referring persons to treatment programs, encouraging persons to stay in treatment, and providing spiritual support. Wong and colleagues further reported that Black persons with alcohol-related problems were more likely to seek help from Black pastors than White pastors. Robinson and colleagues (2018) described the Black Church as a "social hub and community center for service" and "uniquely positioned to provide information, services, and

interventions related to mental health to individuals who are otherwise not reached by mental health-focused services" (p. 1100).

With the current increasing challenge of food insecurity nationwide, one way the Black Church is addressing this need in the Black community is through the Black Church Food Security Network, which was established in 2015 in the aftermath of the Baltimore riots triggered by the murder of Freddie Gray by the Baltimore police (Brown, 2020; Frykholm, 2020). Created by Rev. Heber Brown III, pastor of Pleasant Hope Baptist Church in Baltimore, Black churches and Black farmers united when Black communities were shut down due to civil unrest and deprived of essential services such as public transportation and access to food in stores (Brown, 2020). Black farmers brought trucks of food to local Black churches and Pastor Brown even loaded the church bus taking food to different street corners to distribute to community residents (Brown, 2020). Out of this experience, Pastor Brown birthed the Black Church Food Security Network, which encouraged Black churches to develop their own gardens and created farmers markets in Black churches where Black farmers and business owners sold their products (Brown, 2020; Frykholm, 2020). The mission of the Black Church Food Security Network is to combat food injustice and insecurity by empowering Black communities to develop and control their own food supply system (Frykholm, 2020).

With the Black Church's long history of community engagement, addressing many social, economic, and political issues, and contributing to the survival of Black people, it has been Black pastors who have provided leadership guiding Black churches' involvements in these various initiatives, programs, and issues. Black pastors became leaders in politics during the Reconstruction period (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). If Black pastors were not the initial creators of an initiative, like Pastor Heber Brown III, then their public support

and getting the congregation mobilized behind these initiatives have been and continue to be instrumental in the success of these programs, such as the civil rights movement, voter registration, and Black Church Food Security Network. Supporting such social justice programs places more demands on pastors' time and schedules, adds another burden of responsibility, and further places Black pastors in leadership roles in the public spotlight, any or all of which may increase their pastoral stress. The most notable Black pastor who led the movement for civil rights and racial justice was the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose biography documents the stress he endured as a pastor and civil rights leader and the ultimate cost of his life (Garrow, 1989).

Black Church Demographics

Pew (2021) found that 66% of Black Americans identify as Protestants, 6% as Catholic, 3% as other Christian faiths such as Jehovah's Witnesses, 3% identify with non-Christian faiths such as Islam, and 21% "are not affiliated with any religion and instead identify as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular'" (p. 9). Pew (2021) further found that 60% of Black adults attend a Black church compared to 13% of Black adults who attend a White/other church or 25% who attend a multiracial church. Specifically for Black Protestants, 67% attend a Black church, 10% a White church, and 22% a multiracial church (Pew, 2021). What has become a concern for Black pastors is the decreasing number of younger people attending Black churches. While 66% of each of the Silent Generation (those born before 1946) and Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1946 and 1964) attend a Black church, only 58% of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), 53% of Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), and 53% of Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2002) attend a Black church (Pew, 2021). Of further concern is the fact that, as the generations of Black adults get younger, the percentage of those who identify as Black

Protestants gets smaller: Silent Generation, 83%; Baby Boomers, 76%; Generation X, 67%; Millennials, 55%; and Generation Z, 52% (Pew, 2021).

As indicated above, religion and spirituality have been historically important dimensions of Black people's lives. Pew (2021) confirmed this by reporting that 59% of all Black adults consider religion to be very important and 21% consider religion somewhat important. For those Black Protestants who attend a Black church, 82% consider religion very important and 15% consider it somewhat important (Pew, 2021). Of further concern to Black pastors is the decreasing importance of religion as the generations get younger whereby the percentage of those who consider religion very important drops considerably: Silent Generation, 75%; Baby Boomers, 72%; Generation X, 60%; Millennials, 46%; and Generation Z, 41% (Pew, 2021). Fifty-six percent (56%) of Black Protestants indicated that they attend religious services weekly or more at a Black church, 17% attend once or twice a month, while 27% attend a few times a year, which is significantly higher than the general U.S. population where 24% attend weekly or more, 8% once or twice a month, 17% a few times a year, and 50% seldom or never (Pew, 2021). Black women demonstrate greater church attendance than Black men: 36% attend weekly or more compared to 29% for Black men; 11% attend once or twice per month (vs. 9% Black men); and 35% seldom or never attend (vs. 44% Black men; Pew, 2021). Older generations attend Black churches more than the younger generations where only 23% of Millennials and 27% of Generation Z attend weekly or more and 48% of Millennials and 46% of Generation Z seldom or never attend (Pew, 2021).

The changing demographics surrounding religion within the Black population may challenge Black pastors to find creative, effective ways to meet the spiritual needs of members and non-members, especially as religion seems to be becoming less important to younger

generations. The decreasing importance of religion and church attendance by younger generations has the implication of Black churches' average weekly attendance being composed primarily of older members and raises the question of whether younger generations will have a religious faith similar or different from their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. The absence of Black men in the Black Church continues to challenge Black pastors in finding ways to connect with them and make the church more inviting. In addition to serving existing church members, the Black Church's mission is to invite and incorporate non-church members into becoming members, who will embrace religious faith and practice.

This demographic data may contribute to pastoral stress because it all points to the reality of societal trends which Black pastors and congregations may not have the resources to address or reverse. This data raises the question of the relevance and spiritual/moral influence of the Black Church compared to the influence of secular society especially on younger generations who do not find religion and church attendance important or essential to their lives. In fact, this data may raise the question in Black pastors' minds about the future of their congregations, which are becoming older.

Church Size

Church size may be a factor which influences the work, experiences, and stressors of pastors. Carroll (2006) classified church size into four categories: a small church equals 100 members or less in average weekly attendance (AWA), a medium size church equals 101-350 in AWA, a large church equals 351-1,000 in AWA, and a megachurch church 1,000+ in AWA. For historic Black churches, 61% fit into the small church category, 34% medium size, and 6% large size (Carroll, 2006). Black Protestant churchgoers seem to attend small and medium-size Black churches more than large or megachurches (Pew, 2021). Pew (2021) found that 35% attend a

Black church of 50 or less attendees, 47% a church with 51-250 attendees, 12% a church with 251-1,000 attendees, and 5% a church with more than 1,000 attendees. When looking at the percentage of Black Protestants who specifically attend a church affiliated with historically Black Protestant denominations, 33% attend a church with 50 or less attendees, 46% attend a church with 51-250 attendees, 15% attend a church with 251-1,000 attendees, and 5% attend a church with more than 1,000 attendees (Pew, 2021).

In rural communities where churches tend to be small, the church plays a prominent role as one of its major institutions in meeting the needs of residents (Scott & Lovell, 2015). Due to the small size of both the community and church membership, rural pastors tend to wear many hats and fulfill various responsibilities in both the church and community (Scott & Lovell, 2015). Scott and Lovell (2015) described the rural pastor's role as "they often must run the church, or rather, be the church in every respect, from the sacred to the mundane, and they must carry out functions for which they may never have been trained" (p. 72). The demographics of Black churches raise questions of if and how church size may contribute to the stress Black pastors may experience. Barna Group (2017) reported that some pastors felt depressed when they saw their church’s AWA declining.

Polity

Polity refers to how denominations and churches are governed where different types of church governance exist within Black Church denominations. For example, congregational governance is when each local congregation holds decision-making power over its church life as in the case of the Baptist churches. Connectional governance is when the local church is connected to a denomination through a denominational leadership and accountability structure in which there is shared decision-making based on the structure, such as in the case of the

Methodists (AME, AMEZ, and CME) and Church Of God In Christ (COGIC; Carroll, 2006). Black Baptist pastors' decision-making power independent of their denomination without accountability to or influence by denominational leaders relieves them from a potential stress-causing relationship. For the Methodist denominations, Black pastors are accountable to their Presiding Elders and Bishops which includes financial assessments to their conference and the possibility of being moved from one congregation to another each year by their Bishop, both of which can initiate pastoral stress. For Black pastors in COGIC there is a similar accountability to their District Superintendents and Bishops in addition to each pastor and church submitting financial assessments to the District, Jurisdiction, and National Church which also may create stress for these pastors. Morris and Blanton (1995) acknowledged that pastors may be reluctant to admit, especially to denominational leaders, the negative impact of stressors on themselves and their families through fear of being perceived as incompetent or unqualified for ministry. Morris and Blanton further affirmed that denominations which support their pastors "produce healthy pastors and supported pastors produce healthy churches" (p. 32).

In addition to its significance on a denominational level, polity influences how local churches operate, which in turn may influence pastoral stress. For example, in the Baptist Church the Deacon Board can hold and exercise power in the operation of the church. The Deacon Board and pastor may have different views, which may lead to disagreement and conflict and be a source of pastoral stress. In the COGIC denomination where the Deacon Board has less power and all boards report to the pastor, the pastor may have less stress from interactions with a Deacon Board but may experience disagreement and conflict with the Trustee Board over church expenditures. Therefore, polity, church structure, and how a church operates may influence the stress Black pastors experience.

Black Migration

While millions of Black people migrated out of the southern states from the early 1900s through the 1960s, Black people started migrating back to the South from the 1970s even into the present. As a result, Black churches experienced growth especially with college-educated, professional, and middle-class Black people moving South (Mamiya, 2005). The South became an attractive location with its economic growth and opportunities, lower cost of living and housing than northern areas, and being seen as having good locations for Black people (Mamiya, 2005). The particular increase in educated, professional, and middle-class members, not just in the South but in other areas, had several important implications: (1) these members brought skills, work experience, and ideas and perspectives to their local church which the pastor could use in the operation and programs of the church; (2) if the middle-class members practiced tithing (giving 10% of their income), then this brought more financial resources to the church; and (3) an increase of educated members may have challenged pastors to find more ways to meet the needs of these new members.

Black Megachurches

Black megachurches, defined by Carroll (2006) as having more than 1,000 people in average weekly attendance, have existed since the 19th century. Some megachurches have reported an even larger weekly attendance as large as 10,000. For example, some of the historic Black megachurches included Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baltimore with over 1,500 in AWA in the 19th century, Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City with Rev. Adam Clayton Powell as pastor, Olivet Baptist Church in Chicago in the 1950s, and Concord Baptist Church in New York City pastored by Rev. Dr. Gardner Taylor in the 1980s (Mamiya, 2005).

Black megachurches grew in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, including the Potter's House in Dallas pastored by Bishop T. D. Jakes, West Angeles COGIC pastored by Bishop Charles Blake, and Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baltimore. Black megachurches have different denominational affiliations, such as African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, COGIC, Full Gospel Baptist Fellowship, Pentecostal, Apostolic, and nondenominational. Mamiya (2005) noted that many Black megachurches are either Pentecostal or are neo-Pentecostal, meaning that they either officially identify with a non-Pentecostal denomination (like Baptist or A.M.E.) or are nondenominational but have incorporated elements of Pentecostal worship and practice into their congregational life. Such examples may be a full musical band with organ, keyboards, tambourines, and other musical instruments, speaking in tongues, praising God in the dance, and laying on of hands. Pastors in megachurches may face different church, organizational, and interpersonal dynamics than pastors in small, medium, and large churches, which may present different pastoral stressors for them to overcome.

The Black Pastor

Black pastors serve as the spiritual leaders of Black churches and provide the vision and direction for these congregations to fulfill their purpose in meeting the needs of both members and community. Described as pillars of the Black church and community (Avent et al., 2015), Black pastors occupy a position of authority and influence through which persons within both the church and community perceive them with respect (Harmon et al., 2018). Carroll (2006) described the work of pastors as a "tough, demanding job, one that is not always very well understood or appreciated" and "more complex" than what pastors do during the Sunday worship service (p. 2). Carroll acknowledged that churches, regardless of denominational affiliation, can be both challenging and satisfying places for pastors to work.

The Black pastor's leadership and influence have historical roots in Black history dating back both to the slavery era of Black preachers ministering to the slave populations and the era of Black churches being established (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021). In those early years of the Black Church, the Black pastor was viewed as the most knowledgeable person in the community and carried significant influence in the lives of congregants and the community at large by virtue of leading a Black church, which served as the center of Black community life (Frazier, 1964; Gates, 2021). However, this trend began to change in the 1970s as more Black people went to college, which included the number of Black people earning professional degrees, and which increased the demand from church members and the requirement from Black churches for well-educated Black pastors (Carroll, 2006).

In an unpublished pilot study I conducted in 2020, Black Church denominational leaders described the pastor's role as a calling by God to serve people and great opportunity to fulfill one's purpose in life. The pastor's role is to minister to and shepherd members, strengthen them spiritually and emotionally, and reach out to the community to bring in new members (Rogers, 2020). One denominational leader described the pastor's role as leading the church into ministry and service with a specific focus that is appropriate for that congregation's unique strengths and community location. The pastor is further responsible for helping members to understand the purpose and mission of the church as well as getting them involved in efforts that implement and support the church's mission. One bishop stated very poignantly,

> We believe that a healthy pastor produces a healthy church. The pastor, who is the leader and who speaks weekly, has great influence over that congregation and has the authority to speak life and power to the people they serve. So I expect my pastors to prepare and equip themselves to be leaders that will lead people into wholeness. (Rogers, 2020, p. 3)

By virtue of their position, Black pastors are viewed as church, community, and political leaders (Gates, 2021; Harmon et al., 2018; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mamiya, 2005). Harmon and colleagues (2018) described the Black pastor as a connector to community resources whereby the "pastors bridged the gap between their church and the resources available within their community" (p. 1515), which may include bringing specific programs to the church or directing members to specific community programs (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Harmon and colleagues found that Black pastors viewed themselves as "having potentially broader influence than White pastors" (p. 1517). Cohall and Cooper (2010) reported a similar perception of American Baptist Black pastors playing more active roles than White pastors of social activist and political strategist in their communities.

Black pastors even serve as role models and examples on moral, effective, and healthy living whereby members will inquire what the pastor thinks, does, or how the pastor would handle the matter. Pastors increase members' awareness of health issues and influence members' health-related behaviors through sermons, providing health information, promoting behaviors like healthy eating, and implementing health programs in the church (Baruth et al., 2015; Williams & Cousin, 2021). Some pastors even try to model or be an example of healthy living. Baruth et al. (2015) interviewed a Black Baptist pastor who stated,

> So, far more than I ever imaged, there is a response that recognizes that what I teach them verbally, are things that they pay attention to. But what I do is something that they really pay attention to, including health (p. 1753).

By virtue of their position as church and community leaders, Black pastors are in the public view with much attention given to their words, opinions, and actions. Such a leadership role requires Black pastors to lead by example and be acutely aware of their influence on the

lives of both church and community members of all ages. Being in such a visible, influential role may be a source of stress for Black pastors.

Demographics

Age

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) found the median age of Black pastors was 52 years. Mamiya (2005) later found that 61% of Black pastors were 51 years and older and 38% were younger than 50 years. In comparison, White pastors over the age of 51 comprised 49% and those under the age of 50 years comprised 51% (Mamiya, 2005). Mamiya (2005) indicated that a lack of pension and retirement benefits may be a contributing factor to Black pastors working more years. In addition, the financial stress of lack of financial resources may be another motivating factor for Black pastors to work longer than their White pastor counterparts.

Similarly, Carroll (2006) found the median age of Black pastors was 53 years, while 50 years for conservative Protestants, and 51 years for mainline Protestants. Historically Black denominations had the lowest percentage of pastors under the age of 45 (22%), while conservative Protestants had 29% and mainline Protestants 27%. In addition, historically Black churches had the highest percentage of pastors over the age of 61 years (30%), compared to conservative Protestants (22%) and mainline Protestants (15%; Carroll, 2006). Barna Group (2017) found a similar age trend with 15% of pastors under 40 years, 35% between 41-55, 33% between 56-64, and 17% over 65 years.

Carroll (2006) further found that 78% of Black pastors were in the pastorate as a second career compared to 67% of conservative Protestants and approximately 45% of mainline Protestants. Looking at the average age at the time of ordination for Black pastors who served less than 10 years provided supporting evidence on the pastorate as a second career. The average

age for these Black pastors was 39 years compared to 37 years for conservative Protestants and 35 years for mainline Protestants (Carroll, 2006). Barna Group (2017) confirmed this trend of more pastors entering ministry as a second career especially in Black and conservative Protestant denominations.

Of interest, and maybe concern, with these age demographics of Black pastors being older is the accompanying aging of church members and decreasing attendance of younger generations. Is there a correlation between the age of Black pastors and the decreasing attendance of young people? While there is no evidence at present for such a correlation, this aging data of Black pastors and church members can be a source of pastoral stress for Black pastors concerning the future of their congregations. The high percentage of Black pastors in historically Black churches over the age of 61 years may raise an ethical issue of when it is in the best interest of the congregation for the pastor to retire versus serving as long as possible.

Some researchers have acknowledged age as a factor contributing to pastoral stress whereby younger pastors may experience stress differently from older pastors, having both higher stress levels and rates of burnout (Barna Group, 2017; Doolittle, 2007; Ellison et al., 2010; Randall, 2007; Webb & Chase, 2019; Wells et al., 2012). Even though the demographics reflect a larger presence of older Black pastors serving Black churches, it is important to understand if younger Black pastors experience stress and how their stress may differ from older Black pastors.

Gender

Even though Black women comprise the majority of church members in Black Protestant churches, Black male pastors hold the majority (84%) of pastoral leadership roles compared to 16% of Black women (Chaves et al., 2020). At the same time, 87% of Black women and 84% of

Black men stated that Black women "should be allowed to serve as senior religious leaders of congregations" (Pew, 2021, p. 20). Carroll (2006) acknowledged that, regardless of gender, pastoral responsibilities tended to conflict with family time and activities. Carroll further acknowledged that "because societal, congregational, and structural expectations differ for men and women, clergymen and clergywomen face different pressures and constraints" (p. 70).

A significant increase in women (Black and White) entering the ministry occurred from 1930-1980, while there was an even greater increase of Black women graduating from accredited seminaries between 1972-1984 (Mamiya, 2005). However, since there were few opportunities in Black denominations, many Black women transferred to White mainline denominations to be ordained and serve as pastors, such as in the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, American Baptist Church, and Episcopal Church (Mamiya, 2005). The A.M.E. Zion Church was the first Black denomination to ordain women in 1894 while A.M.E. Church began ordaining women in 1948 and the C.M.E. Church in 1954 (Pew, 2021). Both the A.M.E. and C.M.E. Churches have appointed women to such denominational leadership roles as presiding elders and bishops (Mamiya, 2005). The COGIC denomination holds a practice of not ordaining women to serve as pastors but will ordain women to serve as institutional chaplains in hospitals and prisons (Pew, 2021). While opportunities may have increased over the years for Black women pastors in some denominations, opportunities for Black women to serve as senior pastors are far less than for Black male pastors and they also tend to be paid less than their male counterparts (Mamiya, 2005; Pew, 2021).

Moreover, Black women pastors have been slowly and recently assuming more prominent church leadership roles as in Bishop Teresa Jefferson-Snorton, the only woman bishop in the Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination, who became chair of the National

Council of Churches' Governing Board in 2021 (Banks & Smith, 2021). The Rev. Dr. Gina Stewart, senior pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, was elected president of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Society in 2021, becoming the first woman to be selected to fulfill such a role in a Black Baptist denomination (Banks & Smith, 2021).

Smith (2013) surveyed and interviewed 150 women senior pastors concerning their work and specific challenges as pastors in several different denominations, which included White mainline denominations, three historically Black denominations, and conservative Protestant denominations. These challenges included (1) boundary-setting between local church work and community involvement, (2) financial stress such as not being paid as much as male pastors, (3) being a pastor, wife, and mother with trying to achieve work-family balance, (4) unrealistic expectations, (5) church conflict, (6) dysfunctional members, (7) societal changes, (8) setting boundaries with members, (9) lack of fellowship with other pastors, (10) isolation and loneliness, and (11) if single, finding someone to date (Smith, 2013). Scott and Lovell (2015) found that isolation and lack of privacy as stressors were more significant for women pastors than men pastors in rural communities. While many of these challenges may be like what male pastors experience, there seems to be somewhat of a qualitative difference which gender makes in terms of the perceptions, expectations, and role implementation of women pastors.

Bivocational Pastors

Bivocational pastors work two jobs at the same time, serving as a pastor and working in another job (Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) acknowledged that Black pastors have historically been bivocational dating back to the 1800s when they were slaves and leading small congregations. Black pastors have been bivocational due to their low pastoral salaries and the lack of benefits provided by congregations (Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005). Carroll found the rate

of bivocational pastors to be 41% for Black pastors, 29% for conservative Protestants, and 18% for mainline Protestants. Carroll further found that "historic black bivocationals are service workers, clerical workers, and managers or administrators" (p. 82). In terms of their educational levels, the percentages holding a Master of Divinity degree were 47% for Black pastors, 20% for conservative Protestants, and 70% for mainline Protestants (Carroll, 2006). More than 70% of Black bivocational pastors serve in small churches while 23% serve in mid-size congregations, which compared to over 80% of conservative and mainline Protestant bivocational pastors serving in small churches (Carroll, 2006).

These demographics on bivocational Black pastors raise questions, such as (1) what pastoral stressors they experience, (2) how the number and intensity of pastoral stressors compares between bivocational and full-time Black pastors, and (3) is the relationship between pastoral stressors and mental and emotional well-being different for bivocational Black pastors.

How Pastors Spend Their Time

The hours pastors devote to serving both congregation and community as well as how those hours are spent will have a direct relationship on their pastoral stress. Carroll (2006) found that full-time pastors across denominations worked a median of 51 hours per week and part-time pastors 23 hours per week, which included several hours per week in prayer, meditation, and personal reading. Pastors' work hours included preparing for and focusing on preaching, worship leadership, teaching and training, administration, pastoral care, counseling and visitation, evangelism, denominational meetings, and community involvement (Carroll, 2006). When Carroll compared weekly work hours by denomination, he found that the median hours worked for Black pastors was 55, 47 hours for conservative Protestants, and 48 hours for mainline Protestants. Black pastors and conservative Protestants spent on average 10 hours in prayer and

meditation, while mainline Protestants spent six hour per week (Carroll, 2006). Black pastors devoted 5 hours per week in personal and professional reading, not for sermon preparation, while mainline and conservative Protestants spent four hours per week (Carroll, 2006).

While in agreement with Carroll (2006) that Black pastors spent more hours working than White pastors, Mamiya (2005) found that Black pastors worked an even greater number of hours with an average of 72 hours per week, while White pastors worked an average of 49 hours per week. Black pastors spent 1-3 more hours in worship preparation and leadership, teaching, prayer and meditation, training people, evangelism, counseling, visitation of the sick and shut-in, administration, denominational activities, and representing the congregation in the community (Mamiya, 2005). Additional work time is especially given to sermon preparation where Black pastors devote significant time since "...the sermon is often the highlight of a black worship service and black clergy are often judged by their preaching ability" (Mamiya, 2005, p. 35). Regarding meeting the deadline of sermon preparation, Hulme (1985) asserted,

> It is tough not only to come through by deadline time but to come through in a stimulating, challenging, and inspiring way to people who have already heard most of the preacher's stories and illustrations and know the particular strings that he or she tends to play. (p. 12)

The size of the congregation may influence the number and allocation of pastors' work hours (Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005). Pastors serving in medium (101-350 in AWA), large (351-1,000), and mega (1,000 in AWA) churches spent more time in administration than in small churches (Carroll, 2006). Pastors in megachurches spent a greater number of hours preaching due to having two or more worship services (Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) further found that pastors in urban locations worked 52 hours on average per week versus pastors in rural locations

who worked 43 hours per week, which included urban pastors devoting two times more hours on administration than rural pastors (Carroll, 2006).

While Black pastors spent more time on pastoral duties, Carroll (2006) reported that Black pastors devoted no time for exercise or recreation. Webb and Bopp (2017) acknowledged that regular physical activity may have positive benefits such as guarding against stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, hypertension, and other physical health conditions. Carroll further reported that less than 50% of Black pastors took a day off, while 70% of other Protestant pastors took a day off and reported that taking time off helped to reduce stress. Carroll observed that:

> The more hours per week one works, the more likely one is to complain of stress due to congregational challenges, report that work prevents spending time with one's children, say that one's spouse expresses resentment over the time the work of ministry takes, and say that it is difficult to have a private life apart from the clergy role. (p. 125)

This combination of longer work hours, no time for exercise, and little or no regular time off may contribute to or make Black pastors more susceptible to higher levels of pastoral stress.

Pastors' Role in Counseling Members

Black pastors play a major role in counseling members through various developmental life stages as well as problems and issues (Adksion-Bradley et al., 2005; Avent et al., 2015). In fact, Black pastors have historically been the first counseling resource both members and non-members seek (Bierman, 2006; Boyd-Franklin & Lockwood, 2009). Mental health problems that members have presented include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, autism, domestic abuse and violence, and addictions (Avent et al., 2015). Other problems presented to pastors by church members included marriage problems and divorce, premarital counseling, death and bereavement, family problems, sickness and hospitalization, pregnancy and abortion, financial

problems, and work-related issues (Mattis et al., 2007). Bierman (2006) found that the emotional support Black pastors provided to older members was positively related to those members' self-esteem.

On one hand, Black pastors serve as the first counseling resource members use, yet on the other hand some members refuse to go to their pastor for help. For example, in one focus group, church members identified the same problems above along with sexual violence, domestic violence, spousal abuse, and substance abuse as problems they would not present to their pastor (Mattis et al., 2007). Three factors pertaining to the pastor prevented members from seeking help: the pastor's character, competence, and availability. Issues surrounding character involved members' perceptions of the pastor being judgmental, blaming, lacking compassion, empathy, and confidentiality, and having negative family relationships (Mattis et al., 2007). Regarding the pastor's competence and availability, church members held perceptions of the pastor being unqualified and unskilled as a counselor, too busy to help, and "their issues were not important enough to bring to their pastors who are already very busy" (Mattis et al., 2007, p. 255). Church members further identified issues within themselves by which they chose not to bring issues to their pastors, which included their own discomfort, availability of family and friends to help, and feelings of shame (Mattis et al., 2007).

Boyd-Franklin and Lockwood (2009) acknowledged that counseling and the mental health profession are considered as “antispiritual by some members of the African American community, particularly those with strong religious beliefs” (p. 143). Other barriers to Black people seeking treatment include (1) the history of institutional racism and discrimination experienced by Black people in health care, (2) the cultural belief of keeping family life private, which is captured in the colloquial saying, “what’s done in this house stays in this house,” and

(3) the stigma within the Black community of having mental health problems (Avent et al., 2015; Boyd-Franklin, 2010; Carter et al., 2017; Givens, 2020; Warner, 2021).

Pastors have acknowledged their limitations in addressing mental health needs of church members (Avent et al., 2015). These pastors further affirmed "how pastoring African Americans is different and requires an understanding of the history and the mindset of that specific population" (Avent et al., 2015, pp. 41-42). Such knowledge and awareness are required because of the uniqueness of and diversity within Black people's life experiences, especially the emotional/behavioral effects of racial trauma and the coping resources members may or may not have available to them. In my 2020 pilot study, one bishop acknowledged that pastors are encountering developmental and mental health issues in families and children which they are not equipped and trained to address (Rogers, 2020). Such awareness remains imperative for Black pastors knowing when members' problems are beyond their levels of knowledge, skills, and competency to help and the importance of having a network of professional counselors for referrals. These helping relationships with members may be a source of stress in and of itself as well as contribute to Black pastors' existing time demands, workload, and emotional burden inherent in these relationships.

