

**Endure Hardship: Suffering in the Ministry,
Expectations of Pastoral Trainees in the Reformed
Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa**

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Declaration

I, Geoffrey Mark Gertzen (student number 7471) do hereby declare that the title (Endure Hardship: Suffering in the Ministry Expectations of Pastoral Trainees in the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa) submitted in partial completion of the Master in Theology is my own work and has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another university or for another qualification.

Geoffrey Mark Gertzen

Date

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Abstract

Many pastors do not complete a lifetime of ministry. This research seeks to contribute to the discussion that exists around the reasons for this phenomenon. It attempted to understand the disconnect that exists between the New Testament's emphasis on suffering and its place in the thinking, attitudes and expectations of pastoral trainees and trainers in the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH-SA).

The research began with a theological reflection on the place of suffering in the teaching of Jesus and the thought of the New Testament writers. Suffering was found to permeate the New Testament understanding of the Christian life and especially the task of pastoral ministry. Suffering is built into the call of discipleship and culminates in the Pauline charge to Timothy to endure hardship.

The research then reviewed the literature that seeks to understand the problem of pastors leaving ministry. The factors that predominate are summarised under the four headings of faith, character, conflict and expectations. Amongst the expectations of pastors is their own personal theodicy – their expectations with respect to evil and suffering. The literature was reviewed on the problem of suffering, focusing in on the suffering that is experienced by Christians as Christians.

The research then completed an analysis of the present situation, seeking to understand the expectations and attitudes that are prevalent in the current trainees for gospel ministry within REACH-SA who are trained at George Whitefield College situated in Cape Town, South Africa. The research also surveyed the experience of suffering as well as the attitudes towards suffering present in the faculty at GWC. The research found that students had a significant expectation of suffering but over-emphasised their own ability to endure it. Students were also found to have financial expectations that differed

significantly from the present reality within REACH-SA. The faculty were found to have some experience of suffering and an understanding that suffering is a significant Biblical theme but they did not to teach extensively on this theme.

Finally, some practical suggestions and strategic action are proposed to improve the present situation in order to better prepare trainees to endure hardship.

Key Words

Suffering

Hardship

Discipleship

Pastoral Theology

Theodicy

Ministry Training

Financial Expectations

Pastoral Endurance

Church of England in South Africa (CESA)

Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH-SA)

George Whitefield College (GWC)

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

Pastoral ministry is a complex and multi-faceted task. For its successful undertaking it requires immense skill in a vast number of areas. Pastors are required to be proficient in theology, public-speaking, finance, leadership, marketing, music and counselling. The pastor needs skills in the mobilisation, organisation and development of volunteers. The pastor walks the tightrope of how to be prophetic to a group of people whose gifts pay the living of the pastor; how to speak into a society that is increasingly hostile to revealed truth, how to be relevant in a world that is constantly and dramatically shifting while always seeking to be faithful to God (Hoge 2005:3-9).

In the midst of this complex task the pastor deals with the sinfulness and hypocrisy resident within his own heart.¹ The pastor constantly speaks on matters that she herself has not mastered. In addition the pastor must navigate the shifting sands of denominational and cultural expectations. The pastor's peers hold him accountable and expect him to be a success; but the question of what constitutes this success is often difficult to define.

The vision for successful pastoral ministry has undergone significant changes over the centuries. Chrysostom's vision of ministry was priestly and ascetic, this was significantly different from the monastic view of the medieval period and the reformation vision of the pastor as chiefly the proclaimer of God's word and sacraments. In recent years the pastor has been regarded as liberator, political agitator and resident activist (De Gruchy 1986:17, Willimon

¹ For the purposes of this paper I have alternated between masculine and feminine pronouns. The author holds a Complementarian view of men and women in pastoral ministry, and affirms that there are appropriate though different pastoral ministries for both men and women.

2002:56f), while today the pastor is often seen as a celebrity or the CEO of a mega-corporation. It is little wonder then that so many pastors find themselves confused, torn, anxious, stressed and uncertain. In the midst of this confusion many do not complete the course of a lifetime of pastoral ministry. This research attempts to contribute to the discussion that exists around the reasons for this phenomenon. It aims to contribute to the growing body of literature that tries to understand why pastors leave pastoral ministry as well as trying to aid in preventing this from happening. The author concurs with the assertion made by the Pulpit and Pew Project at Duke University that the outflow is partly preventable and that reducing it would be beneficial for the kingdom of God (Hoge 2005:xi).

1.2. Specific Background for this Research Project

The researcher is an ordained minister in the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH-SA)². He has been involved in the recruitment and training of ministers for a significant period of his pastoral ministry. He is also a part-time lecturer in homiletics at George Whitefield College, located in Muizenberg in Cape Town. George Whitefield College is the theological training college of REACH-SA.

REACH - SA has a perceived problem in retaining trained pastoral workers. The denomination trains a significant number of men and women for ministry (mostly through George Whitefield College although not exclusively) but the attrition rate is substantial. Many of those trained leave full-time, paid pastoral ministry within a short period of time after completing their studies in order to pursue other ventures. Others remain longer but do not complete a lifetime of ministry. The reasons that are given for leaving appear to be complex and diverse. This research sought to understand one of the reasons that may contribute to this problem. This research attempted to better understand the place of suffering in the ministry expectations of trainees. As this is better

² REACH-SA was formerly called the Church of England in South Africa (CESA).

understood the hope was that trainees will be better equipped for long term service in ministry.

The New Testament description of the Christian life is that it is soaked in suffering both for the ordinary Christian and those in leadership. Suffering is constantly addressed in the teaching of Jesus (Matt 10:17; 16:24; 24:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 6:22; 9:58; 12:12) and made explicit when he demands of his followers a life that is cruciform in character (Gorman 2001:155f) (Matt 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). Hays, echoes this when he writes (quoted in Osmer 2008:186),

“The *norm* for discipleship is defined by the cross. Jesus own obedience, interpreted as servanthood is the singular pattern for faithfulness.”

Suffering is also addressed in the life and teaching of the Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1:6; 3:17; 5:1), in the book of Hebrews (10:32;12:7), in Revelation (2,3 et al) and in the life and teaching of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 1:23;2 Cor 1; Gal 5:11; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24; 2:1; 1 Thes 1:6; 2 Thes 1:4-6). The Pauline testimony culminates in a unique and dominant exhortation to Timothy in Paul’s final letter to ‘endure suffering’. So strong is this theme in 2 Timothy that Mounce (2000:cxvii, 474) suggests that the theme of suffering is woven throughout the epistle (2 Tim 1:8; 2:3; 4:5) and that it ties the entire epistle together. Timothy, Paul’s charge, is called to endure suffering as an integral aspect of his calling. The questions explored by this research were whether trainees in REACH-SA understand the centrality of suffering in the Christian life as well as within pastoral ministry, and were they being prepared for the many ways in which suffering will affect the life of the Christian that is engaged in gospel ministry?

1.3. Research Problem

Primary Research Question

What are the expectations regarding suffering in gospel ministry amongst trainees in the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa?

This research problem was subdivided into the following sub-questions:-

1. How do the scriptures understand the place of suffering in the cause of the gospel (Theological reflection on preferred scenario)?
2. What causes pastors to leave ministry? How does a pastor's expectation of suffering influence their ability to endure in ministry (Existing theory on present situation)?
3. What expectations and attitudes do trainees for gospel ministry have regarding suffering (Situational analysis of present situation)?
4. What experience of suffering and what attitudes towards suffering, do those training others in long term gospel ministry have (Situational analysis of present situation)?
5. What would aid trainees to better anticipate and endure suffering (Strategic action and practical suggestions)?

1.4. Definitions

The word suffering can encompass a very broad range of experiences. It is necessary at this point to define exactly what is meant by the word suffering. It is not the place of this research to seek to explore that particular kind of suffering which is experienced by humans, by virtue of their experience of being human. As citizens of the world under the curse of Genesis 3, all people experience the pain, frustration, futility and death which are now interwoven into the fabric of life on the earth. This research however is not concerned with this aspect of the human experience. Instead it sought to explore that suffering which is distinct and unique to Christians as Christians. This research sought to explore that suffering which is granted to Christians when they are included in the people of God (Phil 1:29) and specifically that suffering which is granted to the leadership of the Christian church. It is suffering as a result of being a disciple of Christ (John 16:33). It is suffering for the gospel (2 Tim 1:8). It is suffering as a soldier for Christ (2 Tim 2:3). It is that hardship which comes from discharging the duties of ministry (2 Tim 4:5).

In the case of leaders in the church this suffering will include persecution for presenting the gospel of Christ (Phil 1:13). It will include societal rejection and

scorn as a result of a prophetic voice (John 15:18-25). It will include financial hardship, pressure on the minister's family and overwork. It will include hidden and unrealistic expectations by people, potential burnout, conflict in the local church, discouragement, loneliness and isolation (Hoge 2005:36,37). It is the suffering that comes from working in and amongst the messy people of God (Willimon 2002:316-328). It will include conflict with people over sin as well as the conflict that flows out of sin. This suffering will often be multi-faceted and sometimes difficult to define. It is the suffering that is specifically and uniquely granted to those that are disciples of Christ.

1.5. Objectives

The objective of this research was to begin a dialogue between the Biblical texts and the ministry assumptions that were thought to be present in the minds of trainees (and trainers) for pastoral ministry in REACH-SA. The study aimed to explore and understand the theme of suffering as it relates to pastoral ministry. It then sought to understand what attitudes and expectations pastoral trainees in REACH-SA bring with them as they embark on training for full time paid ministry. By questioning a group of trainees, the research sought to discover what attitudes and expectations they have of ministry and how prepared they are to suffer in the cause of Christ. This study also aimed to bring some understanding of how deeply the theme of suffering influences those training ministry trainees. It did this by surveying and questioning the full time faculty at George Whitefield College in order to better understand whether suffering is integrated into their areas of teaching. The research sought to understand how much help students are given in integrating the expectation of suffering into their own personal worldviews and ministry expectations. It also sought to explore whether the faculty's teaching contains any help in preparing students to embrace and endure suffering. Finally this research has tried to propose some solutions to help trainees and those presently in ministry to cope with suffering and endure it better for the advance of the gospel.

1.6. Purpose

The purpose of this research was to attempt to understand the disconnect that exists between the Bible's emphasis on suffering and its place in the thinking, attitudes and expectations of pastoral trainees and trainers in REACH-SA. It is hoped to contribute to the dialogue that aims to better understand the importance of a right view of suffering for long term perseverance in pastoral ministry. The research also hoped to contribute to the process of better training gospel workers with a Biblical worldview and Biblical ministry expectations, challenging in them their sub-biblical presuppositions. Enormous sums of money are spent on the training of gospel workers and it is hoped that this research will aid trainees so that they can better last the course and complete a lifetime of gospel ministry. Finally, it is hoped that this research will also serve to encourage those whose experience of gospel ministry involves constant struggle and suffering.

1.7. Research Design and Methodology

The researcher has used the LIM model developed by Cowan and described by Smith (2008:205) for the purposes of this research. Having identified the research problem and its sub-questions the researcher undertook a survey of the key scriptural texts that speak into the place of suffering in pastoral ministry. This was done in order to frame the preferred scenario (Smith 2008:208). The researcher holds to an evangelical position on the inspiration, authority and sufficiency of the scriptures as described in articles 6 and 7 of the 39 Articles of Faith of the Anglican Church. This is summarised in the SATS statement of faith (www.satsonline.org).

“We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their original writing as fully inspired of God and accept them as the supreme and final authority for faith and life.”

The researcher examined these scriptures in order to attempt to develop the theological understanding necessary to underpin a theological model for

better praxis which it is hoped can then aid in transforming the existing situation towards the preferred scenario.

The second component of the LIM model is a description and analysis of the present situation (Smith 2007:207). In order to achieve this, *firstly* a literature review was undertaken in order to understand the present research into the problem of pastors leaving ministry. The literature was also reviewed on the problem of how the expectation of suffering will influence the ability of pastors to endure. *Secondly*, in order to understand the present situation a questionnaire was designed to ascertain the attitudes and expectations of the fulltime, undergraduate student body at George Whitefield College. This questionnaire was used to analyse the underlying attitudes prevalent in the ministry expectations of these trainees for gospel ministry. A second questionnaire was designed to survey the full-time teaching faculty at George Whitefield College in order to gain an understanding of the place of suffering in their attitudes and experience; as well as attempting to understand whether suffering is integrated into their teaching.

Finally, the researcher has attempted to recommend some practical responses aimed at helping to transform the existing situation and moving it towards the preferred scenario.

1.8. Hypothesis

The researcher's initial hypothesis was that trainees had little conscious understanding and expectation of the place of suffering in gospel ministry. It was thought that their expectations of ministry in REACH-SA are often romantic and unrealistic; and might possibly even be described as middle-class and suburban. It was thought that even trainees that come from disadvantaged, impoverished, township and rural communities have an expectation of ministry as providing a comfortable middle-class life. It was thought that trainees expect that ministry will provide them with a settled and regular career income and as a result they give little thought to managing their own expectations as well as those of their families. It was surmised that they underestimate the immensity of suffering and the normal place of

suffering in ministry and are thus often deeply surprised and hurt when suffering and hardship comes: When this suffering does come they often abandon their calling because they are not adequately prepared and supported to endure it. It was also surmised that little attention is given to this matter in the teaching preparation given by the faculty to trainees at George Whitefield College.

Chapter 2

A Biblical Survey of Suffering in Pastoral Ministry

2.1. Introduction

This chapter contains a survey of some of the key scriptural texts on the matter of suffering as it pertains to pastoral ministry. This survey was done in order to better understand the place of suffering in the life of the Christian. It was also done to answer the first research sub-question as to how the scriptures understand the place of suffering in the cause of the gospel and develop a theological framework for a preferred future scenario.³

2.2. Jesus the Christ

The earliest Christians spoke of a man. Their significant news was of the arrival of the man Jesus of Nazareth (Seccombe 2002:xviii). The apostle Peter in his first public declaration (Acts 2:22) spoke of Jesus the man, who was accredited by God to them. But their proclamation was not simply a pronouncement regarding the birth and life of Jesus instead they spoke of him as the Christ. Their pronouncement was a declaration of his humanity as well as his Messiahship. They declared Jesus to be the anointed king of the world. They spoke of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, as the one who sits on the throne of David (Acts 2:36). They declared him to be the Lord, the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth to whom every knee would bow and every tongue confess (Phil 2:10). Their declaration spoke of him not simply as a human man but as the very Son of God (Matt 16:16, John 1:1; 11:27). The early church proclaimed Jesus to be in the form of God (Phil 2:6) - to be that which truly and completely expressed the being of God (O'Brien 1991: 210). They spoke of Jesus as the radiance of the glory of God and the heir of all things (Heb 1:3). They

³ Due to the limitations of a mini-thesis the researcher has not attempted an in-depth, detailed exposition of many of the texts involved (Smith 2008:209) but simply surveyed them to provide a framework for the preferred scenario.

proclaimed him to be the pre-existent Logos and the origin of all things (John 1:1) (Carson 1991:111). They declared him to be the creator and sustainer of the universe (John 1:3; Heb 1:3).

The apostle Paul in writing to the Colossian church said (Col 1:18),

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.”⁴

The early Christian church declared Jesus to be the author and agent of life (John 1:4). They declared him to be the fulfilment and culmination of the plans and promises of God (2 Cor 1:20). They declared him to be the goal and end of all things (Heb 1:1) (Goldsworthy 1981:87). And they declared that this Jesus is the present, sovereign ruler of the world – seated at the right hand of God himself (Acts 2:33, Eph 1:20; Heb 8:1; 1 Pet 3:22).

2.3. Jesus, Crucified and Risen

The declaration of Jesus by the early church was however not simply of him as Lord and king it also contained another essential element; central to their proclamation was the shocking and counter-cultural news that Jesus the Messiah was a crucified and suffering servant. This revolutionary announcement was prefigured in the prophets (Is 52,53) and declared by Jesus himself. He taught them repeatedly (Matt 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33; 9:30; 10:32,33) that he had come to suffer, be mocked, be rejected and killed. It was unpopular news that they did not initially want to appropriate. Mark's gospel contains three separate occasions where Jesus teaches his disciples that he is the king who must suffer and die (Chester 2009:93-99). On these occasions they see only dimly (Mark 8), they fail to listen (Mark 9) and instead they seek personal prestige and glory (Mark 10). The lesson is hard learnt, but when it is learnt it becomes integral and central to the early church's proclamation.

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV) (2007).

2.3.1. Peter

The apostle Peter spoke repeatedly of Jesus as the crucified one. His declaration of Jesus the Messiah was centred on the news that Jesus was the crucified Messiah who rose again to life. As Peter spoke at Pentecost, he spoke of Jesus crucified and killed (Acts 2:23). He spoke of this dead Jesus who was then raised again to life by God (Acts 2:24f). When Peter speaks to the crowd assembled at the healing of the beggar, he speaks of Jesus the author of life killed and then raised (Acts 3:15). In speaking to the Council shortly afterwards he again speaks of Jesus Christ crucified (Acts 4:10) whom God raised.

The apostle Peter summarised the content of his message in his first epistle when he said (1 Pet 2:24),

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.”

2.3.2. Paul

The Pauline witness was also centred on Jesus as crucified Messiah, raised to life (Acts 13:48, 17:31; 26:23). The Pauline message was founded on personal experience, Paul met the crucified and risen Jesus on the Damascus Road (Acts 9). This meeting transformed his life and defined his message. Paul's message was the crucified Christ (Stanton 2003:177; 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2; Gal 6:14).⁵ The central argument of the letter to the Romans is built around God's saving love being shown in (Rom 3:24,25),

“Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood.”

