

**ENSIGN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH KPONG GHANA**

**ASSESSING THE SOURCE OF STRESS LEVELS OF STRESS AND  
BURNOUT AMONG PASTORS AT GLOBAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
GHANA:**

**BY**

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**A Thesis submitted to the Department of Community Health in the Faculty of  
Public Health in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree**

**MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**APRIL 2017**

## DECLARATION

I, **Ruth Eyra Atsagli** author of this dissertation do hereby declare that except for reference from other people's works which have been duly acknowledged, the work presented here was done by me under the guidance of my supervisor, as a student of the Ensign College of Public Health Kpong Ghana in April 2017.

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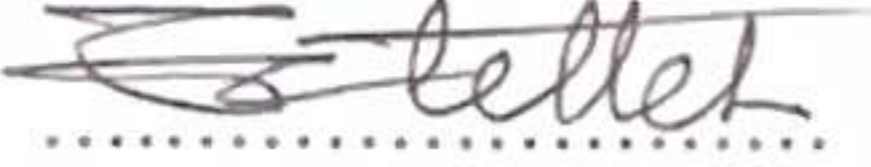
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God for granting me that needed strength to do this work and saw me through school by His Grace.

I am so grateful to my lovely husband Rev. M. K. Atsagli from whom I took a lot of inspiration and of course to my kids, for their support, I could not have come this far without their corporation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First I would like to thank God for His Mercy and Guidance and for helping me through this project and through school. I am so grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Edith Tetteh, who is the source of inspiration, and of course to Rev. Prof. Elom Dorvlo for his immensely contribution not forgotten Dr. Frank Baiden from whom I took a lot of inspiration and always available for consultation, I also thank Global Evangelical Church Pastors for their support. God richly bless everyone who supports me especially Josephine Amankwah in their prayers, time, energy and skills.

Again thanks and God bless you all.

Mrs. Ruth Eyra Atsagli

Thank you.

### Definition Of Terms

- **Burnout:** a level of exhaustion as determined by the designated scale signaling a desire to quit.
- **Clergy:** a church leader given the commission to carry out duties including giving sermons, counseling and handling business concerning a said congregation within the church.
- **Work – related stress:** different levels of perceived stress experienced as a result of doing work.

## Abbreviation/Acronyms

NIV New International Version.....	13
UK United Kingdom.....	15
WHO World Health Organization.....	7

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Pastoral work is professionalized in most developed countries. In sub-Saharan Africa however it remains largely vocational, often informal and ill-defined in terms of scope and working hours. While this approach appeals to African congregations, it could become a source of stress and burn-out for pastors who literally have to be available to congregants 24 hours in the day. This study sought to describe the experience of pastor in this regards and how it affects work satisfaction.

**Methods:** Using a self-administered questionnaire, a cross-sectional survey was conducted among pastors of the Global Evangelical Church attending the Pastor's annual conference in Ho from 4-8<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Data was obtained on socio-demographic background, work activities and work schedule. Pastors also completed the Burnout and Stress Assessment tests.

**Results:** One hundred and fifty out of the 265 Pastors completed the questionnaire. They were made up of 123(82%) males and 27(18%) females. The mean age was 46.90 years (standard deviation of 7.57years). All were married. Majority 147(98%) of the pastors had congregations of up to five hundred members. Three (2%) however had congregations of more than five hundred. The majority (83%) were district pastors; 25(17%) of them were parish pastors and one (1) respondent was a regional administrator. About 46.7% of pastors had high stress levels (about 21.3%) and 10.7% had symptoms suggestive of burnout. The main sources of stress mentioned were care for neglected children, family pressure, organization of crusades and all-night prayer sessions, anxieties about transfers and pressure on personal finances due to societal demands. Despite an enumeration of these sources of stress, all pastors indicated they derived satisfaction from the work they did.

**Conclusions:** The ill-defined nature of the work of the pastor needs to be re-assessed and congregants educated to be accommodating of the need for pastors to have rest and recuperation periods. Churches should consider mandatory rest periods for pastors. Pastors' declaration of work satisfaction contrast sharply with their enumeration of several sources of stress.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study is meant to assess the sources of stress for pastors as well as the levels of stress and burnout that they experience as a result of their work. Like all professions, Pastors also experience stress and some studies have even suggested overwhelming levels of stress which very often lead to burnout and intentions of leaving the church (Palmer, 1998). Studies have shown that occupational stress across different organizations, contexts and professions have damaging effects on employees' mental and physical health, as well as on organizational outcomes such as job performance and employee turnover (Hang-yue, Foley &Loi, 2005). It is in the interest of the church and all stakeholders within the church to take the problem of stress and burnout very seriously. According to Barnard and Curry (2011) clergy experience burnout more than is believed. Most clergy believe that their work is a calling; however this has not exempted them from experiencing burnout. Stress also remains a huge problem within ministry, a problem which needs to be tackled.