Pastors' Spirituality

Pastors foster the spiritual wellness and development of members across the lifespan. At the same time, pastors to varying degrees address their own spiritual wellness through private time devoted to spiritual practices. Carroll (2006) asked pastors how satisfied they were with their own spiritual life, to which 42% were "very satisfied," 53% "somewhat satisfied," and 5% "somewhat dissatisfied" (p. 170). Barna Group (2017) found a similar high rating by pastors on their spiritual well-being where 88% described their spiritual well-being as excellent or good.

Interestingly, pastors who were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” or “somewhat dissatisfied” with their spiritual life expressed similar levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding their "overall effectiveness in this congregation: 36% very satisfied, 59% somewhat satisfied, and 4% somewhat dissatisfied" (Carroll, 2006, p. 170). Is there a correlation between a pastor's level of spirituality and their pastoral effectiveness? Carroll found a positive correlation between satisfaction with their spiritual life and the number of hours spent in prayer, meditation, and private spiritual practices. However, Black pastors reported higher satisfaction with their spiritual lives than other Protestant pastors (Carroll, 2006).

Surveying 524 Protestant pastors from different denominations, Barna Group (2017) found that 81% used prayer and 71% read the Bible for their own spiritual growth. Forty percent (40%) of pastors stated that it was "somewhat difficult" and 7% "very difficult" to find time to dedicate to their spiritual growth (Barna Group, 2017). When comparing the difficulty in finding time for their spiritual growth by how long they had been serving as pastors, as length of tenure increased, there was a decrease in the percentage of pastors who found it somewhat difficult: 50% (less than 15 years), 41% (15-29 years), and 32% (30+ years; Barna Group, 2017). In addition, 59% of all pastors prayed first before responding to a crisis in their work and 52% prayed first when experiencing a family or personal crisis (Barna Group, 2017).

As some pastors have acknowledged the importance of spiritual practices in helping to maintain their emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being (Chandler, 2010; Doolittle, 2010), research in the area raises the question of how pastors in general, and Black pastors in particular, use spirituality as a resource to empower them in their pastoral duties and as a coping resource when confronted by personal and professional challenges and stressors. While pastors work in the domain of spirituality, one cannot assume that spiritual practices taught to a congregation are

practiced by the pastor, as may be evidenced by the difficulty some pastors may have in finding time to pray (Barna Group, 2017). It may be important to assess how Black pastors use spirituality in their work and personal lives, especially to see if they practice what they preach and what benefits and protective factors their spirituality may provide them.

As a result of their roles and work within both the church and community, Black pastors have acknowledged experiencing increased stress levels, which affected how they carried out their pastoral duties and family responsibilities (Harmon et al., 2018). Some pastors have further acknowledged the surprising expectations placed upon them by congregation members and the sometimes challenging roles that they are asked to fulfill, such as being a father figure to fatherless children (Avent et al., 2015). For some pastors the increased stress levels pointed to the need of learning both how to delegate and incorporate coping strategies to better manage stress (Harmon et al., 2018). From gaining some background on the Black Church as a workplace and a perspective on the work of Black pastors, it seems that there are significant responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities Black pastors face, which may lead them to experience stress.

Stress

Pastoral stress results from the interpersonal dynamics, interactions, communication patterns, and emotional processes within a congregation and surrounding community, which may challenge pastors into finding accurate ways to both perceive and assess what is happening and appropriate ways to respond (Hulme, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In particular, Black pastors experience stress from the combinations of their various roles and responsibilities they hold in leading a Black church, their high-profile status and leadership in their communities, their personal identities, and the intersection and interaction of all of the aforementioned. For

example, a Black pastor may be a woman, wife, mother, and daughter caring for an aging parent while at the same time preaching sermons every Sunday, teaching Bible study on Wednesday nights, supervising staff, and coordinating volunteers. The combination of all these identities, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and demands help produce the stress Black pastors experience. Understanding the dynamics of stress in general provides a necessary framework to gain insight into the specific stress pastors experience in their various roles.

Characteristics

Researchers have described stress as a stimulus (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; George & Lynch, 2003; Sapolsky, 2004; Seyle, 1974), response (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Heid, 2019; Benson & Stuart, 1993), and the dynamic interaction between the person and their environment (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As a stimulus, stress exists as an event happening in the lives of people, which may range from major events or changes, such as the death of a loved one, divorce, or car accident, to daily struggles or hassles, such as not finding toilet paper or disinfectant wipes during the COVID-19 pandemic. When experienced as a stimulus event, stress may evoke emotional, physiological, and/or behavioral reactions in persons in their attempt to live meaningful or happy lives (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Defined as a response, stress exists as a response to events and changes in people's lives. For example, in everyday conversations, one may hear another say, "That event stressed me out," indicating emotional, physiological, and/or behavioral reactions to what they experienced from the stressor event (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Sapolsky, 2004). Rather than defining stress in terms of stimulus or response and using a more dynamic approach and cited in very many articles and books, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) posited this definition:

"Psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (p. 19).

Stress may affect the body with a manifestation in various physical symptoms, such as headaches, tense muscles, heartburn and stomach aches, rapid breathing and heart rate, weakened immune system, hypertension, fertility problems such as missed periods, erectile dysfunction, low sex drive, high blood sugar, and sleep disturbances (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Sapolsky, 2004). Behavioral symptoms may include changes in eating habits, consuming alcohol, and other compulsive behaviors. The experience of stress may cause emotional symptoms such as anxiety, worry, depression, and anger, which Lazarus (1999) called stress emotions. Cognitive symptoms may include cognitive distortions, intrusive thoughts, and the inability to concentrate (Benson & Stuart, 1993). Benson and Stuart (1993) reported that these symptoms may increase an individual's stress, the stress in turn may increase symptoms, and the symptoms increase more stress, all of which leads to a negative stress cycle. Moreover, during times of high stress a person's ability to think clearly and critically may decrease while strong emotions may flood them, such as in an argument or fight (Heid, 2019). For example, groups of Anglican pastors described feelings of inadequacy, being overwhelmed, anxiety, frustration, tiredness, exhaustion, and pressure (Charlton et al., 2009) as well as acknowledged the physical symptoms of stress they experienced, which included "tiredness, feeling low, sleep difficulties, headaches, tummy upset, lack of interest in food, boredom, and loss of weight" (Berry et al., 2012, p. 171).

From the discipline of stress physiology, a stressor is "anything that throws your body out of allostatic balance and the stress-response is your body's attempt to restore allostasis," where

the brain directs and coordinates bodily functions, such as changing hormone levels, sharpening sensory receptivity, and increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing, in response to the stress experienced (Sapolsky, 2004, p. 10). Sapolsky (2004) acknowledged how the mind may create stress in our bodies through excessive worry, rumination, fear, and the anticipation of a stressful event. In citing the mind-body connection, Sapolsky further acknowledged how stress may cause or exacerbate certain diseases over time, such as hypertension, diabetes, irregular or ceased menstrual cycles, decreased testosterone, and a weakened immune system. Sapolsky stated that "stress increases your risk of getting diseases that make you sick, or if you have such diseases, stress increases the risk of your defenses being overwhelmed by the disease" (p. 16).

Through an appraisal process the individual assesses the situation: what is happening, who is involved, the significance of the situation, and its potential impact and consequence. The person further appraises their coping resources that are available and which ones might be useful in addressing the situation and managing their stress response (Benson & Stuart, 1993). One implication of this definition is that two persons may see and experience the same event, but have different perceptions and appraisals, which will lead to different responses where one individual may have a negative reaction and the other individual may be less or unaffected by it. A second implication is that an individual may not be able to change or control a stressful event, but they may be able to change their perception and understanding of it as well as more clearly assess their ability to respond and cope.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) described the assessment of the situation as primary appraisal in which the individual determines the nature of the situation as either having no significance to their wellness (i.e., the situation is irrelevant), the situation is positive in nature and leads to positive emotions, or the situation is stress-inducing. Lazarus and Folkman further

described stress appraisal as containing the elements of either harm/loss, threat, or challenge. A harm/loss appraisal indicates that the person has already experienced some situation in which some degree of harm or loss has occurred, such as the temporary closure of a church building or job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A threat appraisal assesses the potential loss or harm that may happen in the future, such as the impending death of a family or being unable to find a job. A challenge appraisal, which has a more positive feeling than a threat appraisal, assesses a future opportunity containing "the potential for gain and growth inherent in an encounter" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 32), such as completing and submitting a Small Business Administration Paycheck Protection Program loan application to rehire church staff temporarily laid off.

Secondary appraisal involves an assessment of the individual's available coping resources to address the situation and which ones may be appropriate for the situation at hand (Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The combination and interaction of both primary and secondary appraisals determine the level of stress a person will experience in a situation. As new information on the situation becomes available, the person may engage in a reappraisal to adjust both their primary and secondary appraisals. Dewe and Trenberth (2012) acknowledged that how a person appraises a stressful encounter will determine their types, level, and intensity of emotions.

Researchers have acknowledged the individuality each person brings to their interaction with potentially stress-inducing encounters (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The manifestation of stress in people's lives differs from person to person in that what may be stressful for one person may not be stressful for another. Or, if the same stressor event experienced by two people evokes a stress response, then

their responses will be different to some degree due to each individual's appraisal of the experience, their coping resources, and their unique identity and life circumstances. For example, when church leaders retire or resign, one pastor may appraise this situation as stressful because these persons have been leading a long time, know how the church operates, and now the daunting task is replacing those older leaders. On the other hand, another pastor may not appraise the situation as stressful but rather as an opportunity for change and enlisting younger leaders with new ideas.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) further acknowledged the importance of the individual's commitment and beliefs as critical factors in the appraisal process, which determine what is important to individuals and how the person sees and reacts to events. More specifically, a commitment may be to certain values, ideas, ideals, or goals, which the individual holds as important or central to their identity, self-esteem, way of being in relationship with others, career success, and wellness (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman stated, "The greater the strength of the commitment, the more vulnerable the person is to psychological stress in the area of that commitment" (p. 58). For example, if a pastor holds a commitment of being an autocratic leader whose ideas and modus operandi are the only way of doing the business of the church, then that pastor may be vulnerable to experiencing stress when at a Deacon Board meeting his ideas are challenged and alternative recommendations are put forth. Conversely, if the pastor does not hold such a strong commitment, then the dialogue of alternative ideas may not seem like a threat or challenge but rather an opportunity for growth and change (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

In addition to commitments, beliefs are a salient factor in how a person appraises a potentially stress-inducing encounter because beliefs function to provide a lens through which

the person sees, understands, and interprets the encounter (Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Beliefs may be silent as well as salient in that persons may be operating on their beliefs in an automatic fashion while not being aware of them until they are questioned and challenged (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Furthermore, some beliefs may be assumed to be true, infallible, and even shared by others in the same encounter. However, beliefs may also be held about oneself including one's abilities, other participants in the encounter, the church as an organization, potential outcomes, and spirituality (Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). For example, a pastor may believe that they know what is best for the church and the board or committee is not capable of coming up with a viable solution, which may cause the pastor to be closed-minded, unable to hear viable solutions, and/or setting up a conflict situation.

After assessing the situation through primary and secondary appraisal, the individual implements coping strategies to address any elements of harm/loss, threat, or challenge and manage any psychological stress they may experience (Benson & Stuart, 1993). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined such coping strategies as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141). This definition underlines Lazarus and Folkman's premise that, to fully understand how an individual sees, understands, and responds in potentially stressful encounters, one must pay attention to the ongoing interaction between the person and their environment. This includes even the changing nature of their coping efforts as they respond to the situation, gain new information and understanding throughout the encounter, and re-appraise the situation and how to respond appropriately. As a result, individuals may engage in three forms of coping: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and relationship-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Stephenson et al., 2016).

The purpose of problem-solving coping is to address the situation or encounter by "defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, weighing the alternatives in terms of their costs and benefits, choosing among them, and acting" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 152). In addition to being directed at the situation or encounter, the individual may direct problem-solving efforts towards themselves by identifying and addressing areas of growth or self-care, such as improved listening skills, anger management, new work skills, or gaining a new perspective on the encounter (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The purpose of emotion-focused coping is to manage one's emotions so that one is not overwhelmed by stress emotions (e.g., anger or anxiety), such as reevaluating the meaning and importance of the encounter, focusing only on selected aspects of the situation, finding some element of hope to offset thinking about the worst that could happen, temporarily diverting attention off the problem through walking, exercise, watching TV, or drinking, and finding some form of emotional release (Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Brelsford et al. (2015) found that problem-focused coping strategies lowered total perceived stress and increased positive affect while emotion-focused coping also increased positive affect.

Relationship-focused coping strategies seek to maintain the connection and viability of important relationships during times of stress or even improve and repair working and significant relationships (O'Brien et al., 2009; Stephenson et al., 2016). Such coping strategies include active listening, practicing empathy, seeking mutual understanding, and resolving disagreements and conflicts (O'Brien et al., 2009; Stephenson et al., 2016). While the research on relationship-focused coping has centered on couples and families under stress, there is some relevance to Black pastors experiencing stress in their interactions with church members, boards, and committees. For example, a Black pastor may experience the stressor of conflict in a meeting

with the Deacon Board during which one specific deacon is highly critical of the pastor's ideas and recommendations. When the meeting ends, the pastor still has a relationship with the deacon as a member, but the stress from conflict may influence the relationship between the pastor and deacon. Therefore, the pastor may reach out to the deacon privately to address the conflict and repair any damage to their relationship through relationship-focused coping.

When confronted with pastoral stressors, pastors may respond with either one or more problem-solving, emotion-focused, or relationship-focused coping strategies, which may be either adaptive or maladaptive. Proeschold-Bell and colleagues (2013) defined an adaptive stress response as one in which "clergy leverage their knowledge, skills, and characteristics to cope successfully with a stressor, even growing stronger through the process" (p. 139), in contrast to a maladaptive stress response in which the

> clergyperson either does not have adequate resources to cope with a stressor, or when a stressor becomes long and a clergyperson has no opportunity for rest or rejuvenation [resulting in] physiological indicators such as poor sleep, cognitive indicators such as rumination, behavioral indicators such as overeating, and emotional indicators such as depression and anxiety. (p. 140)

Therefore, it is imperative for Black pastors to name and identify the stressors they are experiencing, have a lens through which to understand it, and develop effective coping strategies (Pappas, 1995). While pastors experience stress in different forms depending on their specific congregation and the relationships they have with members and the community, there are several broad categories of pastoral stress worth noting: excessive demands, expectations, and projections; work overload; boundary issues; isolation, loneliness, and lack of support; church

conflict; role confusion and role strain; personal and family criticism; financial stress; the church as an emotional system; and mobility.

Excessive Demands, Expectations, and Projections

Church members have various expectations and demands of their pastors, which can be excessive and unrealistic at times (Berry et al., 2012; Charlton et al., 2009). For example, a pastor may be on vacation when a church member or a relative of a church member dies and the family of the deceased expects the pastor to leave or end their vacation to return to perform the funeral. A church member might be experiencing financial difficulty, such as being behind in their rent and facing eviction, and will contact the pastor sometimes on the day the member is to be in court and expect the pastor somehow come up with the funds, either from the church or their own personal funds, to prevent the eviction. The pastor and spouse may experience the expectation to be a model couple and family in front of the congregation and community (Gilbert, 1987). One pastor described the demands and expectations of members this way, "If you think the church is built on keeping sheep (i.e., members) happy, you assigned yourself an impossible task" (Chandler, 2010, p. 5). After serving 18 years, this pastor sent a letter to the church's deacon and trustee boards, describing his experience of demands and expectations:

> I have given so much of myself to help others, listening to them, and knowingly at times carrying their burdens, while still trying to live balanced and enjoy my own life...People have no idea how demanding the pastorate can be and how demanding people can be because everyone thinks they're the only one...Always being called on, the betrayal we experience by those on our ministerial staff, the pressure to fill the need to do better from one Sunday sermon to the next, the administrative workload, the pulling from one person

> to the next, and, by way of outreach, there are nonmembers who show up at the church wanting their needs met. (Croft, 2018, 10:22)

Members will sometimes compare the current pastor with former pastor(s) highlighting what and how much the former pastor(s) did to meet members' needs and expectations (Hill et al., 2003). People who come from another congregation may not only compare their former pastor with their current one but also expect more from their current pastor (Gilbert, 1987). Members may even project onto current pastors their feelings and expectations, both positive and negative, from previous authority figures through transference (Gilbert, 1987).

Members may have a limited understanding and appreciation of all the work pastors do, leading them to assume that pastors are readily available and have plenty of free time (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). As a result, some pastors may feel stressed by the conflict of when to say "yes" and when to say "no" because of the expectations by members of being always available and on-call (Dewe, 1987; Hill et al., 2003). Moreover, pastors may experience stress when they encounter member or congregational expectations which conflict with their own expectations and convictions (Hulme, 1985). Pastors may even have internal expectations and demands of themselves, which may be sources of stress (Gilbert, 1987), such as expecting of themselves to deliver a perfect sermon each week which will evoke much praise from members. These high or excessive work demands may lead some pastors to extreme busyness, people-pleasing, overworking, and neglecting their own spiritual growth and appropriate self-care (Chandler, 2010).

Work Overload

Work overload entails that there is too much work to be done at the same time and too little time in which to accomplish it (Gilbert, 1987). This overwhelming quantity of work may

include too much paperwork, church administration details, many committee and board meetings which may be unproductive, counseling members, working through conflict situations between church members, dealing with difficult people, supervising staff and volunteers, and addressing building maintenance problems while at the same time trying to meet the spiritual needs of members and perform their sacred ministerial duties (Berry et al., 2012; Charlton et al., 2009; Hulme, 1985).

Schedule unpredictability contributes to work overload as another source of stress and barrier to self-care (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2012). The crisis nature of pastors' work of responding to crises, emergencies, deaths, being on-call, and providing counseling and support may create stress for them (Hulme, 1985). In acknowledging pastors as a primary and often the first counseling resource people reach out to for spiritual and emotional problems, Meek and colleagues (2003) called pastors "the therapist on call" (p. 339). After supporting members who underwent their own traumatic crises, pastors acknowledged experiencing secondary traumatic stress which manifested in emotional exhaustion, sadness, disturbed sleep, weight loss, and their family members feeling the negative impact of the pastor's stress (Hendron et al., 2014). Additionally, Maslach and colleagues (2001) found that work overload and excessive time demands are positively related to burnout.

Some rural pastors may serve in more than one church, which requires traveling between the churches and increases the need for work-personal life balance (Scott & Lovell, 2015). Scott and Lovell (2015) further found that rural pastors struggled to have good work-personal life balance and regular self-care practices which left these pastors "feeling episodically overwhelmed, isolated, and unbalanced" (p. 91).

Boundary Issues

Boundary-related stress acknowledges how church work and pastors' job responsibilities may invade personal and family time and space. Boundary intrusiveness or ambiguity is the experience pastors and their families have when church and community scrutinize them to such a degree that it feels like they are living in a fishbowl or glass house with a lack of privacy (Hileman, 2008; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Weaver et al., 2002). Wells and colleagues (2012) posited that "boundary-related stress occurs when the pressures and conflicts violate the domain boundaries of the clerical family" (p. 227) with this experience of work-family conflict being "more prevalent and pronounced in the clerical profession" (p. 216). Regardless of gender, race, and denomination, pastors acknowledged how church work responsibilities contributed to a lack of personal and family time and activities (Carroll, 2006; Dewe, 1987; Lindholm et al., 2016; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2012; Smith, 2013).

This work-family boundary conflict has its roots in the relationship to the congregation whereby church members may view the pastor and the pastor's family as belonging to the church rather than as a separate entity with its unique needs as other families within the congregation where such a lack of recognition of the pastor's family will lead to intrusion upon its boundaries (Wells et al., 2012). All the pastor's relationships and roles, combined with responsibilities and time demands, may create boundary-related stress, which may challenge the pastor's personal and family boundaries (Hileman, 2008; Wells et al., 2012). While clear and firm boundaries protect a person's or family's autonomy and privacy, pastors and their families may experience ambiguous boundaries due to their relationships in the church and community (Hill et al., 2003).

Time demands on pastors may conflict with personal, spouse, or family time and being available to fulfill one's roles within the family and attend family matters, such as birthday

celebrations, school events, and extra-curricular activities (Gilbert, 1987; Hill et al., 2003). Moreover, being on-call to respond in times of member deaths, medical emergencies, and other crises increases the time demand on pastors. Pastors acknowledged their difficulties in setting boundaries and countering the expectation and perception of being available around the clock, even during vacation time (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). Some pastors reported that their own internal expectations to serve effectively and please members contributed to their difficulties in setting boundaries (Dewe, 1987; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011).

Pastors and their families may be challenged to have private space and time away from church members and activities, especially those living in a parsonage owned by the church where some members may assume that the pastor and family have a perpetual open door (Hileman, 2008; Hill et al., 2003). For example, church members have shown up at the pastor's house without invitation or appointment to talk with the pastor. If the church provided a parsonage for the pastor and family, church members or leaders may have expressed control over how the house is decorated (Morris & Blanton, 1998; Wells et al., 2002). As rural communities tend to be small, close-knit with residents having awareness and knowledge of other residents, lack of privacy exists as a stressor that rural pastors often encounter (Scott & Lovell, 2015). All these boundary-related issues may certainly apply to Black pastors given their status, reputation, and visibility in both church and community.

Isolation, Loneliness, and Lack of Support

Loneliness and isolation seem to be integral parts of being a pastor (Berry et al., 2012; Carroll, 2006). As the saying goes, "it's lonely at the top;" pastors experience isolation and loneliness by how members view and treat them as being on a pedestal and different from other human beings (Hill et al., 2003). Chandler (2010) acknowledged that feeling isolated and lonely

and lack of support may contribute to pastors experiencing stress and eventually burnout. Scott and Lovell (2015) found that isolation and loneliness existed as major stressors for rural pastors and had a strong, negative correlation with professional excellence.

Pastors have identified and acknowledged lack of support as a stressor endemic to pastoral work (Berry et al., 2012; Chandler, 2010; Charlton et al., 2009; Dewe, 1987). Lee and Iverson-Gilbert (2003) defined social support as having "supportive relationships in four domains of family, congregation, denomination (e.g., other pastors, supervisors), and community (e.g., friends outside the church)" (p. 250). Gilbert (1987) acknowledged the different types of support people need:

> (1) comfort in times of pain and uncertainty, (2) clarity in times of confusion, (3) confrontation offered lovingly in times needing truth and honesty, (4) collaboration in working together, (5) clowns who add humor and brighten a situation, and (6) celebrators who provide affirmation. (p. 22)

Gilbert further acknowledged that pastors need both personal support and spiritual support. Hough et al. (2019) found that social support positively affected clergy physical and mental health.

Church Conflict

Church conflict exists as a source of stress for pastors, which manifests in different ways, such as between members, committee or board members, leaders, committee versus committee, and between the pastor and any of the aforementioned (Gilbert, 1987). Some pastors reported experiencing stress from church conflict, such as when (1) members challenge and fight changes recommended by the pastor, (2) two groups of members fight over an issue, and (3) members battle with the pastor over power or what the pastor’s role is (Beebe, 2007; Proeschold-Bell et

al., 2011). Pastors further experience stress around conflict over when pastor and members disagree on the church's outreach and missions programs, members want the pastor to change while the pastor wants members to change, and pastors have to play a peacekeeper role between members and boards/committees (Hill et al., 2003).

Mamiya (2005) reported the amount and types of conflict Black and White pastors acknowledged during the past two years. Thirty-six (36%) percent of Black pastors acknowledged no conflict compared to 32% of White pastors; 41% of Black pastors compared with 46% White pastors stated, "some minor conflict;" 4% of Black pastors and 5% of White pastors had "significant conflicts;" and 19% of Black pastors and 17% of White pastors had a "major conflict" which resulted in members and/or leaders leaving the church (Mamiya, 2005, p. 34). Regarding the types of conflicts experienced, 14% of Black pastors and 11% of White pastors identified pastoral leadership as a source of conflict (Mamiya, 2005). In addition, lay leadership was a source of conflict for 29% of Black pastors and 7% of White pastors (Mamiya, 2005).

Role Confusion and Role Strain

Role confusion results from differing conceptions and understandings of the pastor's role as well as the role of lay members in the work of the church. Members may place more importance on certain roles in which they prefer the pastor to function, such as preacher, counselor, or community leader while the pastor may place a different priority on certain roles (Beebe, 2007; Gilbert, 1987). Dunbar et al. (2020) posited that a pastor's understanding of both their pastoral identity and pastoral role may influence how they handle stress and prevent burnout. Dunbar et al. further posited that "an unhealthy understanding of what it means to be a pastor results in unhealthy practice" (p. 177).

As institutions are composed of various roles and relationships, individuals may experience "difficulty in fulfilling their role obligations" which Goode (1960) called "role strain" (p. 483). For pastors, role strain is experienced when there is a conflict between church and family obligations, such as when a scheduled church event or meeting conflicts with a family event. Pastors may further experience role strain in their one role as pastor, as they may have several role relationships with people in the congregation and community, such as supervisor of staff, counselor, parent figure to single-parent children, mentor, example, teacher, or community leader (Goode, 1960). Goode posited that, with their various role relationships, a person "cannot meet all these demands to the satisfaction of all the persons who are part of his total role network," which makes role strain a normal phenomenon (p. 485). Pooler (2011) acknowledged that when a pastor's time, energy, involvement, and self are invested predominantly in their work, the pastor has less to give to other roles.

Goode (1960) offered some strategies to minimize role strain, such as delegation, elimination of role relationships, and barriers to intrusion. Delegation may be an effective strategy to reduce role strain for pastors if the right resource person is available to handle and fulfill the role obligations. Elimination of a role relationship may be a possibility for pastors depending on the role relationship, its centrality to the pastor's job, and its importance and priority. For example, serving as a community leader or an elected official may be a role relationship a pastor may eliminate given its demands on their time, family, and personal resources like energy level. Pastors create barriers to intrusion on their time and space by having a secretary or administrative assistant to provide a buffer between them and members who might unexpectedly make a demand on the pastor's availability. Goode acknowledged the emotional toil that role strain may have on individuals by stating that the persons may “begin to experience

strain, worry, anxiety, or the pressures of others if we devote more time and attention to one role obligation than we feel we should, or than others feel we should" (p. 488). Pastors may experience this role strain as in the case when they devote more time and energy in their pastoral role than family role or they devote more time to preaching than to visiting elderly members.

Personal and Family Criticism

Pastors have acknowledged experiencing criticism directed at themselves and their family members (Carroll, 2006; Lee, 2000; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Rowatt, 2001). Such criticism may include criticism of pastors' preaching, teaching, interactions with members, decision-making, and comparing the pastor to a former pastor, especially the pastor's immediate predecessor, or to other pastors in the community or denomination. Pastors' spouses acknowledged the stress of hearing criticism of their spouses from church members (Hill et al., 2003). Church members sometimes have higher standards and expectations of the pastor's children - often referred to as preachers' kids (PKs) - than other children in the congregation, expecting them to be a perfect example for other children, which may lead members to criticize them (Hill et al., 2003; Lee, 2000). Similarly, members may have expectations of the pastor's spouse in terms of their role in the congregation, interactions with members, and manner of dress, which may lead to criticism (Lee, 2000).

