Intervention Manual for Episcopal Congregations
Separated from Clergy out of Conflict

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The work is dedicated to the Glory of God
in deep appreciation for and loving memory of
Vyvien Gear
Abstract

This study develops clear guidance to interim leadership in congregations immediately after separation of clergy from conflict. The guidance is offered in manual form intended for use in the Episcopal Church. However, it is expected that the guidance will be useful likewise across denominations and other faith communities.

Five learning units inform the development of a doctoral project. Unit One comprises a reflection on relevant personal experience by engaging the works of René Girard on mimetic theory, violence and scapegoating. This reflection completes the writer’s disengagement from personal events and enables objectivity.

Unit Two examines secondary literature for data on the nature of conflict, and methods of conflict management. Work includes reading data on the nature of societies, family systems, on evolution with implications among humankind. Literature on management and organizational models in the business world are consulted. A Draft Intervention Model (DIM) in longitudinal steps with named assumptions and pre-requisites is the result. The DIM is submitted for peer review.

Unit Three develops a survey tool with interview protocols for action research. Underpinning the data collection is a Theological Vision Statement. Data accrues from survey responses, face-to-face, electronic and phone interviews. Assessment of data begins supplemented by coursework in Grounded Theory Methodology.

Unit Four draws from earlier studies to create the Revised Intervention Model assessed in Unit Five by a review panel of seven experts and practitioners from different social and academic disciplines. The experts provide a written review of the RIM. The outcome is the Final Intervention Model located here in Chapter 4.

This Doctor of Ministry study seeks to answer the question: Does the Intervention Manual for Episcopal Congregations offered here provide clear guidance for individuals called to serve in pastoral leadership for churches separated from clergy out of conflict?
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Chapter 1
Introduction and Purpose

Introduction

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.’

Thesis

The purpose of this doctoral project has been to develop and to provide clear guidance to interim ministers, judicatory leadership, and congregations separated from clergy out of conflict for application in that time immediately following separation. The dissertation lays out the developmental program, the process undertaken to get to the doctoral project and where it stands now in its

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1 Rev. 21:1-7 (NRSV).
current iteration. The intervention manual provided here, formed as it is out of the reworking of intervention paradigms, is not the final nor is it the only word on the subject. This is not a positivistic study. It never has been. The work requires context and subjectivity. It is narrational in scope and post-modern in approach, giving testimony as authoritative from tested methods. The work is autobiographical in perspective.

The intervention is a narrative model containing advice drawn from many resources. Among the resources are personal experience and secondary literature on the subject. Data comes from training courses for interim ministry and mediation/reconciliation work, from social research study, from survey data and from interviews.

Backstory-An Autobiographical Account

The vestry meeting on the evening of Wednesday, June 8, 2005, was going to be difficult. We all knew that. As the rector of the Church of Our Saviour, I had been under attack for more than six months. The leader of the antagonists had marshalled her forces among members of the vestry and retreated to her summer vacation spot on an island back east. They were ready; I was not. I called
the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and the games began. In two short hours, I had been assailed by three members of the vestry.

Three members of the twelve were driving the discussions. They were prepared and operated efficiently on the attack. None of the other members offered any defense on my behalf. It felt very much like a trial at which there were no witnesses for the defense. I was lonely. By the end of the evening, the woman seated immediately to my right commented that the experience must have been difficult for me. I replied, “It makes me wonder why I ever wanted to be ordained in the first place.”

Driving home was challenging. I could barely see through the tears of anger and frustration from the humiliation. After a fitful sleep, the next morning I awoke to phone the bishop’s person-in-charge-of-such-things, his canon for the ordinary. I told him of my experience and informed him that I was never going back into that parish again. After the months of conflict, during which I gained over fifty pounds, I sat for hours in the dark with a knotted up stomach, and drank far too much, it had come to this. Here was not only a crisis of my sense of call, this was also a severe test of my faith. I could not fathom why people could behave this way.

While it was true that my faith had taken a substantial hit and my determination to leave the priesthood real, it was also true that I had two tasks
before me that required my priestly presence—two places I would need to be that I could not in good conscience cancel at this late date. I was to officiate and celebrate a wedding on the following Saturday. My presence was necessary for the rehearsal on the Friday evening before and all day Saturday. The irony cannot go unnoticed that I was also the designated preacher for the diocesan-wide confirmation service and reception of new members celebration on that same Saturday morning to be held at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco. I could escape from neither of these events without creating undue hardship on others who were counting on me.

Recovery and Change of Focus

Something happened during the events on Saturday that turned me away from the pathway towards bitterness and towards joy. By many accounts I preached a powerful sermon that was reported as far away as the east coast, and the two newlyweds were successfully joined. Perhaps my facing down from the elevated ambo of that lofty edifice into the one hundred twenty-five expectant confirmands and their twelve hundred well-wishing friends and family members began to re-open within me God’s voice that lead to my eventual healing and return. Certainly the assembly’s presence in that imposing place constituted an
impressive and collective declaration of faith. The couple joined together in marriage that afternoon along with their families professed their faith. Such outward and visible signs of such inward and spiritual grace could not be ignored. So I did not.

This story continues, and I am well. I have recovered both my sense of call to parish ministry and, far more importantly, my faith. My story is not unique, as many clergy and congregations have experienced similar events that caused them to separate from each other out of conflict. These events are sad events, much like divorce where promises and hopes are broken. What may be somewhat different is the course my life has taken over the years since that summer and autumn of 2005. Through the abundance of God’s grace in many forms and with the helping hands of many people, I am now back serving in a small parish in Michigan. I also have been serving at the diocesan level as advisor to the bishop and one of his deans. My assigned duties over the past several years have been those of investigator into questionable behavior of individuals in parishes and among the clergy in this diocese. I have been involved with clergy formation in the diocese as the chair of our commission on ministry. In that post, I have been made aware, during these years since my arrival here in this diocese, of the various conflicted separations that have occurred here and elsewhere. My perspective as a recovering wounded priest, of
recovery, and now my viewpoint serving at the diocesan level, from the relationship with my current parish, from research and study, all these vantage points have helped to find insight that has informed the substance of this Doctor of Ministry program.

As focus evolved away from the work of personal recovery; the weight from the toil and pain of the experiences lifted, and things began to appear different. From the more recently gained points of perspective and from subsequent research, I have observed with growing concern that congregations left behind afterwards can be and are indeed treated inconsistently—sometimes well, on occasion badly. All that language in scripture of caring for the people, all the stories of healing, all the imagery of the Good Shepherd, even to the crumbs left under the table and the *Talitha koum,* ² all these exhortations to care for the people notwithstanding, the people left behind in congregations after conflict are not always given the ministries they need or deserve. And this is failure—the failure of those of us who ought to know and do better.

This is not universally true, of course. From the interviews associated with this research emerged good news. Lynn Carman Bodden, an instructor with the Interim Ministry Network, shared her knowledge from experience of congregations that have suffered from these troubling events who have fared

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² Mk. 5:41 (NIV).
better than many, even reasonably well. In the course of interviewing with Canons to the Ordinary and during class study for certification in pastoral mediation additional examples of successful efforts were offered in evidence. Deeper research by others may provide substantive data that better quantifies results from intervention after conflict. Such research may prove broadly mixed and reveal dependency on a number of factors including luck. For the scope of this doctoral work, the focus has been more narrowly drawn. Even so, it turns out that a very good example of successful outcomes and one of the better resources for this work has proven to be the very parish I have served for the past six plus years.

This parish was impacted by conflict specific to the elevation of an openly gay priest to the office of bishop in the Diocese of New Hampshire. People here were deeply divided by the affirmation his election received among our diocese and by the support given across the Episcopal Church. Arguments still common in public discourse regarding gender orientation and the Church, about the interpretation and application of scripture especially, were at play here. Conflict, according to standards defined by Speed Leas, reached level four plus—possibly level five.3 Many persons left; clergy were called and left. The situation here developed nearly to the tipping point beyond which the parish could not

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3 Speed Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, (Herndon VA: The Alban Institute, 1985). This seminal work on conflict lays out the five levels clearly.
survive. Many persons in the diocese felt that the church would collapse and fail; many within the congregation feared the same. However, it did not. Their journey continues. They have become a reasonably happy, self-differentiated collective of the faithful. They were ministered to well. During the interim period immediately preceding my call here, they were blessed with effective pastoral care. They have been one of those that have fared well. Regrettably, theirs has been an exception to what is being observed in the course of this study.

Motivation for Further Study

For many reasons, the period of time following the separation of clergy from their called pastorate due to conflict has proven to be especially challenging to judicatory leadership, to interim ministers, and to the congregations themselves. Because of personal investment in the process and a belief that we are called towards healthy relationships by our loving God, I found it desirable to be involved more broadly in a ministry dedicated to the care of congregations immediately after conflicted separation. To those parish communities where,

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4 Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Processes in Church and Synagogue*, (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 1985) 231-234; and Edwin H. Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, Margaret M. Treadwell and Edward W. Beal, eds. (New York: Seabury Books, 2007) 183. This term is significant in family systems theory and pastoral care. It appears in secondary literature across the field. I am unclear of its origin, but it is well defined in these works of Edwin Friedman.
unfortunately, they have not experienced the good fortune of this current parish served who have emerged from their suffering into a healthy new creation, it is right to offer help. The kind of help that is grounded in biblically supported theologically grounded hope for the new heaven and new earth promised in Revelation, spoken of by Paul and in the gospels, and implicit in the Eucharistic language of the new covenant. It seems desirable to underscore the assurance that God will dwell with them, that God has never not dwelt with them in a place where they can again be comforted in the knowledge that they are God’s people. The writer of Revelation speaks of creating things new. Personal desires fuels the need to help with that process, to help with bringing new and spiritual water to the thirsty “...as a gift from the spring of the water of life [where] those who conquer will inherit these things.” They need help so that they somehow move from the pain of conflict to that place where they know again that God... “will be their God and they will be [God’s] children.”

Getting to this point has taken years. Accepting the reality of that requires further acknowledgement that the work does not end here. The need for this work will remain for as long as churches exist. Within the intervention model there is a specific invitation for participation by interested, supportive, and

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5 Rev. 21:1-7 (NRSV).
knowledgeable individuals in the evolving and maturing process this work is undergoing.

This process as reflected in the intervention model lives and breathes. It has matured; it has evolved over the years. It is built on feedback and feedback is still needed to keep it growing from persons who find themselves using it. A posture of *continuing attentiveness* must be maintained for advice on ways and means of improving this effort. From the earliest days, gathering advice from persons experienced with conflicted separation, from clergy colleagues, from practitioners in the field such as dedicated interim ministers, from representatives of judicatory bodies, from many directions has been a hallmark of this project. The process must not stop now.

**Premise**

The intervention manual (see Chapter 4) includes substantive discussion on many of the premises central to this work. Significant among them is that antagonism, friction between individuals or factions, and conflict are part and parcel of the natural order.

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6 James Croom, Chapter 4 following, “Final Intervention Model,” 79.
According to Edward O. Wilson, antagonism exists naturally within the biological world in the various forms of aggression over territory or sexual partnerships or dominance within a group. Among humans is added a moralistic aggression “manifested in countless forms of religious and ideological evangelism, enforced conformity to group standards, and codes of punishment for transgressions.” Church communities are not somehow separate from the cosmos, and are neither exempt from the forces of antagonism within themselves nor of the need to adapt to the pressures of change. Churches as components of society demonstrate the same characteristics of all societies across the biosphere; internal conflict is among those characteristics. In spite of our Christian charge to love one another, the truth is that congregations seem to get along neither better nor worse than most collectives or communities of people.

Change is always going on. Creation continues. Conflict is intrinsic in change. At issue are often the speed at which change takes place and the source of the force compelling the change. E. O. Wilson writes that some changes affecting behavior of societies are periodic and predictable such as days or seasons. Most are not, however. Wilson argues most changes are in reality episodic and capricious. Within the animal realm these might include fluctuations in food

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supply or rates of predation; in churches these could include traumas from accident to members of the congregation, or fires, or economic collapse. Change at its most benign might be described in natural terms likening it to continental drift in plate tectonics with a characteristic slow, non-violent change perceptible only over longer periods of time. That kind of change might be manifested in urban decay brought on by population shifts within regions. In churches, one might over time observe the gradual aging of the community.

On the other hand, rapid change carries with it the characteristic of violence. Violent change occurs during strong earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. Violent change also occurs among the animal realm when dominance within the social order comes into play, when new Alphas rise to leadership in the group, or competition over food sources sparks aggression. Churches see violent change when conflict erupts over almost any issue, from the choices of the color of paint for the sanctuary to the firing of an employee.

Among the forces of change, giving impetus to it is the friction between individuals or sub-groups within a collective experiencing change, i.e. antagonism. Antagonism in its most benign forms exists at some level at all times within churches much as ambient noise exists everywhere on earth. People are

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8 Wilson, Sociobiology (2000), 144.
9 This discussion of change is further elaborated in the theological vision statements in Chapter 2 following.
always “rubbing each other the wrong way.” Most of the time this friction is relatively insignificant; it is normal and manageable.

However, all too often the normal, base level friction between and among various members and sub-groups within church communities becomes excited by influences generated either internally or externally that ramp up benign forms of friction into full blown aggression. In natural terms, simple antagonism is amplified and exacerbated; it then becomes more complex and troubling to the community. When antagonism rises to open conflict, the systems destabilize, stress levels rise and a sense of unease, even of danger begins to permeate the community. Members may act out by cutting their pledge or leaving (fight or flight). Forces of change come into play, and those forces may gather sufficient strength to drive the clergy from the congregation. Conflict at any level implies that violence is present at some level, and in violence, injury is a result. In parish conflict, the separation of clergy is one of the many potentialities for harm.

Whether or not the clergy person is a direct participant or culpable in the conflict initially, the position of clergy-leader is located so close to the center of the action and is such an integral part of the community that eventually clergy are involved deeply. The high visibility of clergy within the community then contributes to certain dangers for the clergy person. He or she may be blamed for the conflict. According to Speed Leas, the truth is that, “Most significant conflict
in local churches is pastor focused. More often than not, the pastor is the issue under discussion.”

Edwin Friedman in *Generation to Generation*, his seminal work on family systems theory, says, “Hostile congregational environments never victimize automatically. The response of clergy to environment is almost always the main factor that determines how harmful it will be.”

Early in the recovery phase from the personal wounding experience, it felt that far too often the clergy alone are blamed for congregational conflict and offered up as the sacrificial victim or scapegoat for the expiation of corporate sins. Far too often the clergy bear the brunt of injury out of church conflict, even as the true roots of the conflict are ignored or untended—meaning that the truly guilty individuals are left unscathed. For many, then, the expulsion or voluntary resignation of the clergy signals an end to the conflict. It is easy to recognize now this is a visceral response, not an intellectual one.

The truth is that danger of recurring violence remains a lingering presence in the community after the separation, often long after the clergy person at the center of the matter is gone. Danger exists for the community left behind. Girard warns that violence is cyclical in nature, that conflict reverberates within the system over time and resurfaces again and again unless interdicted by

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appropriate countermeasures. Girard writes, “Vengeance and reprisal [are]
infinitely repetitive processes, a chain reaction whose consequences will quickly
prove fatal to any society—they put societies in jeopardy.”13

Steps must be taken for the care and spiritual safety of the parish. The
danger of cyclical violence or potential for mutual harm must be mitigated. For
Girard, ritual sacrifice is one of three means by which the cycle of violence is
broken.14 The pastor is sacrificed and must leave. In the eyes of the antagonists it
may seem true that now all will be well. Girard warns that this is not the case.
The underlying forces of conflict remain and the roots of causality still exist.

Addressing that causality, the residual forces of conflict, is one of the
important motivations for this work. While elements of Girard’s thinking
regarding ritual or substitutionary sacrifice are present and formative in the
intervention model, it seems blatantly obvious that neither he nor anyone would
advocate the usage of ritual sacrifice! The separation of clergy from congregation
out of conflict is a major injurious event to the system. It is destabilizing for the
church, and this premise is fundamental to this entire project and the
intervention paradigm. However, it seems so clear from this current perspective
that the actual separation is, to varying degrees, the result of many actions or

violence are: 1) Ritual, substitutionary sacrifice. 2) Trial by competition, by combat. 3) The
exercise of authority by a greater power, an overriding judicial system.
failures to act by all persons above the age of responsibility within the community. Finding the roots to the behavior of the conflicted parties seems to be among the first steps to take.

Culpability for the behavior in conflict rests in varying degrees with all the parties involved. This is important. No one has clean hands in the conflict. The people may have lost sight of their ethical imperatives to behave morally, or for the greater good. The clergy may have lost their ability to respond pastorally or with moral authority. The judicatory bodies mishandle these events for any number of reasons that may range from gross ignorance, to inadequate available resources, to sheer unwillingness to deal with conflict. Even failing to act can support or subvert the will of factions in the dispute. However, not all bear the same level of responsibility for the crisis. Some individuals or groups have more culpability than others, especially when their intent is malicious or self-serving, or when as scripture tells us, they are simply stiff-necked and hardheaded. Some make clear choices to harm, to injure or to reject others within the community. For reasons that may be known only to themselves, they choose aggression.

This behavior is, in theological terms, sinful. It is intentional and it hurts.


16 Sometimes the individual demonstrates pathological behavior. An extremely helpful description of difficult people and a useful resource for dealing with behavioral extremes is: Chuck DeGroat, “Part 2: Leading and Loving Difficult People,” *Toughest People to Love: How to*
Obviously, the best time for any intervention by consultants or designated persons skilled in conflict resolution is before the crisis rises to the level that precipitates the separation of clergy from congregation. Many trained individuals such as consultant colleagues and protégés of Speed Leas, or counselors from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Institute Center, or other persons skilled in mediation and conflict resolution are among resources available to prevent level five, intractable conflict. Nevertheless, systems do fail and for any number of reasons.

Failures to prevent conflicted separation come in different shapes and forms. The necessary intervention into the conflict simply may come too late. For example, the crisis within the congregation may be shielded from the judicatory by the clergy or congregational leaders as an in-house or within-family matter.

17 The Congregational Consulting Group, including Speed Leas and other former advisors from the Alban Institute can be reached here: www.congregationalconsulting.org. The Alban Institute was founded in 1974 by Loren Mead. Until 2014, it was a discrete resource for printed matter, educational offerings and consultancy concerning church transitions, conflict and other subjects. In 2014, it established a partnership with Duke Divinity School where many of its intellectual properties now reside. The address is: Alban at Duke Divinity School, 312 Blackwell Street, Suite 101, Durham, NC 27701.

18 Among the offerings from the Mennonite Peace Center courses that include: Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches, Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations, Conflict in Churches: Entrusted with the Message of Reconciliation, and Healthy Congregations. They train and certify competency for mediators through their course, Mediating Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders. They can be contacted at: Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 West 22nd Street, Suite 206, Lombard IL 60148. www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

19 Transition specialists and training for interim ministry are available from the Interim Ministry Network, 5740 Executive Drive, Suite 212, Baltimore MD 21228. www.imnedu.org.
that festers until it erupts. Or perhaps the intervening authority may be insufficiently skilled or inadequately trained or simply incompetent. The intervening consultant may be gifted and yet the factions have hardened in their positions and become unregenerate in their demands. Or possibly, the clergy person may look into the options and choose to give up rather than face the continuing contest. Whatever the reasons may be for separation to occur, an intervention of the form and fashion advocated in this project should take place immediately or as soon as possible after the events of the separation—for the sake of the health and the eventual well-being of the community left behind.

Potential to Harm

The period of time immediately following the separation is a time laden with “potential to harm.”20 Action must be taken sooner rather than later to interrupt the cyclical nature of conflict before further significant harm can be done. Furthermore, such intervention must be designed to assist the congregation in resolving the conflict and in redirecting the energies that have

20 Mark Rich, from ongoing conversations during unit mentoring and supervision(2008-2013). Consistently over the years, the repeatedly stated goal of this study has been “to find, develop or adapt instruments and/or processes for use by judicatory staff and interim clergy during transitions in the church community created by reason of conflict, in order to ascertain the reasons for the conflict and to address the potential to harm that have inevitably resulted from the conflicted separation.”
been turned to violence in such ways that they may provide impetus to long
term healing within the community. The church family is in need of a new order,
a new creation into healthy, life-giving behavior.

More is at stake here in these crises than narrow applications in local
churches. The potential to harm extends well beyond the walls of the parish. First
hand observations lay bare how the continuing deleterious effects of conflicted
separation in one community affect the health of an entire diocese and penetrate
deeply into the national church.\footnote{21} This reflects a broader ministry context for this
work. Experiences and points of reference used here are drawn from perspective
of one ordained in and associated with the Episcopal Church. Therefore the
manual contains specifics relevant to that denomination. However, it may be
useful more broadly and adaptable to other contexts. It is hoped that this work
will attract stakeholders from across denominational and interfaith lines.

Research has uncovered a wide range of persons invested in the problems
this study seeks to address. These are persons with direct personal experience in
conflict that results in separation of clergy. These are persons with vested interest
in the health and well-being of the institution we know as \textit{church}. These are

\footnote{21 During 2010, conflict in a diocesan parish resulting in the eventual separation of the
priest created a hail of criticism for the bishop of the diocese that attracted coverage in local news
media and included a series of letters of complaint to the office of the Presiding Bishop in New
York.}
stakeholders who are aware of the costs of the conflict, of the risks of future conflict and the benefits of healing within church as society.

Statement of the Problem

The first stream of this research was directed towards formulating a theological vision statement to provide the compass charting the course of data collection efforts. Much of this vision statement, now revisited, informs Chapter 2 in this dissertation. The second stream of energy focused on the preparation of a survey instrument for deployment in conjunction with ongoing interviews and engagement of relevant literature for the purpose of gathering data. Both streams have given substance to the naming of the problem addressed in this doctoral work.

The point of this whole endeavor is to provide clear guidance for the purpose of pastoral care in a conflicted community recently impacted by the loss of clergy. Clear guidance to those called upon by events to intervene is needed because of all the inherent dangers to the well-being of congregations intrinsic in

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22 The dual stream approach was suggested by Dr. Kent Miller, learning unit supervisor. Professor Miller teaches strategic management and consulting in the Eli Broad College of Business at Michigan State University. His studies center on organizational learning including routines and philosophical issues in organizations and management. He serves on the editorial boards of Academy of Management Learning and Education, Strategic Management Journal, and Strategic Organization.
conflicted separation of clergy and the period immediately following; because of
the inconsistent responses of authorities given charge of intervention in these
circumstances; because of varying skill sets brought to the work by intervening
clergy.

Evidence of need comes from many directions. Officers in judicatory
positions across the Episcopal Church tasked with the oversight of deployment
or crisis management in their diocese have been unanimous in their statement of
the need for clear guidance, even in those cases where the individual with the
tasked oversight feels competent to provide it. These individuals have been
heard. The accumulated data from the research and from the review of literature
has been heard. Evidence comes from training courses for interim ministry under
the auspices of the Interim Ministry Network, and from certification courses in
Mediation and Conflict Resolution for Pastors provided by instructors from the
Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. Intentional engagement with the chairs of
commissions on ministry at provincial gatherings has provided evidence of need.
Conversations at diocesan meetings, at clergy conferences and at study retreats
point towards need. Clergy are being dismissed or are leaving by reason of
conflict and the question left to, and more specifically to this study, for those
remaining is, “What happens now?”
Giving impetus to this work are personal experiences to be rehearsed elsewhere in this paper. In personal circumstances, care was effective and well received after the events of conflicted separation. On the other hand, as will be more fully described in chapter 4 following, the congregation left behind after separation was not so fortunate. It was interesting to learn in the course of these investigations that the interim following my departure was inadequate to the tasks. What arrested and compounded interest, however, was the realization over time that the congregation left in place had had a series of interim failures.23

A Series of Failures

The sad truth is that congregations have been victims of ineffective or inadequate interim ministry. One parish, during the month preceding the arrival of a newly called settled rector, suffered from a pirating of the search process by members of the community who objected to the gender and gender orientation of the chosen priest. The result was a blown search, a failed call with the loss of the candidate and conflict resulting in people fleeing the parish. The interim assigned to follow this fiasco failed to address the fallout. And the rector following him lasted not quite two years before he left in a proverbial hailstorm

23 A description of the sequence of events at the Church of Our Saviour is attached as a case study in Appendix A.
of acrimony. The interim called next was instructed by the bishop to punish the congregation.

In yet another example, the rector left the congregation out of conflict after over five years of constant bickering within the parish community. The interim assigned to minister to the church following her departure was also instructed by the judicatory to punish the congregation for their behavior towards the priest. This interim had zero experience in recovery ministry, and regrettably, was not inclined to take advice. His most recent service prior to this assignment was a failure that he described as his personal hell from which he actively sought escape.

Therein are examples of the problem. The door closes on the exit of the clergy person after a season of conflict. What happens now? The subject remains continually and stubbornly before us. As is stated above, the purpose of this work and the intervention paradigm is intended to provide clear guidance for interim ministers called to serve in congregations that have suffered the loss of clergy from conflict. Chapter 2 lays out the vision and describes the theology and theories from which it is formed.
Chapter 2
Theological and Theoretical Underpinnings

As a priest, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God’s forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God’s blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you. In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ’s people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.¹

Thesis

The purpose of this chapter is to lay out presumptions that precede and inform the theological bases for the doctoral project. In this chapter are discussions on the sacred nature of clergy-congregational relationships and the concept that post-conflict the work of the community calls us to think in terms of new creation. Here also is included the Theological Vision Statement that found its roots in earlier work with Kent Miller and has since evolved and deepened over the course of continuing study and reflection.

The Theological Vision Statement speaks of health, of what that should look like in congregations. It considers Creation and the manner that God

continues to create. The Vision Statement considers the nature of sin, how that affects the health of the corporate body, and how confession and forgiveness are bound together in the process of renewal, of creating the new heaven and new earth out of the pain of conflict.

Most importantly, the Vision Statement speaks of salvation, of the saving work of Christ. This work is intended to mirror that work of Christ as far as is possible. The Vision Statement speaks of blessings and it speaks of actions of Jesus in life and from the Cross that interceded between sinners and our powerful Creator-God. This chapter offers an extended review of the theology of its author, of his understanding of his relationships with the Church, with congregations in it, and above all, with God that he is called toward in this work.

Presumption One-the Clergy-Congregational Relationship is Sacred

We are called to proclaim, inherit, receive and share the realm of God in this world. Unrestrained conflict impedes or constrains our reception of God’s reconciling work. Conflict that wounds a church community to such a level that it causes separation of the clergy from his or her congregation violates the rubrics of covenant upon which that relationship is built.
The calling process is not an employment search. Properly executed, the calling process is an exploration that attempts to discern the will of God. God’s whole will is beyond our understanding, but the rightly made joining of God’s people in a congregation with the rightly called individual to serve as clergy among them is intended to reflect that portion of God’s will we have been given to understand. In the words of Jared Houze, preaching at an ordination liturgy recently, “What we do here out of our best efforts as a church is a manifestation of the actions of God.”

The joining of clergy to people in a covenant relationship is an “outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace.” While ordination and subsequent institution of clergy into covenanted relationships with the people in a parish community are not considered the great sacraments of the church, the taking of holy orders is one of the seven rites considered sacramental in the Eastern, pre-Reformation Western, and Roman Catholic churches. The union of clergy to God’s people is considered sacred.

The work of the people, the liturgy, the relationship between the people of God in parish communities and their called clergy are especially marked as significant and sacred by the various ceremonies among denominations at the

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2 Jared Houze, from his sermon at a service for the ordination to the priesthood at Grace Episcopal Church, Holland, Michigan, December, 20, 2014.
beginning of those relationships. Services of installations of pastors, or in the Anglican vernacular, the *institution* of clergy are common. These are generally causes for celebration; these events become a part of the history of the community, and the clergy installed often lend their names eponymously to the epoch of their tenure. The services of installation customarily use the language of covenant such as this from the Celebration of New Ministry in the BCP,

“Everliving God, strengthen and sustain N., that with patience and understanding he may love and care for your people; and grant that together they may follow Jesus Christ, offering to you their gifts and talents; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”

The person called to serve as the clergy person makes promises or declarations giving weight to the importance of the moment. The community vows to do their part. The exchange of promises between clergy and community are taken seriously and with intent before God. The relationship is then sealed by some form, with the laying on of hands or an exchange of emblems. These promises exchanged with promises form the contract between clergy and people, and the invocation of the sacred upon this contract seals the covenant.

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5 Comments such as, “When Father David was here,” or “We didn’t dare do that while Mother Cynthia was with us,” are examples of the *eponymous epoch*.
6 BCP is being used as short hand for the *Book of Common Prayer*.
The sacred nature of that union as it is expressed in the current customs and practices in the church reflects the deep traditions described for us in the Bible. From the story of Abraham and Melchizedek of Salem, priest of the most high God,\(^8\) and onwards through the anointing of the prophets and kings of Israel and Judea, the relationships of religious leaders to people is shown again and again as integral and vital to the activity of God on earth. Beginning with the calling, preparations, and consecration of Aaron\(^9\) references to priests and religious leaders are incorporated into the hundreds of scriptural verses that delineate their duties.\(^10\) The successes and failures of the anointed individuals form the substance of vast stretches of scripture in the Hebrew texts and set up the many adversarial dialogues between Temple leadership, Hasmoneans, the Pharisees and Jesus in the Christian corpus. The ritual of anointing religious leaders has implications in the whole of the messianic conversations throughout the received texts and elsewhere.\(^11\)

The calling of clergy is much more than an executive search in the corporate, secular setting. Nowhere else apart from religious organizations is the called individual given to say,

\(^8\) Gen. 14:18 and Psalm 110:4. Melchizedek was the eponymous progenitor of the order of priesthood that ascribed to Jesus in Heb. 5, 6 and 7.

\(^9\) Exod. 28, and following.

\(^10\) Priests were required to declare lepers clean before they could re-enter the community. See Mk. 1:44, Mt. 8:4 and Lk. 5:14.

Make me an instrument of your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and grant that I may faithfully administer your holy Sacraments, and by my life and teaching set forth your true and living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of your holy Word, all the world may be drawn into your blessed kingdom.12

Presumption Two-Renewal, A New Creation

The natural order of creation is an operating assumption throughout the intervention paradigm when engaging the problems emerging out of conflict that separates clergy from congregation. God behaves in the cosmos and continues to create the universe in accordance with the laws of physics that God has chosen as the means to effect creation. Included in these laws are Newtonian physics we learned in high school that describe laws of motion, gravity, etc. These are the mechanistic laws that provide knowledge to fix, repair, or build. God also uses what seem to be a different set of laws we as humankind are only just coming to understand as sub-atomic, quantum physics.13 These laws are complex and sometimes contradictory to Newtonian physics, where atoms can behave in

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13 Bill Bryson, A Short History of Nearly Everything (New York: Broadway Books, 2003). This is not a scientific book. Bryson writes as a lay person for other lay persons. However, he does provide in lay terms, a good sense of the difference between Newtonian and quantum physics.
seemingly strange and unpredictable ways. Among all these laws are those of evolution, of natural selection where adaptation enables the fittest to successfully perpetuate its genetic code into the next generation.

Evolution applies not just to the flora and fauna and geologies in the universe. Evolution applies to ideas too. Ideas and concepts that enable humankind to be successful can also by natural selection be lifted into the next generation. Right, creative thinking can enhance the survival of the species, can perpetuate healthy adaptive behavior, and thereby can contribute to evolutionary successes among all biological societies including human beings. A trajectory of moral improvement emerges over time.\textsuperscript{14} While these are not the only presumptions upon which this theological vision is built, they are considered key to the work of this doctoral project.

Theological Vision Statement

The theological vision which informs this work on behalf of congregations separated from clergy out of conflict begins with and emerges from three


The book from which the chapter is cited is an excellent resource for the nexus of studies from a broad spectrum of experts in science and religion that derives from a research project on altruism entitled, “The Theology of Cooperation.” The study took place at Harvard from 2005 to 2008.
important threads in the Book of Common Prayer, church tradition and informed by scripture: 1) Our sovereign God creates, 2) God wishes good health for God’s creation, and 3) God expects us to treat each other as if we recognize the billions of years God has employed to create the unique and special creatures that we, each of us, are.

Good Health

“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'”\(^{15}\)

“I believe that God wants us to be healthy, both in our relationships in communion with each other, and within ourselves.”\(^{16}\)

“Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us.”\(^{17}\)

Even though conflict is a part of the natural order and is therefore normal in the course of existence, nevertheless seriously conflicted parishes are unhealthy parishes. Whatever the causes of conflict, when friction has been

\(^{15}\) Lk. 10:9, (NIV).

\(^{16}\) From pastoral letter of resignation by a rector to his congregation, September 14, 2005.

ramped up into open conflict, the systemic community is no longer well. It is fevered. The normal order of interactions is breaking down and people are behaving poorly towards one another. The theological implications of conflict in parishes point towards the breaking of will and purpose by human beings from the will and purpose of God. The covenant relationships between clergy and people are endangered. The holy laws that we are to love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves are being violated. As is shown above in the quotation from the BCP 1928, the view that this behavior is unhealthy has been traditionally and deeply held in the Anglican Church.¹⁸

But what is “health?” What is a healthy society, or a healthy community of faith? It appears that the writers of scripture are not silent on the matter.

