

The church leader's cognition of perseverance: A pastoral study elucidating resilience in ministry

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FOREWORD

I grew up in a household where both my parents were in full-time ministry as pastors. Consequently, from a young age I was witness to the good and the sometimes very ugly side of ministry. Today I am an ordained pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of South Africa myself and serve, together with my husband, at a local congregation in Welkom. I have seen and personally experienced how challenging it can be trying to serve God faithfully in this capacity. Despite the challenges associated with ministry, however, I whole-heartedly believe that church leaders are called to thrive and persevere with passion. It is when we, as church leaders, are healthy individuals that we can best serve others. We are at war spiritually, and as soldiers we need to be fit for the fight, ready to engage the enemy as the battle cry of Christ our Head and King resounds.

This study has enriched me personally in terms of how I think about my own resilience and calling to persevere, but I hope that the impact of this study will reach much further than my household and I. I believe the insights gained through this research can save the ministries, families, and sanity of many church leaders and in doing so ultimately contribute to the expansion of God's kingdom.

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ABSTRACT

The local church is called to participate in the redemptive mission of God and to act as a catalyst for hope and transformation in this world. Whether or not it fulfils this calling largely depends on the men and women who lead it; it depends not only on their skills and abilities, but also on their well-being. Unfortunately, the well-being of church leaders remains a source of major concern. Church leaders from all denominations around the globe are struggling to passionately persevere in ministry. Since the situational, personal, and inherent stressors related to ministry are unlikely to disappear completely, church leaders need to be equipped to effectively cope with these issues. Resilience and the intentional and holistic cultivation thereof can add immense value in this regard. Church leaders who comprehend the role of resilience and the importance of the holistic cultivation thereof are more likely to fulfil their calling to passionately persevere and even thrive as servant leaders in ministry.

UITTREKSEL

Die plaaslike kerk is geroepe om aan God se verlossingsmissie deel te neem en as katalisator vir hoop en transformasie in hierdie wêreld op te tree. Of sy hierdie roeping vervul, hang grootliks af van die mans en vroue wat haar lei. Dit hang nie slegs net van hul vaardighede en vermoëns af nie, maar ook van hul welstand. Ongelukkig bly die welstand van kerkleiers 'n bron van groot kommer. Kerkleiers uit alle denominasies wêreldwyd sukkel om passievol te volhard in die bediening. Weens die feit dat die situasionele, persoonlike en inherente stresfaktore wat met die bediening verband hou waarskynlik nooit heeltemal gaan verdwyn nie, moet kerkleiers toegerus word om doeltreffend met hierdie kwessies om te gaan. Veerkragtigheid en die doelbewuste en holistiese ontwikkeling daarvan kan geweldig waarde toevoeg met betrekking hiertoe. Kerkleiers wat die rol van veerkragtigheid en die belangrikheid van die holistiese ontwikkeling daarvan beseft, sal meer waarskynlik hul roeping tot passievolle volharding vervul en selfs floreer as diensknegleiers in die bediening.

KEYWORDS

church leader; cognition; ministry; perseverance; resilience

CONCEPT CLARIFICATION/DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Church Leader(s)**

Any person that is or was employed, part-time or full time, by the local church to fulfil a role or function that involved activities such as leading, shepherding, teaching, counselling, or ministering to the members of the congregation.

- **Cultivation**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (2010:357) defines *cultivation* as “the deliberate development of a particular relationship, quality, or skill”. The researcher wants to particularly emphasise the deliberate and intentional nature of the term *cultivation* as used in this study in relation to resilience. The formation of resilience thus needs to be a deliberate act on the part of the church leader and should not be left up to chance.

- **Holistic Cultivation**

This definition is characterised by the belief that human nature comprises three distinctive yet interconnected and interrelated parts, namely a body, soul, and spirit (Berkhof, 1996:191). In order for cultivation to occur holistically then, it needs to occur in all three areas of man. In other words, attempts to cultivate resilience need to involve and address the needs of the body, soul, and spirit.

- **Resilience**

A variety of definitions for *resilience* are used in relevant literature. These include:

- “The ability to bounce back and to learn from setbacks and moments of intense pressure” (Shell cited by Donders, 2017:20);
- The capacity of a dynamic system to survive significant challenges that threaten its stability, viability, and development (Abernethy *et al.*, 2016:179);
- The human capacity to function optimally despite challenges such as loss, trauma, or illness (Brunsdon, 2014:7); and
- The ability to recover quickly from change, hardship, or misfortune (Pulley & Wakefield, 2001:7).

The working definition of resilience for the purpose of this study is: The dynamic process by which the church leader constructively adapts to overcome severe adversity, trauma, or significant change in order to live and lead effectively and even flourish in light of God's calling upon their life.

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1 CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Ministry in the 21st century

In the 21st century, church leaders are called to passionately persevere in an environment that is proving more and more difficult to navigate successfully and sustainably. Factors such as unrealistic extrinsic and intrinsic expectations, the ever-increasing complexity, pervasive change, and a growing sense of ambiguity contribute to the murky and often hazardous waters in which they operate.

In today's world, church leaders are expected to be "omnicompetent" (Osei-Mensah cited in Elkington *et al.*, 2015:3). As in the case of Jesus and His followers, local congregations and communities often interpret the church leader's role through the lens of their own social, political, and economic needs instead of considering the church leader's God-given calling and unique identity (Nyiauwung & Van Eck, 2013:4). Church members label church leaders as "nice" and "understanding" when they deliver a good sermon every Sunday, meet all expectations, tolerate everything, make themselves available at all times, and remain sincerely interested (Kruijne, 1983:55). Congregations and communities assume that church leaders should effectively fulfil the roles of social workers, mediators, administrators, mentors, teachers, managers, organisers, counsellors, preachers, financial advisors, trainers, and facilitators (Dreyer, 2016a:156; Keizer *et al.*, 1983:106; Putter, 2010a:3; Ream, 2016:2; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:1).

Further contributing to the already complex situation, is the reality that church leaders are expected to be familiar with the values, worldviews, and interests of a variety of different cultures present in their pluralistic communities and congregations (Putter, 2010a:3). Rapid globalisation further magnifies the already diverse faith experiences and worldviews of members in local congregations (Hickman, 2015:321; Kruijne, 1983:52–53). This often leads to confusion which eventually culminates in critique against the church leader. In addition to the expectations of their congregations, society also confronts church leaders with a set of expectations.

Society measures people's value against principles such as ambition, visible results, hard work, competitiveness, and the ability to specialise (Smit, 1995:37). However, these concepts are hard to quantify in ministry and can easily drive church leaders into an unhealthy relationship with performance.

Further complicating the expectations society fosters is the reality that these are generally formulated from a premise of suspicion and mistrust in the church. The “authority crisis” Louw (1984:33) recognised in 1984, continues today and still greatly impacts the way society, in general, understands authority. With the disappearance of any objective foundation for truth and morality, authority and rules are no longer viewed as originating from God but instead as concepts created by man and his situation (Fillebrown, 2014:43–44; Louw, 1984:33).

The church and, in turn, its leaders have lost the power to prescribe worldviews for a population (Miner, 2007:19). This, coupled with the continued democratisation, individualism, and secularisation of society as well as the prevailing process of postmodernisation, has created an environment in which the institutional church’s authority and that of its leaders are questioned and even outrightly challenged (Hickman, 2015:321; Louw, 1984:53; Miner, 2007:19). People are critical and argumentative and no longer prepared to follow out of blind obedience (Duncan, 1995:44).

A few years ago, Smit (1995:35) and Mead (1991:8) observed that the church was standing before a societal paradigmatic change that called for an urgent reinvention as roles and relationships were changing and power was shifting. According to Dreyer (2016b:4), this remains true for the church of the 21st century as he calls for a radical profound reform and emphasises that superficial changes will not suffice (Dreyer, 2016b:4).

Nell (2015:2,6) also observes that there has been indeed a clear shift in power, not only in church circles, but around the world, and that this calls for an end to a certain type of autocratic, top-down leadership that has been characteristic of the local church for some time. Elkington *et al.* (2015:3) agree with Nell’s observations and point out that in a post-Christendom era, there seems to be a shift away from an autocratic top-down style of leadership towards a distributed or shared leadership style in which “leadership resides in the processes of many”.

Dreyer (2015:3) asserts that the church is responsible for its own crisis. Unfortunately, the church’s struggle to reorientate itself and make the paradigmatic changes necessary in relation to the new landscape in which it finds itself has led many to call into question its credibility (Kruijne, 1983:52).

Dreyer (2016a:97–98) further points out that instead of transforming, the church in many ways became more institutionalised and concerned with protecting and isolating itself in light of the shift from modernism to postmodernism thinking, from control to cooperation, from mechanical to organic, and from individual to community. Inherent issues such as religious intolerance, fundamentalism, dividing strategies, insufficient governance and accountability, and inadequate

training of leaders have all contributed negatively to society and weakens the position and authority attributed to the church and its leaders (Forster, 2015:10; Maluleke, 2007:46).

Moreover, regular accusations in the media of institutionalisation, materialism, sexual malpractice, and misguiding teachings only further detriment the credibility of the church and its leaders (Dreyer, 2016a:2–4). Kruijne (1983:56) highlights that the church's credibility crisis clearly manifests itself in the position, faith, and humanity of the church leader. Consequently, church leaders often find themselves marginalised and under the magnifying glass of an already biased society that questions the church's approaches and uses.

Besides being bombarded with expectations from their members and society, church leaders are also confronted with the definitions of "success" and the role understandings expressed by their denominational institutions, theological training, and peers (Naidoo, 2015:166). Along with their own ideals, dreams, and understanding of their calling, the extrinsic expectations discussed above exist in a complex interrelationship that shapes the way how church leaders think about their own roles.

Inevitably, church leaders often experience a sense of disillusion with regard to their calling which is magnified by the absence of visible results and the fact that they frequently feel inadequately trained to deal with the wide spectrum of challenges urbanised ministry presents (De Bruyn, 2016:684; Dreyer, 2016a:155; Keizer *et al.*, 1983:106; Kruijne, 1983:54). These challenges include the distinctive work and client-related stressors, the unique and often intrusive demands of ministry, the generally low income, the vague boundaries between the personal and professional lives of church leaders, the severe opposition and hardships, the intense emotional and often traumatic demands, and the isolation and loneliness which are frequently associated with ministry (Abernethy *et al.*, 2016:177; Adams *et al.*, 2017:149; Burnette, 2016:4; Buys, 2008:1; Chartrand, 2017:9; Forney, 2010:2; Janse van Vuuren, 2005:7; Louw, 2015a:1; Visker *et al.*, 2017:961).

This disillusionment and uncertainty with regard to their calling will severely hinder the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry. It will have an influence on their behaviour and the manner in which they experience and interpret their function within the local congregation. Keizer *et al.* (1983:98) describe the continuous relationship between a church leader's calling and behaviour as follows:

Dit roepingsbesef is echter niét alleen werkzaam op het moment waarop iemand voor het ambt van pastor kiest, maar beïnvloedt ook daarna voortdurend de wijze waarop de pastor zich tot zijn werk verhoudt.

1.1.2 The church leader's calling

From a theological perspective, church leaders' callings are not rooted in what they do per se, but rather in who they are where God has placed them (Smit, 2001:37). It stems from the following theological truths:

- Christ alone is the Head of His body – the church – and He, as the source and origin of life, is committed to meet the needs of His body (Manala, 2010:2; Nel, 2015a:160; Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:21).
- Christ's power and authority are not characterised by command and control but by servanthood, a self-giving orientation towards others, and self-sacrifice (Dames, 2017:7; Osmer, 2008:191; Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:21).
- The church is not an institution but a living organism in which each part is inseparably connected to its Head and essential for the wholeness of the body (Manala, 2010:2; Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:32–33; Smit, 2001:20).
- God calls and shapes His leaders to be servants of His body. He is personally committed to them and they choose to respond to His calling from within a covenantal relationship (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:103).

Church leaders who define their roles and root their calling and identity in the theological principles discussed above, understand that they are a gift to the body of Christ, called to fulfil an equipping role rather than a controlling role (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:37; Smit, 1995:39; Smit, 2001:21). These leaders understand that Christ alone is the Head of His church and that their function may not intrude into the realm of His prerogatives and Headship (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:15). These leaders grasp that they are servants called to “guide people towards understanding and responding to God's redemptive and healing purposes” (Smit, 2001:25). This view releases the church leader from unrealistic responsibilities and expectations and creates a culture of shared leadership in which the priesthood of all believers is acknowledged.

Unfortunately, many well-intentioned church leaders end up fostering, consciously or subconsciously, a distorted view (cognition) of their calling that is enveloped in what they are doing. Cognition refers to the “processes by which people think about and try to make sense of other people, themselves, and also their social situation” (Kruger, 2016a:7). It involves the continuous gathering, storing, and processing of information which ultimately influences decision-making and guides action (Kruger, 2016a:7). The cognitive process, however, is not infallible. Overgeneralisations, arbitrary conclusions, selective abstractions, and all-or-nothing thinking rooted in misguided schemes which assist people to organise and anticipate the new by drawing from the familiar can all result in cognitive distortions (Kruger, 2016a:7).

Therefore, a distorted cognition of one's calling that is defined by what one is doing instead of who one is, will inevitably have a negative impact on one's perspective of ministry and in turn one's behaviour. Church leaders with a distorted cognition of their calling can easily become driven by unhealthy motives such as:

- a fear of losing their identity which is wrongly built on their need to be needed (Smit, 1995:37);
- a fear of losing power and control (Smit, 1995:38); or
- latent guilt that stems from their inability to measure up to the distorted and unrealistic perceptions they have formed of their responsibilities (Kruijne, 1983:56).

The unhealthy drivers mentioned above along with others not mentioned, eventually manifest in the church leader's behaviour. Many church leaders adopt a leadership style rooted in authority, decision-making, and control, thinking that they need to be and do everything in their local congregations (Richards & Hoeldtke, 1980:24–25). They get so caught up in “leading” that they forget to be followers of Jesus, which is the principle foundation of all Christian leadership (Neill, 2015:6). They end up believing that they need to live up to the unrealistic and impossible expectations placed upon them by man, that they need to be omniscient and omnipotent leaders, as if it is even possible (Smit, 1995:36). Kruijne (1983:56) observes that these leaders usually fall into a destructive cycle of excessive self-idealisation and self-disdain which has detrimental effects on themselves, their families, and the congregations they are leading.

On the other hand, those who sincerely aim to stay true to their calling as servants of the body of Christ are often met with intense opposition and discouragement. As Smit (2001:10) points out: “Leadership is always exercised under (and often limited by) the pressures of expectations, assumptions, and values living in the community of faith.”

Who the church leader is and their cognition of their calling often exists in tension with the unrealistic expectations placed on them. All church leaders do not have the ability to constructively handle the recurring conflict and frustration that stems from this persistent tension (Dreyer, 2016a:156). Together with stressors such as financial problems, a disproportionate work load, isolation, and marital or family-related challenges, this reality results in some church leaders feeling frustrated, disorientated, and over-burdened.

Whilst some are overcome by emotions of hopelessness and despair, others might even be confronted by an intrinsic crisis in faith (Dreyer, 2016a:156–158). Consequently, many struggle to passionately persevere in ministry and some decide to leave the ministry altogether.

1.1.3 Church leaders' struggle to passionately persevere

In navigating these murky waters, church leaders seldom forget that they are Christians; they rather forget that they are humans with emotional, mental, and physical needs (Cordeiro, 2009:13). Goodliff (as cited in Marsay, 2013:4) maintains that there is a “kind of martyrdom spirit in some expressions of Christianity that views the recognition of personal needs as entirely sinful: to be holy is to be totally self-denying”. This places church leaders, irrespective of denomination or country, at a high-risk for burnout, moral failure, compassion fatigue, depression, and other stress-related health concerns which all seriously affect the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

In North America, as many as three pastors are leaving the ministry per day (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:4). Over recent decades, the number of active church leaders in the Dutch Reformed tradition in Africa has declined with 32% (Dreyer, 2016a:154). In 2009, a survey among 1 050 reformed and evangelical pastors was done. It found that 100% of the participants knew a fellow pastor who had left the ministry because of burnout, moral failure, or conflict (Chartrand, 2017:2). The same survey also found that 90% of church leaders worked between 55 and 75 hours per week (Chartrand, 2017:2).

A more recent study conducted in 2017 in Minnesota found that 65,4% of the 52 church leaders amongst the Assemblies of God denomination who submitted useable surveys were experiencing burnout to some degree, or were on the verge of burning out (Visker *et al.*, 2017:954–955). Maslach (2003:189) defines burnout as “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job”. It is characterised by feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, overwhelming exhaustion, and a sense of inefficacy (Louw, D., 2015:4; Maslach, 2003:190). The most commonly used coping mechanism amongst these leaders was religious coping¹ (Visker *et al.*, 2017:955).

In 2017, a self-reported health assessment conducted under 150 clergies from the United Methodist Church in Kansas indicated that 77,4% of the participants were overweight or obese (Lindholm *et al.*, 2014:97). High overweight and obese statistics amongst clergy were also found in a study conducted in Missouri with 430 participants; 81,4% were overweight or verging on obesity and 36,7% were severely obese (Manister & Gigliotti, 2016:136).

¹ The term “religious coping”, as used in the study of Visker *et al.* (2017), refers to religious practices such as more frequent prayer and seeking divine assistance that church leaders implement to cope with stress.

Obesity amongst church leaders has been found to be significantly higher than amongst the rest of the population (Manister & Gigliotti, 2016:136; Webb *et al.*, 2016:267–268). Some researchers view emotional eating, an unhealthy coping mechanism often linked to stress and depression, as one of the main contributors to obesity in persons who encounter high stress levels (Ford *et al.*, 2017:489; Lazarevich *et al.*, 2016:639; Manister & Gigliotti, 2016:136). Obesity can be related to a number of health conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, skeletal disorders, diabetes, and hypercholesterolemia (Ford *et al.*, 2017:488; GBD 2015 Obesity Collaborators, 2017:14; Lindholm *et al.*, 2014:97).

The empirical research that sheds light on the well-being of church leaders in South Africa is limited in comparison to research conducted with church leaders from other countries; this is especially true in relation to research conducted amongst church leaders in the pentecostal faith tradition (e.g., Buys, 2008; Buys & Rothmann, 2010; Du Toit, 2009; Jansen Van Vuuren, 2005; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015). Nevertheless, the researcher argues that there is no reason to believe that the situation looks much better or different in South Africa.

In addition to the complex environment in which 21st-century ministry needs to occur, the current South African context gives rise to a general feeling of uncertainty and despair in the hearts of many South Africans (Boyce & Harris, 2013:584; Meiring, 2001:105). Van der Westhuizen and Koekemoer (2015:10) found that South African church leaders are constantly faced with the challenge of coping with the increasing job demands and dwindling job resources. Brunsdon and Lotter (2011:2) also express their concern for the well-being of South African church leaders in light of the high exit rate of Dutch Reformed ministers completely leaving the ministry.

1.1.4 The church leader's perseverance and the local church

The importance of this study is further emphasised when understood against the backdrop of the local church's calling. Therefore, the researcher deems it important to discuss this matter briefly.

Despite the church's past failures and current shortcomings, numerous theological writers and researchers view challenging contexts as an ideal opportunity for the church to play a concrete role in manifesting God's kingdom and, by doing so, shaping a more desirable future (e.g., Botes, 2016:ii; Forster, 2015:12; Goheen, 2011:191; Lategan, 1999:410; Meiring, 2001:106; Pillay, 2017:10; Thesnaar, 2014:6; Van Wyk, 2017:3). Whether the local church recognises and utilises this opportunity, however, depends significantly on its leaders.

The role of church leadership in relation to the local church's fulfilment of its calling is recognised by numerous practical theological researchers:

- Osmer (2008:176) emphasises that church leaders play a vital role in facilitating change in their congregations as these congregations rework their identity and mission in an ever-changing society.
- Van Wyk (2017:4) asserts that church leaders play a significant role in creating spaces where the church has specific opportunities to be relevant and practical.
- Richards and Hoeldtke (1980:92) maintain that church leaders are responsible for shepherding and equipping the individual members of the local church so that the Body might be healthy and able to respond appropriately when Jesus, the Head, speaks.
- Niemandt, C.J.P. (2015:3) highlights that current research values leadership "as the most important contributing factor towards the formation of a mission congregational culture".
- De Bruyn (2016:4) calls attention to the fact that leadership within the local church is not only important for the church itself but, to a great extent, determines the spiritual welfare, sustainability, and moral values of society as a whole.