Barna Group (2017) asked pastors to classify feedback and communications from members in terms of whether they were encouraging versus hurtful, helpful versus unhelpful, affirming versus judging, gracious versus critical, and knowledgeable versus uninformed. The overwhelming majority of pastors found members' feedback to be encouraging, helpful, affirming, and gracious but pastors were equally split on whether the feedback was knowledgeable or uninformed (Barna Group, 2017). For the small percentage of pastors who

viewed members' feedback and comments on the negative side - hurtful, unhelpful, judging, critical, and uninformed - more women than men and more younger pastors under 50 years than older pastors over 50 held these negative perceptions (Barna Group, 2017).

Lee (2000) found that pastors acknowledged personal criticism by a church leader was more stressful than boundary-related stress or unrealistic expectations. Krause et al. (1998) found that pastors experienced significantly more negative interactions of people being too critical and demanding than church leaders, who experienced more negative interactions than lay members. Pastors have often viewed criticism as a personal attack rather than as constructive or helpful (Garner, 2013). Carroll (2006) reported that criticism by congregation members contributed to some pastors doubting their call to ministry and experiencing dissatisfaction with their job, congregation, and personal/spiritual lives as well as the criticism negatively influencing their emotional and physical health. Certainly, Black pastors have not been immune historically to personal and family criticism given their own and their family's high profile in both church and community, where such criticism has come in various forms about their personal and family lifestyle, preaching, public leadership, children's behavior, and spouse.

Financial Stress

Financial stress is concerned with pastors being paid enough to support one's family and the church's ability to provide other areas of compensation, such as vacation time, disability coverage, and other benefits. Pastors have reported the stress of financial strain experienced from low levels of compensation (Carroll, 2006; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). For pastors, compensation includes salary, housing allowance (if the church does not offer a parsonage), and such benefits as medical insurance, retirement contribution, vacation, and weekly day(s) off. Dissatisfaction with their compensation has been a primary factor with some pastors who

have considered leaving the pastorate or have doubted their call to ministry (Carroll, 2006). If there is not adequate compensation received by the pastor, then the spouse may feel pressure and stress to make up the gap in financial resources (Carroll, 2006; Gilbert, 1987).

Mamiya (2005) reported that Black pastors received compensation which was two-thirds of the compensation that White pastors received. Mamiya further found that the salaries of Black and White pastors were more equitable in large congregations (350+ in AWA). Small churches (100 or less in AWA) and medium-size churches (101-350 in AWA) often lack the financial resources of larger congregations, especially if the church is small with an aging population (Carroll, 2006). Carroll (2006) reported that 70% of Black pastors and 60% of conservative Protestant pastors did not have a pension through their church or denomination and 36% of Black pastors and 30% of conservative Protestant pastors did not receive health care benefits. In addition, the financial stress of lack of financial resources may be another motivating factor for Black pastors to work longer than White pastors (Carroll, 2006). Mamiya (2005) also indicated that a lack of pension and retirement benefits may be a contributing factor to Black pastors working more years.

Another dimension of financial stress is the stress pastors experience when the church has limited financial resources being received from members. Black churches receive financial donations from members in the form of weekly offerings, tithes (members giving 10% of their income), and pledges. When I interviewed Black Church denominational leaders, several acknowledged pastors experiencing the major stressor of not having enough money to support the church's programs and ministries, which may lead a pastor to invest their personal funds into the ministry (Rogers, 2020). Pastors are further facing the financial stressor of meeting denominational and conference assessments with declining resources where the church is

prescribed a designated amount of money to support their denomination, district, conference, or jurisdiction. According to one denominational leader I interviewed, congregations have become smaller through members dying, some relocating to southern states where the cost of living is less expensive, and other members choosing not to attend (Rogers, 2020). Some congregations are becoming older with less young people and families attending. There is even growing competition from online churches where people not only participate in worship virtually but also give their money through various online giving apps or send their checks to a TV ministry rather than their own church. With the onslaught of COVID-19, many churches closed their doors and moved to online services, which led to a decline in member donations.

The Church as an Emotional System

Friedman (1985), Steinke (1993), Pappas (1995), and Beebe (2007) applied family systems theory to churches by describing them as emotional systems and applying such family systems concepts as homeostasis, triangles, non-anxious presence, and self-differentiation. Such an application seems appropriate for Black churches since it is common for members to describe the connection between members as a "church family." According to family systems theory, the system is an interacting set of persons that make up a whole organism, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, each person is interacting and affecting each other, and when change affects one person, it also affects the system (Beebe, 2007; Steinke, 1993). Circular causality is where each person interacts with another person as both cause and effect of their behavior and one behavior feeds another and another (Smith-Acuna, 2011). Because of the organismic nature of the church, pastors may experience pastoral stress by failing to foresee and understand the connection between people and how the impact in one part of the church may affect another part.

For example, a conflict in the choir may negatively affect the deacons, ushers, and other participants in the worship service.

Family systems and church systems adapt to maintain homeostasis and equilibrium (Friedman, 1985; Steinke, 1993). Homeostasis is the tendency of systems to maintain predictable interaction patterns to maintain equilibrium while equilibrium is a certain predictable state of status quo which systems seek to maintain and therefore resist change (Beebe, 2007; Friedman, 1985; Smith-Acuna, 2011). Pastors may experience pastoral stress when people and boards resist change which the pastor is seeking to implement. Pastors may experience resistance to change when members (1) immortalize the church's history and tradition, (2) declare what has always been as the only way that things should be done, and (3) prescribe that only one existing (or even a deceased) person can fulfill a role in the way they had been doing it or that it should be done (Friedman, 1985; Pappas, 1995; Steinke, 1993). Pappas (1995) argued that "pastoral stress regularly results when the pastor ignores or misjudges the power of homeostatic forces" (p. 109).

Communication within a system can maintain or reinforce a problem or open door for change (Smith-Acuna, 2011; Steinke, 1993). It is important for pastors to understand the difference between the message sent versus the message received, the surface meaning versus the underlying or hidden message, and the sender's intent versus the impact on the receiver of the message (Smith-Acuna, 2011). Moreover, feedback plays an important role within any system, which includes both negative feedback that promotes a return to equilibrium and the status quo and positive feedback that leads to change (Smith-Acuna, 2011). Pastors may experience pastoral stress when they receive negative feedback, especially when it is unexpected and from unexpected sources.

Pastors provide more effective leadership when they possess self-differentiation and enable congregations to function with healthier interpersonal dynamics (Beebe, 2007; Friedman, 1985; Pappas, 1995; Steinke, 1993). The characteristics of self-differentiation include: (1) having an established, separate identity, (2) being oneself and close to others at the same time without losing oneself or threatening or negating the identity of others, (3) the ability to utilize both thoughts and emotions in processing experiences, (4) "the ability to maintain one's integrity and well-being without intruding on that of others" (Steinke, 1993, p. 11), (5) practicing clear, direct communication, and (6) valuing the unique identity of other persons (Friedman, 1985; Pappas, 1995; Smith-Acuña, 2011; Steinke, 1993). Beebe (2007) asserted that pastors who practice high levels of differentiation will be better able to manage conflict through a collaborative style, handle pressures to conform to social role expectations, and cope with stress to prevent burnout. Son (2019) argued that when a church values sacrifice in their pastor - "sacrifice their financial resources, health, family time, the nurturing of their own children, etc. and devote themselves solely to their ministry" (p. 17) - this produces stress in the pastor and chronic anxiety in both the pastor and congregation. Beebe further found higher levels of differentiation were associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and greater levels of personal accomplishment.

Mobility

The stressor of mobility concerns the pastoral family's lack of control or input on when and where they must move for their next church assignment when the decision is made by their denominational leaders (Morris & Blanton, 1998). For denominations like AME, AMEZ, and CME with an itinerant system where pastors are assigned by a bishop and are required to move to another church at the bishop's discretion this issue of mobility creates stress for pastors and

their families, which includes physically moving, leaving connections and friendships, and adjusting to a new church and community (Hill et al., 2003). Pastors have acknowledged the stress from being moved from one church assignment to another (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2011). Having to move to another church in another town created such feelings of anxiety, loss, grief, and separation for families, especially for children having to enter another school and make new friends (Morris & Blanton, 1998).

Pastors perform a variety of roles within their congregations, such as preaching, teaching, being on-call, administration, crisis intervention, supervising staff and volunteers, and counseling individuals and families for which they are often the first counseling resource to be contacted (Gilbert, 1987; Weaver et al., 2002). Pastors experience job demands such as long work hours, unrealistic expectations, many meetings, being on-call, public visibility and scrutiny, higher moral standards, and providing support in times of crisis, all of which may lead to pastors experiencing stress (Berry et al., 2012; Charlton, et al., 2009; Terry & Cunningham, 2020). Pastors may be an at-risk population for stress and burnout given the complex nature of their work, which includes both meeting the various needs of church and community members and running a religious institution (Berry et al., 2012; Doolittle, 2007, 2010). Pastors' tendency to neglect their own self-care needs may not only negatively impact pastors themselves but also the wellness of their families and congregations (Chandler, 2009, 2010; Lawson et al., 2007; Terry & Cunningham, 2020).

Pastoral stress is a reality pastors experience in different ways depending on their unique relationships, interactions, and circumstances in their churches and communities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When asked about the barriers to being healthier and living a healthier lifestyle, some pastors acknowledged their pastoral stress and specifically (1) an unpredictable schedule,

(2) lack of personal time with family, (3) unrealistic expectations, (4) time demands, and (5) feeling overwhelmed by church members' needs (Chandler, 2010; Lindholm et al., 2016). Krause et al. (1998) acknowledged that vocational stressors may impact pastors negatively by diminishing their pastoral effectiveness and quality of work. Darling et al. (2004) acknowledged that the demands upon pastors may impact their ability to be present, available, and meet the needs of their families, which in turn may increase the stress upon the pastors themselves. Proeschold-Bell et al. (2011) indicated that pastors may be susceptible to depression and anxiety given the complexity and demands of their work and the resulting stressors they may experience.

Barna Group (2017) asked 824 Protestant pastors to identify aspects of ministry for which they would have liked to have been better trained and prepared to which they received some answers:

> (1) counseling/people problems to solve, (2) administrative burden, (3) handling conflict, (4) balancing ministry and administration, (4) importance of delegating/training people, (5) challenges in leadership, (6) church politics, (7) family affected by job demands, (8) having to be all things to all people, (9) high expectations/people expecting perfection, (10) lack of respect for pastoral authority, (11) it never gets easier, (12) must do everything, and (13) time commitment required. (p. 66)

Pastors in large churches were more likely than pastors in medium and small churches to report the need for better training and preparation in both "delegating/training people" and "handling conflict" (Barna Group, 2017, p. 67). Women pastors expressed the need for more training in the areas of they "must do everything" and "expect perfection" (Barna Group, 2017, p. 85). Given the reality of pastoral stressors in the daily work experiences of pastors and pastors' own

admission of the need for better preparation to address them, it is further important to understand how pastoral stressors have influenced pastors' wellness.

Relationship between Pastoral Stress and Pastors' Wellness

Myers et al.'s (2000) definition of wellness - "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community" (p. 252) - provides important evaluative criteria by which to assess the impact of pastoral stressors on the wellness of pastors. Hettler (1976) proposed a wellness model comprised of physical, social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and occupational dimensions. Moreover, Roscoe (2009) posited a seven-dimensional wellness model to include social wellness, emotional wellness, physical wellness, intellectual wellness, spiritual wellness, occupational wellness, and environmental wellness. All these models portrayed the connection of mind, body, and spirit in these similar representations of wellness.

Pastoral stress threatens and negatively influences the emotional, mental, and physical wellness of pastors (Darling et al., 2004; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Lewis et al., 2007; Morris & Blanton, 1994, 1998; Wells, 2013). Trihub et al. (2010) acknowledged that, given their work schedules, demands, multiple roles, and being on-call, pastors "are prime targets for experiencing stress and burnout" (p. 102). Terry and Cunningham (2020) found that pastors' job demands were negatively correlated with their physical and spiritual well-being while positively correlated with symptoms of both physical and mental health problems.

Emotional/Mental Symptoms

In general, researchers have found that higher work stress led to lower emotional health in pastors (Terry & Cunningham, 2020; Wells, 2013). Carroll (2006) acknowledged the

existence of the following stressors which had a statistically significant negative correlation with pastors' positive feelings and emotional health: loneliness and isolation, boundary issues of separating private life from pastoral work, disagreement over pastor's role, too many demands, criticism by members, lack of personal, private and family time, being treated differently as the pastor, and spouse's resentment over demands of ministry and lack of adequate finances. Pastors experienced anxiety and depression as a result of encountering work-related stress in general and specifically financial stress, isolation and loneliness, lack of social support from members, denominational executives, and peers, congregational demands, schedule and life unpredictability, personal criticism, and negative interpersonal relationships (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2013; Terry & Cunningham, 2020; Trihub et al., 2010; Turton & Francis, 2007; Webb & Chase, 2019). A small sample of female clergy (25.8%) reported more depression than the male clergy participants in a study (Webb & Chase, 2019). Some pastors further acknowledged experiencing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization resulting from pastoral stressors (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015).

Some pastors acknowledged low ministry satisfaction and doubting their calling to being pastors (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015). Thoughts of leaving ministry positively correlated with depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization and negatively correlated with personal accomplishment, ministerial satisfaction, and quality of life (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015). Turton and Francis (2007) acknowledged the impact of work-related stress on Anglican pastors who also suffered nervous breakdowns and suicidal ideation. Lee (2010) found that pastors who reported higher congregational demands indicated higher levels of burnout and lower measures of well-being.

Physical Symptoms

Researchers have further found that, when pastors experienced high work stress, their physical health was lower (Wells, 2013). Terry and Cunningham (2020) found that clergy job demands were negatively correlated with pastors' perceptions of general health and positively correlated with symptoms of physical health problems. Wells (2013) found that Black pastors had higher emotional health and lower physical health than White clergy; older pastors had lower physical health and higher emotional health; pastors with children in the home had lower physical and emotional health; and pastors who worked two jobs had higher emotional and physical health.

Carroll (2006) further acknowledged the existence of the following stressors which had a negative correlation with pastors' energy level and physical health: loneliness and isolation; boundary issues; disagreement over pastor's role; too many demands; criticism by members; lack of personal, private, and family time; being treated differently as the pastor; and spouse's resentment over demands of ministry and lack of adequate finances. Turton and Francis (2007) acknowledged the physical impact of work-related stress on Anglican pastors who experienced headaches, insomnia, migraines, and gastrointestinal problems. Webb and Chase (2019) found that greater perceived occupational stress was associated with an increased likelihood of hypertension and type-2 diabetes.

Behavioral Symptoms

There is some evidence that pastoral stress will negatively influence behavioral and lifestyle habits of pastors' lives. For example, Webb and Chase (2019) found that greater occupational stress increased the likelihood of a more sedentary lifestyle. Ferguson et al. (2015) acknowledged that persons under stress without effective coping strategies may overeat

unhealthy foods containing high levels of fats, carbohydrates, and sugar while at the same time not getting enough physical exercise. Ferguson et al. further acknowledged that "men and women who work longer hours tend to have higher BMI scores" and "men are more likely than women to be obese when faced with chronic occupational stress" (p. 251).

Ferguson et al. (2015) also found that Protestant pastors with higher levels of occupational stress worked longer hours, and if they were bivocational, they were more likely to be overweight. Ferguson et al. further found that the chances for being overweight were lower for pastors who regularly took a day off, had been on a sabbatical within the last ten years, who participated in a clergy support group, and exercised. Bivocational pastors had a greater likelihood of being overweight than non-bivocational pastors (Ferguson et al., 2015).

Weaver et al. (2002) acknowledged that high levels of chronic stress may make some pastors vulnerable to sexual misconduct. Seat et al. (1993) found a significant positive relationship between the composite stress score and sexual misconduct behaviors in a sample of 277 Southern Baptist senior pastors as well as a significant correlation between individual areas of stress, such as marriage and family stress, isolation, and sexual issues. Krause et al. (1998) acknowledged that vocational stressors may add strain to marriage and family life, and increase “the risk of problem behaviors by clergy, particularly sexual infidelity" (p. 737).

Quality of Life

Some pastoral stressors may influence the quality of life in its different dimensions for pastors and their families, such as lack of social support, financial strain, lack of privacy and boundary intrusiveness, assignment to another congregation, time and work demands, life and schedule unpredictability, and unrealistic expectations (Darling et al., 2004; Meek et al., 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Terry & Cunningham, 2020). Financial

stress negatively correlated with ministerial satisfaction and quality of life (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015). Higher levels of congregational criticism, expectations, and demands led to lower quality of life, life satisfaction, and ministry satisfaction (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015).

Work-related stressors of mobility, financial compensation, time demands and expectations, intrusiveness on family boundaries, and lack of social support were inversely related to marital and parental satisfaction (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1994). For pastors, intrusiveness on family boundaries had the greatest impact on marital and parental satisfaction while lack of social support and intrusiveness significantly impacted their life satisfaction (Morris & Blanton, 1994). For pastors' spouses, intrusiveness on family boundaries negatively impacted their marital satisfaction, time demands and intrusiveness impacted their parental satisfaction, and time demands and lack of social support impacted their life satisfaction (Morris & Blanton, 1994).

Coping Strategies

Researchers have documented several coping strategies for persons to employ in managing stress (APA, 2019b; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; O'Brien et al., 2009; Sapolsky, 2004; Stephenson et al., 2016). In the immediate experience of a stressor event, persons may engage in problem-solving, emotional coping to keep their emotions in balance, and/or relationship maintenance to keep important relationships functional and intact (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; O'Brien et al., 2009; Stephenson et al., 2016). The person will choose any or a combination of these coping strategies based on their assessment of the situation and what seems appropriate in addressing it (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; O'Brien et al., 2009; Stephenson et al., 2016). Stephenson et al. (2016) asserted that "coping effectiveness depends on the nature of the stressful

situation, the personality characteristics of the individual, the responses of the persons involved, and the social and cultural context in which the coping process occurs" (p. 44).

In addition to responding in the immediate experience of a stressor event, researchers have further documented coping strategies which may buffer or manage the influence of stress on a person when practiced on a regular basis (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; APA, 2019b; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Sapolsky, 2004). These and other similar strategies have positive benefits on the body, mind, and spirit and their interconnection. For example, a healthy diet with good nutrition, regular exercise three times a week, getting enough sleep, and relaxation techniques - such as stretching, massage, warm baths, and sauna - benefit our bodies (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; APA, 2019b; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Sapolsky, 2004). Meditation, pleasurable leisure activities, laughing and having fun, and time in nature benefit our minds (American Institute of Stress, n.d.; APA, 2019b; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Sapolsky, 2004). Social support, reframing our thinking, counseling, and religion/spirituality benefit our spirits and emotions (APA, 2019b; Benson & Stuart, 1993; Sapolsky, 2004).

The strategies pastors implement to cope with stress will affect their level of pastoral stress and influence their quality of life (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Pastors may implement coping strategies depending on their primary and secondary assessments of the situation as well as their familiarity with and availability of their coping resources (Benson & Stuart, 1993; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984;). Pastors may employ various methods to cope with pastoral stress such as Bible study, mentoring, reading, going on retreats, and spending time with family (Doolittle, 2010). Stress reduction and renewing oneself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually seem to be essential survival skills for pastors (Rowatt, 2001). Dewe (1987) classified coping strategies into the categories of social support (e.g., talking with others, getting advice),

postponing action through distractions and relaxation (e.g., avoiding the problem, distracting oneself), developing the capacity to deal with problems (e.g., reducing one's tension, clarifying one's perception, knowing one's limitations), rationalizing the problem (e.g., letting people know where you stand), and support through spiritual resources (e.g., use of prayer, solitude, reflection, talking with family). The literature reflects on some broad categories of coping strategies, such as support groups, spiritual practices, social support, religious coping, and other miscellaneous coping strategies.

Support Groups

There is some evidence that pastors joining and participating in a peer support group may experience a reduction of psychological distress, such as anxiety and depression (McMinn et al., 2005; Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). Pastors in two studies also participated in and received support from other peer groups, such as a lectionary study group and accountability group (McMinn et al., 2005; Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). How much pastors benefited from peer support groups depended on the structure of the group and how it was conducted, such as having a facilitator, offering accountability and social support, and allowing pastors to share and compare their situations with one another (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). Pastors further benefited from the peer support group depending upon their coping style and type of support they needed from the group with the implication that pastors may not benefit equally from participation in a peer support group (Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013).

Spiritual Practices

Some pastors have acknowledged the importance of spiritual practices in helping to maintain their emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being as a source of strength, perspective, and renewal in the face of stressful encounters (Chandler, 2010; Darling et al., 2004; Dewe,

1987; McMinn et al., 2005; Meek et al., 2003; Rowatt, 2001; Visker et al., 2017). Such practices included time alone with God or nature, prayer, reading the Bible and other religious books, going on a spiritual retreat, and journaling (Chandler, 2010; Goldstein, 2007; McMinn et al., 2005). Pastors with an effective and satisfying spiritual life experienced greater spiritual well-being, more meaning, and a higher quality of life and further did not experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, or low personal satisfaction (Darling et al., 2004; Doolittle, 2010). Pastors who engaged in regular Bible Study and went on a retreat twice a year reported lower depersonalization (Doolittle, 2010). Turton and Francis (2007) found that a positive attitude towards prayer contributed to higher levels of personal accomplishment and lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in a study of 1,278 male Anglican pastors. Turton and Francis further acknowledged that the practice of prayer led to greater satisfaction in life, a higher sense of purpose, and more psychological well-being.

Social Support

Social support serves as a buffer against stress through the types of supportive relationships provided by the pastor's social network (Dewe, 1987; Doolittle, 2010; Gilbert, 1987; McCubbin et al., 1980; McMinn et al., 2005; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Rowatt, 2001). Social support, particularly congregational support, correlated negatively with depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization and related positively to physical health, personal accomplishment, ministerial satisfaction, and quality of life (Hough et al., 2019; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015). Carroll (2006) further acknowledged the positive correlation between "feeling loved and cared for by the congregation" and positive feelings, energy, and emotional health (p. 180).

Lee and Iverson-Gilbert (2003) found that the number of supportive relationships in the congregation was positively correlated with well-being and life and marital satisfaction, and that optimism negatively correlated with burnout. Supportive relationships in the family, denomination, and community were positively correlated with life satisfaction and optimism (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). Supportive family relationships were positively correlated with marital satisfaction (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). In dealing with vocational stressors, many pastors turn to their families for support (McMinn et al., 2005; Morris & Blanton, 1995). In their efforts to combat pastoral stressors, Meek et al. (2003) found some pastors employing intentionality to avoid isolation and staying connected to spouse, family, friends, and colleagues.

Religious Coping

People may use their religious faith in response to stress, challenges, threats, and problems to help them cope; such religious coping is related to one's well-being (Pargament et al., 1998, 2001). Pargament et al. (2001) asserted people are more likely to use religious coping strategies when religion and/or spirituality is a part of their worldview and lifestyle, and they view religion/spirituality as coping resources. Pastors certainly meet the criteria of people who have religion/spirituality as part of their worldview and lifestyle and even as part of their professional role in teaching members about the use of their faith as a resource (Pargament et al., 2001). Presbyterian pastors reported a greater number of stressful events and problems at work than either elders or members, and further reported using a greater number of positive religious coping methods than elders and members (Pargament et al., 2001).

Positive religious coping includes such strategies as seeking support, forgiveness, collaborative religious coping, spiritual connection, and religious focus; whereas negative religious coping includes feeling punished by God, redefining God's power, spiritual discontent,

interpersonal religious discontent, and demonic reappraisal (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Pargament et al., 1998). Positive religious coping produced greater positive affect, lesser depressive affect, and higher religious satisfaction for clergy than elders and members (Pargament et al., 2001). Negative religious coping produced a decrease in positive affect, an increase in depressive affect, and a decrease in religious satisfaction for pastors than for members (Pargament et al., 2001). Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) found that positive religious coping led to "more stress-related growth, spiritual growth, positive affect, and...higher self-esteem" (p. 473) and lower levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression. Ano and Vasconcelles further found negative religious coping strategies led to higher levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression.

Other Coping Strategies

Pastors may employ other healthy coping strategies than those mentioned above. For example, regular physical activity had positive benefits for pastors such as guarding against stress, burnout, depressing, anxiety, hypertension, and other physical health conditions (Doolittle, 2010; McMinn et al., 2005; Webb & Bopp, 2017). Webb and Bopp (2017) acknowledged that physical inactivity among pastors may negatively affect their health such as in the occurrence of being overweight, heart disease, and diabetes.

Pastors who had a mentor, engaged in scholarly reading, and went on a retreat twice a year reported lower emotional exhaustion (Doolittle, 2010; McMinn et al., 2005). Pastors who served as a mentor and took regular times off for relaxation, hobbies, and rest reported a higher sense of personal accomplishment and reduced stress (Doolittle, 2010; McMinn et al., 2005). Pastors who employed coping strategies of acceptance, active coping, planning, and positive reframing reported higher personal accomplishment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory.

On the other hand, pastors using maladaptive strategies of venting, distraction, denial, disengagement, and self-blame reported higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Doolittle, 2007; Visker et al., 2017).

With the Sabbath designated as a day of rest, many pastors, who work on Sundays take either Saturday or Monday as a day off (Hough et al., 2019; McMinn et al., 2005). Hough et al. (2019) found that keeping a Sabbath was (1) significantly associated with higher spiritual well-being where pastors experienced the presence and power of God in both their work and daily lives, and (2) highly associated with a higher quality of life and better relationships. Hough et al. further found that, while the relationships between Sabbath-keeping and mental health outcomes appeared positive, they were not significant when examined using multivariate analysis.

In pastors seeking counseling, the issue of confidentiality is of utmost importance because of the concern of how the knowledge of the pastor seeking counseling will be interpreted by members and the public (Meek et al., 2003). For example, persons may think the pastor seeking counseling may be a sign of personal weakness, lack of faith in God, moral failure, pastoral incompetence, or embarrassment and shame for the congregation (Meek et al., 2003). Pastors may have difficulty seeking counseling or other forms of help because of their caregiver and pastoral identities (Pooler, 2011). Pooler (2011) stated that "the pastor at core is no different than people in the congregation, but if the pastor believes he or she is different in some way, then personal problems can be dismissed more easily, minimized, or given no attention" (p. 709). Rowatt (2001) further acknowledged "Every pastor needs a pastor. A pastor for the pastor and clergy families seems to reduce stress and provide a needed component of support" (p. 533) particularly "when the demands (of ministry) exceed the resources, stress escalates and satisfaction declines" (p. 536).

Stress reduction and renewing oneself physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually seem to be essential survival skills for pastors (Rowatt, 2001). Some pastors struggled with the inner conflict between taking time for self-care and time needed to complete church work (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2012). However, the coping strategies that pastors employ remain an important ingredient that will determine not only their level of pastoral stress but also how effectively they manage stressful encounters.