Both the Hebrew texts and the Christian corpus of scripture have many references to healing and health. In fact, the New International Version demonstrates on 170 occasions the writers’ use of variants to the root word “heal,” ranging from Genesis 20.17 at the healing of Abimelech, to Revelation 22.2 which speaks of the leaves of the tree of life healing the nations.¹⁹ An important conclusion from reading of scripture is that, with saving and redeeming

¹⁸ The General Confession from which these phrases are taken has been used in Morning Prayer in the Anglican Church since the first revision, the Prayer Book of 1552, also known as the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. Copies are available on line at: http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1552.

humankind, the core of the ministry of Jesus and of his followers was and continues to be the healing of the world. Furthermore, the healing of ourselves and humankind must be seen from all these healing references in scripture as a prime directive for those of us professing the Christian faith.

However, directing our faithful response to healing requires some understanding of what constitutes health, and that understanding is clouded by the various connotations of the word. Definitions generally include things like the condition of an organism/entity at any given moment, or freedom from pathology, and can include a toast given at special occasions. According to the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. But this definition from such an august deliberative body seems incomplete still, because the usage of the term health and the states of being described as healthy are subject to the normative conditions of the entity in question. What may be healthy for one entity may not be so for another. If God indeed wishes us to be healthy, then a significant task at hand is to discover as far as we are able, what

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22 Some families, for instance, may be loud and rude to each other in their normal interactions. While this may appear unhealthy to others, it may be completely healthy in fact.
that health looks like for each of us individually or collectively—what, specifically, is health for each entity in God’s created order.

Debate on the nature of health in churches requires a broader discussion elsewhere, but for now a more simple answer as a working definition will suit the needs of this paper. A healthy congregation, the collective of persons of faith found in houses of worship, should have characteristics as a whole similar to that of a healthy individual. Congregations should be self-differentiated.23 This means they should understand who they are within God’s created order, whence they come, and their intrinsic value in God’s Creation. Members of the congregations are called by God to recognize the unique set of identifying characteristics that set them apart from other faith communities and they should appreciate this identity in the context of the richness of diversity in God’s creation.

Congregations should be self-actualized which means they should be motivated to common action toward the advancement of the common good by common values from within. Theologically speaking, congregations should recognize in themselves the entity that God is creating them to be and should behave accordingly. They should be able to review their actions and their common values periodically from the perspective of their faith in order to better themselves and to direct their purpose toward a common understanding of the

23 Friedman, Generation to Generation, (1985) 103-104.
will of God, and they should acknowledge responsibility for their actions as participants in the realm of the sovereign God. Decisions in the life of the community, just as in the life of the individual should be made in the light of freely available choices between those life-giving or life-draining options—between actions advancing the will of God, the realm of God on earth, and those impeding the will of God or the diminishing of the realm of God on earth. Therefore, as *self-differentiated* and *self-actualized* entities, healthy persons and healthy faith communities are those that seek daily to be who God is creating them to be.

1) Our Sovereign God Creates

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The theologians writing Genesis are sharing their belief that the world they knew was created by not just any god, but the one God. God spoke and creation occurred. They do not say *how* God created their world, simply that the word of God was sufficient. Even in the older version of creation, from Genesis 2 where God *forms* Adam the human being, the details of how God actually

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24 Gen. 1:1 (KJB, NIV).
accomplished this formation are sketchy. The writers of Genesis 1 and the storytellers that perpetuated the other version have given us clear and unambiguous theological statements of their belief in the sovereignty of God. God called the world into being, it was good, and it was finished. The ancient view is that creation was once and for all—one and done.

Our awareness of creation has changed. As the United Church of Christ reminds us, God is still speaking\(^{25}\) and therefore, God is still creating. One of the most significant of the creative means God employs is evolution through its subsets of natural selection, mutation and cooperation.\(^{26}\)

What the ancients did not know and what we have discovered through the work of Darwin and others and about which we continue to learn, is that the how of our creator God is evolution. Furthermore, the means we know as evolution is perpetual motion and perpetual change. In the evolutionary process, God is always present and God is always active. John Hedley Brooke, from his vantage point as Andreas Idreos Professor of Religion and Science at Oxford writes, “Darwin [in his theories of evolution] had sharpened the choice

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\(^{25}\) "God is still speaking" has been a campaign of the United Church of Christ since 2004. It expresses the viewpoint that God did not stop communicating with humankind at the close of the biblical canon. It further reflects a belief that God is active now and has more to say. www.ucc.org/god-is-still-speaking.

between a God active in everything or in nothing.”

In the lives of humans, as creatures of God’s creation, God is never not present and never not active.

Not just in individual human beings is evolution occurring. Societal units among humankind (and across the animal realm) are being influenced by natural selection processes. Societies, no matter what they are called, whether communities, troupes, tribes or herds, are discrete entities themselves. They are singular and they are unique. They have describable characteristics. Therefore the principles of natural selection, the evolutionary processes in the natural order apply also to each unit, each entity, each society.

As cumbersome as the preceding statements may be, with God’s desire for our health they comprise two significant pieces forming important bases to this theological vision for congregations who have experienced the pain of separation of clergy out of conflict. Our conflicts often feel so intrinsically human that they must be only human and therefore something apart from God. Humans are acting, it seems, but God is not obviously present. However, as creator, God is present and the well-being of God’s creation is fundamentally important to God. Therefore, even in what seems so fundamentally human and apart from God,

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God continues to be present and active, even if, in the heat of conflict, the where and how of God’s presence is obscure.

2) Natural Selection-Healthy and Unhealthy

In human societies such as found in church, God’s presence and actions in evolution are evident in the adaptations the societies make in normal, largely subtle day-to-day adjustments to environment. Over time the society meanders as some leaf carried on gentle current drifts into someplace different from what it may have been in years before. These subtle changes occur in such a fashion that members of the changing society, the parish community, rarely notice anything of substance out of the ordinary, and rarely are the subtle shifts in the boundaries of power challenged to the point of conflict. The life and work of the community continues virtually uninterrupted. The changes and the developments are only noticeable to those who go away for a time and return to the new place in which the congregation has come. In this drifting change, the health of the social unit seems not overtly affected. In this subtle change, natural selection is a quiet force, an almost benign force. For most of us, this is desirable, preferable and, because less stressful, the most healthy. This then, in the words of the theological

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These points are introduced in Chapter 1.
imperative that God wills us to be healthy is the righteous course, the desired state of being. At the drifting rate of change, it is the contention here that people are better able to see, or perhaps more willing to acknowledge an active and present God.

On the other hand, just as in nature sudden mutations occur and/or changes result from cataclysmic violence, so it happens in churches. The constant pressure of change is no longer the quiet force. Rather it appears to humans as something to be frightened of, or to fight about. The discrete entity that is the congregation of the church becomes excited and stressed. During these cataclysmic episodes, the presence and actions of God are less perceivable to many involved, and for some, inconceivable. Sometimes the destructive forces seem destructive just for the sake of destruction, and unfathomable as to purpose. People question the justice of God that these things are permitted to happen. This kind of destructive change is unhealthy. In natural terms it is maladaptive, given to inhibit the selection processes that thrust genetic codes into the next generation, thereby risking the presence of the entity going forward into the future.

Regardless of causality, it seems true that the greater the measure of violence the greater is the suffering of individuals involved. The greater the suffering, the greater is the need for interventions that are useful for the creation
of the more stable, less stressful entity in a state of slow or drifting
development—changed from a highly excited, emotion driven state to a more
stable, more peaceful existence . . . a more healthy existence where opportunities
exist “to find mutual satisfaction, growth, [and] joy.”

The ministrations to the community are, at their philosophical root, no less than an attempt to act on
behalf of God to care for God’s people, to recognize God’s hand in the creation of
those people. The intervention must be viewed as an attempt to honor the will of
God whatever the causality whether the violence is adaptive behavior in the
manner of God’s creation, or maladaptive as destruction for the sake of
destruction. As stated in the presumptions above, God’s whole will is beyond
our understanding, but the rightly made joining of God’s people in a
congregation with the rightly called individual to serve as clergy among them is
intended to reflect that portion of God’s will we have been given to understand.

If that is so, then the breaking of the covenanted relationship is antithetical to
God, and this intervention process as an attempt to renew the covenant while
reducing the potential for further harm among the community is the more
important for it.

30 Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger and Theresa F. Latini, *Transforming Church Conflict: Compassionate Leadership in Action* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013) xvii. This book brings to bear the skills of non-violent communication (NVC) on church conflict, offering developmental insight for individuals called to enter into conflicted situations. It is the type of resource that persons with the charism to serve in interim ministries to conflicted parishes would find valuable.
3) Relationships

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Having been created, humankind is called into relationship with God and with each other. The three synoptic gospels agree on the formulaic juxtaposition of Deuteronomy 6:5 with Leviticus 19:18. We are to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves. The ministries of Jesus described in Matthew, Mark and Luke place these two at the center of the law as the great commandments imperative to the Christian faith. This is how we are to relate. Implicit in these commandments and often missed, it seems, is the fact that if we love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves, our lives will demonstrate those relationships to the world—our body language will be the proof. In these two commandments, the gospel writers tell us that, as followers of Jesus, we all have a stake in the outcomes of the endeavors of others, as they do in ours, and that our relationships with others are our responsibilities. Implicit in the two commandments is a clear call that we are to honor the whole of God’s...

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32 This understanding forms the root to the arguments regarding agency in the intervention paradigm, pp. 120 and following.
work. Each atom in the cosmos has been uniquely formed by God and therefore is necessary in the continuing creation of the cosmos. If each atom is necessary in creation, how much more so is the synergism of the collective of atoms that are the human being and, further, the synergism of the collective of human beings that are the faith communities or societies. We are expected to honor each human being, and certainly the whole of the created order, if for no other reasons than the effort God expends in the creation of the specific person or the society, and the intentionality of that expenditure.\textsuperscript{33} This defines the love of which the gospel writers speak.

Something that is often lost in the consideration of these commandments is the imperative that we are to love others as we love ourselves. We are bound to recognize in ourselves the uniqueness of our own creation and we are to render to ourselves the same respect, if not affection, that we are called to offer others. According the writers of Exodus, “God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.’”\textsuperscript{34} We are created in the image of God. “Being created in the image of God . . . conveys a sense of dignity in both our identity and our task.”\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Honoring the uniqueness of the other in this way coincides with the definition of the term love as used in the two commandments in this discussion, and in the new commandment that we are to love each other as God loves us from the Farewell Discourse in John.

\textsuperscript{34} Gen.1:26 (NRSV).

\textsuperscript{35} DeGroat, \textit{Toughest People to Love} (2014) 32.
This is not to say that we are to love ourselves more than we love others. The world has an overabundance of narcissists already;\(^3\) we are to love ourselves no more and no less than others. This self-respect as one of God’s own is vital to healthy relationships at all levels of human intercourse with the creation.

Purpose of Learning Unit in Project Development

The purpose of learning unit two in the doctoral project was to develop the research tools necessary to discover what happens in congregations after the separation of clergy out of conflict. Efforts are especially aimed at determining how best to manage the environment within a stricken congregation during the aftermath of the separation in order to reduce the potential for harm. Furthermore, there is the desire to learn something of the agency of God as participant in the events. In the course of the development of the data gathering tools and in the subsequent review of data, providing perspective is the theological world view, or biases, described above. In summation of discourse above, the lenses through which the review of data has been shaped are these:

\(^3\) In depth descriptions of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder are available on-line through the Mayo Clinic website at: http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/narcissistic-personality-disorder; or in various textbooks including the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV and more recent at, *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed.* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 2000).
our sovereign God creates, God wishes good health for God’s creation, and God expects us to treat each other as if we recognize the effort of creation and therefore the value of the created in ourselves and each other . . . in-depth discussion of these elements follow.

However, there is more. The ministry to congregations separated out of conflict requires one additional operational bias.

Salvation

“When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”37

Priests in the Episcopal Church are called to bless the people and the sacraments, and to offer absolution. These actions are central to the call of a priest in this denomination. While there are other sacramental and administrative functions of both the diaconate and the priesthood to which the ordained are called,38 these two are most important to personal understanding of the theology, of what it means to be a priest. These aspects of call to the priesthood frame the content, context, and process of the intervention paradigm.

38 Book of Common Prayer (1979), from the Ordination Rite.
In looking toward the priesthood during six years in seminary, it became clear that when making the sign of the cross while blessing the sacrament and the people in the Eucharist, baptisms, marriages and all the other liturgies within our ecclesial structure, the priest is simply marking where God’s action, the blessing has already occurred. In other words, the sign of the cross might be interpreted as *X marks the spot* where an action of God has already and explicitly taken place. Where two people, for example, have promised themselves, each other and God that they will love, honor and cherish each other, and made these promises before the gathered people of God, the blessing, the action of God on earth has indeed already occurred. As priest, that action of God is marked as a *blessing place* by the sign of the cross, and attention is called to it by the language of the liturgy. The prevenient blessing and the liturgical actions are outward and visible signs of an active God. These places are touch-points in life where people have the opportunity to identify Emanuel, *God with us*, and are often considered sacred places—sacramental places. The sign of the cross marks sacred space. This is an important gesture, significant to the church and laden with meaning.

**Absolution**

“Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.’
From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’” 39

The taproot of the priestly call lies buried in the second of the functional aspects or power conferred in the authority of ordination, the authority to grant absolution. Absolution is as real as sin. Grappling with the concepts and the eventual coming to an understanding of the processes involved when humans sin and the now what are at the core of ordained ministry. Furthermore, the processes that drive human sin in communities conflicted to the point where clergy are forced willingly or unwillingly to separate from the community and the now what afterwards have come to form the core of this doctoral work.

Absolution is a response to the first and most necessary step in the healing processes. It is the protocol for health that God calls us towards from our sinful behavior. If we as Christians believe that redemption, reconciliation and restoration with the community and God are at the heart of our Christian faith, then surely the first action towards restoration must be repentance. For without it, there may be forgiveness, but there can be no absolution. 40

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39 Mt. 4:15-17 (NRSV).
40 “. . . repent so that your sins may be wiped out.” Acts 3:19 (NRSV); “. . . repentance leads to salvation.” 2 Cor. 7:10 (NRSV). Other passages providing warrant for this point of view are: 1 Kgs. 8:48; Isa. 1:27; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 13:3. When one sins against one’s neighbor, that neighbor may for the sake of his or her well-being choose to forgive the sin. This forgiveness does not imply absolution.
Absolution in our liturgy is a key element in confessional theology. The BCP uses this language or similar throughout the entire service ordinal in the Episcopal Church, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself to be sacrificed for us to the Father, and who conferred power on his Church to forgive sins, absolve you through my ministry by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and restore you in the perfect peace of the Church. *Amen.*”

Over the many years that the confessional has played a role in the pre-Reformational church, some aspects of it have changed. In the Protestant view of Cranmer the confessional is viewed through the lens of the rite of Reconciliation of the Penitent. The difference is important because the rite now includes a time of spiritual direction and advice out of which the penitent will presumably continue into a state of renewal that enables the complete restoration into the body of the faithful. To say to an individual on behalf of God and the church that “I absolve you from all your sins” carries a monumental weight, and must therefore never be lightly or frivolously spoken. The weight includes in it the spiritual and psychological wellbeing of the penitent. However, it must also take into account the nature of the sin, the individuals who were victims of the sin.

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42 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury believed to be the lead writer of the Book of Common Prayer, responsible for moving the Anglican Church toward the Protestantism of the European continent. (from recall of church history lectures ca. 1998.)
43 *BCP* (1979), from the rite of Reconciliation of the Penitent.
and whether or not the absolution contributes to a just and loving world—to the advancement or impedance of the realm of God.

The confessional is a sacred space where one human being comes to another in the presence of God seeking to unburden himself or herself of deep, closely held and intimate feelings. Entering there implies a level of trust in the other that at the very best is fragile. Yet that trust is also a marker of the deep faith of the penitent in the power of God to make things right again, to make the rough places plain. So, for this priest, the power to offer absolution is the most important gift in having been ordained and also the greatest of the challenges to serving as a priest.

Communal Sin

Upon entering into a community of faith that has been traumatized by the separation of clergy out of violent conflict, the clergy person charged with the tasks at hand will see the results of the sins of the body all around. In such conflicts, humanity has often become at one with its intrinsic bestiality. No one in the community is without sin, whether that sin is a primary, active, factionalized aggression; a secondary passive non-participation which permits the violence to continue; or the shameful lack of caring enough to support or
subvert the power structure once at risk and now broken. One might picture the
entrance moment of the interim minister almost cinematically as if that person
enters upon a spiritual battlefield, with emotionally wounded and spiritually
dying persons everywhere. Damage has taken place and the pain is real.
Nowhere in parish ministry is there more an immediate need for redemption,
reconciliation and restoration to wholeness with the community and God than
here. And yet, the question is, if everyone has sinned against everyone else,
where does the work begin?

The Bible seems to divide sin according to the intentions of the sinner.\(^4^4\) The more egregious sins, those sins that are described as evil, have wounding
intent behind them. These sinful actions are borne upon some \textit{a priori} knowledge
that they will injure another. They are purposeful and hurtful. Jesus speaks to
these sins in both Matthew and Mark in roughly the same fashion. “For out of
the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness,
slander. These are what defile a person . . . ”\(^4^5\) And, “For it is from within, from
the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery,
avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these

\(^{4^4}\) Lev. 4 and 5 offer examples of the relevance of intentionality on sin. Unintentional sin
retains the responsibility, but with proper atonement rituals forgiveness is assured.

\(^{4^5}\) Mt. 15:19-20 (NRSV).
evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”\textsuperscript{46} These sins are serious. The consequences of their perpetration invoke the most serious of punishments at the end of days. Persons who engage in these sins are the winnowed\textsuperscript{47} chaff destined for fire.

On the other hand, in Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and elsewhere, persons who are unaware or unknowing of their sin, who simply sin in error or who sin unintentionally, these persons still incur guilt, but their sin is readily atoned and forgiveness is assured.\textsuperscript{48} This differentiation between the nature of intentionality and its importance in the act of sinning is crucial. It is determinative of the response to the sin. In parish conflict for example, the attacking of the bastions of power, or the Alpha leadership, requires intention and purpose. Intentionality is implicit. And therefore, the sin is the more egregious for it.

Significant in the development of the intervention model has been the process towards and arriving at this truth: Once sin has been perpetrated upon

\textsuperscript{46} Mk. 7:21-23 (NRSV).

\textsuperscript{47} This imagery of the winnowing process is used in Prov. 20, Isa. 41, Mt. 3, Lk. 3 and Ws. 5 to describe the separation by God or the king of those persons to keep and those which will be burned or otherwise discarded (blown away).

\textsuperscript{48} Especially relevant are passages in Lev. 4 and 5, and Num. 15. These provide legal substance regarding the nature of intentionality in sin and specifically, the assurance of forgiveness following appropriate atonement exercises. Significantly, and key to the argument following in this chapter, these regulations apply to individuals \textit{and to the whole congregation}.

“Thus the priest shall make atonement on your behalf, and \textit{you shall be forgiven.”} Lev. 4:31 (NRSV) (italics added).
another, whether intentional or in error, nothing on earth or in heaven can undo the wrong, nor can be restored the pre-existent state of being of the person or persons against whom the sin perpetrated. One cannot give back the potentialities that pre-existed in the moments before the transgression, nor can be given back the pre-existent emotional state of the victim. Because of the interrelationships of all things to all other things in the natural order, the effects of the sin change not only the immediate victim[s], but by extension, everyone and everything they will touch from the moment of the sin to the rest of their lives. The sin changes the whole of the created cosmos forever. The stakes are high.

Since one cannot undo that which has been done, the perpetrator now owes the victim recompense for that which has been stolen. Reparations are due. The sinner in the act of sinning hands over de-facto I.O.U.’s to the person against whom he or she has sinned. That which has been taken should be recompensed, and the note for that payment, the debt itself, is now held by the person injured. It is co-owned by God whose creative work has been interrupted and whose creature has been injured. Finally, all parties must realize that only the person holding the note and God, as having been sinned against, have the right to determine what to do with that note now. The perpetrator has lost the right to influence the process. Forgiveness cannot be demanded from anyone; it should
be asked for, but depending on the circumstances and the state of being of the victim, it may or may not be granted.

With regards to the intervention paradigm, it is acknowledged that the members of congregations in the aftermath of cataclysmic change are highly sensitized to their pain. Because of the tenderness and sensitivity, it could be less easy and perhaps unlikely that they let go of the notes they have been given in the processes of being sinned against. This will make the work of encouraging people to grant forgiveness more difficult. On the other side of the coin, if they are perpetrators of intentional injury, they may also be unlikely to repent of their sin. Things like the desire for revenge, or obstinacy, or pride become constraints and inhibitions preventing redemptive actions that would lead to the eventual restoration of the community to health. Collective grief may immobilize the community. The situation is fragile.

What is to be done?

Gospel of Luke

In the passion narrative of Luke’s gospel, we have been offered a solution to the conflict of clergy-congregational separation. During the passion of Jesus it seems that he was being sinned against by everyone in sight. No one present in
those terrible hours nor absent from fear of similar fate, was without sin.\(^{49}\) As a result, Jesus as the victim of the violence was collecting I.O.U.’s wholesale. Even so, the determination of intentionality proves as difficult here as it must in conflicted churches of today. The complications stem from the sense that many of the persons present were acting out from the reality of their identities and in keeping with their world view. In other words, Romans were behaving as Romans, the temple leadership as temple leaders defending their faith as they understood it, the cowering disciples as persons in fear of their lives, and the crowd, well, as crowds. So therefore, the intentionality of their sinning against Jesus becomes a questionable. Were these actions emergent from the egregious, evil intentioned character of sin or otherwise?

Given the personhood of Jesus and the nature of his relationship with God, everyone sinning against Jesus, the very Son of God was in mortal danger regardless of error or ignorance or evil intent. Because of the nature of a just God in relationship with Jesus as Son of Man, Son of God, the Word made Flesh . . . the promises made after the Flood notwithstanding, God has destroyed the world once before . . . because of these things, the mortal danger was real and imminent. Perhaps because crucifixion is such a barbarous act so hideous in its execution, the mitigating element of ignorance can be no excuse. How can one

\(^{49}\) In the language of the General Confession, “things done and left undone.” BCP (1979).
possibly imagine the depth of God’s righteous anger in these moments? How can one fathom the depths of feeling that God as Parent must have been feeling? If Jesus were one’s own son, what would you feel? If Jesus were one’s own son, and you had the power to destroy the world, what would you do?

At this moment, the whole of the cosmos was in grave danger.

Out of the vivid imagery of Jesus’s unimaginable suffering, the gospel writer Luke, in the manner one might expect of a physician, expresses in the words of Jesus Luke’s salvific solution, “Father, forgive them . . .” which is heroic in and of itself. But then Luke offers something else.

Luke knows his scripture. Luke knows that the mitigating factor for sin is ignorance, mental incapacity, immaturity or some other incompetence that prevents the would-be sinner from the genuine intentionality necessary for the sin to rise to the level of evil. Luke, whom tradition identifies as healer, out of his conception of Jesus has Jesus give God the only means by which God can forgive the things being done to God’s only son. Luke’s Jesus intervenes between all the sinners and God’s wrath, and that intervention prevents a just God from obliterating the world again, in spite of the promise to Noah, rainbow and all. The words of Jesus turn aside God’s anger and stop God from destroying every man and woman in that crowd of sinners and, by extension, the whole of a world
in which something like this could happen. Luke adds, “... for they do not know what they are doing.”

“It is the Great Exception.

Jesus is saying to God that this is error and not evil, that this is from unknowing, even that this is all a mistake. Jesus, in the words of Luke, is asking God not to destroy the world. In modern parlance, perhaps we might hear Jesus say, “Don’t hurt them. They didn’t mean to do this to me.” However one might read it, or whatever one might read into it, that sentence marks, signed by the cross of Jesus, the redemption of the entire world—the entire world forever.

In this action of Jesus, the state of being of the world becomes, not that which was preexistent before the crucifixion, but far, far better than that state of being before the onset of sin. The realm of God, or in the language of the writers of scripture, the kingdom of God is truly at hand. Jesus chooses to destroy all of those I.O.U.’s handed over to him so that the people of God are not destroyed.

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50 Lk. 23: 34 (NRSV).

51 Num. 15:22-26 (NRSV) “But if you unintentionally fail to observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses—everything that the LORD has commanded you by Moses, from the day the LORD gave the commandment and thereafter, throughout your generations—then if it was done unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, the whole congregation shall offer one young bull for a burnt offering, a pleasing odor to the LORD, together with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering. The priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the Israelites, and they shall be forgiven; it was unintentional, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error. All the congregation of the Israelites shall be forgiven, as well as the aliens residing among them, because the whole people was involved in the error.” (italics added)
Furthermore, this action of Jesus renders accessible the healing of the cosmos, the healing of all sinners and, for the sake of this study, the healing of faith communities riven by sin. In it are the means by which the process for redemption of a broken community can begin.

The requirement of repentance is rendered moot by the assumption that the perpetrators could not have known the wounding effect of their actions and therefore may be absolved of them. Persons who normally love God and humankind but are driven in conflict to hurt each other can thus be forgiven and restored. All of the accrued I.O.U.’s amassed during the conflict can be torn up. The I.O.U.’s should be torn up . . . because that is truly what Jesus would do—that is what Jesus did do.

Conclusion

In the cataclysmic events surrounding the separation of clergy from congregations out of violent conflict, the presence and actions of God are less perceivable, and for some of those involved, inconceivable. For some, the actions and presence of God in this cataclysmic form of creation become an issue of theodicy invoking a where-is-God-in-all-this reaction. However, the actions and presence of God in these terrible moments can be viewed in the light of God’s
gift of free will to humankind. God does not strip from God’s people the agency to choose their paths of behavior. Theology becomes enmeshed with trauma. The theological challenges before clergy now in charge of communities of faith broken by conflict are complex and unclear.

The solutions to those challenges must reflect the salvific actions of Jesus, and whatever the healing protocol, the question of sin and what to do with it must be addressed. One should remember that every member of the community of faith above the age of responsibility is responsible for sin and/or complicit in sins. The I.O.U.’s are in hand. The community as a whole, and the constituent membership have choices.

Important to the intervention is an understanding that the community must work to create that which, without God, they cannot create. They must choose to actively engage with God in the new creation. Recognizing that whatever existed as the state of being before the sin can never be again, the only just option is to create with God something that is better than it was before—the people must strive for adaptive change. Through the work of reconciliation and renewal, in the full knowledge that with them in this creation is the Creator, the Godself, the people of faith must make all things new and better than before. In this better than before will be an adapted state, a more fit society, the new social

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52 This has evolutionary implications. Successful societies adapt. Better than before enhances success in the natural selection—here of ideas or ethics.
entity that was the parish in conflict. In this better than before state, the society will be better able and more likely to place its now healthy theological DNA into the next generation of believers. In this adaptive new state the natural selection process of creation continues—strengthening humanity and advancing the realm of God on earth. Over this new creation, co-created with God, the x marking of the spot may take place. Over this new creation, then, is the sign of the Cross.

This theological vision for congregations separated from clergy out of conflict begins with and emerges from three important threads in scripture: Our sovereign God creates, God wishes good health for God’s creation, and God expects us to treat each other as if we recognize the effort of creation and therefore the value of the created in ourselves and each other. Out of these articles of faith are formed the theological vision for the work this paper describes. Upon them is built the remaining work in this Doctor of Ministry program. Through these theological lenses, for the purposes of this study, it is hoped that this vision will ultimately be made most clear.
Chapter 3
Journey to a Manual

Introduction

This chapter describes the process for developing the Intervention Manual. The method is primarily autobiographical. Included are the whole developmental program and the process undertaken to get to this doctoral project. Here is a description of methods, how those methods came to be, and what resources are at the heart of the work.

The doctoral program at Western Theological Seminary is directed study organized into five learning units intended to prepare the doctoral student for his or her project. As the Reverend Doctor Kyle Small, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program says, “It is a formational process toward an intellectual product.” The units are constructed strategically with the end result in mind, and tactically focused on more narrow learning objectives. Prior to and coincidental with the early learning units are doctoral seminars crafted to provide collegial support for the student, to set expectations of the institution and to offer topical subject matter helpful in the fashioning of the project and its subsequent presentation for the awarding of the degree.

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53 The Rev. Dr. Kyle J. A. Small, From comments editing this dissertation, March, 2015.
The awarding of the Doctor of Ministry degree presupposes that the individual study is contextual, that it derives from the personal experience or intentions of the individual engaging in the work of active ministry. The work product is generally intended to advance some component of that active ministry or to provide impetus towards objectives instructive or useful to ministry. Furthermore, the study is expected to reward the greater church in that the fruits of the effort should be applicable and useful for the benefit of God’s realm. This has been the author’s understanding from the beginning of this study.

Curiosity and Motivation for Study

The driving force in this project is fueled by curiosity. In looking back to the earliest days of this pastoral ministry, during chaplaincy in Clinical Pastoral Education and internships, and entering into parish ministry, curiosity has always been a factor in the continuing formation processes. A sense of wonder is always present. The student is always ready to be schooled. The prior career in theater, in opera and public performance, required curiosity. Out of thirty-plus years in theater curiosity developed into habit, it became imprinted. It has become deeply ingrained in the personhood of this writer.
Over the three decades in theater and out of sixty-five plus roles learned, the need to understand the meanings of what the actor must accomplish has intensified. The need to comprehend *motivation*—why people do what they do—has always existed. Motivation of the sort referred to here is never simple, nor obvious, nor immediate. One needs to know far more than the words of the dialogue to comprehend motivation in the character of a player in a play. One needs to know as far as is possible the *intent* of the playwright, and in order to fathom the intent of the playwright, one needs to inquire into the history and substance, the *Sitz im Leben*, of the playwright. The methodology used in the preparation of the intervention model at the heart of this study derives from, is informed by and fueled with curiosity and the desire to understand *motivation*. The intervention model is an attempt to respond to behavior at its fundamental, i.e. the motivation of that behavior.

Initial Stages-Disengagement from Residuals

Under the guidance of Mark Rich, unit mentor, the earliest work of this doctoral odyssey featured an in-depth look at the events surrounding personal

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54 In professional theater, to ask a director what is the character’s motivation is considered the height of bad form. Appropriate preparation of the role is the actor’s responsibility.

55 Or, if preferred, the descriptive anthropology of the writer, the *ethnography*. 

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experiences during and after a period of conflict at the Church of Our Saviour, Mill Valley, California. In his role as mentor, his counsel suggested a lingering need to work through those experiences because of the long-term impact of the conflicted separation on all parties vested in those events. Of special concern were any lingering, potentially damaging effects on my ministry and relationship with the church, the *potentials to harm*.\(^\text{56}\)

One significant area of concern in the early times centered around a personal vestigial sense of victimization, that the antagonists in the conflict had made this writer their scapegoat to be sacrificed to achieve some unstated, inconceivable (as far as could be ascertained) end. Mark was aware of the work of René Girard\(^\text{57}\) around the anthropological nature of scapegoating, and directed reflections towards that, to the nature of victimization and to the cyclical nature of violence in society—all subject matter within the purview of Girard.

This proved to be important work. Much of the labor necessary to recover from the wounds of the conflicted separation, including psychological counseling, spiritual direction, and other undertakings was accomplished by this

\(^{56}\) The terminology originated by Mark Rich is described in Chapter 1 above.

\(^{57}\) René Girard (born December 25, 1923) professor emeritus at Stanford University is an important intellectual whose reach crosses many academic disciplines. His work evolved out of literary criticism in his early years to span anthropology, theology, philosophy, sociology, and psychology. He is considered the originator and principle exponent of *mimetic theory*. This is the theory that imitation plays a significant role in human development, and can lead to violence when the imitation causes us to desire those things that others likewise desire. His discourse on the effects of scapegoating and cyclical violence form a significant resource for the work undertaken in unit one in the doctoral program.
time. Even so, the task of preparing an intervention model must not be weighed down or colored by unresolved issues left over in the writer of the model. This early work served as a time of coaching, taking this writer through careful reflection on the hurtful experiences using the philosophy encountered in Girard as described in Chapter 1 above. The efforts were successful. The review of past injurious events juxtaposed with, and in the light of Girardian philosophy enabled further important disengagement from personal, vestigial response to those experiences. This empowered the movement forward to the project planning. Furthermore, and more importantly, the work in learning unit one created emotional space and creative energy towards a more balanced perspective necessary for the analytical work and study ahead.

Literature Review

The journey next comprised a survey of literature in science, business management and counseling for data on the nature of conflict, and for methods of conflict mediation and resolution. This was an idea collecting period fed by efforts to collect and identify resources for research. It was also a period of resource development, for recognizing assets already available. Included among those assets were interpersonal connections currently in place.
As an example, out of the experiences of conflict at the Church of Our Saviour a working relationship developed between this writer and the Reverend Donna Duensing. She was involved in the mediation efforts there. Pastor Duensing was the Interim Director of Field Education and Integrative Studies at San Francisco Theological Seminary at that time. She brings expertise to this table from her training as a resource consultant skilled in conflict resolution and mediation in churches.