The wellness or dysfunction of church leaders' psychological and personal lives will have a significant influence on their effectiveness and therefore poses a serious threat to the vitality and health of the local church (Burnette, 2016:ii; Coetzer, 2006:11; Diestel *et al.*, 2013:164–165). Burnout, compassion fatigue, depression, and stress-related health problems, for example, have been known to severely impair an individual's professional effectiveness (Abernethy *et al.*, 2016:177; Adams *et al.*, 2017:148; Janse van Vuuren, 2005:11; Louw, 2015a:5; Prevost, 2016:318; Visker *et al.*, 2017:953).

It is apparent from the discussion on church leaders' struggle to passionately persevere and a review of research conducted within the last five years that the well-being of church leaders remains a source of major concern, despite more than 30 years of research dedicated to this topic (e.g., Abernethy *et al.*, 2016; Adams *et al.*, 2017; Burnette, 2016; Chartrand, 2017; Coetzer, 2013; Diestel *et al.*, 2013; Elkington, 2013; Jackson, 2017; Louw, 2015a; Prevost, 2016; Swart, 2017; Visker *et al.*, 2017; Webb *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the well-being of church leaders is a matter that deserves attention in the field of practical theology, not only out of concern for the person of the church leader and their family, but also out of concern for the health of the local church.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the backdrop of the discussion above, the church leader's ability to passionately persevere becomes a matter of grave importance for the field of practical theology. Practical theology studies religious actions in the promotion of the gospel and the expansion of God's kingdom (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:6–7). It is concerned with the task of putting God's revelation into practice as purely and directly as possible (Browning, 1996:5). Strategies developed as the result of the efforts of practical theologians to correct a problem-laden practice will have little effect if they are not embodied and consistently communicated by the leadership of local churches (Burger, 1995:37).

A number of practical theologians have focused on the issue of leadership (e.g., De Bruyn, 2016:ii; Elkington *et al.*, 2015:1; Joynt, 2017:1; Manala, 2010:1; Poh Lee Choong, 2008:1; Putter, 2010a:1; Resane, 2014:1). De Bruyn (2016:ii), for example, developed a pragmatic model for effective and responsible leadership in light of the role it plays in the calling of the local church. Recognising that leadership is critical to the resilience and health of the church, Elkington *et al.* (2015:3,5) took a different approach and called for a new type of leadership development – one that they term “enabling-function leadership” – for the church in the post-Christendom 21st century. Joynt (2017:1) linked “toxic” leadership and the current clergy shortage experienced in many denominations and put forth steward leadership as a possible solution.

Although these and similar works add immense value, the researcher argues that self-leadership and the cultivation of resilience remain somewhat undervalued by church leaders despite the numerous books written on the subject. In an empirical study about church leaders' development conducted amongst a 100 senior pastors, it became clear that the value of continuous development during transitions, in relationships, and during on-the-job experiences were underestimated (McKenna *et al.*, 2007:187). Self-leadership encompasses concepts such as self-awareness, self-care, and self-management which are considered prerequisites to perseverance in effectively leading others while ensuring that one's own well-being remains intact (Grice, 2017:32).

The researcher argues further that self-leadership, which will contribute to church leaders' ability to passionately persevere, is only possible if preceded by a healthy cognition of their calling to persevere and the role resilience and the cultivation thereof plays in their lives. This is based on the fact that cognitive processes influence people's behaviour and very much play a role in every aspect of human life (Kruger, 2016b:1). Moreover, people's cognitive interpretation of

situations and not just the situation itself, give rise to certain emotional experiences (Kruger, 2016a:6–7).

The researcher maintains that the answer to the current challenges facing church leaders will not be found in an either-or solution but rather in a solution that attributes value and importance to the ability of leading others as well as oneself from out of healthy cognitive processes. In light of this reality, the researcher wants to make a significant contribution to the ongoing conversation surrounding church leadership in the field of practical theology, not by discarding the research already done on leading others but by offering a complement. The researcher wants to draw attention to the fact that church leaders need to comprehend the importance of the adoption of self-leadership strategies that are not confined to the spiritual sector of life alone, but also envelop the mental, emotional, and physical sectors. More specifically, the researcher wants to elucidate church leaders' cognition of resilience and the current role, if any, that resilience and the holistic cultivation thereof plays in persevering in ministry.

According to the researcher's literature study, no research has been done in the field of practical theology on church leaders' cognition of the role of resilience in perseverance and their attitudes towards the holistic cultivation thereof in ministry. The researcher maintains that this study can contribute to raising awareness amongst church leaders on the importance of implementing proactive strategies that are foundational to persevering in ministry. In his book *Leading on Empty*, Cordeiro (2009:11), a pastor who experienced burnout himself, shares that during his darkest hours he could only hold on to the disciplines he had already built into his life. Rather than emphasising cures that only become important once burnout, depression, and other stress-related illnesses are already knocking on the door, this study aims to contribute to the development of a proactive strategy, namely a resilient lifestyle.

1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE STUDY AND STATUS OF RESEARCH

1.3.1 Preliminary literature study and contextualisation

As is evident from the discussion in the previous section, research related to the well-being of church leaders from around the globe seems to suggest that leaders are struggling and often failing to passionately persevere and remain resilient in ministry. This does not only severely impact the church leader and their family (Guzman & Teh, 2016:460–461; Miner, 2007:17) but also hinders their ability to lead the local church in the fulfilment of its calling to participate in the mission of God (Forney, 2010:2; Miner, 2007:17). In hopes to address this problem, a wide variety of research has been done.

Quite a number of researchers have focused on identifying and elucidating situational factors that cause the deterioration of the well-being of church leaders (e.g., Breytenbach, 2004; Buys, 2008; Frank, 2016; Lindholm *et al.*, 2016; Prevost, 2016). Situational factors such as role ambiguity, role overload, the secularisation of society, conflict, low income, long working hours, being confronted with unexpected events of suffering, isolation, and intrusive and unrealistic demands have all been identified to contribute negatively to the well-being of church leaders (Abernethy *et al.*, 2016:177; Adams *et al.*, 2017:149; Burnette, 2016:4; Buys, 2008:1; Chartrand, 2017:9; Elkington, 2013:7; Forney, 2010:2; Janse van Vuuren, 2005:7; Louw, 2015b:1; Miner, 2007:19; Visker *et al.*, 2017:961).

Others have explored and highlighted the personal factors and inherent stressors that make church leaders more prone to experience problems related to their well-being. Some personal factors and inherent stressors include the inability to differentiate between role and self in a healthy manner (Beebe, 2007:258–259), the lack of a well-integrated and coherent worldview resulting in an openness to change in beliefs (Miner, 2007:26), unrealistic expectations and ideals related to ministry (Forney, 2010:2), a personality marked by high levels of neuroticism (Miner, 2007:26), and conflict-management styles that can be described as avoiding or accommodating (Beebe, 2007:259).

Alternatively, some have taken a cue from positive psychology which emphasises the importance of studying the best of human behaviour and not the worst (Brunsdon, 2014:7). Instead of merely focusing on elements that deteriorate human well-being and happiness, positive psychology advocates studying elements that promote human well-being and happiness such as positive emotions, positive traits, character strengths, close relationships, and resilience (Brunsdon, 2014:7). Consequently, the ability to maintain a healthy balance between work life and home life, rewarding relationships, a healthy spiritual life, a high level of self-compassion, the ability to accept and adjust to change, and high levels of work engagement have been positively associated with the well-being of church leaders (Barnard & Curry, 2012:159; Buys, 2008:57; Buys & Rothmann, 2010:2–3; Chandler, 2010:5; Jackson-Jordon, 2013:3).

In addition, valuable insights have been offered by practical theologians:

- A number of practical theological researchers have justifiably drawn attention to the need for better and ongoing theological training programmes that are focused on equipping church leaders (e.g., Elkington *et al.*, 2015:2; McKenna *et al.*, 2007:187; Putter, 2010a:3; Strunk *et al.*, 2017:547). They argue that the current training falls short and does not adequately prepare church leaders to lead and deal with the broad scope

of leadership challenges and expectations they will encounter in the complex and adaptive system that is “the church”. Dreyer (2016a:158–159) argues that church leaders are being trained for a church that no longer exists. Strunk *et al.* (2017:547) especially emphasise the need for church leaders to be better equipped in areas of emotional and cultural intelligence, self-care, and family and marital health.

- Joynt (2017:9) calls for a better care system to be developed by denominations. Joynt (2017:7) argues that top leadership (bishops, senior pastors, and denominational representatives) needs to adopt a steward-leadership style as opposed to the current “toxic” leadership style in order to offer more support and mentorship to church leaders and in so doing counter the current exodus of church leaders.
- Niemann (2017:ix-x) suggests that pastors should be equipped by means of a personality analysis in order to improve inter- and intrapersonal awareness and to facilitate effective self-care in order to prevent ministers from leaving the ministry prematurely.
- Elkington *et al.* (2015:9) maintain that the solution requires a worldview adjustment. They maintain that a missional mode where the church is viewed as “a community on mission with God to reach their community for God” will contribute towards a solution (Elkington *et al.* 2015:6). When church leaders adopt a missional-pastoral leadership paradigm in which their role becomes one of facilitator, they will implement a multitudinous approach through equipping as opposed to a control process through managing (Elkington, 2013:9). This is much more sustainable and healthy for the church as well as for the church leader.
- Coetzer (2013:1–7) builds on the book *What they didn't teach you in seminary* and provides a number of practical guidelines for the health and wholeness of the Christian worker. The mentioned author emphasises the necessity of a firmly established partnership with God, a realistic expectation of oneself, the importance of positive self-talk, and the formulation of guidelines today in preparation for tomorrow (Coetzer, 2013:6–7).

1.3.2 Status of research

Although significant contributions have been made, only a small number of researchers emphasise the role resilience and the cultivation thereof plays in the well-being of church leaders (e.g., Abernathy *et al.*, 2016; Elkington, 2013:11; Forney, 2010:1; Frank, 2016:3–4). Resilience can be defined as the ability of human beings to function optimally and even flourish despite being confronted with difficult situations such as trauma, loss, and acute stress (Brundson, 2014:7; Jackson-Jordan, 2013:3). It enables a person to recover quickly from hardships, change, or misfortune (Pulley & Wakefield, 2001:7).

In short, when you are resilient, you are less likely to be controlled by your emotions in difficult situations; you are more likely to creatively problem-solve when faced with difficulty; you are able to deal better with rejection, critique, disappointments, and negative influences; you are able to take responsibility for a wider range of tasks throughout more areas of your life (e.g., society, work, family); you are more flexible to changes in your environment and more likely to experience personal growth from them, and your health, interactions with others, and work-life balance, in general, will be more healthy (Donders, 2017:20–21; Pulley & Wakefield, 2001:7). A lack of resilience is marked by fatigue, burnout, *malaise*, defensiveness, cynicism, and depression (Pulley & Wakefield, 2001:7).

Since there is a general consensus that church leaders are confronted with intense situational, personal, and inherent stressors, the ability to effectively cope with and bounce back from these stressors and in turn passionately persevere in ministry cannot be emphasised enough. This becomes even more apparent in light of the reality that change is omnipresent and that these stressors are unlikely to ever disappear completely.

To the researcher's knowledge, no research has been done (from a practical theological perspective) amongst pastors that focused specifically on elucidating church leaders' cognition of resilience and their attitudes towards the intentional and holistic cultivation thereof in their own lives. The need for research in this area becomes apparent when one considers the fact that the well-being of church leaders remains a major concern despite 30 years of research dedicated to the topic, the publication of a wide variety of books on the matter (e.g., Ash, 2016; Cordeiro, 2009; London & Wiseman, 2003) and the development of effective biblically-based strategies such as the maintenance of the Sabbath day of rest (Swart, 2017), the development of a healthy devotional life (Chartrand, 2017), the development of a theology of mundane work (Roach, 2012), the adoption of a team-approach to ministry (Soto, 2015), and the cultivation of a healthy diet and active lifestyle (Emmons, 2015).

If church leaders do not comprehend the role resilience plays in relation to their well-being and their ability to persevere within ministry, they will not make efforts to intentionally cultivate it on an emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical level. This reality will cause present and future efforts addressing this problem to continue yielding only limited results.

1.3.3 The contribution of the study

The researcher maintains that elucidating the role resilience and the cultivation thereof should play in ministry can help in the formulation of strategies aimed at promoting the well-being of church leaders and their ability to passionately persevere in ministry. In addition, it can aid in

eliciting the cooperation of church leaders with current and future strategies aimed at promoting the well-being of church leaders and their ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

Furthermore, a better understanding of church leaders' perceptions regarding the role of resilience and the cultivation thereof in ministry can significantly contribute to a better understanding of why the well-being of church leaders remains a major concern, and why church leaders continue to fail in persevering passionately in ministry despite efforts being made and the high number of research and books dedicated to this topic.

It can also inform the future development of curriculums by theological seminaries. The research confirmed that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the role resilience plays in persevering in ministry and the importance of a personal and life-long commitment to the intentional and holistic cultivation thereof. Practical guidelines were developed that theological students might draw from throughout their ministry.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM, AIM, AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Research problem

Church leaders are not always equipped to effectively and constructively deal with the stressors and pressures that form such an integral part of the ministry. Moreover, the often unrealistic expectations placed upon them may cause church leaders' cognition of their own role and calling to passionately persevere to become distorted, unbiblical, and unhealthy. Consequently, many do not persevere in ministry or do so at the expense of their personal and family's well-being. It is important to stress here that as long as people live in a fallen and sinful world, it is unlikely that the stressors and pressures associated with ministry will ever disappear. As a matter of fact, they are more likely to increase along with the continued secularisation of society.

Studies have found that most church leaders prioritise religious coping mechanisms, which are vital (Visker *et al.*, 2017:955), but have proven to come up short in themselves since physical, mental, and emotional needs remain neglected. In addition, although theological seminaries do a great job in preparing theological students academically, in general, little attention is paid to important issues such as self-leadership and self-management which are vital for the cultivation of resilience and in turn the perseverance of church leaders in ministry.

A general assumption exists that church leaders understand the role of resilience and the importance of a life-long commitment to the holistic cultivation thereof, but the continued

problem experienced regarding the well-being of church leaders despite efforts to support and equip begs the question if this assumption is valid.

1.4.2 Research question

The question to be answered by this research was:

What should church leaders' cognition of resilience and the cultivation thereof be in relation to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry?

Further questions that arose from the research question were:

1. How can a descriptive-empirical study contribute towards a better understanding of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof?
2. How can an interpretive-pastoral study contribute towards a better understanding of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof?
3. What insight does the normative task (Osmer 2009:4) offer on what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and the role that cultivation thereof should play in their lives?
4. What is the pragmatic task (Osmer 2009:4) regarding church leaders' cognition of resilience and the role cultivation thereof should play in their lives?

1.4.3 Research aim and objectives

1.4.3.1 Aim

The main aim of this study was:

To determine what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and what role cultivation thereof should play in their lives in relation to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

1.4.3.2 Objectives

These research objectives addressed the abovementioned questions by pursuing the following:

1. Conducting a comprehensive descriptive-empirical study on church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof.
2. Conducting an interpretive study on church leaders' cognition of the role of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof. This was done by means of a literature review carried out on an inter- and intradisciplinary level.
3. Carrying out the normative task to gain insight into what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and what role cultivation thereof should play in their lives.
4. Determining the pragmatic task in relation to what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and what role cultivation thereof should play in their lives.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study was that church leaders should comprehend resilience and the holistic cultivation thereof as essential in relation to their ability to persevere in ministry.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted within the scientific field of practical theology within the pastoral subcategory and occurred from a pentecostal faith tradition (Nel, 2015c:2–3). Practical theology is a subdiscipline of theology (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:4). It is not seen as existing in isolation from the other subdisciplines within theology, but instead, as offering a unique perspective on theology as a whole (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:5).

Practical theology as a field of study is concerned with the communicative actions of people as they are performed in service of the gospel and the expansion of God's kingdom in this world (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:6). It identifies and critically and scientifically evaluates the practical theological theories on which these communicative actions are built and sets out to develop new theories for practice where it is deemed necessary (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:7).

A number of methodological models have been developed for research conducted within the field of practical theology. Several methods are briefly described below:

- Browning (1996:6), for example, suggests a model based on the underlying view that all practices are theory-laden. In light of the experience of a crisis, religious communities are forced to engage in a process that moves from describing the current theory-laden practice to gathering normative theory-laden practices and finally to the creation of a more critically-held theory-laden practice (Browning, 1996:7). His model has four main dimensions which are intertwined and interdependent; it comprises the descriptive, historical, systematical, and strategic dimensions (Browning, 1996:8).
- Zeffass (as cited in Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:23–24) also offers a model that starts with the current practice but then moves to analyse the theological tradition from which the current practice originated. A situational analysis is done by means of empirical research and knowledge gleaned from other disciplines to provide more clarity on the current practice. Dialogue is initiated between the theological tradition and the data that resulted from the empirical research and a new practical theological theory is formulated. The new theory is put into practice and then tested against the situation and theological tradition. In light of the test, appropriate modifications are done if necessary.
- Heitink (1999:165) takes a methodological approach to practical theology that involves the use of three keywords, namely understanding, explanation, and change. During research the following three circles are set into motion: The hermeneutical circle which has “understanding” as its key word, the empirical circle which has “explanation” as its key word, and the regulative circle which has “explanation” as its key word.

Although each method discussed above provides valuable insight, the researcher deemed the research method developed by Richard Osmer (2008) as best suited for this study due to its simplified nature and the emphasis placed on the normative task in determining: What should be going on? Osmer (2008:4) emphasises that practical theological research focuses on four main tasks aimed at answering four main questions. These are:

- The descriptive-empirical task which sets out to answer the question: What is going on?
- The interpretive task which sets out to answer the question: Why is this going on?
- The normative task which sets out to answer the question: What ought to be going on?
- The pragmatic task which sets out to answer the question: How might we respond?

Practical theological research often necessitates that the theologian circles back to a task already explored when new information or insights emerge (Osmer, 2008:11). Therefore, practical theological research is best understood as a spiral process and not as a linear process, which involves moving mechanically from one task to the next (Osmer, 2008:11).