Chapter Summary

This literature review has provided background and context for this study of the pastoral stressors Black pastors experience. Looking at the Black Church has shown the role it plays in the lives of members, especially how crucial and fundamental the Black Church has been not only to their survival but also their emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual well-being (Gates, 2021; Nye, 1993). However, the Black Church needed the leadership of Black pastors to operate effectively to meet the various, complex needs of both members and community. Such a pastoral leadership role, which combined with leading a religious institution administratively and spiritually while ministering to individuals and families, placed demands and challenges on Black pastors, such as their time, mental, emotional, and spiritual resources, and even financial resources. Moreover, Black pastors have been leaders in both church and community, held up as role models and examples, and viewed with church and public scrutiny that limits their private time and space. In addition, there seemed to be a high level of expectation placed on Black pastors, which may even consider these pastors engaging in sacrificial acts for the survival and well-being of church and community as a fundamental part of their job (Gilbert, 1987; Rayburn et al., 1986; Son, 2019).

While every human being experiences stress as the result of their various roles and dynamic interactions in their cultural and sociopolitical environments (Goode, 1960), the question this study raises is what pastoral stressors Black pastors experience and whether these stressors are unique based upon their position of servant leaders in a predominantly Black church. The literature leaves this question somewhat unanswered because most of the research focused on White male pastors in either White mainline or conservative Protestant denominations. If there were Black pastors in these studies, they were few, but in White mainline and conservative denominations. Even the recent studies on pastoral stress and burnout failed to include Black pastors (Doolittle, 2010; Hendron et al., 2014; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Terry & Cunningham, 2020; Webb & Chase, 2019).

Mamiya (2005) and Carroll (2006) seemed to be the primary studies on this topic, which intentionally and methodologically incorporated Black pastors from historically Black denominations. Their research, which was part of the landmark Pulpit & Pew study of pastoral leadership across the United States sponsored by Duke University Divinity School, provided much relevant and insightful information concerning the work of Black pastors in comparison to White pastors. Yet, the Mamiya (2005) and Carroll (2006) studies are now 15-16 years old, which necessitates a new study assessing what stressors Black pastors are experiencing in the present. Although Barna Group (2017) surveyed pastors in recent years, the limitation of their study was its lack of racial and ethnic diversity and not including pastors from historically Black denominations. The literature reflects a major gap and omission of Black pastors from the research on pastoral stress.

Upon reflecting on the literature, several corollary questions arise: (1) As Black pastors lead Black churches as safe, sacred spaces for members to be nurtured and renewed emotionally,

spiritually, and mentally, where can Black pastors find a safe space to be open and acknowledge their pastoral stress as well as personal and family issues, such as divorce, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, or addiction; (2) As pastors are the agents of grace, forgiveness, and healing to church members, who offers and administers these same gifts to pastors in their times of need (Gilbert, 1987; Oswald, 1991); (3) As pastors offer counseling to members, provide a supportive presence during difficult times of struggle, crisis, and life-changing events, and hear their confessions and pain, who offers these same services to pastors as persons dealing with their own existential realities (Gilbert, 1987; Pappas, 1995; Meek et al., 2003; Oswald, 1991); (4) Where do pastors' families receive pastoral support and spiritual guidance (Gilbert, 1987); and (5) What level of awareness do Black pastors have of the pastoral stressors they experience (Oswald, 1991)? If they are aware, what words do Black pastors use to describe their stressors and the resultant stress emotions (Lazarus, 1999). "Like those they serve, pastors need a pastor to listen and take notice of signs of distress, perhaps even before they are aware of it themselves" (Meek et al., 2003, p. 345).

While these and other questions evolved through the review of the literature, the starting point of this study were these fundamental questions: What vocational stressors do Black pastors experience? What is the relationship between those stressors and the emotional and mental wellness of Black pastors? In the following chapter I will outline the methodology I used to pursue these research questions.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Black pastors serve as the spiritual leaders and administrative overseers of their congregations, providing services and programs to meet the diverse needs of church and community members. Being in such a high-profile position, Black pastors devote varying amounts of time, energy, and work to fulfill their role responsibilities and meet the demands and expectations placed upon them. In their efforts to be faithful to their calling and commitment as pastors, meet the needs of church members, provide leadership in their communities, and fulfill other personal and family roles, Black pastors may experience stress resulting from their various roles in church and community environments (Carroll, 2006; Darling et al., 2004; Doolittle, 2010; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The research literature on pastoral stress possesses a significant gap by not including Black pastors from historically Black denominations as well as Black independent and nondenominational churches in their samples. The literature has consistently focused on sampling White male pastors from mainline and conservative Protestant denominations. While there are a few exceptions to the exclusion of Black pastors in the research (e.g., Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005; Smith, 2013), the pastoral stress Black pastors experience needs investigation and understanding.

This chapter presents the methodology by which the research question was explored. The research question required (1) the identification of vocational stressors and (2) the determination of the relationship between vocational stressors and mental and emotional wellness. A quantitative methodology using multiple regression sought to determine and explain the relationship between vocational stressors and mental/emotional wellness among Black pastors. This chapter provides a description of the research question, hypotheses, sample, the assessment

instruments and their psychometric properties, data collection strategy, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions: What vocational stressors do Black pastors experience? What is the relationship between vocational stressors and the mental and emotional wellness among Black pastors? The goal of this study is to contribute to the literature by identifying the stressors Black pastors experience in their daily interactions within their work environments, which includes their local congregations, communities, and denominations.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses grounded the exploration of the research questions.

Hypothesis 1: Stress management and spiritual well-being will have a direct influence on occupational stress and psychological strain. Specifically, higher amounts of stress management and/or spiritual well-being will lessen the impact of occupational stress and psychological strain.

Hypothesis 2: Black women pastors will report higher occupational stress levels than Black male pastors.

Hypothesis 3: Younger Black pastors under 45 years will report higher occupational stress than older Black pastors.

Hypothesis 4: Black pastors of small churches will report higher occupational stress than Black pastors serving in medium, large, and megachurches.

Methodology

IRB Approval

The Montclair State Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved this study, MSU IRB #FY20-21-2197, on June 14, 2021.

Sample

The sample was composed of Black pastors, either working full-time or part-time in a predominantly Black church where the average weekly attendance (AWA) is at least 75% Black. Black pastors are those who hold the position of senior pastor or co-pastor in that they are the highest-ranking clergyperson leading that congregation (Barna Group, 2017; Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005; Smith 2013). These Black pastors served a Black congregation that is either affiliated with a historically Black denomination (AME, AMEZ, CME, COGIC, NBCA, NBCUSA, PNBA, FGBCFI), a Black church assembly, fellowship, or covenant group, or is unaffiliated, nondenominational, and independent. Potential participants were excluded from this study if: (1) they did not self-identify as Black in race; (2) they did not serve currently in the role of senior pastor or co-pastor but served in the role of associate pastor, assistant pastor, or licensed minister reporting to a senior pastor; (3) they did not pastor a predominantly Black congregation; (4) they were retired; or (5) they served as a pastor of a Black church in White mainline or conservative denominations or the Catholic Church.

While a random sample might be ideal in some research studies (Heppner et al., 2016), or even a sample which is truly representative of the nationwide population of Black pastors may be desirable, neither one seemed realistic given the logistical and financial hurdles needed to achieve such goals. For example, Carroll (2006) achieved a representative sample of pastors nationwide through the use of a national telephone survey by the National Opinion Research Center and funding by the Lily Endowment, Inc. Without such supporting resources, the goal here was to cast a wide distribution of invitations to as many Black pastors as possible to secure a diverse sample.

The Sample

Of the two hundred eighty-three (283) Black pastors who participated in the study, two hundred eighteen (218) of them successfully completed the survey in its entirety. Sixty-five (65) participants started the survey, paused, and failed to return within the timeframe set within Qualtrics to complete the survey. Initially, this impacted 35 participants with a one-week time limit. After increasing the timeframe to two weeks for completion, 30 pastors did not return within the timeframe to complete the survey. Within each of these 65 surveys, participants only completed a portion of the questions and these surveys were not included in the final dataset for analysis.

This study targeted a sample size of 300 participants to achieve the following statistical goals: (1) avoid a Type I error of assuming to have found a relationship when one does not exist by rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true; (2) avoid a Type II error of assuming to have not found a relationship when one does exist by accepting the null hypothesis when it is false; and (3) have statistical power of at least .80, a significance (alpha) level of .05 or lower, and a medium effect size of .15 (Balkin & Sheperis, 2011; Cohen, 1992). The sample size was larger than recommended by *G*Power* and Cohen (1992) and sought to increase the possibility of finding a significant result, reduce error, and be more representative of the population (Balkin & Lenz, 2021; Balkin & Sheperis, 2011).

Data Collection & Instruments Used

Data Collection

The sample of Black pastors was recruited for this study by inviting their participation through a few sources: LinkedIn, historically Black denominations, How Shall They Hear Preaching Conference, the pastors' conference of the Church Of God In Christ, and word of

mouth through Black pastors and church members. LinkedIn is an online, professional networking site with over 740 million members with a mission to "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful" (LinkedIn, n.d.). LinkedIn contains about 620,000 members with the title "pastor" in their profiles. Black pastors on LinkedIn were invited to participate in the study through a series of posted flyers and a video, approved by the Montclair State University IRB, containing an online link to the study. Several flyers were posted and reposted weekly over an 8-week period (see Appendix B). The flyers received hundreds of views, numerous likes, and several affirmative comments. Some pastors and other LinkedIn members reshared the flyers.

Historically Black denominations received emails and phone calls to inform them of the study and request they share the study flyer with their pastors. The denominations contacted were: National Baptist Convention USA, National Baptist Convention of America, National Missionary Baptist Convention, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Church Of God In Christ, Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African American Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, United Church of Deliverance, Apostolic Assemblies of Christ, and National Association of the Church of God.

The How Shall They Hear Conference is an annual, regional conference on preaching based in New Jersey, which attracts Black pastors from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut and held in November. The Conference emailed the study's flyer to Black pastors on their mailing list who had attended the conference in previous years. The pastors' conference of the Church Of God In Christ was on online conference at which I gave a presentation on pastoral stress in a session with 40 pastors, introduced the study, and invited pastors to participate in the study.

Other Black pastors heard of and participated in the study through word of mouth from Black pastors who participated in the study through a snowball effect. Several pastors emailed the flyer to pastors in their network and mailing list. Some pastors supplied contact information of other pastors who then received phone calls and emails. Church members, who heard of the study, shared the survey flyer with their pastors and with pastor friends and relatives. Word of mouth proved to be the most effective method to reach Black pastors and invite their participation.

Each participant completed the online survey consisting of demographic questions and survey instruments to measure: (1) pastoral stress (Clergy Occupational Distress Index; Frenk et al., 2013); (2) psychological strain resulting from pastoral stress in the form of irritation (Irritation Scale; Mohr et al., 2006); (3) stress management strategies (Health-Promoting Lifestyle II – Stress Management Subscale; Walker et al., 1987); (4) spiritual well-being as a buffer against pastoral stress (Clergy Spiritual Well-being Scale; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014); and (5) the impact of all the aforementioned on pastors' satisfaction with life (Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale; Margolis et al., 2019). The survey can be reviewed in Appendix A.

Demographics

The following demographic variables were included in the demographic section of the survey: gender; age; years serving as a pastor; average weekly church attendance by members online and in-person; full-time versus part-time status; marital status; if there are children or other family members in the home; location of the church in either an urban, suburban, or rural area; denominational affiliation; and average number of working hours per week. These variables were used to determine if there are any differences in pastoral stress based on these

demographic categories. After completing the demographic section of the survey, participants completed the following assessments.

Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI)

The Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI) is a 5-question instrument, which measures how often pastors experience vocational stress from: (1) never, (2) once in a while, (3) fairly often, and (4) very often with excessive demands, personal criticism, loneliness and isolation, and challenges they may encounter (Frenk et al., 2013). Scores may range from 5 to 20 with higher scores indicating more occupational distress. The CODI's construct of distress conforms to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) definition of stress possessing the essential elements of perception of and interaction within one's work environment (Frenk et al., 2013).

To assess CODI's reliability, Frenk et al. (2013) used samples of pastors from Carroll's (2006) Pulpit & Pew Survey and the 2006 Clergy Health Study (CHS), which together provided a sample of 786 clergy. To assess construct validity, Frenk et al. used only the sample from Carroll (2006) since it was more diverse and representative of the general population of pastors, which included Black Protestants, mainline Protestants, conservative Protestants, and Roman Catholic pastors. The analysis further revealed Cronbach's alphas of 0.77 (Pulpit & Pew) and 0.82 (CHS), both of which indicated good reliability in the CODI (Frenk et al., 2013). Concerning its validity, Frenk et al. found that the CODI possessed strong validity whereby "each one unit increase in the index increases the likelihood of feeling downhearted or depressed within the last 4 weeks by 8%" (p. 404). Frenk et al. further found that pastors in the Pew & Pulpit sample (Carroll, 2006) had a mean CODI score of 10.98, which indicated that most pastors experienced all five stress items on average once in a while (=2) and where a smaller percentage experienced distress fairly often (=3) and very often (=4).

Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) used the CODI to measure occupational distress caused by congregational demands reported by United Methodist clergy in North Carolina. Webb and Chase (2019) measured occupational distress in a sample of full-time pastors who served in Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Catholic denominations to assess the relationship between occupational distress and their physical and mental health. Milstein et al. (2020) examined the relationship between occupational distress, spiritual well-being, and depressive symptoms in a sample of United Methodist pastors using the CODI, Clergy Spiritual Well-Being scale, and Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9).

Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile II

The Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile II (HPLP-II) is a 52-item instrument measuring the frequency of self-care, health-promoting behaviors in the areas of Health Responsibility, Physical Activity, Nutrition, Spiritual Growth, Interpersonal Relations, and Stress Management with corresponding subscales for each of these areas (Walker et al., 1987; Walker et al., 1988). Respondents indicate their frequency of practicing specific health-promoting behaviors on a scale of (1) Never, (2) Sometimes, (3) Often, and (4) Routinely. Researchers have used the HPLP-II and the original version in hundreds of studies to measure self-care, health-promoting behaviors in various American population samples and have translated and validated the HPLP-II into Malaysian, Arabic, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish (Kuan et al., 2019).

Walker and Hill-Polerecky (1996) determined the psychometric properties of the HPLP-II from a study of 712 adults and using factor analysis to confirm the construct validity of the six subscales. Walker and Hill-Polerecky further established criterion-related validity through significant correlations with measures of perceived health status and quality of life. The

Chronbach's alpha reflecting internal consistency for the full scale was 0.943 while the following six subscales' alpha coefficients ranged from 0.793 to 0.872 and were as follows: (1) Stress Management, 0.79; (2) Nutrition, 0.80; (3) Physical Activity, 0.85; (4) Spiritual Growth, 0.86; (5) Health Responsibility, 0.86; and (6) Interpersonal Relations, 0.87 (Callaghan, 2003; Walker & Hill-Polerecky, 1996).

The Stress Management subscale used in this study contains eight items focusing on specific, proactive behaviors directed towards managing and reducing stress (Walker et al., 1988). Such behaviors include getting enough sleep, relaxation and/or meditation, practicing acceptance beyond one's control, focusing on pleasant thoughts at bedtime, achieving balance between work and play, using specific steps to control stress, and pacing oneself to protect against tiredness (Walker & Hill-Polerecky, 1996). The score on this subscale can range from 8 to 32 with higher scores meaning the more frequent practice of stress management, health-promoting behaviors (Walker & Polerecky, 1996; Walker et al., 1998).

Clergy Spiritual Well-being Scale

The Clergy Spiritual Well-being Scale (CSWBS) assesses closeness to God specifically in clergy with the use of two sub-scales: Presence and Power of God in Daily Life and Presence and Power of God in Ministry (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014). These sub-scales assume that closeness to God may vary over time, may differ in one's daily life experiences versus one's church work environment, and "the frequency of experiencing God's power and presence would provide an indication of how close one feels to God" (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014, p. 882). Each sub-scale contains six items in response to the statement, "During the past 6 months, how often have you..." which reflect different situations in daily life and carrying out one's pastoral duties (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014, p. 884). Participants choose between five responses: (1) Never, (2)

Sometimes, (3) Often, (4) Frequently, or (5) Always, with scores on each sub-scale ranging from 6 to 30 whereby higher scores indicate greater closeness to God and spiritual well-being (Proeschold et al., 2014).

Proeschold-Bell et al. (2014) found that the two sub-scales were highly correlated at two different time points at 0.83 and 0.78 in a sample of 1,513 United Methodist Church clergy. Proeschold-Bell et al. further found concurrent validity between the two sub-scales and measures for depression, anxiety, stress, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization and a second group of measures for quality of life, ministry satisfaction, and personal accomplishment. To a lesser degree than concurrent validity, predictive validity existed between these two sub-scales taken at Time 1 and for the measures of negative mental health outcomes and positive mental health outcomes taken at Time 2 (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014).

Proeschold-Bell et al. (2015) used the CSWBS to assess clergy spiritual well-being and its contribution to positive mental health in a sample of 1,476 United Methodist clergy. Milstein et al. (2020) employed the CSWBS to assess the relationship between clergy spiritual well-being, depressive symptoms, and occupational distress in 895 United Methodist clergy.

The Irritation Scale

The Irritation Scale is an 8-item survey which measures psychological strain in workplace settings and is available in ten languages - Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish (Mohr et al., 2006). Originally developed in Germany, this scale seeks to measure psychological strain in the form of irritation when individuals perceive obstacles and uncertainty to important work goals (Mohr et al., 2006). Irritation includes both cognitive and emotional irritation where cognitive irritation manifests itself in rumination through which individuals repeatedly think about their work, especially

problems and lack of goal attainment, outside of the work context with lack of success in resolving work problems and issues (Mohr et al., 2006; Mohr & Wolfram, 2010). On the other hand, emotional irritation presents more as a reactive visceral response, which Mohr et al. (2006) described as irritability including elements of anger, annoyance, impatience, and frustration at the lack of goal attainment. Both cognitive and emotional irritation may lead to mental strain, negative mood, and negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem (Hoge, 2009; Mohr et al., 2006; Mohr & Wolfram, 2010).

The Irritation Scales contains two subscales - cognitive irritation and emotional irritation (Mohr et al., 2006). The cognitive irritation subscale includes three questions: (1) I have difficulty relaxing after work; (2) Even at home I often think of my problems at work; and (3) Even on my vacations I think about my problems at work (Mohr et al., 2006, p. 206). The emotional irritation subscale contains five questions, for example, "I get grumpy when others approach me" and "I get irritated easily, although I don't want this to happen" (Mohr et al., 2006, p. 206). Participants rate their agreement with each of the eight statements on a scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Moderately disagree, (3) Slightly disagree, (4) Neither agree or disagree, (5) Slightly agree, (6) Moderately agree, or (7) Strongly agree (Mohr et al., 2006). Scores range from 8 to 56 with higher scores indicating more irritation. If the two subscales are used, scores on cognitive irritation range from 3 to 21 and emotional irritation range from 5 to 35, which combine to give a total irritation score.

Mohr et al. (2006) reported that the cognitive and emotional irritation subscales had internal consistency ranging from 0.85 to 0.97 and the total scale demonstrated positive correlation with such constructs as "psychosomatic complaints, depression, social stressors, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization" (p. 199). Mohr and associates further identified

negative correlations with life satisfaction, personal and work self-efficacy, and optimism. For all the translations, Mohr et al. found good to acceptable internal consistency and, in addition, the English version demonstrated high correlations (r = .70 to .73) with the inability to relax and impatience.

Mohr and Wolfram (2010) used the Irritation Scale to assess the stress reactions of junior and middle organization managers when confronted with dynamic tasks which demanded significant and rapid changes to goals, tasks, and processes to complete assignments. Emotional irritation was significantly higher with dynamic tasks and demands versus predictable and routine ones (Mohr & Wolfram, 2010). Hoge (2009) found that both cognitive and emotional irritation had a significant relationship with work-family conflict whereby such irritation after work hours interfered with workers being mentally and emotionally present and fulfilling family roles and responsibilities in addition to finding that emotional irritation had a significant positive relationship with psychosomatic complaints. Baethge and Rigotti (2013) found that unplanned workflow interruptions needing immediate attention during the workday were significantly related to causing irritation after work in the evening.

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) is a 6-item measure assessing one's satisfaction with life. Three of the items are scored normally and three are reversed-scored on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree; Margolis et al., 2019). Scores range from 6 to 42 with higher scores reflecting higher satisfaction with life. Margolis et al. (2019) argued that a more accurate measure of life satisfaction should include elements of envy ("Those around me seem to be living better lives than my own"), regret ("If I could live my life over, I would change many things"), and wanting change ("I want to change the path my life

is on") in addition to regular positive statements on life satisfaction (e.g., "I like how my life is going; I am content with my life; I am satisfied with where I am in life right now"; p. 630).

The RLSS correlated with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), the leading life satisfaction measurement tool since 1985, between 0.85 and 0.90 (Margolis et al., 2019). The RLSS further demonstrated high correlations with the Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff & Keys, 1995), Big Five (Personality) Inventory-2 (Soto & John, 2017), Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (Hart et al., 2015), and the Affect-Adjective Scale (Diener & Emmons, 1984). In addition, researchers have created Turkish and Polish language versions of the RLSS (Adamczyk et al., 2020; Alici & Secim, 2020).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics summarized the data and multiple regression analyzed the relationships among variables. The results and analysis are addressed in Chapter 4. The family stress theory ABC-X model provided the framework for data analysis where: A(stressor event) + B(coping resources) + C(definition of situation) = X(level of stress or crisis). Applying the family stress theory to this study, we have: A(clergy distress) + B1(stress management) + B2(spiritual well-being in daily life) + B3(spiritual well-being in ministry) + C(irritation as psychological strain) = X(satisfaction with life). The predictor variables were: clergy distress (CODI; Frenk et al., 2013); stress management (HLPL-II; Walker & Hill-Polerecky, 1996); spiritual well-being in daily and spiritual well-being in ministry (CSWBS; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014); and irritation (Irritation Scale; Mohr et al., 2006). The outcome variable was satisfaction with life (RLSS; Margolis et al., 2019). As clergy distress and irritation increased, it was expected that satisfaction with life would decrease. Moreover, as

stress management and spiritual well-being increased, it was further expected that satisfaction with life would increase. Hierarchical multiple regression and path analysis examined the unique, collective, and interactive effects of these predictor and outcome variables (Heppner et al., 2016; Wampold & Freund, 1987).

The open-ended questions allowed Black pastors to identify stressors that they deemed most significant in their work experiences that the Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI) did not fully capture. While the CODI focused on the specific stressors of excessive demands, personal criticism, isolation, loneliness, and challenges (Frenk et al., 2013), Black pastors experienced other types of stressors. These questions provided a broader picture of stressors Black pastors experienced. Similarly worded stressors were combined, the list tallied, and then consolidated.

Ethical Considerations

The ACA (2014) *Code of Ethics* guided the implementation of this study, especially the principles of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, justice, fidelity, veracity, and confidentiality. Autonomy, the right and freedom to choose, is reflected most clearly in participants' freedom of choice to participate in this study without coercion or full information (ACA, 2014; Heppner et al., 2016). Autonomy is implemented through the study's informed consent whereby participants were fully informed about the nature, purpose, and procedures of the study, decided whether to participate without penalty, and could end their participation at any time (ACA, 2014). Nonmaleficence requires researchers to do no harm to participants and clearly inform participants of any potential harm they may experience (ACA, 2014). While there was no intentional harm to Black pastors, this study may have led pastors to remember current or past stress-producing encounters in the church workplace, through which pastors may have

relived those interactions with church members and re-experienced the unpleasant thoughts and feelings. Participants were informed of this possibility.

Beneficence, or doing good (ACA, 2014), was the goal of this study whereby Black pastors, Black churches, and Black denominations may understand the types of stress Black pastors experience. This increased knowledge and awareness may lead Black pastors to implement more effective and different coping strategies to combat the deleterious effects of pastoral stress on their emotional and mental health. This study may further aid Black denominations and churches with understanding how institutional dynamics and interactions may contribute to pastoral stress.

This study reflected the principle of justice - equity, fairness, and equality (ACA, 2014) - by its focus on Black pastors who have been systemically omitted from the pastoral stress research. This study may fill the gap in the research and hopefully lead to future research with Black pastors. The principle of fidelity centers on keeping promises, fulfilling responsibilities, and honoring commitments (ACA, 2014; Heppner et al., 2016) in all my relationships as the researcher, such as with study participants, dissertation chair, and committee members. The evidence of fidelity was found in my faithfulness, integrity, and commitment to excellence and meeting targeted goals. Veracity is the principle of truthfulness, by which our code of ethics mandates researchers to "plan, conduct, and report research accurately" and "not engage in misleading or fraudulent research, distort data, misrepresent data, or deliberately bias their results" (ACA, 2014, p. 16).

It was important to me that I explained that before participating in this study Black pastors had and felt the assurance that their specific responses will be kept confidential from their members, church boards, denominational executives, and maybe fellow pastors. To help

ensure confidentiality, certain demographic variables were omitted, such as city, state, education, and salary. The variables of age and years of service included ranges from which to choose. The location of the church was limited to either urban area, suburban area, or rural area. In the consent form, participants were informed about confidentiality and of any possible limits. Attention to and implementation of these ethical considerations provided the moral compass leading to a quality study.

Chapter Summary

The research question on what pastoral stressors Black pastors experience sought to fill a major gap in the literature, which has consistently omitted Black pastors from historically Black denominations and churches and which raises the ethical question of justice in the pastoral stress literature. The methodology sought a diverse sample of Black senior pastors and co-pastors who work either full-time or part-time in congregations whose AWA attendance is 75% Black. These pastors completed an online survey to assess their occupational distress, psychological strain resulting from their pastoral stress, stress management strategies, spiritual well-being, and satisfaction with life. In the next chapter, I will address how multiple regression and path analysis were used to examine the relationship between these variables to provide understanding of the pastoral stressors Black pastors experience and the relationship of their pastoral stress to their mental and emotional wellness. The results of this study will be reported in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Results

This study focused on identifying the occupational stressors Black pastors experience in their roles of full-time or part-time senior pastors and co-pastors and the relationship these stressors have with Black pastors' emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. This chapter presents the results of this study, beginning with a restatement of the research questions, hypotheses, and study variables. Descriptive statistics will then describe sample participants with demographic information. The model assumptions for using multiple regression will be described followed by a presentation of the results from the hierarchical regression and path analysis describing the relationship between variables. Then the differences between groups will be presented through the results of the analysis of covariance. Black pastors described their most challenging stressors being a pastor and from the COVID pandemic in their own words. Finally, the results will describe the level of stress Black pastors experienced during social protests and the number of other areas in life where they experience stress. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the results.

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Study Variables

This study sought to answer the following questions: What vocational stressors do Black pastors experience? What is the relationship between vocational stressors and the mental and emotional wellness among Black pastors? There were four hypotheses under investigation:

Hypothesis 1: Stress management and spiritual well-being will have a direct influence on occupational stress and psychological strain. Specifically, higher amounts of stress management and/or spiritual well-being will lessen the impact of occupational stress and psychological strain.

Hypothesis 2: Black women pastors will report higher occupational stress levels than Black male pastors.