Pastor Duensing served as mediator between the complainants and this writer during the latter stages of the conflict. She brought impressive skills to bear on the issues faced in the course of her mediation efforts at Our Saviour. Although the conflict ultimately resulted in my asking the bishop for leave from the parish, her participation was positive and effective. Throughout her work she maintained calm, modeled excellent listening skills, demonstrated lack of bias, and provided cogent feedback to participants and the diocesan leadership.

The gathering of pertinent information specific to conflict resolution and mediation during this period impacted significantly on the movement toward developing an intervention model. That impact is visible in the paradigm comprising chapter 4. The gathering process likewise invited listening to learn of actions that were considered ineffective too. Early investigations involved
questioning diocesan officers locally, further afield across the mid-Western Province of the Episcopal Church, and more broadly.

The author served as the chair of our diocesan commission on ministry from 2009 to 2011. This position provided valuable and informative access to persons in similar leadership positions within the Episcopal Church and other denominations. It was advantageous to seize the moment provided by that access to gather information, insight and opinions from this highly professional and quite knowledgeable pool of resources. As it turns out, these are individuals able to cite specific instances of successful interventions and of failures. Fortuitously, by reason of office, close and often personal involvement in the ongoing conflicts in western Michigan was assured, and in some instances participation in continuing efforts as they were unfolding or playing out. This position offered direct, open access to a proverbial laboratory apparatus with a range of activity in varying stages of engagement. Some of the conclusions and learnings that emerged from this milieu are represented in the intervention paradigm.

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58 The commission on ministry has oversight of ministry formation in a diocese. The commission developed the ordination track manuals for the diaconate and priesthood, and shepherded persons discerning their call to ordained ministry. Its work was inclusive of lay ministries as well. A significant body of that work centered on the creation of discernment guidelines that recognized and uplifted the ministries of all baptized persons.
This writer’s first call in this diocese was to be the interim rector of one of the larger parishes in the diocese. Contingent to that call was the requirement that the individual called had to be fully trained as an interim minister. Those training courses provided by the Interim Ministry Network were completed during the summer of service in the parish, resulting in certification for interim ministry. This training proved its value many times since during the course of my ministry in parishes. For the purpose of this doctoral study, the training and certification as dedicated interim minister yielded the first of three seminal and formative loci of resources.\(^{59}\)

The information gathering phase of learning unit two drew heavily on that training. From the perspective as chair of the commission on ministry and out of a recently earned interim ministry accreditation, the bishop found a resource able to offer advice on several aspects of conflicts underway in the diocese that he found useful. The training was useful in learning unit two on another level. It created a set of filters through which the accumulating data could pass, sifting out non-pertinent information. Much of the advice that appears in the intervention model derives not only from coursework in training

\(^{59}\) The three are: 1. Training and certification as Interim Minister. (Contact www.imnedu.org.) 2. Certification as Mediator by Lombard Peace Center. (Contact LMPC, 101 W. 22nd Street, Suite 206, Lombard, IL. Phone: 630-627-0507; E-mail: Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org; Web: www.LMPeaceCenter.org.) 3. Training and further engagement in Grounded Theory methodology with Dr. Kathy Charmaz, Sonoma State University.
for interim ministry, but also from the continuing counsel of the instructors who
did the training.

Early in the process it became clear that the process required help for the
development of the intervention guidelines and advice envisioned would come
out of this doctoral study. Learning unit two proved to be the magnet for the
collection of that help. Fortunately, knowledgeable resources were already at
hand and accessible from several compass points. Reverend Duensing is
someone already well known and appreciated for her skills. The connections
across the province and among the judicatory of the Episcopal Church were a
phone call away. The instructors from the Interim Ministry Network remained in
touch and demonstrated their interest in the project by offering advice or by
readily responding to questions. It was surprising to learn that the bishop of the
Diocese of Western Michigan, now retired, had been a student of Edwin
Friedman.\textsuperscript{60} He studied with Friedman on several occasions. His insights into
family systems theory and his interpretations of Friedman’s work inform the
final paradigm.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} Edwin Friedman was a Jewish rabbi, counselor and author of \textit{Generation to Generation},
and \textit{Failure of Nerve}, widely used textbooks on family systems theory.

\textsuperscript{61} The relatively close working relationship between diocesan dean and bishop was
considered confidential. Specifics detailing the fullness of his contribution cannot shared because
of active, direct participation in several diocesan points of conflict.
Drawing from personnel resources is only part of the challenge. The process turned toward surveying secondary literature for data on the nature of conflict and methods of conflict management. Among the notable authors consulted are Friedman and others needed for refreshment of family systems theory; Nancy Ammerman, Speed Leas and others consulted for conflict management and resolution in churches. Margaret Wheatley provided significant data on management and organizational models in the business world.

The information collection process included reading data on the nature of societies from the perspective of socio-biologists, otherwise known as evolutionary scientists. This writer’s curiosity for motivation led in this direction. Human emotion, the primal self, drives behavior—our emotional intelligence is senior management and functions to motivate our behavior at the deepest level. Dominic Johnson points out, “Basic desires such as sex, hunger, and dominance have been wired into our neural system over many millions of years,

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65 The Rev. Rodney Seeger is an ELCA pastor (retired) and was the supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education at University of California, San Francisco, in 1999. He used this expression often.
long before we developed into *Homo sapiens.*” This belief was awakened many years ago in Clinical Pastoral Education, and has been a channel of interest for nearly two decades now. It was along this avenue of interest that swept the study into the textbook of E. O. Wilson, into consultation with the works of John Alcock, Jared Diamond and others. These experts provided significant data on the influences of evolutionary mechanisms on animal behavior, with implications among humankind. These scientists have deeply influenced the work here as evidenced in repeated references to evolution, the place of conflict in the natural order, synergism and other topics lacing this dissertation and especially the intervention model.

Pastor Duensing suggested the movement from literature toward the project objectives by creating a first draft intervention model. This first attempt was to be simple. However, the weight of reading and accumulating data made this more difficult than expected. Data from the different fields of study among the literature consulted presented a proverbial deluge of information. Information gathered from the training and experiences and advice, compounded by the pressure of an active ministry was overwhelming.

Nevertheless, focused efforts yielded an initial draft intervention model in ten steps. It contained several defined pre-requisites and a number of presumptions upon which this first model rested. Now it needed testing.

Testing of the draft model took the form of a broadcast distribution to clergy and members of the laity in the diocese. Former colleagues in the Diocese of California received copies, as did a cadre of classmates at seminary. After several weeks, the model was reworked from the collated comments received. Then it was sent it out again. The distribution went to the same pool of addressees as before, but in addition, it also included a different set of persons who would be reading it for the first time. Some of the responses are included in a raw data worksheet (See Appendix D). The revised draft comprises a part of the descriptive paper submitted and approved as the proof of learning for the second unit.

Survey Development

The next logical step in the program saw the development of the tools for action research. These were the survey instrument (See Appendix B) and interview protocols to test the earlier assumptions and challenge the early conclusions from the initial, simple model.
The premise for the instrument is vested in the theological vision statement detailed in chapter 2, designed to imbue the work with power and scriptural authority. The theological vision statement pressed me into taking theological stands to incorporate answers to the following:

- What do I believe and why is it important to this study?
- What are the philosophies used to help discover and test motivations in observed behaviors?
- What aspects of scripture undergird advocacy of the guidance to interventions provided?
- What are points of reference going forward in the development and refinement of Grounded Theory methods for data collection and analysis, for subsequent learning units and the doctoral project?

It seems so obvious now that, as this is a Doctor of Ministry program, implicit prerequisites demand categorical declarations of how the work accomplished and the achievements sought are relevant to the care of and ministrations to God’s people in God’s church. There exists an implicit need in this project to reflect on the nature of conflict and its function in the realm of God. The creation of the vision statement helped address that implicit demand. The process of writing a theological statement was transformative. It became a manifesto of recovery from the wounds of conflict, pointing towards new pathways to spiritual health and new intent, a new commitment to God’s call for the remainder of this active ministry. It is hoped that the model, built on this
theological vision should do likewise for others. This is important to the entire process because from all this work comes an intention to implement the intervention model. The intention of this writer is to live with it, to revise it and to improve it for the rest of his life.

Once the vision statement was completed, Dr. Miller coached the process along in the simultaneous work to create a survey instrument and to develop interview protocols. The data gathering rooted in earlier work evolved into praxis. In addition to ongoing engagement with literature, data on how to exercise phone interviews, face-to-face interviews, and effective communication by e-mail accrued from the experience of actual, practical trials. The physicality, the hands-on experiences of actually working through the formation of questions and designing of surveys provided and honed a new set of skills for those purposes. Informed consent documentation required preparation.\footnote{Newly emergent parameters for social research in non-scientific fields suggested a need for written informed consent similar to those used in medical studies. George Hunsberger, Director of Doctor of Ministry studies at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI, guided the research and creation of the informed consent component in the final version of the survey instrument.} Proof of learning was the published survey tool comprising forty-eight questions.\footnote{See Appendix B.}

Finally, during this learning cycle, certification from training in conflict resolution and mediation supplied valuable input into the paradigm development from an unexpected direction. In an interview with Matthew
Stockard, Canon to the Ordinary in the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina, he
shared that he had just attended a course offered by the Mennonites on
mediation for church leaders. Canon Stockard said that, upon completion of the
course and as he was leaving, he phoned his bishop to tell him the course content
was so valuable that if something should happen to him on the journey home,
the bishop must send his new canon to the training immediately. This insight
prompted the immediate responses of locating the appropriate website,
identifying course specifics about which he had spoken and registering for it that
same day.

Collecting and Analyzing Data

The next learning cycle included the distribution of the survey created in
learning unit three, and the analysis of data. The deployment of the survey
instrument, like the creation of the first draft intervention model, was more
difficult than imagined. The wishful thinking at play imagined an anticipated
deployment numbering over one hundred recipients with everyone responding.
These wishes were never realistic; the reality was different.

\[^{72}\text{A critical analysis of the survey is in Appendix C.}\]
An opportunity with good potential for survey distribution arose from an invitation to be a speaker on the subject of conflict in churches at diocesan leadership days. Final distribution efforts managed to get forty or so surveys into the hands of persons expressing interest, and of those, sixteen individuals responded. This level of response seemed insufficient data for the drawing of useful conclusions. Fortunately documentation of earlier interviews and conversations provided an additional seventeen sets of opinions that could inform the intervention model.

Other resources yielded data during this time. Several members of the judicatory of other dioceses across the denomination provided information. This information came by phone interview and face-to-face contact. Members of a parish that was in the recovery stages from conflict that separated clergy also offered relevant information in interviews.

In a moment of good fortune, a conversation with Dr. Small on the subject matter of this study yielded an especially fecund resource. This was an introduction to Grounded Theory methods used in applied social research. Following a close reading of her textbook on the subject, it seemed important to

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73 Annual leadership development efforts by the Diocese of Western Michigan staff, usually consisting of three all-day Saturday retreats, situated in venues in the north, central and south of the diocese. I was a featured speaker.
meet with Dr. Kathy Charmaz\textsuperscript{74} in order to explore potentialities for using the methods described in her text as a part of the intervention model. The meeting with her and the information from the text proved to be so rich and exciting, that additional study followed in Chapel Hill through the Odum Institute, under the auspices of the University of North Carolina.\textsuperscript{75} As will be made clear in chapter four, the course work on Grounded Theory research methods now informs the intervention paradigm at a fundamental level.

During this learning cycle, the next effort collated the data from the survey, interviews, from coursework and from continuing consultation with secondary literature. In order to examine the ethnography of the respondents, part of the work entailed the organization of demographic data.\textsuperscript{76} By the close of the unit, the time and conditions were right to revise the intervention paradigm in preparation for unit five.

\textsuperscript{74} Kathy Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis}, (Sage: Los Angeles, 2006).

\textsuperscript{75} “Introduction to Grounded Theory Methodology” and “Progressing with Analysis and Writing,” 10th Annual Qualitative Research Summer, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, July, 2013.

\textsuperscript{76} See Appendix D for the Raw Data Analysis Chart, and Appendix E for the Ethnographic Data.
Revising the Original Model

The revision process in unit five was a gathering of resources from all prior doctoral work. Included in the resources were relevant experiences from this writer’s past and continuing ministry, data out of the survey, resources from coursework in mediation and Grounded Theory, and the integration of learning from interim training. Resources from secondary literature and interviews were incorporated into the data pool. From all these assets the revised intervention model was prepared and submitted to Dr. Hunsberger. Concurrently and in preparation for this doctoral project, a select panel of eight practitioners with expertise in different fields were invited to read the intervention model and make comment.

The intention in selecting the review panel was simple. The review called for knowledgeable individuals, all of whom are currently active in their specialist fields, to dialogue with the intervention model and to offer from their expertise suggestions to make it better. The approach in the development of the model evolved over the duration of the doctoral study and eventually distilled into three trajectories, all undertaken simultaneously:
1. Speaking first person with judicatory officers.\footnote{Among these were Canons to the Ordinary, others assigned to deal with conflicted parishes, and still others tasked especially to shepherd renewal efforts in parishes experiencing separation from clergy. Consultations included deployment officers, Canons Missioner and with special assistants for congregational development.}

2. The creation and deployment of the survey instrument described in the learning cycles above.

3. Testing of the model.

The revised intervention model was presented to the review panel during the summer of 2014. Members of the panel were contracted and paid a stipend for their review.\footnote{The stipend equaled the diocesan standard for Sunday pulpit supply.} Panel members were asked to read and comment on the revised intervention model from their own area of expertise and to provide written responses of no more than four pages. Once their comments and suggestions were received, the responses were engaged and studied. With the exception of some grammatical changes, or repetitions among the panel, the suggested improvements have been incorporated into the model.

The review panel consisted of seven individuals from four different disciplines. Two of the review panel are instructors recommended by officials with the Interim Ministry Network (IMN),\footnote{As it turns out by chance, the two recommended by IMN were instructors for this writer’s interim ministry certification coursework. Martin Homan instructed the initial course, Lynn Carman Bodden the second.} the organization that certified the interim ministry training. Both instructors from the Network continue to teach...
interims, and both have direct, current, and active experience in conflicted church ministry.

Two of the panel are psychologists, both with deep and relevant experience in churches, especially among clergy. One is the appointed diocesan counselor for the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. In his position as diocesan counselor, he has observed, advised and participated actively in conflicts ongoing within the diocese. The second psychologist has been an adjunct instructor at the seminary level dedicated to pastoral counseling. She has acted as seminarian development advisor, is a private practitioner and an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America. Invitations went to practitioners with expertise in two other fields that provided important contributions to the final iteration of the model. For reasons that are obvious, one invitation was extended to a professor of English who is an expert in composition. The last invitation went out to a teacher of teachers, a professor of education at North Carolina State University. All panelists have responded to the model and the revisions accorded to it are in chapter 4 of this project.
Chapter 4  
The Intervention Manual

Final Intervention Model—An Intervention Manual for Episcopal Congregations

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.’  

Statement of Intent

The following intervention model is intended to provide guidance to persons called to minister in parishes that have recently separated from their clergy as the result of conflict. This is a specialized ministry to congregations, to the people left in place holding the ground who are most likely reeling from the

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80 Rev. 21:1-7 (NRSV).
trauma that led to the severing of pastoral bonds. The intervention model has
been submitted to a panel of practitioners and experts in various fields for
review, comment, evaluation, and revision.

Introduction to the Model within the Manual

Greetings and welcome to this journey. This manual is intended to
provide clear guidance in the format of suggestions for individuals called into
the ministry of parishes that have recently separated from their clergy as a result
of conflict. As a priest serving now in his fourth parish and as the bishop’s dean
for our local area of the diocese, it seems that again and again much time is spent
reminding people of things they already know. Whether from the pulpit or in
private counseling, it feels as if yet again it is important to tell people just how
normal their feelings are, how relevant their actions have been to the life
situations wherein they discover themselves, how important are their decisions
toward their life and health and how valuable they are in God’s scheme. “You
know these things,” is the constant refrain, “I’m just reminding you.”

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81 Elizabeth Trembley, from her comments as a member of the paradigm review panel for
this project. This paragraph reflects language changes at her suggestion. (June 25, 2014).

82 At this stage of the Doctor of Ministry project, the intervention model becomes an
intervention manual.
This manual is offered as a set of lucid and unambiguous suggestions to assist you or persons you know in dealing with a recurring and depressing scenario in our churches; that is to say, conflict in churches that result in the separation of called clergy from their congregation. This manual lays out a process to help you and others in the specialized ministry for that period immediately following the closing of the door of the parish behind the clergyperson leaving because of conflict. The audience is the congregation left behind.

The clergy who are leaving also need care and consideration, yet this manual is focused on the congregations and the interim pastors, the people of the church who are left in place holding the ground, who are most likely reeling from the trauma leading up to the severing of the pastoral bonds.

This manual is a kind of medicine bag. Users will find an array of suggestions rather than prescriptive medications or palliative balms. The image of a medicine bag is useful because it is intended to help congregations and individuals in those congregations get well, to find a new way of being and behaving, to find renewed health. Indeed the manual is about health and healing. Jesus himself makes clear we all need a medicine bag.

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83 This writer is grateful to Dr. George Brown, G.W. and Eddie Haworth Professor Emeritus of Christian Education, Western Theological Seminary. (May, 2009) During casual conversation with Dr. Brown at a social gathering for Doctor of Ministry students during seminars in the latter part of May, 2009, he suggested the medicine bag imagery.
There are two strongly held and related premises that you should know of before we move deeper into the process. These are issues of language and the first is best stated in the negative, as something that is not.

Congregations that have suffered in the manner relevant to this thesis are *not broken*—*not* broken. From this first premise emerges the second premise; they are *changed*. Congregations that have suffered the separation of clergy out of conflict are not broken, they are changed. The processes suggested in this manual treat symptoms pointing toward people’s visceral response to cataclysmic change. People and collectives to which they belong are not toys or watches that will respond to “fixing” in the Newtonian sense. Chuck DeGroat says, “Slowly I began to see people not as machines to be fixed but as image bearing humans who needed tending.” The fires of conflict sear the souls and blister relationships, inflicting emotional pain and suffering on most everyone. But that rupture and wounding are a result of change—the kind of change permanently influencing all future events with echoes that reverberate in the cosmos forever. People caught up in the suffering need tending not fixing.

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84 Homan, Comments (2014) In his review of the intervention model, Marty Homan reminds us that some of the change may derive from efforts at community formation or from early stuckness, those times within the community when hardened attitudes prevent movement through formation or compromise.

User Assumptions

The intervention described in this manual is based on certain assumptions. One is that the presence and work within the congregation is to be short term. The user will work with the parish for a defined period and then he or she will hand over to others the fruit of that work. The user’s period in place will have a beginning, middle, and an end. This manual lays out the care protocol in roughly those temporal terms relative to phases of your transitional ministry—quite broadly using designations such as pre-entry, early, middle, and latter times.

The intervention is weighted to the earlier phases of the intervention since much of what you do at the beginning of your work you will likely continue or modify going forward. In all this, you will discover the manual provides no fixes, nor recipes for success. They do not exist. Suffice it to say for now, the work ahead is complex in scope. Success can be measured only in ambiguities inherent in words and phrases such as healing, wholeness and getting well.

The preparation of this intervention manual has not been undertaken in isolation. Nearly a hundred individuals with vested interest or direct experience in conflicted separation events have contributed to the protocol found here.
Various literature has been consulted, especially from family systems, business organization, and biology.  

Preliminaries-Diagnosis of the Problem

People in congregations involved with conflicted separation from their called clergy share the common bond of loss. These survivors float among the flotsam and jetsam of ruined relationships in the roiling wake of the conflict that led up to the clergy person’s departure. The author of this manual has direct, personal experience with this kind of life-wrecking conflict from the perspective of having been the clergyperson under targeted attack. It happened to me.

As you might expect, the awful, deeply wounding events changed the lives of many wounded people forever. It changed the lives of those persons in the congregation served and it changed the lives of all the persons we touched, then and since. The reverberations continue to resound these many years later,

86 A partial list includes:
and although diminished through the passage of time, they will continue into the foreseeable future. The grief has reached a season of acceptance that one’s own deeply wounding experiences are simply one person’s share of the suffering, confusion, and discontent that flow with apparent inevitability from these traumatic occurrences. Yet in the suffering is also a desire for healing.

Still, I can count myself lucky. In the circumstances mentioned above, the bishop provided strong support at my leaving. He compelled the parish from which I left in pain to pay an adequate severance package that protected my family from financial collapse due to the sudden loss of income. The diocese paid for personal spiritual direction from a qualified and loving priest, and for psychological counseling through the auspices of the diocesan HMO. The bishop provided for and set up continuing education classes in small business management techniques and he provided church sponsored unemployment benefits when the severance payments from the parish ran their course.87 This priest was provided with space and time to grieve.

Finally, when the bishop felt that I was on the mend, he signaled his continuing trust with an offer of another position. Even though the pain was

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87 According to the employment regulations in California, clergy are not entitled to state unemployment benefits. In the instance of my separation, the bishop directed the parish to use a portion of their accumulated resources to continue my salary and benefits for four months. Afterwards, the diocese provided unemployment benefits through an association dedicated to and funded for that purpose.
great and long lasting—to this day there are still vestiges of anger and hurt—this 
*wounded healer* was cared for very well.

Yet, during the course of recovery from the wounds of the events of that 
separation in ministry, as strength increased and the struggling with day-to-day 
living diminished, it became apparent that this story was but one of far too many 
where conflict in churches drives clergy from their called relationship with their 
congregation. The problem was bigger than anyone might have imagined.

This priest was well taken care of by the diocese. As time passed and 
interest in the issues surrounding separation of clergy from conflict grew, stories 
emerged of similar occurrences in other places where departing clergy likewise 
fared reasonably well. Anecdotal evidence gleaned primarily from conversations 
with diocesan officials across the eastern reaches of the Episcopal Church 
supports this generalization. For clergy in our denomination at least, it seems 
that those who have endured separation from congregations out of conflict are 
cared for well. This is a good thing.

During the research phase of this Doctor of Ministry journey, some of the 
distributed surveys reached out to various persons who self-described as having 
direct experience or close knowledge of conflict in churches which resulted in 
clergy leaving. In some of the responses, individuals are drawing from memories 
of conflicts that took place eight, ten or more years ago. The pain and suffering
implicit in the telling relate to circumstances that are not recent. This is important. Some considerable time has passed. While the passage of time alone may dull the ache, it does not cure the malady.

One response provides especially compelling evidence in support of this conclusion. In his quite detailed account, the respondent speaks of events that took place over fifty years ago. His pain that has been with him all these years marks just how much is at stake here.

But what about those people in our congregations or in congregations in other denominations and other religions who have been left behind floating among the wreckage left over from conflict? What of them? How were they subsequently cared for? I began to wonder if maybe those in positions of responsibility for such things are not so good at caring for them. They are the wounded survivors of conflict left holding the ground. As clergy, as church leaders, as baptized Christians, the healing of local communities is our charge. The clergy have a duty of care for and about them. When clergy leave out of conflict, the questions that must be asked concern how the congregations left behind are ministered to after separation. Who is serving them? Are they any good at it? What qualifications do interim clergy have? What are interims able to do in the congregations following the separation out of conflict to promote
health, to lift up the wounded left bobbing in the tumult of residual conflict in the parishes?

Too often, inadequately trained persons are put into interim positions following conflicted separation. Occasionally, shamefully, persons incompetent for the mission are installed. Parishes are provided with supply clergy or called interim ministers who were not up to the tasks before them. In these instances, the wounded survivors in the roiling wake of conflict were thrown, not a life-ring, but an anchor.

Qualifications

One of the greatest gifts for a congregation suffering after conflicted separation is the intervening presence of a qualified interim minister. The recommended qualifications follow. They include certification in interim ministry, and certification or proof of successful experience in conflict mediation. Above all, qualifications include a strong, self-differentiated personality, someone who has accomplished self-care and dealt successfully with personal issues.  

For methods to achieving successful self-care see DeGroat, Dealing with Ourselves: the Best Help We Can Give Another, in Toughest People to Love (2014) 107-157; and Hunsinger and
As indicated above, individuals called to serve congregations that have separated from their clergy out of conflict must be trained in interim ministry. Furthermore, they should also be trained specifically or have demonstrable experience in mediation and conflict resolution. Ideally, they should have experience in crisis intervention. While some gifted individuals may invite successful interventions using abilities that seem to come naturally, these results are as much a matter of luck as anything else. While fortune does play into process, the tasks at hand are too important to rely on chance for outcomes, too complex for the untrained and inexperienced. The risks of worsening the damage are too great to entrust matters to the untrained. Here is not the stuff for amateurs.

Close observations reveal that on occasion, congregations stricken by conflict and having lost their clergy are assigned interims by their judicatory or local leadership using criteria based as much on availability or longevity of service or, God forbid, the simple convenience in filling a temporary vacancy as

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90 For training in mediation and conflict resolution, I suggest the Lombard Mennonite programs. Contact information is as follows: Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, 101 W. 22nd Street, Suite 206, Lombard, IL. Phone: 630-627-0507; E-mail: Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org; Web: www.LMPeaceCenter.org. [Accessed: 03/2015].

91 Martin J. Homan, Review Comments (06/25/2014). This specific qualification is his suggestion.
any other basis. Retired clergy are called upon, or select clergy who function as little more than pulpit supply among parishes in transition within the diocesan (or denominational equivalent) boundaries. These clergy may bring many years of service with them into the fray.

However, having experience in general parish ministry does not guarantee the clergyperson has the emotional wherewithal and skillset to handle the challenges lying in wait in the troubled communities we speak of here. In fact, such clergy, who may have had distinguished and broadly successful ministries elsewhere, can actually exacerbate the turmoil within a troubled and conflicted community. Kenneth Reid says it well, “The term ‘Unintended Consequences’ comes to mind. The experienced clergy person may have successes, but may also be damaged. They may be adverse to conflict and fearful of raising appropriate issues, preferring to ‘help them hire a priest and get the hell out.’”

This moment in the life of a congregation requires relevant experience, specific to circumstance.

Out of direct, personal experiences in parish ministry, from a perspective as dean, having served as chair of our diocesan commission on ministry and during the course of this work towards the Doctor of Ministry, data indicated that many clergy who, having long served in parishes, were assigned to

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92 Kenneth Reid, Review Comments (08/15/2014).
conflicted congregations and subsequently furthered the conflict. One priest was assigned to such a congregation immediately after having been separated from her own parish out of conflict. Her attitude and behavior toward the newly assigned parish reflected unresolved anger from her recent conflicted separation. Another priest, who is regularly called upon by a diocese for interim work and who is now serving in a parish that has separated from not one but two clergy out of conflict, has a history of divisive conflict in his own parishes and a reputation of being Herr Pastor\textsuperscript{93} among his synod. His current parish evidenced further conflict within a few months of his arrival.

Another priest started a choir school and painted the front doors red\textsuperscript{94} during his tenure following conflicted separation. The forces generated by all the unresolved issues that existed prior to his interim period blew up in the face of the called settled rector following unsuspectingly behind. After a short fifteen months, the parish endured another conflicted separation.

Yet another priest, purportedly following instructions from a power collective in the parish where he served as interim, failed to undertake any

\textsuperscript{93} This term refers to individuals with an authoritarian approach as opposed to collegial or egalitarian methods.

\textsuperscript{94} The interim used his energies to express his political views during the second Iraq war. The painting of the front doors red symbolized sanctuary, safe haven for those who wished to express anti-war sentiments. The priest had this done unilaterally, not because the parishioners requested it out of a clearly determined need. Starting a choir school absorbed resources that could have been better used funding study of internal needs or hiring consultants for conflict resolution.
actions that might undermine the status quo during his period of service. He was instructed, purportedly, by members of a sub-faction of the power elite within the parish not to change anything, so he did not. His inaction contributed to ongoing troubles in that congregation now lasting into its seventh year. The called rector in this parish has not had a single day of service without conflict from the moment of his arrival.95

The intrinsic dangers of generalization must be respected. Further, it must be acknowledged that specialized training does not guarantee successful outcomes in situations of conflicted separation. However, the examples cited above and others underscore the need for adequate training of ministers entering congregations separated from clergy out of conflict. Adequate training increases the likelihood of better results96 and diminishes the potentialities for error.

In addition to the training, persons called into this ministry must be self-differentiated.97 This means that the interim must be able to know and act on his

95 Even now, after all these years, the diocesan leadership continue to be pressured by disaffected persons lobbying for the removal of this priest.

96 The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center cites a record of successful interventions requiring mediation and conflict resolution in their course offerings. Later in this paper, I will suggest the kinds of training that are useful for interims entering after conflicted separations.

97 Friedman, A Failure of Nerve (2007) 231. Although the term derives from his earlier work, this is an excellent example of self-differentiated leadership succinctly defined.
or her own mind, according to her or his own moral compass and ethical standards, especially in likely disagreements with the congregation.98

Differentiation is the lifelong process of striving to keep one’s being in balance through the reciprocal external and internal processes of self-definition and self-regulation... [it can be described as] the capacity to become oneself out of one’s self, with minimum reactivity to the positions or reactivity of others.99

He or she should be able to stay in touch with self, to be able to manage her/his own feelings, to refuse assumption of the feelings of others, to take non-reactive stands at the behavior of others and to refuse ownership of the responses of others. Interims should resist efforts towards sabotage and triangling. They should be resistant to the seduction of the compliment. Above all, the clergyperson must demonstrate a non-anxious presence with a tolerance for pain and anxiety. A student of the family systems theory, Arthur Boers, holds that the key to responsible leadership is this quality of differentiation advocated here.100 The interim called to serve in a congregation separated from clergy out of conflict is going to need it.101

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98 Homan, Comments, (2014). Martin Homan calls this “defining oneself over and against the other,” being clear about which issues belong to whom.
100 Arthur Paul Boers, Never Call Them Jerks: Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior, (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 1999).
101 Reid, Comments, (2014). Ken Reid comments, “As I read this section it strikes me how important it is for the clergy to have ongoing consultation (or supervision). It can be a very lonely role.” I offer more about this later.
The intervening, differentiated clergyperson will need to have three essential character sets: a willingness to listen, the ability to withhold judgement, and a determination to love unconditionally. None is more important than the first, the willingness and ability to listen. To be able to hear with a determination to assimilate the substantial volume of information that flows from all compass points surrounding the intervening clergyperson is invaluable.\textsuperscript{102} To have the discipline and the resolve to find meaning from it, to recognize and manage polarities within the conflict\textsuperscript{103} is vital.

The second essential character set for an intervening leader is the combined willingness and ability to withhold judgment.\textsuperscript{104} The individual must not prejudge or assess blame. Seeking and attempting to analyze causality will be a part of the process certainly, but only for the purpose of understanding rather than to condemn, in order to discover avenues for the development of a healthy new creation rather than to punish miscreant behavior. Chuck DeGroat says, “No matter how significant our struggle with another human being, we must never

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\textsuperscript{102} Later I will provide examples from Grounded Theory methodology drawn from the field of social research. The application of Grounded Theory will call for certain qualifications other than the above, and those will be introduced in that discussion. For now, I will suggest that much of the labor ahead in the intervention following separation requires a scientific approach in that, like scientists, the intervening authority must bring and maintain an open mind, an inveterate curiosity and a willingness to let the data speak.

\textsuperscript{103} Homan, Comments (2014). His suggestion.

\textsuperscript{104} Charmaz, \textit{Introduction to Grounded Theory} (2006). This is fundamental to the social researcher using Grounded Theory methodology.
look at that person without remembering his or her original identity and purpose.”

Instead of prejudging and forming allegiances and power centers based on that prejudgment, the interim clergy will need skill to nurture relationships with all the people in the surviving community and patience to observe where those relationships lead. Prejudgment creates barriers that will impede the ability to listen carefully to those persons who may be considered adversaries simply as a result of their having been prejudged.

The third essential character set is the capacity and determination to love unconditionally. Implicit in this is the capacity to deal with pain. In this is the echo of First Corinthians 13.13 where “. . . the greatest of these is love.”

Synergism and Unconditional Love—An Autobiography

Some twenty years ago, while still a professional singer, I was engaged to sing the tenor role in Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with the North Carolina Symphony and a large chorus in Duke Chapel on the campus of Duke University. In this masterpiece, the tenor actually sings only about two and a half minutes of this difficult music.

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105 DeGroat, Toughest People to Love (2014) 32.
106 Homan, Comments (2014) His suggestion.
The performance was going well, and in the course of its movement, I began to notice the more subtle aspects of live performances. I could hear the fingernails striking the necks of the cellos, the click of the closing apertures on the woodwinds, the sounds of feet moving in the orchestra and chorus, the subdued grunts of the conductor himself as his vigorous involvement grew more so with the tempo of the piece. Musicians call these sounds *sonance*. They generally are not noticed by the audience, but they are present in the music all the same. And even though they might be maddeningly disruptive to listeners if audible in any markedly perceptible degree, they are necessary components to the creative process. Beyond the obvious sonance, there were additional elements present that, like sonance, contributed to the moment.

The moon provided backlighting through the stained glass windows up to the right of the performers, casting on all present the beauty of the images in that light. Most noticeable were the intricacies of Beethoven’s melodic interplay between sections of the orchestra, so marvelous is the genius of it. In the dimness of the nave of the church, the faces of the people in the audience were visible, and the effect of the music upon many of them was transparent. It became clear that, even though long dead, Beethoven still changed lives by his work. And from the hands of artisans unknown, the ambient beauty of the venue provided continuing support to artistry of others and contributed in silent
form to the totality of the effects of the moment—a totality greater than the sum of its parts.