The following schematic representation (figure 1-1) demonstrates the distinct yet interrelated nature of the four tasks mentioned above (Osmer, 2008:10):

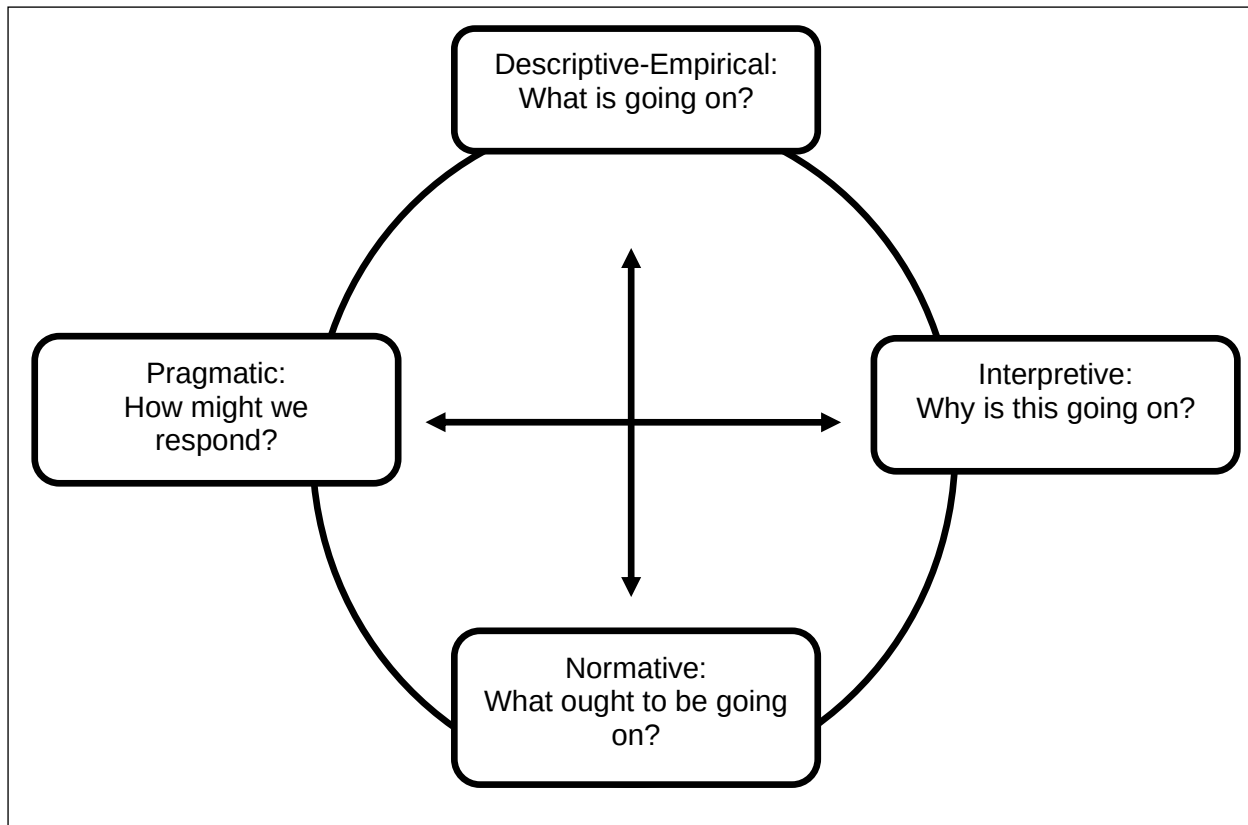


Figure 1-1: Osmer's four tasks of practical theology

The four tasks of practical theological research as developed by Osmer (2008) have been performed to answer the four questions that arose from the research question, namely: What should church leaders' cognition of resilience and the cultivation thereof be in relation to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry? Each task, as explained by Osmer, and how it was applied to this study will be discussed in the sections below.

1.6.1 The descriptive-empirical task

The act of priestly listening constitutes the empirical task (Osmer, 2008:37). It involves openly, attentively, and prayerfully attending to what is happening in the lives of individuals, families, and communities (Osmer, 2008:34). It requires the researcher to make an inquiry into a certain problem and gather relevant information in aid of answering the question: What is going on? (Osmer, 2008:33).

The strategies of inquiry can be divided into two main categories, namely qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research involves the exploration of relationships between variables by gathering and analysing numeric data (Osmer, 2008:49). Qualitative research, on the other

hand, is more focused on understanding the actions and practices of groups or individuals by illuminating the meaning these groups or individuals ascribe to their experiences through interviews, focus groups, observations, etc. (Osmer, 2008:53–54). It is thus more explanatory in nature and focused on describing and understanding complex phenomena as holistically as possible (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:64–65).

1.6.1.1 Research design

Most authors agree that a combined research approach is needed for real-life human sciences since the quantitative and qualitative approaches complement each other in providing a more complete and in-depth analysis and understanding of a complex research problem (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:66). Therefore, the researcher utilised a mixed-method approach in order to complete the empirical task by combining quantitative and qualitative methods in the following manner:

- A literature study was conducted; and
- a structured online questionnaire (see appendix A) was compiled in consultation with the North-West University (NWU) Statistical Consultation Services and the link was circulated electronically:
 - The first portion of the electronic questionnaire was qualitative in nature and included open questions aimed at exploring church leaders' understanding of the concept of resilience.
 - The second portion was quantitative in nature and made use of a Likert scale in order to measure church leaders' current resilience levels as well as their attitudes and current attempts towards the holistic cultivation of resilience. With permission from **xpand International**, an independent consulting and coaching company, their scientifically-developed Resilience Scan Version 3.0 (a questionnaire consisting of 70 questions) and resilience-training workbook acted as the basis for the questionnaire.

1.6.1.2 Research methods

The researcher confirms that ethical principles as set out in the policy for research ethics developed by the Ethics Committee of NWU was adhered to throughout the execution of this study. The study commenced once it was approved and registered with the relevant NWU ethics committee. Special attention was given to issues such as privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, and the risk/benefit ratio. The ethical aspects will be elaborated upon in section 1.7 of this chapter, namely Ethical Conditions.

1.6.1.3 Method of data collection

The link to the online questionnaire was circulated via email using the following databases:

- The Familia Dei Network database, which mainly includes church leaders from the AFM denomination although a few members are from the Dutch Reformed denomination.
- The AFM database, which includes ordained pastors of the AFM Church.

The body of the email explained the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary, and that persons who decided to participate could exit the questionnaire at any moment without having to give an explanation. Participants were assured of confidentiality. Instructions on the completion of the questionnaire were included in the body of the email as well as an estimation of the time necessary for completion. A link was provided allowing consent and access to the online questionnaire.

1.6.1.3.1 Population, sampling, sample and sample size

- The population of this empirical research comprised ordained and non-ordained church leaders who are currently participating in ministry as senior pastors, co-pastors, children's church leaders, and praise-and-worship leaders.
- Church leaders from various denominations and geographical locations were included, but the majority of the participants were from the AFM.
- Both male and female church leaders from all age groups and ethnic backgrounds were included.
- The ideal number of participants for this type of study is 300, but the researcher only managed to get 70 useable completed questionnaires. The validity and reliability of the study, however, was confirmed by the statistical services despite the limited responses received.
- Respondents were to indicate whether or not they are currently ordained, their denomination, and demographical information as described above in order to provide for possible interesting correlations.

1.6.1.3.2 Validity and reliability

- A questionnaire was compiled in conversation with the study leader and a consultant of the NWU Statistical Consultation Services considering the objectives of this study.
- The questionnaire was completed online which safeguarded anonymity, thus preserving privacy and confidentiality and increasing the likelihood of honest responses.

1.6.1.4 Data analysis method

- Data were analysed by the NWU Statistical Consultation Services.
- The relevance and effectivity of the results in relation to the objectives of this study was scrutinised and determined in conversation with the study leader.

1.6.1.5 Role of the researcher

- The link to the online questionnaire was circulated via email, thereby minimising contact between the researcher and participants.
- The online questionnaire was completed and submitted anonymously, safeguarding participant privacy and confidentiality in the process.
- A consultant from the NWU Statistical Consultation Services analysed the data, thereby minimising the researcher's interaction with participants and the possibility of the researcher influencing or manipulating the results.
- The data received from the completed online questionnaire and consent forms are being stored by the NWU Statistical Consultation Services.

1.6.2 The interpretive task

The interpretive task entails drawing on inter- and intradisciplinary theories in order to better comprehend and expound why the problematic contexts, situations, and episodes identified and described in the empirical task occur (Osmer, 2008:113). It aims to answer the question: Why is this going on?

By means of an inter- and intradisciplinary literature study, a contribution was made towards a better understanding of church leaders' comprehension of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof. The study fields that were brought into the discussion were the communication sciences, sociology, psychology, and the education sciences.

- Communication sciences deal with the scientific study of human nonverbal and verbal communication (Berger *et al.*, 2010:3). Since interpersonal communication and management play a major part in a church leader's ministry, the communication sciences could provide some insight into how the church leader's ability in these areas could positively and negatively affect their ability to passionately persevere in ministry.
- Sociology is the scientific study of "how individuals behave in groups and how their behaviour is shaped by these groups" (Hobbs *et al.*, 2015:12). Sociology reflects on the

process by which groups are formed, the dynamics that bring these groups to life, and how these dynamics sustain or change the groups or bring about social change (Hobbs *et al.*, 2015:12). Church leaders are also part of various social groups, for example, the congregation where they serve and the denomination they belong to. Sociology could offer insight into how these groups could positively or negatively influence church leaders' cognition of resilience, their behaviour, and in turn their ability to passionately persevere.

- Psychology deals with the study of the mind – the brain and its activities, including emotions, thoughts, and behaviours (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5). More specifically, it is the scientific study of “behaviour, mental processes, and brain functions” (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5).

A variety of perspectives or approaches have been developed within the field of psychology (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5; Eysenck, 2004:3). These include, amongst others, biological psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, developmental psychology, and abnormal psychology (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:21–23; Eysenck, 2004:4–6). A general consensus, however, exists that these perspectives need to be viewed as interconnected and not in isolation in order to provide a clear picture of human behaviour (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:26; Eysenck, 2004:3).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher paid special attention to the following three perspectives within the field of psychology:

- **Cognitive psychology**

This subbranch of psychology focuses on areas such as learning, memory, problem-solving, language, attention, and perception (Eysenck, 2004:5). This perspective added value to this study by shedding light on the cognitive and thinking processes behind the church leader's understanding of resilience and the behaviour that eventually may lead to him/her leaving the ministry.

- **Social psychology**

This subbranch focuses on the effects that the social and cultural environment as well as individual differences have on human behaviour (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:22). This perspective explained how the personality, attitudes, and beliefs of the church leader and the social and cultural environment in which they lead could negatively as well as positively influence their cognition of resilience, their behaviour, and their ability to passionately persevere.

- **Biological psychology**

This focuses on the relationship between the mind and behaviour and the underlying biological processes such as genetics, neurotransmitters, hormones,

etc. (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:21; Eysenck, 2004:4). It added depth to the understanding of why church leaders struggle to passionately persevere in ministry by exploring the biological factors that might contribute to their thinking and behaviour.

- The education sciences provided perspective on how the theological education and ministerial formation activities of the AFM of SA contribute or fall short in terms of empowering church leaders towards passionate perseverance in ministry.

It is important to note that in order to ensure the integrity of the theological research, intradisciplinary theories within the mentioned fields were chosen based on careful analysis and assessment (Osmer, 2008:114).

1.6.3 The normative task

In developing a normative theological perspective appropriate to practical theology, the normative task is concerned with addressing the question: What ought to be going on (Osmer, 2008:130)? Osmer highlights three approaches to the normative task, namely theological interpretation, ethical interpretation, and good practice and normative reflection (Osmer, 2008:130–132).

The researcher aimed to develop normative perspectives on the cultivation of resilience in order to formulate an answer to the question: What is the pragmatic task regarding what a church leader's cognition of resilience should be and the role that cultivation thereof should play in their lives? This was done by:

- Elucidating the servant leader's call to passionate perseverance through the identification and exegesis of biblical pericopes related to "perseverance" and "endurance". Specific pericopes that received attention were:
 - 1 Corinthians 9:24–27
 - 1 Timothy 4:11–16
 - Hebrews 12:1–2
 - James 1:2–4
- Theologically researching competencies associated with resilience by conducting word studies on certain concepts. These included concepts such as
 - forgiveness (a reconciled past), which enables one to respond to crises resiliently and embrace one's future in a meaningful manner (Donders, 2017:35–36; MacDonald, 2004:97–98; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:152);

- hope (realistic optimism), which enables people to escape from despair and move powerfully towards their goals (Donders, 2017:4–5; Kwan, 2010:50);
- working with one's skills, which enables one to passionately and boldly discover, develop, and implement one's intrinsic skills, and at the same time understand one's limitations (Donders, 2017:69);
- problem-solving, which enables one to analyse difficult situations and discover creative solutions (Donders, 2017:60);
- discipline (self-control), which enables one to live healthily by consistently implementing disciplines that aid one physically, spiritually, and emotionally (Donders, 2017:50);
- self-awareness, which refers to a healthy awareness of one's emotions, strengths, limitations, passions, etc. (Donders, 2017:93–101; Kay, 2018:184–185); and
- healthy relationships, which encourage one to grow in kindness, generosity and empathy, and which enable one to cope more effectively in times of crises and suffering (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:49–50; Donders, 2017:104).

1.6.4 The pragmatic task

The pragmatic task, according to Osmer (2008:176), involves integrating the collected data and insights gained from the aforementioned tasks and using it to formulate specific, actionable strategies aimed at leading change in order to facilitate the desired outcomes (Osmer, 2008:176). Thus, during the pragmatic task, pastoral practical-theological perspectives were formulated, explained, and discussed considering the findings, as related in preceding chapters, in order to elucidate the role resilience and the cultivation thereof should play in the lives of church leaders.

1.7 ETHICAL CONDITIONS

The researcher acknowledges the importance of ethical aspects as emphasised by the NWU and confirms that ethical guidelines have been applied and maintained throughout this study through the implementation of the following ethical values:

- The researcher assumed responsibility to honour the fundamental ethical principle of social research, namely that no harm would be done to the participants.
- This study has social value, not only for the participants and the faith community in which they function but also for the community, since it could possibly contribute to the well-being of church leaders and their families, who in turn contribute to the well-being of

their congregations, which in turn contribute to the well-being of their broader community.

- Participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout the study and could withdraw at any time without having to provide a specific reason.
- All participants provided informed consent before taking part in this study. There was a brief introduction at the top of the questionnaire that explained the purpose and nature of the research, the estimated time duration for the completion of the questionnaire, the fact that participation was voluntary, and the fact that they could decide to quit the questionnaire at any time without fear of negative consequences.
- Participation occurred on a voluntary basis.
- Participants' contributions were respected.

1.7.1 Estimated risk level

This study had a low-risk level since the risks involved were not higher than those encountered by participants during their daily routines. Participants' responses were anonymous in order to safeguard confidentiality and their privacy.

1.7.2 What was expected of participants during data gathering?

- Participants were expected to complete an online questionnaire that took approximately 20 minutes of their time; and
- participants were expected to critically reflect on their own perceptions of resilience, resilience levels, and attitudes towards the holistic cultivation thereof.

1.7.3 Probable experience of the participants

The researcher did not foresee any evident risks; the risks involved were not higher than those encountered during everyday life.

1.7.4 Benefits for participants and risk/benefit ratio analysis

- Direct benefits included the process of self-discovery that participants might have experienced when they critically evaluated their own perceptions of resilience, resilience levels, and their attitudes towards the cultivation thereof.

- Indirect benefits included the knowledge gained on resilience and the holistic cultivation thereof that could be of value to theological seminaries, the Christian faith community, and society at large.
- The study held more benefits than risks for participants.

1.7.5 Criteria for participant selection and recruitment

- Participants had to be or previously had been church leaders since the study focused on elucidating church leaders' perceptions of resilience, their resilience levels, and attitudes towards the holistic cultivation thereof. No other criteria existed.
- As part of the recruitment process, a link to an online questionnaire was circulated using the databases of the Familia Dei Network and the AFM with permission from the relevant gatekeepers.

1.7.6 Informed consent (permission)

Informed consent implies:

- That sufficient information regarding the goals of the study, the estimated time participation will necessitate, the research processes, the possible benefits and risks participants might be exposed to, and the qualifications of the researcher will be given to potential participants before the commencement of the study (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:117); and
- that participants are legally and psychologically able to give permission and that they know they can withdraw their permission at any time without fear of negative consequences (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:117).

The letter of informed consent that served as the introduction to the online questionnaire has been attached to this research report as an appendix for perusal (see appendix B).

1.7.7 Incentives and/or remuneration of participants

Participation in the study was voluntary; no remuneration or incentives were offered to participants.

1.7.8 Announcement/Dissemination of study results to participants

Upon completion of the online questionnaire, participants had the option to choose whether or not they would like to be kept informed on the progress and outcome of the study and were required to provide their email addresses accordingly. Care was taken to ensure that participants who desired to remain informed received feedback.

1.7.9 Privacy and confidentiality

- Participants completed an online questionnaire anonymously at a place and time that was convenient for them in order to safeguard their privacy;
- results were anonymised and pooled; and
- completed questionnaires were analysed by the NWU Statistical Consultation Services.

1.7.10 Management, storage and destruction of data

The storage and destruction of the data will be done by the NWU Statistical Consultation Services according to the approved protocol. Any data acquired by the researcher for the purpose of this study will be securely stored for a period of seven years.

2 CHAPTER 2: DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Osmer (2008:4), the descriptive-empirical task involves gathering the information that aids in the discernment of patterns and dynamics in specific episodes, situations, or contexts. Osmer (2008:35) uses the term “priestly listening” to describe the descriptive task. It denotes the need for the researcher to attend with a prayerful openness and attentiveness (Osmer, 2008:34).

Here it is important to remember that one's attending needs to take into account not only the particular individuals, but also the interconnections, complex relationships, and broader systems involved since practical theological interpretation is deeply contextual (Osmer, 2008:17). Church leaders' endeavour to passionately persevere in ministry does not occur within a vacuum but is profoundly affected by the interconnected existence of individuals, families, churches, communities, and broader social systems which are in turn located in a wider web of natural systems (Osmer, 2008:16).

A descriptive-empirical task that fails to take the interconnected nature of life into account will result in a very superficial exposition of a much more complex problem. Failure to listen attentively leads to failure in effective leadership.

2.2 OBJECTIVE

In this chapter, the aim is to answer the question: What is going on? in terms of church leaders' cognition of resilience, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the development thereof. Although a purely descriptive account is not truly possible as observing and describing always take place from a specific perspective, the objective of this chapter is to describe what is going on and not to reflect on or interpret why it is going on (Osmer, 2008:59). The interpretive task will be dealt with in the chapter that follows.

This chapter will commence by defining resilience. Then, with the interconnected nature of theological interpretation in mind, it will describe the challenges that the 21st century poses to church leaders by providing an exposition which moves from describing the broader overarching social systems to the realities on a community, congregational, family level. Please note, however, that this exposition cannot be considered exhaustive although it attempts to address

some of the main themes. The well-being of church leaders in South Africa and the coping strategies employed by them will also receive attention. The chapter will conclude with an account of the researcher's own empirical research findings.

2.3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This study draws from the theoretical framework of Osmer (2008:6–29) who builds forth on the integrative approach of Heitink and proposes that practical theological interpretation involves four main tasks, namely the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:21). As mentioned above, this chapter will focus on the descriptive-empirical task.

The descriptive-empirical task was carried out by means of a mixed-method approach that involved a qualitative literature study and empirical research. A mixed-method approach was deemed suitable since the results would yield an in-depth exploration and description of a very complex human problem.

Quantitative research focuses on gathering and analysing numerical data in order to identify and explore relationships between variables (Osmer, 2008:49). Qualitative research, on the other hand, focuses on understanding the practices and actions of individuals and groups and the significance these individuals and groups ascribe to their experiences (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:395; Osmer, 2008:49). It provides the opportunity to gather information that portrays the authenticity of people's experiences (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:395).

2.4 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON RESILIENCE

Before exploring what is going on in terms of the ministry environment church leaders need to navigate, the current coping strategies employed by them in an attempt to do so, and their current well-being status, the researcher deems it important to spend some time exploring the concept of resilience and how it has been used in the field of practical theology.

2.4.1 Resilience defined

The idea of positively adapting to adversity is as old as mankind itself and features as a major motif in most religions (Vorster, 2018:474). Nevertheless, the scientific conceptualisation of resilience only originated in the early 1970s in the field of psychology (Vorster, 2018:474; Zylla, 2014:101). Moreover, the tendency for researchers, policymakers, and clinicians to move their focus from risk to resilience has only surfaced over the last two decades (Rutter, 2012:335).

As seen manifested in the positive psychology movement, only recently there has been a greater awareness to emphasise the positive rather than the maladaptive (Rutter, 2012:336). With this new-found focus, the concept of resilience has since its inception been used in a variety of disciplines such as social work, medicine, psychiatry, engineering and management theory (Rutter, 2012:335; Searby, 2015:7; Vorster, 2018:474; Zylla, 2014:101). Consequently, a number of definitions for resilience exist, as seen below:

- Rutter (cited by Zylla, 2014:101) defines resilience as “the ability to bounce back or cope successfully despite substantial adversity”. He later amended this definition in order to draw more emphasis to the interactive nature of resilience stating that resilience can be defined as “reduced vulnerability to environmental risk experiences, the overcoming of stress or adversity, or a relatively good outcome despite risk experiences” (Rutter cited by Zylla, 2014:101).
- Vorster (2018:473) refers to resilience as the “dynamic process involved in the human ability to cope with severe adversity or major threats; to resist destructive forces, events or processes; and to adapt constructively to setbacks or trauma”.
- In his review and concept analysis, Windle (2011:152) defines resilience as “the process of withstanding negative effects of risk exposure, demonstrating positive adjustment in the face of trauma or adversity and beating the odds associated with risks”.
- Paul Donders, the managing director of **xpand Netherlands** and CEO of **xpand International**, a coaching and consulting company, defines resilience as “the ability of a person to deal with surprises, changes, and unexpected setbacks in a healthy manner” (Donders, 2017:19).