The apostle reminds the Corinthians of the essence of the gospel he preached and by which they were saved when he said (1 Cor 15:3,4),

⁵ There is much discussion on the boundaries and parameters of Pauline authorship (see for example Dunn 1998:13-19; Gorman 2004:87-91). The author holds the view that Paul is responsible for the letters that carry his name. This in no way excludes the possibility of an amanuensis contributing to the composition; influencing the vocabulary used and perhaps even contributing to the theological development of some of the thirteen letters that carry the apostle's name.

“Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared...”

As the apostle came to the end of his life, he summarised the essence of his message, when he urged his charge Timothy to (2 Tim 2:8),

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel.”

Dunn summarises Pauline theology as centred on the cross and resurrection of Jesus when he says (1998:208),

“There can be no doubt as to where the centre of gravity of Paul’s theology is to be found. It lies in the death and resurrection of Jesus.”

Gorman echoes this when he says (2001:371)

“Cruciformity is the all-encompassing, integrating narrative reality of Paul’s life and thought, expressed and experienced in every dimension of his being...Cruciformity is, in sum what Paul is all about, and what the communities of the Messiah that he founded and/or nurtured were also all about...” (emphasis in original).

2.3.3. Hebrews⁶

Christ crucified and raised was not only the message of the apostles Paul and Peter, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of the blood of Christ offered to God to purify our consciences (Heb 9:14). He speaks of Christ being offered once to bear the sins of many (Heb 9:28) and Christ’s superior sacrifice (Heb 10). The

⁶ The authorship of Hebrews is a much disputed matter. For a discussion of the matter see Ellingworth (1993:3-21) and Lane (1991:xlvi-li). This writer is content with Lane’s conclusion (1991:xlix) that the identity of the author cannot be established with any degree of certainty.

death of Jesus is central to the writer's argument about the superiority of Jesus. But Jesus is to the writer to the Hebrews not simply a dead Messiah he is also the living one who is able to intercede forever (Heb 7:24, 10:12, 10:21, 12:2).

2.3.4. John

The apostle John also centres his message on Jesus the crucified, messianic king. The trial of Jesus before Pilate begins with the question (John 18:33), "Are you the king of the Jews?" and ends with Jesus being flogged and handed over to be crucified, killed and buried (John 19). The author testifies to being one of the first into the empty tomb and being one of the first to believe that Jesus was risen (John 20:8).

The Revelation of John introduces Jesus (Rev 1:5) as,

"The firstborn of the dead."

Jesus is described as the dead/living one (Rev 1:1:17), the lion/lamb (Rev 4,5), the rider on the white horse whose robe is dipped in blood (Rev 19:13) and who will return to culminate human history.

This brief and incomplete survey demonstrates that the Christian message is fundamentally of Jesus the man, the Messiah king, crucified and raised. The Christian message is cruciform (Gorman 2001:2) or crucicentric (Tidball:2001:24). The cross is the essence of the Christian religion. If you remove the cross you no longer have Christianity. The cross is the main point, the substance and the essence of Christianity (Stott 1986:44). The early church saw the cross as the crux of history. The cruciform shaped life of Christ shapes and defines the mission of God in the world; and the cross is the pattern and focal point for the apostolic message (Amundsen 1988).

Kung (1976:409,410) said that the cross is,

“The distinguishing feature of Christianity as opposed to the ancient world religions and the modern humanisms...is quite literally... “this Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ *crucified*.””

Lloyd Jones (1986:18) concurs,

“The preaching of the cross, the preaching of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross is the very heart and centre of the Christian gospel and the Christian message.”

This message of a crucified Messiah king is a fundamentally counter-cultural declaration however. Crucifixion was first century Rome’s pervasive and sinister instrument of power and control (Gorman 2001:5). To be crucified was to experience the most brutal and humiliating method of execution designed by humanity. Crucifixion was a terrifying, disgusting, horrifying and shamefully delayed death which resulted in the maximum possible pain for the victim (Penner 2004:137, Stott 1986:23). It was to be shamed and tortured as a criminal and as an enemy of the state (Stott 1986:20, Lloyd Jones 1986:19). To be crucified in the Jewish mind was to be cursed and rejected by God (Deut 21:23). It was inherently absurd and offensive to declare that God’s Son could have been nailed to a cross. It was a stumbling block and foolishness (1 Cor 1:23). It was in the ancient world a ludicrous idea to make a political criminal and his cross the central element of your declaration, the focus of human devotion and the model for life in the world (Gorman 2001:5). But despite the horror and offense of the cross the church has always regarded Christ crucified and risen as the central element to its declaration.

The question that needs to be considered at this point is why the cross was central to the church’s proclamation? Why does the church, ‘cling to the old rugged cross’ (Stott 1986:43) and insist on its centrality despite its horror, shame and offense? Why has the central declaration of the church over the centuries remained, ‘Jesus the Christ, crucified and risen’?

At least two major reasons present themselves in answer to this question.

2.4. The Cross – Displays the Character and Plan of God

The church has declared Jesus crucified and risen because the cross displays the character and plan of God (Gorman 2001:18). The message of Christianity is the message of a God who continues to love a rebellious and sinful world (John 3:16). It is the message of a God who remains consistently committed to an adulterous and wayward wife (Ezek 16; Hos 1). It is the message of a God who is lavish in mercy, steadfast in love and whose patience is long and enduring so that he is consistently concerned for the welfare of humanity. In the actions of the cross, God is revealed as a God who loves humankind and this love is displayed in the heavenly places (Eph 3:10) by what God was willing to suffer for humanity (Erickson 1998:318). His love was not motivated by humanity's prior love for him but flows from his *suffering embracing character*.

The apostle John (1 John 4:10) says,

“This is love: not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

The cross reveals God to be gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. God is shown as (Ex 34:6),

“A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.”

But God is not only a God of love and grace he is also revealed to be a God of holiness and absolute purity. His love and holiness cannot be separated. God's holiness is central to his being. He alone is God. He is utterly perfect and pure (Milne 1982:68). God's wrath arises from his eternal self-consistency and the abhorrence of evil that is his nature. The cross shows God's revulsion of all that opposes his glory and his holiness (Milne 1982:69).

The holiness and love of God meet perfectly in the person and work of Jesus on the cross. The cross displays to the world the character of God. He is a God

willing to embrace the humiliation of the incarnation (Phil 2:7). He is a God who, as a result of his love, is willing to embrace into himself in suffering the consequences of human wickedness. He is a God willing to suffer immense pain - the pain of that mysterious separation when Jesus cried out,

“My God My God why have you forsaken me?”

Chester (2009:96) says,

“The fullest revelation of God is not in power and glory, but in the foolishness, shame and weakness of the cross.”

The church has always declared Jesus crucified and risen because it understood the cross to display the suffering character of God and his loving plan for the world.

2.5. The Cross – a Paradigm for Discipleship

A second reason that the preaching of the cross was central to the Christian message was that it provides a paradigm for the Christian life and for Christian leadership. Jesus repeatedly warns his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer and die, and he then teaches his followers that to follow him is to do likewise.

Jesus said (Matt 10:38),

“Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”

Mark also records this when he records Jesus saying (8:34),

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

These words are echoed in the Lukan account with the important addition of the word 'daily' (Luke 9:23),

Normal discipleship is shown to be cruciform (Gorman 2001:214-267; Osmer 2008:186). Jesus issues a summons when he declares that attachment to him and his kingdom involves a willingness to suffer and die; it involves a daily and constant attitude of denial to self and personal ambition, even to the point of personal pain and martyrdom (Marshall 1978:371,372). To follow Christ requires a willingness to face rejection and death. It means death to the world and a separation from its values and lifestyle (Rom 6). It requires a basic shift of orientation and agenda (Bock 1996:265) towards a life of suffering death. Discipleship is a heartfelt attitude and not simply an intellectual assent. To follow Christ is to die.

Bonhoeffer famously said (1948:73),

“The cross is laid on every Christian...since this happens at the beginning of the Christian life, the cross can never be merely a tragic ending to an otherwise happy religious life. When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die...every command of Jesus is a call to die...”

Gorman concurs (2001:139) when he says,

“Crucifixion with Christ is not a supplement to faith it is the essence of faith.”

The early church's declaration was cross-shaped because the cross defines the pattern and paradigm for the disciple of Jesus. The follower of Jesus is called to imitate his master in suffering and death (Chester 2009:49) both as an initial experience and as an ongoing reality (Gorman 2001:139).

1 Peter 2:21 says,

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an *example*, so that you might follow in his steps.”

Chester summarises (2009:49) when he says,

“Following Jesus means following the way of the cross.”

The word daily that is added in the Lukan gospel augments and clarifies what this death is to comprise. Normal discipleship is a *living* death. It is a life given over in daily and constant death. This daily cross-bearing involves love (John 13:34, Rom 12:9, 1 Cor 13, 1 John 2:10, 4:7), sacrifice (Rom 12:17-20, 2 Cor 8:1f, Heb 13:1,2), submission (Rom 13, Eph 5:21, Phil 2:3, Col 3:18f, 1 Pet 2:13f), self-denial (Matt 16:24, Luke 9:23, Rom 12:3,9; 1 Cor 12:7, Heb 13:3), service (Mark 10:44, John 13:14,15, Rom 1:1, 7:4, 1 Cor 7:22, Gal 1:10, 1 Pet 2:16) and suffering (Chester 2009:50).

Johnson (1999:143) said,

“To “learn Jesus” is...to learn how to be little and weak, a servant who in the pattern of Jesus gives one’s life as a ransom for others.”

These different components of cross-bearing death express an attitude to discipleship, an altered expectation of what is regarded as normal and a paradigm for the Christian life. It is the radical and fundamental altering of a life’s orientation from self towards God and the consequent love for others. It is a fundamental shift from self-centredness, self-righteousness and self-service towards embracing God-centredness, real community and radical love (Chester 2009:52). Ironically the way of discipleship is to die to self that God may live in the disciple. Gorman describes cruciform discipleship (2001:139) when he says,

“Paradoxically, this life is a death, a crucifixion, so that the Crucified One may live in the crucified one.”

2.6. Cross-Shaped Suffering

This research does not seek to examine all the aspects that comprise a cross-shaped life, it seeks only to examine and explore the unique place of suffering in the life and expectations of the disciple of Christ and in the leaders of God's church.

The Bible reveals that the cross-shaped life is soaked in suffering and followed by glory (Stott 1986:322f). The New Testament speaks often of suffering and is unembarrassed and unapologetic about suffering in the life of the disciple in the present.

Penner (2004:116) says,

“Suffering is not foreign to the purposes and person of God but rather...it is a central theme (in the life of the disciple).”

In contrast to the human desire for happiness and prosperity now, the New Testament witness is that the disciple of Jesus is to expect suffering, embrace it and even regard it as a privilege on the road of discipleship.

2.6.1. Jesus

Jesus taught his followers that suffering was actually blessing when he said (Matt 5:10-12),

“Blessed are those who are persecuted...blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you.”

In Mark 10:30, Jesus further connects blessing and suffering. As Peter declares to Jesus that they have left everything to follow him, Jesus replies that blessing will follow a life committed to him as well as persecutions.

At another time Jesus warned his disciples of suffering because of their allegiance to him (Matt 10:16-23),

“Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues...brother will deliver brother over to death...you will be hated by all for my name’s sake...when they persecute you in one town, flee to the next.”

In the upper room Jesus further warns his disciples (John 15:20) that,

“A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me they will also persecute you.”

2.6.2. Paul

Suffering was written into the call of the apostle Paul (Chester 2009:52). As the Lord commands Ananias to go and heal Saul he speaks of how much Paul will suffer for him (Acts 9:16). Paul saw his life and ministry as sharing and participating in the sufferings of Christ (Phil 3:10, 2 Cor 1:5, 4:10) and even completing the sufferings of Christ (Col 1:24). The apostle’s call is inextricably linked to suffering for Christ (Hafemann 1993:919).

The apostle Paul considered suffering to be a mark of the genuineness of his apostolic ministry. He repeatedly lists his sufferings in his *peristatis* catalogues as evidence of his genuineness (Gal 6:17; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 11:23f; Phil 1:30; 2 Tim 1:11f). Astonishingly the apostle boasted of his sufferings (2 Cor 11:30, 12:10), rejoiced in them (Rom 5:3, Col 1:24); he even appears to have embraced suffering (Phil 1:19f) and courted it, entering into situations where he must have anticipated suffering would be the outcome (Acts 14-23). He regarded his sufferings as temporary and insignificant (2 Cor 4:17) and soon to be replaced by reward,

“For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”

The apostle regarded his sufferings as an extension of the ministry of God in Christ (2 Cor 1:5, Col 1:24) and his sufferings as revealing the reality of the cross and resurrection as well as being a paradigm for his life (Phil 1:21, 3:10).

The apostle regarded the wisdom and power of God made known in the cross to now be further revealed in his sufferings (1 Cor 1:2) (Hafemann 1993:920).

The apostle extrapolates this expectation of suffering into the life of the disciple of Christ and especially into those trusted with the leadership of the people of God. He teaches and warns that suffering is a normal and integral part of the Christian experience. It is the common lot of all Christians (Knight 1992:388). Christians will share the suffering that is part of life in a fallen and cursed world (Gen 3); but the disciple of Christ is also called to embrace additional suffering and perhaps even seek suffering as part of their inclusion in the kingdom of God. Their response to suffering is to embrace God's use of it for their own personal Christ-like maturity and sanctification (Rom 8:28, Col 1:24-29) as well as to embrace suffering as a form of witness to the world.

Amundsen (1988:668) says,

“While the suffering to which believers respond aright contributes to their spiritual growth and fellowship with Christ, it is also a form of witness – to each sufferer of his own salvation, to the unsaved for their conviction; to fellow Christians for their edification, encouragement and comfort; to principalities and powers in accordance with God's mysterious purposes.”

The apostle Paul taught that the disciple of Christ should expect suffering as a result of identifying with Christ (Phil 1:29-30, Hafemann 1993:920). The apostle regarded suffering as a sign of being a genuine child of God (Rom 8:17). Suffering was a mark of the legitimacy of personal faith and a declaration of fellowship with both the apostolic band (1 Thess 1:6,7; 2 Thess 1:4-6) and the church (Gal 4:12; 4:14),

This expectation of suffering for the disciple of Christ and the leader of the church culminates in Pauline thought in his second letter to Timothy. Four times during his short, final letter he calls his charge to embrace suffering and endure it.

In 2 Tim 1:8 he says,

“Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us...”

In 2 Tim 2:3 he says,

“Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.”

In 2 Tim 3:12 he says,

“All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

And finally in 2 Tim 4:5 he says,

“As for you, always be sober minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.”

So strong is the theme of suffering in 2 Timothy that Mounce (2000:474) suggests that this theme is woven throughout the epistle and that it ties the entire letter together. Gorman (2001:549) suggests that in 2 Timothy, suffering becomes almost the principal sign of the Christian and that 2 Timothy is a call to imitate the apostle as pastor, teacher and suffering martyr. Suffering is written large in the pages of the Pauline expectation for the Christian. The pastoral minister experiences the sufferings of being a Christian but also must be willing to embrace hardship and persecution as he discharges his duties (MacArthur 1995:33). The Apostle Paul is not ashamed to suffer (2 Tim 1:12, 2:9, 3:11). His life is a constant litany of suffering (2 Cor 11:21-12:10) and he calls Timothy to be willing to share in that same suffering as a good soldier too. In 2 Timothy some of the Apostle's ministerial colleagues have ceased to be willing to continue to embrace suffering and have instead deserted him (2 Tim 1:15) but

the true minister is called to embrace suffering for Christ. This echoes Jesus call that the one who puts his hand to the plough should not turn back.

2.6.3. Peter

As Jesus restores Peter after his resurrection he warns the apostle of the suffering and death that he will endure (Matt 21:18). This expectation of suffering in the Christian experience is interwoven in the writings of the apostle Peter. Peter's first epistle is also soaked with an expectation of suffering which he calls 'all kinds of trials' (1 Pet 1:6 NIV). Suffering is the central issue of the letter but this is not suffering for sin this is the unjust suffering of the innocent Christian for Christ (Davids 1990:30,36). Peter sees an inevitable suffering for the Christian of verbal abuse, slander, malice and other forms of persecution simply because of living for Christ (Jobes 2005:45). Peter calls his readers not to be surprised by suffering but rather to expect it and emulate the example of Christ (1 Pet 2:21; 4:1) in it. Christians are called to embrace suffering and even consider it as a source of joy realising that the destiny of Christ is also the destiny of his followers (Jobes 2005:45). In 1 Peter 4:12-16 he says,

“Beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share in Christ's sufferings...let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God.”

The exhortation to suffer applies not only to the follower of Christ but especially to the leaders of the church. Clowney (1988:198) says,

“For Peter, sharing in ministry means sharing in suffering: suffering now and glory to come...If all Christians partake of Christ's suffering and glory, how much more must the shepherds of his flock do so.”

This exhortation to the leaders of the church to embrace suffering is clear in Peter's final charge to his 'fellow elders' where he declares that he is not only a witness to Christ's sufferings but also a participant or sharer in those sufferings.