The totality of this wonderful experience brought out a new and deeper understanding of *synergism*, the “cooperative interaction between two or more components in a system, such that the combined effect is greater than the sum of each part.” This single event proved to be a turning point in the growth of a deeper and richer personal theology. From this experience yielded new personal, internal discoveries and the ability to finally name and understand. In God’s Creation some things exist that are greater than their constituent elements, greater than the sum of their parts. Some things are so unified in their wholeness that they cannot be described as a sum of their parts.

That night, in those moments and over the years since in the contemplation of them, it occurred to me that every person present in that place actually contributed somehow to the *synergism*. All of these persons were present and were, like the sonance of the instruments, *needed* for the mystery of synergism to literally play itself out.

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And here is unconditional love. The recognition of the potentiality within the other for joining together in the creation of a greater good and the willingness to appreciate that potentiality without precondition is this writer’s definition of unconditional love.

Among all those necessary for the synergism, there exist likeable individuals, individuals about whom no opinion favorable or unfavorable develops, some individuals who are simply tolerable and some most assuredly dislikeable. Beethoven himself might have been one of the latter! The salient point is that, whether or not likeable, all persons present in the creative moment where the synergism came into being were necessary, constituent elements of its creation. In the Ninth Symphony, synergism enriches an already greater good.108

What is being proposed here is that the existence of synergism is evidence of grace from God that points towards God’s active use of all human beings in the continuum of Creation.109 Whether or not one finds the other agreeable or objectionable, unconditional love dictates that one must behave towards the other as if God has purpose for that individual, and that, regardless of purpose, God’s usage of the individual influences the continuum of Creation in one’s own

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108 If one combines human endeavor for the creation of evil or bad, then, regretfully, one might conclude that that result is likewise greater than the sum of its parts.

109 This paragraph is a suggested elaboration on synergism reflecting comments by George Hunsberger, Responses (2014). See Appendix G, Question 1, p. 234 following.
self. In other words, everyone that exists changes everyone else that exists. To paraphrase H. Richard Niebuhr, at some level God is acting through the actions of others upon you. Therefore, at base, respond to others as if you would respond to the actions of God.\textsuperscript{110}

Pain, Grief, and Steeples that Cry

Under the best of circumstances, interim ministers enter into church communities that are in some level of disarray due to grief. As Jaco Hamman says in his book, \textit{When Steeples Cry}, grief is a by-product of change . . . because change is loss. “The face of change-as-loss is varied and always morphing into a new image . . .”\textsuperscript{111} This is true even in those instances of transitions out of intentional change.\textsuperscript{112} In parishes disrupted by conflict leading to the loss of the pastor, the effects are often markedly worse. The parish the interim is entering has dramatically changed. All grief is multi-faceted and unique. Each person grieves in his or her own way and time and order. The same is true with whole congregations as discrete entities or within pockets among the parish membership. Therefore, while the clergy leader may have experienced helping

\textsuperscript{110} Niebuhr, \textit{The Responsible Self} (1963) 126.
\textsuperscript{112} Homan, Comments (2014).
parishes move through grief, he or she ought to remember that this time the
grief process will be different.

Normally in churches that require interims the source of the grieving for
the congregation is in the departure of the pastor. At the best of times, changing
pastors signals the end of an era and people are fearful, or, at the very least,
apprehensive of the future. This rings true whether they anticipate missing the
individual, or they are glad for the departure. A change in pastors out of conflict
heightens the fear and exacerbates the grief. The corporate body is wounded. The
state of the congregation is highly charged and emotional. Not only is fear for
the future present, but so also is anger, sadness, frustration, etc. These feelings
are strong and debilitating to varying degrees. Good healthy decisions are
difficult to make when people are in the throes of grief. Logic is impeded by
grief even among people who outwardly may seem logical and connected.
Therefore, the interim should expect that members of the congregation and the
entity that is the whole congregation will be less able to make good and healthy
decisions because of the nature of grief they are experiencing.

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113 A useful, succinct resource for pastors or other caregivers helping people through
grieving is “Professional Caregivers Grief Manual,” collated from several authors by Hospice of
Michigan (03/08/2012). Copies may be ordered by phoning 888-247-5701.

114 Reid, Comments (2014). Dr. Reid notes, “When I read this page I found myself
thinking of the transference (and counter-transference) dynamic. It is especially important when
we call our priests ‘father’ and ‘mother.’”
“Forgive and Forget”

Parish priests, and clergy in general are regularly reminded that the woeful phrase, *forgive and forget* lingers with us like chewing gum stuck to soles of our relationships. If ever a more useless cliché or less worthy modicum of pithy advice exists today, one must stretch to imagine it. Yet, one continues to hear it often. At the base of the advice being shared here, it is important you be encouraged as the intervening clergy to help people understand that they cannot *make it like it was before*.

Conflict is formative in nature. Pain from conflict changes us. No cosmic parts departments exist from which may be drawn nuts or bolts or baling wire or duct tape to repair damage and restore the congregation, wounded by the conflict and grieving the separation, back to some halcyon place referred to as the *way things used to be*. The metaphorical language of fixing and repairing, as common as it seems to be, just does not apply. In fact, it’s not helpful. One’s personal, strong resistance to the use of the language and imagery of fixing and repairing extends even further. Maybe we ought to toss out, as far as we are able, such words as restoration, rejuvenation, recreation, even renewal . . . and here’s why.
The way things used to be or otherwise what once was is now never, never land—a place that may be visited in dreams or storybooks, perhaps, but not accessible on waking. We are engaged in telling a new story.\textsuperscript{115} What was is gone. It does not exist. There is no back to option. Restoration to that which was is now impossible. Furthermore, our memory of things-as-they-were is inaccurate and flawed. What used to be never really existed as we remember. Therefore, when we as interim clergy or consultant enter into a congregation strewn with the relational debris from conflict and painful separation, our objective in the intervention is not about fixing.

However, it is worth remembering that we, in our present, are the sum of all we have been given genetically and through experience. We should acknowledge that some things out of the immediate past continue to influence our behavior—in bad and in good ways.\textsuperscript{116} The changes we experience through conflict do that. The question of degree might always be present, but let us rely on Richard Niebuhr who speaks to this presence when he says that in every present is “an internal and remembered past” which cannot be forgotten or left behind. He goes on to say that this past can be re-interpreted instead of

\textsuperscript{115} Homan, Comments (2014).
\textsuperscript{116} Hunsberger, Responses (2014).
abandoned.\textsuperscript{117} The point is this; we should remember formative experiences well in order to better re-interpret those memories in life-giving, healthy ways.

We should do the same in congregations wounded from conflict. We should be about managing, creating and facilitating processes so that the congregation, with the help of God may create \textit{something new and healthy} within the community from what is left.\textsuperscript{118} In the words of Revelation, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had \textit{passed away} . . .”\textsuperscript{119} Even though threads in the fabric which existed before the conflict seem to remain, and even though their presence may contribute to the illusion that the community can go back and reset, it just is not possible. Perhaps our sense of this impossibility contributes to our sadness over our loss.

Finally, consider this: Creation itself is constantly changing. The earth and all the stars were created out of chaos preexisting. The continents were formed from the shifting of tectonic plates, and islands are formed in the Pacific from the actions of volcanoes. Rock formations are shaped by the actions of abrasives in water and wind. Out of the pain of birthing are children born.

\textit{Conflict is a form of creation like all these natural phenomena of change. Yet it}

\textsuperscript{117} Niebuhr, \textit{Responsible Self} (1963) 102.

\textsuperscript{118} Lynn Carman Bodden, from her comments as a member of the paradigm review panel for this project. According to Lynn, this defines the difference between the roles/tasks of interim and the congregation. (07/19/2014).

\textsuperscript{119} Rev. 21:1 (NIV). (italics added). The New Testament brings considerable weight of opinion on the concepts of making things new. See scriptural quotations in Appendix H.
need not be violent. Change can be gentle. In all these faces of change, nothing has ended. There is more to come. We can hope for the future. We can move on.

A Word about Power

Conflict is generated from any number of causes for a multitude of reasons. The nexus of circumstances that results in conflict sufficient to force the exit of clergy from a congregation brings together a blend of influences unique to the moment. Clergy can be removed under disciplinary rubrics and canon for malfeasance, sexual misconduct or other causes, or they can choose to resign ahead of prosecution. These removals will generate conflict whatever the verdict in ecclesial courts or civic trial. Generally though, it is normal that conflicts follow the removal or surround the judicial action. The causality of conflict in these circumstances seems logical, easily pointed towards, or follows directly.

This type of conflict is the result of competition within the society or community for control, and therefore its causality is more complex, less linear. In other words, this is about authority and power and the pressures that surround transitions.
Power within the natural order is morally neutral. Every society across the biological spectrum needs dynamic influences and leadership. Energy sources that drive the society towards fulfillment of basic needs are important for survival and adaptation. This kind of dynamism is an observable phenomenon in the world around us. Choices must be made for the good of the community. Those individuals within a society who are best suited for making those good decisions ought to be in positions of power. However, individuals who ought to be leaders may not be. Sometimes, regrettably, the proof of the competency of leaders is the extinction of the troop or church.

The root of conflicts lies upon or abuts the locus of power, where the reins are held and at the points of challenge to those alphas in the community holding it. Power ebbs and flows in its strength. This is part of the natural order. Under normal conditions, power within a society can be expected to transfer from the old to new, from current to different, from I or us to other. Conflict arises when competing groups aggressively vie for formative leadership of the pack over

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121 Homan, Comments (2014). This section calls to mind power differentials. These exist in relationships where one party or group occupies a position of dominance over others by reason of strength, gender, social position, economic strata, etc. Power differentials, while normally healthy and functional, can be the sources of conflict through abuse by the dominant power over the weaker.
alignment issues, generational transmission or other matters. Therefore, conflict forms at or around the point of convergence where the decline in the power of the current leadership meets the rise in the power of the challengers, where perceived vulnerability meets aggressive desire.

In nature, conflict can reflect the continuing evolution of the species as a means by which dominant individuals introduce new genetic material into the resource pool. Even if we imagine some wounding from vicious encounters between two competitors vying for dominance, the result of the encounter in which a clear winner is determined sustains the normal processes for adaptation. If it does, and the society evolves because of it, the conflict can be understood as healthy or adaptive. If the conflict results in destruction and extinction, the process is maladaptive.

Interim clergy should not waste time forming judgments about the need or desire for power or about the reality that the transfer of the reins of power is at issue. The healing of the community is about evaluating behavior as you find it and helping form conflict-weakened relationships into healthy ones. It is about helping the community adapt to change.

122 Homan, Comments (2014). Re-alignment refers to the re-ordering of membership within factions where individuals might choose to change sides. Generational transmission refers to change due to the aging of leadership whether real or perceived by the community.
Pre-entry-The Team of Supporting Players

The individual called to enter into a community in the aftermath of conflicted separation from its clergy needs backup and support from a team of vested others. Lone rangers need not apply—the challenges are too great and the issues too complex for one person to manage. The risks of further, even if unintentional damage to the community and of emotional injury to the intervening person, no matter how self-differentiated, are high.

Interim clergy need first to develop an extra-parish support team that is dedicated to intervention oversight and ongoing support. Such a team should be recruited from several sources and include:

- The interim clergyperson
- One or more persons representing the denominational judicatory with specific knowledge of the history of the parish and of the crisis that preceded the separation. At least one person should be vested with authority to make decisions on behalf of the greater church within the bounds of denominational canon. This person, or another, may act as the liaison between the intervening person and the judicatory.\(^{123}\)

\(^{123}\) In Episcopal governance, authority rests with the diocesan bishop. The team member suggested here, in addition to the position description above, will also act as buffer between the bishop and the conflicted parish. This buffering will serve to constrain, even if not completely,
o One or two persons trained as interim[s] and experienced in conflict resolution and mediation should meet regularly with the intervening clergy, per agreed schedule, for the purpose of debriefing the intervention process, reviewing actions taken by clergy, assessing developments during the intervention and suggesting responses to situations as they arise.

o A competent counseling psychologist for the well-being of the interim.

o A spiritual advisor, again for the well-being of the interim and to keep the focus on seeking the will of God.

All these comprise the extra-parish, management support team. If available the team may also include a local clergy group. From the parish, the intervening clergy team should include these:

o The chair of the vestry (or its denominational equivalent)

o The vestry

o Bellwethers (Persons who demonstrate a non-reactive demeanor who are committed to the long term interests of the parish.)

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124 These may not be available in some communities.

125 “Evolution-From Wolf to Domestic Dog,” Newton’s Apple Website. This article provides a good description of the work of Dmitri Konstantinovich Belyaev regarding the evolutionary transition of wolf into domesticated dog. In experiments with foxes, he developed a theory concerning flight distances, the measure of physical distance a wild animal will permit before fighting or fleeing. The lower the flight distance, the tamer is the animal.

This study has relevance among human societies. Persons who demonstrate the calmer, less reactive or more stable demeanor are likely reflecting the human equivalent of low flight distance in feral animals. www.newtonsapple.org.uk/evolution-from-wolf-to-domestic-dog.
Keep Your Enemies Closer

After a conflicted separation, within the congregation will remain elements from the various factions of the conflict. While not official pre-set members of the team, the intervening clergy should regularly consult with their leadership as clarity emerges during the data collection process. Sometimes the leader of a faction will use proxies or emissaries in the conflict. He or she will refuse to speak directly with other factions or parish leadership. He or she will try to manipulate the situation through the filter of others.\(^\text{126}\) Even though you may find this behavior to be frustrating and subversive go ahead and speak first to the proxies. Listen to them. See if you can discover the role of this person within the community and the nature of his or her influence. Then try to break the triangles and open dialogue with that leader directly.

Your conversations and data collection efforts must cast across the broadest accessible reach, including even those persons who operate from a nucleus of power at the source of the conflict. Their objectives may be the sabotaging of any efforts they perceive might threaten their accretion of

\(^\text{126}\) This writer encountered this behavior during his own experiences. The individual leading the charge for my leaving never met with me face to face once the actions were initiated. This person never attended the parish meetings where matters were discussed, and was out of town for the months when the conflict was most intense. She operated through a group of persons acting as agents.
authority. Yet even they can provide useful information going forward into the new creation and healing process. Here may be the locus of greatest challenge to you as intervening clergy. Withholding judgment of these persons may be most difficult. Nevertheless, interim clergy need data from this faction as much as from any other source. Let the extra-parish and internal teams assist you.

Doing the Homework-Grounded Theory

The door closes behind the clergy person separated from the congregation out of conflict. The judicatory has arranged for an interim clergy person to enter into the parish. Ideally, the interim is adequately trained, self-differentiated, able to withhold judgment, and willing to listen. The recommended support team is organized and in place. What now?

Information has been streaming toward the interim in a steady flow even before arriving at this point. Like a radioactive substance, beams of data have been radiating out of the afflicted parish community. Every aspect of the challenge is feeding that stream. Information is flowing up and down, and it is a deluge. Be sensitive to the acquisition of information. Listen. Be curious. Wonder. Ponder. This is the single most important task before you in the process of healing. In
order to be effective, or at least to better the chances for positive outcomes, soak up as much information as possible . . . and analyze it.\footnote{127}

The interim is first a social researcher. Social researchers prepare processes for handling the information that will best suit the engagement of the problem/question.\footnote{128} Begin now to draw from your training and experience. Begin now to think in \textit{Grounded Theory terms}. “Grounded theorists evaluate the fit between their initial research interests [the problem/question to be engaged in the conflicted church] and their emerging data. We do not force preconceived ideas and theories directly upon our data.”\footnote{129} The field of social research from which Grounded Theory emerged offers help in data gathering and provides a process for sorting and analyzing the collected data.\footnote{130}


\footnote{128} According to Dr. Charmaz, “A [research] process consists of unfolding temporal sequences that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in between.” Charmaz, \textit{Constructing Grounded Theory} (2006) 10.


\footnote{130} Hunsberger says that, “The portrait of Grounded Theory method would seem to be helpful not only to interim ministers following conflict but to any new ministers commencing ministry in a congregation.” Hunsberger, Response (2014).
Grounded Theory (GT)-Attitude Adjustment

Grounded Theory (GT) methods are made up of defined strategies for collecting data/information you will find useful as you put together your theories about what has been going on in the conflicted parish prior to your entrance, and how to deal with things as they stand now. Grounded Theory methods offer the advantage of flexibility in that you can adjust them according to your own style and temperament and you can allow them to take you into virtually any direction of discovery. In fact, an important principle to the use of GT is your willingness, your openness to letting the data lead you. So in addition to withholding pre-judgment, determine to manage as well as you can all preconceived notions about what has happened, what the causes are, who are the antagonists and so forth. Trust that the data will lead where it will. Let the methodology instruct you.

GT methods promote the simultaneous collection and analysis of information, using them will help you look at the congregation as a whole, at the actions of individuals, into the organizational structures and processes in order to find meanings for behavior. GT permits you to use your inductive logic muscles, and at the same time continually checks your conclusions.
Agony and Being Part of the System

Moving forward through the process, remember how important it is to clear the mental slate and to become aware of all the information gathered and available. Think of the collated data in terms of relationships, namely as social constructs that wire together the people into the church community. Data is everywhere.

Interim clergy will be engaging in the life of the community as both observer and participant, “The longer you are with the church, the more you become part of the system.” Your involvement in the community now will influence it forever, and it will influence you. You are now a part of the change. Just as the exiting of clergy creates volatility and contributes to destabilizing the system especially when conflict is present, the entrance of clergy into a conflicted community likewise contributes to volatility and destabilization among the people. Therefore, listen carefully and constantly to the data with sensitivity to your own impact on it, and its impact on you.

Your immersion in the community may bring up issues in your own emotional makeup; there may be similarities in personalities or behavior that remind you of formative episodes in your development. Be aware and listen.

\[131\] Homan, Comments (2014).
Count on your extra-congregational team members to help prevent the possible transference of issues out of your own history to cloud your judgment going forward. Even the most differentiated and self-aware of practitioners can be vulnerable. Take care. Do not permit yourself to become part of the problem.\textsuperscript{132}

The Grounded Theory Process-Write It Down

Data emerges even before the interim walks in. Prepare for and practice writing down as much of the information you can as soon as you are able. Keep records. Become a note-taking, journaling dervish. When you have conversations with anyone for any reason, write them down\textsuperscript{133}—as soon as possible. Find a regular time at either the beginning of the day or at the end of the day, or whenever suits you, to review your notes, to write your reflections or to journal.\textsuperscript{134} If you have had an interesting encounter with some individual, take a page from the Clinical Pastoral Education book and write verbatim of the conversation.\textsuperscript{135} Ask, “What’s happening here?” Anything that seems unusual,

\textsuperscript{132} Reid, Comments (2015).
\textsuperscript{133} The descriptions of Grounded Theory methods are intended for guidance only. While the explanations of the methodology go into some depth, no one assumes that, at the end, you will be a trained social scientist. This writer himself does not profess to be, either. These are tools. Use them as you wish. Having worked with one of the leaders in its development, Dr. Kathy Charmaz, these methods are trustworthy, and therefore advocated here.
\textsuperscript{134} After prayer or meditation time could be especially useful.
\textsuperscript{135} A sample verbatim from Clinical Pastoral Education is in Appendix M.
write it down. Keep in mind or post in some convenient and obvious location the set of questions:136

- Whose point of view are you hearing? Is it first or second or third hand?
- How does the person speaking or persons in conversation with you interact with others? How are they treating you?
- What are the observable power dynamics? Who is exerting or attempting to exert control?
- Where are the power centers in the community? How are those made clear to you? How are they made clear to others? Who or what is making them clear?
- What are the factions? How do they interact with each other? What does each want? Is what each wants possible under the rubrics of canon/polity, or accessible by other healthy means?
- What meanings are you hearing? Are you sensing the more subtle, deeper implications of what is being said, or heard?
- What are your visceral responses to your observations, conversations or non-verbal communications?
- Are you noticing shifts in dynamics in relationships? What changes are you seeing or hearing?
- Where are you noticing push-back or resistance?
- Where are you noticing a difference between the spoken word and behavior?
- What are you reading from non-verbal clues, body language (from persons) or structural elements (building and grounds)?137

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136 These questions are the property of the author of this project.

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Be realistic about the time constraints of your work; honor your own
wellness needs. As you write, leave enough room in either margin for the next
step—coding.

Grounded Theory Process-Code it

Once you have these notes and verbata at hand, begin coding. For the
purpose of your work, this simply means that you make brief notations in the
margin of your texts, simple one or two word responses that the text elicits from
you. They should not be heavily thought out. These are your first-cut reactions.
They are meant to help you begin the data analysis. At this level these words or
phrases should have a brain-storming character about them. While making these
little notes, concentrate on emotional content. Listen for depth of feeling that the
notes will reveal from ongoing encounters and interactions. Let the notes point
to these. The reflection on the experiences might be saying that the presenting
symptoms are not the causality. Listen to that. Make the notations.

Next, in that dedicated period of each day or whenever scheduling
permits, it’s important to review these notes. Build the routine according to your

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137 For example, some congregations proclaim loudly that they are open and welcoming
yet their buildings are hidden by shrubbery or trees, their visitors’ book is out of the path from
doorway to church and their signage is non-existent or confusing.
own rhythms. Make this work for you, but the reviewing steps are necessary so plan on it and do it, please. Every time you make a reviewing pass over the texts and codes, make new codes according to need or as the process evokes something new in you. Over time, from this exercise images will emerge of the forces and factors at play within the congregation. Think about those computer generated graphics often used in calendars and such that as you stare into them, eventually three dimensional images seem to appear as if by magic. This process is much like that. Your reviews will enable new visuals to appear, visuals in the forms of concepts, mental constructs and ideas. \(^{138}\)

When these visuals take shape, write down your impressions separately. Grounded theorists might call these *memos*; you call them what you wish. From each pass, each review of your texts, something may jump out at you. Write about it.

In the later reviews, you may observe trends or definable commonalities of action in more than one response or noticeable characteristics of the surviving congregation. Write about them. As you write, do not worry about grammar, syntax or form. Write for yourself. The important difference between your

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\(^{138}\) In response to a query from George Hunsberger, it is important to appreciate that the Grounded Theory data gathering and coding, and your listening to it, should carry on from the moment you are called until after you leave. It is not only pre-entry work. Hunsberger, Responses (2014).
usage of Grounded Theory methods and their use by a social scientist is that you
are not preparing for publication. Therefore you do not need to worry about
ingo. If you understand what you are writing, if your notation is
clear to you so that over time you can make conclusions, then that is sufficient.139

But be aware. You must let the data lead you. In order for this
methodology to work, you must not force fit the data into your own
preconceptions. You must not use the data to proof-text some predetermined
action or preformed conclusions.

Objectives and Expectations

When the reasons for the change are relatively benign such as retirement
or the pastor’s move to employment elsewhere, in healthy transitions the
congregation has the opportunity to prepare for the change, to say appropriate
farewells, to grieve the departure, to take stock of things and to turn their eyes
toward the new relationships to come. The Interim Ministry Network and the
Alban Institute, among many others, offer guidance for an ordered process that
allows adequate time for these tasks to be accomplished.140 While such normal

139 Examples of coding and memo writing can be found in Appendix I.
140 Donna Duensing, from her comments as a member of the paradigm review panel for
this project. Pastor Duensing offers the reminder that congregations occasionally do not want to
periods of transition do require skilled leadership, and even under the best of circumstance can degrade into conflict, most often they go relatively smoothly and the congregation moves forward through the process into a healthy new world.

On the other hand, conflicted separation is time-compressed, sudden, like earthquakes or volcanic eruptions in nature. People do not have adequate preparation. They may not have time to say appropriate farewells and are often left stunned among the debris field revealed in the proverbial dust of clergy departure.

In this intervention the job of the clergy is to gather together from the detritus of conflict those persons who are able to join in the creation of a healthy new order for living together and worshiping together in community with each other within the realm of God. The tasks are to promote the invigorating, the strengthening or the awakening of bonds of love among the members of the parish. We are called to foster an environment conducive to forgiveness, tolerance and acceptance.

engage interims or the interim process. They are resistant to the need for the dedicated work between settled pastors, and wish to skip the process to the immediate calling of the next clergyperson (07/31/2014).
Objective Agency

“What if you know that people hurt you deliberately?” This is a good question. It is the kind of question that will stop conversations. This question expresses a common concern. Be prepared for it or one like it. The next question seems inevitable, “What do I do about that?”

Edward O. Wilson, a scientist and professor at Harvard recognized by the academy as the progenitor of sociobiology, identifies three characteristics of enduring societies. They are cooperation, cohesiveness and altruism—all relational traits. Christians know about these things. These three characteristics reflect beautifully the equally succinct teachings of Jesus Christ. Do to others as you would have done to you. Love your neighbor as yourself. If you love me, feed my sheep. Here is my new commandment: that you love each other as I have loved you.

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141 Wilson, Sociobiology, (2000). from his discussions on society, Chapter 2. Sociobiology, also known as evolutionary psychology, is the study of the social behavior of animals and the characteristics of social groups across the whole of the biological world as they are revealed in all kinds of organisms including humankind. The sociobiologists, evolutionary psychologists, attempt to describe common behavioral characteristics for the whole of each society.

142 Mt. 7:12; Lk.6:31 (NRSV).
143 Lev.19:18; Mt.19:19; Lk.10:27; Rom.13:9; Gal.5:14; Jas. 2:8 (NRSV).
144 Jn. 20:17 (NRSV).
145 Jn. 13:34; Jn. 15:12 (NRSV).
In varying degrees the members of the community you are about to enter have lost sight of these teachings. They hurt each other, they incite others to hurt others and this is all done on purpose. The standards of common decency have broken down. So, take on as a first and continuing objective, the renewal of decency in behavior as the normative behavior in the church community. This is not to advocate sitting in judgment on persons for what has already transpired. Hear the wisdom from the Mennonites, “be hard on issues but soft on people.”

Determine to model Christian behavior, and be prepared to name behavior that is outside the norms given to us by God as stated in our gospels.

The greater the conflict, the fewer the overt references to God, to Jesus, to love and so forth. With no little irony it seems that often within the tired and much-abused expression political correctness are hidden patterns of behavior that justify or enable emotional assaults on targeted individuals. People perform behind-the-back character assassinations on a heroic scale while never once forgetting to say please or thank you to the victim’s face. It has happened to this

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146 Reid, Comments (2014). Ken suggests that the “congregation needs to be reminded they are a part of a Christian community and not a business.”


148 Reid, Comments (2015). After 30 plus years of teaching and counseling, Ken says, “I have learned that Christians don’t deal with conflict very well.”
writer; perhaps it has happened to you. Certainly it has happened to someone you know and love.

Theology Matters

In the realm of God, we know that these behaviors are choices that people make out of agency, their free will to do so. Hurtful choices are, depending on the level of conflict, more and more creatively justified. As tensions from conflict rise, hurtful choices are made less offensive to the perpetrator and more ethically correct to the attacker by means of more and more tortuous reasoning. God objects to these behaviors. As much as they are hurtful to the victims, they are more so to God.

Therefore, the objectives of the intervention should include the awakening of cooperation among the parish body. Remind people from all points of the communication media available to you that they are responsible for their behavior. They own what they do, and they have the agency, the ability, to change it. Work at strengthening of bonds of relationships within the community by word and example.

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149 See Levels of Conflict in Churches, Leas, Moving Your Church Through Conflict, (1985) 17-23.
Remember and hold close the teachings of Christ that we are to love God and one another. Remember and hold close the Golden Rule. Allow these laws to be constants before you, and keep them constantly before the people. Print them on large posters and put them up around the church. Have them close to you when interacting with the people. Preach them from the pulpit. As the Deuteronomist instructs us, circumcise these laws upon your heart. Inscribe them on the hearts of the people. These instructions from out of our sacred texts provide markers or signs pointing towards the healing we desire within the new creation we seek. They provide the foundation for the building of relationships in a new order of being together in relationships.

Open and keep open the invitation to all to sacrifice their strongly held positions, animosity, even the hatred they may harbor, for the benefit of the greater good. It is O.K. to name and be hard on issues. Be open and loving and welcoming to the people. The members of the community should be reminded of the common heritage they share and the common legacy they leave behind. They should be encouraged to forgive, to let go of the grudge.

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150 Deut. 30:6, “Moreover, the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.”
151 A sample liturgy of reconciliation with penitential language is in Appendix L.
152 Homan, Comments (2014).
Trust in the power and continuing presence of the Holy Spirit. Never let the people forget that God is active, too. Never let the people forget that God has always been present and God has always been acting. Continually press the people to renew their relationship with our loving God, and bring their behavior into line with God’s expectations. After all, God has the greatest of all stakes in what people do to people, in what happens to God’s people. The choice belongs to the individual. This is your first objective. Bring your best efforts to the work.

There are other objectives or courses of action to be discovered. They may even be measured more easily and visibly than matters of agency. You will find them going forward once your assessments of all the data inundating you, processed with your brand new Grounded Theory methodology, have gained headway.

Practical Issues

You have been called by the judicatory, your name has been submitted to the interim search team at the parish, and you have been selected.\footnote{This path of call reflects one “norm” in the Episcopal Church. Other viable and common paths are chosen usually based on immediacy of need and the discretion of the judicatory authority. The bishop may simply approach a potential interim directly, secure agreement to the task and appoint the interim without input by the conflicted parish.} You are gathering data, coding it and already analyzing it. In this early phase, dig into
the history of the parish. Go as far back as available records or other data will allow. The judicatory, former pastors, and individuals within the parish who are the keepers of the story would be among those who will provide resources you need. Go back to the founding of the parish, and find out the circumstances leading to its birth. Who are the important persons in the timeline since inception? What are the significant points of transition such as clergy changes, building campaigns, or earlier crises? What are the worship patterns and customs? Use this data as a mirror for the community.\textsuperscript{154} In the Episcopal tradition, find out whether the liturgy is high church or low church, or something in between.

Be sure to collect as much detail as you can of the current conflict. Try to obtain copies of the financial records, and be sure to take a look at the parish registers\textsuperscript{155} if you can. If your denomination requires the equivalent to the Episcopal parochial reports\textsuperscript{156} that must be submitted to the national church, be sure to look at these. Find the minutes of the vestry or denominational

\textsuperscript{154} Homan, Comments (2014).
\textsuperscript{155} In the Episcopal Church, these are books containing membership data such as records of baptisms, marriages, etc. usually held in a secure location, generally under lock and key. One interesting register often kept in the sacristy, the vesting area or some other obvious place is used to record attendance data, private communions or service types. This provides data on average Sunday attendance and fluctuations due to seasonal influences or perhaps the conflict itself.
\textsuperscript{156} Parochial reports provide demographic and financial information to the central church. They are required and due early in the year.
equivalent. Read them and, applying Grounded Theory methods, code directly from them.

You may find that the parish has a photo directory. If you can, begin to associate names and faces. Begin your analysis of the situation, of the people, of the motivations, of the ethnographic structures in the parish. Keep in mind as you do this particular data search that you are looking for the genetic characteristics of the congregation. You want to begin now your work of learning the personality traits of the community as a whole, as a discrete entity. ¹⁵⁷

Congregational Identity

From the experiences gleaned over three decades before the public in various roles as a performing musician and actor, it is apparent that each audience is different. We performers quickly learn that on any given night, our performances are received differently. Our jokes fall flat on one night and on the next our every move is funny. Our arias are appreciated with standing ovations (on occasion) at Friday evening performances, and barely acknowledged at the

¹⁵⁷ One tool that proved effective in my experience was the posting of a long sheet of newsprint on the wall of the great room. On it we drew a time-line of the parish and invited members of the congregation to mark the special moments of their parish life on that time-line. The exercise provided a wonderful picture of the genealogy of the parish.

While uncertain where the idea originated in this instance, the wall chart idea is advocated for and described in depth in Ammerman et al, *Studying Congregations* (1998) 209-210.
Sunday matinees. We must learn quickly how audiences react, because it determines our performance timing and enables us to modify our actions in order to compensate for the differences. Perhaps more importantly, it likewise enables us to adjust our expectations.

We learn the character of audiences largely through the medium of non-verbal clues, from prior ethnographic knowledge gained by immersion experiences of local culture, and from our other general experiences in the field. As we perform we are, simultaneously, listening and observing and learning. This is what you will be doing as intervening entity.

Bear in mind that congregations have definable personalities which you, as an intervening individual, can come to know reasonably well. “No two congregations are alike. Each gathering of people creates its own ways of doing things, its own ways of describing the world, its own tools and artifacts that produce its distinctive appearance.” You will need this knowledge to serve them adequately while you are present with them. Depending on the size, a congregation could have characteristics unique to itself that may resemble certain alpha individuals in the group—or not.

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159 A good resource on congregational identity is, Janet R. Cawley, Who Is Our Church: Imagining Congregational Identity, (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2006).
Resources from data prior to your entry may provide pertinent
descriptions and may have some sense of who the congregation as a whole
believes they are. Remember that the personality of the whole is not
predictable. Until you are in it, with it, and aware of it, you will not know it.
Even then, you are limited by your own skill and by the time constraints of your
contracted interim period from the level of knowing that comes with long service
among them. You already know this. It is critical that you remember so that you
are better able to guard against those preconceived notions going in. You must
not go in thinking that you already know these people. Again, you must let the
data lead you. You need to know what the corporate personality is. You must
be on the lookout for it.