Although a variety of definitions exist and the exact meaning of this notion is widely debated, the following key elements of resilience become apparent when critically reflecting on resilience, literature, and the definitions mentioned above along with others provided by researchers (see Abernethy *et al.*, 2016:179; Brunsdon, 2014:7; Pulley & Wakefield, 2001:7):

a. Resilience is linked with adversity

Adversity in this context refers to anything that disrupts a person's life, whether it is change (positive or negative), hardship (caused by personal decisions or actions or imposed by the decisions or actions of others), or misfortune where the cause is simply unattainable (Forney, 2010:6). Adversity is a part of everyday life. It is estimated that approximately 90% of people experience at least one traumatic event during their lifetime (Southwick & Charney, 2018:2).

Scripture also teaches on the commonality of trials and tribulations (1 Peter 4:12); Jesus, His disciples, and the first Christians all had to endure hardships during their life on earth. People, however, respond differently to adversity (Dreyer, 2014:1; Zylla, 2014:103). On the one hand, exposure to adversity might increase vulnerability through a sensitising effect, on the other hand, it might decrease vulnerability through a steeling effect (Zylla, 2014:103).

The process of resilience, however, is always preceded by some adversity, whether in the form of challenge, change, or disruption (Zylla, 2014:103). Dekker (2011:69) sums it up powerfully stating that resilience “is birthed in the process of adversity”.

b. Resilience involves bouncing back

An aspect in all definitions of resilience refers to a person’s ability to “bounce back” despite hardships (Zylla, 2014:103). It must be stressed that what constitutes the outcome of resilience has evolved over the years from emphasising the reduction of negative outcomes to emphasising positive development (Elkington, 2013:3). Thus, resilience is no longer just about “bouncing back” but also about thriving and flourishing despite hardships.

Scripture also teaches the concept of growth as a result of adversity (James 1:1–3; James 1:4–12; Romans 5:3–7). People who respond resiliently still experience the effect of the trauma, but instead of being overcome by it, they find healthy and constructive ways to deal with and absorb it and can continue to live a meaningful life (Dreyer, 2014:1; Zylla, 2014:103).

c. Resilience emphasises strength, competencies, capacity, and healthy development as an alternative to risk and deficit theory

For a long time, the social sciences concentrated on the disease model, studying the worst of human behaviour (Brunsdon, 2014:7). The last two decades, however, have been marked with the tendency to focus on and promote the best in human behaviour (Brunsdon, 2014:7; Dreyer, 2014:2). Resilience research directs attention towards positive outcomes and contributing factors (Zylla, 2014:104).

d. Resilience is process-orientated rather than trait-orientated

Rather than an achieved state or static trait of an individual, more and more researchers argue that resilience refers to an interactive process (e.g., Doehring, 2015:636; Dreyer, 2014:1; Elkington, 2013:4; Rutter, 2012:335; Rutter cited by Zylla, 2014:104; Vorster,

2018:473; Windle, 2011:152). Dekker (2011:69) puts it this way: “Resilience is not a static and sustainable descriptor of a person but rather describes a person’s set of responses to particular adversity in a given period of their life.” A person might respond resiliently in one set of circumstances and fail to do so in another (Dreyer, 2014:2). It is an active process of perseverance, overcoming, recovery, and growth in response to adversity (Dreyer, 2014:1).

e. *Resilience can be cultivated*

Flowing from the element of resilience discussed above is the developmental nature of resilience. Resilience is not something one is born with or without; it can be learned, and it can be taught (Dreyer, 2014:2; Searby, 2015:8).

Bearing the key elements discussed above in mind, the working definition of resilience for the purpose of this study is: The dynamic process by which the church leader constructively adapts to overcome severe adversity, trauma, or significant change in order to live and lead effectively and even flourish in light of God’s calling upon their life.

2.4.2 Resilience competencies

Masten (2015:3) refers to resilience as a type of “ordinary magic”, emphasising that it arises from ordinary human processes and resources. Masten (2015:3) asserts: “The great surprise of resilience research is the ordinariness of the phenomenon. Resilience appears to be a common phenomenon that results in most cases from the operation of basic human adaptational systems.” Dekker (2011:70) also asserts that resilience is a fundamental human capacity but views this reality in light of *Imago Dei*, recognising God’s role in equipping people for life. Dekker (2011:80) views resilience as the “common grace” that encourages social order and progress towards a common good.

The premise of resilience research is based on the asset-adversity model which denotes that if a person’s adaptive systems are protected and functioning at a satisfactory level, their response to adversity will be robust, whereas a lack of the required assets, as measured against the intensity of the adversity, will lead to a less resilient response (Forney, 2010:7–8). Thus, researchers are taking an increasingly multi-levelled approach recognising that a broad array of factors influence human resilience (Dreyer, 2014:1; Rutter, 2012:335; Vorster, 2018:474; Zylla, 2014:105).

Quite a number of competencies or adaptive systems have been associated with resilience as a result of various studies. A person's resilience does not stem from intrinsic competencies alone but can also be influenced by extrinsic factors such as social, cultural and religious systems (Dreyer, 2014:1). This study will mainly focus on intrinsic competencies, however, since church leaders can assume responsibility for the intentional cultivation of these whereas extrinsic factors is outside of their control.

Southwick *et al.* (as cited by Dreyer, 2014:2) list the following factors: realistic optimism, problem-solving orientation, courage to face one's fears, ability to ask for help, ability to accept responsibility for one's own physical and emotional well-being, ability to retain a sense of humour, religious practices that help them to find meaning in life, and the ability to recognise opportunity for growth in the midst of hardship. As a result of her own literature study, Zylla (2014:105–106) lists the following contributing qualities: positive relationships/social support, sense of humour, conviction about efficacy in adversity, trust in others, flexibility, and self-determination.

The focus of this study is demarcated in seven personal competencies, as mentioned in Donders' book *Resilience: Live Healthier, Perform Better* (Donders, 2017:30–32). The seven personal competencies are briefly introduced below; in chapter 4 these competencies will be discussed more thoroughly in light of theological insights.

a. Reconciled past

Reconciling the past refers to embracing one's story (Donders, 2017:35). A big part of this is accepting the reality of past suffering and forgiving oneself and others where necessary (Donders, 2017:35–36). A number of studies have linked forgiveness with the promotion of resilience (e.g., Lijo & Annalakshmi, 2017:1552; Worthington & Scherer, 2004:394; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:158).

Negative emotions such as hostility associated with unforgiveness can lead to mental and even physical health problems (Worthington & Scherer, 2004:394; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:153). Worthington *et al.* (2016:158) explain the positive effects of forgiveness as follows: "Forgiveness shifts the emotional content of ruminative cognitions away from resentful, bitter, hostile, hateful, anxious, depressed content, which has both mental and physical health benefits." Thus, dealing with the hurt, fear, and grief of the past enables people to deal with present emotional pressures in a more constructive manner (Donders, 2017:30).

b. Realistic optimism

Optimism is the tendency to adopt the most hopeful interpretation of any incident (Feder *et al.*, 2011:17). Realistic optimism acknowledges the presence of adversity but chooses to channel energy towards solutions (Dreyer, 2014:4). Not only has optimism been associated with resilience (e.g., Donders, 2017:30; Dreyer, 2014:4; Sourì & Hasanirad, 2011:1541; Southwick & Charney, 2018:35), but it has also been linked to increased physical and psychological health and greater life satisfaction (Feder *et al.*, 2011:17). Rampe (cited in Donders, 2017:43) asserts that optimism is one of the basic requirements for a positive crisis/conflict solution. It is the belief that crisis is something temporary and can be overcome (Donders, 2017:43). Southwick and Charney (2018:35) maintain that optimism provides the energy necessary to power the other resilience competencies.

c. Working with one's skills

Discovering and intentionally finding ways to implement one's intrinsic and extrinsic skills and abilities contribute to resilient responses to adversity (Donders, 2017:71). This resilience competence stems from a place of belief in one's own competence (self-efficacy) and unique value or purpose (Donders, 2017:69). Both of these will be discussed briefly:

- Self-efficacy has been linked with numerous stages, levels, and forms of resilience (Garcia-Dia *et al.*, 2013:266). It is described as the belief in one's own abilities to overcome adversity or achieve a certain goal (Garcia-Dia *et al.*, 2013:266). Research has shown that a lack of efficacy and competence results in cynicism and exhaustion (Forney, 2010:24).
- People who believe that their lives are purposeful and that they are called to something beyond themselves are more likely to experience adversity as meaningful (Donders, 2017:100). When actively engaged in one's calling one exhibits greater resilience, especially when this calling is perceived as contributing to a greater good (Forney, 2010:25).

d. Problem-solving competence

Problem-solving skills have been linked to resilience in the fields of nursing (e.g., Brennan, 2017:43; Pinar *et al.*, 2018:144-149), adolescent psychiatry (e.g., Fayyad *et al.*, 2017:196), and education (e.g., Dekker, 2011:75), just to name a few. Problem-solving requires the ability to analyse situations constructively and to be flexible in

finding a creative solution while remaining focused and assertive about intended goals (Donders, 2017:56).

Hatler and Sturgeon (2013:33) identify a resilience-building strategy that follows a process of assessment, acceptance, and adaptation which the researcher of this study deems insightful with regard to the problem-solving competency. It involves recognising the nature of the events that transpired without procrastinating, rationalising, denying, or accepting it (but not passively) instead of resisting or complaining about the events. Also, to adopt a “what now” attitude focusing energy on solutions and adapting to the new situation while at the same time looking for creative ways to influence it and make it work (Hatler & Sturgeon, 2013:33).

Professor Brooks (cited by Forney, 2010:26) makes the following statement about resilient people that should serve as an important premise from which the competence of problem-solving is approached: “Resilient people focus on what they can influence and don’t spend time on things they can’t.” In order to approach adversity resiliently, church leaders need to maintain a contextual balance between external and internal locus of control (Forney, 2010:25). In other words, they need to believe that they are able to influence what happens to them, never perceiving themselves as a helpless victim while paradoxically believing that God is sovereign (Forney, 2010:25).

e. *Discipline (self-control)*

Mandell and Jordan (2010:xxviii) define discipline as “acting consistently whether or not one feels motivated”. Discipline involves controlling one’s own emotional and behavioural impulses (Donders, 2017:77). Discipline and resilience exist in an interdependent relationship; discipline promotes resilience and resilience renews discipline (Mandell & Jordan, 2010:231). Discipline fuels the intentional development of the other resilience competencies. It provides a sustained effort that enables one to consistently implement physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual habits that contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. It enables a person to sacrifice immediate gratification in favour of working towards long-term goals (Donders, 2017:77).

f. *Self-awareness*

Self-awareness, as linked to resilience, refers to a healthy awareness and understanding of the following important issues (Donders, 2017:93–101; Kay, 2018:184–185):

- Your strengths and weaknesses, potential and limitations;

- your story, the successes, crisis, and the unresolved matters in your life and how they might be exerting a conscious or subconscious influence on your current actions and decisions;
- the positive and negative emotions you experience and how they influence your behaviour (emotional intelligence);
- your understanding of others and their perception about you as well as your attitudes and responses towards them; and
- your passions, beliefs, and values.

Increased self-awareness better enables one to be truly present in one's life and in doing so identify and analyse the obstacles to personal growth so that one might be able to intentionally work towards disarming them (Kay, 2018:184). One of the ways in which self-awareness is achieved is through regular and structured reflection (Finley, 2018:1185). Deliberate, honest, and sincere reflection protects one against burnout by allowing time for emotions and cognitions to be processed (Finley, 2018:1185,1187). It provides an opportunity for one to examine, comprehend, and integrate assumptions, attitudes, core beliefs, behaviours, skills, and knowledge (Finley, 2018:1185,1187). A healthy self-awareness will lead to more insightful responses and decisions as opposed to tempered reactions (Finley, 2018:1185; Kay, 2018:185–186).

g. Healthy relationships

A number of studies have linked social support with resilience (e.g., Doebling, 2015:636; Garcia-Dia *et al.*, 2013:266). Doebling (2015:636) asserts that resilience is a relational process and that people who are rooted in life-giving relationships are more likely to grow under stress. Healthy relationships which encourage one to grow in kindness, generosity and empathy, enables one to cope more effectively in times of crises and suffering (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:49–50; Donders, 2017:104). Here it is important to note that social support does not necessarily necessitate multiple relationships although it is beneficial; research has found that having even one healthy relationship with a significant person contributes immensely to resilience (Forney, 2010:30; Garcia-Dia *et al.*, 2013:266).

From the discussion above, the value that the cultivation of resilience could add in ministry becomes apparent. By developing the competencies linked to resilience, church leaders increase their assets and in doing so strengthen their ability to positively process and deal with the demands placed upon them by adversity. In the section to follow, the researcher will discuss how the concept of resilience has been used in the field of practical theological studies.

2.4.3 Resilience and practical theological studies

A number of studies have recognised the potential contribution that resilience could make to the field of practical theology. Dreyer (2014:1), for example, brings psychological dimensions of resilience theory into dialogue with theology as an answer to the problem of church schism. Dreyer aims to provide a theological and psychological foundation for faith communities experiencing adversity so that they might respond resiliently (Dreyer, 2014:7).

Another example is the research of Brunsdon (2014:1) in which he proposes a possible partnership between pastoral care, positive psychology, and narrative therapy. In his proposition, he specifically highlights the contribution resilience could make in pastoral care because of its focus on post-traumatic growth (Brunsdon, 2014:7). Vorster (2018:473), also recognising the value of resilience, explores the remedial potential of Christian-theological understandings of resilience with regard to the formation of gangster identity.

Focusing on youth ministry, Dekker (2011:84) argues that youth leaders need to avoid a “fix-it” paradigm and instead develop an attitude that embraces the adversity the youth is facing, viewing it as an opportunity for the development of resilience. Dekker (2011:67) maintains that the development of resilience should be seen as an act of God leading the teen to dependence and Christian resilience.

Taking a somewhat different approach, Zylla (2014:106–107) applies resilience theory to congregational studies exploring what contributes towards a resilient congregation and how to facilitate it. In light of the adversity church leaders often have to face in ministry, Forney (2010:1) explores the concept of resilience specifically focusing on the asset-adversity model and applies it to ministry. His hopes are to increase the resilience levels of church leaders so that they might fulfil their call to ministry with energy and creativity (Forney, 2010:1).

Also recognising the adverse context of 21st-century ministry, Elkington (2013:5) emphasises the role adversity could play in the development of leaders as they resiliently respond from a worldview that recognises that adversity is unavoidable. The aforementioned author emphasises the need for the development of intrinsic and extrinsic strategies to deal with adversity (Elkington, 2013:5–6). Focusing on worship leaders, Smith (2015:4) proposes a resilience-training model based on narrative methodology, arguing that resiliency training is a proactive way in which worship leaders can prepare for the stressors of ministry.

Although introducing the concept of resilience in the field of practical theological studies is not something new, the focus of this study is unique, however, in that it aims to explore the church

leader's cognition of resilience in relation to their calling to passionately persevere as well as their attitudes towards the holistic cultivation thereof in their lives. The argument is that this will have a great impact on the church leader's attempts to cultivate resilience and their current resilience levels. According to the researcher's literature study, empirical research within the field of practical theological studies with this specific focus has not been conducted amongst church leaders in South Africa.

2.5 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHALLENGES THE 21ST CENTURY POSES

As mentioned earlier, the church leader's endeavour to passionately persevere in ministry does not occur within a vacuum but is profoundly affected by the interconnected existence of individuals, families, churches, communities, and broader social and natural systems (Osmer, 2008:16). Exploring these interconnected systems and the taxing demands they place on church leaders is of great importance if one wishes to answer the question: What is going on? in a manner that does justice to the complex nature of the problem.

Therefore, this section will focus on providing a description of the general challenges the church leader faces within the context of ministry in South Africa. It will start with a brief description of the overarching paradigms and processes and the negative impact these have on 21st-century ministry after which a description of the taxing demands related to ministry will follow. At times, differentiation will be made between black and white South Africans since some of the phenomena discussed manifest differently to some extent in these respective cultures.

2.5.1 Overarching paradigms and processes

As seen throughout the ages, Christians do not exist in isolation of their contexts. What has become known as the information age has created a greenhouse effect in which numerous paradigms and processes converge and flourish. These exert immense influence on the environment in which ministry happens as well as the experiences and worldviews of the people ministered to, non-Christian and Christian alike.

A worldview, whether organised or not, is a framework made up of fundamental considerations that give direction, meaning, and context to one's life (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:8). Whether consciously or subconsciously, worldviews influence people's perceptions of the world, their orientation towards the world, and their daily decisions and actions in the world (Chalk, 2013:6; De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:25). Therefore, understanding the church leader's endeavour to

passionately persevere within the context of broader social and natural systems and the challenges these create is vital.

It must be mentioned that the person of the church leader does not stand outside of the paradigm shifts and processes but is also influenced by them to think and act in an unbiblical manner if he/she is not weary. How these paradigms and processes intrinsically impact the person of the church leader, their cognition of resilience, their attitudes and attempts to cultivate resilience, and their current resilient levels will be discussed in chapter 3, which is focused on interpreting why church leaders are struggling to passionately persevere in ministry.

The focus, however, of this descriptive study is on the extrinsic challenges that these overarching paradigms and processes create for the church leader by influencing the systems, the communities, and the people that the church leader aims to serve. Therefore, the following section will provide a brief description of some of the prominent broader social and natural systems and their impact on the ministry environment in South Africa.

2.5.1.1 Secularisation

Although secularisation has its roots in modernism, its influences can still be felt today. Wilson (as cited by Fordahl, 2017:553) defines secularisation as the process whereby religious thinking, practice, and institutions lose social significance. Weber understood secularisation as a sort of “disenchantment” that occurs as people find rational scientific explanations to replace the mythical ones religion has to offer (Weber as cited by Vorster, N., 2013:143). According to secularisation theory, scientific knowledge makes religious cognitive function redundant since modernised man no longer needs religion in order to understand the world he lives in or to find answers to vital questions (Van Ingen & Moor, 2015:559; Vorster, N., 2013:143).

In the 1990s, with the end of apartheid, South Africa leap-frogged into a rapid process of modernisation (Vorster, N., 2013:146). The Constitution took a more liberal approach enacting laws protecting secular values such as abortion, same-sex marriages, and the public distribution of pornography (Vorster, N., 2013:147). It also inaugurated a new relationship between the church and state, requiring the state to be neutral and non-discriminatory towards all religions (Vorster, N., 2013:147). A new educational order was established aimed at bringing learners into contact with a wide plurality and diversity of religions without educating them to be religious (Vorster, N., 2013:148). A previously non-existent space was created for secular values and the visibility of an increased plurality of values in the public domain (Vorster, N., 2013:146).

Even though Christianity lost the coercive public power it once held as a result of the secularisation of the state, statistics seem to indicate that Christianity in South Africa is not declining and that South Africans somehow escaped the effects of secularisation. A general household survey conducted by StatsSA in 2013 found that 84,2% of South Africans described themselves as Christian, and 56,4% indicated that they attended worship services on a weekly basis (Schoeman, 2017:3).

Nevertheless, a closer look reveals the need for concern. Vorster, N. (2013:150) draws attention to the need for a critical interpretation of the statistics in light of the high crime rates, the general moral decline in South Africa, the almost systemised corruption, and the high HIV/AIDS statistics that cannot merely be contributed to innocent contraction. Although many associate with the Christian religion, it is apparent from the conflicting data that Christian values are not lived and do not permeate South African society in a manner that would do justice to the high percentage of self-reported Christians. McCain (2000:117) draws attention to the reality that the African church has often been described as a mile wide but only an inch deep. While it appears that religious belief is not vanishing as a result of secularisation, certain forms of religious expression have been privatised and individualised and others are definitely coming under pressure being labelled as archaic, conservative, or traditional. It is clear that a sort of dichotomy exists between professing and practising Christianity in South Africa. Numerical growth without the corresponding spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth poses serious challenges for church leaders.