In 1 Peter 5:1-3 he says,

“So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

The term ‘witness of the sufferings’ is not simply a reference to Peter being an eye witness to some of the events of Christ’s death but is a declaration to be one who proclaims what he has seen and also participates in the consequences of that proclamation (Davids 1990:176-177, Jobes 2005:302). He calls the under shepherds in the church to also testify to the sufferings of Christ and to take their share in them as well (Marshall 1991:161) when he says,

“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

2.6.4. *Hebrews*

The dominant pastoral purpose of the book of Hebrews is to encourage the readers of the Epistle to stand firm in their faith (Ellingworth 1993:77). The readers who are known to the writer appear to be weary at their faith and in danger of drifting away or drifting back to where they have come from. They are in danger of losing hold of what they confess (Heb 4:14) of becoming dull and not growing to maturity (Heb 5:11-14). They are in danger of being carried away by all kinds of strange teachings (Heb 13:9) and drifting away. But they are also in danger of active rebellion and apostasy. They are in danger of turning away from the living God like the generation of wicked Israel in the desert (Heb 3:12) (Ellingworth 1993:78,79). They are in danger of crucifying Christ again and holding him up to contempt (Heb 6:6). They are in danger of not listening to the voice of God (Heb 12:25). These dangers that they are facing come from the

trials, suffering and persecutions that they are experiencing. They are being tested (Heb 2:18, 4:15) both from within and from outside. Although we have to acknowledge an element of uncertainty as to what constituted the pressure upon the Hebrews it is clear to see that suffering was an integral part of their experience in following Christ (Heb 12:3) (Ellingworth 1993:80). The writer urges his readers to stand firm in the face of this suffering and to model themselves on Christ (Heb 10:32; 12:5-7),

2.6.5. James

The theme of suffering (trials) is also prominent in the book of James and underlies many of its other themes (Davids 1982:35). The recipients are experiencing suffering not of acute persecution but a suffering that the writer sees as a test of their faith (Davids 1982:37). The writer calls his readers to patient endurance, steadfastness and joy in the face of suffering when he says (Jam 1:2),

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

Furthermore in agreement with Jesus, James regards blessing as coming from steadfastness and perseverance under trials until the day of reward (Jam 1:12).

2.6.6. Revelation

As the New Testament closes, the Book of Revelation describes the scene of a great multitude gathered around the throne of God in fulfilment of the promises of God. This great multitude stands before the Lamb and the throne, and poignantly they are described as those who have endured great tribulation (Rev 7:14). Some scholars understand this reference to refer to a single great final event of suffering because of the presence of the definite article in the sentence but it is more likely that the description *tribulation* refers to the suffering of the church throughout history (Morris 1969:117). It is not only the suffering that will occur at the end of the age but the suffering that was set in motion at the time of

Christ which is to be encountered by believers because of their allegiance to him (Beale 1999:434).

2.7. Conclusion

From this brief survey of the Biblical texts it is immediately apparent that the early church had a deep experience of suffering. Suffering was seen as a normal and expected part of the life of the disciple of Christ. And this suffering was not the suffering that is the reality of human existence after the fall. This is not the suffering that is normal to all humans as a result of our rejection of the rule of God. This is not the suffering that has come as a result of the subsequent curse that God has placed upon creation (Gen 3). Nor is this the suffering of the people of God that is interconnected with their disobedience to the words and actions of God (Lev 26; Deut 28). This is that new and significant dimension of suffering that was added by the teaching and example of Jesus. This is the suffering embraced by God himself in the incarnation and crucifixion. This is that suffering emanating from the character of God, flowing from the love of God which is as an integral part of the plan of God. This suffering is shown to be an essential part of the life of the disciple of Christ. It is the suffering that comes from attaching oneself to the suffering God. Bonhoeffer (1948:74,188) summarised this when he said,

“Suffering, then, is the badge of the true Christian. The disciple is not above his master...”

This suffering is essential to the maturity of the disciple of Christ. It is fundamental to the advancement of the kingdom of God. It is an indispensable component of the plan of God and it is even a deep privilege to be embraced by the disciple of Christ.

Bonhoeffer (1948:74,188) said,

“No greater glory could he have granted to his own, no higher privilege can the Christian enjoy, than to suffer “for Christ.””

This suffering is to be embraced by the leadership of the church of God. It needs to be an attitude and expectation held by those who exercise pastoral ministry. It stands in direct opposition to the anthropocentric teaching of the 'Word of Faith' movement that is characteristic of much of Christianity today (Morris 2012:74). This expectation of suffering needs to be deeply understood and included in the worldview and ministry expectations of those who embark upon the task of pastoral ministry. It needs to be encouraged in the lives of the leaders of the church of God. The church languishes and declines when her members and her leaders are not willing to embrace suffering. And the character of God is not shown to the world when his church seeks comfort and power rather than suffering and service.

Chapter 3

The Quest for a Theodicy

3.1. Introduction

Having concluded from the scriptural survey that suffering is an integral part of the life and experience of the Christian, as well as an integral part of the experience of Christian ministry, the second component of this research (chapters 3 and 4) sought to understand the expectations present in the trainees for gospel ministry at GWC. This chapter comprises a literature review undertaken in order to understand the present research into the problem of pastors leaving ministry; as well as a review of the literature on the problem of how does a pastor's expectation of suffering influence their ability to endure in ministry.

3.2. Reasons for Leaving Pastoral Ministry

REACH-SA is a family of churches committed to reaching South Africa with the gospel of Jesus Christ. A significant part of this commitment is in the planting of new churches, the growth of existing works and the establishment of new projects to impact South Africa.⁷ To this end the denomination recognised the need for trained leadership and George Whitefield College was founded in 1989 in order to train men and women for pastoral ministry across South Africa. The denomination is committed to equipping trainees to undertake the task and embark on a lifetime of ministry; however the attrition rate amongst workers is significant.⁸ This problem is however not unique to this denomination but is a common problem in many church denominations across the world. Clinton

⁷ Amongst these works are social and community projects such as children's homes (e.g. Lily of the Valley, Christ Church Care Centre), community development projects (e.g. U-Turn and Arise) and educational projects (e.g. Christ Church Preparatory School and the St James Educational Trust).

⁸ George Whitefield College is beginning to do some research on what happens to their graduates. This work is in its infancy. Preliminary conclusions however suggest that the attrition rate of graduates is disturbingly high.

(quoted in Kraft 2011:20) says that only 30% of leaders complete a lifetime of pastoral ministry. Hoge and Wenger (2005:28) in their study, indicate that this figure may be overstated but nevertheless they did find that the dropout rate of pastors in ministry is alarmingly high (Hoge 2005:xi). Ryken suggests that seventeen hundred pastors leave ministry each month in the United States and that barely one in ten will retire as a minister (Ryken 2010:29). Brain (2004:26) discovered a similar thing in his research concluding that 44% of those who had been ordained for more than 15 years had experienced some form of burn-out, with a significant percentage of these pastors leaving ministry as a result of this burnout.

Ministers leave pastoral ministry for a variety of complex and interconnected reasons. Seldom is there one single reason for leaving ministry, usually a complex matrix of factors contributes to the decision to leave their calling (Hoge 2005:31; Fuller 2014). Some of the factors experienced are unique to some denominational structures while others are more commonly spread across all denominations. Hoge (2005:221) lists nine important studies in the USA that have been conducted on the subject of pastors leaving pastoral ministry. It seems best to group the factors that cause pastors to leave under 4 headings. These are faith, character, conflict and expectations. These groups of factors are deeply interconnected and simply give us a framework to begin to understand the problem.

3.1.1. Faith

The first reason that pastors leave ministry is a loss of faith or a significant change in their understanding of a Biblical worldview. Scripture warns of this possibility occurring in the life of a Christian (Mark 4:15-20, Hebrews 4:1,11; 12:1-3 et al). These momentous changes then bring the pastor into conflict with their existing organisational structures and they feel the necessity to leave ministry.

3.1.2. Character

A second reason that pastors leave ministry is due to some significant issue of character. Often closely connected with a change in faith or worldview is a

major moral shift or a momentous moral decision. Amongst these the most prevalent are sexual (Hoge 2005:130-142) and financial misconduct. Works in pastoral theology rightly give much attention to aspects of character that are to be developed in order for the pastor to endure (Ascol 2004:23-156); amongst these are the personal character of the pastor (Prime 2004:35-64, Tidball 2011); the pastor's devotional life (Ezell 1995:55-62, Hughes 1987:71-83, Piper 2003:53-58); the pastor's style and practice of leadership (Gehman 2008:105; Osmer 2008:175-218, Horner 2008:85-116, Stott 2002:109-128, White 1998:178) and the pastor's theology and values (Ascoll 2004:183-284, Tidball 2011).

3.1.3. Conflict

The third major factor that causes many pastors to leave is summarised under the word 'conflict' (Hoge 2005:29). Many leave because of conflict *within* their own local congregations. This includes conflict over leadership styles, finances, changes in worship styles, conflict among staff as well as conflicts over building and financial matters (Hoge 2005:78). Fernando (2007:113) suggests that in his own experience the greatest pain in his ministry has come from people and human relationships. Willimon (2002:317,318), draws attention to the fact that the church is a refuge for people with great need. When sinful, broken and rebellious humans are committed to other sinful, broken and rebellious people, conflict and pain are sure to ensue.

A second area of conflict is conflict with denominational authorities. Pastors leave pastoral ministry because they do not feel supported, valued nor listened to by denominational authorities (Hoge 2005:99); they encounter problems over placements, frustration over leadership direction as well as despair when leadership handles conflict badly (Willimon 2002:325).

A third area of conflict relates to conflict within the pastor's own family – either marital conflict or conflict with children. Many pastors have left ministry because of the need to resolve conflicts that had occurred within their own family support structures. Piper (2003:245) rightly says that it is crucial for pastors to love their wives.

A final area of conflict that often weighs upon those in pastoral ministry is conflict with outsiders. As the pastor seeks to engage in a prophetic ministry, some outside of the church will find this ministry offensive and seek to oppose this ministry (Matt 5:10).

3.1.4. *Expectations*

Willimon (2002:316-326) lists a number of reasons why pastors leave ministry. Amongst these he lists:-

- Loss of purpose and meaning
- The work of the church is never done
- Diverse and amorphous expectations
- The church is full of people in great need
- Church and ministry are not valued by society
- Pastors forget to nurture and care for their bodies
- Poor time management
- Ministry is messy

All of these factors could be summarised under the heading of 'expectations'.

White (2011:18) says,

“What makes ministry so emotionally hazardous? That’s easy. It all starts with overbuilt expectations.”

As pastors enter ministry they encounter the expectations of the congregation that they serve. Many struggles experienced by pastors have been noticed and addressed by authors in pastoral theology. Amongst these struggles are depression (Brain 2004:67-82, Hart 1984, Lloyd Jones 1965, Spurgeon 1954:154-166); burnout (Brain 2004:25-36; Sanford 1982); stress (Brain 2004:37-66, Prime 2004:300-302); loneliness and familial pressure (Ascol

2004:53-66, MacArthur 2005, Piper 2003:245-260). Many of these struggles are a product of a clash of expectations. The congregation desires that the pastor act in a particular way and the pastor feels unable to meet these expectations.

Compounded with the congregation's expectations are the pastor's own expectations. Pastors bring with them a set of expectations about life and ministry itself. Sometimes these expectations are perceived rather than real and sometimes these expectations come from an inner drivenness or *Messiah Complex* (Brain 2004:17) resident within the pastor themselves. Amongst these expectations is the pastor's own personal theodicy – their expectation and understanding of the place of evil and suffering in the world. As they enter ministry some pastors bring with them an idealised and often romantic notion of life and ministry. They are then confronted with the realities of how evil the world actually is and confronted with the realities of sin both in their own hearts and in the hearts of the congregations they serve. They are confronted with the enduring questions of pain and suffering and this expectation gap creates a significant reason why pastors do not endure.

If pastors have a sense of entitlement and an expectation that life should be happy and prosperous then this will surely contribute to their struggle to continue.

Fernando says (2007:51),

“I think one of the most serious theological blind spots in the western church is a defective understanding of suffering. There seems to be a lot of reflection on how to avoid suffering and on what to do when we hurt. We have a lot of teaching about escape from and therapy for suffering, but there is inadequate teaching about the theology of suffering. Christians are not taught why they should expect suffering as followers of Christ and why suffering is so important for healthy growth as a Christian.”

This research now reviews the literature on this aspect of pastoral expectations. It seeks to understand how a personal theodicy will affect the expectations of trainees.

3.2. Seeking a Theodicy

The problem of evil and suffering is not a detached discussion undertaken in the academy, but a personal struggle encountered by every human being.

Blocher (1994:9) says,

“While it is evil that torments human bodies, it is the problem of evil that torments the human mind.”

The human experience is a daily, personal and painful encounter with evil and its consequences (Carson 1978:11). Stott (1986:311) suggests that it constitutes the greatest challenge to the Christian faith. There is a lived disparity between morality and the experience of fortune or misfortune (Job 1,2; Hille 2010:138). Evil perpetrated by humans, produces the suffering which must then be experienced and endured by people. Evil committed also produces guilt and blame (Blocher 1994:13) in the life of every human. Along this journey of evil experienced and evil committed, humans struggle to reconcile the existence of a good and omnipotent God with their ever present experience of evil, suffering and pain. In the midst of this journey the human mind seeks to trace connections and find order. The mind desires to categorise, summarise and understand what is happening to it. It seeks purpose and meaning in the painful, frustrating experience of life (Blocher 1994:103) in order to find healing (Carson 1978:31) and purpose. This is the quest for a theodicy⁹. A theodicy seeks to answer the question of, why does a good God allow or permit evil and its consequent suffering? A theodicy is an attempt to look for a ‘justification of God’ (Blocher 1994:9) in order to make some personal sense of the experience of evil and suffering in the world. It is the human attempt to understand God’s

⁹ The term theodicy was first used by Leibnitz in 1710 (Hille 2010:138).

character and his handling of human history (Louw 2000:25). It is a quest attempted by all.

Any theodicy will attempt to answer the multi-faceted questions that comprise the problem of evil. These will include:-

- The origin evil
- The inequality of suffering experienced
- The evilness of evil
- The silence and inactivity of God
- The purpose of suffering

Various potential theodicies have been proposed:-

3.2.1. A Deficient God

Every theodicy begins with an understanding of the character of God (Carson 1978:31). The first solution proposed to the problem of evil and suffering suggests that God must in some way be less than omnipotent or alternatively less than all loving (Hicks 2006:148). This has been popularly expressed by Kushner (1978) in his book *When Bad things happen to Good People*. In this view God is thought of as being unable to end the evil that occurs. Although he is powerful to some degree, God is not powerful enough to make a complete end to the evil of the world. Alternatively if God is powerful enough to end the evil then he must not want to end it and this brings into question his goodness and his character.

Against this view stands the twin Christian propositions that God is absolutely sovereign and absolutely good. He is supremely in control of all events even evil¹⁰; and God is absolutely and unquestionably good (Blocher 1994:104).

¹⁰ See Gen 50:20 as an example of this.

3.2.2. *Evil as Allowed/Caused by God*

A second approach to the problem of evil suggests that God could prevent evil but chooses not to. Two main reasons are postulated for God's actions.

3.2.2.1. *Suffering as Punishment by God*

Firstly, it is suggested that God allows suffering as a just punishment for human sin and rebellion. God created the world good. Evil entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. When humans rejected the plan of God (Gen 3) he allowed suffering to be experienced by them as the just punishment for their actions in the expectation that this will cause them to repent (Hicks 2006:148, Wenham 1994:45). Biblical justification for this position can be derived from the significant warnings that populate Old Testament books. In Deuteronomy 7:10, God warns the Israelites that those who hate him he will repay with destruction. In Deuteronomy 8:19, God warns the Israelites that if they forget him they will be destroyed. In Habakkuk 1:2-4, God warns the prophet that he will use evil and suffering brought about by foreign armies to punish his people's rebellion. In this view evil and suffering have an important purpose which is to cause humans to repent of their rebellion and turn back to God.

3.2.2.2. *Suffering as an Expression of Free Will*

A second approach is built around the concept of human free will and autonomy. God can end suffering but chooses not to because he has made humans with free will. For this free will to have real meaning, for love to be love, humans need to be able to exercise genuine free choice and it is in the exercise of this choice that evil and suffering occur (Hall 1986:70,71; Carson 1990:34).

McGrath (1992:55) says,

“Suffering is the price we pay for being alive. More than that; it is the price we pay for being human.”

God limits his involvement in the affairs of humans in order for this choice to have meaning. Kierkegaard called it ‘the real possibility of evil’ (Blocher 1994:63). It is argued that for good to have meaning there must be the possibility of rebellion, rejection and disobedience. To have freedom to act must allow the freedom to do evil. God thus pulls himself back from creation so that people may exercise the real choices and freedoms that he has bestowed on them (McGrath 1992:58, Wenham 1994:39).

McGrath (1992:58) says,

“It is pointless to speak of God endowing his creatures with freedom, only to refuse to allow them to exercise that freedom. And in the exercise of that freedom, we may see the origins of much of the tragic suffering of the world.”

This rejection of God and the disobedience by humans to the will of God causes evil and suffering in the world (Hicks 2006:150). God himself knew that this would happen but he was willing to pay the price in order to have genuine, meaningful relationships with his creation (Hicks 2006:150). Evil and suffering then is a consequence of human rebellion (Gen 3) and cannot be blamed on God (Carson 1978:16).

As has been stated in chapter 1 the concern of this research is not to explore all aspects of human suffering but to limit this research to that suffering uniquely experienced by the disciple of Christ as *disciple*, as well as that suffering experienced by the leader in the church of God.

3.3. Towards a Biblical Theodicy for the Christian

The Bible presents a God who is absolutely good and completely sovereign. This God controls every aspect of the human story. The Bible is not embarrassed by suffering but instead affirms the reality of it and also affirms

that suffering is not the final word in the human condition (Hall 1986:19).¹¹ The Bible presents a number of reasons for suffering in the life of the disciple of Christ.

3.3.1. Suffering, the Love of God and Human Transformation

Any discussion of the problem of evil and suffering from a Biblical perspective must take cognisance of the fall of man. God created a good world (Gen 1:31) but humankind's rejection of God created a cosmic upheaval. As a result of this human rebellion the curse of God was placed upon the world and the world becomes a place of trouble, pain and suffering (Gen 3:14-19, Hille 2010:146). Not all suffering can be traced back to this 'grasp after infinity' (Hall 1986:81) but much of it can.