Hypothesis 3: Younger Black pastors under 45 years will report higher occupational stress than older Black pastors.

Hypothesis 4: Black pastors of small churches will report higher occupational stress than Black pastors serving in medium, large, and megachurches.

There were several variables that were used within this study: clergy distress, stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, irritation score, and satisfaction with life. Clergy distress measured the frequency with which pastors experienced occupational stress in the form of excessive demands, personal criticism, loneliness and isolation, and challenges (Frenk et al., 2013). Stress management assessed the frequency in which pastors practiced behaviors to effectively manage and reduce stress (Walker et al., 1987, 1988). The spiritual well-being scales measured closeness to God by the frequency in which pastors experienced the presence and power of God in their daily lives and within ministry activities (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014). The irritation score measured psychological strain in the forms of rumination or continually thinking about a matter (i.e., cognitive irritation) and irritability or being annoyed, impatience, and/or angry about a situation (emotional irritation; Mohr et al., 2006). Finally, the satisfaction with life measured pastors' satisfaction with life, which included not only positive statements of contentment with one's life but also statements of envy, regret, and wanting change (Margolis et al., 2019).

Descriptive Statistics

The sample included 135 men (61.9%) and 83 women (38.1%) from a variety of Black Church denominations and faith traditions (see Table 2). The Baptist category included several Baptist faith traditions, such as National Baptist Conventions - USA and of America, National Missionary Baptist, and Progressive National Baptist. There were no participants from the Full

Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship even though this was listed as a separate category due to its hybrid combination of Baptist and Pentecostal traditions. The Methodist category included the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, and Christian Methodist Episcopal denominations. The Church Of God In Christ is the largest Black Pentecostal denomination in the United States out of which many other Pentecostal traditions and churches developed. The Pentecostal category captured the wide variety of Pentecostal faith traditions. The Independent/Non-denominational category was for churches which were not members of any specific denomination and described themselves in some way as independent or non-denominational. The Other/Not Listed category provided a category for pastors who could not associate their church in any of the other presented categories. Since the Other/Not Listed category had so few participants (n = 7), this category was combined with Independent/Non-denominational for analysis purposes. In addition, regarding women pastors in denominations, the Methodist denominations had the highest number of women pastors (n = 38) followed by the Independent/Non-denominational (n =13), Pentecostal (n = 10), and Baptist (n = 9).

Table 2

Number of Participants by Denomination

Denomination	N	%
Apostolic	3	1.4%
Baptist	35	16.1%
Church Of God In Christ	57	26.1%
Holiness	7	3.2%
Methodist (AME, AME Zion, CME)	58	26.6%
Pentecostal	26	11.9%
Independent or Non-denominational	25	11.5%
Other/Not Listed	7	3.2%

Age Range

Over half of the pastors (53.2%, *n* = 116) were between 45-64 years while 34.4% (*n* = 75) were 65 years and older. On the other hand, as noted in Table 3, only 3.2% (*n* = 7) were 18-34 years and 8.3% (*n* = 18) 35-44 years. There were no women in the 18-34 years category. Women had a within gender percentage of 59.0% in the 45-64 years category and 33.7% in the 65 years and older category, which totaled to 92.7% for women 45 years and older. Men had 49.6% in the 45-64 years category and 34.8% in the 65 years and older category, which totaled 84.4% for men 45 years and older.

Table 3

Ages of Participants

Age range	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18-34 years	7	5.2%	0	0.0%	7	3.2%
35-44 years	13	9.6%	5	6.0%	18	8.3%
45-64 years	67	49.6%	49	59.0%	116	53.2%
65 years +	47	34.8%	28	33.7%	75	34.4%

Prefer not to answer	1	0.7%	1	1.2%	2	0.9%
Total	135	100.0%	83	100.0%	218	100.0%

Marital Status

The majority of the sample was married (70.6%) while 15.1% were single and 10.6% divorced. A closer look at marital status revealed a contrast between male and female pastors. Comparing the within gender percentages, married pastors held the highest percentage over those who were single and divorced. For men 81.5% were married, 8.1% single, and 8.1% divorced. For women 53.0% were married, 26.5% single, and 14.5% divorced. While male pastors seemed more likely to be married than female pastors, women pastors seemed more likely to be single and divorced than men pastors. Regarding family composition, 63.3% (87 men and 51 women) had family members living with them while 36.7% (48 men and 32 women) did not.

Employment Status

Sixty-seven percent (67.0%) of all participants were full-time senior pastors, 5.0% full-time co-pastors, 19.3% part-time senior pastors, and 8.7% part-time co-pastors. For female pastors 59.0% served as full-time senior pastors, 4.8% full-time co-pastors, 21.7% part-time senior pastors, and 14.5% part-time co-pastors. For male pastors 71.9% were full-time senior pastors, 5.2% full-time co-pastors, 17.8% part-time senior pastors, and 5.2% part-time co-pastors. These pastors have served an adequate number of years within the church setting from 0-9 years to 31+ years (see Table 4). As years of service increased, the percentage of pastors in each category decreased, which was more evident when looking at gender. For example, women have a significantly lower percentage of pastors who have 21-30 years and 31+ years of service, which reflects their later entry into the pastorate. Moreover, for analysis purposes, the categories of 21-30 years and 31+ years were combined to make the years of service categories more even.

Table 4

Number of Pastors by Years of Service

Years served	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0-9 years	40	29.7%	36	43.4%	76	34.9%
10-20 years	39	28.9%	33	39.8%	72	33.0%
21-30 years	33	24.4%	11	13.3%	44	20.2%
31+ years	23	17.0%	3	3.6%	26	11.9%
Total	135	100.0%	83	100.0%	218	100.0%

Average Hours Worked Per Week

Survey participants reported working a wide range of hours per week with both men and women included in each weekly hour category (see Table 5). The vast majority of pastors (87.1%) worked between 1-50 hours per week, with a mode of 1-20 hours and a median of 20-30. At the higher ranges (50-60 hours, 60-70 hours, and 70+ hours), both men and women pastors continued to report working these hours all of which were full-time senior pastors or co-pastors, with three exceptions. The three exceptions included two part-time male senior pastors who worked 50-60 hours per week and one female part-time senior pastor reported working 70+ hours per week. In addition, there were not any full-time co-pastors reported working 70+ hours.

Table 5

Average Hours Worked Per Week

Hours worked	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-20	38	28.1%	25	30.1%	63	28.9%
20-30	32	23.7%	23	27.7%	55	25.2%
30-40	24	17.8%	16	19.3%	40	18.3%
40-50	23	17.0%	9	10.8%	32	14.7%
50-60	9	6.7%	5	6.0%	14	6.4%
60-70	3	2.2%	2	2.4%	5	2.3%
70+	6	4.4%	3	3.6%	9	4.1%
	135	100.0%	83	100.0%	218	100.0%

Church Size

Church size reflects the average weekly attendance with both in-person and online attendees. The COVID-19 pandemic initiated online attendance through the mandatory closing of houses of worship. After the re-opening of churches, online services continued due to ongoing fears of COVID-19, members and senior citizens with underlying health conditions continuing to worship online, and members in general being accustomed to enjoying online worship at home. Table 6 depicts the numbers and percentages of churches by average weekly attendance, where a small church equated to 1-100 people, a medium size church equated to 101-350 people, a large church 351-1,000 people, and a megachurch 1000+ people (Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005). Prior to running the data analysis, large church and megachurch categories were combined into the large church category of 351+ people, due to the large church category only having 10 churches and the megachurch category only having two churches. When considering the location of the churches, 61.0% of churches reside in an urban area, 23.4% in a suburban area, and 15.6% in a rural area.

Table 6

Number of churches by average weekly attendance

Weekly Attendance	N	%
1-100 people	164	75.2%
101-350 people	42	19.3%
351+ people	12	5.5%

Church Size and Hours Worked

When considering the number of hours pastors worked on average by church size, slightly more than 80% of pastors serving in small churches worked up to 40 hours per week while another 11% worked 40-50 hours, and 5.5% worked 50-60 hours. Interestingly, two

pastors of small churches reported working 60-70 hours on average while two pastors worked more than 70 hours per week. For medium-sized churches, pastors worked the full gamut of weekly hours categories from 1-20 to 70+ hours per week, with the 30-40 hours category being the mode and 7 pastors working 70+ hours per week. For large churches, pastors worked between 20-30 hours to 60-70 hours per week, with 40-50 and 50-60 hours being the mode. Only two pastors in the sample, who were women, served in churches with 1,000+ members with one working 40-50 hours and the other working 60-70 hours per week.

Table 7

Average Number of Hours Worked by Church Size

Hours per week	1-100 people		101-350 people		351+ people		Total	Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-20	61	37.2%	2	4.8%	0	0.0%	63	28.9%
20-30	46	28.0%	8	19.0%	1	8.3%	55	25.2%
30-40	26	15.9%	13	31.0%	1	8.3%	40	18.3%
40-50	18	11.0%	10	23.8%	4	33.3%	32	14.7%
50-60	9	5.5%	1	2.4%	4	33.3%	14	6.4%
60-70	2	1.2%	1	2.4%	2	16.7%	5	2.3%
70+	2	1.2%	7	16.7%	0	0.0%	9	4.1%
	164	100.0%	42	100.0%	12	100.0%	218	100.0%

Variables Under Investigation

There are six variables included in this analysis: clergy distress, stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, irritation score, and satisfaction with life. These variables fit into Family Stress Theory accordingly: A (stressor event: clergy distress) + B (coping strategies: stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry) + C (interpretation of event: irritation score) = X (crisis/level of stress: satisfaction with life). Table 8 shows the Cronbach alpha coefficients, which measured the

internal consistency and reliability of each variable's scale, with the ideal value being greater than 0.7 (Pallant, 2020). Table 9 shows the means, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores for each variable.

Table 8

Cronbach Alpha Statistics on Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Clergy Distress	.861	.863	5
Stress Management	.792	.795	8
Spiritual WB in Daily Life	.855	.856	6
Spiritual WB in Ministry	.891	.893	6
Irritation Score	.864	.866	8
Satisfaction with Life	.794	.798	6

Table 9

Variables Under Investigation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Clergy Distress	218	5.00	20.00	11.25	3.34
Stress Management	218	11.00	31.00	19.40	4.10
Spiritual Well-being in Ministry	218	9.00	30.00	22.10	4.92
Spiritual Well-being in Daily Life	218	11.00	30.00	22.13	4.40
Irritation Score	218	8.00	56.00	28.31	11.19
Satisfaction With Life	218	6.00	42.00	28.58	7.84

Black pastors in this study had a mean of 11.25 (std. deviation = 3.34) on the clergy distress score, which indicated they experienced stress in the form of excessive demands,

criticism, loneliness, isolation, and challenges on average at least "once in a while" (score = 2) but somewhat less than "fairly often" (score = 3). A one-sample *t* test evaluated whether this sample mean for Black pastors was significantly different than the test value population mean of 10.98 from the Pulpit & Pew Study sample of a nationally representative group of clergy (Frenk et al., 2013; Green & Salkind, 2017). The one-sample *t* test revealed that, while Black pastors had a slightly higher clergy distress score (mean difference = 0.27), there was no significant difference between Black pastors and the Pulpit & Pew sample, $t(217) = 1.18$, $p = .238$.

The stress management score revealed that Black pastors “sometimes” (score = 2) practice specific behaviors to manage and reduce their stress more so than “often” (score = 3) or “routinely” (score = 4). The spiritual well-being scores measured how close Black pastors feel towards God through their experiences of His presence and power in their daily lives and during their practice of ministry. Both scores indicated that Black pastors experience closeness to God at least “often” (score = 3) but not quite “frequently” (score = 4) on average. The irritation score indicated that Black pastors at least slightly disagreed (score =3) to partially feeling neutral (“neither agree or disagree”; score = 4) that clergy distress was negatively affecting them both mentally and emotionally. The satisfaction with life score reflected that Black pastors tend to slightly agree (score = 5 versus moderately agree with a score = 6) with being satisfied with their lives.

Model Assumptions

Multiple regression served as the basic method of analysis for the data, as it allowed me to analyze the relationship among the variables and compare groups of sample participants. Multiple regression required certain assumptions to be met, including adequate sample size, absence of multicollinearity and singularity, absence of outliers among the variables, normality,

linearity, homoscedasticity of residuals, independence of errors, and absence of outliers in the solution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Cohen (1992) recommended a sample size of 91 when using multiple regression with 5 independent variables, a statistical power of .80, an alpha equal to .05, and a medium effect size; the current sample size of 218 met this assumption. Regarding multicollinearity where two independent variables are highly correlated at $r = .7$ or greater (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), two variables, spiritual well-being in daily life and spiritual well-being in ministry, drew attention, as there was a correlation of $r = .693$. Moreover, these two variables on spiritual well-being both measured how frequently pastors experience the presence and power of God, which is the same construct but in different domains in their lives, which could potentially explain their correlation. Yet, their collinearity statistics (i.e., tolerance and variance inflation factor) did not indicate the possibility of multicollinearity. Of lesser attention were the clergy distress score and irritation score with a correlation of $r = .569$. None of the independent variables in the dataset were a combination of any other independent variables with subscale scores combined to equal total scores such that singularity is absent from these variables.

The IBM SPSS program was utilized to run boxplots and the lists of extreme values, which identified outliers within three variables: clergy distress, stress management, and satisfaction with life. Clergy distress had 5 datapoints at high end of 20; stress management had 1 point at 31, 2 points at 30, 1 point at 29, and 1 point at 28, all of which were at the high end; and satisfaction with life had 5 datapoints on the low end with 3 points at 6, 1 point at 7, and 1 point at 8. All the outliers were not errors, were within scoring range for each variable, and there were no missing values. Comparing the mean versus the 5% trimmed mean of each variable was one method used to assess the possible impact of the outliers. The comparison for clergy distress

(11.25 versus 11.13) and stress management (19.40 versus 19.32) showed minimal difference in these values. Satisfaction with life showed a slightly larger difference (28.58 versus 28.87) indicating that those extreme values on the low end did exert some influence on lowering the mean value. The range of scores for satisfaction with life was 36 with 6 as the minimum score and 42 the maximum score. Identifying the standardized z-scores for these outliers revealed scores of 2.62 for clergy distress, 2.10 to 2.83 for stress management, and -2.63 to -2.88 for satisfaction with life. The outliers were assessed in all three variables to reflect the population of Black pastors and, given the sample size, retained without transforming or removing them from the dataset.

While normality of a distribution can be assessed through statistical measures and graphs or plots, Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) encouraged the use of graphs and plots especially with a larger sample. For example, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests of Normality showed significant results for each variable indicating non-normal distributions. However, reviewing the Normal Q-Q Plot revealed a relatively straight line, but with some deviation from a normal distribution. In a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis equal zero whereas in this sample skewness ranged from -0.509 to 0.534 and kurtosis -0.691 to 0.114. Looking at the histograms, there is resemblance of normality but with deviations within each variable. Each observation in the dataset is independent of each other and the variables have a linear relationship.

Testing the assumption of linearity assesses the existence of a straight-line relationship between variables and the absence of nonlinear or curvilinear relationships (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Scatterplots revealed varying degrees of linear relationships, which Pearson's r confirmed. Testing homoscedasticity assesses that the variability in scores for one continuous variable is roughly the same at all values of another continuous variable where the "scatterplots

between two variables are of roughly the same width all over with some bulging towards the middle" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 73). Some variables in this study manifested homoscedasticity, whereas other variables leaned towards heteroscedasticity.

Relationship among Variables

Hypothesis 1 speculated that the coping strategies of stress management and spiritual well-being will have a direct influence on clergy distress and irritation. Specifically, higher amounts of stress management and/or spiritual well-being will lessen the impact of clergy distress and irritation. Hierarchical regression and path analysis served as tools to explore the relationship among these variables.

Hierarchical Regression

Hierarchical regression was used to assess the relationship between the variables in accordance with the Family Stress Theory A+B+C = X model. A represents clergy distress, B represents stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry, C represents irritation score, and X represents satisfaction with life (i.e., the outcome variable). Table 10 presents the correlations between variables with each correlation.

Table 10

Correlations between Variables

	Satisfaction with life	Clergy distress	Stress manage-ment	Spiritual well-being in daily life	Spiritual well-being in ministry	Irritation score
Satisfaction with life	1.00	-.38	.30	.25	.17	-.45
Clergy distress	-.38	1.00	-.31	-.20	-.20	.57
Stress management	.30	-.31	1.00	.51	.32	-.52
Spiritual well-being in daily life	.25	-.20	.51	1.00	.69	-.34
Spiritual well-being in ministry	.17	-.20	.32	.69	1.00	-.31
Irritation score	-.45	.57	-.52	-.34	-.31	1.00

Note. Each correlation was significant at either $p < .001$ or $p < .005$.

Clergy distress was entered at Step 1, explaining 14.5% of the variance in satisfaction with life. Within Step 2 stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry were entered and explained an additional 4.7% of the variance. Within Step 3 irritation score was entered, explaining an additional 4.6% of the variance. After Step 3, the total variance of satisfaction with life explained by the model as a whole was 23.7%. Step 1 was at $p < .001$, Step 2 at $p = .007$, and Step 3 at $p < .001$, reflecting significant *R* change.

The ANOVA table indicated that the model as a whole was significant, F (5, 212) = 13.20, $p < .001$. In the final model only two variables made a significantly unique contribution to predict satisfaction with life, clergy distress score ($p < .011$) and irritation score ($p < .001$). The coefficients table provided the unstandardized regression coefficients *B* and a Constant value (34.6) to derive the following prediction equation: Satisfaction with life = 34.6 + (-0.44 x clergy distress) + (0.07 x stress management) + (0.25 x spiritual well-being in daily life) + (-0.10 x spiritual well-being in ministry) + (-0.21 x irritation score). The unexpected result in this equation was the negative relationship between spiritual well-being in ministry and satisfaction with life when it was expected to be positive. Table 11 presents the hierarchical regression summary.

Table 11

Hierarchical Regression Summary, Satisfaction with Life as Outcome Variable

Step and predictor variables	*B*	*SE B*	Beta	Semipartial correlation	Change in R^2	R^2
Step 1					0.145	0.145
Constant	38.62	1.73				
Clergy distress*	-0.89	0.15	-0.38	-0.38		
Step 2					.047	.192
Constant	27.26	3.89				

Clergy distress*	-0.74	0.15	-0.31	-0.31		
Stress management	0.28	0.14	0.14	0.13		
Spiritual WB daily	0.24	0.17	-0.13	0.10		
Spiritual WB ministry	-0.5	0.14	-0.30	-0.24		
Step 3					0.046	0.237
Constant	34.60	4.31				
Clergy distress*	-0.44	0.17	-0.19	-0.17		
Stress management	0.07	0.15	0.04	0.03		
Spiritual WB daily	0.25	0.14	0.14	0.10		
Spiritual WB ministry	-0.10	0.13	-0.06	-0.05		
Irritation score*	-0.21	0.06	-0.29	-0.24		

Note. Variables with * were significant at $p < .05$.

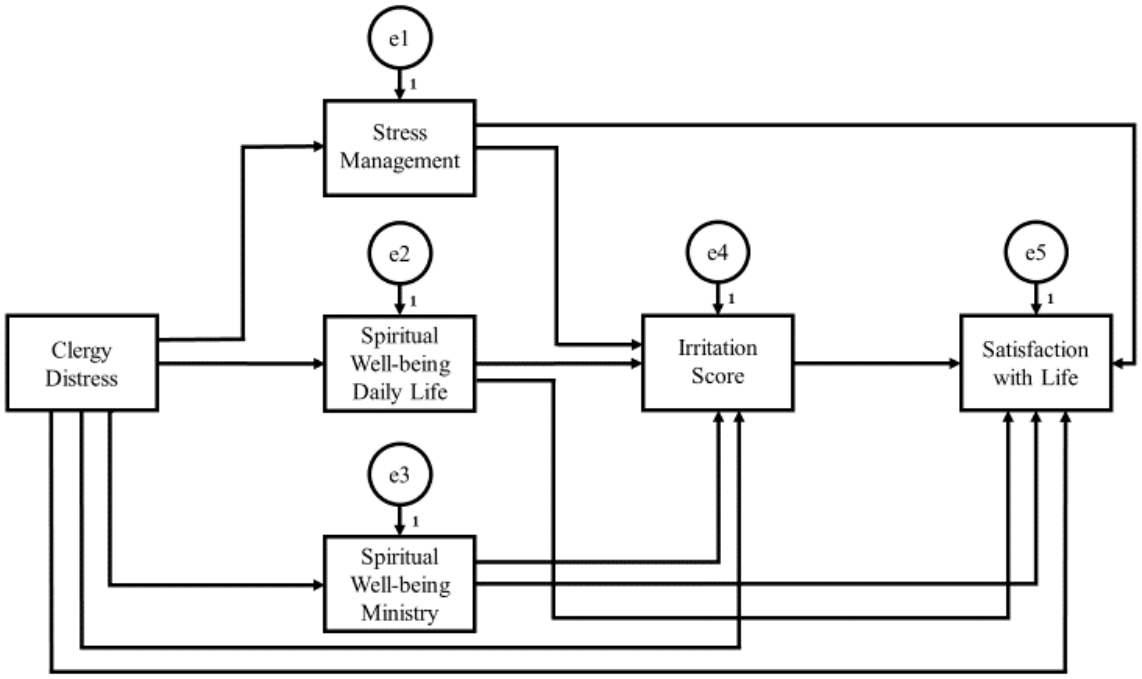
This hierarchical regression served as the first step in exploring the relationship among the variables. The analysis revealed the importance of clergy distress and irritation score as significant in predicting satisfaction with life. However, the regression did not present enough information on the direct and indirect effects of the variables on satisfaction with life, which resulted in the use of path analysis.

Path Analysis

The IBM SPSS AMOS software was used to conduct a path analysis to further explore the relationships of the variables in this study based on the Family Stress Theory A+B+C = X model. The goal of this analysis was to assess any direct and indirect effects of variables, specifically regarding if the coping strategy variables (i.e., stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry) moderated the effects of clergy distress and irritation score. Figure 1 displays the original model where clergy distress served as an exogenous or predictor variable, which affects the five other endogenous or outcome variables. The lines between the variables represent the relationship between the variables.

Figure 1

Model 1 of the Path Analysis



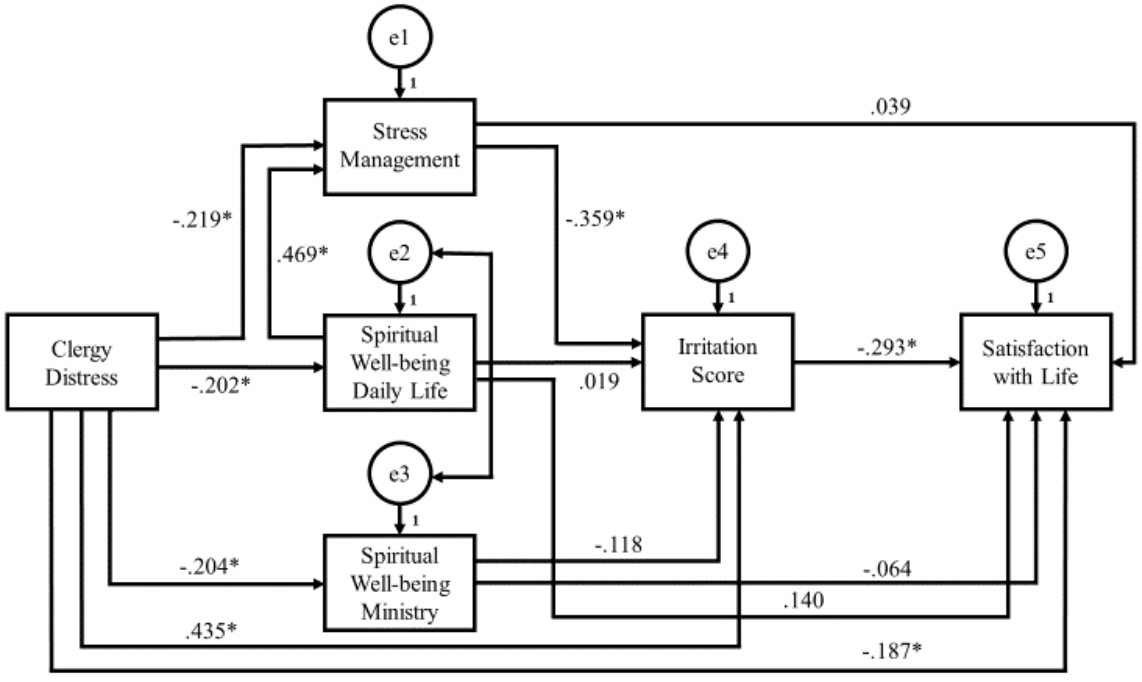
IBM AMOS calculated estimates of the variables' relationships in the original model, which produced results indicating that the model did not fit the data. The model fit summary of the chi-square value (CMIN) to test whether the model differed significantly from a model that fits the data indicated that the model did not fit the data: c^2 (3, N = 218) = 194.28, p = < .001. GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) and AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) also measured the fitness of the model where GFI measured the relative amount of variance and covariance in the sample covariance matrix (Crowson, 2020). Moreover, the AGFI measured the adjustment to the GFI for the number of parameters estimated (Crowson, 2020). With scores ranging from 0 to 1, values greater than .90 or .95 are considered an acceptable to good fit. The GFI = .796 and AGFI = -.429 indicated that this model was not a good fit. Furthermore, the Normed Fit Index (NFI = .548), Relative Fit Index (RFI = -1.258), Comparative Fit Index (CFI = .552), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI = -1.303) indicated a poor fit with scores well below the acceptable range of

.90. Furthermore, the root mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA = .542) pointed to the model not being a good fit since values up to .08 or .10 indicate an acceptable fit and values greater than .10 indicate model fit problems (Crowson, 2020).

The Modification indices box under the Output tab in the Analysis Properties window in IBM AMOS was checked to perform an analysis identifying possible changes to improve the fit of the model. This resulted in the program identifying the addition of a covariance line between the residual terms of e2 and e3 and a relationship line from spiritual well-being in daily life to stress management. After implementing these recommended modifications, the following changes occurred in the fit indices: CMIN, c^2 (1, 218) = 1.774, p = .183; GFI = .997; AGFI = .943; NFI = .996; RFI = .938, CFI = .998, TLI = .972; RMSEA = .060. These indices revealed that the revised model was now a good fit to the data.

Figure 2

Revised Model with Standardized Regression Weights



Note. An * indicates that the relationship is significant at $p < .05$.

Figure 2 shows the revised model with the standardized regression weights with an asterisk indicating a significant relationship. The revised model depicts the role and impact of the coping strategy variables (i.e., stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry) in relation to clergy distress and irritation score. There were significant inverse relationships between clergy distress, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, and stress management.

Spiritual Well-being in Daily Life

Clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with spiritual well-being in daily life (-.202, p = .006), whereby those pastors with a higher spiritual well-being in daily life experienced less of an impact of clergy distress. Yet the path from spiritual well-being in daily life to irritation score was not significant (.019, p = .809), which indicated that spiritual well-being in daily life did not moderate the effect of clergy distress on irritation score. Clergy distress had another path to irritation score through spiritual well-being in daily life (-.202, p = .006), spiritual well-being in daily life to stress management (.469, p = .003), and stress management to irritation score (-.359, p = .003). Both spiritual well-being in daily life and stress management together moderated the effect of clergy distress on irritation.

