Taking Inventory:
Preparation for the Next Phase of Ministry

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ABC of Wisconsin
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Midwest and Southwest Ministry Development are part of the Ministry Development Network, an ecumenical, church owned service whose mission is to strengthen and care for persons in ministry.
“O God, You Search Me”
by Bernadette Farrell

🔗 https://youtu.be/F4ScBPE9v_I
Rev. Walter J. Lanier
Mental Health Advocate and Pastor
Progressive Baptist Church
Milwaukee, WI
Have you notice more feelings of anxiousness or depression in the past two months?

Yes or No
Have you found more or less time for yourself in the past two months?

More or Less?
What does it feel like to be a spiritual first responder?

Have you ever thought of yourself as a first responder?
Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”
Do you love yourself as you love your neighbor?

- Challenge is to understand that you are no less precious to God than the work you do and the people you serve. (*Rest in the Storm*, p. xxii)

- “Well-doing, devoid of proper self-care is, at best, doing well poorly. Exemplary care for others is rooted in vigilant self-care.” (*Rest in the Storm*, p. 8)
Self-Care & Wellness Inventory

- Spiritual wellness
- Physical wellness
- Psychological wellness
- Relational wellness

Luke 2:52 (ESV)

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.
Self-Care includes:

- **Self-Care Practices** (things you regularly do for self-care) and **boundaries** (things that, for the sake of self-care, you will not do). (Health, Holiness and Wholeness for Ministry Leaders, p. 38)

- These practices and boundaries help us experience well-being.

- Henry Cloud: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nENHkYV-iLI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nENHkYV-iLI)
Clergy: Satisfied & Stressed

- 90% of clergy are satisfied with their ministry (1986, 2003, 2006, 2009)

- Clergy score highest for being happy with their jobs among all professionals (2006, 2009)

- 2/3 feel “loved and cared for” by their congregations (2002)

- 74% are “very satisfied” with their current position (2002)

- 50% of clergy experience stress “fairly often” or “very often” (2013)

- 40% report moderate to severe financial stress (2013)

- 25% experience functional impairment due to depressive symptoms (2013)

- 79% are obese or overweight compared to 61% of general population (2015)
What’s going on?

How can we be both highly satisfied and stressed, depressed, and sick?
From Self-Care to Wellbeing

- [https://wellbeing.nd.edu/flourishing-in-ministry/](https://wellbeing.nd.edu/flourishing-in-ministry/)
- **Wellbeing** includes all the elements of one’s life which contribute to overall happiness.
Hedonic Well-Being

Eudaimonic Well-Being

Bloom, 2013
Hedonic Well-Being = Daily Happiness

How do we increase day-to-day happiness for pastors?
Hedonic Well-Being

Happiness = Affect + Mood

Bloom, 2013
Happiness: Typical American, Typical Day

- High Happiness
- Low Happiness

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
Daily well-being accumulates
Strategies to Increase Hedonic Well-Being

**Detachment and Relaxation**
- Not thinking about work, physical and mental rest
- Ideally each day, minimum of at least 4 times per week
- More often during times of high stress

**Restorative Niches**
- Flow Experiences = voluntary, enjoyable, autotelic
- Pastors who participated in restorative activity at least weekly had highest levels of well-being
- Only about 1 in 4 pastors can identify having a restorative niche

**Meditation or Contemplation**
- 5 minutes per day has a positive impact
- Any contemplative practice – centering prayer, mindfulness meditation, guided meditation
- Lower levels of burnout, less reported stress, higher levels of daily happiness and thriving
Hedonic Well-Being  Eudaimonic Well-Being

Bloom, 2013
Eudaimonic Well-Being = Thriving

Directly related to helping pastors sustain their call. Can living out a call undermine day to day happiness?
Strategies to Increase Eudaimonic Well-Being

- **Staying Grounded in One’s Call**
  - Periodic reflection on call
  - Honoring the changing nature of one’s call
  - Sensing dependence on God, not self

- **Improve Pastor – Church Relationships**
  - Pastors flourish when they feel they belong to the church community
  - Pastor/Church Fit – both in terms of skills/interests and core values

- **Relationship to Significant Others**
  - Only a weak correlation to Ministry Satisfaction
  - Essential for Life Satisfaction
  - Are pastors overly focusing on buffering their family from the church?

- **Role Models**
  - Exemplars for clergy (the ideal possible self)
  - Informal gatherings and exposure to multiple “exemplars”

- **Mentors**
  - Times of transition especially important
  - Match on personality, values, and beliefs, rather than formal factors
  - Genuinely invested in life of protégé

- **Community of Pastors**
  - Sense of belonging
  - Emotional and practical support
  - Safety and authenticity
  - Place to not be in the pastoral role
Hedonic Well-Being

Eudaimonic Well-Being

Flourishing

Bloom, 2013
4 dimensions of flourishing in ministry:

- Everyday Happiness
- Resilience
- Thriving
- Self-Integrity/Authenticity
Pastoral identity

- Pastoral Identity: The key to long-term clergy well-being
  - Pastors with strong, stable, and positive identities do well over the long term
  - Pastors with weak, variable, or negative identities are more susceptible to low levels of well-being
  - Initial Enactment (early years) sets the trajectory
Clergy Physical Health
What is Metabolic Syndrome?