Amazingly, God does not end his relationship with humanity at this point. God's love (John 3:16, Rom 5:8, Eph 2:41 John 3:1) for rebellious humankind, drives him to implement a solution to the problem of this human rebellion. This solution is the astonishing conquest of suffering and rebellion by 'suffering love' (agape) (Hall 1986:94) shown at the cross. The cross stands as the centrepiece of the God/human story. It shows that there is a deep, bitter-sweet (McGrath 1992:13,24) connection between love and suffering. To love is to suffer. As a result of God's love, he suffers along with his world, as his Son gives himself in death for the restoration and salvation of humankind (Hille 2010 57).

McGrath (1992:1) says,

“Jesus Christ suffered on the cross. This remarkable statement holds the key to a Christian understanding of suffering. None other than the Son of God himself underwent pain and death.”

¹¹ The New Testament looks beyond the experience of suffering by the Christian to a significant hope of glory. It is this hope of glory which makes suffering bearable for the Christian (Stott 1986:323).

Humans tend to consider love and suffering as opposites but that is not the case. It is the very love of God that is shown in his willingness to suffer and the suffering of the Son of God that demonstrates the extent of God's love. This love that God has for humanity means that God desires that humans have the best. And this best is that humanity is reunited to its maker and transformed into the image of his Son. The Bible shows God to be working in the lives of people for their transformation. God is bringing humans along a journey to perfection and maturity as he conforms them to the image of his Son (Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 3:18, Col 1:28). God banishes Adam and Eve from the garden precisely because he desires that they do not live forever in their rebellion and estrangement from him. Instead he desires their best which involves reconciliation with him. This agenda of human transformation is one of the key aspects of what is achieved at the cross. This however is a vastly different agenda to that desired by the human heart which is independence of God and the indulgence of our own desires.

McGrath (1992:26) says,

“The love of God is not some indulgent benevolence which smiles upon our whims without asking whether they are innocent or profoundly destructive, and then generously allows us to have what we want. It involves our transformation. It involves our reshaping so that we may desire and receive those things which are, in the mind of God our creator, for our greatest good...precisely because of God's astonishing and overwhelming love for us, shown through the death of Christ upon the cross, he wants us to have nothing but the best.”

Carson (1990:70) says that as a result of this love-based, transformation agenda the most dominant form of suffering experienced by God's people is the discipline meted out by God himself for the good of his people. This discipline is designed to combat sin (Heb 12:4) in the life of the follower of Jesus and to produce holiness (Heb 12:10). God intends his people to grow through trials and suffering in order to become like Christ (Fernando 2007:52,64). This discipline is also an encouragement of the genuineness of the familial

relationship (Heb 12:6) as discipline is meted out by parents only to their own children. Without this discipline the status of the person as a genuine child of God must be called into question (Heb 12:8). Discipline is then for the good of the receiver (Carson 1990:71, Stott 1986:316), it is to be expected and desires to transform the receiver into what God desires them to be.

3.3.2. Suffering as Cosmic, Kingdom Conflict

A second reason for suffering that is unique to the Christian is contained in the Bible's description of the cosmic clash of kingdoms. The arrival of Jesus is the culmination of the heavenly conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. John's Revelation describes this conflict using the metaphorical language of a lion/lamb and a dragon (Rev 12). The book describes a conflict in heaven between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God culminating in the ultimate and decisive victory of Christ (Rev 18-22). The apostle Paul echoes this understanding when he calls the Ephesians (6:11f) to,

“Put on the full armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places...”

The disciples of Jesus are involved in the warfare that results from this cosmic clash of kingdoms (Knox 1992:66-73).

In John 15:18-20 and 16:33 Jesus warned his disciples of this when he said,

“If the world hates you keep in mind that it hated me first.”

“In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Following Christ will bring suffering upon the Christian as the disciple of Christ comes into conflict with the powers of darkness. The kingdom of God advances by the efforts and work of the people of God. As they embark upon evangelism and prophetic witness they are brought into conflict with the powers of darkness. Godly living exposes the sin of the world and is not welcomed by the world instead it brings hatred, rejection, division and conflict. .

3.3.3. *Suffering as Witness*

The suffering of the disciple of Jesus creates opportunities for witness (Acts 8:1-8). It provides a window through which the light of Christian hope can be clearly seen. Suffering is often public and visible. The way in which Christians conduct themselves in the face of suffering gives people an opportunity to notice something different about them (McGrath 1992:88). It creates an opportunity to speak of Christ to a world that is often closed to the gospel of grace.

Lewis spoke of this when he wrote (1940:74),

“We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities...But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Suffering creates opportunities to present an alternative worldview, to display a different language (Willimon 2002:99) to that usually experienced by the world. In this opportunity for witness, suffering shows an alternative and attractive way to conduct life.

Suffering has often played a key part in the growth and development of the church (Fernando 2007:83). Penner (2004:137) describes this when he says,

“Without Christ’s death there is no redeemed community. But just as Christ’s cross was needed to establish his church, our crosses are needed to build His Church...there is no better way to put it than to follow

the lead of Josef Ton: “*Christ’s cross was for propitiation. Our cross is for propagation.*”

The apostle Paul recognised this same truth when he spoke of his own imprisonment and the opportunities it created. He said (Phil 1:12),

“I want you to know brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.”

Suffering then is one of the instruments that the Christian can expect God to use in advancing the cause of his kingdom.

The Cape Town Commitment of the Lausanne Movement (2011:Section 2c.2) affirmed this,

“The love of Christ calls us to suffer and sometimes to die for the gospel. Suffering may be necessary in our missionary engagement as witnesses to Christ, as it was for his apostles and the Old Testament prophets.[69] Being willing to suffer is an acid test for the genuineness of our mission. God can use suffering, persecution and martyrdom to advance his mission. 'Martyrdom is a form of witness which Christ has promised especially to honour.'[70] Many Christians living in comfort and prosperity need to hear again the call of Christ to be willing to suffer for him.”

3.3.4. Suffering as Pruning and Refinement

Jesus warned his followers that his heavenly Father will prune those he loves (John 15:2) in order for them to become more fruitful. No fruit bearing branch is immune from this pruning. The purpose of the pruning is that God desires the branch that is fruitful to become even more fruitful (Carson 1991:514, Stott 1986:317). Jesus did not define how this pruning will take place but this procedure will certainly involve pain and suffering (Carson 1990:70). God will use a variety of mechanisms to achieve his purposes even allowing the

enemies of God's people to triumph over them (Hab 1:2-4). Suffering then is used by God to develop fruitfulness in the life of the disciple and without this fruitfulness there must be a question about the validity of the faith. When suffering is mingled with faith it produces a tenacious perseverance, Christ-like character and eternal hope in the certainties of the kingdom (Rom 5:3-4) (Carson 1990:79). There is a certain kind of maturity that can only be attained through the pruning and refinement of suffering which even Jesus had to learn.

Hebrews 5:7-9 says,

“Although he was a son he learned obedience from what he suffered.”

3.3.5. Suffering as Incarnational Leadership

Having considered the purpose of suffering in the life of the disciple there is a final element to suffering that is unique in the leadership of the Christian church. The apostle Peter calls the leaders of the church to suffer in an additional way.

Carson (1990:90) says,

“The best Christian leadership cannot simply be appointed. It is forged by God himself in the fires of suffering, taught in the school of tears. There are no shortcuts.”

In addition to refinement Christian leaders want to absorb suffering within themselves in order that their flocks are spared it. It is incarnational and an imitation of Christ (Carson 1990:90). Paul showed this attitude when he said (Col 1:24),

“I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.”

3.4. A Theodicy of Optimism

Having established the outline of a Biblical theodicy it is possible now to turn the direction of this paper to some theodicies that are proposed by human reason and secular thought. Blocher (1994:13) suggests that human reason proposes three solutions: pessimism, dualism and optimism.

Pessimism regards everything that exists in the material world as evil. This view which finds its roots in Greek Idealism (Hille 2010:140) regards the material world as essentially bad. All that is real is fundamentally and irredeemably polluted and the only solution is to escape this world and be freed by death. The world is perceived as dark, meaningless, hopeless, irrational and pitiful (Blocher 1994:16).

Dualism on the other hand, often seen in Eastern worldviews, presents a perpetual and unresolved conflict of good and evil. Reality is essentially governed by this constant conflict of the two fundamentals - good and evil. It is a conflict that has always been and will never end. It hopes for and sometimes even postulates a victory for good but this is by no means assured (Blocher 1994:15).

Optimism is the third solution proposed by human reason. It asserts that if evil is examined long enough and deeply enough it will be seen to not be evil at all. This finds its extreme in the optimistic denial of evil and suffering in movements like 'Christian Science' (Blocher 1994:13) but this view is also deeply prevalent in many secular and Western worldviews. Evil is thought to reside in our human consciousness and needs to be educated, thought or trained away. Aspects of this worldview can be seen in modern 'Word of Faith' presentations of the gospel where Christianity is presented as an anthropocentric (Morris 2012:74) solution to the problems of life. Prosperity theology promotes Christianity as a cure for poverty, sickness and political oppression. It is marketed as a solution to the personal problems of a suffering world. Any suffering experienced in the world is thought to be as a result of ignorance or a lack of faith (Fernando 2007:64). This theodicy is optimistic, materialistic and popular. All suffering is

seen as an abomination and not a part of the plan of God for the life of his followers. Suffering is to be avoided and conquered. It is an expression of a lack of faith to be prayed away and conquered by faith.

Osteen (2004:ix,x) says,

“Happy, successful, fulfilled individuals have learned how to live their best lives *now* (emphasis in the original)...I am confident that if you will take these steps along with me, you ultimately will be happier than ever before, living with joy, peace and enthusiasm – not just for a day, or a week, but for the rest of your life.”

Hinn (2014) says,

“If God forgives all, He will heal all...He will heal all now: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).”

Amundsen (1988:669) describes these modern, optimistic presentations of the gospel when he says,

“Some modern presentations of the gospel leave little room for suffering as an aspect of the Christian life. Toleration of religious diversity together with materialism, prosperity and medical sophistication that encourage an analgesic mentality in the West have conditioned many evangelicals to regard most suffering as an intrusion on the tranquil life that they feel is their God-given due.”

The Cape Town Commitment of the Lausanne Convention (2011:Section 2e:5) rejected this theodicy of optimism as unbiblical when it said,

“We affirm that there is a biblical vision of human prospering, and that the Bible includes material welfare (both health and wealth) within its teaching about the blessing of God. However, we deny as unbiblical the

teaching that spiritual welfare can be measured in terms of material welfare, or that wealth is always a sign of God's blessing...

We also deny that poverty, illness or early death are always a sign of God's curse, or evidence of lack of faith, or the result of human curses, since the Bible rejects such simplistic explanations.

We accept that it is good to exalt the power and victory of God. But we believe that the teachings of many who vigorously promote the prosperity gospel seriously distort the Bible; that their practices and lifestyle are often unethical and un-Christlike; that they commonly replace genuine evangelism with miracle-seeking, and replace the call to repentance with the call to give money to the preacher's organization. We grieve that the impact of this teaching on many Churches is pastorally damaging and spiritually unhealthy. We gladly and strongly affirm every initiative in Christ's name that seeks to bring healing to the sick, or lasting deliverance from poverty and suffering. The prosperity gospel offers no lasting solution to poverty, and can deflect people from the true message and means of eternal salvation. For these reasons it can be soberly described as a false gospel. We therefore reject the excesses of prosperity teaching as incompatible with balanced biblical Christianity."

3.5. Conclusion

The purpose of this research has been to discover what expectations and attitudes regarding suffering actually reside in the mind-sets of trainees for gospel ministry in REACH-SA in order to determine whether these attitudes will influence their perseverance as gospel ministers. The literature revealed that there are many complex and interconnected reasons why pastors leave ministry. Amongst these reasons a significant factor was the disappointment of unmet expectations. Amongst these expectations is the pastor's own personal understanding of evil and suffering. This research now sought to discover what expectations are actually present in those training for gospel ministry at GWC. It sought to determine how much does the spirit of optimism actually present itself in the expectations and attitudes of trainees presenting themselves for

training in gospel ministry? Do they expect suffering? Do they have a Biblical understanding of suffering? Do they have realistic expectations of suffering and do they have realistic expectations of their ability to endure suffering?

It was also the aim of this research to try and determine what experience of suffering, and what attitudes towards suffering do those training others in gospel ministry at GWC have in order to determine how trainees are being helped and taught to understand that ministry involves suffering.

Chapter 4

Understanding the Present Situation

4.1. Introduction

The Biblical data has indicated that suffering is a normal part of the Christian life.

Hicks (2006:202) describes this when he says,

Those who walk the way of Christ...will walk the way of suffering

The clear anticipation of the New Testament is that the followers of Jesus will suffer persecution (Matt 10:24,25; 2 Tim 3:12), hatred (Mat 10:17-22), division (Matt 10:21, 35-37), fear (Matt 10:26) and even death (Matt 10:28). The apostle Paul regarded suffering as an integral part of the Christian life and an integral part of his ministry. He urged Timothy to embrace and endure suffering as he did (2 Tim 1:8, 2:3, 4:5).

The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether those being trained for leadership in the church of God at GWC, the training College of REACH-SA understand this, internalise it, expect it and even rejoice in it. This research set itself the goal of determining what experience of suffering and what attitudes towards suffering do those training others at GWC have? This research sought also to explore whether this attitude and expectation of suffering was deeply understood by those training the leaders of the church and whether this was encouraged in the lives of trainees.

In order to achieve these research objectives two data gathering instruments were designed. The first instrument was used to gather information from the students at GWC and the second was used to gather information from the faculty at GWC.

4.2. Student Research

The research instrument chosen for the students was a multiple choice questionnaire comprised of 13 questions (Appendix A). These questions sought to uncover information in three areas. In the first section, questions 1-6, the aim was to understand some of the demographics of the group of students involved. By determining their age, year of study, national backgrounds as well as how they saw their church and theological affiliation this research attempted to see whether these factors played any role in the answers given.

The second group of questions, numbers 7-9, sought to determine the trainees' expectations in regard to their future. The research sought to enquire from them some of their expectations and dreams regarding their expected future ministry.

The third group of questions, numbers 10-13, was set up to help understand the trainees' personal understanding of suffering as well as endeavouring to determine whether they feel they are being adequately prepared in order to face suffering.

The questionnaire was designed and pretested with a few select individuals not connected with the college in order to minimise grammatical, understanding and printing errors (Mouton 2001:chapter 7). This pre-test resulted in some additions and alterations to the questionnaire.

Multiple choice questions were used to aid and improve student participation; and answers were placed alphabetically so as not to influence the results in any way.

It was decided to use the forum of a 'principal's hour' to conduct the research. This is a mandatory, timetabled weekly slot that students are required to attend. The principal generously allowed the research to happen during this period on

the 28th February 2014. By sampling the entire undergraduate body present on that day sampling errors could be minimised.

4.2.1. Understanding the Test Group

The 6 questions that made up section 1 were designed to understand some of the demographics of the sample group in order to determine whether this might influence the results.

1. What year of study are you in?

A total of 51 students took the study of a total possible number of 58. This comprised the entire 1st year body of 18 students; 17 of a possible 22, 2nd year students; and 16 of a possible 18, 3rd year students. Those missing were absent because of ill health, pressing family matters or other factors. It is thought that their contributions are unlikely to have materially affected the results.

2. What is your home country?

Figure 1, indicates the representation of nationalities at the college. The vast majority of students are from South Africa. It is thought that this factor was unlikely to have influenced the results in any way.

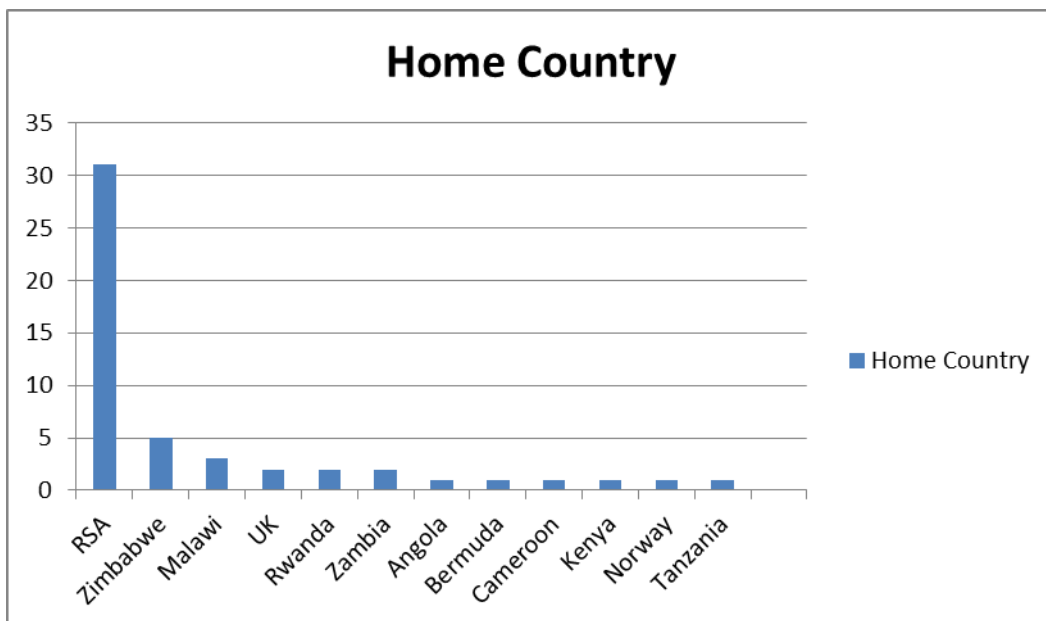


Figure 1

3. *How old are you?*

The findings regarding the respective ages of the students are shown in figure 2. The vast majority of students (even those in their early years of study) are shown to have some life experience. The vast majority of the student body were not immediate school-leavers with the average age being around 30. This meant that students are far more likely to have personally experienced suffering.