Be especially attentive to non-verbal clues. Be aware that your
evolutionary psychologists are supporting you. In sociobiological terms familiar
to E. O. Wilson and others, where society is a group of individuals belonging to
the same species and organized in a cooperative manner, that society has

160 Think of speed dating or dating in general. That person one meets for the first dinner
is the person you may wish to marry—or not. Time and closer contact will reveal more of the
whole character of that person before you.

161 Non-verbal clues are body language clues. These are the facial expressions, the hand
and arm gestures, the stance, characteristics one might describe as demeanor or affect. “When I
visited her, she had a flat affect. Her whole demeanor indicated sadness.” Our body language
vis-à-vis the body language of our pets, for example, and the people of our congregations is the
principal form of interspecies as well as interpersonal communication. For a quick read, see
Kendra Cherry, Understanding Body Language, About Education,
psychology.about.com/od/nonverbalcommunication/ss/understanding-body-language.htm.
properties that can be described.\textsuperscript{162} In your congregation newly separated from clergy out of conflict these properties exist. Be on the lookout.

Remember that the behavior of one individual or one faction is not a reliable predictor for the behavior of the whole.\textsuperscript{163} Within the same society, the same church community, characteristics can and do change with the corporate mood swings from exterior influences such as war, famine or economic downturn. Churches are a microcosm of society. They suffer from the same issues as the general population.\textsuperscript{164}

“No student of a congregation can ever presume to have captured its essence. That essence is constantly changing, and the wise student will find ways to work alongside those she or he is studying, offering interpretations and definitions with humility in the face of the reality that is a congregation.”\textsuperscript{165}

Finally, in summary, every congregation has its own character and its own personality, its essence that can be determined and described. Every congregation differs from all others; therefore every conflict will differ just as every congregation differs. Neither specific individual characters within the community nor factions or subsets of the congregation describe the congregation as a whole. They represent a degree of saturation—elements within and a part of

\textsuperscript{162} Wilson, \textit{Sociobiology}, (2000).
\textsuperscript{163} Getting to know Dennis or the Altar Guild does not mean you have come to know Holy Trinity.
\textsuperscript{164} Homan, Comments (2014).
the whole, but not the whole. Those persons who may be responsible for and
active participants in conflict are not the whole. The faction is not the whole. The
awkward individual is not the whole. That group of persons you will be
preaching to every Sunday is.

More Reminders

In these early days, double check that self-care lifelines are in place and
functional—ongoing counsel and spiritual direction is a must. If not a member
of a clergy group or other confidential collegial team, join one. The Interim
Ministry Network (imnedu.org.) can help find one. There is probably an interim
association meeting in your area. Join it. Recognize that there will be bad days
when your emotional batteries are weak and you are vulnerable. Even the most
self-differentiated of us have tender areas that, over time, are inevitably revealed
through our body language. Congregations have people who seem to have talent
for finding and exploiting our vulnerabilities. These measures, these groups will
help you stay safe.

While you are collecting your initial data, you will use some of your time
to negotiate contractual agreements—in our diocese, this is the letter of
agreement. You will need to agree to your anticipated length of service, your salary, and your benefits. Pay attention to vacation, days off and periods for your respite needs. Finally, be sure you, your judicatory and your parish leadership are all clear on one, extremely important point, your authority.

Your Authority

In the Episcopal Church, the authority of the rector is rooted in canon law. Rectors have canonical oversight of worship, and unencumbered access to building, grounds and all records. The rector gets a key to everything. The rector has access to all documents, including all financial records—and this access applies to the proverbial Episcopal Church Women’s Tatting and Sewing Fund, or the Men’s Group Beer Bash and Baseball Fund. No accounts of any kind for any purpose by any person or groups within the parish are to be held in secret from the rector. If the document or record is associated with any aspect of the parish, the rector is canonically entitled to see it.

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167 Title III.9, Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (2012).

168 Authority over endowment funds is less clearly established in church canon. Some if not all states have laws concerning endowment funds that may override or subvert canon.
All rooms, storage cupboards, garages or outbuildings, all desks and filing cabinets must be available to the rector. Nothing is excluded. Nothing.\textsuperscript{169}

Furthermore, in the Episcopal Church, all employees of the parish, whether paid or volunteer are considered \textit{at will}. The national church is developing employment guidelines to protect employees from abuse, but at this time, employees can be dismissed at the will of the rector. The authority to dismiss is especially important during the interim period after conflict since data may point to the behavior of members of staff as its root cause.

Occasionally cults of personality around members of staff or the chairs of parish organizations or leaders of factions may have grown over time to create a surfeit of power in certain individuals. Sometimes individuals bar progress towards the healthy new creation; their removal, judiciously undertaken, may be the only way forward and the authority for that action must be in place from the beginning.

These areas of authority are significant to the work ahead. Some dioceses limit the interim’s authority, and some denominations withhold the power to hire and fire from clergy. The questions of the limits of authority in relationships

\textsuperscript{169} In one parish well known to this writer, the treasurer actually had two sets of books, one for the financial committee and one for the rector and vestry. The discovery by the new rector of the second set of books was partial cause for the conflict that forced his eventual leaving.
between clergy and congregations are denominationally specific. Often, in spite of canon within denominations, authority may lodge in different quarters of power—sometimes authority may rest with the holder of the deepest pocket in the community, or with the patriarch of an important family. Their authority derives out of their power. Do the homework.

Check now with the judicatory. Clear up any misunderstandings about who holds the authority that may have arisen between you and the leadership of the congregation you are joining. Be as certain as possible that all who need to know are clear about authority, namely on who holds it, where it comes from, and in what circumstances it will be applicable. Finally, be aware that some expectations of persons or factions in the conflict may be canonical impossibilities. That is to say, the canons and structure of the denomination may not contain in them sufficient leeway or flexibility to bring remedy to the substance of complaints.

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170 Do not confuse authority with power. You may have one or the other but not both; you may have neither; you may have both. Authority is given up from below or assigned from above and takes the shape of the society. Power is negotiable. It is a measure of dominance. It comes from any direction and takes the form of individual or faction.

171 For example: Complainants disagree with the leadership style and personality traits of the rector. They believe he is controlling and rigid; he has removed from office many long-serving, highly respected members of the congregation because they do not support him in his ministry. His preaching style is scholarly and laden with references to obscure academic resources. His presence is cold, and worst of all, he practices “high church” liturgy. His vestry and the entire congregation present at the annual meeting unanimously voted no-confidence in his leadership. Everyone present at that meeting wants him out. This man cannot be removed from office because he has not violated canon, nor is he guilty of misconduct. The bishop has no authority, apart from advising this priest that perhaps he should leave, to force him to resign. He
Respect as a Necessity

Healthy interaction among those left behind in the aftermath of conflict and the clergy intervening depends upon the willingness of persons involved to work together with some degree of harmony. This harmony opens the doors to trust, and that trust must be nurtured in the wounded community as necessary for the process. Social researchers in the Grounded Theory field suggest that there is one key, one fundamental that must be present if harmony is to be built that can sustain the kinds of relationships necessary to get your work done. Kathy Charmaz quotes the dictum, “Respect your subjects.”172

Always respect the persons with whom you serve. Give them the benefit of doubt. Honor their humanity, their dignity. Allow time for your rapport with the congregation to grow and always maintain a posture of respect. Furthermore Charmaz says that “our respect for our [subjects] pervades how we collect data and shapes the content of our data.”173 It creates a healthy frame through which we view and learn from our congregation.

We demonstrate respect by how we apply ourselves to learning about the people we serve from their perspective. We want to understand their views and

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their actions while, as the same time, do our part to preserve their dignity—even if we question their points of view and their actions.

Minimize Change-Enter Softly

Finally, in these early days, please make no changes whatsoever, or as few changes as possible. Change is a factor with destabilizing effects upon the community. Things are already highly charged. Do not contribute to the excited state in the community by behavior that might seem arbitrary to the people. Carry your authority lightly. Do not move furniture, rearrange the pews, or re-design the service leaflet. Stay calm and non-anxious; use your resources to help you. Demonstrate in your own behavior the desired behavior you seek. People will be observing and will pick up nuances when the tone and tenor shift; this will create anxiety. Again, withhold judgment. Maintain warm affect, and be kind.

The Intervention-Early

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174 Duensing, Comments (2014). Pastor Duensing says that seemingly little things often become huge, especially in an environment already sensitized by conflict from struggles for power.
I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.  

Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my lambs.” A second time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

We are called in any pastoral relationship to care for the people as our first order of business. After conflicted separation you enter into a region where pain dwells. The people are feeling emotions ranging across the whole of the spectrum; you must tend to their wounds. Treat the whole of the congregation as in grief, as if they are wounded. Effect the best possible care protocol for individuals that you can as early as you can. Make certain those in hospitals or nursing homes are visited, those who need personal pastoral counseling have it offered them, marriages are prepared for, and the saints are buried with grace. Let the people see your caring demeanor. Let the people know that you are praying for them. Be sensitive to their needs.

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175 Jn.13: 34-35 (NRSV).
176 Jn. 21:15-17 (NRSV).
Your principal medium of direct influence upon the greatest number of persons is corporate worship. In fact, some would argue that the application of ritual is key to the success of the intervention. Your influence is at its most visible at sermon time especially and during announcements. In keeping with the tenor of this paper, be reminded of the importance of adequate preparation for your preaching. Craft your messages well and with great care. As much as you can, given that the lectionary and season of the church year can occasionally “impose” constraints, preach cooperation, forgiveness and the need for kindness. Remind the flock of the importance of healthy relationships and that those begin with a healthy sense of self. Preach hope.

In your preaching, try to make open references to conflict. Draw from scriptural references that are relevant in daily interactions both inside the parish family and out in the world. Show how the things we believe inform healthy behavior and provide for us a useful ethical compass. Define, demonstrate and preach unconditional love. Let scripture remind us that this includes especially our antagonists.

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177 Homan, Comments (2014). Martin Homan is one who does.

178 Announcement time is generally more casual in presentation. It is therefore especially useful to show your playful or non-confrontational or non-judgemental nature. Use the time wisely.

179 Duensing, Comments (2014). Reverend Duensing considers this important. She insists that the conflict should be named, that the interim should not be fearful about doing so. The conflict should not be covered up.
Remind the congregation that history and the promise of a healthy future are greater than the current conflict. Help the people to understand that they are not defined by the conflict—it is not they and they are not it. Use scripture and model behavior that vitiates the moral authority of those driving the conflict. By tone of discourse and modeled behavior, demonstrate respectful toleration of disagreement.

Note publically when you can and affirm what you observe as healthy behavior. Likewise affirm what you believe are healthy missions and ministries in the church. Sustain and strengthen corporate worship. Develop or draw from your resources prayers for mutual respect, for listening, for taking responsibility, for asking forgiveness and for showing mercy.

Office Work, Administrative and Judicatory Development

While in these early days of intervention, initiate as few changes as possible to the administrative work patterns of the community. Now is a time for learning not just how things have been accomplished, but by whom. In your listening mode you will glean a great deal about the dynamics of power in the community from its administrative core. The persons who control communication in the form of worship bulletin preparation, newsletters, web-
site development, phone answering and so forth will be at the center of the conflict whether intentionally so or not. The persons with the authority over the money who have access to check writing, bill paying, making deposits and having keys to petty cash will be at the center of the conflict. The persons who oversee building and grounds will be at the center of the conflict. As you encounter these individuals, you would do especially well to apply your Grounded Theory techniques. These are fertile fields.

Upon entering the administrative engine room, affirm simple measures as you meet them, and tidy up those procedures that need your attention. You just want to make sure that the lights are on, that the building is heated or cooled as parishioners would expect, that the bulletins are printed accurately and that the worship leaders are scheduled and present. Make sure the money is handled according to accepted accounting standards along denominational guidelines. Make sure records are being kept as appropriate.

“Help the parish hold a positive future vision. When rumors, counter-rumors, and dark prophecies are put out there for general consumption, it is hard for a congregation to imagine that anything good could be on the horizon.”\textsuperscript{180} Speak of virtue. Tell stories of virtuous behavior. Cite examples.\textsuperscript{181}

\textsuperscript{180} John Bosserman, in comments from his review of the initial intervention paradigm, 09/02/2010.
\textsuperscript{181} Homan, Comments (2014).
An interim pastor can help everyone be more peaceful and make better choices by being the dispassionate adult in the room and by being the “keeper” of a positive vision and constantly holding up a tangible ideal to strive for. 182

At a recent diocesan convention, the newly elected bishop called the convention to have fun, to get the work done and take the work seriously, but to do the work with a sense of joy. This bishop follows in the footsteps of one who had been called to do some really hard and painful work in the diocese and whose tenure had been marked by conflicted resistance to his re-ordering of priorities and his regularizing of due process and fiduciary diligence. This diocese had been through a dark valley, so the message of hope and joy brought to convention by the new bishop was needed and welcomed. Let your broadcast news provide such messages.

Be visible. Be open. Within reason, be accessible. Post office hours and keep them. Look in on and support where you can the various internal structures such as your altar guild, choir, Sunday school and youth groups. Make sure that all avenues of parish communication are open and use them all to keep information current and free-flowing. Take care, but be forthcoming with important news in bulletin announcements, and sustain efforts that will disseminate information broadly such as newsletter production.

182 Bosserman, Comments (2010).
Be sure to short-circuit any gossip.\textsuperscript{183} Think of this as rumor control. Plan to have your own system in place where rumors can be checked. Try keeping to an open-door policy. Make rumors public when you can. Answer rumors in public, either from pulpit if appropriate, at announcement time, online or on a bulletin board so they can be quickly sapped of any negative power. These steps will help reduce if not eliminate secret keeping.

From the beginning, be clear within yourself and make it clear to the congregation that you are not available for call as settled rector. A parishioner with experience gained the hard way puts it like this:

I believe it is extremely important that an interim pastor clarify his or her role at the very beginning of a relationship with the congregation. He should make it clear that he is NOT eligible to be hired, called, drafted, cajoled, forced, begged, tricked, retained, contracted, schmoozed or otherwise placed in a permanent rector position. Hurt congregations often develop a particularly strong attachment to their healing pastor which can easily distort the sense of reality for both the interim and the congregation and can lay groundwork for all sorts of havoc.\textsuperscript{184}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{183} Bosserman, Comments (2010).
\textsuperscript{184} Bosserman, Comments (2010). John served in parish leadership that suffered conflict during an interim period in part because the interim priest became ‘confused’ over her role and succumbed to the temptation to reset her contract from interim to settled/called rector.
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Ongoing GTM-Staying Focused

Using Grounded Theory methodology as adapted for application here, continue to listen to the flow of data. Remember to write down interactions, to code them, and to create the memos out of those moments of interest when someone or something evokes a visceral response. Use the set of questions from above in conversations.

Continue the daily review of the earlier work. Revisit codes and continue to listen for the change. Mark the changes. Sort your responses now if you can into categories you find useful and appropriate. Pastoral issues go into your pastoral file; administrative matters go there; mediation responses or conflict resolution opportunities go into that corner of your desk.

As early as you can, begin to determine the unique character of the parish as a whole. Lean heavily on your diocesan liaison, your vestry and wardens. Begin to look for the members of the congregation who hold their own set of proverbial keys to the history of the community. You may consider it advisable, if realistically feasible, to speak directly to the clergy person separated from the community by the conflict.

Concentrate on gathering data on the history of the parish. You may wish to develop a historical time-line or use other diagnostic instruments from your
medicine bag to learn of the parish DNA, to learn what are the patterns of behavior that have revealed themselves over the years, and what are the various themes of ministry. See if you can pry open the history of the current conflict. Learn as much as you can about it, and listen for its depth in the history of the parish—how far back does this go? You might ask who were the founding members of the congregation and, as far as can be determined, ask what they were like, try to discover what their aspirations for the newly formed church were. Trace the changes in the congregation since the early days.

If you can, lay out plans for meeting as many members of the congregation as possible, close to their nuclear residence. Within reason, be willing to meet them largely on their terms. Set up scheduled listening to the 

congregation events—listening posts.\textsuperscript{185} Use both public and private meetings as listening exercises and be sure to note them, code them and memo. Be sure to use the same type of questions across the listening media. Listen for clues to determine as best you can who are the members of factions, and what are the positions they hold. Listen to your intuition regarding the moods of the parish and note any changes.

\textsuperscript{185} Homan, Comments (2014).
Mediation and Conflict Resolution Efforts

“Without a clear sense of who they are, and what they are trying to accomplish, organizations get tossed and turned by shifts in their environment”\textsuperscript{186} and fall prey to difficult persons. Try to discover the organizational intent and the identity of the community—not what people say they are, but what, in reality, is their identity. How does the mission statement match the purpose and drive of the community?

In these early days, remember to clear your preconceived notions of assigned culpability. Do not take sides, and resist efforts to triangle you. Stay as calm as you can. Be the unreactive presence in place. Speak openly of the conflict. In the all-parish listening events, find a way with set boundaries and healthy guidelines\textsuperscript{187} to give parishioners a chance to express their emotions. Just as you undertake pastoral counseling to individuals or small groups in the pastoral work, counsel the community as a whole. Speak to the corporate entity. Speak of loss. Promote dialogue; encourage talking between factions. Draw on your work in the pastoral area by encouraging attitudes of loving God and


\textsuperscript{187} Examples of healthy guidelines for setting these boundaries are in Appendix J. George Hunsberger reminded this writer of the need for clear examples in this instance. Hunsberger, Review Comments, (2014).
loving each other. Explain the natural order of change, how conflict is sometimes the normal living out of the pressures to change.

Begin now to elicit admissions of roles in the conflict. Seek ways to open discourse leading to apologies to those who have been wounded. Begin the work of helping people to make amends for their actions. Help the community to see and acknowledge the positives in their adversaries. Affirm those persons who are openly seeking compromise; who express a willingness to work with others toward healing. Lend your voice and support to leadership that advocates holding together. Promote tolerance of alternative views by lifting up those who are willing to agree to disagree because of their greater loyalty to the whole. Draw from and apply your training in mediation and conflict resolution.

Pastoral Care-Moving toward the Middler Times

Richard Niebuhr, in his book *The Responsible Self* says, “God is acting in all actions upon you. So respond to all actions upon you as to respond to [God’s] action.” This is great wisdom. Use it in your pastoral care. Post it around the church. Put it in the church publications.

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Preach to the interconnected nature of creation and the importance of our presence in it. Preach messages of love and forgiveness. Continue the holistic conversation. Speak about the health of the congregation and the individuals in it. Remember to develop positive behaviors, to remind people of agency. Ask three questions publically from the pulpit or at announcement time, “How is God acting in this conflict? How are you acting to participate in the realm of God in this conflict? How do you see God in the others in this conflict?” Ask what the prayers for the congregation should be. Preach repentance. You may wish to take the congregation collectively through some form of penitential office.189

Be especially attentive to seniors or others who have by their longevity demonstrated investment in the community and who, because of events and change, may no longer feel that “this is my church.” Be as present with them as you can. Honor them and support them in their grief, even if they have contributed significantly to the conflict at the root of their grief.

189 See Appendix L for a sample liturgy.
Movement from Early Days to Middler Times will be vague. Transitions in interim ministry are not like movement through rooms with clearly defined doorways. The divisions of the duration of your contracted service assume that your initial planning will have temporal shape—some version of beginning, middle, and end. Do not get stuck in those organizational periods as hard and fast demarcations. If the term time becomes an organizational stumbling block, think in phases with cusps.

Each phase may last months. To determine when the interim phases change, trust training and sense of timing as guides. Listen to the collective wisdom of the intervention team as to when transitional phases or cusps occur. This is a team effort. Do not rush the work. Do not press forward to tasks before the congregation is ready. If it feels right to move forward, do it.

Listen to and make yourself aware of administrative issues that have arisen during the period of conflict leading up to separation. Discover gaps in functional authority, task overlap or redundancies, and areas where individuals have assumed oversight of matters outside jurisdiction of office. Begin as soon as
is expedient the process of regularizing polity\textsuperscript{190} within the congregation. By this is meant you should re-affirm lines of authority and functional order to meet the standards outlined in denominational canon.\textsuperscript{191} Employees such as the parish administrator and choir director should have position descriptions. Volunteers should also be given clear position descriptions. Everyone should know where they stand in the organization of the parish, to whom they report and what are the boundaries of their authority. \textsuperscript{192} Depending on the degrees of organizational irregularity, these efforts will require firmness and the backing of ecclesial authority within the denomination, and your work may continue throughout your intervention.

In these middler times, you will have been working with wardens and vestry as a part of your team. Continue to be clear with authority and conscientious of your ecclesial relationship with them. Model the behaviors you

\textsuperscript{190} Polity is the form of governance within the denomination or faith body. It might include some or all of the following: the constitution of the church, local by-laws, customs and tradition.

\textsuperscript{191} For example, in the Episcopal Church, the ecclesial line devolves from bishop through priest and deacon to laity. The priest has certain canonical duties such as pastoral care, preaching (teaching), ministering sacraments and so forth. The vestry shares authority in the parish itself and oversees matters relating to the common purse. They set salaries, oversee endowments, manage the buildings and grounds, etc.

\textsuperscript{192} Hunsberger wonders whether this direction conflicts with earlier suggestions to change as little as possible. Hunsberger, Response (2014) These statements invite an affirmation of polity simply by the actions of living into the canons of the church, rather than overt or noisy change—an outward and visible sign of an inward and intentional purpose. Quietly going about liturgy or administrative work as they are informed by canon or constitution by example of behavior alone initially is what is intended here. As said earlier “Demonstrate in your own behavior the desired behavior you seek. The people will be observing you and will pick up nuances in your demeanor.” (p. 135 above).
expect from them and demonstrate by actions and deeds that you can be trusted and work toward developing appropriate rapport with them. This also applies in work with paid staff and volunteers. Encourage canonically appropriate and firm leadership in the vestry. And during this period, look for the support of key individuals you will by now have identified among the congregation who hold the respect of the community and who can be lifted up as stabilizing influences going forward.

Now is a good time to strengthen the relationship of the community with the judicatory leadership. Conflict in congregations almost inevitably spills over into the greater church, and various levels of blame reflecting varying degrees of accuracy accrue to the bishop or other institutional leadership for the suffering experienced in the parish. During this time raise the visibility of the judicatory within the congregation. Invite the bishop or other leader to participate in the life of the parish as schedules permit. Encourage the judicatory to demonstrate by physical presence or other means their compassion for the suffering in the parish. It can be useful to have diocesan leadership “name their [the congregation’s] situation, and their pain” in some form of broadcast communication or directly from the pulpit on Sunday.

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193 See www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers. This website from the Episcopal Church Foundation provides the canonically appropriate model for vestries. Other denominations may offer similar clear guidance laying out polity and purpose for persons serving in office within congregations.

194 These are your bellwethers (See page 108 above).
Make clear to the people the bishop’s interest and support. Continue to consult closely with the intervention support and team members. Now might be a good time to invite according to availability your diocesan liaison into the parish for a period of direct involvement. With judicatory support, encourage and assist your vestry and wardens in the development of an action plan for future health. Be creative. Keep listening. Use your coaching skills to help follow the plan.

During these times, help the parish leadership to clarify or define the parish character and identity. What is their corporate story, and how do current events fit into that? What has been the trajectory of their community as it has been given them by their predecessors and how has the conflict interrupted or changed that trajectory? Using this data and in consultation with the involvement of the whole community, work through the mission statement. Ask how it reflects the character and identity of the parish and whether it demonstrates a common will.

Revise or create a newer statement of mission.\textsuperscript{195} Broaden community participation by encouraging the formation of committees to develop common themes with new or revitalized ways to express the common mission. Continue

\textsuperscript{195} Reid, Comments (2014). From his work in conflicted parishes, Ken Reid believes that the church mission statement needs to be read at every meeting of the parish vestry, consistory or board.
open communication making certain that information reaches every member of
the parish family.

By now, as you have been listening and observing and participating in the
community, you ought to have a sense of the individuals in the roles of

*conflictors*. These are persons at the heart of the conflict that led up to the
separation of clergy, and who, in spite of your ongoing conflict resolution and
mediation work, may continue to display disruptive or unhealthy behaviors.¹⁹⁶
These might also be individuals who have an innate resistance to the changes
occurring during this intervention period and cannot make peace with them.
There could be persons whose abilities no longer match requirements for the
position they hold and whose removal bears risk of exacerbating tensions
between factions. The middler period of your intervention is the most likely time
when persons inclined to do so may act out unhealthy or undermining behavior.
Consider removing them or isolating them from positions of influence,
effectively benching them for the duration of the intervention. Tread carefully
here. Know your authority. Consult with parish leadership and your
intervention team.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ For valuable advice concerning pathological behaviors among congregations, see
¹⁹⁷ In another query from George Hunsberger he wonders that, “the actions mentioned
here seem very much at odds with the spirit commended throughout. Is this a defensible strategy
in light of the literature on conflict resolution?” Hunsberger, Response (2014).
These kinds of personnel changes divide into two different courses. In one course, you may be obliged out of your consultation and/or requisite response to inappropriate behavior to fire outright the individual in question for cause. Be clear with your leadership team about the reasons you all agree on this action. As far as is ethical in personnel matters, let the congregation know. Use language that does not imply judgment of the individual. Then stay calm and be prepared for push-back from the community. Defer to your experience in mediation and conflict resolution for response.

The other course for benching or removal reflects a less immediate need and can be undertaken over time. In addition to persons whose overt behavior is at question, this course may open consideration about the beloved administrator.

This set of suggestions is included in the intervention model because of direct involvement and close observations in situations where staff changes were handled badly in interim periods. Episcopal polity gives the authority for hiring and firing to the priest holding that authority as an extension of the arm of the bishop. On many occasions, staff find themselves either by choice or by position thrust into the main of conflict. If they are in the conflict by choice, a whole set of determinations about fitness to continue in office will be a part of the ongoing intervention. With regards to other denominational polity, for example in the Reformed churches, session or consistory involvement is required in personnel decisions. As a trained interim minister, this writer holds that the interim clergy or other transitional leadership have an ethical imperative to deal with determinedly awkward persons in the interim period.

The sad reality is that individuals who will not by force of will or otherwise be willing to move forward from conflict, or who have pathological resistance to living in healthy community with others must move or be moved onwards. Matthew 18 says, “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’” (NRSV)

198 Such as, “In consultation with vestry and wardens, we believe it is appropriate for the spiritual health of all to make this change at this time.”
who has served for years in an office that has outgrown her or his skill set or about the person who has staked a claim on some area of parish activity such as the altar guild. This latter person may have developed a sense of ownership over his or her area, often from years of overseeing it, and may have become resistant to any guidance, management input or change, thereby creating a blockade against the healing, constructive interface with others. The result here might include this person’s impeding or even undermining the interim work before you.

Once you and your team have determined the need to make personnel changes, the process should entail three steps. As the first step, prepare the ground by publically announcing leadership changes and the need for fresh, invigorating new faces or viewpoints. State some future date for the change. Prepare an appropriate severance liturgy or means by which the involvement of the person named will be recognized and his or her gifts to the community acknowledged publically. Step two entails the public separation of the individual in an appropriate and agreed format. Step three is to publically acknowledge the need to grieve the separation and allow adequate time for the grief.
Once More into the Office-Latter Days

In the latter third or quadrant of your intervention, when the time is right, begin your preparation for handing off to the next person. Continue to work with your intervention team to lay the groundwork for the anticipated changes in leadership. Discuss with the congregation through the various communication media, different models of ministry. Make certain the whole parish understands the call process, and the need to uphold that process. Intervene if necessary into any attempts by factions or individuals to unduly influence or short circuit or otherwise interfere with the search procedures.

If you have not already, begin to write down your activities as interim for the next clergy leader. Collect information you think the next clergy leader will need, locate it in a safe place where confidential issues you include will be protected and copy all that to the judicatory. State what was attempted, what was accomplished and what remains to be done. Name the players and describe their influence. Note any hazards that may await the new clergy. Let your guide here be this: If the information you are considering for inclusion would have been useful to you on your entrance, supply it. Try not to present your colleague following you with the opportunity to say, “If I had only known . . . “
Take whatever steps you feel necessary to ensure adequate preparations for the smooth handover of your duties to next in line. Update your progress and situational analysis to parish leadership and the judicatory. Assist the vestry and diocese in the calling and charging of the search team. Now is a good time to advocate for the establishment of a separate transition team if you wish. Help the vestry and search team in profile development and transition planning. Remember your training and do not permit yourself intrusive involvement in the search. Provide appropriate advice; let them do the work.

Work with the parish leadership to make certain the congregation understands the need to pair the skill set of the called rector with the size of the community. Continue to affirm and strengthen denominational polity and relationships between church and diocese. Prepare for departure. If conditions permit, set the date and define the exit process and announce it. Work with the administrative leadership to close any remaining functional work deficits.

Heading Towards the End Times

Rod Seeger, hospital chaplain and supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education at the medical center of the University of California, San Francisco,
offered some of the best advice and guidance this writer has ever received. His hand is present in this manual, and much of what he has shared has proven useful for the persons I have been called upon to serve. Since you are now looking at the end of your intervention, here is a suggested plan that he provided for his CPE cohorts.

As you approach your separation from the community, remember what you all have been going through over the past length of time. You have been pastor, worship leader, counselor, guide and perhaps cattle prod for the people. You have been immersed in their grief. You have been working with them towards their new creation of healthy life together. You will have offered them unconditional love. You have been for them the non-reactive, supportive presence they have so much needed out of their pain. Many of the people you have served with and ministered with will love you back. Many will be grateful for your guidance and leadership. Your experience has cost you . . .

Rod Seeger told all, one would hope, who were fortunate enough to have worked with him that there are five things one should say in preparation for leaving. They are these: Thank you. Please forgive me. I forgive you. I love you. Goodbye. These words work well at departure from a called ministry; they are especially efficacious at the time of death.
Over your last five weeks with your congregation, take each of the statements in order and either use it in your sermon or at announcement time. Be deliberate. Make clear the purpose of your saying these things. You are leaving. Incorporate them into your final message of hope for the future.

On the day of your departure, save your goodbye until the very end of the service and then incorporate it into some appropriate ritual. It is ritually important to formally hand over the keys to the church to the warden, for instance. After worship, go to the coffee hour, celebrate with cake and cookies or whatever is customary . . . and leave.

From this point of departure there should be no continuing contact. None. Have exit interviews with your intervention team. Debrief your experiences with judicatory authorities. Try to determine what worked and what did not work. Make peace with your misses; rejoice with your hits. Then let it go and try to unwind. Your counsel and spiritual advisor will help you.

Thank you for your efforts. Praise God. Amen.
The parish served by this writer is a happy parish. They were happy prior to his arrival. By the Grace of God and through the goodwill of the people they continue to be happy. Gratitude has remained at the center of the relationship for the nearly seven years thus far served with them. During the early years of this still new century, they were breaking apart at the seams from conflict over matters of gender orientation and election of bishops. The constructive work of the fondly remembered priest who had built the parish into a vibrant and viable worshiping and serving community in the late Twentieth Century was falling apart. Average Sunday attendance fell by half; a member of the vestry died in the rector’s office after an apparently divisive, confrontational meeting. The clergy search process was short-circuited and undermined by a determined few and at least two called rectors left, one from conflict.

After the rector left out of conflict, the parish entered a period of over three years without a called, settled rector. They were blessed with the services of a gifted interim who loved them, worked with them, cajoled them and nurtured them through the fifteen months it took for a new order to take root. That new order began with a determination, mutually agreed but not necessarily spoken, that disagreements would no longer be given the strength to act as wedges
between the people. The people remaining acknowledged in ways defined by their actions rather than words, that the communion rail was long enough for all, regardless of differences. This is how agency ought to work.

For over three years, these people held together. They acted upon many of the suggestions that have been offered here; they lived them out. They found healing, not just on their own, but from a shared sense of a need for it. They found hope and they held on. The interim and the priests who provided for Sunday supply were needed by them and good for them. Through their own intentional efforts, supported by loving people, they moved into their portion of the realm of God that God calls us all towards—not heaven, but the region where they can see heaven from here. Learning of all this, while still working on my own recovery from conflicted separation some years ago, I was taken a bit by surprise. Learning of all this, I have been awed by the power of the Holy Spirit with them, in them and from them. And what was even more surprising?

. . . They said they were waiting for me.

You have God’s people waiting for you. Go in peace.
Invitation to Join

Early in this paper I asked you to stay with me through it all. I expressed my intention that I would ask your advice, your suggestions for ways and means of improving this effort to provide clear guidance for persons called to serve in congregations recently separated from clergy out of conflict. You came to this paper for a reason. Whatever that may have been, because you did I say again that you have something to offer here that lies at the heart of your reason(s) for having joined with me.

I invite you to offer your suggestions now. I invite you to contact me with them so that perhaps we can indeed work together going forward to improve this work. As I said before, I know this problem, this continuing knotty issue, is far too important for one person to tackle alone. My intellectual, spiritual and physical resources are limited. Having worked your way through this paper, you now have some sense of those limitations. I know I need you. I think we need each other, and most certainly, the congregations that have been left to struggle with the aftermath of conflicted separation need us.
Chapter 5
Learning from the Journey This Far

The Journey So Far-A Deeply Personal Reflection

When I consider the formative events in my life, I go to many places, many epochs dating as far back as I can remember in my childhood. Not all of the events were bad experiences evoking grief. Not all were hurtful to such a degree as needing recuperative efforts followed by some movement towards understanding, acceptance and health. Many were, however, and this project emerges from an especially bad one.