In addition, although the overall percentage of South African Christians has not demonstrated significant decline, there has been a reported de-churchification amongst white South Africans and particularly young white South Africans (Vorster, J.M., 2013:606,609). It would appear that white South Africans have fallen prey to the disenchantment of secular rationalism as a decline in religious affiliation is noticeable (Vorster, J.M., 2013:608; Vorster, N., 2013:154). The white South African community is especially susceptible because of its material welfare, high education levels, and global connectedness (Vorster, N., 2013:154). It must be noted, however, as black South Africans obtain higher levels of education and move to more urbanised areas, they too become more susceptible to the process of secularisation.

2.5.1.2 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a paradigm that emerged towards the late 20th century (Beyers, 2014:2). Postmodernism, as a life approach, emphasises the existence of different worldviews and conceptual realities as opposed to one true or correct one (Beyers, 2014:2; Potgieter & Van der Walt, 2015:238; Vorster, N., 2004:603). It casts doubt on the existence of one grand

metanarrative and, in doing so, also questions the metanarrative propagated by modernism and the faith modernism put in rationalism (Beyers, 2014:2; Vorster, J.M., 2013:610). Rationality is no longer regarded as the only means through which knowledge is gained (Beyers, 2014:9).

Although it is too soon to declare the end of modernism and secularisation along with it, it is clear that a paradigm shift has taken place in many respects (Beyers, 2014:8). Postmodernism seems to have awakened what some refer to as post-secularisation as a noticeably heightened interest in the spiritual, transcendent, and the metaphysical has taken place (Vorster, J.M., 2013:604). Although it creates opportunities for Christianity, it does not necessarily imply an upsurge in the church (Vorster, J.M., 2013:604). Nolte and Dreyer (2009:1) contend that the shift from modernism to postmodernism and the ensuing implications associated with it has resulted in cognitive dissonance and emotional wounding in church leaders as they struggle to come to grips with new realities.

Although postmodernism claims to be sensitive to difference and otherness, it is by no means neutral. It is subtly promoting a culture that is slowly destroying what is local and different and poses a serious threat to the church and biblical morality and values (Katongole, 2000:238). Katongole (2000:246-248) uses the condomisation campaign as a metaphor stating that postmodernism promotes:

- Disposability – postmodernism parades a lack of commitment and stable relationships as a signifier of freedom and flexibility;
- Freedom – postmodernism undermines the authority of institutions such as the family, church, or tribe. It promotes a certain view of freedom that asserts that the modern individual's responsibilities and commitments are not determined by tradition but by his/her own choices; and
- Feeling good – postmodernism promotes a lifestyle that can be characterised by a superficial feel-good playfulness.

Three interrelated aspects that fuel the postmodern culture described above are of particular importance for this study because of their impact on ministry in South Africa. These are relativism, individualisation, and syncretism. A concise discussion of each and how they impact the ministry environment will follow below.

Relativism argues that there is no such thing as universal truth, that no one grand meta-narrative exists (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:38). Moreover, it asserts that there is no such thing as objective knowing; each person instead discovers, interprets, and decides on the truth for themselves (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:37-39).

As a result of this ideology, society, in general, has become more sceptical of the existence of a transcendental truth. The authority and value of Scripture and in turn its teaching on morality and values are often disregarded, not only by unbelievers but even by believers. Human experience and existence are often elevated above Scripture (Vorster, N., 2004:600). The church and the message it proclaims has become just another voice amongst voices (Irvine, 1997:59).

Consequently, church leaders are expected to guide and nurture individuals on their personal spiritual journeys, regardless of the direction they have chosen, without imposing beliefs or interfering (Irvine, 1997:68–69). Moreover, there seems to be a growing resistance towards the church as an institution since religious authority is no longer viewed as resting with the church, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but it poses leadership challenges the church leader must successfully and creatively navigate (Beyers, 2014:9). The seemingly rising scandal and corruption in the institutional church, however, makes this an even more daunting task (Irvine, 1997:57).

Individualism accentuates the individual and his/her personal experiences and existence. It is the process by which institutions and communities continually lose their influence on the individual (Paas, 2013:94). As a moral ideal, individualisation promotes the idea that happiness is possible when individuals think for themselves rather than being subjected to what others think, when people's own principles instead of tradition, rules, and habits provide the foundation for their actions, when people learn to trust rather than suppress their own feelings, and when people find their own morality and identity instead of allowing these to be imposed by extrinsic expectations (Paas, 2013:92).

Research has found that white South Africans tend to have a more individualistic approach to life whereas black South Africans tend to be more collectivist in their approach (Wissing *et al.*, 2006:15). Nevertheless, Wissing *et al.* (2006:15) stress that continuous urbanisation and growth in economic status is leading to the development of more individualistic value systems amongst black South Africans as well.

The influences of individualisation can be seen in, amongst other things, the reality that going to church has become a matter of consumption for many; emphasis is placed on what the church can offer the individual on their pilgrimage through life instead of on participation in the *Missio Dei* of God (Irvine, 1997:70; Paas, 2013:92–93). The individual decides what is sacred and which elements of religion are functional and desirable (Beyers, 2014:9). Thus, the church leader is often bombarded by issues related to the individual's needs and desires, the individual's comfort or discomfort, the individual's idea of morality, and the list goes on. The

church leader must somehow cater to the group without neglecting the needs and desires of the individual (Irvine, 1997:71).

Finally, postmodernism creates an environment in which syncretism is condoned and even promoted. Syncretism refers to “the mixing of Christian assumptions with those worldview assumptions that are incompatible with Christianity so that the result is not biblical Christianity” (Kraft as cited by Chalk, 2013:4). Many South Africans profess to be Christians but hold on to worldviews and in turn practices that do not coincide with biblical truth. This is seen exemplified in, amongst other things, the numerous black South Africans who classify themselves as Christians but still hold on to their traditional African religion (Chalk, 2013:1).

The result of syncretism is a shallow Christianity that is easily overcome by forces such as political manipulation, corruption, patriarchy, traditionalism, classism, hatred, racism, and ethnicity (Chalk, 2013:3). This poses serious challenges for the authority and integrity of the church which in turn affects its leaders. In addition, church leaders often have to deal with conflicts, expectations, sin, etc. that result from the unbiblical worldviews held by community and church members which places a heavy demand on their resources.

2.5.1.3 Globalisation

Globalisation is the “increased interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres” (Zimmermann, 2014:56–57). For the purpose of this study, the effects of globalisation in terms of the social, economic, and cultural spheres will receive attention.

With the demise of apartheid, South Africans, no longer isolated from the rest of the world, were bombarded with an explosion of information (Vorster, N., 2013:148). The bombarding has not abated since. Today, through cell phones, internet, and the media, many South Africans have easy access to and come into contact with different cultures, values, norms, and ideas (Van Ingen & Moor, 2015:560; Vorster, N., 2013:148). South Africans are confronted with diverse religions and worldviews that all make a claim to authoritative truth (Van Ingen & Moor, 2015:560).

On the one hand, this has had a fundamentalist effect on some Christians as they try to make sense of the chaos by clinging more tightly to tradition and orthodox doctrines allowing absolutely no room for change or alternatives (Beyers, 2014:11; Vorster, J.M., 2004:595; Zimmermann, 2014:57). On the other hand, some people come to live with what Smit (2003:306) refers to as “patchwork-identities”. He explains that “like children playing with toys,

they construct their lives by using available pieces and parts, only to deconstruct it tomorrow, and perhaps to reconstruct something new again” (Smit, 2003:306).

One movement that embodies this pluralising effect of globalisation is the New Age movement which has penetrated South Africa and gained popularity particularly amongst the youth (Chepkwony, 2006:317; Maritz & Stoker, 2016:4). New Age is described as a widespread and vast, loosely structured meganetwork of organisations, groups, and individuals who share common ideas and values characterised by monism, mysticism, pantheism, and a common vision of a future age of mass enlightenment and peace (Chepkwony, 2006:313–320; Maritz & Stoker, 2016:4). Two of the beliefs it advocates that are of particular interest are that different religions merely are different routes to the same ultimate divine reality and that there is no such thing as absolute truth or absolute moral values (Chepkwony, 2006:318–319). Consequently, church leaders encounter a plurality and diversity of worldviews and cultures within their communities and even within their churches which require great wisdom and discernment on their part.

The end of apartheid in 1994 also paralleled a rapid escalation in materialism and consumerism that has not waned since (Czeglédy, 2008:289). The indebtedness of South Africa is a good example of how consumerism and materialism have penetrated South Africans’ worldviews. In 2009, the South African National Credit Regulator reported that almost 40% of the total population was in deep debt (Jacobs & Smit, 2010:17). What is even more alarming is that 40 to 48% of South African borrowers cannot really afford the loans they have taken and are at least three months in arrears (Mushava & Murray, 2018:35). One might argue that the high debt is the result of low-income borrowers’ attempts to survive, but the International Finance Corporation found that the biggest expenditure sectors for South Africa’s low-income population after food at 43% is other at 16,1% (which includes several luxury items such as expensive cellphones and branded clothing), and household goods such as décor and furnishings at 11,2% (Jacobs & Smit, 2010:17).

The skewed materialistic worldviews of many South Africans make them very susceptible to the influences of unbiblical teachings like those promoted by the prosperity gospel which teaches that God destines unlimited financial prosperity and physical health for believers (Chepkwony, 2006:321; Van Emmenes *et al.*, 2017:7). The prosperity gospel’s influences in South Africa should not be underestimated. Many have come to view the Christian faith as a means to financial prosperity and miraculous healing which, according to the prosperity gospel, is considered the birthright of the believer (Van Emmenes *et al.*, 2017:7). Of course, when hardships are encountered or when church leaders preach about unpopular themes such as “carrying your cross” and “suffering as an integral part of Christianity”, many believers

experience confusion, disappointment, and even anger. Once again, these unmet expectations and confusion culminate in criticism against the church and its leaders.

Moreover, economic globalisation has nurtured a consumer-driven mentality amongst South Africans that not only enjoys choice but demands it. Church members often view the church as the provider of religious products; they move from church to church in search of what meets their needs (Niemandt, 2013:24–25). Paas (2013:93) recalls the restaurant metaphor as he describes the church in a culture driven by choice and consumption. People view the church as a restaurant; they come and see what is on the menu and select what they like and leave again. Tomorrow, without the slightest consideration of loyalty, they go to another “restaurant” to peruse the menu there (Irvine, 1997:70; Paas, 2013:93). This has led to a type of critical passivity amongst many church members that places often unrealistic demands on the shoulders of the church leader who needs to work and compete tirelessly to keep the consumers satisfied.

Although the paradigms and processes discussed above have had some positive effects and created opportunities for the church, the purpose of the section above was focused on describing the challenges these paradigms and processes have created for the church and in turn the church leader. Nolte and Dreyer (2009:2) correctly assert that the church leader’s interaction with people as well as their perception of their role and function within their congregation and the wider community can no longer be thought of in the same manner.

Society has indeed become more complex as paradigms shift, and processes converge and exert influence on people’s worldviews. Complexity means rapid, unpredictable, non-linear change (Fullan, 2001:ix). Reality is that two people living side by side might perceive and experience the same phenomenon radically different (Mead, 1991:31). Moreover, one person might perceive a certain sector of reality through one paradigm and another sector of life through another.

Thus, church leaders are faced with the task of leading sophisticatedly and persevering passionately amidst the messiness of complexity. On the one hand, failure to respond in a rapidly changing environment will lead to extinction and yet, a quick, injudicious decision could deliver an equally fatal blow (Fullan, 2001:ix).

2.5.2 Taxing demands and challenges associated with the ministry

Although it is true that church leaders can experience the ministry as fulfilling, a general consensus exists that ministry places numerous demands on the person of the church leader

(see Adams *et al.*, 2017:149; Buys, 2008:24; Coetzer, 2006:9; Du Toit, 2009:vi; Grobbelaar, 2007:4; Jackson, 2017:1; Janse van Vuuren, 2005:6; Joubert, 2018:iii; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:1; Visker *et al.*, 2017:952). Furthermore, the plethora of demands associated with ministry is diverse in nature, requiring a wide range of skills and competencies. The section below will describe some of the taxing demands and challenges commonly associated with 21st-century ministry.

2.5.2.1 Role expectations

The complex worldviews of people shape how they perceive the role of the church and in turn that of its leaders. In the Christendom paradigm which emerged at the beginning of the fourth century, the role of the church leader was considered a high-status role; it was clear and unquestioned; it was central, predictable, and carried authority (Mead, 1991:32). Today, this is no longer the case as power shifts and the Christendom paradigm disintegrates (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:2; Mead, 1991:33; Nell, 2015:6). Although the post-Christendom era is welcomed by some, it is indeed accompanied by confusion and uncertainty as church leaders grapple with their roles and identities while their authority comes under pressure (Mead, 1991:34; Nel, 2015a:176). It caused a paradigm shift that has largely contributed to the perception that the church is no longer essential or even contributing to the individual's religious life (Irvine, 1997:57). It is a shift that has removed the church from the centre of cultural and social life and assigned it to the private sphere of life (Nel, 2015a:176).

Nevertheless, even in the post-Christendom society, there are certain expectations regarding the way church leaders should conduct themselves. There is a certain "public ownership" that surrounds the church resulting in the basic assumption that public access to the church and the services of church leaders should be granted upon request, even to those who never attend or support the church (Irvine, 1997:8). Moreover, these services are often expected at a very low cost, if not for free. This is seen in the still commonly held idea of church weddings, burials, counselling, and baby dedications, for example. Furthermore, church leaders are expected to be actively involved and visible in the community (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:7; Putter & Lotter, 2010:106; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:1).

Also, a higher standard is a trademark of society's expectations of those who see themselves as called to ministry in comparison to those in other professions (Irvine, 1997:8). Church leaders are expected to continually and consistently demonstrate, amongst other things, self-confidence, self-awareness, respect, accountability, responsibility, integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, love, care, sensitivity, hospitality, and generosity (Putter & Lotter, 2010:106). At all times, church leaders are expected to be role models in relation to their spiritual and

personal lives as well as their interpersonal relationships (Putter & Lotter, 2010:106). Although the reality that church leaders should set a good example is Scriptural (Titus 1:7–14; 1 Timothy 3:2; James 3:1; 1 Corinthians 11:1), society's expectations create an environment in which the church leader as a human being who is also in need of God's grace and forgiveness struggles, often in isolation, against sin. Moments of weakness and failure is usually met with harsh criticism and public shame.

The unrealistic expectations regarding the role of church leaders are not limited to those outside the church. The majority of church members is unsure about the hard work ministry entails and what the church leader does besides officiating Sunday services and the occasional wedding and funeral (Buys, 2008:25; Chartrand, 2017:1; Prime & Begg, 2004:142). Thus, they ignorantly assume that the church leader, as a paid staff member, should be available to respond to all requests and needs. Church leaders are expected and even pressured to respond to a diverse array of demands that arise from members who have become more and more individualised in their thinking and vocalise an increased desire for diversity (Irvine, 1997:62). Heitink (as cited in Nel, 2015a:41) notes that the current era is a time where the individual is “over-evaluated”, usually at the expense of the community. Moreover, as church members become more educated and move to more urbanised locations, their expectations in terms of preaching, leadership, counselling, teaching, etc. also evolve. Church leaders are under continuous pressure to be relevant and in touch with not only the needs of the congregation but also those of the individual as they compete for the little time people have (Putter & Lotter, 2010:109).

Because most churches are too small to be able to afford appointing multiple staff members, most pastors function as generalists doing a bit of everything in order to keep the boat afloat (Buys, 2008:1). The roles implied by the various functions and expectations are those of spiritual leader, mediator, preacher, guide, advisor, administrator, financial advisor, manager, organiser, teacher, natural leader, counsellor, facilitator, social worker, and educator (Dreyer, 2016a:156; Keizer *et al.*, 1983:106; Putter & Lotter, 2010:108; Putter, 2010a:3; Ream, 2016:2; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:1). Essentially, church leaders are in many cases expected to be a substitute for God (Coetzer, 2013:20).

Also, church leaders are faced with the gruelling task of intergenerational ministry and often get caught in the cross-fire as a result. They are responsible for the care and spiritual growth of church members at various life stages whether just starting with school, just married, or just retired, for example (Buys, 2008:1; Putter & Lotter, 2010:104,107). Church leaders are expected to make the gospel, tradition, and theology of the Christian faith relevant for the modern person, their worldview, and daily life without resulting in reductionism (Irvine, 1997:71–72; Putter &

Lotter, 2010:109). At the same time, however, there is the need to accommodate the older generations who are comfortable with how things have been in the past (Irvine, 1997:72).

What further adds to the complexity, is the need for church leaders to lead in an increasingly culturally diverse context. It is becoming more and more important for church leaders to be aware of and familiar with the interests and concerns of a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:4). Moreover, they need to be able to build relationships in a multicultural context (Putter & Lotter, 2010:111). It must be mentioned that the South African context, which unfortunately is still marked by racist and xenophobic attitudes permeating the church, makes this task even more taxing (see Baloyi, 2018:1; Foot & Van den Berg, 2014:43; Pillay, 2017:6).

For female church leaders, there is often the added pressure to prove their competency and the very right to be in a leadership position (Irvine, 1997:78; Mitchell, 2017:1). For years, patriarchal dominance has been emphasised in religious organisations (Irvine, 1997:78; Ojong, 2017:126; Truman, 2010:1). Although women have been formally allowed to serve as leaders in a number of denominations, there remains a deadlock when it comes to practice. In relation to African churches, for example, Ojong (2017:126) contends that cultural and traditional practices, which in many ways promote gender inequality and stereotypes, remain intact and difficult to change. Men are still viewed as leaders who actively shape the church whereas women are viewed as subordinates who follow and receive knowledge (Ojong, 2017:129). Consequently, many men and even women are not ready to respond to women as church leaders.

All in all, there is a shrinking commitment and growing expectation from church members and society in relation to the church and its leaders. The role of the church leader has indeed gone from a “high-status/low-stress profession to a low-status/high-stress profession” (Mead, 1991:53).

2.5.2.2 Pastoral care

The total person of the pastor is involved in the scope of pastoral care. Pastoral care places intense emotional, mental, spiritual, and even physical demands on the person of the church leader. Sorenson (2018:40) contends that it was a universal conviction among the ancients that the call to ministry encompassed particular spiritual hazards and therefore should not be entered into lightly. Sorenson (2018:40) cites the words of Gregory the Great, amongst others, to support his argument: “Lest he who recalls the diseases of others to health by remedies should himself swell through neglect of his own health; lest in helping others he desert himself; lest in lifting up others he fall”.

Church leaders are often called upon to assist with the trauma, sickness, suffering, loss, and grief of church members and the community (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:7; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:4). When people experience a crisis in their lives, whether it be relational, economic, physical, or spiritual, they often turn to church leaders, if not as first choice then as last resort. Consequently, things such as comforting a family who suffered the sudden loss of a loved one, advising exhausted parents whose adolescent is addicted to drugs, supporting a young mother who is being violently abused by her fiancé to gather the courage to get out, and counselling a husband who has lost his job and is contemplating suicide are all too common in the life of church leaders.

When unexpected events of suffering and unexplainable disasters occur, church leaders are expected to reconcile the existential paradoxes of life as humans search for meaning in the midst of suffering (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:7; Louw, D.J., 2015b:1). In these vulnerable and critical moments, church leaders need to embody the presence of God, “enfleshing” His compassion (Louw, D.J., 2015b:14).

Church leaders, in a sense, offer to absorb some of the trauma and pain and help the victim carry it (Fourie, 2008:65). At the same time, however, church leaders run the risk of overextending themselves and feeling responsible for the other (Coetzer, 2006:28). If church leaders do not practise diligence to ensure that they care in a healthy manner, they will inevitably end up feeling overwhelmed and helpless (Coetzer, 2006:28).

Fourie (2008:65) asserts that trauma is indeed contagious. The constant exposure to human suffering and excessive overidentification with it place immense demands on the person of the church leader and can lead to compassion fatigue (Louw, D., 2015a:2). The more emotional demands the church leader needs to deal with, the more likely it becomes that these stressors might interfere with their nonwork and home relationships as well as their spiritual activities (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:8).