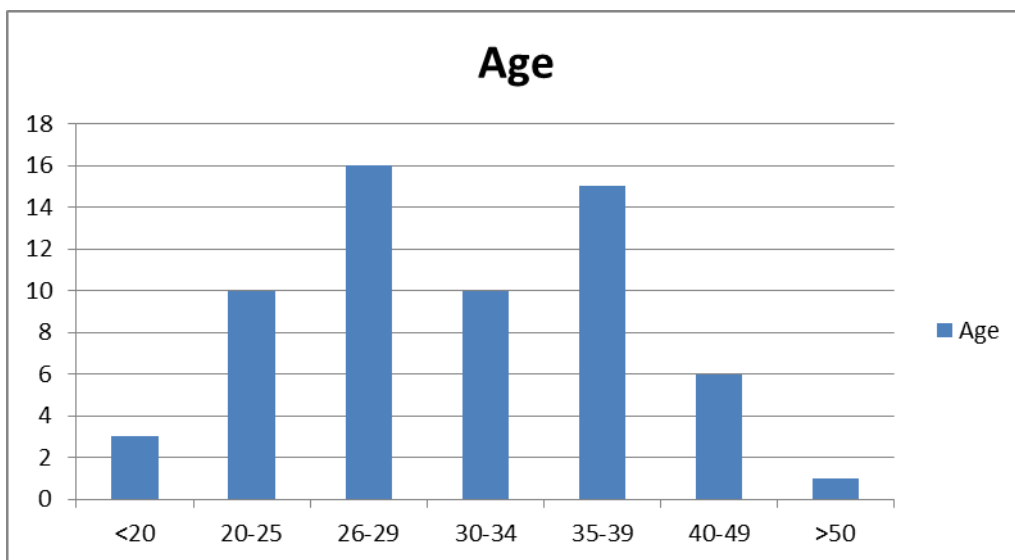


Figure 2

4. *What words would you use to describe your church affiliation?*

Figure 3 indicates how students described their church affiliation. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of students described themselves as Evangelical, Anglican and Reformed with significant minority numbers using the adjectives Baptist, Pentecostal and Charismatic.

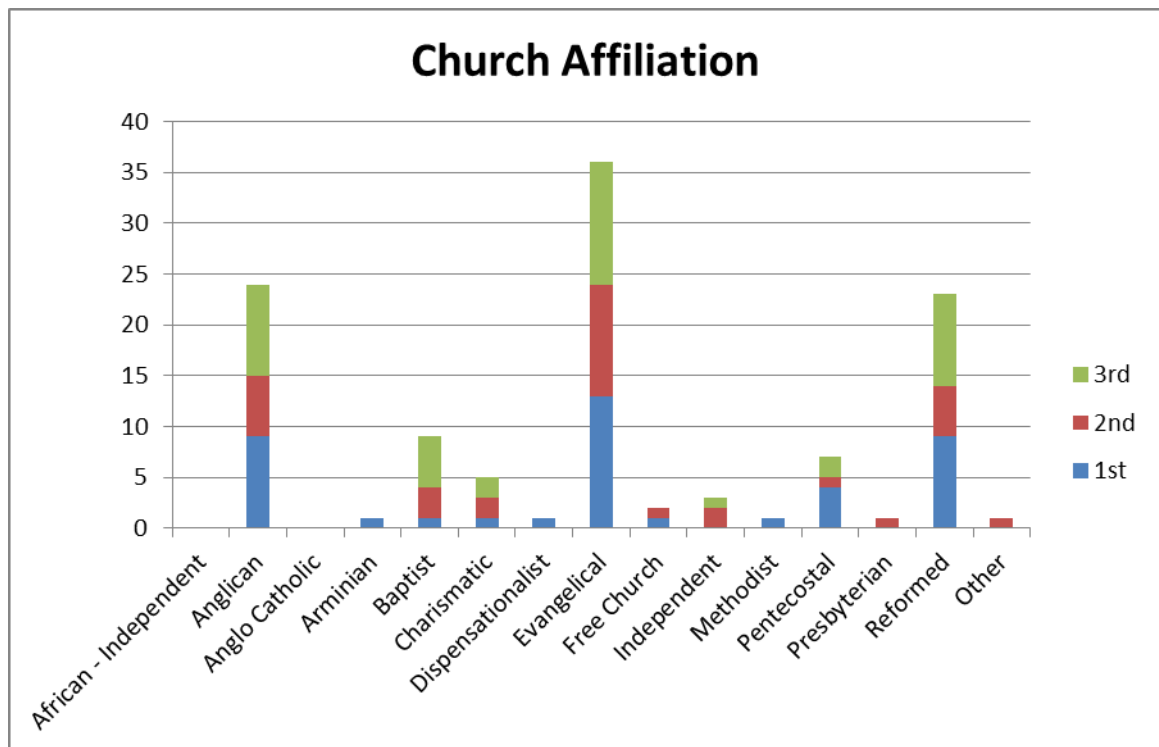


Figure 3

5. *What type of ministry do you hope to embark upon when you finish your theological studies?*

6. *How long do you hope to be in ministry?*

Questions 5 and 6 were designed to understand how the students perceived their futures. In question 5 (figure 4), eight possibilities were presented to the students to try and determine why they are training at GWC and how they saw their futures. The vast majority of students indicated that they were studying in order to enter into paid ministry of some description; either in a church denomination, in a para-church organisation or in a mission field.

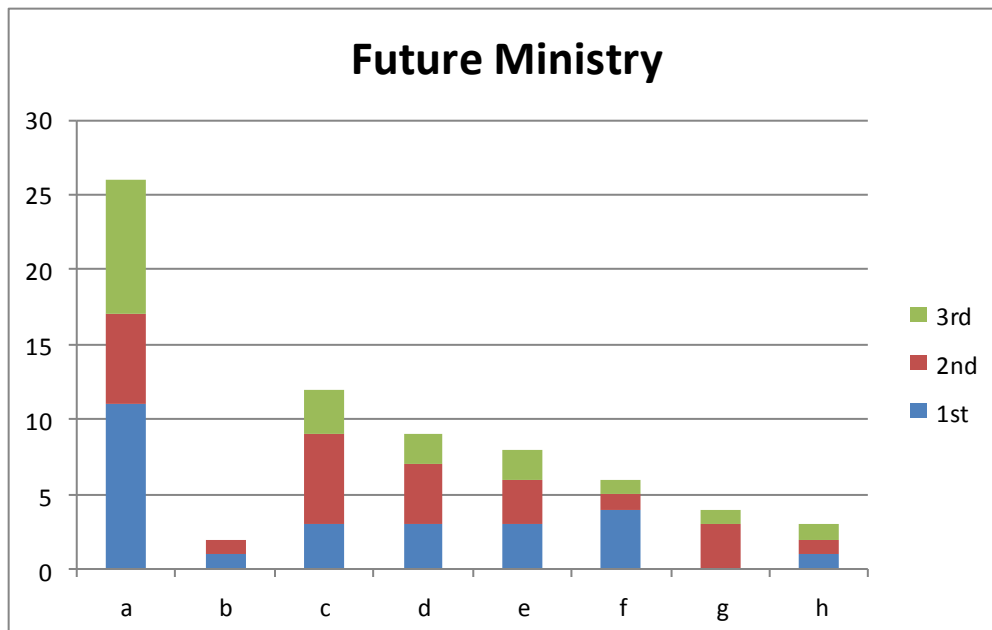


Figure 4

- a. Full time paid pastoral ministry in REACH-SA (CESA).
- b. Full time paid ministry in another Anglican Denomination
- c. Full time paid ministry in a non-Anglican denomination.
- d. Full time paid work in some other Christian organisation eg NGO, para-church
- e. Mission work.
- f. Part time semi-paid ministry.
- g. Return to secular work and conduct ministry as a lay person.
- h. Other.

The results from question 6 (figure 5) indicated that most students anticipated being in this particular ministry for the vast majority of their lives.

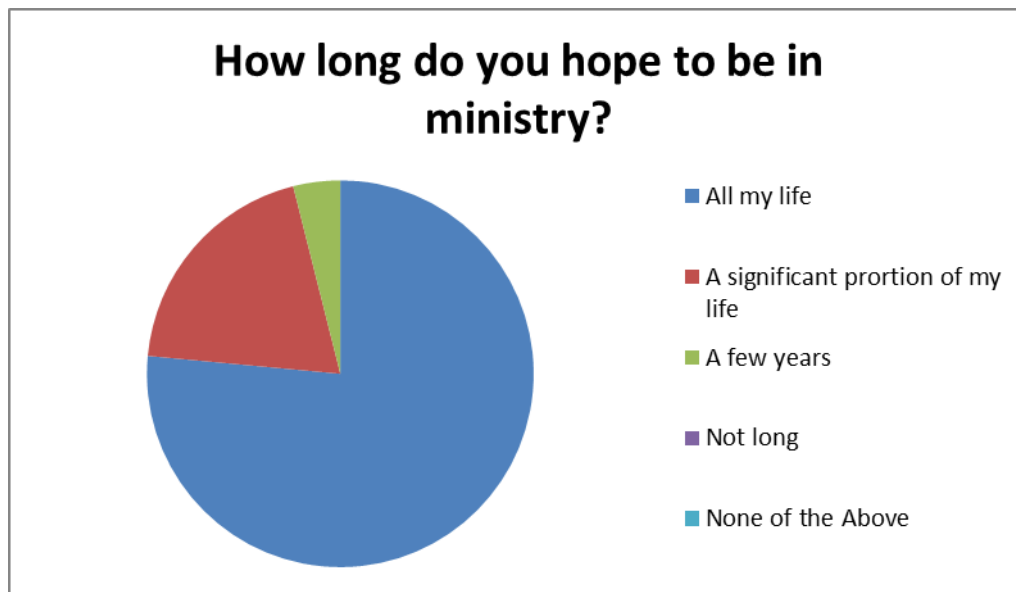


Figure 5

i. Ministry Expectations

The second group of questions was designed to determine the students' expectations when they embark upon the ministry that they are training for. Questions 7 and 8 sought to understand what the students' financial expectations were, using their financial expectations in order to begin to understand their perspective on future ministry.

7. *If you are hoping to enter paid ministry what do you expect to be paid? (A teacher entering employment in South Africa would be paid about R20,000 per month)¹²*

¹² An entry-level state salary for a newly graduated teacher according to salary scales from the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which took effect from April 1 2013 is R185 184 per annum. This does not include medical aid, pension and housing subsidy contributions, which are in addition to this amount. This is estimated to be an additional 37% for these benefits. This would bring the starting salary of a state school teacher with a relative education qualification value (REQV) of 14 and above (Postgrad qualification) to R253 702 pa or R21 141 a month (Barry 2014).

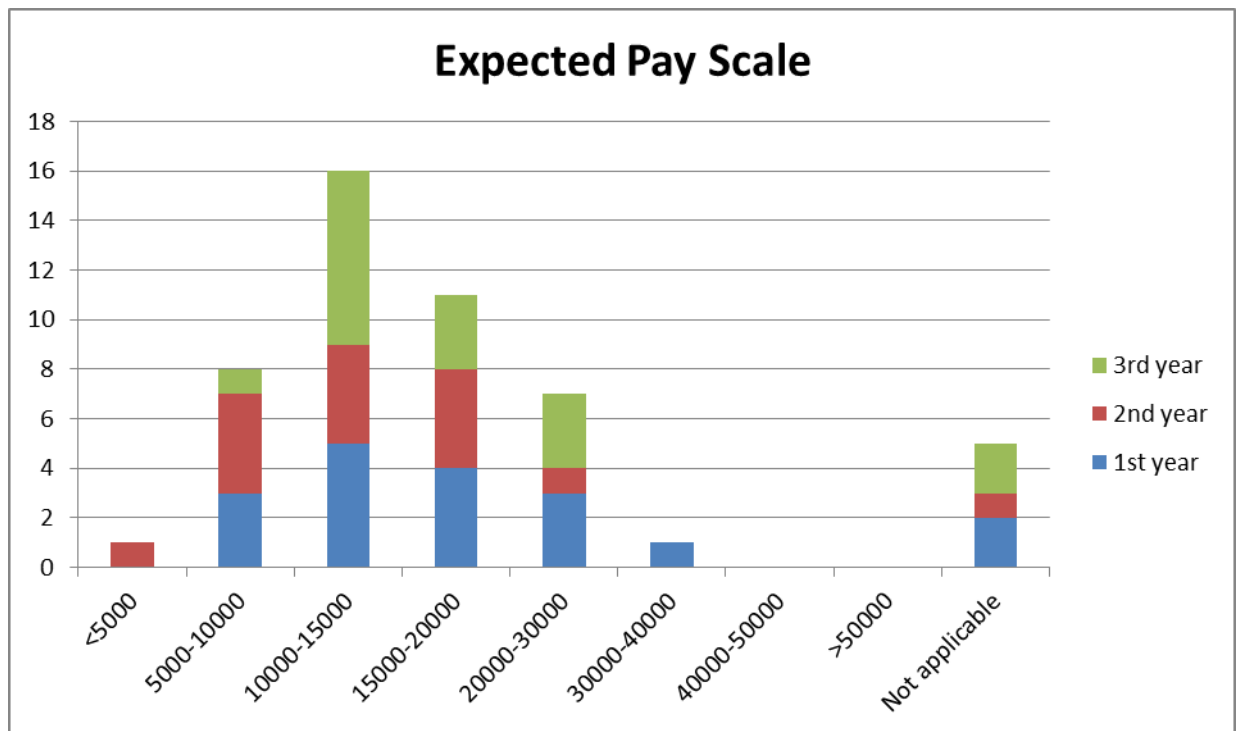


Figure 6

8. If you are hoping to enter paid ministry what do you expect will be provided for you by your employer in addition to your salary? (Pick as many as you like).

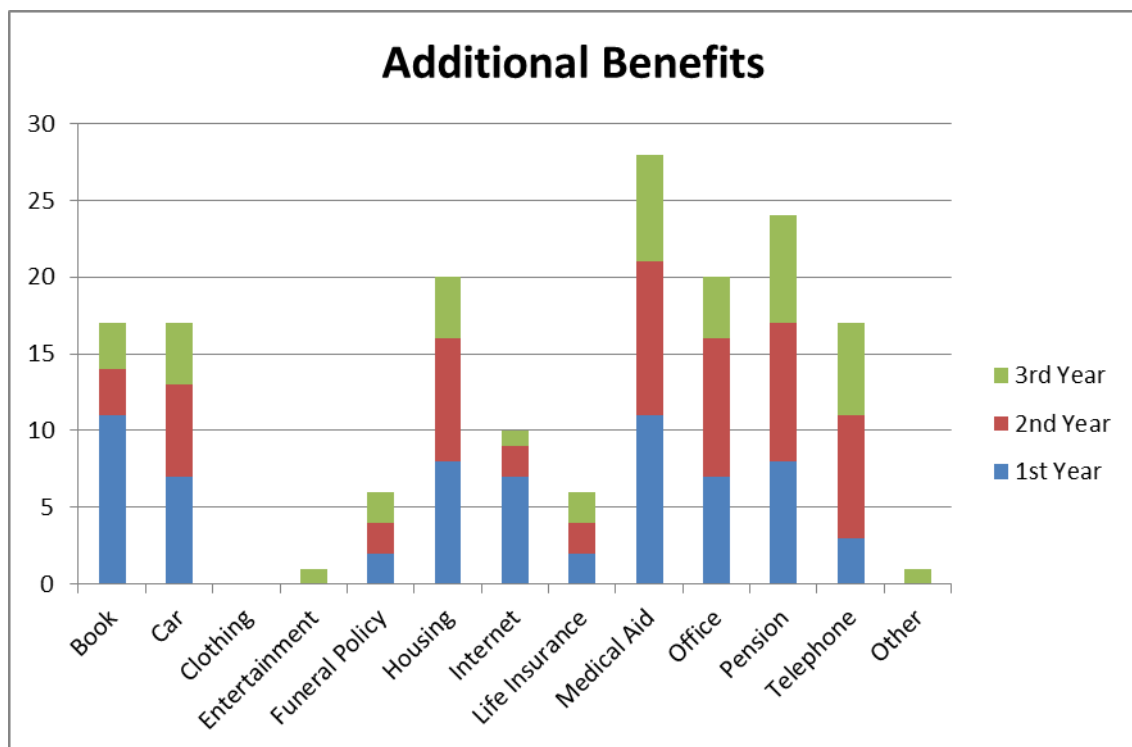


Figure 7

Over 75% of the students who answered questions 7 and 8 (Figures 6 and 7) indicated that they hope to be paid in excess of R10,000 per month. 19 of the students (33%) had an expectation of being paid in excess of R15,000 per month. Almost all students had an expectation of significant additional benefits being provided by their employers as well. These benefits include medical aid, pension, office, housing, phone, car and book allocations.

These results indicate a significant gap when compared to the actual pay ranges recommended by REACH-SA at the present moment (Table 1). The denomination recommends that a junior ministry worker, on completion of theological study can expect a **total** package of between R9340-R16020 per month. The actual pay scales granted to ministers are determined by the local congregation and may even be below the recommended range in areas where poverty is significant.

The vast majority of students then had financial expectations significantly higher than the actuals recommended by the denomination. Most expected to be paid at least what the denomination recommends but to also receive significant benefits in addition.

Church Category	Rector	Minister	Junior Minister	Junior Ministry Worker	Apprentice
Small	21490-36840	17750-30440	14020-24030	9340-16020	2670-5010
Medium	24440-41890	21490-36840	14020-24030	9340-16020	2670-5010
Large	29440-50460	24440-41890	14020-24030	9340-16020	2670-5010

Table 1

9. Do you expect ministry (whether paid or unpaid) to be...?

Figure 8 indicates students' expectations with regards to their expected future experience of ministry. Most students expected ministry to be hard, stressful; with a lesser expectation that they would encounter pressure. Coupled with this they also anticipated that ministry would be rewarding, satisfying and glorious. Hidden in these statistics may be an important indicator of potential failure. Almost no students expected ministry to be boring. This may indicate an

expectation of constant and regular (perhaps even dramatic) action in daily ministry; students may not be prepared for the slow and painstaking building work of pastoral ministry.