In reality, the effects of stress cannot be understated. Life is filled with competition, conflict, demands coupled with a lack of rest and recreational activities have produced tension and anxieties to not only the social and emotional life, but also to spiritual life. Studies show that stress is prevalent among clergy. Studies have reported growing levels of stress and burnout among clergy and their families as they deal with intrusive demands, overwhelming responsibilities, financial strain and other issues (Kayler, 2011). The inherent benefits and relevance of such a study therefore cannot be understated. Upon completion the study will be throwing much needed light in an area without a lot of existing research.

Stress to an individual, can either be positive or negative depending on various things, such as conditions or environment under which individuals experience it and circumstances under which the experience occurs. In addition, people of all ages experience stress somewhat. All this must be first admitted and then we must turn to the pastor to see if that particular calling experiences stress in a different way from the rest of the congregation.

Davies (1988), views stress as made up of any pressure from the outside world that can cause individuals to feel an inward sense of strain. This view generally agrees with the Oxford English dictionary (1996) that defines stress as "mental, emotional and physical strain or tension". On the other hand, the New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology (1995), asserts that the term stress is used to describe causes that are associated with change and results of pressure; and concludes that no one is exempted from it. Lastly, it notes that Christians are often subjected to extra pressure because of high expectations from society.

Research over the past several decades has demonstrated that clergy, like many professionals, face a great deal of job-related stress. Studies have shown that clergy often face high demands on their time, a lack of privacy, pressures from frequent relocation, and criticism from church members (Carroll 2006). Additionally, they frequently must balance multiple roles which can lead to various types of role strain (Kay 2000). Such stressors can lead to physical and mental health problems if clergy do not have sufficient social and personal resources to manage them effectively. Indeed, scholars have shown that stress and burnout are persistent problems among pastors.

Of course, not all pastoral work is the same. Clergy serve in churches of varying sizes, in various locations, and minister to people with unique cultures, personalities, and problems. This diversity

leads to differences in occupational demands, which in turn can influence the types and intensities of stressors that pastors face and can offer clergy different resources with which to manage these challenges. Understanding the patterns of stressors and resources in pastoral work is an essential first step in creating healthy work environments for clergy. According to Kaldor and Bullpit (2001) stress levels among clergy are generally higher than can be found in the general population. They further argue that clergy tend not to employ self-care strategies; some theological assumptions lead to a denial of the effects of stress. Instead of facing and admitting stressors, clergy often turn to spiritual connotations and explanations to deny their apparent situation. This may lead to a situation where the problem remains even after prayers and so on. The truth is that stress is prevalent among clergy. Studies report growing levels of stress and burnout among clergy and their families as they deal with intrusive demands, overwhelming responsibilities, financial strain and other issues.

According to Kayler (2011), Three-quarters of pastors say they have experienced a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry. Almost half of pastors say they have experienced depression or burnout severe enough to cause them to take a leave of absence from ministry. Almost two-thirds say that their self-esteem is lower now than when they started pastoral ministry. These statistics illustrate the problem of clergy stress. Although these studies were conducted in developed countries, one may predict that the already existing hardships in developing countries can only multiply the problem. Issues of poverty, starvation, systems not working, poor health conditions, low economic well-being and so on are already giving the ordinary African a lot of stress. The pastor, being an African as well, is faced with the additional burden of helping others navigate the many stressors in their lives. This does not even come

close to the pressure Pastors experience from society. Society expects them not only to be perfect and happy but also to be examples to others. Most people feel Pastors should be above all else.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The work of clergy may be expected to be as stressful as most other jobs. However, various studies revealed that clergy may experience much more stress in relation to their work. Clergy work is characterized by undefined working hours, undefined working areas, vaguely defined roles and obligation towards the church as a body, their faith, the congregation and society. Clergy are expected to be on-call at all times for the needs of their congregations (Palmer, 1998). Added to this burden are the expectations of society and congregations of the life of the clergy to be one of perfection (Charlton, Rolph, Francis, Rolph and Robbins, 2008). Clergy are expected to heal and do miracles, pray for success and give direction to others. Various individuals within the church also share their burdens with clergy and expect the pastor to not only share their burden but also have a solution no matter the nature of the problem. There are also the usual stressors like work-overload, work-family conflicts and work relationships (Palmer, 1998). It can therefore be concluded that Clergy may be experiencing very high levels of work related stress and are at constant risk of burnout.

Like most helping professions at some point clergy are expected to experience burnout (Barndard and Curry, 2011). Religious leaders often experience burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion and/or low satisfaction. Clergy with high emotional exhaustion feel drained and discouraged (Barnard and Curry, 2011). The issue of burnout is also important to investigate as more and more clergy may now be working without the purpose they set out to accomplish. Despite all of these concerns there are few studies in this area to tackle the situation

especially in the African setting. The study will thus shed some much needed light on the phenomena of stress and burnout experienced by clergy in this part of the world.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate and assess sources and levels of stress and burnout among clergy.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- identify different sources of work related stress for clergy.
- assess the levels of stress experienced by the clergy.
- assess the levels of burnout if they exist among clergy.
- compare the levels of stress to the burnout experienced by clergy.