Another aspect of pastoral care that places high demands on the person of the church leader is dealing with the sin of others (Grobbelaar, 2007:34,170). Church leaders often feel overly responsible for the spiritual and emotional growth of church members (Grobbelaar, 2007:108). Welch (as cited by Grobbelaar, 2007:34) maintains that the church leader can as a result of the sin of others experience feelings of shame, guilt, and vulnerability that can be equated with the guilt, shame, and vulnerability they experience as a result of their own sin. Furthermore, when assisting a person who has fallen in sin, Galatians 6:1 warns that the church leader is tasked with correcting that person in a spirit of gentleness without succumbing to temptation themselves (Grobbelaar, 2007:127; Prime & Begg, 2004:283).

2.5.2.3 Leadership and management

Simply stated, leadership refers to seeking constructive and adaptive change whereas management refers to providing consistency and order (Burns *et al.*, 2013:27). Although most church leaders would prefer to delegate these tasks and can to an extent, if their church size and income allows it, they need to accept that if they want to thrive in ministry, they will have to fulfil leadership and managerial functions to some degree (Burns *et al.*, 2013:26–27).

Leadership is critical to the health and resilience of the church (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:2). Church leaders are expected to lead effectively. Under their leadership, the congregation must go about its activities effectively, efficiently, and in good order (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:738). Church leaders need to be able to provide strategic leadership and determine where the church currently finds itself, where it needs to be in, for example, five years, and how to get there (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:747–748).

What makes this a challenging task is the reality that the 21st century requires a type of leadership other than the autocratic top-down style that was a trademark of the Christendom paradigm (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:3; Nell, 2015:2,6). There has indeed been a clear shift in power, not only in church circles but also around the world (Nell, 2015:2,6). Leadership is no longer understood as residing in the personal capital of one key individual but rather “in the processes of many” (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:3). In this changing context, church leaders need to function as servants who equip and enable the body of Christ to advance the *Missio Dei* (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:3; Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:737).

In relation to church management, there are, or at least there should be, profound differences between a business and a congregation (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:737). Nevertheless, the church, as an institution, exists in the same world as other businesses and organisations. The church encounters the same political, social, economic, and environmental factors and therefore has to be managed in ways similar to other businesses and organisations (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:737).

Thus, even though the church leader is responsible for the spiritual care, growth, and mobilisation of church members, an increasing part of their responsibilities are related to administrative and managerial functions (Buys, 2008:2; Irvine, 1997:74). The list below provides just a glimpse into the managerial and administrative functions that 21st-century church leaders encounter. These tasks can place taxing demands on the person of the church leader, even more so in cases where the church leader is not adequately prepared to fulfil them:

- Church leaders need a basic understanding of financial administration in order to provide oversight and assist the financial committee in making wise decisions with regard to church finances (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:739).
- Church leaders need to be able to chair a variety of meetings and provide strategic guidance effectively (Putter & Lotter, 2010:110). Thus, they also need to be aware of proper meeting procedure and documentation.
- Church leaders need to ensure sound governance and compliance with the legal requirements associated with SARS, Workmen's Compensation, UIF, Department of Labour, etc.
- Managing diversity is another task the church leader of the 21st century needs to fulfil considering the multiculturalism of society and the importance of intergenerational worship (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:750).
- Church leaders are confronted with important decisions and problem-solving issues on a daily basis and therefore need to possess effective decision-making and problem-solving competencies (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:750). These issues do not necessarily have a clear right or wrong answer (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149). Scenarios like these expose church leaders to criticism (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149).
- Church leaders need to be competent organisers and communicators as they have to coordinate and empower the different teams in their congregation (Putter & Lotter, 2010:104,106). At the same time, they have to promote cooperation and unity within the various staff and volunteer teams. This is challenging considering the diverse priorities, personalities, and histories of these people (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149).
- Church leaders need to be able to manage responsible, proactive change which needs to be a constant occurrence in any church (Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:748).
- Church leaders must often act as mediators and manage conflict in the congregation in an attempt to maintain the peace and keep teams focused (Putter & Lotter, 2010:106).

2.5.2.4 Conflict

Nel (2015a:234) asserts that it is generally assumed that change creates conflict for those who resist it as well as for those who embrace it. Conflict is part of every normal congregation and can be a positive force or catalyst in the process of reformation (Miller, 2016:86; Nel, 2015a:216). Unfortunately, both inter- and intrapersonal conflict are recognised as major stressors in ministry and one of the main reasons why church leaders fail to passionately persevere (Joynt 2017:2; Niemann, 2017:3; Prevost, 2016:320,323,325; Ream, 2016:27,29). Inter- and intrapersonal conflict could arise in ministry for a number of reasons:

- The person of the church leader and his/her leadership style does not always coincide with the person of the office as expected by the congregation. Because these expectations are linked to strongly held beliefs and values, unrealistic, unstated, and unclear expectations inevitably result in unmet expectations which give rise to feelings of anxiety, guilt, and frustration, which ultimately culminate in tension and conflict (Prevost, 2016:324; Ream, 2016:3).
- The church leader still operates and thinks from a modern paradigm whereas individuals in his/her congregation and the community that he/she serves operate and think from a postmodern paradigm or vice versa (Nolte & Dreyer, 2009:1).
- Church leaders work with and minister to people with personality profiles that are divergent from their own (Niemann, 2017:8). Divergent personality styles approach and interpret things differently, thus creating an opportunity for conflict.
- Church leaders sometimes have to work with or be submissive to leaders (mentors, senior pastors, denominational representatives, etc.) who practice a toxic leadership style marked by behaviours such as poor conflict handling, favoritism, “labelling” subordinates, passivity, unethical behaviour, poor or lack of communication, etc. (Joynt, 2017:7–8).

2.5.2.5 Lack of resources

The role volunteers play in the functions, operations, and ministry of the church is undeniable. Nel (2015a:147) asserts that “the whole body expresses the ministry of Christ”. Unfortunately, the quickly paced and success-driven society of today has created an environment in which the church needs to compete for people’s time. The church is no longer the social centre of families. It has become just another item fighting for space on an already overstrained schedule. It is deemed unreasonable of the church to expect more than an hour per week as people struggle to balance the demands of success, work, personal needs, family, and daily living (Irvine, 1997:61). The more uninvolved church members become, the more involved the church leader becomes (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:7). Church leaders often resort to workaholicism when they get tired of passive church members and volunteers saying no (Miller, 2016:85).

Moreover, church income is largely dependent on the giving of church members. Giving is essential for the continuation of the church and its mission (Burnette, 2016:62). Unfortunately, numerous churches struggle financially. Church leaders are firstly tasked with setting an example in cheerful and faithful giving and secondly, they are responsible for educating their congregants on biblical stewardship (Burnette, 2016:62). This, however, poses a source of stress for many church leaders since their own financial stability is related to whether or not church members respond and give faithfully.

2.5.2.6 Challenges related to the personal life of the church leader

a. Vague boundaries

The regular occurrence of uncommon events, coupled with a frequent lack of policy and procedure, creates an environment in which roles and boundaries are often ill-defined (Prevost, 2016:324). The majority of helping professions have a built-in defence mechanism that allocates and keeps work efforts within certain recognised boundaries (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2). Church leaders, however, do not enjoy such a defence mechanism in relation to their work (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2).

Church leaders often have difficulty distinguishing between being on duty and off duty as the lines between work, family, and personal responsibilities blur (Burns *et al.*, 2013:15; Joubert, 2018:110). Furthermore, church leaders are expected to be accessible to the congregation and community at all times (Putter & Lotter, 2010:104). Church members sometimes show up unannounced at church leaders' homes or corner them in public settings with taxing issues (Joubert, 2018:110). The needs and crises of the church and community often take precedence over personal and family issues (Buys, 2008:2; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:4). Research has shown that the intrusive demands placed on church leaders and their families have a detrimental effect on the attitude and well-being of the church leader (Buys, 2008:2).

In addition, the nature of ministry, which makes it difficult to define success, increases the difficulty for leaders to set and maintain boundaries. Results are not always immediately visible or even tangible (Joubert, 2018:109). Although some measure a church's success by indicators such as financial affluence and numerical growth, spiritual growth, for example, remains difficult to measure even if attendance is climbing (Ream, 2016:3). Thus, church leaders often work long hours chasing a definition of success often imposed by their own unrealistic expectations or those of others. In one survey conducted in 2001, it was found that 50% of the church leaders who responded spent less than 10 hours a week with their families (Price, 2001:18).

b. Family

The impact the stressors related to ministry have on the church leader's family is widely recognised (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149; Burns *et al.*, 2013:25; Grobbelaar, 2007:115; Joubert, 2018:111; Miller, 2016:86; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2). When the church leader is stressed, it is their role in relation to their family that often suffers the

most (Grobelaar, 2007:115). Consequently, many church leaders feel guilty about not sufficiently attending to the needs of their family (Grobelaar, 2007:115).

Moreover, family members are often directly exposed to and affected by ministry stressors such as presumptuous expectations, personal criticism, family criticism, and boundary ambiguity (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149). In a survey conducted in the United States amongst 722 spouses of protestant pastors, almost half of the respondents agreed that it felt like their family lived in a fishbowl (Banks, 2017:18). Out of the participants, 79% said they were expected to be “a model family” (Banks, 2017:18).

According to Lee (as cited in Joubert, 2018:112), there exists a general expectation that church leaders’ children must be better mannered and spiritually more mature than the average child in the congregation or community. Furthermore, the spouse of the church leader is usually understood to be part of a package deal (Joubert, 2018:112). Hence, the spouse of the church leader often has to share in the demands of ministry and the ensuing exhaustion but does not necessarily get to share in the work satisfaction and positive impact of empathy and consideration (Joubert, 2018:112; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2).

c. *Loneliness*

Church leaders and their spouses often become lonely in ministry and separated from “meaningful human interaction” (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:7; Irvine, 1997:99). It is important to note that research differentiates between social isolation and loneliness. Social isolation is defined as an objective state in which there is an absence of supportive informal relationships or contact with others (Glover, 2018:26; Kaye & Singer, 2019:4). Loneliness, however, refers to a subjective state in which there is a discrepancy between an individual’s expectations or desires of relationships and their perception of the quality and quantity of current relationships (Ciolfi, 2019:25,27; Glover, 2018:27; Kaye & Singer, 2019:4).

This distinction is important because people who are not socially isolated can still experience loneliness (Glover, 2018:27). In other words, being surrounded by people does not automatically mean a church leader’s social needs are being met. Church leaders are seldom viewed or appreciated as human beings who have relational needs and interests (Burns *et al.*, 2013:20). Rather than perceiving church leaders as fellow Christians on the same journey towards sanctification and maturity in Christ, church members often view the church leader solely in terms of their leadership role as a paid staff member (Burns *et al.*, 2013:20; Irvine, 1997:101).

In the minds of many, the ideal church leader is regarded as someone who is infallible, someone who can walk on water (Coetzer, 2006:78). Thus, fear of exposing their vulnerability and failures and fear of rejection keep church leaders from seeking much-needed help at times (Coetzer, 2006:78–79). This also prevents in-depth social and personal interaction from occurring (Irvine, 1997:101). Thus, church leaders often sense a lack of support from congregation members (Prevost, 2016:324). Church leaders are constantly, whether consciously or subconsciously, making careful calculations about who they can trust with deeper concerns (Miller, 2016:81–82). Needless to say, very few if any, past the test. In the survey mentioned above conducted amongst 722 spouses of church leaders, 69% indicated that there were “very few people” in whom they could confide (Banks, 2017:18). Thus, church leaders feel they cannot really share with someone in their congregations when faced with a personal crisis (Joubert, 2018:109).

Irvine’s (1997:101–102) research indicated that this lonely state is not only socially but also professionally (serving solo in a certain setting as opposed to serving in a multistaffed team), interdisciplinary (lack of support from other professions) and intradisciplinary (lack of support from other church leaders). Coetzer (2006:78) marks that there is a general resistance amongst church leaders in getting help. As a result, the spouse of the church leader often becomes “a nuclear waste dumping site” as the church leader processes and engages in reflection (Miller, 2016:82).

This is alarming considering the positive impact trusted relationships and social support have been found to have in terms of quality of life and negating the negative impact of stress (Kim *et al.*, 2016:65; Prevost, 2016:330 Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:3). Moreover, church leaders, like any human being, need accountable relationships in their lives that will stimulate continued spiritual growth.

d. Finances

Church leaders often suffer from financial stress (Coetzer, 2006:74; Coetzer, 2013:19; Grobbelaar, 2007:111; Joubert, 2018:109; Price, 2001:18; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:9). They receive low compensation, in comparison with other professions, for long hours of work (Grobbelaar, 2007:111; Joubert, 2018:109). Not knowing how they will provide for retirement, educational debts, and the purchase of a home are some of the financial concerns that plague the minds of church leaders (Banks, 2017:18; Grobbelaar, 2007:111; Price, 2001:18). Partnered with and compounding the stress caused by finances is the guilt felt by church leaders as they wrestle with providing for their family and the concept of being called to serve instead of merely pursuing a career (Coetzer, 2006:71; Price, 2001:18). On the other hand, for

some the financial stress is not so much related to the amount they earn but rather to the feeling of being exposed to the congregation (Grobelaar, 2007:111).

2.5.2.7 Ministry preparation and continual development

Given that church leaders have one of the most challenging and thought-provoking occupations (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:7), quality ministry preparation is of vital importance. Putter and Lotter (2010:102) refer to research conducted in 1990 by Erasmus which found that AFM pastors who completed shorter training courses than, for example, Dutch Reformed pastors were more prone to burnout when compared to other helping professions and denominations. Today, however, even what is understood as quality ministry preparation seems to fall short in light of the challenges church leaders face in the 21st century. The purpose of this section is not to provide a holistic description of various ministry preparation programmes but merely to highlight some of the challenges that have been voiced by church leaders across various denominations.

According to Godfrey (as cited by Morrow, 2018:2), only 10% of what ministry requires from church leaders is covered by formal training. Morse (as cited by Joubert, 2018:110) found that 90% of the church leaders who participated in his research felt inadequately prepared for ministry. Dreyer (2015:3) also notes that a large percentage of church leaders feel their theological education did not adequately prepare them for the role they would have to play in church and society.

Osmer (2008:15) argues that many contemporary theological schools fail to adequately prepare church leaders for the interconnected nature of ministry in the congregational system as well as in the congregation's interaction with the context in which it is embedded. Due to specialisation in the academic world, sharp divisions usually exist between the various subject areas and scholarly fields (Osmer, 2008:15). Thus, pastoral care often takes a very individualistic approach and neglects to take into account the interconnected web of life which exerts immense influence on the individual (Osmer, 2008:15–16).

During summits held with groups of pastors, Burns *et al.* (2013:26) found that leadership and management was another aspect that did not receive much attention in ministry preparation although it consumes more of a church leader's time than any other responsibility. Elkington *et al.* (2015:1–2) also assert that formal theological training does not adequately prepare church leaders in the area of leadership, neither does it support them in the process of their ongoing leadership development after seminary. Grobler and Van der Walt (2008:739) also assert that the practical exposure church leaders get to organisational management and leadership is

limited, may leave them vulnerable and compromise their ability to fulfil their calling. Joubert's (2018:148) empirical research amongst AFM church leaders provides further evidence to the reality that church leaders often enter the ministry unprepared in the area of financial and general management. As a result, they are vulnerable to manipulation and experience additional stress and pressure (Joubert, 2018:148)

Coetzer identifies a gap in ministry preparation that is of particular interest to this study. He contends that the preparation of the person of the church leader is neglected in ministry preparation (Coetzer, 2006:21). He further maintains that the church, in general, has failed to cultivate a culture amongst church leaders that respects, much less values, self-care (Coetzer, 2006:22). Ministry preparation is primarily focused on academic preparation and covers traditional topics such as hermeneutics, biblical knowledge, spiritual formation, theology, etc. sufficiently (Coetzer, 2006:21). Critical factors that are essential to passionate perseverance in ministry such as personal and emotional growth, basic psychological concepts indispensable to interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, dealing with role ambiguity, and dealing with sexual temptation, for example, receive little attention (Coetzer, 2006:22–23).

Chapman (as cited in Miller, 2016:81) agrees with this observation, asserting that ministry killers are not rooted so much in the church leader's ability to fulfil the expected tasks but rather in the church leader's life skills, behavioural patterns, and character. Chapman (as cited in Miller, 2016:81) observes that the majority of church leaders leaves the ministry because of conflict, lack of resources, and sin which is usually of a sexual nature. In light of his research, Morse (as cited in Joubert, 2018:110) also motivates that theological seminaries need to emphasise the personal ethics and personal effectiveness of church leaders in addition to teaching religious constructs.

Nevertheless, it must be said that shifting all the blame to inadequate seminary preparation will not suffice in the attempt to progress towards a workable solution. The best seminary training ten years ago will fall short considering the rapid and pervasive change of the current era. Thus, continual training and development are not negotiable for the church leader who strives to persevere passionately and thrive in 21st-century ministry.

The researcher argues that this includes the continual development of the various resilience competencies mentioned earlier in this chapter. Contemplating the future church at the beginning of the 21st century, Mead (1991:54) already emphasised with a sense of urgency the need for continued development and support after seminary which builds on the experiences of each successive class. Mead (1991:34) recognises the stress and burnout caused by the growing crevasse between the 21st-century environment and church leaders who were trained

by institutions and ordained by denominations and organisations which were primarily shaped by the rapidly disintegrating Christendom paradigm.

Francis *et al.* (as cited by Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:3) contend that in order to be able to develop effective coping strategies for the diverse stressors associated with the ministry, church leaders need continual ministry-related education. When church leaders neglect their own growth and maturation, they essentially neglect their calling which will eventually have an impact on their overall health and well-being as church leaders (Morrow, 2018:4).

Putter (2010a:1–8) conducted extensive research motivating the need for the continual development of church leaders in the AFM Church. Putter (2010a:2) found, however, that time and financial constraints are the two main reasons why church leaders do not consider engaging in continual theological development.

2.5.2.8 Denominational support

Although strategies differ slightly, denominations across the board seem to experience barriers to the cultivation and implementation of support structures that are perceived as safe. Prevost (2016:324) contends that church leaders often feel as though their colleagues offer only a limited amount of support. Grobbelaar's (2007:116) research under South African church leaders from the Dutch Reformed tradition, for example, confirms that although church leaders have good relationships with other church leaders in their community, they seldom feel comfortable to discuss issues that affect them on a personal level. Joubert's (2018:147) research amongst AFM church leaders also found that some regarded their colleagues as unreliable confidants.

Furthermore, denominational support structures are often perceived as competitive in nature rather than supportive, merely providing a platform for the "successful" to boast (Grobbelaar, 2007:116; Irvine, 1997:79,169). The Dutch Reformed participants in Grobbelaar's (2007:116) study attested to this and mentioned the need for formal and informal support structures that actually allow them to be vulnerable.

Joubert (2018:147) conducted research under AFM pastors of which some reported that they also do not find support and an understanding ear in their district leaders. In his interviews with 10 church leaders who had left the ministry, Joynt (2017:1) found that a toxic leadership style demonstrated by properties such as favouritism, nepotism, abdication of responsibilities, poor conflict handling, passivity, labelling "subordinates", autocratic leadership tendencies, and

unethical behaviour amongst senior or denominational leaders was one of the factors related to church leaders' decision to leave full-time ministry. Putter (2010a:5) mentions the individualistic mind-sets of the older generations (i.e., the so-called silent generation, baby boomers, and generation X) who tend to think in terms of individual performance as opposed to team performance as a result of the teaching methods of their day and how this poses a challenge to the continual development of church leaders.

The lack of denominational support robs church leaders of the opportunity to obtain much-needed mentors. As is the case with any other study in the humanities field, students deal with highly theoretical ideas in the classroom, and when confronted with the practical realities of the real world, they often feel ill-equipped (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:5). Mentors can assist new church leaders to navigate these unfamiliar territories with greater effectivity.