- A group of risk factors that raise your risk for heart disease and other health problems, such as diabetes, kidney disease, and stroke.

**Qualifying factors:**
- A large abdominal circumference + 2 of the risk factors below:
  - □ High blood pressure
  - □ A high triglyceride level
  - □ A low HDL ("good") cholesterol
  - □ High fasting blood sugar

4 effects of chronic stress:

- Increase in pain (reduced endorphins)
- Increased anxiety (reduced natural tranquilizers)
- Increased risk for illness (reduced immune system)
- Increased fatigue and depression (reduced adrenaline resources)
Managing your Adrenaline

- Pace yourself with technology
- Plan recovery times before and after high stress periods
- Changing your Type A behaviors: resign as the “keeper of the universe” and focus on participating with God
- Take care of unpleasant tasks first and get them out of the way
- Avoid frustrations by working around them
- Resolve conflicts quickly – festering conflicts are huge stressors
- Especially, deal with your anger. Anger is like a boomerang, it will come back and hurt YOU.
- Learn to respond in proportion to the situation, rather than react.
- Limit caffeine
Clergy Mental Health

Depression
Hidden process addictions
Coping with depression in ministry

- Normalize depression in ministry, for yourself and others
- Gender Differences:
  - Women tend to “feel” their depression, men “act out” their depression.
  - Male depression is less sadness and more irritability and aggression or addiction...better diagnosed from its behaviors.
- **Treatment:** Best approach is holistic--chronic medical issues, psychotherapy, medication, and lifestyle changes.
Hidden process addictions

- **Process Addiction:** A condition in which a person is dependent on the brain’s own chemical processes, which are set in motion by some type of behavior.

- Examples:
  - Workaholism
  - Technology
  - Pornography/sex addiction
  - Food
Spiritual First Responder

As a Spiritual First Responder, you need to pay more attention to self-care, boundaries, and well-being. Be kind to yourself so that you have the resources and resilience to help others.
If you’re thinking about suicide, are worried about a person who might be contemplating suicide, or would like emotional support, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255) or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting “HOME” to 741741.

“Giving Back to Those Who Serve”
https://religionnews.com/2020/05/14/giving-back-to-those-who-serve-caring-for-our-faith-leaders/

“That Discomfort You Feel is Grief”
https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief

“Faith and Mental Health in the Wake of Covid 19”
Self-Care Practices to support clergy well-being

- **Cultivate Sabbath**
  - Contemplative Spiritual Disciplines
  - Detachment
  - Develop a “niche” activity
- **Take Care of Your Body**
  - Eat, Rest, Exercise
- **Embrace Your Limits**
  - Boundaries – time management
  - Manage Your Adrenaline
Wear your ministry as a loose garment

Not as a straightjacket
Q & A
Small Groups

20 minutes
Small Groups

- What are you sensing that God is showing you through this experience? What learnings are you sensing and willing to share?
- What remains unclear?
- What new opportunities are you being called to in this new phase of ministry?
Midwest Ministry Development Service

- Life & Ministry Visioning (Sabbatical planning, etc., 2 days with a counselor, no testing)
- Vocational Consultation (mid-career, more in-depth, take a more objective look at what is working and what isn’t)
- Coaching (5 free coaching sessions with ABC pastors)
- On-line consultations
- Retirement planning with MMBB
Midwest Ministry Development Service

- Chicago Office
  - 708-343-6268

- Columbus Office
  - 614-442-8822
  - 614-442-8823
  - Se habla español

- Managed by Columbus staff
  - 1-800-297-6192
https://www.judsonpress.com/Products/J277/health-holiness-and-wholeness-for-ministry-leaders.aspx

Discover practical steps to developing healthy behavior patterns that allow you to effectively navigate between the pastor as person and ministry as a professional discipline.

The volume includes real-life application from actual ministry settings of the three principles of excellence:
- separation of self and role,
- always choose strength and
- straight from Jesus.
Final Blessing
St. Patrick’s Breastplate
(390-461 A.D.)

O Christ be with me, Christ within me
O Christ behind me, Christ before me
O Christ beside me, Christ to win me
O Christ to comfort me and restore me.
O Christ beneath me, Christ above me
O Christ in quiet, Christ in danger
O Christ in hearts of all that love me
O Christ in mouth of friend or stranger.
Bibliography


- https://wellbeing.nd.edu/flourishing-in-ministry/


- THANK YOU!