## **1.4 Research Question**

The following research questions will be used to guide the researcher to carry out this study:

- What are the different sources of stress for clergy?
- What are the levels of stress experienced by the clergy?
- What are the levels of burnout if they exist among clergy?
- What are the levels of stress to the burnout experienced by clergy?

## **1.3 Hypotheses and Research Questions**

Hypothesis 1: Clergy experience high levels of stress as part of their work.

Hypothesis 2: Clergy experience high levels of burnout.

Hypothesis 3: Clergy who experience higher levels of stress will experience higher levels of burnout.

Hypothesis 4: Clergy who experience stress will have low satisfaction with their jobs.

### 1.5 Relevance of the Study

The study is essential and findings shall contribute to the body of literature on stress and burnout among the clergy in Ghana. The study could also be of significance to the policy makers and various organizations most especially churches since this research report would give them a fair view of the stress experienced by clergy and consequently guide them to adopt feasible mechanisms to make their work easier reduce stress and burnout to keep their pastors happy.

### 1.6 Operational Definitions

- **Work – related stress:** different levels of perceived stress experienced as a result of doing work.
- **Clergy:** a church leader given the commission to carry out duties including giving sermons, counseling and handling business concerning a said congregation within the church.
- **Burnout:** a level of exhaustion as determined by the designated scale signaling a desire to quit.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses related literature about the sources of stress, levels of stress and burnout among Pastors of Global Evangelical Church, Ghana and some of the concerns various researchers have expressed and the suggestion made towards improving the system. The essence of this review is to get a focus for the study and to use these pieces of relevant information as conceptual framework upon which tentative generalizations and conclusions may be drawn.

#### 2.2 The Concept of Stress

The definition and study of work stress conceptualizes it in terms of the dynamic interaction between the person and their work environment. Stress in itself has had different conceptualizations and definitions. Different authors have given different definitions to stress. Lazarus (1984) for example, defined stress as a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.

However, stress is best explained as the body's response to an external event which is meant to help the body cope with this overwhelming effect. Prolonged levels of stress will interfere with the individual's well-being. Well-being is a dynamic state of mind characterized by reasonable harmony between a person's abilities, needs, and expectations, and environmental demands and opportunities (WHO, 1986). The individual's subjective assessment is the only valid measure of well-being available (Levi, 1992). Cox (1978) considers that stress involves external stimuli, the physiological response to these stimuli, and psychological processes that mediate between

stimulus and response. The psychological processes involve differences between individuals in their perception of the environmental demands and their own capacity to cope with them.

### **2.3 The Demand-Control-Support Model of Work Stress**

Karasek (1979) proposed the possibility that work characteristics may not be linearly associated with worker health, and that they may combine interactively in relation to health. He initially demonstrated this theory through secondary analyses of data from United States and Sweden, finding that employees in jobs perceived to have both low decision latitude and high job demands were particularly likely to report poor health and low satisfaction. This model of work stress is the Demand-Control model of stress. This model was subsequently revised as the Demand-Control-Support Model of stress. Karasek (1979) simply proved with his studies that work characteristics contributed to the mental and physical well-being of workers. When the demands of work were simply too much to bear workers often reported poor health. The revised model incorporated an over-looked factor which served as a moderator and that is social support. In that social support greatly affected the relationship between the demands of the job and the stress experienced.

### **2.4 The Role Theories**

Basically, four types of role stressors, namely role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and work-family conflict, that are identified as common sources of work stress in the literature (Boyar et al., 2003; Cooper et al., 2001; Jackson and Schuler, 1985; Tubre and Collins, 2000). Role ambiguity occurs when an individual does not have clear information about the expectations of his or her role in the job or organization (Rizzo et al., 1970). As shown by

previous studies, higher levels of role ambiguity are related to lower job satisfaction, more job-related tension and anxiety, lower work commitment and involvement, lower job performance, and a greater propensity to leave the organization (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983; Jackson and Schuler, 1985). Clergy are likely to experience role ambiguity when their work role is not clearly defined and they need to perform diverse tasks and duties (Kuhne and Donaldson, 1995). As they work independently, clergy may not receive clear and sufficient information about their work role requirements and expected performance from the organization. Even in cases where roles are defined, the nature of the job of the pastor is so diverse that one barely knows where lines are crossed. Clergy task load, job description and background characteristics, such as specialized training and tenure, are various factors which lead to and are associated with role ambiguity.

Role conflict refers to the incompatibility in communicated expectations that impinge on perceived role performance (Rizzo et al., 1970). It exists when an employee faces incompatible expectations such that compliance with one expectation would make it difficult or impossible to effectively comply with the other expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). Similar to role ambiguity, role conflict was found to be associated with numerous undesirable consequences, including lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, and higher turnover intentions (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983; Jackson and Schuler, 1985). Role conflict is a problem for clergy because they need to interact with different groups of people, including congregation members with diverse backgrounds, members of the church council and clergy of other churches and denominations who make different expectations and demands on their time. They also need to perform a multiplicity of roles (Kay, 2000). When these role expectations are incongruent and conflicting, and clergy do not have sufficient time and resources to fulfill these role expectations, they are likely to experience role conflict.