The current era is a time that provokes feelings of uncertainty, fear, and even anxiety in many; it is a liminal time in which an epoch is coming to an end and people stand at the edge of the unknown (Niemandt, 2013:43). Scharmer (as cited by Niemandt, 2013:43) asserts that people today are witnesses to the collapse of an entire social structure. Niemandt (2013:45) highlights the role Christian leaders need to play in helping people navigate the rapid change. Uncertainty, disorientation, and confusion do not have to be the enemy of creative leadership but could, in fact, be its greatest partner (Niemandt, 2013:98–99). As Osmer (2008:21–22) explains, it is the feeling of coming up short that opens people up to re-evaluating their taken-for-granted world and embracing a new way of interpreting and being.

The description above of the 21st-century environment and the stressors that accompany it amplifies the need for resilient church leaders. As job demands increase, church leaders need to actively develop their personal resources since these can play a vital role in decreasing the negative impact of job stressors (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2). For church leaders to be able to rise to the challenge they

- need to have dealt with the unresolved issues of the past, being able to actively engage in the future;
- need to be realistically optimistic, filled with hope that inspires action;
- need to be able to approach problems creatively with a solution-orientated mindset;
- need to know and implement their skills and abilities;
- need to be self-aware, know their strengths and limitations and be able to recognise and deal with emotions in a healthy manner;
- need to be self-disciplined; and

- they need to have healthy relationships in their life from which they can draw encouragement and support.

2.6 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE WELL-BEING OF CHURCH LEADERS

Stress has become almost epidemic in the workplace (Redelinghuys, 2003:1). Stress is conceptualised as an expression of the manner in which a person interacts with their environment and the demands it places on them as well as the manner in which they handle the internal demands they place on themselves (Redelinghuys, 2003:1). Stress arises from an imbalance between one's perceived abilities and one's perceived circumstantial demands (Du Toit, 2009:8). Although not all stress is negative, an excessive amount of stress that is handled ineffectively or perceived as overwhelming can have a negative impact on an individual's well-being (Grobbelaar, 2007:1; Irvine, 1997:25; Niemann, 2013:3; Prevost, 2016:323).

Recognising the stressors and high demands associated with ministry which were briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, there has been a growing interest in the well-being of church leaders over the past decade amongst practitioners and researchers from around the globe (Adams *et al.*, 2017:147; Buys & Rothmann, 2010:2; Chartrand, 2017:1–2; Jackson, 2017:1–2; Prevost, 2016:315; Ream, 2016:1; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:1; Visker *et al.*, 2017:952; Webb *et al.*, 2016:266). Nevertheless, a limited number of empirical research has been conducted that sheds light on the well-being of church leaders in South Africa (e.g., Buys, 2008; Buys & Rothmann, 2010; Du Toit, 2009; Jansen Van Vuuren, 2005; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015). This is especially true for church leaders in the pentecostal faith tradition who account for the majority of responses in this empirical study – which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although only limited empirical research results on the well-being of South African church leaders are available, the existing research suggests that the demands of ministry place all who respond to the call at risk for burnout, depression, compassion fatigue, and other stress-related mental and physical illnesses. Some of the phenomena that influence church leaders' ability to passionately persevere will be discussed below and, where possible, statistics as related to South African church leaders will be relayed. As the discussion progresses, the interconnected nature of these phenomena will become apparent; one often leaving the church leader vulnerable for the other and vice versa.

2.6.1 Burnout

Burnout first emerged as a social problem shaped by pragmatic concerns (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993:2). Freudenberger, a psychiatrist, and Maslach, a social psychological researcher, were the first to identify and label burnout and separately authored the first few articles on burnout in the 1970s (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993:2). It must be mentioned, however, that although burnout was “discovered” in the 1970’s, psychological states that match its description were already surfacing in fictional works as early as 1922 and case studies as early as 1953 (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993:3).

Maslach (2003:189) defines job burnout as a psychological syndrome which stems from “a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job”. Burnout refers to overperformance; due to an excessive demand placed on a person’s skills and resources, the self becomes depleted (Louw, D.J., 2015a:4–5). Both quantitative (e.g., too much work and too little time) and qualitative (e.g., role ambiguity and role conflict) job demands have been found to influence burnout (Buys & Rothmann, 2010:1). Coetzer (2006:28) explains that at its core burnout is a pattern of emotional overload marked by little appreciation or reward which is usually accompanied and fuelled by a sense of helplessness. Burnout is not an indication of laziness but rather of commitment, responsibility, and care (Fourie, 2008:97–98; Ream, 2016:3). Thus, Van der Merwe (2006:138) refers to burnout as the sickness of the dedicated.

Burnout has three dimensions, namely exhaustion (feeling frustrated, fatigued, and used up), sense of inefficacy (feeling like a failure unable to accomplish the job requirements), and cynicism (expecting the worst in others and even actively disliking them) (Maslach, 2003:189; Miller, 2015:204). Thus, it has been classified as a state of mental fatigue, emotional exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment, and depersonalisation (Buys & Rothmann, 2010:1; Coetzer, 2006:27).

Coetzer (2006:19) contends that burnout represents not only a personal breakdown but also a breakdown in interpersonal and organisational relationships. Burnout also incorporates a spiritual aspect; burned-out individuals have reported feeling alienated from God and a loss of purpose, meaning, and faith (Coetzer, 2006:19; Fourie, 2008:98; Van der Merwe, 2006:141,172). Thus, burnout affects the entire being; it has physical, intellectual, and spiritual implications (Van der Merwe, 2006:138). Consequently, a burned-out church leader essentially becomes ineffective and even destructive in relation to the fulfilment of their calling and the performance of their day to day responsibilities at church and at home.

Since its “discovery” in the 1970s, burnout has become an all too familiar phenomenon confronting individuals, organisations, and health institutions (Buys & Rothmann, 2010:1). It is a common social problem in many human services professions (Burnette, 2016:4; Fourie, 2008:97; Maslach, 2003:189). Although research focused specifically on South African church leaders in relation to burnout is limited, the few empirical studies conducted seem to suggest that South African church leaders are also at great risk of burnout and that for some it might already be a reality.

In 2001, Böhmer and Spangenberg (2001:9–11) conducted quantitative empirical research amongst 157 South African Dutch Reformed church leaders and found that 21% of them were experiencing symptoms of depression. Almost 50% experienced anxiety of which 34,4% experienced significantly high levels of anxiety. The combination of depression symptoms and high anxiety levels is typical of burnout and thus Böhmer and Spangenberg (2001:9–11) concluded that the participating church leaders were at high risk of burnout at the time of the study.

Grobbelaar (2007:7–8) conducted qualitative empirical research focused on the prevalence of stress amongst Reformed church leaders. Out of the nine church leaders who participated voluntarily, seven attested to experiencing symptoms of burnout during the time of the study or at some stage in their ministry. These symptoms included low motivation and energy, frustration, difficulty in controlling emotions, confusion, and collapse (Grobbelaar, 2007:114–115).

Based on research with 87 South African Dutch Reformed church leaders, Du Toit (2009:iv) concludes that the incidence of burnout along with indicators of poor physical health is common amongst the church leaders who participated in the study. Burnout was lower (12%) amongst church leaders with higher levels of physical activity and higher (20%) amongst church leaders with lower levels of physical activity (Du Toit, 2009:iv).

Buys and Rothmann (2010:4) also focused on South African church leaders from the Reformed tradition. They found that church leaders, like other professionals, encounter job stressors that can place immense demands on their resources and inhibit the development of supportive relationships as well as growth (Buys & Rothmann, 2010:8). In addition, these stressors can lead to the experience of an increased feeling of burnout and health-related problems (Buys & Rothmann, 2010:8).

Niemann (2013:1) provides unique insight into the burnout status of Reformed church leaders by investigating the burnout levels present amongst postgraduate theological students of this

denomination. Niemann (2013:1–2) found that out of the 26 students enrolled in 2009, 75% experienced burnout to some extent. Furthermore, out of these, 35% experienced acute burnout whereas 15% could be classified as to be in the breakdown phase of burnout (Niemann, 2013:1).

In relation to AFM church leaders, Joubert (2018:8–9) conducted qualitative empirical research with five church leaders focusing on identifying the pressures related to ministry, how these influences the person of the church leader, and how church leaders handle this. It is clear from Joubert's (2018:157) research that church leaders experience immense pressure in ministry and have developed different ways to cope with it. Out of the five church leaders, however, four indicated that they experienced the ministry as fulfilling (Joubert, 2018:155–156).

Although the empirical research discussed above is not nearly enough to make any conclusive statements about the burnout status of South African church leaders, a general consensus exists that ministry, regardless of geographical location, can be hazardous due to the wide array of job demands and stressors (Adams *et al.*, 2017:149–150; Burnette, 2016:4; Buys & Rothmann, 2010:8; Coetzer, 2006:9; Du Toit, 2009:vi; Grobbelaar, 2007:4–5; Joubert, 2018:156–157; Putter & Lotter, 2010:104,106–107,108–109; Ream, 2016:1; Redelinghuys, 2003:3; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:1; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:1; Visker, *et al.*, 2017:952). In light of the need for further empirical research into the burnout status of South African church leaders, the value of this study and the need for others like it become even more apparent.

2.6.2 Compassion fatigue

The term *compassion* refers to being “touched in your innermost being; a feeling of empathy; to reach out; to become involved with the pain and needs of others” (Coetzer, 2006:81; Van der Merwe, 2006:48). Louw, D.J. (2015:4) states that “compassion operates on the basis of self-emptying for the sake of the other”. Although compassion is an integral part of the ministry, overexposure to the trauma of others could lead to compassion fatigue since trauma affects all those involved, even those who offer support (Fourie, 2008:3; Louw, D.J., 2015a:1). Sharing in the pain of others or feeling responsible for them can place a heavy burden on the shoulders of the church leader and becomes a source of stress for them (Snelgar *et al.*, 2017:248). Constant exposure to graphical accounts of extreme loss, trauma, and intentional human cruelty as well as exposure to the clients themselves and their fear, shame, and suffering deeply impact the helper (Fourie, 2008:80–81). As with burnout, compassion fatigue is seldom the result of incompetence or a lack of skills (Fourie, 2008:1). Fourie (2008:1) draws attention to the reality

that it is the most effective therapists who are the most vulnerable to the effects of trauma; it is their strength that becomes the basis for their emotional wounds and injury.

Compassion fatigue and burnout are interrelated to the same phenomena of exhaustion and overexposure which make it difficult to clearly distinguish between these concepts (Louw, D.J., 2015a:2). Whereas burnout is related to an overexposure to stress which results in withdrawal and desensitisation, compassion fatigue is related to overexposure to intense human suffering, overidentification and overinvestment (Louw, D.J., 2015a:2; Snelgar *et al.*, 2017:249). In both, however, a process of self-inflation typically occurs in which the person's attempt to cope becomes a symptom of the pathology itself (Louw, D.J., 2015a:2). In other words, people become driven to do more of what they were doing that got them in the unhealthy situation in the first place (Louw, D.J., 2015a:2).

Louw, D.J. (2015a:2) draws attention to the belief that compassion fatigue in pastoral ministry is more than emotional and physical exhaustion. Compassion fatigue wrestles with paradox, antimony, and polarity on a spiritual level (Louw, D.J., 2015a:3). Van der Merwe (2006:48) also contends that compassion fatigue has a spiritual aspect to it. It fundamentally describes "the barrier of spiritual exhaustion and its connection to depleted hope and an inappropriate theological framework of reference" (Louw, D.J., 2015a:2).

As church leaders attempt to come to grips with these contradictions, awareness of their own inability grows and places demands on their spiritual resources (Louw, D.J., 2015a:4). The helplessness and pain of others infiltrate the church leader's conceptualisation of suffering and pain and framework of meaning (Louw, D.J., 2015a:5). The result is a lack of spiritual resilience as vulnerability and an overwhelming sense of failure sets in in the face of human suffering which seems impossible to deal with in a sustainable way (Louw, D.J., 2015a:4).

Church leaders suffering from compassion fatigue often resort to irrational behaviour and a kind of obsession to help and replace other's suffering (Louw, D.J., 2015a:5). Secondary losses that can occur as a result of compassion fatigue are the deterioration of one's marriage, loss of faith, and ultimately resigning from ministry (Fourie, 2008:66).

Unfortunately, research on the compassion-fatigue status of South African church leaders is very limited. Fourie's (2008:118) empirical study on compassion fatigue had only six respondents out of a potential 193 Dutch Reformed church leaders. Out of the six respondents, 33,33% demonstrated a medium to high risk for compassion fatigue (Fourie, 2008:119). Van der Merwe's (2006:158) qualitative empirical study with eight individuals focused on the effective functioning of the Christian counsellor/therapist but only included two South African church

leaders. Van der Merwe (2006:168) found that 63% of the respondents have suffered from compassion fatigue. Van der Merwe (2006:168), however, feels that this is an inaccurate representation and that the percentage could be much higher since all the participants demonstrated limited knowledge of the concept of compassion fatigue as distinguished from burnout.

A more recent study conducted by Snelgar *et al.* (2017:257) with 273 South African church leaders from four denominations found that the participants did not experience alarmingly high levels of compassion fatigue. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, South African church leaders are expected to offer emotional and spiritual support to congregation and community members who experience adverse trauma and suffering which places them at risk for compassion fatigue. Thus, this study might provide some further insight into whether or not South African church leaders are indeed cultivating resilience competencies to sustain them in ministry and prevent the onset of compassion fatigue.

2.6.3 Depression

Depression is distinguished from ordinary emotions such as sorrow and sadness in that it is more persistent and intense; it denotes feelings of severe dejection (Johnson, 2016:1; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:3). Depression has been classified as a mood disturbance since the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:3). A mood is a pervasive and persistent emotional orientation experienced internally which influences an individual's behaviour and perception of the world (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:3).

Depression can be triggered by a number of things such as long-term stress, great loss, unresolved problems, financial stress, and the pressure to excel (Cordeiro, 2009:50–54). In cases of burnout, however, Coetzer (2006:32) contends that depression is nearly always a symptom, and as such it is the result of “adrenaline exhaustion” due to overexposure to stress and not necessarily a problem in itself. Post-adrenaline depression can occur after bouts of stress and high performance and usually blow over in these cases if the person allows for a period of rest and recuperation. Church leaders who typically experience it on a Monday after an intense weekend as they come off the adrenaline rush serve as a good example of such a bout (Van der Merwe, 2006:141).

Long-term and continued exposure to stress, however, eventually depletes the body's natural fuel which is produced biochemically by the different hormones, some of which provide an analgesic effect and others which function as neurotransmitters connecting individual brain cells

to one another (Cordeiro, 2009:51). As these hormonal levels decrease, the body resorts to producing adrenaline in order to keep the engines running (Cordeiro, 2009:51). Eventually a type of adrenaline addiction occurs and the body becomes dependent on greater amounts of adrenaline in order to keep up the required pace, and the eventual crash is more severe and more difficult to overcome (Cordeiro, 2009:51). Medication may assist in correcting the chemical imbalance in one's brain, but if one does not treat the underlying causes and triggers, healing will not be possible (Cordeiro, 2009:55). Medication will only offer a temporary fix.

Depression negatively influences aspects of an individual's life such as their interpersonal relationships, the pleasure gleaned from recreational activities, and work performance (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:3). Regardless of the source, depression limits a person's insight and judgement (Van der Merwe, 2006:45). Swanepoel *et al.* (2012:3) draw attention to the following cognitive mistakes individuals make during periods of depression:

- Arbitrary conclusions (conclusions are made without supporting evidence);
- selective withdrawal (focus is placed on specific details outside of context);
- generalisation (conclusions are made on the basis of one or two isolated incidences);
- exaggeration or underestimation (too much emphasis or too little emphasis is placed on the meaning of an event);
- personalisation (the individual tends to draw external events to themselves); and
- dualistic thinking (the individual tends to place events in one of two opposing categories).

The following are some of the symptoms associated with depression (Cordeiro, 2009:60–64):

- A sense of hopelessness – depressed individuals' thoughts are consumed by pessimistic views of themselves, their future, and their circumstances. They do not see things getting better.
- Frequent tears – depressed individuals feel easily overwhelmed.
- Difficulty concentrating – depressed individuals will experience regular if not constant fatigue and an inability to remain focused for long periods of time.
- Difficulty making decisions – depressed individuals struggle to engage problems rationally and are filled with uncertainty and ambivalence.
- Irritability – depressed individuals might experience anger, irrational sensitivity, and petulance.
- Insomnia – although the depressed individual might experience an increased desire to sleep, falling asleep will prove to be difficult.

- Lowered activity levels – getting up proves hard for the depressed individual. There is a general lack of interest in group activities and life in general. Finding energy to sustain responsibilities, let alone acting innovatively, proves difficult.
- Feelings of loneliness – the depressed individual feels no one understands, not even God.
- Lack of marital affection – the depressed individual usually feels a disinterest in their spouse and may experience a decrease in libido although in some cases, the desire for sex itself does not necessarily decrease. This is a recipe for moral failure. A growing desire for isolation and sexual release creates a volatile situation in which the lesser the commitment seems, the higher the attraction becomes. This makes the church leader extremely vulnerable to affairs, addictions, pornography, etc.
- Eating disorders – eating too much or too little accompanies depression.
- Aches and pains – headaches, stomach cramps, pain, hypertension, skin irritations, and other physical symptoms might accompany depression.

Once again, only limited insight was gained into the depression status of South African church leaders as a result of the literature study conducted. In 2001, Böhmer and Spangenberg (2001:8–10) conducted empirical research amongst 157 South African Dutch Reformed church leaders and 95 church board members who acted as the control group. The incidence of depression under the church leaders and church board members respectively was found to be 21% and 21,1% (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:9). This is higher than the depression rate for the general South African population which was 14,3% at the time the research was conducted (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:10).

The researchers highlight that the average age of the control group was 58,4, much older than that of the church leaders which was 42,2 (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:10). This is significant, because the majority of the church board members was retired or close to retirement which has been related to depression due to the feelings of loss of identity associated with the loss of, for example, career, status, family role, health, etc. (Böhmer & Spangenberg 2001:10). Thus, the fact that the same incidence of depression was found under church leaders who were much younger than the control group, testifies to the high depression rate under church leaders (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:10).

Furthermore, in relation to seven of the nine measurement items, church leaders had significantly higher scores, seeming to indicate that they were experiencing the symptoms of depression more intensely (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:10). These items were self-accusation, lack of satisfaction, feelings of guilt, irritability, feelings of sadness, social withdrawal, and dissatisfaction with self (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2001:10). Due to the

emotional and cognitive nature of the symptoms, the researchers deduce that the church leaders in this study group were likely experiencing depression as a symptom of burnout as opposed to clinical depression (Böhmer & Spangenberg, 2010:11).

Cooke (as cited in Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:3) asserts that in the first six months of 2002, the medical scheme of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa spent R1 168 000 on the distribution of anti-depressants to church leaders (on average 3 816 prescriptions).

Buys and Rothmann (2010:6–7) conducted a more recent study which found that South African church leaders experience heightened levels of depression as a result of mental distance and exhaustion, and when facing mental distance, exhaustion, and depression, their work engagement decreased. Swanepoel *et al.* (2012:5,7) found that out of a group of 53 Dutch Reformed church leaders, 40 had minimal levels of depression, six had medium levels of depression, and one person fell in the serious category.

2.6.4 Physical stress-related illnesses

Stress does not only have the potential to negatively impact the emotional and psychological capacities of an individual but can also have a negative impact on the physical aspects of an individual (Grobbelaar, 2007:1–2). Things that happen to church leaders psychologically have an impact on them physically and vice versa (Grobbelaar, 2007:2). The impact can be direct as the body responds biologically in reaction to events perceived as stressful, or it can be indirect as a result of the neglect of health-related behaviours or the application of unhealthy coping mechanisms during events perceived as stressful.

Nowadays there is little debate about whether life stress influences physical health (Slavich, 2016:348). The direct influence of stress on a person's physical health is demonstrated in a number of ways. For example, the function of the body's immune system is impaired during times of high stress that is not handled effectively, causing greater susceptibility to disease (Du Toit, 2009:26; Slavich, 2016:348–349). In addition, stress results in the release of the primary stress hormone, cortisol (Grobbelaar, 2007:1). Cortisol affects systems throughout the entire human body by increasing the heart rate which in turn impacts upon one's heart, lungs, circular system, and immune system (Grobbelaar, 2007:1). Moreover, researchers have implicated stress in poor clinical outcomes related to rheumatoid arthritis, cardiovascular disease, chronic pain, breast cancer, HIV/AIDS, and ovarian cancer (Slavich, 2016:348). Finally, stress has been linked to accelerated biological ageing as well as premature mortality (Slavich, 2016:348). In a sense, stress can result in a biological "wear and tear" of one's body (Slavich, 2016:349).