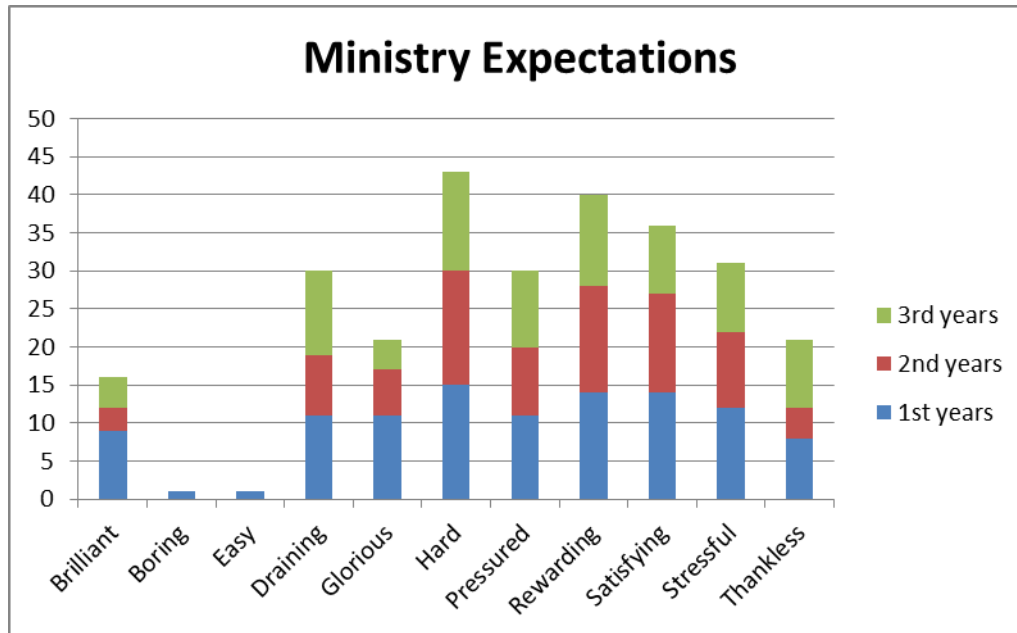


Figure 8

i. Suffering Expectations

The final group of questions sought to discover what expectations the students have with regards to suffering.

10. If you hope to enter ministry of some sort which of the following would you expect to experience at some point in your ministry. (Pick as many as you like)

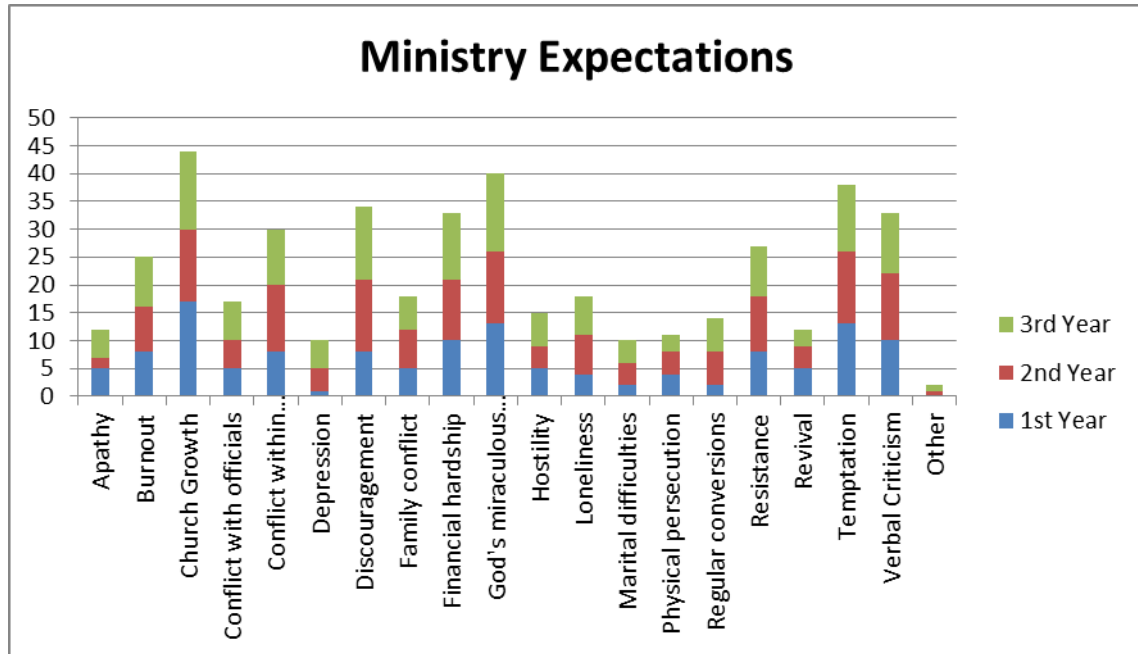


Figure 9

11. What suffering do you think might cause you to leave ministry? (Pick as many as you like)

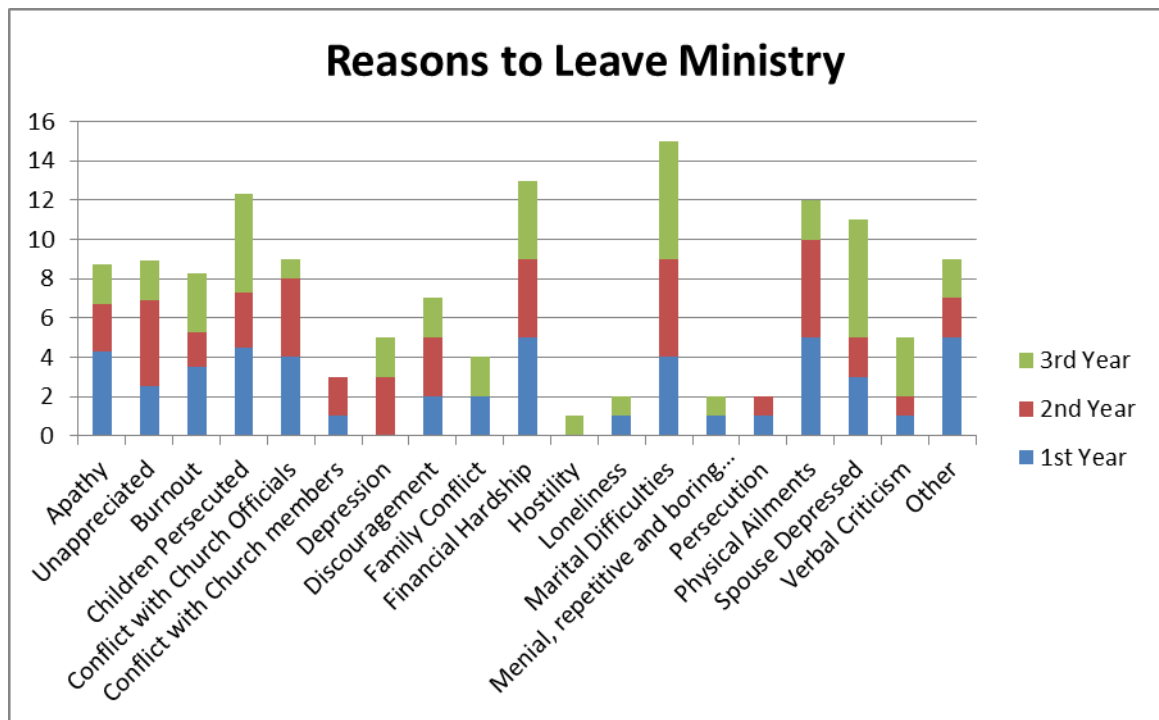


Figure 10

The answers given to questions 10 and 11 (figures 9, 10) indicate that students had a significant expectation of encountering suffering in their ministries. The initial hypothesis of this research thus proved to be incorrect. The researcher had anticipated that students would have little expectation of suffering. A significant portion however expected discouragement, financial hardship, conflict and temptation. Many even anticipated the possibility of burnout. Coupled with their expectation of suffering most expected to see God working in a miraculous way, they anticipated church growth but curiously, they had little expectation of regular conversions or revival. It is presumed that much of their anticipation of God's miraculous intervention then is perceived to be in the area of financial provision. Few students had an expectation of marital difficulties during the course of their ministries.

The dramatic conclusion in our research comes in the comparison of figure 9 with figure 10. Although students had an expectation of suffering, far fewer of them anticipated that this suffering would or could cause them to leave ministry. In comparison to their expectation of suffering most expected that they would be able to handle the suffering and remain in ministry. Those that did anticipate

factors causing them to leave ministry listed family pressures, financial pressures or health difficulties as the most likely reasons for leaving. Few anticipated that the major factors of conflict and expectations might cause them to leave ministry. Most students expect some form of suffering but it seems that they over-anticipate their ability to endure this suffering; which in turn means that they give little thought to perseverance in ministry.

12. When you think about suffering which statements best describe your theological view. (Pick as many as you like)

Question 12 was designed to infiltrate the students' theological worldview in order to determine whether a theodicy of optimism was present in their understanding or whether their worldview was closer to that presented by the Bible. The answers given (figure 11) reinforce the conclusions reached from question 10. Students have a reasonable expectation of suffering and their theological worldview with respect to suffering is largely Biblically accurate. Encouragingly there was almost no acceptance of the propositions that would indicate a theodicy of optimism or a large scale embracing of prosperity doctrines.

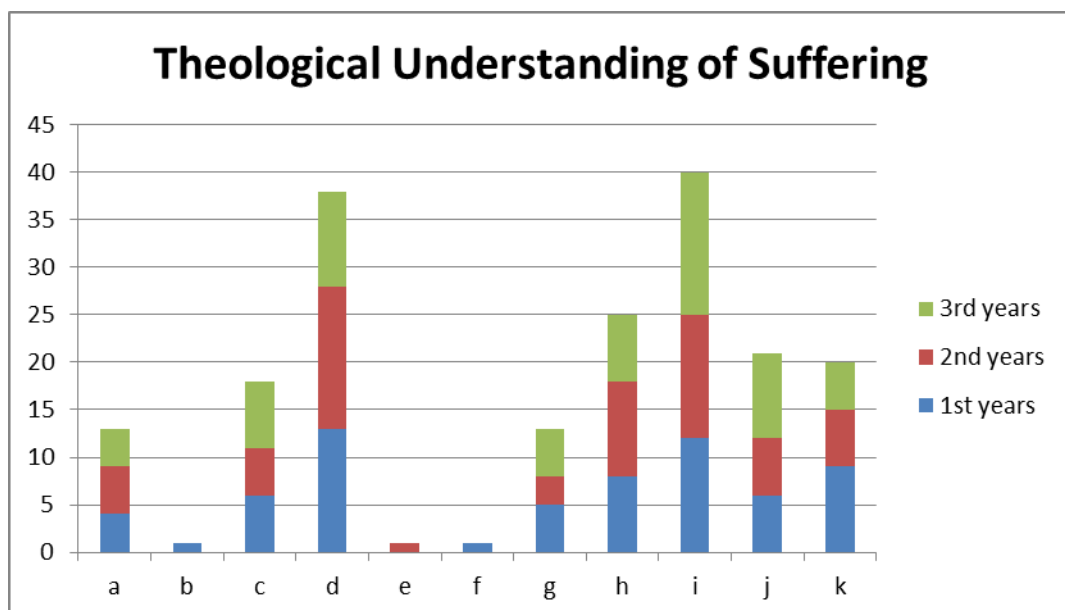


Figure 11

- a. Suffering teaches us that God loves us
- b. God does not desire his people to suffer now
- c. Suffering is as a result of sin
- d. Suffering is an essential part of the Christian life
- e. Suffering can be avoided by prayer and faith
- f. Suffering comes because of a lack of faith
- g. The world is a battle field between the equal forces of good and evil
- h. Suffering is essential for the gospel to advance
- i. God brings suffering on his people to grow them to maturity
- j. Suffering is to be embraced
- k. Suffering is to be a cause of joy

13. Do you think you are being well prepared in your training at GWC to face suffering

The final question sought to determine whether students felt they were being adequately prepared to face suffering. The answers given by the first year students were omitted as it was felt they had not spent enough time at the college to be able to adequately answer the question.

The answers given by the students (figure 12) were heavily weighted at either extreme. Some felt strongly that they were very well prepared; while others felt strongly that they were not prepared.

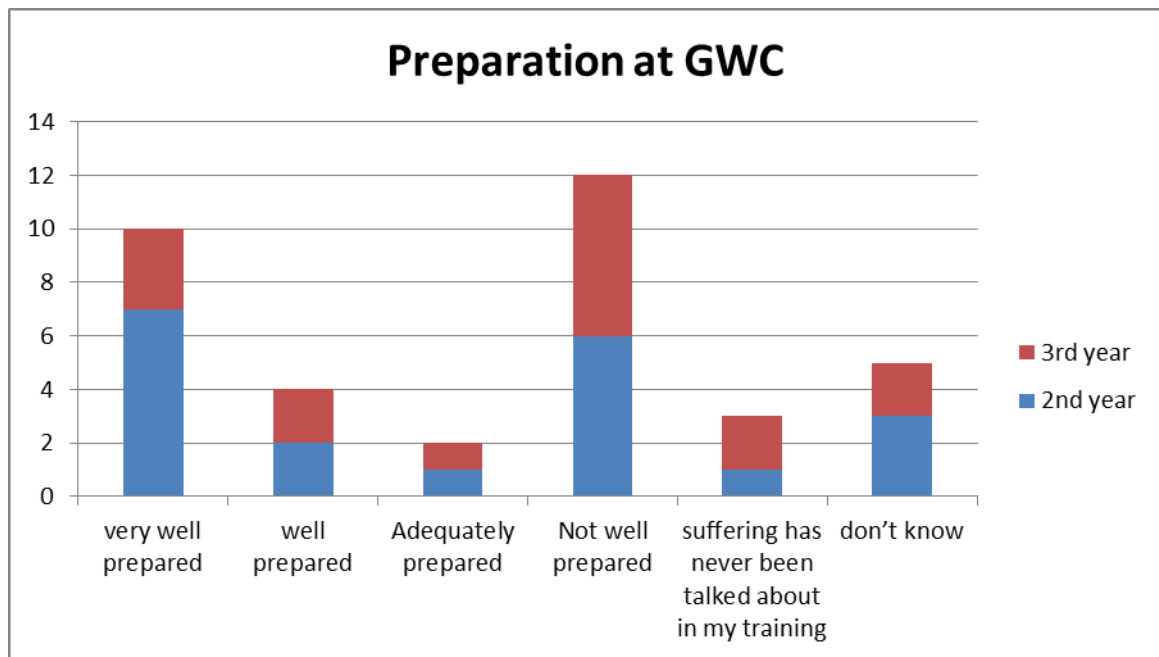


Figure 12

a. Faculty Research

Research with the faculty of GWC followed similar lines to that undertaken with the students. The research questionnaire was modified as it was thought that it was unnecessary to explore the faculty's demographics and theological position. It was presumed that all staff members hold a theological persuasion that is Reformed, Anglican and Evangelical in its outlook. The faculty's nationalities are known, 6 of the faculty are South African, one British and one Australian. It was also decided not to ask any questions relating to the demographics of the faculty. This may have been a mistake as a question about age may very well have given insight into the amount of suffering actually experienced by the faculty.

The research was conducted at a faculty meeting held on the 10th March 2014. Seven questions were put to the staff (Appendix B) on that day. Seven questionnaires were completed of a total of 8 full time faculty members. The principal himself was not present at the meeting but this was not thought to materially affect the results.

1. *What words would you use to describe your own personal experience of ministry? (Pick as many as you like)*

The faculty's personal experience of ministry (figure 13) reflected many similarities to that expected by the students. The faculty however indicated a far deeper satisfaction for ministry (in the middle of suffering) than was anticipated by the students.

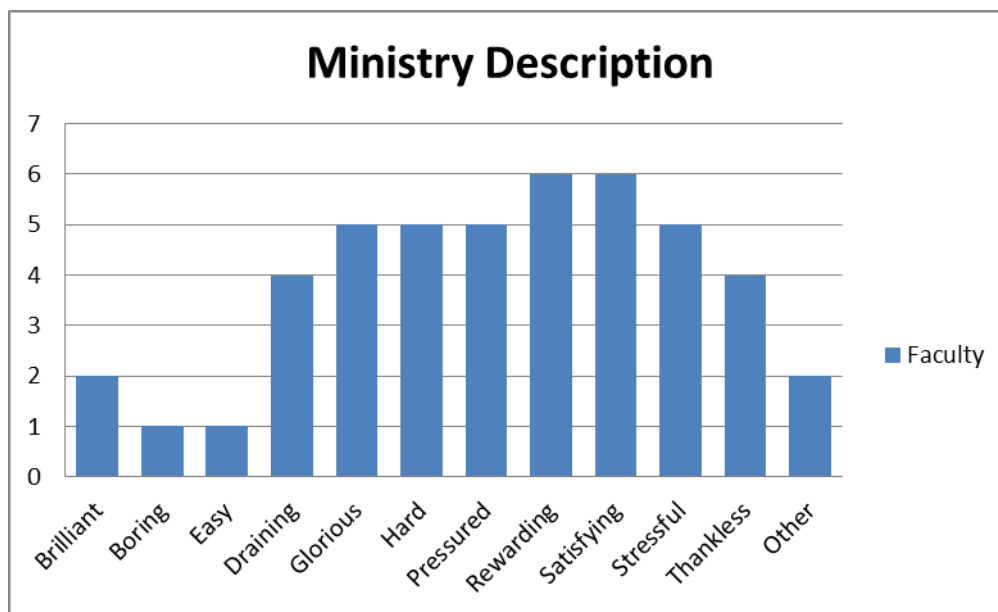


Figure 13

2. *Have you experienced any of the following at some point in your ministry? (Pick as many as you like)*

The faculty's experience of ministry was found to reflect many similarities with the student's expectations although some differences were noted. All faculty members had experienced verbal criticism; and most had personal experience of God's miraculous provision. A significant difference occurred at the point of church growth; only some faculty had encountered church growth in their ministries, compared to a high anticipation of growth by the students. This probably reflects the reality of church in the developed world and the South African context from which the faculty come. Willimon (2002:321) lists one of

the factors for clergy leaving ministry as a loss of morale when they are serving in circumstances of decline.