One of the most destructive experiences of my life centered around my ultimate separation from the Church of Our Saviour after a season of complex, deeply emotional and spiritually draining conflict. I continue to wonder how persons sitting in the precincts of the Holy One can behave in the manner that some did. I remember again the response I gave to the woman seated next to me after the trial that evening at vestry. She said that this must have been hard for

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1 The reader will have noticed that the convention in academic writing to avoid first person narrative has been a challenge to this writer. The nature of this work has deep association with events in his life, and this chapter reflects that deepness. To honor the convention in this chapter would have the reader falling over him or herself. Hence, with apologies, the broad use of first person prevails.
me. I said, “It makes me wonder why I ever wanted to be ordained in the first place.”

So much has transpired since that evening. Over time and as I have recounted here in this paper, I have recovered and largely healed. My psychologist calls me a “survivor.” He is correct. But the cost of recovery has been high. It has taken a lot of work. It has been profoundly formative.

During the recovery process and since, I wonder at my own involvement; I wonder at my own contribution to the conflict. Because of much hard work, perhaps as much in silent contemplation as in any other fashion, my wonderings have evolved over the intervening years since this particular trial took place. The difference between my musings now and those at the time surrounding the vestry meeting on June 8, 2005, is significant to this study.

My injuries from the conflict, as deep as they were, as scarring as they were, are but the injuries to one person. I was not alone. No one emerged from the conflict unscathed. I sometimes imagine that the degree of injuries reflected proximity to some blast radius, the closer to the burn, the greater the wound. Likewise, it follows that the closer to the wounded, the greater the emotional wounding for those loved ones standing in witness or participating to a lesser degree. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder affects families too, and the potential to harm lingers into the future generations. We read in scripture, “... for I the
“LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me.” And again, from Exodus, “The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, ’The LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.’” The writer[s] of those words had no awareness of the conflict in a small church in a small town at some future time, but they understood the nature of the damage.

An important piece of my healing and a major influence on this intervention manual emerged out of instructions from my bishop at our meeting when I asked for relief from my duties as rector. He instructed me to write a letter to the people informing them of my desire to leave, but he admonished me to speak to them in terms of healing and health. Juxtaposed with the wise counsel reflected in his instruction, and out of the earlier experience of preaching at the diocesan confirmation service described elsewhere, I began to revisit a wounded faith. I began to see through my blindness from emotional trauma that

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2 Ex. 20:5 (NRSV).
3 Ex. 34:6-7 (NRSV).
4 That letter is in Appendix K.
5 See page 4 above. For additional background, see Appendix A.
there are larger and more important issues here. I began to see the broader picture. I began to perceive the call to forgive those hurting me almost as if whispered directly from Jesus, the Christ, who suffered far more than I and managed to do it. Health and forgiveness bound up together—these inform this project ten years later.

This matter concerned, not just the Church of Our Saviour, but the greater church, the *ecclesia*. It harmed not just the small company of souls who battered each other emotionally for whatever it was that lay at the heart of the battering. It harmed the cosmos. It damaged the fabric of Creation. It interposed itself into the work of God. It saddened the heart of Christ. Even more, the potential for further harm loomed large.

I learned to forgive. This doctoral project is an important part of that. This doctoral project helped me finish the work I had begun in the months and years after the events. That work included more than forgiveness for those who purposefully hurt me and hurt others that cared for me. The work included forgiveness for myself, for my part in all the hurt. Over time, and in the work of this doctoral project I learned that I was not just a victim of some modern *crucifixion exercise* by bad people. They earned their stripes no doubt, but I was an active participant in all of it. I was an integral and vital part of the system. Therefore, I have come to own my share of the destruction.
Perhaps it is a sign of growth that I no longer argue over percentages.

During the years after my separation out of conflict, I learned from various individuals that the effect of my leaving was still impacting heavily on the congregation left behind, and for quite some time. The parish was left in turmoil at my departure. Members were stunned at the turn of events. Some persons vented their anger at the perceived antagonists; others were overtly distrustful and angry at the bishop because of his determination that I should receive a good severance package.

Into this roiling emotion-fueled turbulence entered an interim who had not sufficiently worked through her own anger at having just been herself the clergy person separated from her congregation out of conflict. From the periodic reporting, it seems that she worked out some of that anger by being aggressive in her demeanor and unwavering in her determination to do things her way. One of the members remaining commented that she felt the congregation was being punished for what they did to me. Over time it appeared to me that the congregation had been left with untended wounds. In does not take great leaps of insight or infinite wisdom to realize that their experience was not uncommon.

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6 Three individuals who remained active in the parish took it upon themselves to communicate with me occasionally. Once in a while I heard from others. This paragraph is an amalgam of their reporting.
among churches. Even then, I remember hearing similar stories of conflict, of separation and continuing disquiet among the community left behind.

Press fast-forward to the period in my ministry spanning much of 2007 and most of 2008. I had been called to serve as interim rector at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Western Michigan. Initially I had been reluctant to consider re-entering parish ministry because of residual baggage from Our Saviour. But I needed employment, and this felt like a job rather than a calling.

I was required to train in interim ministry as a part of my covenant with St. Luke’s. I had no idea then the full measure of blessing this training was to give me. I learned many valuable lessons from it; a substantial number of those lessons are here in this intervention manual.

After qualifying as interim minister while serving at St. Luke’s, I noticed a sense of call toward further study. As a part of discernment over choices for living out the balance of my career, the notion that I might turn my still recent experiences into something of value grew in plausibility. It became, potentially, a good idea. I decided that I wanted to work on my Doctor of Ministry.

The ministry in that parish was going well, partly because of personal growth and maturation in me, partly because of the valuable lessons from interim ministry training that were so informative. St. Luke’s had restored to me
my desire to serve in parish ministry. I would look at my experience at Our Saviour to see if there might be something useful in its aftermath that could inform my future ministry and strengthen the greater church. I applied for study at Western Theological Seminary and was accepted into the Doctor of Ministry program in 2008, beginning study nearly three years after separation from Our Saviour.

I did not know going into the program how coincidental would be the events streaming in parallel to that study over the years ahead. I hesitate to invoke the will of God into processes and passages of life so influenced by the agency of human beings. Nevertheless, I will say from this perspective these years later that either Fortune or the Hand of God was at play in this work. Let us say that this may be the prime lesson from the study. God is always present, and God is always active. One does not expect to reach this realization while sitting in dark rooms with knotted stomach and high blood pressure from the confluence of multiple emotions out of conflict.

God is always present. God is always active. Healing. Health. Forgiveness. Important major themes to the intervention paradigm are present.
Interpretation: Questions and Processing

This project has been investigative from the very beginning. Informing the process was the attitude I brought to it from years ago in my ordination journey. Every corner or proverbial resting place, every meeting with every committee or bishop was an opportunity to revisit the discernment. I used these points of passage to ask myself whether this path continues to be the better choice. I used these corners to take counsel from my spiritual advisor, to re-assess my call. Occasionally, the object of the exercise was to test my resolve by asking if I sincerely wish to continue. If that answer was affirmative, then I next questioned where this would go. Clinical Pastoral Education taught me the action-reflection model. I have been using it ever since. It is in the intervention paradigm.

I found helpful the doctoral seminars in those early years. Exercises in setting learning units or study constellations as we called them, or clusters of research were valuable for their stimulative properties. They opened an array of options for going forward. Concurrent with the study, I was appointed to diocesan office as chair of our commission on ministry. This located me in the center of or close proximity to considerable live-action conflict in the diocesan community, and placed me among colleagues within the regional, provincial judicatory who were encountering similar experiences in their immediate locale.
Data seemed to pour in from all directions.

I learned fairly quickly from the inundation of information coming at me that the need existed for some form of coaching or guidance to be provided individuals thrust into pastoral duty in conflicted congregations. Observations of clergy and congregations over time, supported by input from colleagues and other data, indicated that the period of conflict that followed the departure of settled clergy was a time of special vulnerability for the congregation. This had been my observation from experience. Yet, the clergy in place immediately after separation were often not prepared for conflict continuing. The violence of bad behavior and potential for further harm still loomed large within the community.

My training as an interim ministry specialist proved valuable. I knew from it that dedicated and well-prepared leadership was available. However, this avenue for resource appropriation did not rise into visibility of decision makers with any consistency. Judicatory bodies, in the process of making decisions in real time, chose from the pool of available clergy on many occasions. As argued elsewhere in this paper, availability, even when supported by longevity of service, does not assure adequacy of performance in conflicted circumstances.

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7 My training was a condition of service for the interim ministry I was called into at St. Luke’s. Not all decision makers were blind to the resource or importance of the training.

8 Neither does training however rich. Nevertheless, I also argue that training dramatically increases the chances for successful interventions.
Under the supervision and unit guidance of Mark Rich, the first learning unit was dedicated to processing and closing down residual feelings from my experiences years before. Mark was wise in his observation that, until all sense of victimization or sacrifice that lingered from my having been separated out of conflict had been re-visited and stabilized, my work was at risk from tainting.

Mark and I spent fruitful time examining the nature of violence through the lens of René Girard. From this segment of study, I gleaned an understanding of Girard’s views regarding cyclical violence and mimetic theory. We covered the descriptions of sacrifice in ancient literature; that sacrifice was integral within ancient systems of ethics. Human sacrifice exists in cultures throughout history, reaching deeply into recorded time. We have evidence from scripture that indicates human sacrifice was practiced among the proto-Hebraic people, in Judean ritual.⁹ Cyclical violence, mimetic behavior, ritual sacrifice were playing themselves out in real time in churches within our diocese and elsewhere, even as Mark and I were engaging the literature.

We agreed that I had been sacrificed to the interests of the antagonists in the conflict. Girard helped process that determination. In the Judeo-Christian

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⁹ One example is the reference in Micah that implies the sacrifice of the first fruits of the season, whether from crops, livestock, or human family, “Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” He has told you, “O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:7-8 (NRSV).
religion, sacrifice provides an ethics of release whether from human sacrifice or animal surrogates. Once the sacrifice was executed, the conflict was deemed ended by the various antipathetic parties. Indeed, *pharmakoi*, humans cultivated for ritual slaughter as remedy for ills of society, existed within the Greek culture. What I was seeing among the conflict driven events indicated that people still believed that ritual executions or the scape-goating exercises were enough to assuage the violence.

They were not. The violence or threat of violence may have retreated; it may have gone underground. It did not go away.

This sense that sacrifice is a permissible option and even to be expected within the aegis of the Creator is supported by scripture in several places. From the Hebraic corpus, the story of Abraham and Isaac lends support to ritual sacrifice, not in the final result of the tale, but in the clear intention and absence of grief in Abraham. Sacrifice is implied in the following: “The firstborn of your sons you shall give to me. You shall do the same with your oxen and with your sheep . . .”\textsuperscript{10} People still seem to hear this at some base level and think it is O.K. to do it within their churches.

However, scripture ultimately rejects sacrifice. Later in Exodus the commandment is modified. “All that first opens the womb is mine . . . All the

\textsuperscript{10} Ex. 22.28-29 (NRSV). Implications in atonement theories surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus I leave to argue elsewhere.
firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.”  

Again in an argument against sacrifice, the priests state unequivocally, “You shall not give any of your offspring to sacrifice them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.”  

The significance of all this work around cyclical violence and sacrifice goes to the question of whether the separation of clergy from conflict, regardless of whose decision it may be, is somehow an act of God.  

This question lurks within the minds of injured persons and forms the root of theodicy. It needs to be addressed satisfactorily, and for me in the course of this study it was. Coming to the conclusion that God did not do these things to me completed the work necessary for disengagement and opened the way to objectivity. If God did not do it to me, it follows that maybe we should let God off the hook for others in similar circumstances. Maybe we should be looking, not so much at the agency of God, but the choices and decisions made by human beings. Therefrom derives another major theme of the work, i.e. ownership of responsibility for actions in community. 

The work provided substance to the need for anticipating questions of sacrifice among congregations suffering from post-conflict separation. It offered

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11 Ex. 34:19-20 (NRSV). (italics added). See also Micah above.  
12 Lev. 18:21 (NRSV).  
14 In counseling one often hears the questions like, “Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Am I being punished?” In grief work, statements such as, “God wanted her more than you. Everything happens for a reason,” point towards the ubiquity of this attitude.
learning opportunities on matters of responsibility for behavior. It acknowledges agency. In the course of study and from work ongoing in the church, I discovered that not just clergy may feel sacrificed, but the people left behind in the congregation can feel it too.

Trustworthiness, Dependability; Checks and Balances

Much of the work of this project centered around collecting reliable data. I describe the data gathering methods in chapter 3 above. Undergirding the collection process was the determination early that where possible, the data I use is supported by some form of demonstrable consensus. This became one of the criteria for inclusion of data or revision of documents. Literature on evolutionary psychology (sociobiology) in the study finds agreement in scripture. E. O. Wilson teaches that the successful societies are co-operative, cohesive and altruistic. Mark, Matthew and Luke teach us to love God with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourselves. Matthew tells us that we should do to others as we would wish others to do to us. I see that the gospel writers and Dr. Wilson achieve that same philosophical end.

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Likewise, in the peer reviews and panel reflection on the intervention models, I accepted most readily those suggestions that met in cross-reference with others. As an example, every member of the paradigm review panel writing independently of each other commented favorably on the usage of Grounded Theory methods. The greatest consensus emerged from the common belief that clear guidance as an objective of the intervention model is truly needed—the work of bringing it together necessary. In conversations from the very beginning of this study, the concept of providing clear guidance for use in post-separation turmoil was greeted with universal affirmation. All agreed that it is a good idea. I have no recollection of any resource decrying the need for an effective set of guidelines for ministry in congregations wounded by conflict. Care is at the root of Christianity. Care is fundamental to interim training. Care is the motivating force for mediation and reconciliation. All commentators, reviewers who have offered input into this project acknowledge the importance of this work.

In order to underwrite trustworthiness of the paradigm, each version was submitted to outside review by ordained clergy peers and dedicated, experienced laity. All revisions are based on those responses. All revisions were undertaken with supplementation from the continuing study and review of literature. Furthermore, every step of the journey, every draft of the intervention was tested by submission to unit mentors as evidence of learning in each unit.
The signature of each unit mentor is authentication of dependability; they lend the weight of their own credibility to it.

The survey was developed under supervision of Dr. Kent Miller, acknowledged as one of the experts in the field by the academics at the seminary here and abroad. Once the survey was completed I sent it to colleagues active in interim ministry for testing. Only after careful development under the mentorship of a world-class expert, testing by competent colleagues, and final tweaking afterwards, I deployed the survey.

As a part of the exercise in review of the survey responses, I needed to critique the survey. I was disappointed in the number of responses, sixteen returns from forty or so distributed. I was disappointed in the overall level of completion of the surveys returned. Most were only partially completed. The quality of responses degraded the reliability of the data.

In order to improve the quality and broaden the reach of data, I looked back to some of the earlier work in the project development. As indicated above, I had submitted the original draft of the intervention model for peer and laity review. Dr. George Hunsberger encouraged me to combine these earlier responses to the draft intervention model with the more recent survey data. This

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16 The Reverend Lynn Carman Bodden, a member of the paradigm review panel, was one of the test subjects in the validation process of the survey.

17 The critical analysis of the survey is in Appendix C.
created a more credible pool. I then organized the collected findings into raw data charts. Finally, before moving on, George suggested that I examine the respondent pool according to ethnography.18

Dr. Kyle J. A. Small, Director of Doctor of Ministry study, opened one of the keystone elements of the revised intervention model with his suggestion that I look into Grounded Theory methodology. I consulted literature on the subject and then went directly to the source. Dr. Kathy Charmaz, an acknowledged world authority on grounded theories in social research, agreed to meet with me privately in her office at Sonoma State University, California. During our meeting, I roughed out the intervention model, then she and I wondered together how best to utilize Grounded Theory as a means for collecting data in conflicted parishes. The results of that work, coupled as it is with later coursework in Grounded Theory under Dr. Charmaz through UNC-Chapel Hill, are integrated into this paper. After all that, I used the accrued data from the survey, relevant literature, material from additional study in mediation and conflict resolution and input from Grounded Theory to revise the intervention model. I am confident that this revision is substantially stronger because of the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. Confidence notwithstanding, the

18 The Raw Data Chart is in Appendix D; the Ethnographic Worksheet are in Appendix E.
prepared revision was submitted to another round of testing. I deployed it to the contracted review panel for comment.

Applicability; Universality and Potentials

As the reader will acknowledge, the intervention manual was written from the perspective of my current ministry as a priest and dean in the Episcopal Church. I acknowledge many references to Episcopal polity and quote extensively from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979). Even so, I have always kept the greater church in mind. The model embedded within the manual can be adapted for wider distribution. With what I feel are minor adjustments, the applicability of the intervention model should flow easily across denominational, inter-faith lines.

The validity of that assumption will be tested in future active ministry. This is my plan. However, I have evidence of cross-denominational accessibility already. My confidence is based on several factors. I have been provided with and used data from resources associated with many of the denominations in the United States. In addition to the Episcopal Church which provides the platform of perspective for much of my work, I have heard from Presbyterians (PCUSA), members and academics from the Reformed Church in America (RCA), from
Evangelical Lutherans (ELCA), from Lutherans Missouri Synod (LCMS), from the Roman Church, from non-denominational churches, from the United Church of Christ, from the Mennonite Brotherhood, and others. The list goes on.

The themes at play here are universal in scope. Among the many are agency and the actions of God in the world, the nature of unconditional love, conflict in churches, grief and loss, use and abuse of power, the invitation to wonder without judgment, conflict mediation in theory and practice, naming congregational identity, gathering history, genetic information about the church (or more broadly, societies), discerning ethnography, and the three traits of successful societies; cooperation, cohesiveness, altruism.19 These themes are not limited in application or relevance to the Episcopal Church.

In order to keep up the pressure for the maximum fulfillment of potential, the intervention model will be subjected continually to further testing and revisions according to new data obtained through its application in active ministry going forward. Testing and revision must be integral to future ministry; the action and reflection model advocated in Clinical Pastoral Education should be applied as a constant. This intentional testing assures a state of change to the model with an implicit goal of improvement. Just as some advocate ecclesia

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19 This list is partially drawn from the review of the intervention model by Celaine Bouma-Prediger, Comments (2014).
semper reformanda est, so must this work be continually examined and reformed for the greater good of the church.

As a matter of course, I plan to encourage the Interim Ministry Network to help me in distribution and application. Leadership in that organization has been supportive for some time now. Because of their important work as an inter-denominational, inter-faith resource group, the contributions from two of their leading members in the review of the model strengthens its applicability. Placing this work in as many hands as possible will increase the likelihood of its improvement and realization of potential. I intend to do that.

Dependability, Credibility, Reflexivity; Academic Scrutiny

One of the challenges of this work arises out of its longevity. I have been engaged in it for quite a while now. Concurrent with working on the project, in keeping with nature of the Doctor of Ministry as a professional degree, I have been engaged in parish ministry. I have not been uniformly successful in compartmentalizing tasks associated with active ministry and

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20 Ellen Goudy, Education and Membership Manager for IMN, reviewed my requests for panelists and suggested three names, two of whom joined the team, Lynn Carman Bodden and Martin J. Homan. Lynn, as noted earlier, was my instructor in 2008. She and two other instructors, William Thomas and Robert Haskell consulted with me in the early days of this program.
academic/professional development study. Inevitably, over the nearly seven years of project development, ideas have become interwoven, data conflated.

I realize how important it is to maintain proper academic standards. I am aware that the credibility of the project is contingent upon the integrity and proper management of data. The dependability of the product is built on trust that data is properly attributed to the resource. As a guard against improper accreditation of data, to protect against infractions of academic standards, the question constantly before me has been, “Is this my idea or is it another’s?” The question is an important one.

As far back as 2010, Dr. Mark Rich raised the importance of proper acknowledgement of the literature and the work of the authors who provide it this way:

... I’d like to see real engagement with the literature. You mention... that the literature exists and that in constructing this model you have benefitted from reading the literature. So naturally you have to show us your knowledge of that literature and your reactions to it. It may be that you are explicitly doing that in some other place in your work, which is perfectly fine. But I would also expect, in at least the final version of your thesis, that there be some references to that literature in your description of this intervention model, both in whole or partial agreement and/or disagreement with other authors.

I know that it’s good and necessary to outline your own ideas and proposals, and that seems to be mostly what you’ve done here. Like all others, this D.Min. project is supposed to be your presentation of your own new research and thinking. But it is also to be done in the context of the research and thought already out there. 21

I have taken this advice to heart. As I hope is made obvious by the presence of footnotes and bibliography, I have tried hard to acknowledge the sources of the details and advice present in the intervention model that are not my own. However, in the nearly seven years of project development, approximately one hundred individuals have participated or been engaged in the data collection exercise. Therefore, to have tried is not enough. I recognize that due diligence to proper standards must be applied in the days ahead and into the future.\(^{22}\)

Now that the intervention model has undergone its development and testing, I acknowledge that its significance and implications for the church are relative to the extent of its usage. The extent of usage is contingent on its dissemination across the ecclesial culture. The reality of data collection is that some of the work is of a compiling nature. The field of conflict in churches is full of advisors giving advice. The many references in this paper are evidence.

Where this work seems to diverge from the work of others is its focused concern for that period immediately following separation of clergy. My research has not yielded advice specific to that time anywhere else. Other persons I consulted agree that there does not seem to be much direct attention to it, nor to

\(^{22}\) Many of the persons who have been a part of this exercise are named in Acknowledgments.
the increased focus on the health of the congregation in these particular circumstances.\textsuperscript{23}

Furthermore, I have not found a better, more functional data collection medium for usage in the aftermath of conflicted separation than Grounded Theory methodology. I cannot recall encountering it in interim training or in the mediation skills coursework. One of the many assets of the listening attitude in GTM seems to be that it can provide an important counter-balancing to patronizing, hierarchical leadership.\textsuperscript{24} We need it.

In one additional nod to academic scrutiny, the intervention model has imbedded in it the stated intention to invite users towards an active response to it. The invitation is intended to bring even more voices to the mix so that the work is improved. I ask readers to consider joining in the establishment of a network of practitioners dedicated to close sharing of data from the currency of experience.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Bouma-Prediger, Comments (2014). Polly Hewitt, in conversations regarding internal matters of a local church, 2014. Although consultants in church conflict and mediation could argue that this period is simply a subset of all conflict.

\textsuperscript{24} Against judicatories or bishops predisposed to insist on set courses of action, or priests who enter the fray with all answers predetermined and ready at hand, to cite two examples.

\textsuperscript{25} Croom, Revised Intervention Paradigm, (2014) p. 160.
Personal Significance—A Summary of the Personal and Professional Insights Gained from the Project

I claim substantial personal growth from the work associated with this doctoral project. Evidence of that growth lies in the determination to make something of value from events I describe as incredibly destructive. I want to do something here that will advance the realm of Christ; to return to Christ the wounds of the past by discipleship in the present and future. These determinations are a result of insight gained from this project. I moved from a vestigial sense of being a victim to a healthier, non-judgmental advocacy for the renewal and health of congregations after separation from conflict. This project has evolved into an exercise designed to support the mission of the church, to undermine evil behavior within it.

From deep personal anger, and the questioning of ordination nearly ten years ago, this project moved me to complete the journey to forgiveness. Early in the work, I found that I truly forgave those I view as perpetrators, and I forgave myself for the part I played in the drama. Through counsel, continuing hard work, personal reflection and with the help of many dear persons, I am healthy. I am far better able to receive criticism, to respectfully engage in disagreements, and to maintain a healthy sense of self. At the outset of this study I was a survivor; now I am healthy and my ministry thrives. This is good news for the
church, for those persons I love and serve in the church. I believe that God is pleased with the change.

The professional growth and insights that paralleled the private advances are several. The church benefits from my recognized need for an integrated approach to conflict among the body. I have observed and can acknowledge bad examples of behavior and leadership responses. I have witnessed and documented the cost of ineffective reactions to conflicted separation.

This work has affirmed the need for an intentional, organized process dedicated to listening to data—broadly, not just from sources acquiescent to a point of view. I have observed results from vindictive responses and am now better at taking balanced, non-judgmental positions. I admit surprise at having discovered that my years of theater and music artistry still prove useful in public presentation techniques—in the abilities to communicate well with many and to read the moods of the gathered body. I have become more comfortable offering counsel.26

Academic growth and insights include better, more effective reading of data. I am more efficient in finding and engaging relevant literature. My writing is better. (Better, not yet great.) I have improved research skills, still in infancy. I

26 Fifty-five plus pages of it here in the form of a Final Intervention Model.
am excited about the potentials, now latent, in my developing aptitude for Grounded Theory.

Ecclesial Significance; Summary of Implications for Further Ministry Growth

The ecclesial significance of this work and implications for further ministry growth call to mind my plans for future application of the learning acquired in this study. I intend to re-enter the interim ministry network, seeking to engage directly in those places recently separated from clergy out of conflict. I value the process thus far. I see the work being absorbed into and informing the trajectory of my ordained ministry as it disappears into the rest of my life.

I likewise see implications in the training or counseling of persons we in diocesan leadership call to serve in our future transitional ministries. This work can be important as an instructional tool for them, and through them a benefit to the people they serve. In a similar vein, I intend to use this work to create a task group in the Diocese of Western Michigan who will be trained and on call for parishes in conflict. I anticipate the task group will be given authority to intercede in the conflict and to provide counsel to both the congregation and clergy, demonstrating to both sides an unbiased posture. I expect that the group

27 Including additional study, or for ministry leaders who may choose to replicate the project in the future.
will also have authority to recommend appropriate healing action for the community up to and including the separation of clergy if necessary, and that the bishop will rely on their advice.

The intervention model will never reach a final version; as stipulated before, it will be reviewed constantly. Other than for errors, and possible copyright requirements, I will never claim the model as my own, nor will I erect proverbial hallowed walls around it designed to repel criticism of it. I hope that, in the form it has become at this point, it will give method and direction for persons who, by reason of exigency, have been thrust into events on short notice and may be facing a blank page of what-to-do-now at their time of call. For persons of my skill set or better, I offer a set of reminders and suggestions. I am confident that, having been tested and examined from many angles, this model can be of use. That is my prayer.

Theological Interpretations and Significance of the Data

Scripture informs us of the loving God who has tried again and again to be in covenant with us, only to have been deeply distressed by our continuing

28 I would mark Lynn Carman Bodden and Martin J. Homan as two of many more gifted than I.
failures to hold our end of the agreement. In the words of Eucharistic Prayer C from the Book of Common Prayer:

At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home. By your will they were created and have their being. From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight. Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace. By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed. 29

In the synoptic gospels, we are instructed to love God and our neighbor; in John we are mandated to love each other as God loves us. In all of this work, I have sought to find the ground upon which these instructions can rest in the land of hurt amid the climate of destruction following the separation of clergy from people. I also have heard and held before me the words in John instructing that, in paraphrase, if you love me you will feed my sheep, you will tend my lambs, you will love my people.

As far as I can see, this is the theological substance of my work. The intent of this work is to do as God has directed me out of the voices of prophets and gospel writers now long dead. Yet, I also hear the voices of those persons alive

now who, out of their love for me or sense of dedication to their own ministry, have brought me personally back from a place of darkness filled with hatred. Theirs are the voices I now hear; theirs is the love I now carry within me. It was they who encouraged me and taught me about forgiveness. Their faces I can see clearly before me.

I write this out of gratitude that I did not die and leave the world bitter. I write this out of gratitude that God has been able, and I acknowledge the grace in it, to bring me thus far and to provide through the saints living and dead who have contributed to this work, the new markers and new direction in my life. I hear their voices, I hear their songs and I find in them the basis for my theological world view. This is work intended for the continuing task of salvation. This work is intended as a co-creative effort out of the wisdom of many, with the help of a willing and thankfully proximate God, to advance the realm of God on earth. And it has been joyful in its birthing. Its significance will be revealed in its life—and therefore remains to be seen.
Acknowledgements

The person who suffered most in the conflict that eventually led to my separation from Our Saviour is my wife, Stephanie. She was unable to stop the hurt. She felt it two-fold—her own deep feelings and mine with me. I cannot say how much gratitude I have in my heart for her constancy and love through it all, and now in happier days for her unstinting encouragement.

My deepest thanks go to those persons who agreed to serve on the Paradigm Review Panel. Each of them offered far more effort to the tasks asked of them than could have ever expected. They are wise, they are gifted and I am grateful. Their support to this project reflects their love for God, for the church and especially for the people that are the church. They are:

The Rev. Lynn Carman Bodden
The Rev. Martin J. Homan
The Rev. Donna Duensing
Dr. Kenneth Reid, Ph.D.
The Rev. Celaine Bouma-Prediger
Dr. Elizabeth Trembley, Ph.D.
Dr. D. Barry Croom, Ed.D.
I honor and am grateful to my learning unit mentors and supervisors. They have been supportive, pastoral and demonstrably wise, one and all:

The Rev. Dr. Mark Rich, Ph.D.—Doctoral Supervisor, Learning Unit One Mentor
The Rev. Donna Duensing—Unit Two Mentor and Review Panelist
Dr. Kent Miller, Ph.D.—Michigan State University, Unit Three Mentor
The Rev. Dr. George Hunsberger—Units Four and Five Mentor
Doctoral Supervisor and Director of Doctor of Ministry Study.
The Rev. Dr. Kyle Small—Doctoral Supervisor, Dissertation Mentor
Director of Doctor of Ministry Study.

To the many others who offered wisdom in counsel, conversation and presence I give my thanks:


To any person whom I have not named here who should have been, I offer my apologies.
Appendix

Appendix A

Case in Point, Church of Our Saviour

The Church of Our Saviour in its history had the unusual situation within the Episcopal Church where the son of the rector was called to be rector at his father’s retirement. As it turns out, between father and son, the two served about fifty years as clergy of the parish. Over time, both rectors acquired the status of “beloved pastor,” and for good reason. By all accounts they were extraordinary men, highly competent and loving. When the son retired after his thirty-two years in place, the called interim split the parish when she actively campaigned for the position of settled rector.¹ The ensuing conflict was not dealt with in any effective way before she left at the calling of a new settled rector. This settled rector was called by the basest of margins within the search committee, by one vote in a split of 7 to 6, which can hardly be considered a universal mandate. This rector served for twelve years, and left on the verge of conflict between a power

¹ This is a serious infraction of the standard expectations for interim ministry.
center that had formed during his ministry and others that had newly arrived who were seeking the reins of control.  

In this next interim period, two clergy were called. The first spent his time forming a choir school, painting the entrance doors red and passively observing as power factions lead the charge to renovate the church. During this part of the interim period, the church received a new hundred year roof and an exterior coat of paint. The vestiges of conflict from twelve years before, unresolved, and a growing struggle for power among the now three differing factions were untouched. This priest left to serve elsewhere and the next interim was called to cover the short time before I was called as the new rector. She did not keep office hours and simply maintained the necessary worship leadership presence. A substantial amount of work that could have been done to interdict further conflict was left undone.

My own period of service, not officially an interim rector call, could also be considered inadequate. After I left, the interim brought with her considerable anger at her recent loss of position from conflict that she subsequently visited upon the congregation. She was considered a punisher of the congregation, especially to those who had been leaders in the push for my removal. We are now on to about fifteen years of unresolved disquiet and open conflict.

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2 The power center that had formed around this rector had themselves driven wedges of control between themselves and the hierarchy of leadership under the last “beloved” rector.
Following her, a priest was given as clergy-in-charge, and matters have eased over time. The power centers have eroded through attrition, through departures and death among the members. As far as can be determined from this perspective, still tinged by vestigial bias from a negative experience, none of us clergy that served the congregation from the dynastic retirement until now have provided the leadership this congregation has needed. Simply letting things ride does not count for healthy intervention—this is burying the talent, not using it for the benefit of the Lord.  

(See Figure 1)
Figure 1
Appendix B

Survey Instrument with Introductory Letter

Introductory Letter

Dear Colleague in Ministry,

You have been recommended as an individual who, by personal experience or direct knowledge, might have advice to offer in the matter of what happens in congregations that have lost clergy by reason of conflict. Because of that recommendation, I am asking you to please complete the attached survey. The objective of the survey is to acquire knowledge in the forms of advice, wisdom gained by experience and/or usable data. I want to find out what actions have been taken by whom after clergy have separated from the congregation out of conflict, and whether the actions have been successful or not. I want to know what conversations must take place, the format of those conversations and whether or not they should be public or private or both. I want to know what people think about their church, and how they believe God is acting through the church and through themselves. What was the vision of the will of God, and what is it "now?" Once the proverbial door closes at the clergy departure, what happens next? How is the parish community brought to health, and what does that health look like for the parish?