Role overload refers to the sheer amount of work required and the time frame in which work must be completed (Cooper et al., 2001). It occurs when work roles require more time and effort than an individual has for them so that the roles cannot be performed adequately and comfortably (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Markham and Bonjean, 1996). Previous research has shown that role overload is related to higher levels of strain, anxiety and depression, as well as poor job performance (Cooper et al., 2001; Kushmir and Melamed, 1991). Role overload is an issue for clergy since they work an irregular schedule that involves unpaid overtime. They are expected to have high involvement in multiple work roles (Beck, 1998) and, thus, they are likely to suffer from role overload.

Work-family conflict is generally defined as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible or incongruous in some respect, whereby participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Work-family conflict has been neglected in previous stress research because work and family are often viewed as separate life domains. However, recent studies suggest that the interface of work and family produces stresses and strains for employees (Cooper et al., 2001; Frone et al., 1992a). Evidence also indicated that work-family conflict is associated with a lower level of job satisfaction and a higher propensity to leave the organization (Burke, 1988; Frone et al., 1992b; Wiley, 1987). Some job-related factors such as work involvement, hours of work, and job flexibility were found to affect the level of work-family conflict (Ngo and Lau, 1998).

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## 2.5 The Concept of Burnout

The concept was described originally by Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) as a stress reaction to stressors on the job. The concept is a reflection of the very subject being addressed by the study. A common definition is quoted as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity" (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996, p. 4). The definition highlights first that burnout isn't necessarily a physiological phenomenon. It is an emotional state brought about by an experience of prolonged high levels of stress in relation to an activity. Technically, burnout is specific to the performance of one's job. Burnout could occur in other areas of life but basically authors have linked burnout to work and career roles.

According to the theory of burnout as a process, authors such as Burisch (2006) contend that burnout does not occur overnight. Burnout, according to this theory is set off by excessive job demands and consequent inability to continuously invest energy when meeting the demands. The development of burnout usually begins at an early stage of emotional exhaustion. High levels of emotional exhaustion consequently lead to a withdrawal from the people or clients or patients or customers the employees work with and also from their job in general. Such a withdrawal results in depersonalized reactions to people and towards the job. Simply, as time goes on and the demands of one's job become subjectively overwhelming it triggers the burnout reaction and subjects become indifferent or disinterested in performing duties. Subjects may quit their jobs or stay on and perform either poorly or passively. The greatest danger of burnout of course is the abandonment of the responsibility however burnout may lead to a lackluster attitude towards work.

## 2.6 Biblical/Theological Basis – Stories of Burnout in the bible

Several places in the Bible deal with the theme of burnout. Even great leaders of the Old and New Testament experienced the crisis of stress and burnout in their ministry. Moses, Elijah and Paul's cases are good examples.

- *The story of Moses*

When Moses advanced to Canaan leading the Israelites, he had the authority of three powers: the legislature, the executive and the judicature. He led the battle during war, he presented the regulations and he mediated disputes. However, many of the Israelites had to wait for their order, and Moses was very tired of excessive business. Moses is an example of one who was not good at delegating power to others. Jethro, who watched this procedure, advised him to select officials over thousand, hundreds, fifties and tens. So Moses made the new appointed officials to judge the people, and he judged only the difficult cases. After that, the Israelites didn't have to wait long and Moses did not have to judge all the cases.

Also, Moses suffered from spiritual burnout because of grumbling and disobedience of the Israelites, which began in the early period of the Exodus. The Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh pursued them (Exodus 14:11) and they grumbled when they wanted to eat meat and bread (Exodus 16:3). They grumbled against Moses because they had no water in Rephidim (Exodus 17:3), and they grumbled again because the great descendants of Anak lived in the promised land (Number 14:2). They grumbled because only Moses and Aaron ruled over them (Number 16:3) and they grumbled that the Israelites were destroyed because of Moses and Aaron (Number 16:41).

When they grumbled against Moses in Kadesh, Moses couldn't endure it anymore. Therefore, Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff in spite of God's word to "speak to

that rock". Moses made this mistake because he expressed his anger. After all, because of Moses unholy behavior, God prohibited him from entering the land of Canaan.

- *The story of Elijah*

Elijah was a person who successfully achieved the goal of mission. First of all, he made a great victory over the prophets of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel by calling down fire from heaven to burn up the sacrifice. A long drought was finished by the prayer of Elijah. Furthermore, Elijah ran ahead of Ahab's chariot by running 12 miles from Mount Carmel to Jezreel. In spite of these miraculous achievements, he ran for his life hearing the threat of Jezebel. So he went into the dessert and wanted to die under broom tree, suffering from burnout. Especially, 1 King 19 shows us the facts that made him burnout: He went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors (1 King 19:4, NIV). There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too" (1 King 19:9-10, NIV). Ultimately, God reminded Elijah that he was not the only one left, that there were still seven thousand who had not worshipped Baal. However, at that stage, Elijah felt that he was the only one. He resented the fact that the Israelites had abandoned God. This bitterness drained away important emotional energy. Asking God to take his life with the complaint, "They are trying to kill me", he demonstrated his dissatisfaction and lack of trust concerning God's control over his life. All these feelings are likely to be experienced by individuals who feels burned out.