Spiritual Well-being in Ministry

Clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with spiritual well-being in ministry (-.204, p = .003), whereby a higher score in spiritual well-being in ministry led to a lower score in clergy distress. However, the path from spiritual well-being in ministry to irritation score was not significant (-.118, p =.091), which indicated that spiritual well-being in ministry did not moderate the effect of clergy distress on irritation score. The path from spiritual well-being in

ministry to satisfaction with life was also not significant (-.064, p = .475) and did not moderate the effect of clergy distress on satisfaction with life.

Stress Management

Clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with stress management (-.219, p = .002). Thus, pastors with a higher stress management score experienced a lower effect of clergy distress. Additionally, stress management had a significant inverse relationship with irritation score (-.359, p = .003) suggesting that pastors with higher stress management had lower cognitive and emotional irritation. As a result, stress management moderated the relationship between clergy distress and irritation score. In addition, clergy distress had a direct, positive, and significant relationship with irritation score (.435, p = .002) where higher amounts of clergy distress resulted in higher amounts of irritation.

Satisfaction with Life

None of the coping variables had a significant relationship with satisfaction with life: stress management (.039, p = .641), spiritual well-being in daily life (.140, p = .140), and spiritual well-being in ministry (-.064, p = .475). Clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with satisfaction with life (-.187, p = .023) whereby higher levels of occupational stress resulted in lower satisfaction with life. Moreover, irritation score had a significant inverse relationship with satisfaction with life (-.293, p = .003), meaning that higher irritation resulted in lower satisfaction with life.

Overall Model

Looking at the overall model and progression through each step, the Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC) indicated the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the variable or set of variables pointing to it. For example, 31.3% of the variance in stress

management was explained by clergy distress (p = .007). Clergy distress further accounted for 4.2% of the variance in spiritual well-being in daily life (p = .022) and 4.2% in spiritual well-being in ministry (p = .002). Clergy distress, stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry accounted for 48.6% of variance in irritation score (p = .008). Finally, clergy distress, stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, and irritation score accounted for 23.7% of the variance in satisfaction with life (p = .011).

The path analysis confirmed the significant relationships of clergy distress and irritation score directly on satisfaction with life. Clergy distress had significant inverse relationships with the three coping variables: stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry. Clergy distress further had a significant direct effect on irritation score as well as an indirect effect through the three coping variables. Of the three coping variables, only stress management had a significant effect on irritation score. None of the coping variables had a significant relationship with satisfaction with life.

Differences between Groups

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to assess any differences between groups of pastors while controlling for the potential influence of other variables (i.e., covariates) on the outcome variable under investigation. The analysis procedure partitioned the variance of the dependent variable and accounted for the variance in the independent variables. The ANCOVA required that these model assumptions be checked: reliability of coefficients, correlation between covariates, linear relationships, and regression slopes. The reliability of the covariates ranged from .79 (stress management and satisfaction with life) to .89 (spiritual well-being in ministry). See Table 8 on Cronbach Alpha coefficients. The covariates did not have a strong correlation,

such as $r = .80$ between them. Linear relationships existed between the outcome variables and the covariates without evidence of any curvilinear relationships. Finally, the regression slopes for each outcome variable and covariate appeared to be similar.

Exploration of Hypotheses 2-4

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to assess any differences between groups of Black pastors in clergy distress based on gender (Hypothesis 2), age (Hypothesis 3), and church size measured by average weekly attendance (Hypothesis 4). The dependent (outcome) variable was clergy distress and the covariates were stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, irritation score, and satisfaction with life.

Gender and Age

After adjusting for the covariates, no significant difference was found between Black male and female pastors on the clergy distress score, F (1, 211) = 0.03, $p = .870$, partial eta squared = .00. There was a significant covariant relationship between clergy distress and irritation score, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .183. Moreover, there was a significant covariant relationship with satisfaction with life score, $p = .012$, partial eta squared = .03. In addition, there was no significant difference between pastors in age, F (3, 209) = 2.17, $p = .093$, partial eta squared = .03. As covariates with clergy distress, irritation score was significant, $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .177, as well as satisfaction with life, $p = .023$, partial eta squared = .025.

Church Size

There was a significant difference found in clergy distress based on church size, F (2, 210) = 3.87, $p = .022$, partial eta squared = .036. In the ANCOVA process, SPSS controlled for any influence of covariates on clergy distress (the dependent variable) which might be affecting

its score (Pallant, 2020). SPSS accomplished this by removing any variation caused by the covariates on clergy distress and adjusting its score. After adjusting for the influence of the covariates, the following were the means for pastors based on church size: 10.96, std. error = .212 (small churches), 11.98, std. error = .421 (medium churches), and 12.61, std. error = .799 (large churches). Further, pastors in large churches had a significantly higher clergy distress score as compared to pastors in small churches ($p = .048$). Pastors in medium-sized churches had a significantly higher clergy distress score than pastors in small churches ($p = .032$). Interestingly, there was no significant difference between pastors in large and medium-sized churches ($p = .491$). The covariates, irritation score and satisfaction with life, each had a significant relationship and exerted influence on clergy distress. The irritation score was significant at $p < .001$, partial eta squared = .167 and the satisfaction with life was significant at $p = .022$, partial eta squared = .03.

Therefore, ANCOVA provided results to address Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. Hypothesis 2 was not supported because there was no difference in gender on clergy distress. For Hypothesis 3 the data did not find any differences based on age. However, the data did reveal a difference in clergy distress based on church size (Hypothesis 4) where pastors in large churches had significantly higher score than pastors in small churches and pastors in medium-sized churches had a significantly higher score than pastors in small churches.

Years as a Pastor and Denomination

In a further exploration of group differences, there was no difference in the clergy distress score when examining years as pastor, $F (2, 210) = 1.17$, $p = .31$, partial eta squared = .011. Irritation score ($p < .001$, partial eta squared = .182) and satisfaction with life score ($p = .015$, partial eta squared = .028) continued to show a significant covariant relationship with

clergy distress score. When comparing denominations, there was a significant difference found in the clergy distress score, F (6, 206) = 2.73, p = .014, partial eta squared = .074. After adjusting the means for the effects of the covariates, the clergy distress scores from lowest to the highest were: Methodist (10.44, std. error = .353), Church Of God In Christ (10.84, std. error = .357), Pentecostal (11.72, std. error = .530), Independent/Non-denominational/Other (11.75, std. error = .477), and Baptist (12.40, std. error =.460). The Baptists had a significantly higher clergy distress score than Church Of God In Christ (p = .008) and Methodists (p < .001). Additionally, the Methodists had a significantly lower score than the Pentecostals (p = .046) and Independent/Non-denominational/Other (p = .029). As in previous covariant relationships with clergy distress, irritation score (p < .001, partial eta squared = .172) and satisfaction with life (p = .002, partial eta squared = .046) were significant.

Differences Between Groups on Other Variables

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance was conducted to assess any differences between groups of Black pastors in the other variables that have not yet been addressed, including stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, spiritual well-being in ministry, irritation score, and satisfaction with life; based on gender, age, years as pastor, church size (i.e., average weekly attendance), and denomination. The analysis uncovered statistically significant differences in three variables: spiritual well-being in daily life, satisfaction with life, and spiritual well-being in ministry.

Spiritual Well-being in Daily Life

For spiritual well-being in daily life, a significant difference existed when comparing pastors by church size, F (2, 210) = 3.48, p = .033, partial eta squared = .032. After adjusting the means for the covariates, pastors in medium-sized churches had the highest spiritual well-being

in daily life score (22.29, std. error = .444), followed by pastors in small churches (22.03, std. error = .224), and then pastors in large churches (20.60, std. error = .842). Further, there was a significant difference in scores between pastors in medium and large churches (p = .014). There was no significant difference between scores for pastors in large and small churches or small and medium churches. There were two covariates which had a significant and strong relationship with spiritual well-being in daily life: spiritual well-being in ministry (p < .001, partial eta squared = .43) and stress management (p < .001, partial eta squared = .168).

Satisfaction with Life

When considering the satisfaction with life score, there was a significant difference when comparing pastors by denomination, F (6, 206) = 2.83, p = .011, partial eta squared = .076. After adjusting the means for the covariates, the denominations were ranked from highest to lowest: Baptist (31.32, std. error = 1.164), Independent/Non-denominational/Other (30.64, std. error = 1.199), Pentecostal (29.9, s5td. error = 1.338), Methodist (27.10, std. error = .898), and Church Of God In Christ (27.06, std. error = .898). The Baptist score was significantly different than the Church Of God In Christ score (p = .004) and the Methodist score (p = .005). The Church Of God In Christ score was significantly different than the Independent/Non-denominational/Other score (p = .018). The Methodist score was significantly different than Independent/Non-denominational/Other score (p = .020). Finally, the irritation score was significantly related to satisfaction with life, p <. 001, partial eta squared = .057.

Spiritual Well-being in Ministry

When exploring spiritual well-being in ministry, there was a significant difference when comparing pastors by age, F (3, 209) = 2.77, p = .043, partial eta squared = .038. After adjusting the means for covariates, the means were ranked from highest to lowest: 65+ years (22.98, std.

error = .419), 45-64 years (21.81, std. error = .325), and 18-44 years (20.87, std. error = .720). The score for 65+ years of age was significantly higher than the score for 45-64 years of age (p =. 027) and 18-44 years (p = .013). Both the spiritual well-being in daily life (p < .001, partial eta squared = .424) and stress management (p = .049, partial eta squared = .018) were significantly related to spiritual well-being in ministry.

Spiritual well-being in ministry revealed a second significant difference when comparing by years as pastor, F (2, 210) = 3.14, p =.045, partial eta squared = .029. After adjusting the means for covariates, the means were ranked from highest to lowest: 10-20 years (22.60, std. error = .416), 21+ years (22.46, std. error = .419), and 0-9 years (21.28, std. error = .403). The score for pastors serving 10-20 years was significantly higher than the score for those serving 0-9 years (p = .025). The score for pastors serving 21+ years was significantly higher than the score for pastors serving 0-9 years (p = .044). There was no statistically significance difference in the scores between pastors serving 10-20 years and 21+ years (p = .812). Spiritual well-being in daily life was significantly related to spiritual well-being in ministry (p < .001, partial eta squared = .421).

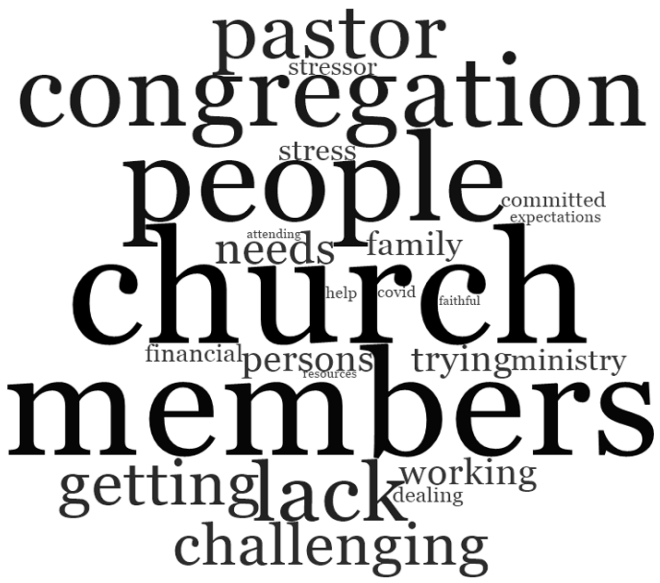
The ANCOVA results revealed several significant differences between groups of pastors. There were differences in clergy distress based on church size and denomination. There was a statistically significant difference in spiritual well-being in daily life based on church size. Satisfaction with life showed a significant difference when comparing denominations. Finally, spiritual well-being in ministry showed a significant difference between pastors based on age and years as pastor.

Most Challenging Stressors for Black Pastors in Their Own Words

The study participants responded to an open-ended question to identify one of the most challenging stressors they face being a Black pastor serving in a Black church. Respondents used both short phrases and complete sentences to answer the question. The NVIVO software helped to code and organize the responses with the use of In Vivo coding, which "uses words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes" (Saldana, 2016, p. 295). Figure 3 depicts the 25 most frequently used words by pastors to describe their stressors with larger-sized words indicating a greater frequency.

Figure 3

Most Frequently Used Words to Describe Pastors' Stressors



The initial 18 codes were combined into five categories, which will be explored below: member dynamics, being a female pastor, financial stress, leading church to fulfill its purpose and mission, and pastors' workload.

Member Dynamics

Participants' perceptions of members' behaviors and interactions were the most frequently noted stressors for Black pastors. Pastors mentioned members' lack of commitment as reflected in their inactivity and unwillingness to engage voluntarily in ministry programs, within the church and community. Pastors repeatedly wrote about the lack of participation by church members, especially members who were younger than 60 years. One female pastor expressed her increased stress and frustration with "getting the congregants to follow through on ministry ideas and not waiting on me to tell them what to do and how to do it." A male pastor similarly described his situation as the "inability of leaders to take ownership of ministry functions without handholding and meticulous guidance from the pastor." Pastors repeatedly acknowledged members' inconsistent commitment and participation and the huge need for human resources, faithful support, and consistent involvement to get things done.

Lack of Church Attendance

The lack of church attendance existed as another significant stressor for pastors. One female pastor described this stressor as the difficulty of "getting the congregation to understand the importance of church attendance and how important it is to their children especially." This stressor seemed hard for some pastors to understand as it related to members' physical whereabouts not including church. This frustration was explicitly expressed as church members "are going everywhere else but the church physically." While pastors acknowledged that members may attend services online, they would prefer to see members in-person. The ongoing uncertainty in whether members will attend is another source of stress for Black pastors.

Resistance to Change

Black pastors experienced persistent stress when church members, boards, and committees are unyielding to change. Pastors reported that they have attempted to introduce new ideas, opportunities, and ministries, but have been met with criticism, resistance, and members holding onto past traditions and the way things had always been done. One male pastor described members as "wanting to remain in a status quo situation...and not wanting to progress into the 21st-century but wanting to keep the church in the organization the way they are most comfortable." This quote seemed to accurately express how most pastors were feeling in regard to resistance to change and innovation. Aligned with the previous quote, one female pastor further described some church members as "not following the (pastor's) vision of the house but trying to create their own." An additional quote that is noteworthy was made by a female pastor who commented that "church members (leaders in the church)...do not want to change the direction of the ministry to include others." It seemed that while trying to help their churches move forward and grow, pastors have found it very difficult and stressful to get everyone on the same page.

Member Expectations

The expectations of members served as another major stressor that Black pastors experienced. The expectations that were expressed most frequently included being available at all times of the day, always having the correct and expected answer to questions which often times were unanswerable, and living up to members' perceptions and expectations. One male pastor stated,

The sheer volume of needs of which people have and expect for their church and Pastor to fulfill, needs ranging from health, finances, social injustices, and family crisis just to name a few. All the while, the expectation of a rich weekly spiritual message never fades. Pastors related these expectations to the various types of personalities found in the church, such as members being very needy, demanding, and even attention seekers. Some pastors acknowledged that their ecclesiastical superiors are both demanding and difficult to deal with as well. These various expectations and personalities presented significant challenges and stress for Black pastors.

Lack of Spiritual Unity

The lack of organizational and spiritual unity represented another stressor for Black pastors. Being a pastor becomes more difficult when church members and leaders are not on the same page and working towards the same goals. Pastors reported that leading a church becomes more stressful when members seek to impose their direction on the church rather than engaging in spiritual unity within their respective congregation. One female pastor described this as "the power struggles with Deacons and Trustees who want to control the authority of the Pastor to make decisions." Many pastors expended a significant amount of time and energy on getting everyone to agree with and invest in the church's vision in a unified manner; however, many times with minimal success. Additionally, some pastors believed that the root of this problem was the lack of spiritual maturity in both members and leaders.

Being a Female Pastor

Several participants who were Black women described their most challenging stressor as being a woman in what has historically been a male's role in the church, especially in congregations which have been accustomed to having males in various leadership roles. One

female pastor acknowledged that Black men unintentionally and intentionally "undermine my authority, office, and station in life." This seemed to be a huge stressor that was expressed by several women. Additionally, another pastor acknowledged that "men make you feel like a misfit." This premise seemed to not only make female pastors feel uncomfortable, but also evoked feelings of significant stress. Along with these two sources of stress, another female pastor reported the lack of respect from members and often being misunderstood. Moreover, women pastors reported criticism and resistance to change and some reluctance to follow a new vision for the congregation. As a result, church members and leaders may be resistant to women pastors' leadership while at the same time leaders, such as deacons and trustees, may engage in power struggles with them.

Various Expectations

Black women pastors reported experiencing various types of expectations, including being someone other than who they are and whom God has called them to be, as well as being expected to do everything in the church. Some have found it difficult to get members and leaders to take the initiative and follow through on ministry ideas and programs, while other pastors lacked the human resources to help get things done. One female pastor stated that, due to the lack of people working consistently, she has had to finish projects without any assistance. These expectations are increasingly challenging for some Black women pastors who are bi-vocational because their congregation is not financially able to provide a sufficient salary and benefits package. One pastor poignantly articulated the stress in being a Black woman pastor:

> So often congregants forget that pastors are human, have families, personal problems, challenges that men do not have. Their families are often put on hold so they can deal with the problems of those in the congregation. We are criticized for almost everything,

> we do not have the support of male pastors, have to preach through our pain, we cannot cry or we are judged to be too emotional, cannot express anger or we are judged to be 'over the top.'

Financial Stress

Black pastors identified financial stress as a major stressor they constantly battle. Financial stress manifests itself in the lack of financial resources, which may originate in the socioeconomic status of members, a small church size, lack of stewardship and tithing, and in essence not enough funds being received. The lack of income placed a financial burden on the church, as well as the pastor. For the church, this means not having enough money for programs and operational expenses, all of which ultimately creates financial uncertainty. For churches in a connectional denominational structure where the denominations require financial assessments (e.g., AME, AME Zion, CME, and COGIC), pastors reported that meeting these denominational financial requirements are a major stressor, especially when the church has both limited attendance and financial resources and these assessments either remain the same or increase. The stress included (1) the strong expectation and pressure that the financial assessment will be paid on time even if it is paid out of the pastor's personal funds and (2) potential consequences of pastor and church being penalized or losing standing with the denominational leadership and, in the Methodist traditions, the pastor being moved to a different and lower status church if the assessment is not paid. Pastors further indicated experiencing personal financial stress by not receiving an adequate salary, having to work and pastor, and having no retirement plan in place.

Building and Property Maintenance

Financial stress manifests itself especially in church building and property maintenance. One female pastor acknowledged the stress in "bringing in resources to maintain a very old

facility," which reflects the reality of many pastors who are challenged to find the proper funds to make needed repairs. Some needed repairs and building maintenance issues have been known for some time while others have appeared unexpectedly. One male pastor reported the challenge of "my church was running in a rented house," while another pastor acknowledged the stress of trying to build a new edifice. Financial stress seems to be a pervasive stressor confronting many Black pastors.

Leading Church to Fulfill Its Mission and Purpose

Black pastors identified providing effective leadership for the church to fulfill its mission and purpose, meeting the needs of members and community, and experiencing membership growth as the most challenging stressors for them. They acknowledged the challenges of building a committed membership, helping members to acknowledge and use their various gifts and talents, keeping members engaged in worship and improving the worship experience, finding ways to reach the youth especially in churches with an aging membership, and motivating the congregation to reach outside the church building. One female pastor identified her stressor as "finding competent, available and willing persons to support the work of the ministry and assist me in the operation work of the church." Pastors further acknowledged the stressor of getting members to have an outward vision on church ministry and focus more on community service. To help their congregations grow, pastors expressed the concern that their preaching stayed relevant to a post-pandemic era.

Meeting Needs within the Congregation

Black pastors frequently acknowledged the stressor of trying to meet the great variety of needs within the congregation and community, which included spiritual, psychosocial, emotional, health, social injustices, and material needs. Pastors expressed the challenges of

finding adequate resources and being there for the members in their times of need and crisis. One pastor acknowledged the stressor of "managing personal and congregational grief and loss." Another pastor stated, "The most challenging stressor for me has been regaining the complete trust of the saints who have been hurt or mistreated by former leaders in the church." Finally, one female pastor asserted that her priority was "making sure my preaching, teaching and leading reflect the needs and give the nurturing needed for my congregation." Black pastors articulated their commitment to leading their congregations to fulfill their purpose and mission, as well as their commitment to meeting the members' needs.

Pastors' Workload

Many Black pastors acknowledged the stress of their workload and described it in different ways, such as members looking to the pastor to do everything, being the "go-to" person for needs being met, and, as one pastor phrased it, (I) "am always on." Since one of the primary and major responsibilities of Black pastors is preaching, several pastors cited that trying to preach each Sunday creatively and with relevance, which required significant focus and preparation time, was a major stressor. Similarly, another pastor described his workload in these terms: "It's been the collective constant of having to effectively manage church administration, pastoral care of members, and leadership development all the while doing sermon preparation and planning Bible studies."

Pastors experienced frustration when "no one offers any suggestions or help." Additionally, several pastors, both female and male, identified the addition of a workload from a secular job on top of their church workload as their most challenging stressor, resulting from their congregations not having enough financial resources to pay them a full salary. Here is how one pastor described his situation: "Being bi-vocational; full-time pastor and full-time corporate

America. While the church provides a stipend, it is not enough to sustain our family so I must work which causes a stress to work/church/family life balance."

Isolation and Loneliness

Pastors acknowledged isolation and loneliness as major stressors they experienced, which resulted in part from people not understanding their pastors or placing them on an unrealistic pedestal through high expectations. One female pastor identified isolation and loneliness as a result of being appointed to serve in a different city. Another pastor experienced a marital crisis and separation, but had no one with whom to confide and receive support from "but God and Jesus." Some pastors had other family issues with which to contend while at the same time trying to serve their congregations faithfully.

Pastoral Stress During the COVOD-19 Pandemic

Aside from all the previously discussed stressors Black pastors experienced, it was important to acknowledge and investigate the stress-related struggles that were present due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, Black pastors responded to the question, "What was your level of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic?" Their choices of response included: (1) Not at all stressful, (2) Slightly stressful, (3) Moderately stressful, (4) Very stressful, or (5) Extremely stressful. Several pastors identified COVID-19 in the first open-ended question as one of their most challenging stressors. Table 12 illustrates the levels of stress Black pastors reported during the pandemic.

Table 12

Level of Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Level of Stress	N	%
Not at all stressful	17	7.8%
Slightly stressful	43	19.7%

Moderately stressful	73	33.5%
Very stressful	62	28.4%
Extremely stressful	23	10.6%
	218	100.0%

A Mann-Whitney *U* Test revealed no significant difference in COVID-19 stress levels between Black female (Md = 3/moderately stressful, n = 83) and male pastors (Md = 3/ moderately stressful, n = 135), U = 6138, z = 1.228, $p = .22$, $r = .00$. These results are displayed in Table 13. Kruskal-Wallis Tests revealed no statistically significant difference in COVID-19 stress levels for Black pastors based on age range (c^2 (3, n = 218) = 5.47, $p = .14$), years as pastor (c^2 (2, n = 218) = 2.67, $p = .263$), average weekly attendance (c^2 (2, n =218) = 4.40, $p = .111$), and denomination (c^2 (6, n = 218) = 4.18, $p = .653$).

Table 13

Level of Stress by Gender During COVID-19 Pandemic

	Male		Female	
Level of Stress	N	%	N	%
Not at all stressful	11	8.1%	6	7.2%
Slightly stressful	30	22.2%	13	15.7%
Moderately stressful	45	33.3%	28	33.7%
Very stressful	36	26.7%	26	31.3%
Extremely stressful	13	9.6%	10	12.0%
	135	100.0%	83	100.0%

Pastors were asked to respond to the open-ended question of what was one of the most challenging stressors they experienced specific to and during the COVD-19 pandemic. Respondents used both short phrases and complete sentences to answer the question. NVIVO software again assisted in the coding and organization process for the responses with the use of

In Vivo coding (Saldana, 2016). The initial 20 codes were combined into five categories: congregational life, church operations, impact of virus, bereavement and grief, and pastors' workload.

Congregational Life

Some of the most challenging stressors for Black pastors centered on keeping the congregation safe, together, and connected; engaged and involved in the church's life and ministries; encouraged in the face of ongoing pandemic fears; informed to combat misinformation; and motivated to be proactive in self-care. Achieving these goals were challenging, as one pastor expressed concerns about "Trying to manage a congregation virtually when they were used to only functioning in person." An additional indication of this problem was expressed by pastors as they struggled with members, and even in some cases themselves, not being technologically savvy, especially senior citizens. Pastors faced the stressors of "persuading people that there is a new normal and trying to persuade people to accept change." In addition, pastors experienced stress when providing direction for the church, providing spiritual guidance and support to members, and seeing that "the congregations had its basic need met (food, housing, healthcare)."

Transition to Virtual Services

The necessity of and transition to online worship services was a major stressor for Black pastors, which was especially challenging for some pastors who had to experience being online for the first time and not being prepared to use social media. This transition required pastors to learn social media platforms and become familiar with Zoom and other platforms. Then, pastors had to get the church members accustomed to using technology, which did not seem to present as a simple task. One pastor expressed his difficulty with this: "Getting my aging congregation to

see the importance and need of technology.” Some pastors also had concerns and stress related to technical expertise. In fact, one pastor mentioned overwhelming stress that came from a lack of "technical expertise and reliable internet service." In addition to technical issues, pastors also experienced stressors related to attendance. One pastor stated they experienced stress related to “Not knowing who would attend on-line service," learning to preach and teach to a computer screen with no immediate feedback from members, and making sure the technology was working properly.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the ability and pattern of pastors providing support through what had traditionally been pastors visiting members in hospitals, nursing homes, and homes. The new normal of being unable to engage in in-person pastoral visitations became a major stressor for pastors. Several pastors acknowledged the stressors of not being able to do home and hospital visits and "not being able to be there in-person during some members' last day on Earth." Other pastors further acknowledged the challenge of not being able to use technology in visiting elderly members "due to their lack of knowledge and access to technology."

Church Operations

One of the most challenging stressors during the pandemic was the closing of church buildings, which created the inability to gather in-person, connect with other members, and receive the emotional and spiritual support members were accustomed to experiencing. One female pastor commented on the struggles they experienced, such as "The constant pivoting brought on by changing government regulations. It created multiple mandatory changes that left us all trying to secure our footing." The pastors mentioned how some churches were closed for a year or more. As a result of church shutdowns, many churches experienced a decrease in financial support while their operational expenses continued, which served as a major stressor for

pastors. In a couple of rare cases, financial support increased. For some pastors, the financial demands from their denominations were the most challenging stressors.

Impact of the Virus

Several pastors reported contracting COVID-19 with varying degrees of seriousness including being hospitalized and out of commission for nine weeks. Even with contracting COVID-19, they were still the pastor of a congregation where one pastor stated he was "trying to spiritually keep the congregation together" and another pastor acknowledged "I was hospitalized with COVID-19 (before the vaccine was available) and I had to maintain a level of maturity with the leadership team, my family and the church." Fear on the part of both pastors and members was a major stressor pastors had to address, which included fears of becoming infected, infection spreading, and loved ones dying. Moreover, pastors focused on helping members understand the gravity of the pandemic and counter misinformation. Pastors further focused on supporting members and their families impacted by job closings and loss of income while at the same time trying to meet the church's financial obligations, even to their denominations.