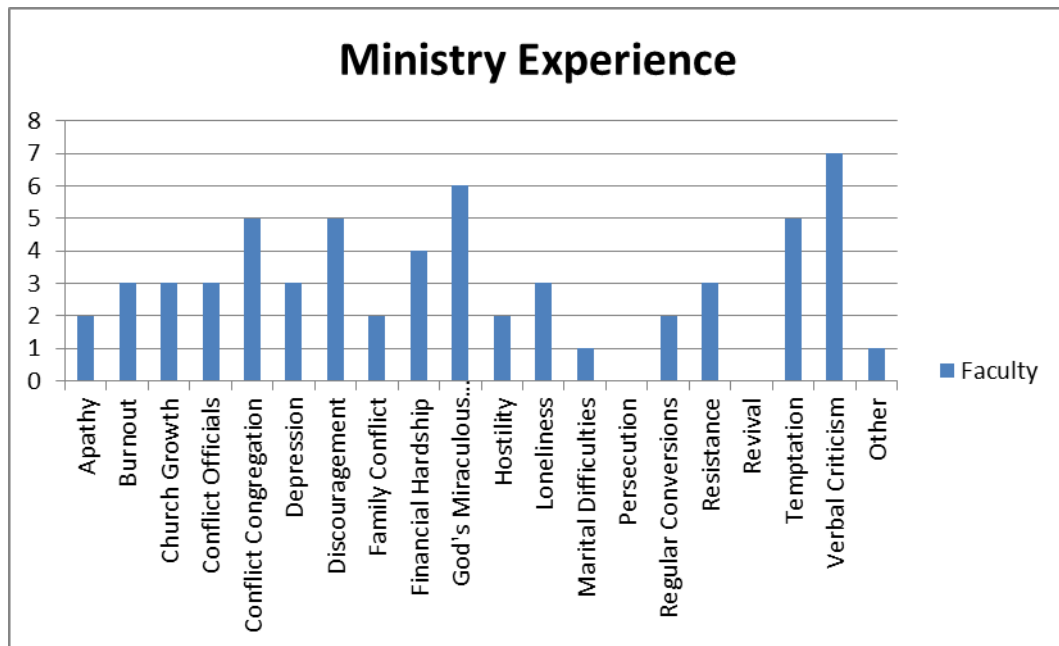


Figure 14

3. *What suffering do you think might cause you to leave ministry? (Pick as many as you like)*

Figure 15 indicates what factors the faculty considered might cause them to leave ministry. The most significant factors were thought to be marital and family pressures. The second major set of factors that the faculty thought might make them leave ministry were personal and physical pressures such as burnout, depression and physical ailments. The faculty had no expectation that conflict might cause them to leave ministry. Although all faculty members had experienced verbal criticism none thought this would cause them to leave ministry.

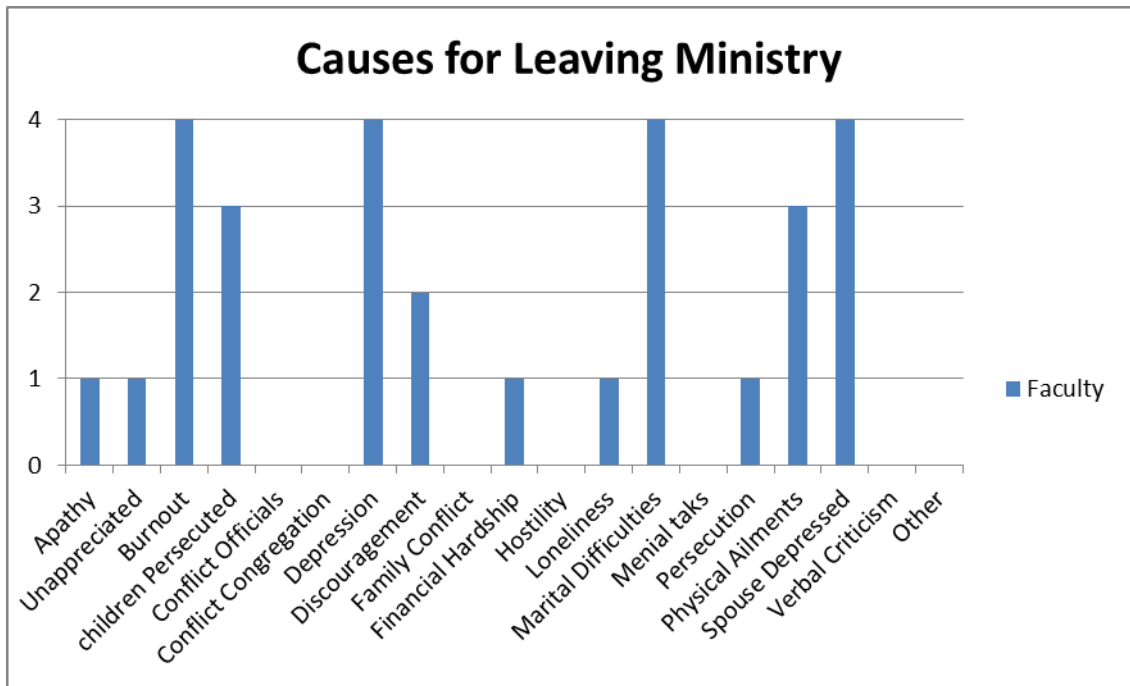


Figure 15

4. *When you think about suffering, which statements best describe your theological view? (Pick as many as you like)*

Figure 16 indicates the faculty's theological understanding of suffering. This was very similar to that exhibited by the students and reflects a Biblical theodicy rather than a theodicy of optimism.

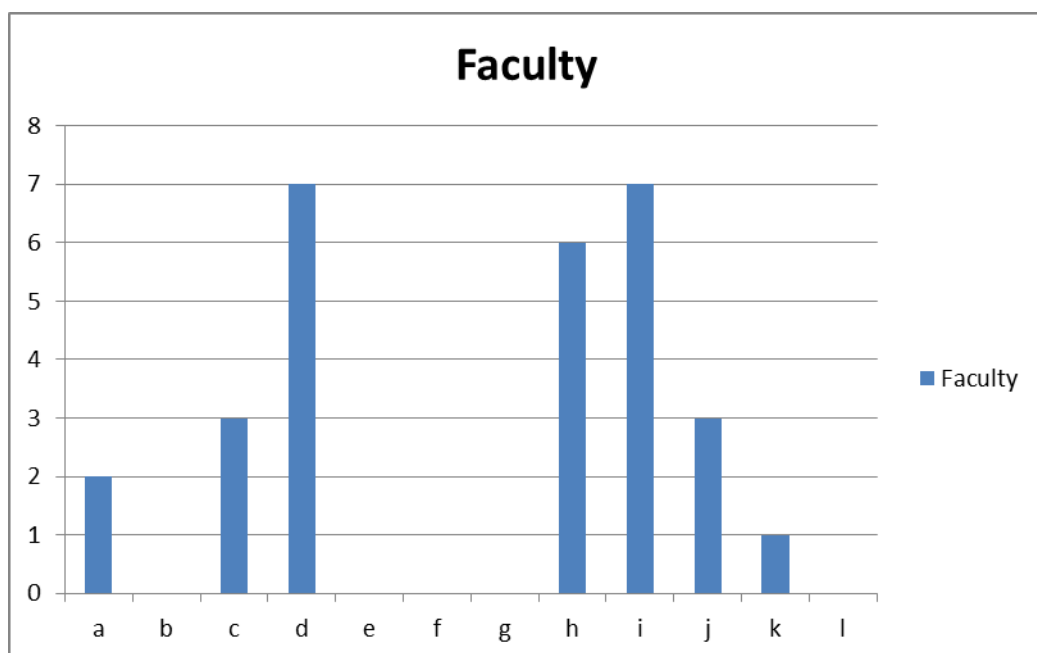


Figure 16

- a. Suffering teaches us that God loves us
 - b. God does not desire his people to suffer now
 - c. Suffering is as a result of sin
 - d. Suffering is an essential part of the Christian life
 - e. Suffering can be avoided by prayer and faith
 - f. Suffering comes because of a lack of faith
 - g. The world is a battle field between the equal forces of good and evil
 - h. Suffering is essential for the gospel to advance
 - i. God brings suffering on his people to grow them to maturity
 - j. Suffering is to be embraced
 - k. Suffering is to be a cause of joy
 - l. Other
5. *In your own theological understanding, how big is the theme of suffering in the Bible?*

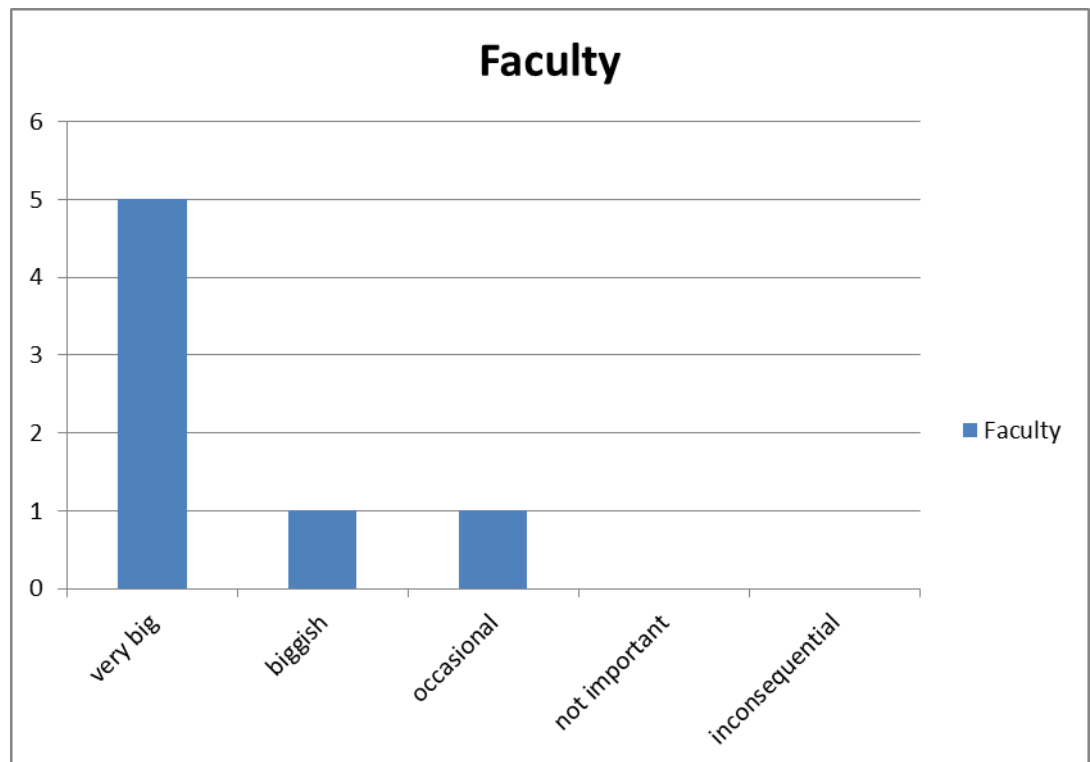


Figure 17

6. *In the courses that you teach, do you teach on suffering?*

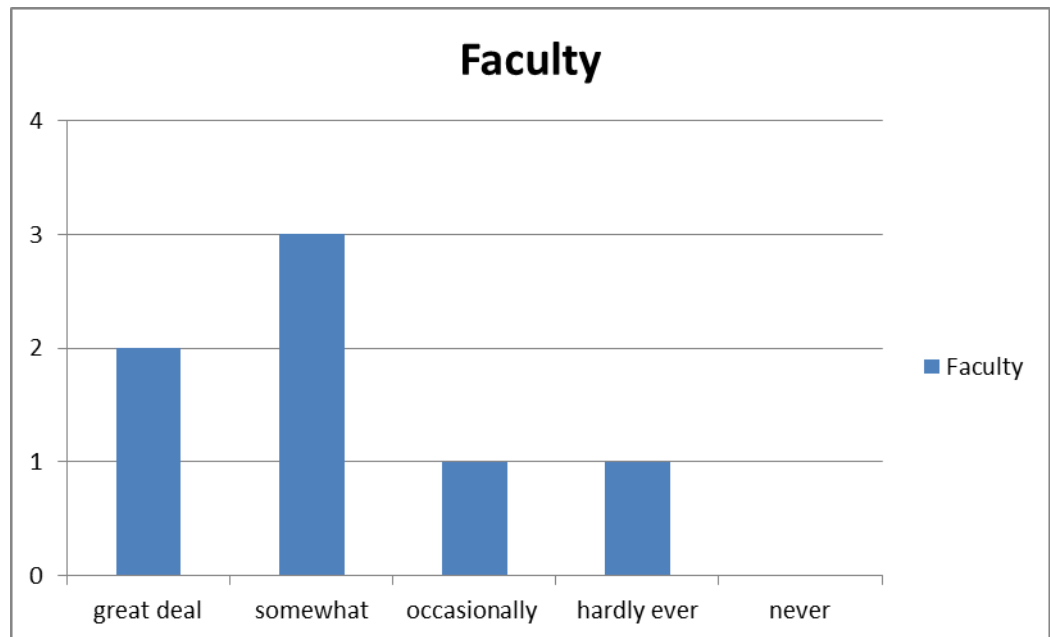


Figure 18

7. *How well do you think GWC prepares its students to face suffering in pastoral ministry?*

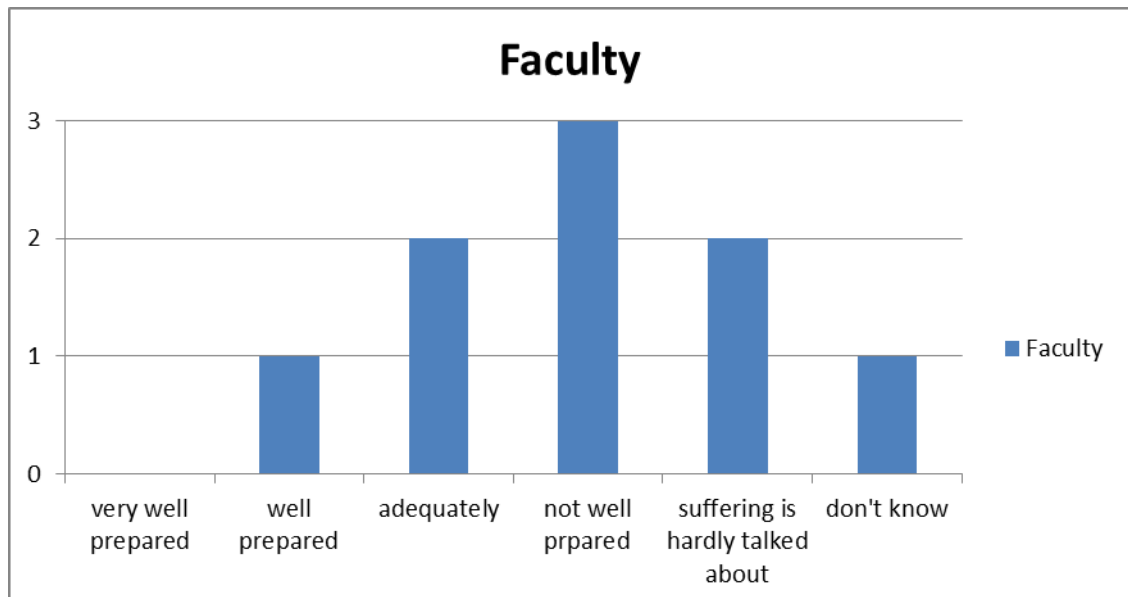


Figure 19

The final group of questions, numbered 5,6,7 (figures 17,18,19) were designed to understand how large the theme of suffering is in the minds of the faculty, how much they teach on the theme and how well they feel they are doing as a faculty to help the students prepare for the suffering they will experience. All felt that the theme of suffering was significant in the scriptures and most taught on it. Curiously however they also felt that they weren't doing a good job in preparing the students to face suffering¹³.

b. Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to discover whether trainees for gospel ministry in REACH-SA have an expectation of suffering and a willingness to suffer in gospel ministry. A part of the initial hypothesis proved to be partially incorrect. In that initial hypothesis it was anticipated that students would have little expectation of suffering in ministry. It was found that students and faculty did in fact expect suffering in ministry *and* also expected that they would be able to endure it.

The second part of our initial hypothesis proved to be absolutely correct. Students have an expectation that ministry will provide them with an above average, middle-class standard of living. Their financial expectations exceed the reality thus creating the real potential for disappointment. REACH-SA's salary scales are updated annually and reflect market forces for comparable responsibilities and work. Attention needs to be given to addressing financial expectations in the training of candidates.

This research also set itself the goal of determining what experience of suffering and what attitudes towards suffering do those training others at GWC have? The research endeavoured to explore whether the attitude and expectation of suffering is deeply understood by those training the leaders of the church and whether this is encouraged in the lives of trainees. The desire was to find out

¹³ Figure 19 indicates more than 7 responses as some faculty indicated more than one response; when this happened all responses were tabulated.

how trainees are being helped and taught to understand that ministry involves suffering, so that these trainees are better able to anticipate and endure suffering. The research found that the faculty have grasped the importance of this theme and do teach on it in order to prepare students for ministry.