- *The story of Paul*

The great Apostle Paul confessed that he experienced the condition of burnout to abandon his ministry, losing the hope to live: We don't want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life (2 Corinthians 1:8 NIV). Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, and I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked (2 Corinthians 11:23-27 NIV). The apostle Paul experienced many sufferings on different fronts. There were the Jewish officials who had conspired against him because of his conversion and preaching to the Gentiles. There were the Christians who couldn't forget the memory of persecuting Jesus and his disciples. There were the Gentiles to deal with. All of these made him tired and burned out.

As stated above, many leaders in the Bible suffered from the crisis of burnout, and they did their best to overcome burnout. Accordingly, burnout is not a shameful experience because many of the spiritual leaders had experienced burnout to some degree.

## 2.7 Empirical Studies

Barnard and Curry (2011) concluded from analysis of previous studies that "Religious leaders often experience burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion and/or low satisfaction. Clergy with high emotional exhaustion feel drained and discouraged." The pair however conducted their own study on personality characteristics and their own interactions in the proposed model based on the conclusion they derived from the analysis. The study however concluded that even though different characteristics could account for variations in the burnout rates and levels only self-compassion as an individual characteristic had a direct significant influence on the fact the burnout experienced by clergy as a result of stress. We cannot however dismiss the role of these characteristics but they contribute the normal distribution of the sample group. The present study will not consider any of these possible personality factors however they are worthy to mention and could possibly inform a direction or discussion based on the results of the former.

Charlton et al. (2008) also conducted a study seminal to this particular study. The study examined Clergy Work-Related Psychological Health among clergy in the UK. The study conceptualized poor work-related psychological health in terms of high levels of negative affect in the absence of acceptable levels of positive affect. A random sample of 58 ministers of word and sacrament serving within the west midlands synod of the United Reformed Church in England completed an open-ended questionnaire. Content analysis highlighted the main themes recurring through these open-ended responses. The conclusion is drawn that ministers of word and sacrament within the United Reformed Church in England are exposed to a number of recurrent recognizable sources of stress. The study interestingly concluded clergy were experiencing high levels of stress but admitted that contrarily it also found satisfaction among the

same clergy experiencing the stress. The study however suffers some limitations which one may speculate to be the reason for the unexpected contradictions. One such is the fact that the study was organized by the church itself. Thus, clergy may have felt obliged to express satisfaction with the job to their current employer.

Beebe (2007) cited that in 1991, the Fuller Institute of Church Growth conducted a survey of 1000 pastors which showed that "50% of respondents had considered leaving the pastoral vocation during the previous three months [and] 70% had a lower self-image than when they began their professions". A similar survey by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reported 69% of its ministers as being overweight, 64% as having high blood pressure, and 13% as taking prescription antidepressants. Similarly, a 2005 survey of Presbyterian clergy had reported that occupational stress and burnout played a factor in 4 times as many ministers leaving the profession during the first five years of ministry, as compared with the 1970s. These studies among others highlight the threat of burnout and stress to clergy.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the design of the study and the mode of collecting data. It also describes the instruments used and the sample used for the study.

#### 3.2 Target Population

The study focused on ministers of the Global Evangelical Church in Ghana. The church officially accounts for 265 member clergy force. Thus the population under consideration is 265. However, the researcher planned to meet these clergy at an annual conference of Pastors and Spouses. The attendance of Pastors for the meeting was estimated at 215 which is the actual population from which the researcher had to sample.

#### 3.3 Sampling Size and Technique

A convenient sampling technique was adopted by approaching 215 ministers but only 150 ministers were willing and agreed to participate.

The sample size is based on the work of Watson (2001). Based on tables provided by Watson (2001); a .05 significance level and a possible variability of 80% - 20% is considered. The variability is informed by the fact that studies (Barnard & Curry, 2011; Beebe, 2007; Charlton et al.; 2008) have shown large proportions of clergy experiencing similar stress indicators therefore a low level of variability. However, the study posted a low response rate. One hundred and fifty

out of the 265 Pastors completed the questionnaire. They were made up of 123(82%) males and 27(18%) females. This represented the 82% responses rate.

This was a problem encountered by the researcher which may be due to the fact that the Pastors were very busy.

### **3.4 Material**

The Maslach Burnout Inventory was improvised and used to measure burnout among the clergy. Sources and levels of work stress were determined using the work stress inventory devised by Powell (2009) for the British Occupational Health and Safety Commission. Both scales were contained in a single questionnaire which also contained open-ended questions to explore other sources of clergy work related stress which may not have been documented by other studies.