Bereavement and Grief

The pandemic intensified the reality of death and loss for both pastors and congregations by the large number of deaths which occurred. One pastor lamented about "losing 60+ members during the pandemic due to death" while other pastors expressed similar grief over the deaths of church leaders and relatives of church members. Pastors also experienced stress in conducting funerals with pandemic restrictions, which "did not seem to bring sufficient comfort and closure to the families and the grieving..." Moreover, pastors faced the deaths of their own family members, such as one pastor who lost "15 people that are close to me" and another pastor who "lost 5 family members and several friends." One pastor experienced a different type of loss

through a marital separation acknowledged "not having anyone to confide in but God and Jesus!"

Pastors' Workload

Black pastors reported that COVD-19 brought an added dimension of stress to their workload, such as doing the groundwork to move to online services and working 12-hour days. One female pastor acknowledged "carrying the church on my shoulders while struggling to keep communication lines open and worship engaging." This added burden of responsibility led some pastors to experience isolation which became especially hard for a few pastors moving into a new church assignment. In addition to mental health stressors, some pastors struggled with physical health stressors, such as contracting COVID-19, family members with COVID-19, and one pastor being a transplant recipient. All these stressors and challenges raised the issue of self-care for pastors needing to find some balance. In facing this issue of balance, some pastors expressed the concern of unrealistic expectations, such as in one case where the pastor had COVID-19 and "being expected to serve others" and another case a female pastor was "taking care of church needs and being a caregiver for my mother." COVID-19 changed the nature and level of pastors' workloads.

Other Areas of Stress for Black Pastors

In addition to the open-ended questions reported above, Black pastors answered two questions to assess the level and nature of stress in other areas of their lives. Question 19 asked, "What was your level of stress during the deaths of Black people by law enforcement (e.g., George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown) and the resulting social protests?" Their choices of responses included: (1) Not at all stressful, (2) Slightly stressful, (3) Moderately stressful, (4) Very stressful, or (5) Extremely stressful. Question 20 inquired, "In addition to any stress you

may be experiencing in your role as a Pastor, in how many other areas of your life are you experiencing stress…"? Their choices of responses included choosing a number from zero through six.

Stress During Social Protests

Black pastors acknowledged experiencing stress during the social protests following the death of Black people by law enforcement with their stress levels ranging from "not at all stressful" to "extremely stressful." Over half (55.1%) of Black pastors had "very stressful" and "extremely stressful" levels of stress while 22% identified as being moderately stressful. See Table 14 for a breakdown of the responses.

Table 14

Stress Levels During Social Protests

Stress levels	N	%
Not at all stressful	10	4.6%
Slightly stressful	40	18.3%
Moderately stressful	48	22.0%
Very stressful	68	31.2%
Extremely stressful	52	23.9%
	218	100.0%

A Mann-Whitney *U* Test (see Table 15) revealed no significant difference in social protest stress levels between Black female (Md = 4/very stressful, n = 83) and male pastors (Md = 4/very stressful, n = 135), U = 6039.5, z = .997, p = .319, r = .00. Kruskal-Wallis Tests revealed no statistically significant difference in COVID-19 stress levels for Black pastors based on age range (c^2 (3, n = 218) = 1.00, p = .799), years as pastor (c^2 (2, n = 218) = .17, p = .918),

average weekly attendance (c^2 (2, n =218) = 3.97, p = .138), and denomination (c^2 (6, n = 218) = 4.60, p = .596).

Table 15

Level of Stress During Social Protests by Gender

	Male		Female	
Level of stress	N	%	N	%
Not at all stressful	6	4.4%	4	4.8%
Slightly stressful	25	18.5%	15	18.1%
Moderately stressful	35	25.9%	13	15.7%
Very stressful	39	28.9%	29	34.9%
Extremely stressful	30	22.2%	22	26.5%
	135	100.0%	83	100.0%

Number of Other Areas in Life Having Stress

Black pastors acknowledged experiencing stress in several other areas of life. In the open-ended question (#16) on one of the major stressors they experience as a Black pastor, some pastors identified other areas outside of being a pastor where they experience stress, such as caring for a dying mother, family members being sick, working a secular job, going to school, financial stress of having no retirement, financial problems, a recent move to a new city, the death of a parent, marital separation, and the deaths of "young men killing each other." Pastors identified three areas as the mode and median in their responses (see Table 16).

Table 16

Number of Other Areas of Life with Stress

	N	%
0	8	3.7%
1	21	9.6%

2	34	15.6%
3	66	30.3%
4	42	19.3%
5	25	11.5%
6	22	10.1%

A Mann-Whitney *U* Test (see Table 17) revealed no significant difference in the number of other areas of life with stress between Black female (Md = 3 areas, n = 83) and male pastors (Md = 3 areas, n = 135), U = 5844, z = .546, p = .585, r = .00. Kruskal-Wallis Tests revealed no statistically significant difference in number of other areas of life with stress for Black pastors based on age range (X^2 (3, n = 218) = 2.06, p = .56), years as pastor (X^2 (2, n = 218) = 1.22, p = .543), average weekly attendance (X^2 (2, n =218) = 2.02, p = .365), and denomination (X^2 (6, n = 218) = 2.08, p = .912).

Table 17

Number of Other Areas of Life with Stress by Gender

	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
0	3	2.2%	5	6.0%
1	18	13.3%	3	3.6%
2	16	11.9%	18	21.7%
3	46	34.1%	20	24.1%
4	26	19.3%	16	19.3%
5	13	9.6%	12	14.5%
6	13	9.6%	9	10.8%
	135	100.0%	83	100.0%

Chapter Summary

The data analysis confirmed Hypothesis 1, showing that there is a relationship between the coping strategies (i.e., stress management, spiritual well-being daily, and spiritual well-being

in ministry) and clergy distress and irritation score. Clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with each of the coping variables. Only stress management had a significant inverse relationship with the irritation score. The data analysis did not support Hypothesis 2 of there being a difference in clergy distress based on gender. The data analysis did not support Hypothesis 3 of a difference in clergy distress in Black pastors based on age. Yet, differences in groups were found in clergy distress when pastors were compared by denomination.

In further comparison of groups on other variables, differences were found in three variables: spiritual well-being in daily life, satisfaction with life, and spiritual well-being in ministry. Pastors differed in spiritual well-being in daily life based on church size. Pastors also differed in satisfaction with life based on denomination. Moreover, pastors differed in spiritual well-being in ministry, based on their age and years as pastor.

Black pastors identified their most challenging stressors as a Black pastor under the categories of member dynamics, being a female pastor, financial stress, leading a church to fulfill its purpose and mission, and pastor's workload. Pastors further identified major stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included congregational life, church operations, impact of the virus, bereavement and grief, and again pastor's workload. Regarding stress in other areas of their lives, 55.1% of Black pastors acknowledged that the social protests were "very stressful" and "extremely stressful." Pastors further acknowledged that they experienced stress in other areas of their lives with three areas being the most prevalent number.

Chapter 5 will discuss these results, their meanings and implications. Chapter 5 will further discuss limitations of the study, areas for future research, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The results of this study provided meaningful answers to the research questions. This discussion chapter seeks to elucidate the potential meaning of those findings in a detailed and thorough manner. This chapter will then explore the implications of the results, especially for the counseling profession, counselor education and supervision, Black pastors, and Black Church denominations. After discussing the implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research will be explored. Finally, a succinct conclusion will be presented.

This study focused on identifying the occupational stressors Black pastors experience as spiritual leaders of Black churches. This study further seeks to fill the gaps in the literature of (1) the absence of research targeting and including Black pastors as primary sample participants and (2) incorporating a multicultural perspective absent from past and current research. While some previous research provided important in-depth analysis on Black pastors (e.g., Carroll, 2006; Mamiya, 2005), this study sought to provide a contemporary examination of this topic.

Family Stress Theory served as the theoretical framework to investigate the relationships between variables in this study where A (stressor events) + B (coping strategies) + C (interpretation of the event) = X (an outcome). The theory posits that stressor events (A) will lead Black pastors to employ coping strategies (B). From the combination of the stressor events (A) and coping strategies (B), Black pastors will interpret the meaning or impact of these stressors (C). Then the combination of the stressor events (A), coping strategies (B), and interpretation of the events (C) will result in an outcome (X), i.e., satisfaction with life. As used in this study, the A+B+C=X model contained the following variables: A (clergy distress) + B (stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry) + C (irritation score) = X (satisfaction with life).

Hypothesis 1: Relationships between Variables

The hierarchical regression model illuminated the relationships between variables according to the Family Stress Theory model. For example, it revealed a strong connection between clergy distress and irritation and their significant impact on satisfaction with life. Clergy distress directly feeds into and sustains irritation so that Black pastors can experience negative thoughts and feelings after leaving the workplace but with the workplace stressors continuing to occupy their attention. Similar to previous findings by Hoge (2009), such irritation may distract needed personal attention and presence from the pastor's family or her/his personal life. Moreover, the irritation experienced by these Black pastors during the COVID-19 pandemic supports Mohr and Wolfram's (2010) finding that a dynamic, changing, unpredictable environment, which presents obstacles to achieving organizational goals, possesses a significant yet small correlation with irritation. In addition, clergy distress and irritation both had inverse relationships with satisfaction with life with clergy distress having a greater influence through explaining a greater degree of variance in satisfaction with life.

The study results supported previous research that Black pastors, along with White pastors, experience clergy distress in the form of excessive demands and criticism from members, isolation, loneliness, and challenges as measured by the Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI; Frenk et al., 2013). In fact, in comparison to a national representative sample of clergy, Black pastors showed no significant difference in clergy distress (Frenk et al., 2013). The study further confirmed other research indicating that Black pastors' clergy distress had a significant inverse relationship with their coping strategies (Darling et al., 2004). However, the study’s results on clergy distress differed from other research in that Black pastors had lower

clergy distress than groups of White pastors from mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations (Milstein et al., 2020; Webb & Chase, 2019).

The path analysis provided further insights on the relationships between variables in the Family Stress Theory model. All three coping strategies presented as important in combating clergy distress, given that each strategy had a significant inverse relationship. Yet none of the coping strategies had a significant, positive relationship with satisfaction with life. This was surprising and somewhat conflicting to previous literature, as it had been found that spiritual well-being significantly enhanced quality of life (Darling et al., 2004; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2016). However, there were differences in how these coping strategies protected Black pastors against irritation. Specifically, spiritual well-being in daily life and spiritual well-being in ministry did not have a significant inverse relationship with irritation and did not provide protection against irritation. This was also an unexpected result and contrary to Darling et al. (2004), who found that spiritual well-being was a stronger protective factor than family coping resources against psychological stress, physiological stress, and lack of meaning and coherence to life. This study's results were further contrary to Proeschold-Bell et al. (2016), who found that spiritual well-being in daily life was a significant protective factor against depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization, while spiritual well-being in ministry similarly protected against depersonalization.

Importance of Stress Management

Most significantly, the results indicated that stress management provided protection against irritation through its significant inverse relationship while the spiritual well-being coping strategies did not. In fact, stress management had a slightly stronger inverse relationship on clergy distress than spiritual well-being in daily life and spiritual well-being in ministry. Black

pastors reported practicing stress management behaviors sometimes, which was less frequently than in one study (Callaghan, 2005) and almost exactly the same frequency in another study (Callaghan, 2006). While Black pastors may maintain their spiritual well-being to combat clergy distress, they must additionally practice stress management to more effectively combat both clergy distress and irritation. The results further demonstrated that the most effective strategy for Black pastors to combat clergy distress, protect against irritation, and enhance satisfaction with life is through a joint, integrated praxis of spiritual well-being in daily life and stress management.

The need for stress management along with spiritual well-being in daily life may not be surprising since we know that Black people experience more stressors than White and Hispanic individuals and have a higher incidence of clustering of two or more stressors than White people (Sternthal et al., 2011). In fact, Black pastors acknowledged the clustering of two through six stressors in their lives in addition to their clergy distress and other pastoral stressors. These results may indicate the pervasiveness of stress which Black pastors experience encompassing both their professional and personal lives. This stress clustering warrants increased awareness and attention by Black pastors given the potential of the unique combination of these stressors may have in exacerbating underlying health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes, and contributing to negative mental health outcomes (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Sapolsky, 2004).

More supporting evidence of the need for stress management can be found in Black pastors' acknowledgement of the level of stress which they experienced during social protests following the deaths of Black people by law enforcement and the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the data indicating the high percentage of Black pastors experiencing stress levels of moderately stressful, very stressful, and extremely stressful may seem surprising. Yet, on the

other hand, these high levels of stress confirm the racism-related stress that Black people experience even vicariously, and the stress Black pastors may experience as social justice advocates and community leaders (DeSousa et al., 2021; Harrell, 2000; Sayer et al., 2012; Thoits, 2010; Williams, 2018). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic exerted new levels of life and pastoral stress for Black pastors. The combination of clergy distress, stress from social protests and COVID-19, and stress clustering underscores the importance of stress management for Black pastors.

Yet the need for stress management may be surprising to some Black pastors, especially those who hold beliefs of (1) enduring and persevering through stressor events without acknowledging or addressing them and (2) taking their problems, burdens, and issues only to God in prayer who they hope will solve them. Nouwen (1986) acknowledged the importance of Christian pastors addressing their stress rather than avoiding it by indicating that "the life of Jesus has made it very clear to us that the spiritual life does not allow by-passes" (p. 3). Cashwell et al. (2010) identified spiritual bypass as a problem where people avoid addressing their pain, psychological problems, and personal work through the use of spiritual excuses and spiritually-based or spiritually-rationalized avoidance strategies. Such may be the case for some Black pastors who do not directly address the clergy distress and irritation in their lives by taking no action to manage and reduce them and assuming that only God will solve the problems or remove the issues.

Hypothesis 2: Differences Between Black Female and Male Pastors

The data indicated similarities in the pastoral stress that Black male and female pastors experience. For example, there was no significant difference in the clergy distress score and irritation score between Black male and female pastors, which may point to the similarities in the

pastoral role. Whether you are male or female, the pastoral role has traditionally been held in high esteem and respect by Black church and community members, with the title and role of pastor carrying certain responsibilities and expectations in a Black church (Gates, 2021). The data affirmed that both female and male pastors experience clergy distress and irritation to a similar degree. These results support previous research that stress, loneliness and isolation, excessive demands, criticism, and challenges are endemic to the pastoral role, regardless of race or gender (Berry et al., 2012; Carroll, 2006; Charlton et al., 2009; Frenk et al., 2013). Yet, there is some data that may indicate that the occupational experiences for Black male and female pastors may be different existential realities.

The demographic data seemed consistent with Carroll's (2006) finding of differences in congregational and structural realities based on gender. It appears that Black women enter into the ministry at older ages whereas Black males may begin their training for professional ministry at younger ages with the expectation and goal of becoming a pastor. The data further seemed consistent with structural realities of the Black Church in that Black men hold the overwhelming majority pastoral positions with fewer opportunities for Black women, who may be limited to staff positions in Christian education, pastoral care, or church administration (Chaves et al., 2020).

The data confirmed previous research that Black men have been serving as pastors for a longer time than Black women (Carroll 2006; Gates, 2021; Mamiya, 2005). Yet, Black women pastors seem to fulfill their roles on the same level of quality leadership as their male counterparts. The two megachurches (1,000+ in average weekly attendance) in the dataset have Black women as pastors. When given the opportunity, Black female pastors seem to demonstrate leadership excellence on a par with Black male pastors.

Black women pastors seem to be serving more in part-time pastoral roles than Black men and less in full-time roles, which points to more Black women pastors being bi-vocational. This phenomenon may be related to Black women pastors entering ministry at older ages, whereby they continue working in the private or nonprofit sector while obtaining their ministerial training. Then, as some Black women pastors reported, their congregations are not able to provide sufficient financial support for them to work full-time. Black women pastors may not be appointed to a medium or large church but to a smaller, less prominent or established church, which is unable to provide the needed salary and benefits. On the other hand, the higher part-time status of Black women pastors could potentially be an indication of the structural realities of the Black Church where expectation and preference are directed towards men fulfilling the pastoral role.

While experiencing similar aspects of pastoral stress as Black men which are integral to the pastoral role, Black women pastors seem to experience nuanced differences that may be only apparent to Black women pastors. In their own words, Black women pastors acknowledged having their authority undermined, their calling and purpose questioned, their leadership ability and vision discounted, and being misunderstood and disrespected. While both Black women and men pastors reported resistance to change, Black men pastors did not report such challenges to their pastoral identity, authority, and role as did Black women pastors.

Hypothesis 3: Differences in Age

Pastors identified their age range which showed the overwhelming majority of the sample occupying the upper age ranges (i.e., 45-64 years and 65+ years). While few Black pastors identified being in the younger age ranges, what was even more surprising was the absence of any Black women pastors in the 18-34 years category. These results supported previous research

identifying the older ages of Black pastors and women obtaining clergy status at later ages (Carroll, 2006; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mamiya, 2005). The percentage of Black pastors in this study being 65 years and older lends support to Carroll's (2006) finding of Black denominations having the highest percentage of pastors over the age of 61 years compared to conservative and mainline Protestant denominations. Some Black pastors may continue to work as long as possible for financial reasons, such as lack of retirement funds (Carroll, 2006). Yet other Black pastors continue to work from a sense of a higher calling from God and feeling that there still remains a purpose and work to accomplish. Particularly for older pastors, continuing to serve may provide meaning for their lives knowing that they are contributing to the spiritual growth and development of younger generations.

The blessings and benefits of age may be evident in the spiritual well-being in ministry score where Black pastors, 65 years and older, had significantly higher scores than the younger age groups. These higher scores reflect the fact that the oldest pastors experienced greater closeness to God in the higher frequency of God's presence and power in ministry activities. Moreover, from their longer years of pastoral experience, they gained more awareness and recognition of the presence of God in ministry. In a corollary finding, Black pastors with more years of experience similarly had higher closeness to God in ministry than newer pastors. From a faith development perspective, Genia (1990) might describe these pastors as having a mature internalized faith or transcendent faith. This type of faith provides meaning and purpose, internalized moral and spiritual guidance for living out one's faith commitments, a quality relationship with God, and utilizes prayer as communication and relationship-building tools with God (Genia, 1990). Ultimately, such a mature faith may explain their closeness to God. An integral part of Black pastors' faith is the sense of being called by God to serve in ministry as a

pastor that requires faithfulness and accountability, which translates into seeking and being close to God.

From a psychosocial developmental perspective, Erikson (1963) described later adulthood, in which these Black pastors find themselves, as being in the developmental stage of ego integrity versus despair, whereby persons in this stage of life hopefully see themselves as having lived their lives with meaning, purpose, and fruitfulness from their labors. The virtue or strength of later adulthood is wisdom which persons have gained through their many years of experiences. In particular, Black pastors in this life stage possess wisdom through their life and pastoral experiences of closeness to God in ministry, working with church members, and managing institutional dynamics (Erikson, 1963). Such meaning, purpose, accomplishment, and satisfaction of contributing to people's lives may serve as motivation to continue serving as pastor even as they get older.

Hypothesis 4: Differences in Church Size

The data confirmed the predominance of small churches where Black church members attend more than medium and large churches (Carroll, 2006; Pew, 2021). The original hypothesis that Black pastors in small churches would experience greater clergy distress due to wearing many hats, performing different roles, and having less privacy was not supported by the data. Rather, pastors in medium and large churches showed higher levels of clergy distress than pastors in small churches. Pastors in medium and large churches seem to have more and larger areas of concern with more members, programs and activities, and administrative duties. This was not an unlikely finding given all the moving parts of different departments and ministries needing coordination and direction. There are more people to care for, watch over, and stay connected to. In addition, COVID-19 brought a new, multifaceted dimension of stressors for

pastors for which they had never been trained nor experienced. These additional stressors included the physical health of members, deaths of members, isolation of senior citizens, anxiety and depression experienced by members, church building closures, financial survival of the church, facilitating congregational grieving and bereavement, and encouraging members to get vaccinated.

From their own words, Black pastors acknowledged several stressors which may have a greater impact in a medium or large church. For example, the lack of attendance and member involvement may affect the operation in those size churches by programs and ministries not having enough volunteers to provide for smooth and effective implementation. Black pastors further acknowledged both the stress of church building and property maintenance and the vast number of needs that members brought to the church looking for support and help.

Differences in Denominations

The study's results showed an unexpected difference in clergy distress score based on denominations whereby Baptist pastors had the highest score while Methodist and COGIC pastors had the lowest scores, with the Baptist score being significantly higher. Moreover, Methodist pastors, who had the lowest clergy distress score, had a significantly lower clergy distress score than Pentecostal and Independent/Non-denominational/Other pastors. Similarly, there was also a difference in satisfaction with life with Baptist having the highest score and Methodist and COGIC pastors having the lowest scores. One factor connected to these results is that of polity and church structure. For example, Baptist churches possess autonomy and independence where the power of governing lies within the congregation. Black Baptist pastors have to contend with the power of deacons and lay leaders, which may be stressful. At the same time, Baptist pastors may benefit from their church's freedom and autonomy.

Another factor is church size where the results indicated that pastors in medium and large churches had higher clergy distress than pastors in small churches. The Baptists had more medium and large churches, including two megachurches, than other denominations in this study. Moreover, almost 90% of the Methodist congregations in this study were small churches, which may also mean that their denominational financial assessment may not be as large as medium or large churches. Similarly, almost 80% of COGIC churches were small, which may account for their pastors' low clergy distress score. These differences by denomination in clergy distress score and satisfaction with life are both surprising and hard to fully explain without more investigation.

Impact on Black Pastors' Mental and Emotional Wellness

While this study confirmed that Black pastors experience clergy distress and irritation, it did not fully answer the research question on the relationship between clergy distress and the emotional and mental wellness of Black pastors. Resulting from their clergy distress, Black pastors sometimes experienced psychological strain in the forms of cognitive irritation (e.g., repeatedly thinking about a matter) and emotional irritation (e.g., repeatedly experiencing negative emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, and impatience), especially during their leisure time. Hoge (2009) acknowledged that irritation may increase negative mood, decrease psychological functioning, may have a long-term connection to depression, and found a "strong direct effect from emotional irritation to psychosomatic complaints," such as headaches, dizziness, and digestive problems (p. 47). The present study was not able to assess such direct emotional, mental, or physical effects. Even though this study did not find specific, measurable effects on Black pastors' mental and emotional wellness, their experience of irritation may serve as a precautionary sign for more attention and greater awareness when experiencing irritation,

especially to prevent irritation from causing other psychological and physiological problems (Hoge, 2009; Mohr & Wolfram, 2010).

Implications

Importance of Wellness

The Family Stress Theory model (Hill, 1949, 1958) and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have described stressor events as the starting point. For example, in the Family Stress Theory A+B+C=X model, after the stressor event (A) begins, the individual activates their coping strategies (B). Similarly, Lazarus and Folkman posited that, after experiencing the stressor event, individuals engage in primary and secondary assessment and then implement their coping strategies. Both models seemed applicable to Black pastors in this study, yet from the study's results, Black pastors' effectiveness in successfully coping with their stressors remain questionable. In both models, individuals are reacting to the stressors they experience. In addition, pastors in general have been found to focus more on taking care of others as a first priority before taking care of themselves by denying, minimizing, or postponing their needs for self-care (Chandler, 2009, 2010; Lawson, 2007; Oswald, 1991). This seems to be true historically of Black pastors in their support of the survival and empowerment of generations of Black people and especially in modern times, such as during the Civil Rights Movement and the COVID-19 pandemic (Gates, 2021; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Mamiya, 2005).

This study's results seem to suggest the importance of Black pastors paying more attention to levels of clergy distress and irritation and their corresponding influence on the satisfaction with life. The results further suggest that a more proactive approach to better equip Black pastors to successfully manage or overcome stressors may be helpful. The path analysis supports these suggestions through its finding that the integration of both stress management and

spiritual well-being in daily life provided the most effective protection against clergy distress and irritation. The incorporation of these two coping strategies can become part of a self-care and wellness plan for Black pastors. Such a more proactive approach to safeguard against pastoral and life stressors seems warranted because Black pastors tend to have stress in more areas of their lives than just being a pastor, stressor events happen all the time and sometimes without warning in both church and their personal lives, and Black people tend to experience higher levels of stress. Black pastors may need assistance in strengthening specific wellness dimensions and utilizing their strengths and coping resources to be proactive in guarding against the stressors in their lives (Ohrt et al., 2019).

Implications for Counseling

This study holds implications for the counseling profession and its core values of wellness and social justice advocacy. The importance of focusing on and practicing wellness has three important tenets: (1) the perspective on the whole person and the interconnection of all life's dimensions influences health and ways of living; (2) practicing wellness improves one's functioning in the world, wellness in specific dimensions which are addressed, and quality of life; and (3) personal responsibility and initiative by clients are essential for them in creating and implementing a personal wellness plan (Granello, 2000; Myers et al., 2000; Roscoe, 2009). Counselors first can educate Black pastors about the importance of wellness and assist them in developing an individualized wellness plan with specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-sensitive goals (Granello, 2000; Myers & Sweeney, 2008). Counselors can further assist Black pastors in strengthening specific wellness dimensions and utilizing their strengths and coping resources to be proactive in guarding against the stressors in their lives (Ohrt et al., 2019).

With the Black Church as a major community institution, the counseling profession can seek to partner with Black pastors to provide mental health services to underserved populations. For example, psychoeducation workshops held in Black churches can benefit both church and community members on various wellness topics such as coping with the holidays, managing grief and loss, stress management, and dealing with anxiety and depression. Moreover, more in-depth training on parenting and marriage has the potential of strengthening family relationships and combatting the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences.

In accordance with the preamble of the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2014), counselors can empower Black pastors and Black Church members to accomplish wellness, mental health, and career goals where healthy pastors and church members will lead to healthy churches. Moreover, in alignment with and in fulfillment of the ACA core values, counselors can further enhance development of Black pastors and church members across the lifespan, honor and affirm the diversity and uniqueness within Black churches and communities, and support their worth, dignity, and potential (ACA, 2014). The counseling profession can reach out to Black pastors to offer counseling services to them, their families, and church members. This study can serve as an impetus for the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), a division of ACA which focuses on issues of race, ethnicity, and multicultural concerns, and the Conference of National Black Churches (CNBC), to initiate dialogue and explore possibilities of a collaborative relationship to promote the wellness of Black pastors, Black Church members, and underserved Black communities.

As a profession committed to promoting social justice as one of its core values (ACA, 2014), counselors have a significant opportunity and responsibility to continue to voice its opposition to racial injustice and microaggressions, which are major sources of stress for Black

people (Sawyer et al., 2012; Sue et al., 2019; Williams, 2018). Counselors can further promote basic human and civil rights, acknowledge the voices of Black people and persons of color, and advocate for equitable access to resources, knowledge, power, and services (Crethar et al., 2008). Particularly, counselors can help address any barriers to counseling, which Black people may experience.

Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision

Black people have historically used religion and spirituality to produce comfort, hope, meaning, resilience, courage, and determination through a multitude of life's circumstances (Boyd-Franklin, 2010). If counselors are going to work with Black pastors and/or Black Church members, who tend to be spiritual and religious (Pew, 2021), then counselors may need training in the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling Competencies (ASERVIC, 2009). These 14 competencies provide guidelines for counselors' attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to work with clients in the domain of their religion and spirituality, especially in how a client's religious/spiritual beliefs and practices may "enhance well-being, contribute to client problems, and/or exacerbate symptoms" (ASERVIC, 2009, Competency 11). Training and supervision in these competencies will equip counselors to practice what some researchers have called spiritually sensitive counseling with the ability to work with spiritually diverse clients (Cashwell & Young, 2011; Watts, 2001).

Spiritually sensitive counseling places equal importance on clients' spiritual/religious components of their identities and worldviews as on their cultural and racial/ethnic components (ASERVIC, 2009; Cashwell & Young, 2011; Watts, 2001). Through understanding the meaning, role, and importance of clients' religion/spirituality, counselors can strengthen the counseling relationship and equip clients to draw more hope, strength, and support from their religion and

spirituality to enhance their well-being (ASERVIC, 2009; Cashwell & Young, 2011; Watts, 2001). Watts (2001) further advocated for clients being treated as experts on the meaning of their spirituality and religious practices for counselors to understand the roles and salience of spirituality/religion in their clients' lives. Therefore, training and supervision in these competencies remain essential for counselors to work competently and ethically with Black pastors and church members.

In a similar fashion, counselors may need training in the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts et al., 2015) if they are going to work with Black clients. With their exposition of competencies in the areas of counselor self-awareness, client world view, counseling relationship, and counseling and advocacy interventions, these competencies remain critical for counselors to increase their skill and comfort levels in working with clients of color. Through training and supervision in these competencies, counselors will be more equipped to validate clients' experiences of racism, strengthen clients' racial/cultural identity, assess clients' capacity for self-care, facilitate client coping, promote human development and social justice, and encourage their psychological well-being and liberation (Crethar et al., 2008; Dunbar, 2001; Duran et al., 2008; Malott & Schaefle, 2015).

Implications for Black Pastors

With the increased awareness of the potential negative effects of clergy distress and irritation, Black pastors can seek the assistance of licensed professional counselors to help them accomplish their wellness, mental health, and career goals. For example, in dealing with stress counseling may help pastors to examine their perceptions of stressor events to address any cognitive distortions, process their feelings, and explore different stress management strategies. Counseling may be of further benefit to Black pastors in these areas: (1) addressing the difficulty

and sometimes guilt feelings of setting boundaries and saying no; (2) marriage and family relationship issues; (3) self-doubt concerning one's capabilities, feelings of insecurity in responding to certain situations, and feelings of impostor syndrome when one's pastoral identity and authority are challenged; (4) pastors who are experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression, who may or may not be aware of their symptoms, may not fully understand what they are experiencing, and yet keep persevering through these symptoms in order to remain faithful to their pastoral responsibilities; and (5) the personal feelings of grief Black pastors experience when church members, family, friends, and clergy colleagues die but pastors may not have the time, space, opportunity, or know how to express and work through their grief, which has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study may challenge and encourage Black pastors to raise the frequency, quality, and consistency of stress management and spiritual well-being. In the area of stress management, Black pastors may increase their frequency of practicing strategies and techniques to reduce and manage stress from "sometimes" to at least "often" or even closer to "routinely." Black pastors must realize the importance of stress management to their wellness and make a daily commitment to implement stress management strategies. As Black pastors commit daily time to spiritual well-being in the form of prayer, they must realize the important value of the combination of spiritual well-being and stress management. For example, since researchers have found physical activity, such as walking, may safeguard against stress, burnout, anxiety, depression, and hypertension (Doolittle, 2010; McMinn et al., 2005; Webb & Bopp, 2017), Black pastors may combine prayer and meditation with walking.

For spiritual well-being in both daily life and ministry, an implication may be that Black pastors increase their frequency of experiencing the presence and power of God from "often" to

at least "frequently" and hopefully increasing it to "always." As a corollary to this, as one pastor indicated from his own experience, it cannot be assumed that pastors are close to God just because they are pastors and lead a religious institution. More importantly, pastors themselves cannot assume they are close to God because they work in a church. Rather, their relationship and closeness to God requires intentional awareness and consistent effort. The same truths and practices on spiritual growth, which Black pastors preach, can be helpful in enhancing their own closeness to God if they practice what they preach.

Black pastors may realize that they are not alone in the pastoral and life stressors they experience. Such a realization may itself relieve some stress and provide solace that they are not alone or crazy in having their stressor experiences. However, a more important step is for Black pastors to create their own clergy support group as a proven strategy to have supportive relationships and combat stress (Dewe, 1987; Doolittle, 2010; Gilbert, 1987; McMinn et al., 2005; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2015; Rowatt, 2001). Such support groups, especially a small group of six to ten pastors committed to meeting regularly, will provide opportunities for Black pastors to share their experiences, exchange ideas and resources, receive support, engage in physical and social activities together, and learn from each other.

Implications for the Black Church

Black Church denominations may want to further investigate this topic of the stressors their pastors are experiencing by surveying the pastors within their specific denominations and tailoring such a study to the unique dimensions of their church polity and structure. Such a denomination-specific study would provide useful information to Black Church leaders in understanding the stressors, challenges, and issues of being a pastor in today’s world. Depending on its construction, such a study could assess factors of mental, emotional, and physical wellness

among pastors. Such knowledge could equip denominational leaders in promoting the health and wellness of their pastors, which in turn could lead to healthier congregations.

Some Black pastors in connectional denominations (i.e., AME, AME Zion, CME, and COGIC) acknowledged the financial stress from the denomination's financial assessments levied upon them and their congregations with the expectation and demand that these assessments be paid. Pastors in congregations with limited financial resources and an aging and/or decreasing membership find such assessments burdensome especially if the assessment does not consider the changing church and community demographics. While these congregations continually send money to their denominations, congregations and pastors may not receive any direct benefit or return from these funds. That is, while these assessments send funds to the denomination, some pastors reported that there may not be funds flowing from the denomination to invest in local congregational growth, building and property maintenance, or pastors' professional and personal development. In fact, Black pastors having to meet denominational financial assessments seem sandwiched between the stressors already experienced in their congregations and the financial stress from their denominational hierarchy. This denominational source of stress may need to be addressed by denominational leaders in order to reduce this burden upon pastors. A question denominational leaders may want to ask is: How can we support our pastors to relieve some stress they may be experiencing in order to improve their functioning and effectiveness in their pastoral roles?

The aging of Black pastors is noteworthy, but the absence of women and younger pastors (18-34 and 35-44) is even more noteworthy and somewhat concerning. While women compose the overwhelming majority of church members (Pew, 2021) and men hold the majority pastoral leadership positions (Chaves et al., 2020), it seems that there may be a traditional or greater

congregational expectation for men to accept the call into ministry and become a pastor than for women. With pastoral roles having been historically held by Black men, the question remains regarding how open and ready Black churches are to receive a Black woman pastor, especially if the church's or denomination's history and tradition either favors or assumes Black male leadership and/or negates the pastoral leadership capabilities of Black women.

As Pew (2021) indicated, younger generations of Black people are attending church and professing Christian faith at much lower rates than previous generations. There may be a correlation between the decreasing numbers of younger generations attending Black churches and the number of young adults entering the ministry. There are several questions that Black Church leaders may want to explore: (1) what are the reasons younger generations are not attending church and not professing and practicing Christian faith; (2) how are young people being encouraged to enter the ministry and pastorate, especially young women; (3) what perceptions do young adults hold of being a pastor as a viable calling and vocation; and (4) what are the perceptions of the Black pastorate and Black Church that young people hold? With the aging of Black pastors and members along with fewer members of younger generations attending church, Black Church leaders may want to examine and discuss this trend.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study that should be mentioned. The contemporary context of the COVID-19 pandemic and prevalence of racial injustice by law enforcement created limitations for this study. These major events occupied the time and attention of Black pastors while contributing to their stress, which may have influenced Black pastors' participation and survey completion. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions changed the original data collection strategy of attending denominational and preaching conferences to disseminate

surveys when these conferences were either canceled or switched to being virtual. In addition, the stress Black pastors experienced from these two events may have prevented an accurate assessment of the stressors Black pastors experience because of the life-changing and societal impact of the pandemic and social justice protests.

One limitation consists of the sample composition, which is not truly representative of the population of Black pastors nationwide. For example, there were no pastors of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship and very few pastors of the Apostolic (n = 3) and Holiness (n = 7) faith traditions. Of the Baptist denominations, it is not clear if there were participants from all the Baptist traditions. This study depended primarily on the snowball method to achieve its sample size. Other methods of reaching Black pastors, such contacting Black denominations, Black clergy associations, and virtual Black clergy conferences, provided very limited success in securing participants. The snowball effect depends on who you know and who your contacts know. While it has the potential of reaching a variety of people, it is an unreliable method of achieving a representative sample and an adequate sample size. Thus, a larger and more representative sample would have been helpful.

Another limitation exists in the data collection methodology, specifically in the survey instruments used to collect the data. There were 54 questions for participants to complete including 10 demographic questions. A shorter survey with fewer questions may have contributed to higher completion rates and sample size. Moreover, the Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI) measured the frequency in which pastors experience excessive demands, criticism from members, isolation, loneliness, and challenges. Yet there may be other stressors that pastors experience as this study revealed through its open-ended questions. Maybe a second instrument to help measure stress would have been helpful to obtain a fuller or broader picture of

the pastoral stress of Black pastors. For example, Darling et al. (2004) used a second instrument to measure compassion fatigue along with family stress. The Irritation Scale measured psychological strain in the forms of rumination or continually thinking about a matter (i.e., cognitive irritation) and irritability or being annoyed, impatience, and/or angry about a situation (i.e., emotional irritation; Mohr et al., 2006). Perhaps to better assess the effect of stress on pastors' mental and emotional wellness, a different or additional assessment tool may have been helpful, such as one that specifically measured mental health outcomes, such as the PHQ-4 which measures anxiety and depression (Kroenke et al., 2009). Even a measure of physiological strain may be helpful to further assess the influence of stress on Black pastors (Darling et al., 2004).

The issue of social desirability in Black pastors' responses was not considered or checked. That is, some Black pastors may have answered survey questions in terms of what they thought might have been a right, good, or appropriate answer. For example, Pallant (2020) posited that on surveys regarding quality of life or satisfaction with life (as in this study) participants may tend to give higher scores. However, the survey was completely anonymous with certain demographic information, such as state or education, omitted in an effort to guard against social desirability.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study was conducted during a pandemic, which created a stressful environment for Black pastors leading their congregations but also for their personal lives. Future research may want to reexamine the research questions in a non-pandemic environment. Future research is further needed on the surprising results found in this study. First, none of the coping strategies contributed significantly to satisfaction with life. Second, spiritual well-being in daily life and

spiritual well-being in ministry did not safeguard against irritation. Third, research is needed to investigate if there are differences in clergy distress and satisfaction with life based on denomination.

Future research may further assess what specific coping strategies Black pastors use to manage and reduce stress and whether there are differences in coping strategies for Black female and male pastors. Moreover, the impact of stress clustering of having three or more additional areas of stress on Black pastors' physical, mental, and emotional wellness warrants attention. Future research can focus more closely on the mental health effects of clergy distress and irritation that Black pastors experience. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, n.d.) described the similarities in experiencing stress and anxiety, which included excessive worry, tension, uneasiness, headaches, body pain, hypertension, and lack of sleep. Future research can explore such topics as: (1) under what conditions does their stress turn into anxiety for Black pastors; (2) how do Black pastors recognize the difference in stress versus anxiety; and (3) what coping strategies Black pastors use to manage their stress versus anxiety. Additionally, a worthwhile topic may be to assess burnout among Black pastors.

Future research can assess whether there are gender differences in the mental health outcomes resulting from stress experienced by Black pastors. Bangasser (2021) acknowledged the differences between male and female responses to stress and reported that women are more likely to have a higher lifetime prevalence of mental health disorders associated with stress than men. For example, women had a higher prevalence of major depression, migraines, insomnia, PTSD, generalized anxiety disorder, irritable bowel syndrome, and panic attacks (Bangasser, 2021). More research is needed to assess more clearly if Black women pastors experience stress in such a way that leads to negative mental health consequences.

Conclusion

Black pastors experience clergy distress in the forms of excessive demands, criticism, loneliness, isolation, and challenges as frequently as White pastors with no significant difference between these two groups. Within the sample of Black pastors themselves there was no significant difference in the level of clergy distress based on gender and age but differences in church size and denomination. Black pastors in medium and large churches had significantly higher clergy distress than pastors in small churches. Baptist pastors showed the highest clergy distress while Methodist and Church Of God In Christ pastors had the lowest clergy distress.

Clergy distress and irritation had a significant inverse relationship with satisfaction with life with irritation having the stronger effect. The coping strategies of stress management, spiritual well-being in daily life, and spiritual well-being in ministry all provided some protection against clergy distress through their significant inverse relationships with stress management having the strongest effect. None of the coping strategies contributed significantly to satisfaction with life and only stress management provided protection against irritation. The best safeguard against clergy distress and irritation was a joint praxis of spiritual well-being in daily life and stress management.

In their own words, Black pastors identified major stressors they experienced, which included: (1) member behaviors which included lack of church attendance, resistance to change, member expectations, and lack of spiritual maturity and unity; (2) financial stress from lack of financial resources, decreased giving, denominational assessments, and building maintenance costs; (3) leading a church to fulfill its purpose and mission with the challenge of meeting the various needs of church and community members; (4) pastor's workload, which was extra burdensome for pastors who were bi-vocational; and (5) being a female pastor with its various

expectations, lack of respect, and challenges from male congregants to women pastors' leadership, authority, and pastoral identity.

Almost three quarters of Black pastors experienced stress levels of moderately stressful, very stressful, and extremely stressful during the COVID-19 pandemic. They experienced major stressors from the mandatory church closings, transitioning to virtual services, managing congregational life, dealing with many deaths, contracting COVID themselves and in family members, and their increased workload. Moreover, slightly more than 75% of Black pastors acknowledged being moderately, very, and extremely stressed during social protests against the deaths of Black people by law enforcement. Over 70% of Black pastors further acknowledged having three to six additional areas of life with stress besides the stress of being a pastor.

Clergy distress seems to be endemic to the pastoral role regardless of race, gender, age, church size, years as pastor, and denomination. The pastoral role further possesses unrealistic expectations, work overload, schedule unpredictability, boundary issues, financial stress, church conflict, and stress from being moved to another church assignment. Yet Black pastors experience additional stressors based on race alone in a racist macrosystem and society being Black men and women first and second as community leaders and social justice advocates. The results of this study indicate that there is a hidden cost in all of Black pastors' work, responsibilities, and sacrifices – i.e., the stressors they experience. These stressors may be defined as hidden because Black Church members may not be fully aware of the stressors their pastors experience, especially when member dynamics are a source of pastoral stress. Then, Black pastors themselves may not be fully aware of the stressors they experience and their influence on their mental and emotional wellness. While the full influence of the stressors on

Black pastors needs further investigation, this study found that the stressors Black pastors experience are real, numerous, and ongoing.

The uniqueness of the stressors Black pastors experience may further be found in the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, culture, and class which has created many faith expressions of Black churches. The location of these Black churches in urban, suburban, and rural communities adds another dimension of challenges and stressors based on the specific demographics, community needs, problems, and issues that impact the church as an institution and its members. As spiritual leaders and directors of Black churches, Black pastors encounter stressors based on the uniqueness and dynamics of their respective congregations, as well as their own personal and pastoral unique identities as reflected in their gender, age, marital status, family composition, and years as pastor, which they bring to a congregation.

The results of this study contribute to the knowledge base of pastoral stress by providing an emic perspective of Black pastors in historically Black Protestant denominations and independent congregations. This study fills a gap in the literature by identifying the clergy distress, irritation, and other areas of stress Black pastors experience. One of the strengths of this study was the opportunity for Black pastors to acknowledge their major sources of stress in being a Black pastor and during the COVID-19 pandemic in their own words.

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Appendix A

Pastoral Stress Survey

Demographic Information

1. **Gender:** [ ]Male [ ]Female [ ] Prefer not to answer for confidentiality reasons

2. **Age:** [ ]18-34 [ ]35-44 [ ]45-64 [ ]65 and older [ ] Prefer not to answer for confidentiality reasons

3. **Marital Status:** [ ]Single [ ]Married [ ]Divorced [ ] Separated [ ] Prefer not to answer for confidentiality reasons

4. **Family Composition:** Do you have children, grandchildren, parents, or other family members living with you? [ ]Yes [ ]No

5. **Years as Pastor:** [ ]0-9 [ ]10-20 [ ]21-30 [ ]31+

6. **Employment Status:** [ ]Full-time pastor [ ] Full-time Co-pastor [ ]Part-time pastor [ ] Part-time Co-pastor

7. **Location of Church:** [ ]Urban area [ ]Suburban area [ ]Rural area

8. **Average Weekly Attendance** (in-person & online): [ ] 1-100 (small) [ ] 101-350 (medium) [ ]351-1000 (large) [ ] 1,000+ (mega)

9. **Average number of hours you work as pastor per week**: [ ] 1-20 [ ] 20-30 [ ]30-40 [ ]40-50 [ ] 60-70 [ ] 70+

10. **Denomination:**

[ ] Apostolic [ ] Baptist [ ] Church Of God In Christ (COGIC) [ ] Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship (FGBCH) [ ] Holiness [ ] Methodist (AME, AME Zion, CME) [ ] Pentecostal [ ] Independent or Non-denominational [ ] Other/Not listed

A-Factor: Pastoral Stressors Participants Have Experienced

Clergy Occupational Distress Index (CODI) (Frenk et al., 2013)

(1) Never (2) Once in a while (3) Fairly often (4) Very often

1. During the past year, how often have the people in your congregation made too many demands of you?

2. During the past year, how often have the people in your congregation been critical of you and the things you have done?

3. Looking back over the past year, how often have you experienced stress as a result of dealing with congregational members who are critical of you?

4. Over the past year, how often have you felt lonely or isolated in your work?

5. Over the past year, how often have you experienced stress because of the challenges you have in this congregation?

What has been or is one of the most challenging stressors for you in being a Black pastor serving in a Black Church?

_____

_____

_____

What was your level of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic?

[ ] Not stressful at all
[ ] Slightly stressful
[ ] Moderately stressful
[ ] Very stressful
[ ] Extremely stressful

What was one of the most challenging stressors you experienced specific to and during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

_____

_____

_____

What was your level of stress during the deaths of Black people by law enforcement (for example, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor) and the resulting social protests?

[ ] Not stressful at all
[ ] Slightly stressful
[ ] Moderately stressful
[ ] Very stressful
[ ] Extremely stressful

In addition to any stress you may be experiencing in your role as a Pastor, in HOW MANY OTHER AREAS OF YOUR LIFE ARE YOU EXPERIENCING STRESS, such as in money matters, family responsibilities, personal health, working on a degree, being a caregiver, personal relationships, death of a loved one, racial discrimination, neighborhood stressors (lack of safety, crime, violence), etc.
[ ] 0
[ ] 1
[ ] 2
[ ] 3
[ ] 4
[ ] 5
[ ] 6

B-Factor: Coping Strategies

Health-Promoting Lifestyle Profile II – Stress Management Subscale (Walker et al., 1987)

Indicate the frequency with which you engage in each behavior:

(1) Never (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Routinely

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Take some time for relaxation each day.
3. Accept those things in my life which I cannot change.
4. Concentrate on pleasant thought at bedtime.
5. Use specific methods to control my stress.

6. Balance time between work and play.
7. Practice relaxation or meditation for 15-20 minutes daily.
8. Pace myself to prevent tiredness.

Clergy Spiritual Well-being Scale (Proeschold-Bell et al., 2014)

(1) Never (2) Sometimes (3) Often (4) Frequently (5) Always

Presence and Power of God in Daily Life

During the past 6 months, how often have you:

1) Experienced the presence and power of God in the ordinary?
2) Observed the presence and power of God in your closest relationships?
3) Consciously practiced discerning the presence and power of God?
4) Felt God's grace and God's love for you as you are, apart from any accomplishments or good works?
5) Felt that events were unfolding according to God's intent?
6) Felt that you have a vital relationship with God?

Presence and Power of God in Ministry

During the past 6 months, how often have you felt the presence and power of God:

1) In planning and leading worship?
2) When conducting pastoral visitations?
3) When participating in church-related events (e.g., Bible study,, fellowship time, etc.)
4) When sharing in crisis intervention and counseling?
5) When sharing in the sacraments?
6) In the midst of serious conflict?

C-Factor: Definition of Events

Irritation Scale (Mohr et al., 2006)

Please rate your agreement with each of the statements below.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Moderately disagree (3) Slightly disagree (4) Neither agree or disagree (5) Slightly agree (6) Moderately agree or (7) Strongly agree

1. I have difficulty relaxing after I get home.
2. Even at home I often think of my problems at work.
3. I get grumpy when others approach me.
4. Even on my vacations I think about my problems at work.

5. From time to time I feel like a bundle of nerves.
6. I anger quickly.
7. I get irritated easily, although I don't want this to happen.
8. When I come home tired after work, I feel rather irritable.

X-Factor: Quality of Life

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (Margolis et al., 2019)

Please rate your agreement with each of the statements below.
(1) Strongly disagree (2) Moderately disagree (3) Slightly disagree (4) Neither agree or disagree (5) Slightly agree (6) Moderately agree or (7) Strongly agree

1. I like how my life is going.
2. If I could live life over, I would change many things.
3. I am content with my life.
4. Those around me seem to be living better lives than my own.
5. I am satisfied with where I am in life right now.
6. I want to change the path my life is on.

Appendix B

LinkedIn Flyers

Stressors Black Pastors Experience

Few people fully understand the workload, pressures, and demands Black Pastors have. Black Pastors may be unaware of the number, intensity, and impact of stressors they have.

STUDY PURPOSE: Identify the stress Black pastors experience and assess the impact of stress on their health and wellness.

GOAL: To help Black pastors, Black church members and leaders gain better understanding of the stressors Black Pastors experience and the impact stressors may have on pastors and congregations.

METHOD: Black pastors filling out a 10-minute online survey answering the following questions:

- Stress experienced as a Black senior pastor or co-pastor.
- Self-care and spiritual coping strategies used to combat stress.
- The impact of stress on emotional and mental wellness and your satisfaction with life.
- You can fill out the survey on your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Or, you can complete the survey in a telephone phone interview.

RESEARCHER: Pastor Robert Rogers, Senior Pastor of the Church of God in Christ For All Saints, Morristown, NJ, and a Doctoral Candidate in the Counseling Department, is conducting this study. If you are interested in participating or have more questions, please contact him at 862-259-4967 or rogersr3@montclair.edu.

Copy or click on link to participate in study:
https://montclair.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3rzq4OHnMiUFfOS

This study has been approved by the Montclair State University Institutional Review Board, MSU IRB #FY20-21-2197.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Stressors Black Pastors Experience

While Black Church members enjoy many benefits of church membership, there are costs associated with these benefits. One cost may be the stress Black pastors experience in leading the church, providing vision, overseeing program implementation, meeting members' needs, and supporting their spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. What might your stress be costing you?

I am inviting Black pastors to participate in a study of The Stressors Black Pastors Experience, which seeks to identify and name the stressors Black pastors experience in their church work and how this stress impacts their health and wellness. The 10-minute online survey will ask about (1) the stress you experience as Black pastor, (2) the self-care and spiritual coping strategies you use to combat stress, (3) how stress might impact your health and wellness, and (4) how all of these factors might impact your satisfaction with life. You can compete the survey on your smartphone, tablet, or computer. Or, you can complete the survey over the phone.

If you are a Black senior pastor or co-pastor serving in a Black church, which is part of a Black denomination, assembly, fellowship, covenant group, or is independent, non-denominational, or unaffiliated, you are invited to participate. If you know a Black pastor, please encourage them to take this survey.

If you would like more information or like to participate, please contact me, Pastor Robert Rogers, Montclair State University, by email at rogersr3@montclair.edu or by text/phone at 862-259-4967.

If you are willing to take this survey, here is the link:
https://montclair.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3rzq4OHnMiUFfOS

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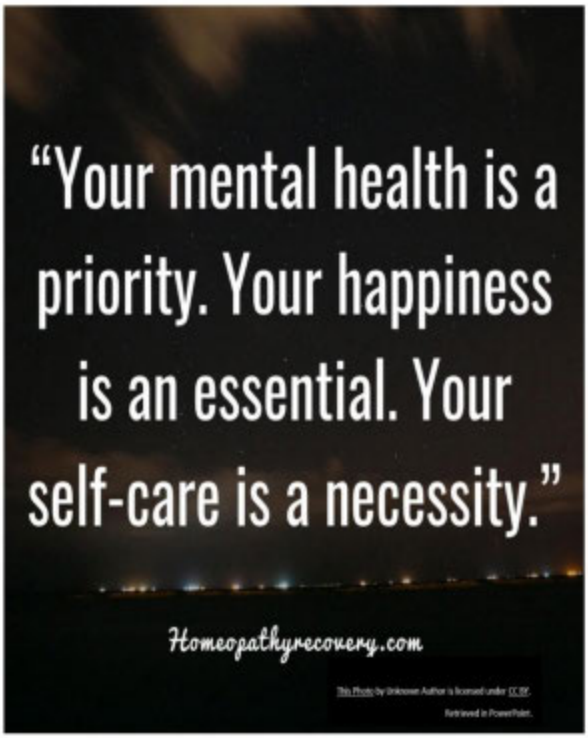
Stressors Black Pastors Experience

Have you ever felt like the Prophet Elijah - discouraged about people not getting the message, depressed, worried about your future, wondering how your basic needs would be met, felt like you're the only one serving God, or felt like your work isn't accomplishing anything? Knowing our vulnerable areas and the stressors that negatively impact us may help us target our self-care strategies more effectively.



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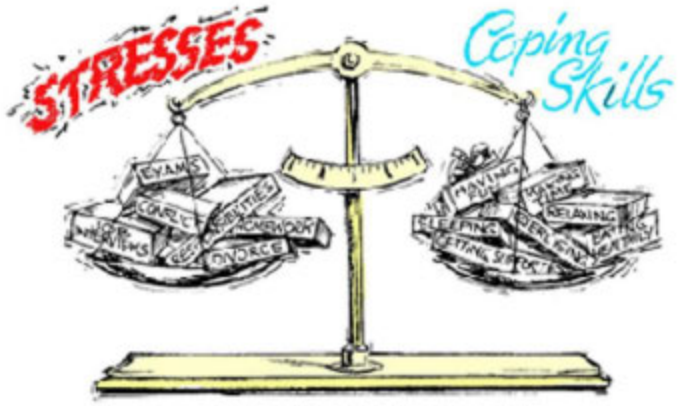
Stressors Black Pastors Experience

Pastoral stress is a reality pastors experience in different ways depending ways on their unique relationships, interactions, and circumstances in their churches and communities. The strategies pastors implement to cope with stress will affect the impact of stress has and influence their quality of life. At the same time, pastors are human beings, who experience the same existential realities as the members they serve, such as raising children, caring for an aging parent, sickness, death of a family member, and so many more.



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