Chapter 5

Strategic Action and Practical Suggestions

5.1. Introduction

The task of pastoral ministry is immensely complex. The pastor needs to master theology but theology is only a small component of the many skills required for the successful undertaking of the task. Willimon describes the complexity of the task when he says (2002:308),

Pastors visit, speak, study, pray and preside in activities that require the mastery of a whole range of physical, mental, and emotional skills. Learning to be a pastor is a complex process of learning the “moves” of ministry, bending one’s life to the practices, conforming body and mind to the demands of the craft.

The complexity of the task means that the pastor is tempted to listen to many voices, each voice declaring a different solution for the successful undertaking of this complex task. The purpose of this research has been to contribute to the dialogue on how to train pastors better in order for their endurance, perseverance and success in the task of ministry. A significant majority of pastors feel that they have been inadequately trained (Statistics in the Ministry 2014) and the hope of this research has been to contribute to the process of improving this training. Enormous sums of money are spent on training men and women for gospel ministry and this research hopes to contribute to improving this process.

A number of conclusions present themselves as a result of this research.

5.2. Teach on Suffering: Help them Endure

In the Roman Catholic rite of Ordination the priest to be ordained lies prostrate on the floor of the cathedral, face down, arms outstretched in the form of a

cross in order to remind those present that ministry requires death and suffering (Willimon 2002:288). The apostle Paul in his final letter to Timothy emphasises that suffering is to be expected and endured in the task of ministry. This charge from the apostle echoed Jesus own teaching that suffering is an integral component of the Christian life. The cross stands as the symbol of discipleship. In this research it was apparent that trainees did have an expectation of suffering but over anticipated their own ability to endure it. The training of pastors needs to include training on suffering in order to offset the false teaching in the world, as well as training on ways to stand firm under the pressure. It needs to emphasise an understanding of suffering as an integral component of Christian discipleship for all, as well as an integral component of ministry. In the Western world where material comfort is seen as a right, Christianity subtly starts to take on the characteristics of its society. It forgets that to be a Christian is not normal, nor safe, but rather foolish and dangerous. It forgets that (Piper 2003:ix-xi),

“At the center of Christianity and the center of the pastoral life is the dishonourable, foolish gruesome and utterly glorious reality of the tortured God-Man Jesus Christ...”

This training on suffering needs to include a number of attributes.

5.2.1. Teach them the Bible

Chief amongst the tools used for this training must be the inspired Scriptures. When the Scriptures are taught, trainers need to take care not to present a sub-biblical, western-value driven exegesis that de-emphasises the place of suffering. Trainees need to be challenged not to be emotionally fragile but resolute in enduring hardship. They need to be encouraged to be willing to embrace the Pauline call to Timothy to remember the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of the apostle (2 Tim 2:9). Trainees are to be encouraged to keep their eyes on Jesus who endured the cross and scorned its shame (Heb 12:2,3). They must be encouraged to not grow weary and lose heart (Heb 12:2,3).

Trainees need to be taught the normalness of suffering in the life of the Christian. They must be encouraged to embrace persecution and scorn (2 Tim 3:12); to expect it; to examine it and to endure it. They must be challenged not to soften the message of the gospel in the face of opposition (MacArthur 1995:32). Carmichael describes this attitude that should be prevalent in the Christian when she (2011:30) says,

“Let us not be surprised when we have to face difficulties. When the wind blows hard on a tree, the roots stretch and grow the stronger, let it be so with us. Let us not be weaklings, yielding to every wind that blows, but strong in spirit to resist.”

In a world where not all will personally experience terrible suffering and intense persecution, trainees can be encouraged to stand with those who do. Suffering can take many different forms. It can either be the life of martyrdom or the life of long, wearisome, constant and faithful service. Whatever its form trainees should be encouraged to not turn back (Luke 9:62) but rather to encourage (Heb 10:24,25) each other along the journey of ministry. They can personally embrace suffering as they pray and partner with those who do, sacrificially contributing to the needs of others.

5.2.2. Get them to read history and biography

A second tool in the armour of the trainer is the story of the development of the kingdom of God. As trainees are immersed in history they will be taught and strengthened by those who have come before them, they will be strengthened by the fellowship of the living and the dead (Piper 2003:90). Trainees should be encouraged to read the lives and history of the church and remember the sufferings of those that have preceded them. Trainees should be challenged to read biography and history as well as theology. This will encourage a world view that is more in tune with the truths of the scriptures and the experience of the church than that presented by Western secular media.

5.2.3. *Remind them it is war*

Seldom is pastoral ministry understood or presented in the categories of war and conflict. Seldom is the church perceived to be the battle field on which the plan of God is played out. Driscoll (2010:60) describes the pastor as,

“Covered in the blood and mud of the spiritual warfare that rages in the local church...”

Pastoral ministry can be perceived as peaceful, comfortable and suburban. In these peaceful, suburban settings it can be easy to forget that ministry is war. Ministry is the way in which the kingdom of God advances against the kingdom of darkness. Trainees should be encouraged to prepare for war, to expect war and to be ready to fight. Too often ministry training is simply perceived as intellectual skills needed in order to handle theology without sufficient emphasis given to the personal and corporate battles that rage around the minister.

5.2.4. *Teach them joy in suffering and the hope of glory*

The counter-cultural witness of the apostle Paul is the witness of joy in the midst of suffering. His life is characterised by constant pressure, troubles, hardship and distress (2 Cor 6:3f) yet despite this he describes himself as always rejoicing (2 Cor 6:10). Suffering is something not only to be endured but also to be rejoiced in as the disciple hopes for glory. The apostles rejoiced that they had been counted worthy of suffering for Christ (Acts 5:41, Phil 1:29, 1 Peter 1:6,8) and looked forward to another day (Phil 3:10,11; 1 Peter 4:13). Suffering is a sign of sonship (Rom 8:17), it is a sign of God's ongoing commitment to fruitfulness (John 15:1) and it is a sign of perseverance in the kingdom of God (Luke 10:62). Suffering is to be embraced and rejoiced in because it holds out the prospect of glory to be revealed (Rom 8:18), the prospect of transformation into the likeness of Jesus (Rom 8:29) and the prospect of maturity in Christ (Col 1:28).

5.2.5. Teach them the presence of Christ in suffering

As Jesus commissions his disciples for the task of mission he teaches them about himself. He reminds them that (Matt 28:18),

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

He commands them to undertake the task of mission (Matt 28:19), and he reminds them that in this task he is with them (Matt 28:20),

“Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Trainees need to be reminded of the glorious promises of Jesus’ presence in the sufferings encountered on the task. When Jesus speaks of imprisonment and persecution (Matt 10:19, Mark 13:11) he promises them the presence of his Holy Spirit. Trainees are to be encouraged in the presence of Christ through his Spirit and to rely on him in prayer; through this they will be enabled to endure.

5.2.6. Teach them that the gospel only advances with suffering

Tertullian in his *Apologeticus* observed that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. As church history has progressed the advance of the gospel has almost always been watered by the suffering of the saints of God. The gospel has seldom advanced by people being committed to ease and safety. The verbal proclamation of the gospel needs to be accompanied by a deep willingness and commitment to suffering alongside it. Trainees need to be taught that they must be willing to lay down their lives, their possessions, their families and their safety for their Lord (Nathan 2006).

5.3. Teach on Money: Address Expectations

It is clear from this research that there exists a significant disconnection between trainees’ financial expectations and the actual financial remuneration that they will receive. Modern society is entranced by the rich and famous. The subtle lure of materialism is strong, constant and ever pervasive. Modern

society urges people to reject financial suffering and instead to embrace and aspire to physical comfort and prosperity. As South Africa emerges from the bondage of Apartheid the dominant social dialogue is that of economic liberation. This dialogue is vital for the continued transformation and development of a previously oppressive society. It is almost impossible for any member of a society not to imbibe aspects of the current social dialogue and incorporate it into their own personal expectations. The Apostle Paul reminds Timothy to be willing to endure hardship (2 Tim 2:3); amongst these hardships that must be embraced is that of financial pressure. The minister must be willing to stand against the love of money in society and within his or her own heart (2 Tim 3:1-5). It is clear from this that trainees need to be given training in the area of money. They need to be trained at both a macro and a micro level.

At a macro level it is essential that trainees are taught to consider their own value system regarding money. More research is needed in order to better understand the financial values that drive trainees' expectations. They need to be taught the Bible's understanding and expectations with respect to money and be helped to apply these values in their lives. Trainees need to be encouraged to think about the complexities of ministry in a country where vast socio-economic differences exist. Some may find themselves much poorer or much richer than the communities in which they are called to serve. They should be challenged to consider their values and attitudes with respect to money, suffering, generosity and idolatry. The apostle Paul was willing to preach the gospel without any financial remuneration (2 Cor 11:7); he moved freely between self-support, accepting support from others to serve one community and accepting support from the local community all in order to enable the gospel to advance. These values need to be cultivated in all those seeking to serve in pastoral ministry.

At a micro level trainees should be given tools to help them with their own personal use of money. They need to be given skills in budgeting and the management of money. They should be taught how to raise money in ministry; this is especially true for those that will embark on the task of church planting;

as well as those who will minister in poorer and rural contexts where they will have to raise a significant portion of their own financial support

5.4. Conclusion – Suffering as Victory

The cross stands in the centre of the plan of God. It is the symbol of the kingdom of God, it reveals the character of God and it contains within it the call of God to discipleship. In its pain, suffering and defeat it paradoxically contains its victory. The plan of God stands in stark contrast to the desires of the human heart. The human desire for power, ease and comfort resident within our hearts and reinforced by a society committed to these values surreptitiously robs the church of its power and witness.

Willimon (2002:290) says,

“Gradually to lose heart out of sheer boredom at the triviality of the church is to fail for the wrong reason. To be crushed because we put too much confidence in the approval of people or the praise of the world is failure not worth having. But to have failed in the manner of Jesus on the cross, to lie prostrate on the floor, arms outstretched in cruciform, to have confronted the world with the good news of Christ only to have the world fling it back in our face - this is the cross that is the pastor’s crown.”

All pastors (and especially trainees) need to be reminded, taught and constantly encouraged to embrace the call of Jesus to deny themselves, to take up their cross and to follow him (Mat 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23). Ministers need to be taught that hardship is normal and they need to be encouraged to endure it (2 Tim 1:8, 2:3, 3:12, 4:5) remembering that it is the cross that is the pastor’s crown.

As Charles Simeon came to the end of his life he was asked by his friend Joseph Gurney how he had endured in ministry under immense suffering and provocation. He said (Moule 1948:155f),

“My dear brother, we must not mind a little suffering for Christ’s sake. When I am getting through a hedge, if my head and shoulders are safely through, I can bear the pricking of my legs. Let us rejoice in the remembrance that our holy Head has surmounted all His suffering and triumphed over death. Let us follow Him patiently; we shall soon be partakers of His victory.”

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Appendix A

Student Research Survey

1. What year of study are you in?
 - a. 1st
 - b. 2nd
 - c. 3rd
 - d. Other

2. What is your home country?

3. How old are you?

4. What words would you use to describe your church affiliation? (Pick as many as you like)
 - a. African-Independent
 - b. Anglican
 - c. Anglo-Catholic
 - d. Arminian
 - e. Baptist
 - f. Charismatic
 - g. Dispensationalist
 - h. Evangelical
 - i. Free Church
 - j. Independent
 - k. Methodist
 - l. Pentecostal
 - m. Presbyterian
 - n. Reformed
 - o. Other.....

5. What type of ministry do you hope to embark upon when you finish your theological studies?
 - a. Full time paid pastoral ministry in REACH – SA (CESA).

- b. Full time paid ministry in another Anglican Denomination
- c. Full time paid ministry in a non-Anglican denomination.
- d. Full time paid work in some other Christian organisation eg NGO, para-church
- e. Mission work.
- f. Part time semi-paid ministry.
- g. Return to secular work and conduct ministry as a lay person.
- h. Other.

6. How long do you hope to be in the ministry you have indicated above?

- a. All my life
- b. A significant portion of my life
- c. A few years
- d. Not long
- e. None of the above

7. If you are hoping to enter paid ministry what do you expect to be paid? (A teacher entering employment in South Africa would be paid about R20,000 per month)

- a. < R5,000 per month
- b. Between R5,000 and R10,000 per month
- c. Between R10,000 and R15,000 per month
- d. Between R15,000 and R20,000 per month
- e. Between R20,000 and R30,000 per month
- f. Between R30,000 and R40,000 per month
- g. Between R40,000 and R50,000 per month
- h. More than R50,000 per month
- i. Not Applicable

8. If you are hoping to enter paid ministry what do you expect will be provided for you by your employer in addition to your salary? (Pick as many as you like).

- a. Book allowance
- b. Car or Car allowance
- c. Clothing allowance
- d. Entertainment allowance
- e. Funeral Policy

- f. Housing
- g. Internet/Computer allowance
- h. Life insurance
- i. Medical aid
- j. Office
- k. Pension
- l. Telephone/Cell phone allowance
- m. Other

9. Do you expect ministry (whether paid or unpaid) to be... (Pick as many as you like)

- a. Brilliant
- b. Boring
- c. Easy
- d. Draining
- e. Glorious
- f. Hard
- g. Pressured
- h. Rewarding
- i. Satisfying
- j. Stressful
- k. Thankless

10. If you hope to enter ministry of some sort which of the following would you expect to experience at some point in your ministry. (Pick as many as you like)

- a. Apathy
- b. Burnout
- c. Church growth
- d. Conflict with church officials (eg bishops, moderators)
- e. Conflict with members of your congregation
- f. Depression
- g. Discouragement
- h. Family conflict
- i. Financial hardship
- j. God's miraculous provision
- k. Hostility
- l. Loneliness
- m. Marital difficulties
- n. Physical persecution
- o. Regular Conversions

- p. Resistance
- q. Revival
- r. Temptation
- s. Verbal criticism
- t. Other.....

11. What suffering do you think might cause you to leave ministry? (Pick as many as you like)

- a. Apathy by your congregation
- b. Being unappreciated
- c. Burnout
- d. Children persecuted
- e. Conflict with church officials (eg bishops, moderators etc)
- f. Conflict with members of your congregation
- g. Depression
- h. Discouragement
- i. Family conflict
- j. Financial hardship
- k. Hostility
- l. Loneliness
- m. Marital difficulties
- n. Menial, repetitive or boring tasks
- o. Persecution
- p. Physical Ailments
- q. Spouse depressed
- r. Verbal criticism
- s. Other.....

12. When you think about suffering which statements best describe your theological view. (Pick as many as you like)

- a. Suffering teaches us that God loves us
- b. God does not desire his people to suffer now
- c. Suffering is as a result of sin
- d. Suffering is an essential part of the Christian life
- e. Suffering can be avoided by prayer and faith
- f. Suffering comes because of a lack of faith
- g. The world is a battle field between the equal forces of good and evil
- h. Suffering is essential for the gospel to advance
- i. God brings suffering on his people to grow them to maturity
- j. Suffering is to be embraced

k. Suffering is to be a cause of joy

13. Do you think you are being well prepared in your training at GWC to face suffering

- a. Very well prepared
- b. Well prepared
- c. Adequately prepared
- d. Not well prepared
- e. Suffering has never been talked about in my training
- f. Don't know

Appendix B

Research Survey – GWC Faculty

1. What words would you use to describe your own personal experience of ministry? (Pick as many as you like)
 - a. Brilliant
 - b. Boring
 - c. Easy
 - d. Draining
 - e. Glorious
 - f. Hard
 - g. Pressured
 - h. Rewarding
 - i. Satisfying
 - j. Stressful
 - k. Thankless
 - l. Other.....

2. Have you experienced any of the following at some point in your ministry?
(Pick as many as you like)
 - a. Apathy
 - b. Burnout
 - c. Church growth
 - d. Conflict with church officials (eg bishops, moderators)
 - e. Conflict with members of your congregation
 - f. Depression
 - g. Discouragement
 - h. Family conflict
 - i. Financial hardship
 - j. God's miraculous provision
 - k. Hostility
 - l. Loneliness
 - m. Marital difficulties
 - n. Physical persecution
 - o. Regular Conversions
 - p. Resistance
 - q. Revival
 - r. Temptation
 - s. Verbal criticism

- t. Other.....
3. What suffering do you think might cause you to leave ministry? (Pick as many as you like)
- a. Apathy
 - b. Being unappreciated
 - c. Burnout
 - d. Children persecuted
 - e. Conflict with church officials (eg bishops, moderators etc)
 - f. Conflict with members of your congregation
 - g. Depression
 - h. Discouragement
 - i. Family conflict
 - j. Financial hardship
 - k. Hostility
 - l. Loneliness
 - m. Marital difficulties
 - n. Menial, repetitive or boring tasks
 - o. Persecution
 - p. Physical Ailments
 - q. Spouse depressed
 - r. Verbal criticism
 - s. Other.....
4. When you think about suffering, which statements best describe your theological view? (Pick as many as you like)
- a. Suffering teaches us that God loves us
 - b. God does not desire his people to suffer now
 - c. Suffering is as a result of sin
 - d. Suffering is an essential part of the Christian life
 - e. Suffering can be avoided by prayer and faith
 - f. Suffering comes because of a lack of faith
 - g. The world is a battle field between the equal forces of good and evil
 - h. Suffering is essential for the gospel to advance
 - i. God brings suffering on his people to grow them to maturity
 - j. Suffering is to be embraced
 - k. Suffering is to be a cause of joy
 - l. Other.....
5. In your own theological understanding, how big is the theme of suffering in the Bible?

- a. A very big theme.
 - b. A biggish theme.
 - c. An occasional theme
 - d. Not a terribly important theme
 - e. Inconsequential
6. In the courses that you teach, do you teach on suffering?
- a. A great deal
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Occasionally
 - d. Hardly ever
 - e. Never
7. How well do you think GWC prepares its students to face suffering in pastoral ministry?
- a. Very well prepared
 - b. Well prepared
 - c. Adequately
 - d. Not well prepared
 - e. Suffering is hardly talked about at GWC
 - f. Don't know