### **3.5 Procedure**

Institutional approval was obtained from Ensign College of Public Health and then permission from the Global Evangelical Church Heard office. The study was restricted to Pastors who attended an annual, Pastors and Spouse New Year summit. The researcher aimed to recruit as many Pastors as possible. The Pastors were approached and the researcher explained the study to each one. Each Pastor who was willing to participate was given a questionnaire. Pastors were then allowed to take the questionnaires with them for some time. The details of each participant were noted by the researcher but not recorded in the study. This was necessary so that each participant could be traced when necessary. However, this method was not efficient enough as the response rate (%) for the study was relatively lower than expected.

The researcher collected as many completed questionnaires as possible and then the data from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS.

### 3.6 Scoring

Scoring for each scale was pre-determined by their individual keys since these scales were not formulated by the researcher. The burnout and stress scales both come with their own keys for scoring and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 RESULTS

#### 4.1 Demographic

This study seeks to assess the source of stress and the levels of stress and burnout among pastors at Global Evangelical church Ghana.

In all one hundred and fifty (150) pastors were recruited using structured questionnaire.

The respondents were made up of 123(82%) males and 27(18%) females Majority 147(98%) of the pastors had a congregation number of less than five hundred and only 3(2%) had a congregation more than five hundred. Majority 124 (82.7%) of the respondents were district pastors. Result further showed that about 124(83%) were district pastor; 25(17%) of them were parish pastors and the only one (1) respondent was a regional administrator. The result also shows that all the respondents were married. The mean age of the respondents was 46.90 years with a standard deviation of 7.57years. The youngest respondent was 34 years and the oldest was 61 years. Table1. All the respondents had worked as pastors for a mean number of years of 13.87 with a standard deviation of 6.59. Their years of work ranged between 1-24 years.

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**Table1. Demographic Information of the Participants (n=150)**

Variables	Categories	Number (%)
Gender	Male	123(82.0)
	Female	27(18.0)
Marital status	Married	150(100)
	Single	-
	Divorce	-
Jurisdiction	District Pastor	124(82.7)
	Parish Pastor	26(17.3)
Membership strength of congregation	Less than 500	140(98.0)
	Above 500	3(2.0)
Average Years Of services	13.9years(SD=6.59)	
Age	Mean 46.9 (SD =7.57) Youngest Age= 34years      Oldest Age=61years	

Source: Field data (2017)

#### 4.2 Stress and Burnout

Respondents rated eight (8) possible sources of stress experienced. A higher mean score for a statement indicates greater importance. The results shows that majority (85%) of the respondents agreed that “Multiplicity of roles” with a mean score of 4.58 and a standard deviation of  $\pm 1.03$ . This is followed by “High expectation of church congregation (78.3%) with a mean of 4.31 and standard deviation of  $\pm 1.08$ . About 75.8% and 74.2 of the respondents agreed to “Deficient social support” and “Poor-work home boundaries” respectively. However, it was evident from the mean score of 1.96, 2.72, 2.41 and 2.11 with respective standard deviation of  $\pm 1.03$ ,  $\pm 1.13$ ,  $\pm 1.31$  and  $\pm 1.23$  that respondents expressed disagreement opinion about these four indicators,

“Being basically insecure, lonely and too serious”, “Problems with self-esteem”, “Time management problems”, and “Financial pressure” as sources of stress experienced.

**Table 2. Response to Sources of Work**

<i>Variables</i>	SA/A (%)	U (%)	SD/D (%)	Mode	Mean/Std.
Financial pressure	26.67	20.83	52.5	Dissatisfied	2.11/1.23
Multiplicity of roles	85	5.83	9.17	Strongly Agree	4.58/1.03
High expectation of church congregation	78.33	8.33	13.33	Agreed	4.31/1.08
Time management problems	44.17	7.5	49.17	Disagree	2.41/1.31
Poor-work home boundaries	74.17	8.33	17.5	Agreed	3.98/1.15
Problems with self esteem	14.14	13.33	72.5	Disagree	2.72/1.13
Deficient social support	75.83	8.33	15.83	Agree	4.12/1.14
Being basically insecure, lonely and too serious	11.67	7.5	80.83	Strongly Disagree	1.96/1.03

*Source: Field data (2017). With the use of a five-point Likert scale, with one as “strongly disagree” and five as “strongly agree”*

### 4.3 Stress Level

According to the result, majority (46.7%) of the respondents had a medium level of stress whiles 32% had a low level of stress, and 21.3% had a high level of stress. (Table 3)

**Table3. Respondents Level Of Stress**

Variables	Frequency	%
Low	48	32
Medium	70	46.7
High	32	21.3
Total	150	100

*Source: Field data (2017)*

#### 4.4 Level of Burnout

The result also shows that majority (47.3%) of the respondent said they had a low level of burnout. While 42.0% said they had a medium level of burnout. And 10.7% said they had a high level of burnout.