Please answer each question as completely as you wish. Use extra paper if needed. Your answers will be used to sharpen and focus a proposed paradigm designed to provide clear guidance to interim ministers or clergy-in-charge who are called to serve in congregations that have separated from clergy out of conflict. The development of the protocol is the goal of my Doctor of Ministry program. Once the intervention protocol is developed, I hope to "go live" into the broader church in order to test its functionality, effectiveness, and flexibility among the diverse communities that are the church. At that point, it becomes my life’s work for the time I have remaining. Your contribution out of the wisdom of your experience will be of potentially great value to the church, and your participation here is deeply appreciated. If you know of others with whom I

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4 This is a facsimile that differs from the original in that the blanks for written responses have been removed to conserve space.
might be in touch to solicit their wisdom, I would be grateful for that information too.

All this asks much of you. Because the stakes have proven to be so high, the measure of what you might offer is that much the greater. Thank you for having a go.

Every blessing,

The Very Reverend James Croom+
Rector, Holy Trinity, Wyoming, Michigan
Dean, Grand Valley Deanery of the Diocese of Western Michigan

Survey, Out of Conflict-Revision 03/22/2011

The survey represents the partial fulfillment of requirements for the Doctor of Ministry, Learning Unit 3, at Western Theological Seminary, by the Very Reverend James Croom.

Demographic Data

None of the following information will be used in any future publication without the written consent of the respondent. This information is strictly for demographical analysis only. Contact information is requested for the purpose of clarifying or following up on responses.

1. Tell me about yourself.
   Name
   Address
   Home Phone
   Cell Phone
   E-Mail

2. Are you currently a member of a religious congregation?
   Yes
   No
3. How long have you been a member of your congregation?
4. Are you now or have you been in a leadership position in your congregation?
   Yes
   No
5. If so, please tell me what your role[s] are or were.

Prior Situation vs. Current Situation

The information gathered from the following set of questions will be used in the preparation of future social research to be undertaken in order to test models of action that have been found successful in dealing with the aftermath of the separation of clergy from congregations out of conflict. The ultimate objective of this study is to provide clear guidance for persons who find themselves in the role of interim minister or clergy-in-charge of congregations suffering from the aftermath of separation of clergy out of conflict. Therefore your candid responses and clearest counsel will be most appreciated.

Unless otherwise stated, all responses will be considered confidential. Please Note that in answering open-ended questions, you are invited to use as much additional paper as you need. Or, if you prefer, you may make additional comments via e-mail to revjimcroom@yahoo.com.

6. Have you direct first-hand information about, personally observed or been involved in parish conflict which resulted in the clergy person leaving? [If not, thank you for your participation thus far. You need not complete the remainder of this survey.]
   Yes
   No
7. Please briefly describe the conflict. [It was about the rector's preaching, or the way the bills were handled, etc.]
8. How would you describe your relationship to the events? [I was an active participant; I was an observer, etc.]
9. What was the nature of your relationship to the events? [I supported the rector, or I was anxious that the pastor leave or I was supportive of reconciliation, etc.]
10. Please describe the events leading up to the departure of clergy.
11. What was the experience prior to the separation like for you?
12. In your opinion, what prompted the clergy person to leave?
13. How did the clergy's decision to leave affect you personally?
14. What was your sense of the general feeling in the parish at the time of the clergy person's departure?
15. At the time of the departure, what do you think needed to be done in the parish to "right the ship?"
16. Did you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit as active during the period of conflict leading up to the separation?
   Yes
   No
17. If yes, in what ways did you sense that presence? If no, then why do you suppose not?

After Separation Out of Conflict

18. After the clergy person left, please describe what happened.
19. In your opinion, after the separation, did the parish recover from the trauma of the conflict?
   Yes
   No
20. If yes, what does that recovery look like to you? If no, what is the current state of affairs in the parish?
21. What actions were taken by the judicatory body, i.e. the diocese, the classis, the presbytery, etc.?
22. How would you rate the quality or effectiveness of the actions by the judicatory?
   Highly Satisfactory, Effective
   Satisfactory, Useful
   Poor, Not Very Useful
   Most Unsatisfactory, Unhelpful
23. What do you think the judicatory body did that was useful and effective? Please be as specific as you can.
24. What do you think the judicatory body should have done that they did not do? Again, please be as specific as you can.
25. What actions, apart from those of the interim or clergy-in-charge, were taken by others in parish leadership after the separation?
26. How would you rate their effectiveness?
   Highly Satisfactory, Effective
   Satisfactory, Useful
   Poor, Not Very Useful
   Most Unsatisfactory, Unhelpful
27. What do you think the parish leadership did that was useful and effective?
28. What do you think the parish leadership should have done that they did not do?
29. Please briefly describe the next clergy person who came to the parish.
30. Was this person . . .
   A person trained in interim ministry?
   A person untrained in interim ministry?
   An experienced priest/clergy-in-charge?
   An inexperienced priest/clergy-in-charge?
   Other, please specify
31. How would you rate his/her effectiveness?
   Highly Satisfactory, Effective
   Satisfactory, Useful
   Poor, Not Very Useful
   Most Unsatisfactory, Unhelpful
32. What do you think the intervening clergy person did that was useful and effective?
33. What do you think the intervening clergy should have done that she/he did not do?
34. Did you at any time sense the reality of God's presence during and/or in the aftermath of the conflict?
   Yes
   No
35. If yes, in what ways did you sense that presence? If no, why do you suppose not?
36. Do you recall if anyone attempted to facilitate a sense of God's real presence during and/or after the separation event?
   Yes
   No
37. If yes, how was the awareness of that presence facilitated? If no, how do you think that might have happened? [What suggestions might you have?]
38. Did the conflict and its aftermath affect your prayer life, or your worship life or your relationship with God?
   Yes
   No
39. If yes, how so? If no, why not?
40. What elements of the actions after the separation were helpful in returning the congregation to health? OR, what suggestions might you have for actions that were not undertaken?
41. In your opinion, what preaching or liturgical themes might have been or, in fact, were helpful in the aftermath of the separation?
42. What resources do you think were, are, or would be necessary in these circumstances?
43. What conversations should have or did take place that, in your opinion, were necessary for the restoration of health in the parish?
44. In what ways, if any, do you think the corporate vision of the congregation was changed by the conflict and separation?
45. Please describe what you believe to be God’s purpose in the congregation.
46. How did/does the conflict affect that sense of purpose?
47. Briefly describe how the judicatory, the parish leadership and the clergy have spoken to or addressed God’s purpose in the parish community.
48. Have you anything else you would like to add?

   Thank you so much for taking the time out of your life to complete the testing of the attached survey. Hopefully your efforts will contribute to the future wellbeing of God’s church. When you have finished you may return your survey to me in one of several ways: Please place the hard copy in the envelope provided and send it pre-paid to my home address below; you may also FAX it to 616-538-1469; you may send it electronically by e-mail, or if you have chosen to complete the online version, you may simply click on “submit.”

   Thank you again. May you and those you love be richly blessed.

   [Signed] For questions or clarification, please contact me by e-mail at revjimcroom@yahoo.com or by phone at 616-834-8223
Appendix C

Survey Instrument Critical Analysis

As a part of an analysis of the data gathering process from unit 4, my unit mentor and I felt it important to take a critical look at the survey questionnaire that was deployed during unit 3. How did it work? Was it effective at eliciting responses? What are some things that would need to be changed?

The original plan as envisioned back in the depths of unit 3 was to deploy one survey through various media to gather pertinent data. Working with Dr. Kent Miller, unit 3 mentor, I knew I wanted to break the gathering process down into several tasks. The first task was to try to visualize the pool of potential respondents who had experienced conflict in churches which resulted in the separation of clergy from the congregation of call. I determined what I wanted to ask them.

I also had to determine up front what type of questions I wanted to ask. Our doctoral seminars around social research informed my choices. For my purposes, the questions would be primarily open-ended. Some questions would offer multiple choices designed to provide simple grading scale responses to
questions like, “How do you think ______ did?” (Effective, Useful, Not Very Useful, Unhelpful)

I needed to know about the nature of the conflict. Consequently, I set up some questions about that, asking for brief descriptions of the conflict and where was the respondent positioned among the actors in the play. Then, after this preliminary work, I turned to questions seeking opinions on efficacy of the actions of participants in the drama. These I divided into three categories: the judicatory, parish leadership, and laity.

I then subdivided these categories into three segments each. I asked questions such as, “what was the involvement of ______ (member of group)?” I asked whether that involvement was effective. I asked what actions were undertaken that were useful or helpful, which were not useful or helpful. Next I asked what actions did the respondent think ought to have been done by representative in each category.

At the top of the document, I included an informed consent document, along with demographic information requests. At the closing of the survey, I asked whether the respondent felt that God was active in the process and how. It seemed important to know what themes were being preached and what was the quality and context of “God language” being used?
Not Insignificant, But . . .

The questionnaire runs to 48 questions; I have been informed that it took respondents that completed the whole survey about an hour to finish. From this vantage point, with the effort expended in survey preparation, I feel my time would have been better spent in face-to-face interviews. Many of the persons in the diocesan offices who said they would complete the survey did not. None of the colleagues in my graduating class from seminary completed it. I was invited to present at three separate diocesan leadership days in the Diocese of Western Michigan\(^5\) which are offered annually to those persons in administrative and canonical positions of authority, both lay and ordained, for the purposes of in-service training. At each of those, many persons picked up a hardcopy of the survey, complete with addressed and stamped envelope.\(^6\) Few were returned. Data collection through interviews would have been better.

This is not to say that the survey itself as I developed it was entirely at fault. Surveys can be a bit like condominiums, hard to sell. From several conversations on the subject of survey deployment, the anecdotes support broad variance in return rates. My unit mentor, Kent Miller and I agreed that the

\(^5\) The same presentation three times: At St. Luke’s, Kalamazoo, St. Mark’s, Grand Rapids, and Grace Church, Traverse City.

\(^6\) The total number of hard copies that were taken is unavailable. Regrettably I did not count them. The figure I use elsewhere of 40 copies distributed is really my best guess. There may have been more; certainly that there would have been fewer is unlikely.
things we asked reflected the things we wished to know. However, the
questionnaire itself proved to be too long. Of the surveys returned, several
contained whole sections which were left unanswered or simply notated or
otherwise marked as “read.”

However, I did receive several surveys that were completed fully. I am
pleased to acknowledge that when completed fully, the data collection sequence
as laid out tracks very well. The questions do have a logical sequential nature to
them. When completed, the survey is effective in eliciting data.

These pieces of news have an upside and a downside. The upside is that
it works; the downside is that it was so often completely or partially ignored.
The victory then is pyrrhic; the losses are heavy. And I am left uncertain about
what would need to be changed.

Would I do it again? My feelings are ambivalent. If I asked myself
whether or not I can imagine developing and deploying a survey again, the
answer is yes. I can. In fact, at about the time I was developing this survey, our
church leadership requested that I prepare one for the parish. We needed data
from the congregation on aspects of our life together and where we collectively
wished to go. Out of an average Sunday attendance of 80 persons, and a pledge
base of 48 units, we received 38 responses. As a result, I can imagine over the
course of my active ministry remaining, I might develop and deploy another survey.

Nevertheless, because I have been introduced to Grounded Theory methodology, I find the processes there deeply appealing, especially the emphasis on the direct, personal interactions. I incorporated Grounded Theory principles in the revised intervention model and expect to use it in my ministry regardless of where my career leads me. My ministry, my doctoral project, these and virtually all aspects of this profession require ongoing, evaluative research. Surveys have their place; they can be useful. As for me and my house, I will set my course towards Grounded Theory.
Appendix D

Raw Data Analysis Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>S/I/WC</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Helpful-Positive-Actionable-Do</th>
<th>Unhelpful-Negative-Do Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1   | S      | F      | 56  | -All parish counseling; parish gatherings  
|     |        |        |     | -Strong vestry leadership; listening to cong.  
|     |        |        |     | -Compassionate leadership from bishop; facilitating counsel and mediation  
|     |        |        |     | -“Solid caring rector;” affirming parish mission/ministries | Call “weak” interim; having his/her own personal problems, etc |
| 2   | S      | M      | 64  |                                | -Judicatory; Failing to listen -Judicatory; Taking one-sided view -Vestry dissolved |
| 3   | S      | F      | 53  | -Strong judicatory action; removing priest  
|     |        |        |     | -Talking to “one another” -Ongoing worship -New priest listened to “all” -Emphasis on Christian values -NPrst non-judgmental; treating all in loving way, peacemaking | -No presence from diocese; bishop not showing much interest -Response to conflict delayed |
| 4   | S      | M      | 65+ | -Discussions “with all parties” -Mediation/conflict resolution efforts | -No action by judicatory; bishop responding “to endure” not useful/effective |
| 5   | S      | M      | 65+ | -Bishop intervention |

1 S=Survey response. I=Interview response. WC=Written or other correspondence response.
| 6 | S | M | 64 | -Judicatory support through active presence of chaplain/diocesan officer  
-“Recovery” plan set in place; parish leadership following directions  
-Set aside/impose practical and reflective work before permission to call new rector  
-Called priest; “kind and gentle soul who negotiated his way through . . . issues, around power & control”  
-Interim provided stability  
-Reconciliation work inc:  
  1. Admission of role in conflict;  
  2. Apology to wounded;  
  3. Statement of amends  
-Conversations; using questions pointing to expressions of dissent, then new commitment to comm., identification of gifts, promises to use for good of whole | -Positive action impeded by anger and anxiety  
-Interim did not impose accountability; needing to be “loved and admired”  
-Authentic community not addressed  
-Diocesan interventionists’ own self-work incomplete |
| 7 | S | M | 70+ | -Strong action by judicatory  
-Training in conflict rez for following priest  
-Judicatory transparent re the conflict  
-Interims/settled priest modeled appropriate behavior | -No “plan” for addressing of issues  
-No skilled facilitators for leadership provided  
-No counseling for actors in conflict |
| 8 | S | M | 60+ | NPI  
  
 | 9 | S | F | NPI |
| 10 | S | F | 65+ | -Conflict resolution intervention  
-Meetings between parish and mediator/s | -Little action by judicatory  
-Interim “ill-fitted”  
-New rector unsatisfactory  
-Pain left unaddressed |

2 NPI=No Pertinent Information.
-Prayer, listening, taking responsibility, asking forgiveness, showing mercy
-Acknowledging positives in “adversaries”
-Call trained interim
-Preach sermons dealing with the following:
  1. Open reference to the conflict;
  2. Use of biblical themes with relevant “real world” [i.e. outside of the parish] examples of what works;
  3. The sharing of love of God for all, even antagonists;
  4. Lifting up ministries of all prior pastors;
  5. Reminding parish of past as greater than current conflict

-Quickly calling a skilled interim “essential”
-Strong vestry leadership; immediately meeting with church leaders—continuing ministries
-Exit interview of priest important
-Adopt “stay calm and carry on” motto for parish
-Mature and experienced leadership a strong plus
-Develop a transition plan
-Give membership a chance to express emotions

-Interim trained and entered with “game plan”
-Exit interview read and appraised by leadership
-Interim maintained calm demeanor

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3 In this instance, a trained interim and instructor from the Interim Ministry Network used one survey to described three separate instances of conflicted separation.
- Leaving priest “should work with bishop on a transition plan”
- Boundaries SB clearly established, roles clarified—especially “who’s in charge”
- Prayer and reflection encouraged in order to find peace during periods of high tension

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| - Initiate an “open information campaign”
- Permit time for interim process to “work” before calling settled rector
- Interim meetings with as many as possible of parish valuable
| - Judicatory actions lack clarity/transparency
- Judicatory not obviously involved
- Vestry leadership lacking in transparency
- Energies diverted from core issues to superficial matters; no admission of sexual misconduct, instead focused on “money”

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| - Make peaceful departure
- Balance needs of congregation
- Reassure congregation; non-anxious presence
- Well-differentiated interim, settled rector
|   |

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| - Involve judicatory immediately, if not already engaged
- Provide judicatory overseeing “handler;” trained in conflict rez and/or mediation
- Try to match skills of interim with nature of separation, ie sexual misconduct with trained specialist, etc. |
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<th>Key individuals in parish act as stabilizing influence -Strong lay leadership; determination to “hold together” -Members willing to seek compromise; working together -Membership demonstrating loyalty</th>
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<td>Persons working independently; “outside the system” 4</td>
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<td>Stable, i.e., self-differentiated/self-actuated, interim able to change tone -Interim “up-front” and intentional with parameters for engagement -Work toward parish definition of identity -Formation of committee to develop common themes and common mission -Interim modeled universal acceptance</td>
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<td>Unguided town hall or meetings harmful -Vestry inadequately prepared; clearly adversarial -Diocese not much involved -Rumor mill permitted to operate</td>
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<td>Internal structures, ie. Altar guild, choir, Sunday school continued -Bellwethers, leaders in congregation demonstrate willingness to work together/stay together</td>
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<td>Interim did “housecleaning” ie. re-established functional order in worship and admin -Opened communication between/among clergy-people, people-people [groups and individuals] -Interim “did NOT stifle conversation</td>
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4 In this case, this refers specifically to individuals seeking to disengage from the Episcopal Church USA in order to affiliate with Anglican Mission in America, a more conservative reactionary denomination formed to counter initiatives in the ECA to regularize LGBT presence among clergy.
| 23 | I | M | 70+ | -Strong interim called -Interim spoke to AMAPossible in their own homes -Interim combined two services, therefore two factions into one -Instituted and supervised town meetings -Challenged operative “wisdom”⁶ -Promoted communication; “met on common ground,” agreeing to disagree -Reframed conversations | -Important issue[s] never addressed directly/overtly -Antipathy towards judicatory unresolved |
| 24 |   | F  | 70+ |                          |                                    |
| 25 | I | F  |      | -State publically the issues of conflicted separation | -Consultants often not helpful |
| 26 | WC | F  | 50+ | -Interim should have sophisticated skills -Think managing rather than fixing |                                    |
| 27 | WC | M  | 50  | -Interim should clarify role and relationship at outset; ie. not available for call as settled rector -Reset early the ground rules for behavior and communication |                                    |
| 29 | WC | M  | 45  | -Identify who is generating conflict/who are resonating to the generators -Maintain non-anxious presence; this will calm resonators -Consider removing generators of conflict |                                    |

⁵ Couple interviewed together.
⁶ The interim challenged pre-conceived notions such as “If one is for something, he/she must be against something else.”
“Strong preaching” and teaching that speaks openly, frankly and consistently with dynamics of conflict needed. Note Christian scripture that display dynamics openly; vitiate “moral” authority of conflictors.

- Instead of eliminating/firing or removing conflictors in congregation, think in team sporting terms as “benching”.

- During interim period, have judicatory help congregation “name their situation, and their pain”.

- Set tone that all agree to the respectful toleration of disagreement.
  - Develop historical timeline/other tools for discovery of parish DNA, patterns of behavior and themes of ministry.
  - Provide regular, timely updates of progress and situational analysis to judicatory and parish leadership.

- Clarify boundaries of authority of interim.
  - Set specific goals as soon as possible.
Appendix E

Ethnographic Data¹

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Additional notes: N. is the spouse of a retired capt. in sheriff’s office.

Additional notes: N. served as treasurer and assistant treasurer in his parish for many years. His family is a long-standing presence in his church.

Additional notes: N. is the spouse of a retired capt. in sheriff’s office.

¹ To insure confidentiality, names are withheld.

² Educated is taken to mean some college or university. Highly educated means that the individual has a masters degree or higher.

³ Active in church polity implies that the individual serves on vestry or other councils in the church at parish and/or diocesan levels.

⁴ Active in programs means that the person undertakes to serve as member of choir, Sunday school teacher, etc.
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<td>Additional notes: N. is hearing impaired.</td>
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| 22 | M | 45 | • Single, partnered  
• Educated  
• Employed  
• Regularly attends church  
• Active in programs |
| 23 | M | 70+ | • Married  
• Children  
• Retired  
• Educated  
• Regularly attends church  
• Lay minister  
• Active in programs  
Additional notes: N. and his wife are long-serving members of the congregation, held in high esteem because of their ministries to various individuals and causes in the parish and community. |
| 24 | F | 70+ | • Married  
• Children  
• Retired  
• Educated  
• Regularly attends church  
• Lay minister  
• Active in programs |
| 25 | F |   | • Highly educated  
• Employed as canon to the ordinary  
• Regularly attends church  
• Active in church administration  
• Active in church polity |
| 26 | F | 50+ | • Priest  
• Married  
• Children  
• Highly educated  
• Regularly attends church  
• Social activist  
Additional notes: N. is married to a chief surgeon at her local hospital. She is surviving cancer. |
| 27 | M | 50+ | • Married  
• Children  
• Educated  
• Employed  
• Regularly attends church  
• Active in polity  
• Active in programs |
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<th>Age</th>
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<th>Church Involvement</th>
<th>Polity Involvement</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
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<td>28</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40+</td>
<td>Highly educated, Employed, university professor, Regularly attends church, Active in programs</td>
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<td>Highly educated authority on research techniques.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45+</td>
<td>Minister, ELCA, Married, Children, Highly educated, Employed/pastor, Regularly attends/serves church, Active in polity, Active in programs</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Minister, ELCA, Single/widowed, Children, Highly educated, Employed/seminary administration-faculty, Regularly attends church, Active in polity</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>Deacon, Married, Child, Highly educated, Employed, diocesan officer, Regularly attends church, Active in polity</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Priest, Partnered, Children, Highly educated, Retired, Regularly attends church, Active in polity</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Seminarian, Married, No children, Highly educated, Employed, Regularly attends church, Active in programs</td>
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Appendix F

Intervention Model Review Panel

Biographical Information and Summaries of Review

Lynn Carman Bodden, M.Div.
Martin J. Homan, M.Div., S.T.M., Th.M.
Donna Duensing, M.Div.
Kenneth Reid, Ph.D.
Celaine Bouma-Prediger, M.Div.
Elizabeth Trembley, Ph.D.
D. Barry Croom, Ed.D.

Lynn Carman Bodden, M. Div.

Reverend Bodden is a minister in the United Church of Christ. She is a certified Professional Transition Specialist by the Interim Ministry Network and has served for many years as an instructor in their highly regarded interim training courses. Lynn is still active in interim ministry. She serves on the board of IMN, and as a consultant in church transitions.¹

Summary of Review-Carman Bodden

Lynn provided a broad range of suggestions for improving the project. Many of her suggestions are footnoted in the paradigm; most involved editorial improvements.² She questioned some of my terminology, wondering about the

¹ Lynn Carman Bodden was one of the instructors who trained me for interim ministry.
² My practice has been to accept edits in entirety. Exceptions are made in those instances where reviewers duplicate suggestions, or on the rare occasion when I might feel that the edit
use of *intervening pastor*, for example, when I am speaking of an interim minister.

Principal among recommendations was her instruction that I need not continually use the phrase, “I suggest you,” when the whole paper is comprised of suggestions. She also points out that my repeated use of “please” sounds as if I am pleading my case. She affirms that I do make my case without its repeated usage. She believes I make the case well and that people will either take it or leave it. “Just be bold!” she says.

Martin J. Homan, M.Div., S.T.M., Th.M.

Pastor Homan is a deeply skilled and highly trained individual whose credentials are impeccable for the work he provided to this project. He is an ordained Lutheran minister in the LCMS, and an Interim Ministry Network Instructor. He holds degrees from Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, MO, where he was awarded his M. Div. in 1981, his S.T.M. (Exegetical and Systematic Theology) in 1982, and from the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, IL, where he received his Th.M. (Biblical Studies) in 1986.

His credentials in interim ministry include his accreditation as Professional Transition Specialist by the Interim Ministry Network (IMN), in June, 1999. He received his Intentional Interim Pastor and Interim Ministry risks changing the character of my own voice in the writing. I have no recall if the latter exception due to concern for loss of voice was ever made.
Specialist (large churches and schools, and conflict) credentials from the LCMS Interim Ministry Conference, 2002-2010.

Pastor Homan has served twenty congregations as intentional interim pastor. His experience includes six years as instructor and assistant professor in Old Testament and Hebrew at Concordia College in River Forest, IL. Martin has studied on several occasions with Dr. Peter Steinke, one of the renowned advocates of family systems theory. He has taken courses with and been certified by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at their Mediation Skills Training Institute. He has taken many skill development courses through the Alban Institute.

Martin Homan served on the Board of Directors, Interim Ministry Network, edited their Basic Education Manual (2004-2005) and was chair of the Research Committee, IMN.

Summary of Review-Homan

Pastor Homan provided a marked up copy of the intervention paradigm with margin comments and suggestions. His suggestions have been utilized extensively and are indicated by footnotes throughout. His edits and comments are imbedded deeply in the paper.
Donna Duensing, M.Div.

The Reverend Donna Duensing is a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She served for seven years as a parish pastor at St. James Lutheran Church, Richmond, CA. She also served 15 months as interim pastor at First United Lutheran Church, San Francisco.

Pastor Duensing served for a total of twenty years on the faculties of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkeley, and San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California, as Associate Professor of Integrative Studies, Theological Field Education and Supervision of Ministry. During this time, she studied Conflict Utilization, Systems Theory and Organizational Change at Boston College, Andover Newton, and Iliff School of Theology. She served as consultant to congregations and organizations in conflict, and as coach and mentor to clergy in conflictual situations.

Pastor Duensing provided consultative counsel for me and for the congregation of the Church of Our Saviour during the conflict described in this paper.

Summary of Review-Duensing

Pastor Duensing offered many suggestions notated in the project paradigm which I have folded into this version. Her overall critique is supportive of the paper. She cites it as “excellent” and further comments that it
invites the reader “on a journey and then provides the GPS to make the trip as rewarding as possible, arriving at the destination of the completion of an effective interim ministry.”

She points to several effective characteristics of the paper. She appreciates the way the introduction develops a personal relationship with the reader. She thinks the personal witness is effective, and that the paper demonstrates the complexity of situations in parish settings where clergy have separated as a result of conflict. She notes some highlights: the importance of doing one’s personal introspective work; the need to establish “a good, trustworthy, support group ‘outside’ the ministry setting.” She found the Grounded Theory Methodology to be a good GPS for the journey, and time-generalized legs of the journey a good way to organize the material.

Among other positives she acknowledges are these: the theological reflection within the paper models the importance of the practice of grounding one’s ministry theologically. The use of a variety of disciplines as resources for the work of addressing conflict, grief and change in a system is valuable. She finds that the reminding of the reader that this work is also ministry “aids the

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3 Duensing, Comments (2014).
pastor to remain focused on the proclamation of hope and the promise that God is indeed ‘making all things new.’”

Kenneth Reid, Ph.D.

Dr. Reid has a long and rich history as a counselor and educator. He has worked in psychiatric hospitals and outpatient clinics in both Kansas and Michigan. He is Professor Emeritus of Social Work at Western Michigan University, where he taught clinical practice for 37 years. Ken has written extensively on counseling and psychotherapy including two books on the use of groups in social work.

As a psychotherapist, Ken counsels individuals and families as well as clergy in the counseling program of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. In this role within the diocese, Ken has observed first-hand as active participant, or indirectly as consultant for individuals involved, conflicts in diocesan churches—several instances resulted in separation of clergy out of conflict. Furthermore, he has been a hospice volunteer and disaster mental health responder with the disaster services of the American Red Cross.

Ken advised me in my interim ministry at St. Luke’s in 2007-2008, and has been my personal counselor since that time.

4 Many of these comments are drawn from the cover letter with annotations that Pastor Duensing provided with her marked up intervention model.
Summary of Review-Reid

Dr. Reid chose the same method of review as some of the others in that he provided a hard-copy of the intervention paradigm with extensive notes and markings suggestive of improvements and/or seeking clarification. In addition, he cross-referenced a series of comments in his four page analysis with the various markings in the paper.

His overall sense is that the concept is “great and useful to those in the foxhole trying to figure out how to assist a church.” He finds the material, the information, is “good, practical, and obviously from the heart.”\(^5\) Ken offers his insight at several levels which coincides with the trajectory of his career. Some of his notes have an academic quality in that he suggests structural changes and improvements to language. He consistently cautions against overly long paragraphs, and especially against overwhelming the reader with too much information regarding Grounded Theory. “Are you teaching the model or borrowing from it—a big difference,” he says. He goes on to call attention to the tendency to put excessive quantities of thoughts and ideas into single paragraphs. He agrees with the pedagogical recommendation from Dr. Croom following that I should provide more concrete examples of concepts espoused.

\(^5\) Reid, Comments (2014).
Many of Ken Reid’s comments recall our working together over the years, prior to our relationship in personal, private counseling, but in the roles as rector priest and consultant to congregations in the diocese undergoing conflict.

Celaine Bouma-Prediger, M.Div., M.M.F.C.

The Reverend Celaine Bouma-Prediger is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America. Her training includes a Master of Divinity, a Masters in Marriage and Family Counseling, and a three years training in Spiritual Direction. She serves as a specialized minister in her congregation, doing both pastoral counseling and spiritual direction in the Holland, Michigan, area. She has served on the adjunct faculty of Western Theological Seminary, working with the students in the counseling area as resource person and guide.

Summary of Review-Bouma-Prediger

Pastor Bouma-Prediger chose to provide her review in a four-page, closely written prose analysis containing several statements in overview and then offering specific comments. First of all, she feels that the “notion of writing and hopefully publishing an ‘Intervention Paradigm’ for those who will serve in Interim ministry within a church is fabulous.” 6 She believes the model would be “so helpful for folks in that situation, especially those in the specific place of

6 Celaine Bouma-Prediger, from her comments as a member of the paradigm review panel for this project (08/19/2014.)
coming into a parish that has been through a trauma of some kind, which
resulted in the pastor leaving.” She suggests that perhaps the work might be
published for more broad distribution and usage, remarking that there is very
little available for persons who find themselves in similar situations.

Among the positives she finds in the work is her sense that the model
could be useful in other denominations than the Episcopal Church, that it is
broad in scope. She finds solid theology within it, more biblical than some works
with which she is acquainted and less dogmatically associated with specific
denominations.

She feels the work contains solid theory and believes the use of the
Grounded Theory methodology is an excellent avenue of approach. She thinks it
would also be helpful for pastors seeking to examine, to process or think through
their roles as clergy. She finds GT methods fascinating. The strategies that
emerge from it give “something to do’ and a way to go about assessing and
leading that is practical and structured.” She appreciates that the structure
provided by GTM is flexible enough to allow tailoring according to personal
learning styles.

Celaine found helpful the suggestions that journaling functions as a way
of paying attention. She asserts that this “allows/invites noticing and encourages

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7 Bouma-Prediger, Comments (2014).
presence, awareness and contemplation all of which are essential skills in such a highly charged situation.” The writing down offers a place for the interim to describe or name what they notice without judgment and in the privacy of their office.

Pastor Bouma-Prediger found themes that she feels are necessary to the project and that are well-described in the model. Among them are the following: grief and loss, use and abuse of power, the invitation to wonder without judgment, conflict mediation in theory and practice, naming congregational identity, gathering history, genetic information about the church, discerning the ethnography, and the three traits of successful societies; cooperation, cohesiveness, altruism.8

She affirms several ways of being that she found in the paper: those on balance and self-care, differentiation, attitude of not fixing but creating new, the willingness to listen and above all, the capacity and determination to love unconditionally.

She suggests that my attitude is too self-effacing. And she notes that some of my categories are confusing, suggesting simplification.

8 Wilson, Sociobiology (2000).
Elizabeth Trembley, Ph.D.

Elizabeth is an Associate Professor in English at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. She holds her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Her special areas of expertise include the teaching of writing in the areas of fiction, creative non-fiction, the writing of memoirs, essays and research. She teaches courses in learning and thinking styles, and is involved in faculty development at Hope.

Elizabeth brings a scholar’s eye and strong English writing skills to her review of this project paradigm. She is a contributor to Beyond Tests and Quizzes: Creative Assessment in the College Classroom (2007), to Fresh Water: Women Writing on the Great Lakes (2006—named a Michigan Notable Book in 2007), and to Michael Crichton: Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers (1996). She has extensive work as editor. Among her distinctions she counts her certification as Practitioner of the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument, as applied to creative thinking, teaching, and learning.

Summary of Review-Trembley

Elizabeth provided extensive editorial suggestions to the project paper. They have nearly all been applied to the current iteration. In addition to her keen eye for writing compositional weakness, she bring another skill set to the review. Her contribution is of special interest from her perspective of one skilled in the use of the English language in writing, but untrained in interim ministry. Neither
is she ordained. She asks many questions of the paradigm that *cognoscenti* such as Lynn Carman Bodden and others know from training or experience. This has proven an important contribution because it serves to refresh vision and disrupt any tendency to lapse into jargon.

Some of her queries have found their way into footnotes.

Dan Barry Croom, Ed.D.

Dr. Croom has recently become the Head of Department and Professor of Agricultural Education and Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University in Corvallis. Until his appointment to that post he served as Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. Barry was selected as Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professor in April, 2012. The emphasis of his work centered on educational leadership and program evaluation within the occupational education specialties throughout the State of North Carolina. Barry is a teacher of teachers and consultant evaluator of school curricula and program.

As Alumni Distinguished Undergraduate Professors, all of the duties and responsibilities of the rank of professor are retained while serving in this capacity. Graduate and undergraduate teaching responsibilities include courses in teaching methods, leadership, experiential learning and program planning.
Research is conducted in the areas of diversity in agricultural education, agricultural and extension education history, and teacher education. Extension-type programs conducted include teacher induction programs and advising the Park Scholars Program. Barry is Fellow, American Association for Agricultural Education, 2013, and editor for *Journal of Agricultural Education, American Association for Agricultural Education,* (2013-2015).