**Table4. Respondents Level of Burnout**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Low	71	47.3
Medium	63	42
High	16	10.7
Total	150	100

*Source: Field data (2017)*

#### 4.5 Respondents Level of Satisfaction

Majority (54%) of the respondents were satisfied whiles about 28% were very satisfied; and the rest (18%) were dissatisfied.(Figure1)

Figure1. Respondents Level of Satisfaction



#### 4.6 Testing Hypothesis

Hypothesis tested:

*H1: Clergy who experience higher levels of stress will experience higher levels of burnout*

*H2: Clergy who experience stress will have low satisfaction with their jobs*

The result represented by Table.5 shows the relationship between job stress levels and burnout level of the respondents. The result shows that there was a strong relationship between low level stress and low level burnout ( $r=0.71$ ;  $p=0.001$ ) and a very weak relationship between low level stress and medium burnout ( $r=0.17$ ,  $p=0.093$ ). Also, there was a very weak relationship between low level stress and high level burnout ( $r=0.02$ ,  $p=0.74$ ). The results also shows a weak relationship between medium level stress and low level burnout ( $r=0.25$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Again there was a positive relationship between medium level stress and medium level burnout. There was also, a medium correlation between medium level stress and high level burnout ( $r=0.61$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Furthermore, a negative relationship between high level stress and low level burnout ( $r=-0.49$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) was observed. In addition there was medium relationship between high level

stress and medium level burnout ( $r=0.64, p=0.001$ ). Finally, there was a significant associate between high leave stress and high level burnout ( $r= 0.85, p<0.01$ ).

**Table5. Relationship between Job Stress Level and Burnout Level**

Variables	Burnout					
	Low		Medium		High	
Stress	R	P	R	P	R	P
Low	0.71	0.001	0.17	0.093	0.02	0.74
Medium	0.25	0	0.52	0.001	0.61	0.001
High	-0.49	0.001	0.64	0.001	0.83	0.001

$p<0.05, p<0.01, p\leq0.001$

$r=0.00-0.025$  (very weak),  $r=0.26-0.49$  (weak),  $r=0.50-0.69$  (medium),  $r=0.70-0.89$  (high),  $r=0.90-1.0$  (very high)

#### 4.7 Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

The results shows no significant relationship between stress and job satisfaction of the respondents ( $r=0.302, p=0.195$ ).

**Table 6: Relationship Between Job Stress And Job Satisfaction**

Experienced Stress	Job Satisfaction	
	Pearson Correlation	0.302
Sig. (2 tailed)	0.195	
N	150	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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## Sources of Stress

### **In your own words, how will you explain stress?**

- It is a state of going through some form of pressure or difficulties. According to 36 years district pastor.
- It is a physical, spiritual and emotional, mental condition when one becomes use up. By 46 years district pastor.
- A stress could be going through a difficult situation that becomes a burden in your life. by 44 years district pastor.
- Stress is being tired and frustrated by issues that affecting your personal life and ministry. According to 57 years parish pastor.

### **In your own words, could you list some of the aspects of life as a Pastor of the church and the work in the ministry that may give you stress?**

- Members over dependence on me, the size of my congregation or districts and Members not caring for my needs According to a 44years district pastor.
- Organization of crusades(Teaching and ministration) Half night programmes marking of Examination scripts. According to a 46 years district pastor.
- Sitting to counsel people, sitting at prolong session meeting and travelling to meetings every month. According to 36 years district pastor.

In your own words what are the major sources of stress that you have faced throughout the year?

- Thinking about church projects, and constantly coming into contact with neglected Children
- Teaching and ministry work, visiting church members and the aged.
- Lack of money, work overload and family problems
- Transfers from one place to another within one or two years.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter looked at an overview of the research problem and methodology, summary of major findings.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate and assess sources and levels of stress and burnout among clergy of the Global Evangelical Church, Ghana. The design used was a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The sample size was 150 participants, these included Pastors who attended an annual, Pastors and Spouse New Year summit. Convenience sampling technique was adopted for selecting the samples using a structured questionnaire consisting of four research questions and was analyzed.

Concerning stress experienced by the clergy, "Multiplicity of roles", "High expectation of church congregation", "Deficient social support", and "Poor-work home boundaries" were unanimously stated as the sources of stress. However, respondents expressed disagreement opinion about "Being insecure, lonely and too serious", "Problems with self-esteem", "Time management problems", and "Financial pressure" as sources of stress. The study also discovered that about 32% of the clergy had a low level of stress, while about 47% had a medium level of stress. However, about 21% had a high level of stress. Furthermore, about 47% of them had a low level of burnout, while 42% had a medium level of burnout. Again, about 11% had a high level of burnout. The result also shows that, about 28% of them were very satisfied; 54% were satisfied and the rest (18%) were not satisfied.

The study also established a strong relationship between low level stress and low level burnout ( $r=0.71$ ;  $p=0.001$ ) and a very weak correlation between the same low level stress and medium burnout ( $r=0.17$ ,  $p=0.093$ ). Also, a very weak relationship was established between low level stress and high level burnout ( $r=0.02$ ,  $p=0.74$ ). The analysis further established a weak relationship between medium level stress and low level burnout ( $r=0.25$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and a medium relationship between medium level stress and medium level burnout. Also, a medium relationship between medium level stress and high level burnout ( $r=0.61$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Furthermore, a negative relationship between high level stress and low level burnout ( $r=-0.49$ ,  $p=0.001$ ); and a medium relationship between high level stress and medium level burnout ( $r=0.64$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Finally, a strong relationship was established between high level stress and high level burnout ( $r=0.83$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). Finally, findings established that there is no significant relationship was obtained between stress and job satisfaction of clergy ( $r=0.302$ ,  $p=0.195$ ). The findings made so far from the study suggest several important conclusions.

Firstly, it was apparent from the findings that, "Multiplicity of roles", "High expectation of church congregation", "Deficient social support", and "Poor-work home boundaries" are the source of stress experienced by the clergy of the Global Evangelical Church.

Secondly, the study found that majority of the clergy had a medium level of stress and also majority of the clergy had a low level of burnout. Furthermore, this study has established that, majority of the clergy were satisfied with their job irrespective of their stress and burnout level.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Facilities should be provided at every parish and district heads for physical exercises and relaxation to release tension in clergy. Furthermore, the Clergy should also be assisted to improve on their stress management abilities. This can be done by organizing seminars for the clergy to enhance their emotions management abilities.
- Working conditions should be improved in order to reduce their job stress levels and burnout (less hours of work, longer annual leave), and that psychological and emotional support is provided to all clergy, in particular those experiencing high level of stress and burnout.
- Delegate wisely, Relate well with their wife and children.

Future studies as previously mentioned will benefit greatly from expanding the sample size used in this study. Another recommendation also mentioned is that the study could have benefited from multiple populations. Future studies could expand their focus to more than a single church. Finally, future studies could incorporate qualitative method to identify various stressors and areas of stress for clergy.

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## Appendices

### Appendix1. The consent Form

I am a student of the Ensign College of Public Health Kpong Ghana. I am conducting a study on "Assessing the sources of stress, levels of stress and burnout among Pastors". This questionnaire seeks to assess stress, burnout and the sources of stress for Pastors of the church.

All information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please be sincere with all your responses to the questions.

Do not write your name.

Any further clarification needed could be sought from the researcher through

[ruthatsagli@st.ensign.edu.gh](mailto:ruthatsagli@st.ensign.edu.gh) (0243132051).

Thank you for your participation

Name of Researcher: Ruth Eyra Atsagli

## Appendix2. The Questionnaire

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

i. Sex:                      Male [    ]                      Female [    ]

ii. Age...

iii. Marital status:      Single [    ]                      Married [    ]                      Divorced [    ]

iv. How many Years have you served as a Pastor of the church?

.....

v. What is the approximate membership strength of the congregation?

Below 500 [    ]                      500 -1000 members [    ]                      above 1000 [    ]

vi. Please indicate jurisdiction.

District Pastor [    ]                      Parish Pastor [    ]

Other [    ], Specify.....

SECTION A

Question	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I feel emotionally drained by my work							
2. Working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort							
3. I feel like my work is breaking me down							
4. I feel frustrated by my work							
5. I feel I work too hard at my job							
6. It stresses me too much to work in direct contact with people							
7. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope							

Question	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I feel I look at certain members who come to me as just members; I don't take their issues personally.							
9. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work.							
10. I have the impression that my congregation makes me responsible for some of their problems.							
11. I am at the end of my patience at the end of my work day.							

12.	I feel I really don't care about what happens to some my congregation members.							
13.	Since I started I feel I have become more insensitive to people and members of the church							
14.	I'm afraid that this job is making me uncaring.							

Questions	Never	A few times a year	Once a month	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Everyday
Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	I feel I accomplish many worthwhile things in this job.						
16.	I feel full of energy						
17.	I am easily able to understand what my congregation members who come to me feel.						
18.	I feel I take care of my members problems very effectively.						
19.	In my work, I handle emotional problems very calmly. .						
20.	Through my work, I feel that I have a very positive influence on people.						
21.	I am easily able to create a relaxed atmosphere with my church members						
22.	I feel refreshed when I have been close to my members at the congregation.						

## SECTION B

The following questions ask about your feelings and thoughts during THE PAST MONTH. In each question, you will be asked HOW OFTEN you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are small differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question.

NOTE: the best approach is to answer fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the exact number of times you felt a particular way, but tell me the answer that in general seems the best.

Questions	Never	almost	Sometimes	Fairly often	Very often
Score	0	1	2	3	6
23. In the past months, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?					
24. In the past month, how often have you felt unable to control the important things in your life					
25. In the past month, how often have you felt nervous or stressed?					
26. In the past, month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle personal problems?					
27. In the past month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?					
28. In the past month, how often have you found					

	that you could not cope with all the things you had to do?					
29.	In the past month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?					
30.	In the past month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?					
31.	In the past month, how often have you been angry because of things that happened that was outside of your control?					
32.	In the past month, how often have you felt that difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?					

**SECTION C:**

Please read the question and provide the answer you feel best describes your position. You can seek clarification if needed.

33. In your own words, how will you explain stress?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

34. In your own words, could you list some of the aspects of life as a Pastor of the church and the work in the ministry that may give you stress?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

35. In your own words what are the major sources of stress that you have faced throughout the year?

a) .....  
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.....  
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b) .....

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c) .....

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d) .....

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