Barry is the younger brother of the writer of this doctoral project dissertation. Notwithstanding that relationship, he has deep experience in the areas of teaching effectiveness and social issues affecting career education. His is a strong voice for review of the paradigm.

Summary of Review-Croom

Dr. Croom bases his observations and recommendations on his experience teaching adult learners in both formal and non-formal settings, and focus solely on the quality of the document as “both a source of self-instruction, and a resource for instruction.” He points out that after more than twenty-seven years of teaching, his conclusion is that we all have a lot to learn about how people learn. Contemporary learning theories are well established by thousands of research studies. They are our best explanation for what we as researchers and

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9 D. Barry Croom, from his letter commenting on the paradigm as a member of the review panel for this project (07/18/2014). Dr. Croom is clarifying that his review is specifically directed toward adult education vis-à-vis the education of children and youth.
educators think we are observing during the process of teaching and learning. He stresses that much of what we know about education is an educated guess. He finds important that instruction should seek to make connections between the learners’ prior knowledge and the new concepts one wants them to learn. Establishing rapport with the learner is necessary, therefore he supports the conversational style of the document as “significantly enhance[ing]” rapport. He observes that I write with the reader in mind and, in his opinion, have a clear understanding of the readers—what they are thinking and feeling, where they are with regard to the particular circumstances experienced by intervening leaders. He finds the explanations of complex theoretical principles are set in terms that the learner can understand. According to Dr. Croom, the manuscript is clear, easy to understand, and organized in a reasonable fashion—all of these are traits of quality teaching resources. He finds aspects of the document “impressive.”

He makes several recommendations regarding the project model. He sets the tone of his recommendations in the following statements: Teaching is both an art form and a science. Every artist has a style of teaching that arises out of their experiences and abilities. There is no singular "right way" to teach. So, with this in mind, the following two recommendations are purely for consideration:

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10 Croom, Comments (2014).
1. Learners acquire knowledge through visual, auditory and kinesthetic means. That is, they learn by "seeing, listening and doing." I had indicated that I would be adding visual representations (graphics) of key concepts. He affirms their inclusion. This allows the learner to use spatial representations to make meaning from the text. He recommends that the inclusion of graphics wherever they enhance the text.

2. Croom suggests providing learning activities that encourage the learner to practice what they have learned. These might include short case studies or vignettes that demonstrate the principles I am teaching. Furthermore, he recommends the inclusion of some components that encourage the learner to stop reading for a moment, and respond to a question or concept. It may also be helpful to include what the publishing industry calls "box features." These are text boxes embedded throughout the text that call attention to key phrases, ideas or concepts. He offers examples on request.
Appendix G

Review of Revised Intervention Model Out of Unit Five
George R. Hunsberger, Ph.D.

The Reverend Doctor George Hunsberger, recently retired from his Professorship in Missiology at Western Theological Seminary, was active in support of this doctoral project from its inception. When I started in the program, he was the Director of Doctor of Ministry Studies. Over the years, consulted regularly with me, and provided mentorship to my learning units four and five.

Learning unit five was taken up with the development and writing of the Revised Intervention Model (RIM). I submitted the completed version to him simultaneously with submissions to the review panel. Dr. Hunsberger’s response to the RIM came in the form of fourteen questions/comments. In September, 2014, I laid out a plan for addressing his queries. Since that time, and as the project has continued to live and evolve, I have revised my plan. Rather than summarize his response in the manner of those reviews from the panel, I provide his set of queries here. I have edited the RIM using them according to my current determinations. Evidence of their presence are footnotes.
1. Your imagery surrounding ‘sonance’ and synergy is very powerful (pp. 16-19). The equation with “unconditional love” is interesting but not quite clear. That unconditional love is related to synergy seems probable, but is the synergy you portray the ‘definition’ of unconditional love? Or is it the fruit of it, the aim of it, the expression of it…?

2. Your argument (pp. 20-22) that congregations that have experienced pastor separation out of conflict “are not broken” leads to an effective point—that the model for response therefore is not to fix it and make it like it was before. However, I wonder if you overplay the argument when you say that “what was is gone.” I understand and appreciate the overall point, but are there not still, remaining, broken relationships of the past that are part of the present landscape? Is not the past, in a fundamental way, always a part of the present? Must we not always seek and find healing for those things in the past that were/are unhealthy (as you suggest on p. 28)? Can you weave this so that your argument doesn’t get backed into a corner on this?
3. The portrait of Grounded Theory method (pp. 32-38) would seem to be helpful not only to interim ministers following conflict but to any new ministers commencing ministry in a congregation. Agree? Disagree? Why or why not?

4. The first paragraph under “Organization and Strategy” (p. 39), and others like it repeated throughout, strikes me as a good device! One question here, however, regards the last statement: “You are ready to enter.” Does that mean the GT data gathering and coding and interpretation you have previously discussed is all “pre-“ work? Does that limit it too much (as well as expect more advance data than is likely to be available to a person)? Wouldn’t this be ongoing into the initial month(s) of the interim’s presence? (On p. 60, you finally say this, but the earlier implication that it is prior to arriving could be modified to give it ongoing space from the outset.)

5. Curiously, and gratefully, you say, “…and well, trust in the power of the Holy Spirit” (p. 42). Curiously, because it seems to come as an aside, a tip of the hat to “of course, God,” a possible resource along the way, rather than as an argued, direct affirmation. Will it be such later on? What are your convictions about divine agency in all of this?

6. There are a lot of “I believe” statements which form the backbone of what is commended, but many are without corresponding grounding beyond what your experience has led you to understand and believe about how things
7. Is your advice ‘home-spun wisdom’? OR, ‘studied counsel’? Which are you offering? At times it seems more the latter, at other times more the former. For the purposes of doctoral work and the intention of your work, the latter is the more solid. The first 50 pages or so lean more in that direction, but the latter third seems to drift back into the former.

8. Pp. 53ff (tracing out the four lanes) seems to settle into very generic, very generalized advice. Organizing around four lanes may have good potential, but it will fulfill that potential best with more specific and tangible help.

9. As I trace the exposition of your four lanes through the three periods (early, middler, and latter) I find an awkwardness of disproportion in their treatments. Pastoral Care: separate sections on early and middler, totaling 3 ¼ pages. Administrative/Judicatory: separate sections on early, middler, and latter, totaling 10 ¼ pages. Ongoing GTM: a combined early and middler section, totaling 2 pages. Mediation/Conflict Resolution: a single section on early, totaling 1 ½ pages. The proportions seem way unbalanced. If anything, given the heart of the matter, the last lane, which now has the slightest treatment, should have the most comprehensive and thorough treatment.
10. Your advice on getting a grasp of the unique character of the congregation (p. 61, as well as earlier on) could bear the addition of more concrete discernment strategies such as those found in the book Studying Congregations.

11. On p. 62 you commend listening meetings with “set boundaries and healthy guidelines”—provide or point to particular resources that provide a concrete set of these. That is a key ‘tool’ for the toolkit.

12. P. 64: the advice here to “begin as soon as you can the process of regularizing polity” seems to contradict earlier advice not to change anything right away and to spend adequate time discerning how things (authority, especially) work. As you move here from early to middler strategies (which is what it seems you are doing in this context), there needs to be something more about a sense of timing. What marks the movement from one period to another? What factors are the indicators that the time is right, ripe?

13. P. 68: removing, isolating, benching [the conflictors]. This reads very Episcopal in terms of the singular authority of the priest. Do you really intend the pan-denominational suitability you have identified to be your intent? Also, the actions mentioned here seem very much at odds with the spirit commended throughout. Is this a defensible strategy in light of the literature on conflict resolution?? [In the end, are you speaking here about staff/hired personnel? It
seems at first open-ended, then it seems to be about firing people. Can you clarify and/or distinguish between these?

14. The repeated echo throughout has been movement “towards their new creation of healthy life together” (e.g. p. 71). What I have not seen in the manuscript is a clear depiction of what the “healthy life” of a congregation is. Even more missing are the steps by which “healthy life” may be cultivated within a community of people—whether grieving, conflicted or otherwise. Much of the manuscript attends to professional presence, attitudes and behaviors in these special circumstances. But how, exactly, is the congregation experiencing formation into new patterns themselves, so that after the interim period there are really new dynamics afoot laying the foundation for a more hopeful future?
Appendix H

New Testament References, All Things New\textsuperscript{11}

Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.\textsuperscript{12}

He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, 'The old is good.'"\textsuperscript{13}

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."\textsuperscript{14}

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.\textsuperscript{15}

But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life."\textsuperscript{16}

Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) So they took him and

\textsuperscript{11}The themes of renewal or of new creation are integral to this paper and draw support from the writers of scripture.
\textsuperscript{12}Mt. 9:17 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{13}Lk. 5:36-39 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{14}Lk. 22:19-20 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{15}Jn. 13:34 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{16}Acts 5:19-20 (NRSV).
brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." 17

Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 18

While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit. 19

Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 20

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 21

Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 22

Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. 23

18 Rom. 6:4 (NRSV).
19 Rom. 7:5-6 (NRSV).
20 1 Cor. 5:6-8 (NRSV).
21 1 Cor. 11:25 (NRSV).
22 2 Cor. 3:5-6 (NRSV).
23 2 Cor. 4:15-16 (NRSV).
And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!  

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!  

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.  

For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another.  

But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices

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24 2 Cor. 5:15-17 (NRSV).
26 Eph. 2:13-17 (NRSV).
27 Eph. 4:21-25 (NRSV).
and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.\textsuperscript{28}

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.\textsuperscript{29}

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one. God finds fault with them when he says: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors, on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach one another or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more." In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear.\textsuperscript{30}

For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.\textsuperscript{31}

He also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the

\textsuperscript{28} Col. 3:8-10 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{29} Tit. 3:3-6 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{30} Heb. 8:7-13 (NRSV).
\textsuperscript{31} Heb. 9:15 (NRSV).
sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.\[32\]

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.\[33\]

Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.\[34\]

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish.\[35\]

Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.\[36\]

\[32\] Heb. 10:17-24 (NRSV).
\[33\] 1 Pet. 1:3-4 (NRSV).
\[34\] 1 Pet. 2:1-3 (NRSV).
\[35\] 2 Pet. 3:11-14 (NRSV).
\[36\] Rev. 2:16-17 (NRSV).
I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.\(^{37}\)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true."\(^{38}\)

\(^{37}\) Rev. 3:11-13 (NRSV).

\(^{38}\) Rev. 21:1-5 (NRSV).
Appendix I

Samples of Coding and Memo Writing

Guidelines and Suggestions

The codes are simple phrases of your own choosing. You are simply making notes to yourself from the texts you have written. So keep them short. None of the codes, or the memos you write are meant for publishing or review or sharing of any kind with anyone. Therefore, do not worry over your writing techniques or grammar. Just put down what you are thinking. If you understand what you have written, that is sufficient.

Memos should spring from something in your texts or coding that leaps out at you. Is there a word or phrase or remembered expression that piques your interest or raises questions? Let these kinds of things lead you.

In the examples below, notice that the two memos reflect two approaches. The first memo from the survey response is a first-cut response to the text of the survey and points toward further work that will probably be necessary. The second memo, from the post-flood interview reflects my own emotional reactions to the respondent.

Keep your coding and memos in a safe place. Review them going forward; compare them with others. Note trends or emerging thoughts. Let the data lead you.

Example 1.

This example is drawn from a set of responses to the survey deployed during the course of data gathering for the doctoral project. Because of confidentiality expectations, names have been withheld.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes (03/14/2013)</th>
<th>Text from Survey Transcribed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explaining events</td>
<td>There were 2 issues involved with the rector’s leaving. The first and I felt most important was the rector having an adulterous relationship with a parishioner he was counseling. Second, the rector was channeling friends from a personal business thru the rector’s discretionary fund putting in jeopardy the church’s tax exempt status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing emotionally</td>
<td>At first I supported the rector but as it became clear the extent of his malfeasance I felt he should be censured(^{40}) in some way. Thru the process of removing the rector is was clear that there was no possibility of reconciliation. I am not really sure of the extent of my participation. It felt huge at the time but was in reality rather small. Mainly I lobbied to get the vestry to accept (name withheld)’s offer to guide us until an interim could be found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritizing improprieties; adultery</td>
<td>When (name withheld) was ordained and made assistant rector she discovered the financial problems and then the affair came to light. The rector blackmailed the vestry into hiding the facts from the parish. But (name withheld) refused to shut up and sweep things under the rug. She went over the vestry’s head and contacted the Bishop directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing concern, parish in jeopardy</td>
<td>I was seeing the rector for spiritual direction and was uncomfortable with him but I could not define what was the matter. Because of abuse issues in my own background I was particularly shocked by the rector’s abuse of the counseling relationship. I was very lucky that (name withheld) took me under her wing and provided some space and protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting rector initially</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing clarity in rector behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believing he should be censured with rector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing no reconciliation with rector</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling uncertain of participation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation feeling huge, really “rather small”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobbying for parish associate to be short term interim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant discover financial issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affair comes to light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rector “blackmailing” vestry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst rector not shutting up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going over vestry to bishop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeing him for spiritual direction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not defining why</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosing own abuse issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling shocked by abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling lucky for space and protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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39 Transcribed without edits for spelling and usage.
40 Should be censured.
Memo

More Questions than Answers, 08/14/2013.

This person admits to some prior relative/relevant experience. I think this is projected into her responses and analysis of the issues, giving her responses a distinct point of reference. Her emotional responses reveal clues to significance of her own abuse (“particularly shocked”). Time references are vague (“Through the process of removing the rector”); no specific longitudinal references (structural failure of survey perhaps).

I’m sensing that she is seeing the assistant rector as a savior. I’m wondering what that reveals about her (pastoral need). I want to know how the financial malfeasance came to light, it seems to have “emerged.” Sexual abuse by the rector is conflated with financial malfeasance. I wonder about that. How did the assistant rector discover the financial improprieties; discretionary funds are confidential? What was the relationship between rector and assistant?

What might be the factions here and who are members of them?
Example 2.

This example was an in-class exercise taken from material provided for study with Dr. Charmaz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes (07/23/2013)</th>
<th>Text from Sample Exercise41</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting to avoid flood</td>
<td>(Another friend, [name withheld] of the North River community near Beaufort, told me of her experience with Floyd as well as other hurricanes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to daughter’s house</td>
<td>(Name withheld) said, “Me and Bud (her mentally challenged son) went to my daughter (Name withheld)’s house because it is up higher off the ground. We knew that the flooding would be bad because it always is; but, I didn’t expect it to go up over the windows of my house. But, this ain’t nothing new. It happened in Fran, Bertha, and in Dennis. All we do is thank God for what we have and then go about cleaning up and starting over again. We just try to hold on until they (FEMA) give us a new house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House is higher up</td>
<td>They is suppose to put us a double-wide home on block that is going to be 8 feet off the ground. They is suppose to start by November. We done been through this so much that all we know to do is to be thankful of life and our health. If you look below this here plywood in my house you can see the ground. We’ve done had snakes, ells, and fish to float in this house after hurricanes. This was the worst one when you look at the flooding. We will be all right once we get us a new freezer. The old one was messed up by that salt water. I might go down to social services to see if I can get some help. We lost all our food. If they help me I will give them the money back because I don’t want no welfare.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipating bad flooding</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Not expecting this level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing that its happened before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanking God and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning up and starting over</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to hold on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing expectations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Looking for bigger home, higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resigning to fate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being thankful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing dilapidated floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling of creature invasions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noting that this the worst part of the flood experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stating hope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning action recourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to social services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing pride, no welfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Memo

Alice, Abused by Power

Alice is living in a world burdened by the modern equivalence to latifundialization from the early C.E. where landed gentry or owners or governors exist far away. She is burdened by injustice that keeps her in her place. And it appears she is grateful to God; if she could lift her eyes from the immediacy of the road toward base level survival for herself and her son, she would see this God provides no genuine solace. I wonder what is the structure of her religious life and who is in control of that. I further wonder what is her sense of herself within the strata of power.

And I have some educated guesses from having lived in that part of the world for many years. She is afflicted by male clergy who cast the constraints of religious fundamentalism on her. I wonder if she is being told that “God is good” when her life demonstrates reason for theodicy, the placing of God on trial. She is a person with several pressing needs and that among these are life in a safe home with protection from elements, adequate support for her mentally challenged son, sufficient income to fund base level existence without the reliance on public assistance, public assistance to help her reach out and up towards whatever it is that sparks her determination that she “don’t want no welfare.” My guess is that she is being taught that welfare is wrong, that having health and life is enough . . . in spite of the fact that both health and life are in jeopardy.

SO, some study of the Alice’s in this part of the world might be in order.
Appendix J

Guidelines and Resources for Healthy Boundaries in Meetings

Some Suggested Rules of Engagement

1. Listen attentively—it’s easy to miss what others are saying.
2. Respect all opinions—even though some are different than yours.
3. Speak only for yourself—avoid we and use I terms instead.
4. Model transparency—be open, honest and direct.
5. Challenge in love—especially when we are not living up to our norms.
6. Practice courtesy—rudeness hurts, and will drive us apart.
7. Admit responsibility—be accountable for your errors and misunderstandings.
8. Practice confidentiality—it’s O.K. to share what you said, but not what others said.
9. Honor your feelings, i.e., hurt, loss, anger, etc.—God created them within you.
10. Take care of your own needs—it’s not necessary to be a victim or a martyr.
11. Do not lose your sense of humor.

And not to be forgotten:
The Truth shall set us free. But before it does, it will make us crazy as hell!

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42 Reid, Kenneth, from the Pastoral Care and Counseling Program of the Diocese of Western Michigan. Used by permission of Dr. Reid.
High Functioning Groups

1. Participants know what is expected of them. Their individual goals are consistent with those of the group.

2. Healthy norms are established that permit a balance between structure and spontaneity.

3. Dysfunctional group roles are kept in check while power is centered among those who work toward collaboration and completion of tasks.

4. Information and experiences are shared readily among participants.

5. The style of leadership is described as democratic, with shared responsibility, rather than authoritarian or laissez faire (passive).

6. Conflict and disagreement are viewed as constructive. They are worked through rather than ignored.

7. There is a high level of honesty and openness in the group so that constructive feedback is shared.

8. Communication flows in multiple directions. There is an equitable distribution of power, control and contribution.

9. There is a high degree of trust, safety and cohesion in the committee.

10. Members attend regularly, are on time, and are prepared.

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43 Taken from D. W. Johnson, and F. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills, 7th ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000), provided by Dr. Kenneth Reid, Pastoral Care, (2014).
Another Resource

_Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love: Commitments for Christians in Times of Disagreement_, (Lombard, IL: Lombard Mennonite Peace Center). Pamphlet with guidelines broken down into categories such as, *in thought*, *in action*, *in life*. The pamphlet provides the background for the establishment of the guidelines, the biblical foundation for them and suggestions for their adoption and use. It also provides additional resources including literature, workshops and training events sponsored by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center.
Appendix K

Letter of Resignation, Church of Our Saviour-September 14, 2005

Dear beloved Parish Family,

Over the last eight or so months, I have been deeply aware of the developing pressures of conflict in our parish family. And while conflict within a community of any kind is a normal cost of being in relationship, I am convinced that the health of the parish has suffered in this instance for it. Furthermore, many of you will have noticed, as indeed I have, that my own physical and spiritual health has deteriorated during these trying times.

I believe that God wants us to be healthy, both in our relationships in communion with each other, and within ourselves. I believe we have come together to that place where, as we consider our future, we must ask whether or not healing will come to the family and to me if I stay here as your Rector. In consultation with my wife, Stephanie, and others whom I trust, I believe that my continuing presence here will impede that healing.

Therefore, with deep sadness I have decided to give up my position here as your Rector as of October, 31, 2005.

The Right Reverend William Swing, our Bishop, and Canon Michael Hansen, are both fully apprised of my decision, and will continue to lend diocesan support to this parish in the times of transitions ahead. They have also indicated that they will help me to refresh and renew my priesthood. In addition, it is important to remember that we are blessed with a strong Vestry, lead by a strong Senior Warden. The various commissions and committees essential for the smooth operation of the parish are now or will soon be in place. This parish will live.

Even though we have been together a short 17 months, I have loved you all and I continue to do so. Let us work together over the next six weeks to make sure the systems remain functional, and let us make sure we say our necessary goodbyes. And let us pray for each other that we may find the healing that God so desires for us.

Every blessing, [Signature]
Appendix L

Sample Liturgy of Confession and Reconciliation

Opening Hymn: (Selected from the repertoire of the community, penitential in nature.)

Liturgy of the Word

Celebrant: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;
People: His mercy endures forever.

Collect of Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Kyrie

Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Collect of the Day:

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE LESSONS (The lessons following are suggestions.)

The First Lesson: Ezekiel 36:23-28
The Psalm: Psalm 51, Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon
The Second Lesson (Epistle): 1 John 1:5-2:2

Sequence Hymn: Just as I Am, Hymn 693

The liturgy that follows was used in a parish after conflicted separation at the suggestion of the interim priest. Portions of the liturgy are drawn from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer (1979) and/or Enriching Our Worship II. Usage of the liturgy will require permission from Church Publishing Incorporated, New York. The liturgy was crafted by the Reverend William Whiting. Those portions that are original content were written by him.
The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People:  
Glory to you, Lord Christ.


The Celebrant:  
The Gospel of the Lord.

People:  
Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

LITANY OF PENITENCE

If you have searched your soul and you feel that you have not been part of one of the following confessional statements, or if you are new to St. Paul’s since last summer, or if you are visiting with us today, please feel free not to join in as we say that particular confessional statement, or else say it on behalf of the whole congregation.

The Celebrant and People together, all kneeling (or standing)

Most holy and merciful Father: We confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault, in thought, word, and deed; by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

All of our resentments, all of our anger, and even all of our rage about the last five years,

We confess to you, Lord.

Our uncharitable thoughts towards others,

We confess to you, Lord;

Our desire for revenge or to see others brought down,

We confess to you, Lord;

That we have seen or heard Mother “n.” be treated unkindly and done nothing about it,

We confess to you, Lord.

That we were angry at those who supported Mother “n.”, or angry at those who did not support Mother “n.”

We confess to you, Lord.

45 Name withheld. The former priest recently separated from the congregation after five years of conflict.
That we have gossiped, and sometimes with delight, about Mother “n.” or about each other,
   We confess to you, Lord.
For unloving things we may have done that we didn’t even realize or that we have forgotten,
   We confess to you, Lord.
That we did not speak the truth in love,
   We confess to you, Lord.
That we did not confront bad behaviors in ourselves or in other persons when we should have,
   We confess to you, Lord.
That we withdrew our support of the parish, of each other, and of Mother “n.,” both spiritually and emotionally and financially,
   We confess to you, Lord.
That we stewed about the injustice of the parish situation,
   We confess to you, Lord.
Because we have done things that hurt this community of faith,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
Because we have not always been faithful in worship and prayer and works of mercy,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For being critical and angry and judgmental towards other parishioners, including members of the Search Committee and Vestry several years ago,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For the wounding that we have caused each other,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For allowing ourselves to become segmented and divided, and for turning against one another,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For forgetting to take care of each other,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For being angry and resentful at people who left the parish, and being inhospitable when some returned,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For not seeing each other through the loving eyes of God,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For our lack of compassion for others here at (name of parish),
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
For unkind words towards others,
   We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.
Because we all played a part in the last five years, including a part in the negative atmosphere in the parish,

We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.

Let us now name, either aloud or in our hearts, any other things that we have done or left undone.

Silence

For these things that we have done or left undone,

We ask your forgiveness, Lord Christ.

That you would heal our wounds, as individuals and as a community of faith,

We beseech you, Good Lord.

That your Holy Spirit may fill our hearts and minds with your peace now,

We beseech you, Good Lord.

That by your grace and power, you would help us to start afresh,

We beseech you, Good Lord.

For the spiritual health and well-being of (name of parish) as a parish, and for all the individuals who are part of (name of parish),

We pray to you, O Lord.

For Mother “n.”, that she would know God’s enfolding love and mercy,

We pray to you, O Lord.

For the will and the grace to forgive Mother “n.”, Bishop “n.”, Canon “n.”, and anyone else who has hurt or offended us or failed to help us,

We pray to you, O Lord.

That those persons would forgive us for any and all of our wrongs towards them,

We pray to you, O Lord.

Just as the Prodigal Son came to himself and returned home, help us to come home to our loving Father in heaven and know the joy of returning,

We pray to you, O Lord.

Grant us your peace and a knowledge of your mercy,

We pray to you, O Lord.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation, O Lord,

That we may show forth your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,

Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life and bring you to the joy of being restored once more to his loving embrace. Amen.
Processional to the Baptismal Font—Renewal of Baptismal Vows

All stand.

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father?
People: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
People: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
People: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Celebrant: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
People: I will, with God's help.

Celebrant: Grant, O Lord, that all who are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ your Son may live in the power of his resurrection and look for him to come again in glory; who lives and reigns now and for ever. Amen.

Water is poured into the Font
Blessing of the Water

Celebrant: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity, one God, be present at this font for the sake of these your servants.

_Amen._

Here let the old Adam be buried, and the new be raised up.

_Amen._

Here let the power of evil be broken, and the power of the Spirit be revealed.

_Amen._

Strip from these your servants the soiled and tattered garb of sin, and clothe them with the shining robe of immortality.

_Amen._

Help them to know that all who are baptized into Christ have put on the mind of Christ.

_Amen._

Let all who, at the font, have renounced Satan and every evil power, receive strength to overcome temptation.

_Amen._

Whoever has confessed you here as Lord, acknowledge as your own, O Lord, in your kingdom.

_Amen._

Lead them with joy from the font to the altar, and prepare for them a place at your heavenly banquet.

_Amen._

Banish from them the fear of death, and give them a sure faith in your promises.

_Amen._

Teach them to deny themselves for the sake of your Gospel, that they may never lose you, their everlasting treasure.

_Amen._

Let every one who is dedicated to you through the ministry of your holy Church be bound to you for ever, and everlastingly rewarded.

_Amen._

Grant this in your mercy, O God, for you are the ruler over all, and you live and are blessed for evermore. _Amen._

Now sanctify this water, we pray you, by the power of your Holy Spirit, that those who here are cleansed from sin and born again may continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and for ever. _Amen._
Asperges

*The Celebrant sprinkles holy water on the people and says:*

To any negative spirits from the past, *be gone;*
To any spirits of resentment, *be gone;*
To any spirits of hostility, *be gone;*
To any spirits of anger and resentment, *be gone;*
To any spirits of destruction, *be gone;*
To any spirits of judgment and self-righteousness, *be gone.*

Holy Spirit, come and fill this place with your peace, your grace, and your love.

*Amen.*

Holy Spirit, come and fill your people with your peace, your grace and your love.

*Amen.*

Holy Spirit, come and set us free and bring us joy.

*Amen.*

May you know that you are made in the image and likeness of God, and that you are very good.

*Amen.*

*Following the liturgy, or during Communion, anyone who wishes may bless themselves or each other with the holy water, and may use the above words, if they seem appropriate.*

The Peace

*Please Stand*

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

*At this time the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

The Service continues with the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion.
Appendix M

Sample Verbatim

Pastoral Opportunity and Plans

My own initial plan was to engage the patient in a methodological fashion following the paradigm suggested by . . . [unnecessary for illustration] The patient apparently liked to talk. Enabling that for her was my primary plan.

Account of the Visit

C1: Hello, Mrs. M. It’s me again. Is this an O.K. time for a chat?
P1: Yes! Come in! The hospital artist just left—she comes on Wednesdays. She said that we might put one of my works up when they change the art work out in the halls.
C2: (Walking over to the bulletin board in the room.) Is this yours? This is really lovely. (Picture of flowers. Quite well done.) [Small talk to get things moving. We talked about artsy things like perspective and usage of shapes, etc.] (I looked at other items on the board.)
P2: Those are my children. That’s my daughter X. on the right, my son Y. in the middle and that’s my oldest son Z. on the left. Over here, if you come around the bed, are my grandchildren . . . and these are my friends.
C3: (Taking her cue. Try for the story.) Tell me about your friends.
P3: [Patient describes at some length the relationships between herself and P. and M., her two best friends, dating back to their time together in high school.]

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46 Excerpted from a Pastoral Report submitted by James Croom to the Supervisor, Clinical Pastoral Education, Moffat Hospital, University of California, San Francisco Medical Center, January, 1999.
47 The following text constitutes an attempted word-for-word, or verbatim, restatement of the conversation between Chaplain Croom and the patient. Conversations intended for submission to the CPE Supervisor are written down as soon as possible after and separate from the encounter. Therefore, the accuracy of the verbatim is tempered by the limitations of memory.
48 The conversation is numbered as follows: “C” represents the words of the chaplain. “P” represents the words spoken by the patient. The numerical designations follow logically according to the order of the conversation, i.e., the first pairing is “C1/P1,” the second pairing is “C2/P2,” etc.
C4: (Looking for feelings.) Tell me what their friendship means to you.
P4: (Immediately.) They don’t want anything from you. (Long pause.) They can be themselves. You can be yourself. Of course, love is in there too. There’s trust between you.
C5: (Hm-m-m. What was her rapid initial response revealing. Check it.) P., I noticed there was quite a pause there in your answer. When I asked the question you responded quickly with, “They don’t want anything from you.” Then you seemed to pause quite a while to think about the rest of your answer. What do you suppose that was all about?
P5: Friends don’t expect anything from you for their friendship. Some people do.
C6: (Clarifying.) Say more about that.
P6: Oh, I don’t know . . . I’ve been burned before.
C7: (Point of pain. Resistance. Clarify.) In what way?
P7: Oh, I don’t know—just burned.
C8: (Long pause. She doesn’t seem to want to continue in this direction. The implication seems to be that she has been taken advantage of previously. File for future reference. Try for current scenario.) Tell me about your illness.
P8: [Patient launches into extended narrative about her illness. She provides a comprehensive history of her experience. During the course of her speaking, I attempted to probe her feelings about death and dying.]
C9: How does the possibility of dying make you feel?
P9: I’m a survivor. I like to beat the odds. If the doctors tell me that I have a 40% chance of living, I believe that I will be in that number.
C10: (She has avoided answering to the feeling probe. Take her toward the darker side.) What if you’re not?
P10: Oh, my children and I have talked about it. I went out and made my will, and got all my affairs in order. It’s all taken care of.
C11: (Head response. Go for feelings.) What does that feel like?
P11: It’s all done. I don’t have to think about it now.
C12: (She has avoided answering again. Fishing expedition begins.) So you feel relieved?
P12: Well . . . no. That takes care of things, but who’s going to look after everyone when I’m gone?
C13: (Clue. Is she sensing a loss of power? Clarify.) What do you mean?
P13: I’m the controller. I tell everyone what to do. I look after everybody. (Laughingly.) My kids think I annoy the heck out of them! But I know they need me.
C14: (Hm-m-m. “They need me.” What does that mean? Is she saying that she needs them? Has she been “taken from them?”) Does all this feel unfair?
P14: Yes.
C15: In what way?
P15: (Patient breaks eye contact and turns in bed. No answer.)
C16: (What does this mean?) Have you wondered why this is happening to you?
P16: Yes.
C17: Any feelings about that? (Oops. Should have said, “What does that feel like?”)
P17: (No answer. Patient looks down.)
C18: (Patient has answered affirmatively to both of these feeling questions, but will not go further. Body language of avoidance. Fishing expedition continues.) So maybe you are a bit angry perhaps?
P18: Well yes. Why IS this happening to me. I’m the controller. They all need me.
C19: Who needs you?
P19: My children. My grandchildren. (Pause. Lengthy pause. She seems to be searching for a response. I determine to remain quiet.) [Patient then speaks fondly of the two younger of her children. The oldest seems to be a locus of pain. He hasn’t been to see her in the hospital. When she spoke of him her demeanor changed. Her facial expression became closed.] He was supposed to be here yesterday, but they had a flood in the bathroom, and he had extra work to do so he couldn’t get here . . . and the five kids are demanding. I mean, I think each person in his life ought to have an hour of his time each day, but he is too busy. With five kids and a wife and work he just doesn’t have time.
C20: (Point of pain.) But you wish he would come to see you?
P20: Of course, (Pause.) but I understand it if he can’t. ( Longer pause.) He can certainly take time off to drive three hours to attend a baseball game for one of his daughters though (Said with some intensity). (Relaxing a bit.) But he said he will be here tomorrow.
C21: (Point of choice/pain. Take her to the dark side.) What if he doesn’t come?
P21: I’ll be O.K. (Avoidance.) I don’t really expect him to come anyway.
C22: (Back to the dark side.) But how would you feel?
P22: I would call him up and give him hell! (Avoidance, she dodged the response.)
C23: (Naming what she has done.) P. that’s an action. That tells me what you would DO. I want you to tell me how it would feel.
P23: (Stone silence.)
C24: (She doesn’t wish to go there.) You don’t want to go there?
P24: (Protective.) He’s like that.
C25: (Once more into the breach.) P. If he doesn’t come tomorrow, how will that make you feel?
P25: (LONG pause.) He can go see his daughter . . . I know his kids are important . . . (Voice trails off.)49

49 The conversation continues in similar fashion.
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