On the other hand, the indirect impact of stress on the physical health of individuals is seen in that individuals tend to neglect health-related behaviours such as exercising, getting enough sleep, and eating a balanced diet in times of acute stress (Du Toit, 2009:25–26). In addition, the indirect impact also manifests in the application of unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Obesity, for example, is one of the outcomes of an unhealthy coping mechanism, namely emotional eating, applied in response to stress. Some researchers view emotional eating as one of the main contributors to obesity in persons who encounter high-stress levels (Ford *et al.*, 2017:489; Lazarevich *et al.*, 2016:639; Manister & Gigliotti, 2016:136). Moreover, obesity has also been found to have a bidirectional relationship with depression; obesity increases the risk of the onset of depression, but depression also increases the risk of obesity (Lazarevich *et al.*, 2016:639). Obesity has been related to a number of health conditions such as hypertension, heart disease, stroke, skeletal disorders, diabetes, and hypercholesterolemia (Ford *et al.*, 2017:488; GBD 2015 Obesity Collaborators, 2017:14; Lindholm *et al.*, 2014:97). Obesity amongst church leaders has been found to be significantly higher than the rest of the population (Jackson, 2017:3; Manister & Gigliotti, 2016:136; Webb *et al.*, 2016:267–268).

As in the cases of burnout, compassion fatigue, and depression, empirical research on the physical stress-related illnesses of South African church leaders is limited. Once again, however, the research that is available indicates a need for concern and further research.

In 2006, Badenhorst and Fleischmann (2008:42) distributed an *Occupational Stress Inventory – Revised Edition* which was completed by 20 church leaders. The results indicated that the church leaders experienced high levels of stress, especially in terms of “responsibility”, in which 25% of them scored over 70%, and “overload”, in which 15% of them scored over 70% (Badenhorst & Fleischmann, 2008:43).

In 2007, Grobbelaar (2007:113) conducted qualitative empirical research with nine South African church leaders from the Reformed tradition. Eight of the nine church leaders who participated in the study described physical health problems that could be attributed to stress. These included diabetes, headaches, gastrointestinal problems, chronic fatigue, short-term memory loss, and sleeping problems (Grobbelaar 2007:113).

Du Toit (2009:iv) conducted research with a bigger sample of South African Dutch Reformed church leaders in 2009 and found that out of the 87 participants, a total of 25% indicated the presence of stress-related illness (21% attested to lower back pain, 21% attested to high levels of cholesterol, 15% attested to pain in shoulders, arms, and hands, 15% attested to hypertension). Joubert (2018:144–156) conducted qualitative research with AFM church leaders

on the experience of stress in ministry, but it focused on identifying stressors and the coping mechanisms employed by the participants rather than providing insight into the incidence of stress-related physical illness.

2.7 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS' COPING STRATEGIES

Coping can be seen as a foundational component which enables a person to adapt and develop in different situations (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:3). Coping is the changing cognitive, perceptual, and behavioural attempts which are aimed at handling intrinsic or extrinsic requirements perceived as difficult or challenging (Redelinghuys, 2003:5; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). Coping is a conscious, voluntary, and transactional process between the individual and their environment; it is a dynamic and complex process (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2).

In literature, a differentiation is made between coping as a strategy and coping as an outcome (Redelinghuys, 2003:21). Coping as a strategy refers to the different methods an individual implement in an attempt to control their situation whereas coping as an outcome is the eventual result of a particular strategy (Redelinghuys, 2003:21; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). For the purposes of this section, the focus rests on coping as a strategy rather than coping as an outcome. Coping is seen as an important moderator of stress; ineffective or dysfunctional coping strategies have been shown to lead to higher levels of depression, anxiety, and burnout (Du Toit, 2009:9; Redelinghuys, 2003:21; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). Thus, it is a person's attempt to handle a situation that is perceived as potentially harmful or stressful that is of importance to this study (Redelinghuys, 2003:18).

Research further differentiates between problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Redelinghuys, 2003:22; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). The former focuses on addressing the source of stress by identifying the problem, finding possible alternative solutions, and implementing a plan of action whereas the latter focuses on addressing and dealing with the emotional distress that is associated with the situation (Redelinghuys, 2003:22; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2; Van der Merwe, 2006:110). Problem-focused coping is generally viewed as more effective because of the associated results, namely better physical and mental health and mitigation of the symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). Nonetheless, emotion-focused coping that aims at regulating emotions and strengthening the appropriate expressions thereof as opposed to emotion-focused coping that highlights negative thoughts and emotions have been found to be beneficial for one's psychological health (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2). It is a combination of both problem-focused and emotion-focused

coping strategies, however, that is deemed the most effectual and successful (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:2; Van der Merwe, 2006:110).

Finally, research also differentiates between passive/defensive and active/confrontational coping strategies (Redelinghuys, 2003:25). Passive or defensive coping strategies are categorised as dysfunctional and characterised by avoidant behaviour (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2012:8). Active, confrontational strategies, on the other hand, are characterised by a sense of responsibility and proactive behaviour. Redelinghuys (2003:v) conducted research with 87 church leaders from the Dutch Reformed Church. The research focused on determining the levels and relationships between sense of coherence, coping, burnout, and engagement amongst church leaders (Redelinghuys, 2003:v). Passive coping strategies were associated with higher levels of burnout (Redelinghuys, 2003:16).

Coetzer (2006:22) maintains that there is a pervasive fallacy amongst church leaders that only spiritual resources can help deal with stress because their work is spiritual in nature. Religious or spiritual coping does indeed hold significant implications for well-being and seems to be an effective coping mechanism for many church leaders (Buys, 2008:3–4,100; Joubert, 2018:150; Redelinghuys, 2003:48; Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:1; Visker *et al.*, 2017:955). Nevertheless, in order to effectively and constructively deal with the stress associated with the ministry over the long haul, church leaders need to recognise their own humanity (Coetzer, 2006:66). Ream (2016:2) agrees with this observation. Swanepoel *et al.* (2012:2) also contend that a one-dimensional approach to spiritual well-being which does not take cognisance of the interaction and need for balance between the different components of a human being will fall short.

2.8 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

2.8.1 Introduction

Practical theology identifies and critically evaluates existing practical theological theories and, where necessary, develops new theories (Heyns, 1990:19). Heyns (1990:19) asserts that the critical evaluation and formation of theories for practice is based on empirical studies. Osmer's (2008:31–47) framework is characterised by a methodology that takes empirical research and data very seriously.

As the literature study indicated, empirical research focused on the well-being of South African church leaders is limited. In addition, according to the researcher's knowledge, no empirical research exploring the church leader's cognition of resilience has been conducted with South

African church leaders. Thus, the results of the empirical research of this study could offer a valuable contribution to this area of study.

2.8.2 Data collection

The empirical research for this study was conducted by circulating an online questionnaire to church leaders using the databases of the Familia Dei Network and the AFM of South Africa. The NWU Statistical Consultation Services received the anonymous electronic responses, processed the raw data, and relayed the processed data to the researcher.

2.8.3 Sample

The Familia Dei Network database comprises 203 church leaders, the majority of whom belongs to the AFM of South Africa although other denominations are also included. The database of the AFM of South Africa consists of 1 042 AFM church leaders. The questionnaire was circulated twice on each database.

2.8.4 Measuring instrument

The circulated questionnaire was developed for this study and utilised both qualitative and quantitative strategies. The questionnaire was available in English. It consisted of four main sections. Participants were firstly asked five open-ended questions that aimed to gather information on their cognition of resilience. After the five open-ended questions, the question format changed to a six-point Likert scale.

The first set of 11 questions aimed to elucidate the attitudes of church leaders' towards the holistic cultivation of resilience, the next set of 16 questions focused on exploring church leaders' current attempts at cultivating resilience in their lives, and the final set of 24 questions focused on exploring the participant's current resilience levels by establishing what symptoms, if any, they had of the four phases of burnout as identified by **xpand**, namely hyperactivity, confusion, frustration, and despair. The Likert-scale questions were based on the Resilience Scan 3.0 (a questionnaire consisting of 70 questions) and the resilience workbook of **xpand**, an independent coaching and training company.

2.8.5 Demographics

Unfortunately, only 70 useable completed questionnaires were received. Nevertheless, the various tests conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the data yielded sufficient and, in

some cases, very high values. This will be discussed in more detail later in this section. Table 2-1 below represents the demographical breakdown of the 70 respondents:

Table 2-1: Demographic information

Gender		Age	
Male:	88,6%	18–30	5,7%
Female:	11,4%	31–40	20,0%
		41–50	57,1%
		51–60	22,9%
		60+	14,3%
Race		Denomination	
Black	20,0%	AFM	97,14%
Coloured	12,9%	Interdenominational	2,76%
White	67,1%		
Current ministry status		Current ordination status	
Full time	85,7%	Ordained	91,4%
Part-time	12,9%	MIL in progress	1,4%
No response	1,4%	Study in progress	4,3%
		Other	2,9%
Current position in ministry		Years in ministry	
Senior	61,4%	Minimum	2
Co-pastor	21,4%	Maximum	45
Worship leader	2,9%	Mean	18,32
Youth leader	5,7%		
Other	5,7%		
Years at current congregation		Congregation size	
Minimum	0,25	0–50	8,6%
Maximum	35,00	51–100	15,7%
Mean	9,33	101–150	15,7%
		151–300	25,7%
		301–600	15,7%
		601–1000	10,0%
		1000+	8,6%

The following demographical data resulted from the responses:

- Most of the respondents were male.
- Ages ranged between 18 and 60+, although more than half of the respondents were between the ages of 41 and 50 years.

- More than half of the respondents were white, but black and coloured church leaders were also represented although to a lesser degree.
- As suspected, almost all the church leaders were part of the AFM of South Africa.
- Most of the respondents were in full-time ministry.
- More than half of the respondents had been ordained.
- More than half of the respondents are currently the senior pastors at their congregations.
- The minimum number of years in ministry was four and the maximum number of years in ministry was 45 while the mean for the group was 18,32 years, which meant that the respondents as a group had a lot of experience in ministry.
- The minimum amount of time reported at a current congregation was three months whereas the maximum amount of time was 35 years while the mean for the group was 9,33 years.
- Congregation sizes ranged from around 50 people to over a thousand. The majority of participating church leaders, however, reported congregation sizes between 151 and 300 people.

The question regarding the number of people in congregation teams is not included in the discussion, because it is clear from the responses that some of the participants misunderstood the question.

2.8.6 Qualitative results

The questionnaire commenced with five qualitative questions focused on gleaning information about church leaders' cognition of the concept of resilience. Individual responses were analysed to identify the main thought or thoughts conveyed. Similar thoughts were grouped together, and concise sentences were developed to capture the message of each group of similar thoughts. This process was done with ethical guidelines in mind, taking care to retain as much as possible of the raw data and at the same time avoiding unethical alteration of the data. The frequency at which each thought occurred was also indicated. The concise sentences were then grouped together according to predominant themes or main ideas identified.

The summarised and themed responses to each qualitative question are tabulated and discussed below.

2.8.6.1 Question 1: In your opinion, what does it mean to be resilient?

Table 2-2: Summary of qualitative responses to question 1

Main themes	Breakdown of responses	Frequency
To be steadfast	To be steadfast and enduring through all circumstances	7
	To be strong, tough, or courageous for yourself and others	6
	The ability to withstand pressure, difficult conditions or great challenges	4
	To remain focused, committed, and loyal and not allow yourself to be distracted	4
	The ability to withstand spiritual attack and abuse from your congregation and fellow leaders	1
	Total:	22
The ability to bounce back or recover	The ability to bounce back from adversity, challenges, difficulty, or trauma	12
	The ability to recover quickly from difficult conditions or setbacks	4
	The ability to recover after disappointment, illness, difficulties, or setbacks	4
	The ability to recover <i>and</i> continue with what you set out to do in the first place	1
	To stand up after a fall	1
	Total:	22
To persevere	To keep on going, to be tenacious, to press on or persevere even when it gets tough	13
	To finish the race/the job/the God-given assignment	2
	The ability to conquer or overcome the difficulties faced in ministry	2
	<i>To keep going with passion, purpose, and change in all circumstances</i>	1
	To continue with the help of the Lord	1
	Total:	19
To be flexible	To be flexible	5
	To be able to adapt to the demands of our time or almost any situation	2
	To think outside the box	1
	To have alternatives in place	1
	Total:	9
The ability to cope	Ability to cope with difficult situations	3
	Handling criticism, negativity, disappointment, setbacks, stress and chaos with competence and capacity in a meaningful and productive way	3

	To quickly identify, understand, and analyse situations, get a working solution for it. In all areas of your life.	1
	Self-help	1
	Total:	8
To be passionate	To be passionate	1
	To be able to enjoy your work	1
	The ability to stay fresh in ministry	1
	Motivated	1
	Total:	4
To thrive	To be healthy in all areas, to be inspirational in all areas, to be moving forward in all areas, to bring change in all areas	1
	Total:	1

From the summary of the responses to question 1 as indicated in table 2-2 above, the following was deduced:

- The predominant themes that were identified from the responses were to be steadfast (frequency = 22), to bounce back or recover (frequency = 22), and to persevere (frequency = 19).
- Being flexible (frequency = 9) and the ability to cope (frequency = 8) were also themes that emerged from the responses.
- Only a few references (indicated in italics for easy detection) were made that demonstrated a broader understanding of resilience extending beyond the concept of mere survival in ministry to include ideas related to thriving (frequency = 1) and passion (frequency = 5).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the concept of resilience has evolved over the years from emphasising the reduction of negative outcomes to emphasising positive development (Elkington, 2013:3). Thus, resilience is no longer just about “bouncing back” or “persevering” or “being steadfast” but stretches beyond to include the idea of thriving, flourishing, and passionately persevering despite hardships. In order for church leaders to fully comprehend the value of resilience in ministry, they need to adopt a perspective of resilience that does not limit the role of it to the process of survival but views it as a vital component for the process of flourishing in ministry and persevering with passion.

2.8.6.2 Question 2: Do you think resilience is important to persevere in ministry? Why or why not?

Table 2-3: Summary of qualitative responses to question 2

Yes	100%	
No	0%	
Main themes	Breakdown of responses	Frequency
Ministry poses a challenging environment	Ministry is not always easy; it is demanding and challenging.	13
	It is important because of constant challenges, critique, and resistance.	2
	It is a hostile environment; you are exposed to abuse and must be able to cope.	2
	People will hurt you every day.	1
	We work with people. People will hurt you, people are diverse, people are sometimes draining.	3
	Palm trees survived the tsunami, because they are resilient!	1
	Total:	22
Without resilience, you won't make it in ministry	Without resilience, you won't make it in the ministry; the burdens will be crushing; you will quit; you will fail.	8
	Without resilience, you will not fulfil your calling; it will end abruptly.	2
	Without resilience, you will fail to handle the pressures that come with ministry, resulting in poor people relations as well as the ability to be present.	1
	Without it you are vulnerable.	1
	Total:	12
Leadership and effectivity depend on it	Otherwise, you cannot lead with confidence	1
	It is crucial to persevere in ministry. As a leader I can only take the people where I am at, so by being on the back foot the whole time, always on the verge of collapse, will be unhealthy, not only for me and my family, but also for the people that I serve and minister to.	1
	Every single Sunday I have to get back on the platform and encourage others, and I must be able to do that in an authentic way. Resilience helps me to keep on being authentic.	1
	You lose and your church will lose if you don't bounce back.	1
	Probably most important. We carry "Good News". Without resilience, we aren't effective. We are in human bodies that get tired physically and emotionally.	1
	The church and ministry have come a long way over the years; we have seen a lot of changes over the years, but the basics of ministry	1

	remain the same. We have to come back to the original form in order for us to be effective.	
	We need to recover quickly.	1
	Otherwise, we might as well not have started	1
	To keep one motivated	1
	In order to fulfil the great commission	1
	Total:	10
To be able to keep up with change	It is an ever-changing environment; things are changing very quickly, and we need to keep up.	3
	People change. The demographics of the area we live in change.	1
	Total:	4
You must endure	Quitting under pressure simply means starting all over again, instead of biting the bullet. Those who endure to the end shall be saved.	1
	You cannot give up every time you fail.	1
	You face daily challenges, and a previous mishap/mistake cannot dictate your actions. You need to do what must be done.	1
	Ministry is more about keep on going on than anything else.	1
	Total:	4
Provides focus and clarity with regard to one's calling and identity	It keeps you focused on your calling and helps you not to lose your identity.	4
	Total:	4
Growth depends on it	No growth without it	1
	Resilience is needed, because it builds faith, shapes character, and births pioneers.	1
	For some, disappointments can be life-changing.	1
	Total:	3
Christ set an example of resilience	Because our Lord was resilient in everything.	1
	Total:	1
Personal health depends on it	To stay whole and balanced in your own life.	1
	Total:	1

From the summary of the responses to question 2 as indicated in table 2-3 above, the following was deduced:

- 100% of the respondents indicated that resilience was important for persevering in ministry.

- The predominant theme identified from the responses was that ministry poses a challenging environment (frequency = 22). Closely related to this theme due to its implicit connotation to the reality that ministry is challenging, and the second most frequently mentioned theme, was the idea that one will not make it in ministry if one is not resilient (frequency = 12).
- The role resilience plays in relation to one's leadership and effectivity (frequency = 10) was also a strong theme that was identified in the responses.
- Important themes that did not occur as often were the importance of resilience in relation to retaining focus on one's calling and not losing one's identity (frequency = 4), the importance of resilience for personal growth and development (frequency = 3), and the importance of resilience for one's personal wholeness and balance (frequency = 1).
- Once again, the majority of the responses seems to focus on the role of resilience in minimising negative outcomes and enabling one to survive rather than the role of resilience in maximising positive outcomes and development.

2.8.6.3 Question 3: Do you think resilience can be developed? Why or why not?

Table 2-4: Summary of qualitative responses to question 3

Yes		97,14%	
No		0%	
Not sure		2,86%	
Development process	Main themes	Breakdown of responses	Frequency
Responses that seem to indicate a more active process of development on the part of the church leader	Yes, through regular practice and self-discipline	It's something you can get fit in; the more you practice it, the more it becomes part of you.	8
		By sticking to good habits; through self-discipline	3
		Through every hardship in life/ministry, one must decide to continue or to quit. In this way, one develops resilience or not.	1
		Cognitive discipline and emotional intelligence is something that can develop like muscles in a gym.	1
		Through learned responses	1
		By setting development goals	1
		Total:	15
	Yes, by acquiring knowledge	By acquiring knowledge and learning skills • Management skills • Stress management • Coping skills	13

	and being equipped	By being equipped	2
		Through personality/character interventions	1
		Total:	14
	Yes, through positive relationships	By good mentoring	3
		With proper communication and honest accountability partners, it's always possible.	2
		To be positive and seek help if necessary	1
		Being around the right people can inspire you to become more resilient.	1
		Total:	7
	Yes, through spiritual development	If you develop your spiritual life and do ministry because of Jesus, you will keep on fighting.	3
		I think if you mature as Christian this will become easier.	1
		Total:	4
	Yes, through regular reflection	I have to teach myself to get back to the basic message; from time to time I have to pause and think of what I am doing in ministry. I have to look at it from the point of view that I am focusing on the right areas in order for me to progress in ministry.	1
		Total:	1
	Yes, but it requires the right attitude	Self-confidence	1
		Willingness to adapt	1
		Total:	2
Responses that seem to indicate a more <i>passive</i> process of development on the part of the church leader	Yes, through experience	I don't always think it is something you work on; it is something that grows with experiences and failures.	4
		When there is no plan B and the only thing you can do is to hold on. It is in these storms that you get to know not only the Lord's protection but also what you are capable of.	1
		Total:	5
	Yes, with time	It comes with time; it can only be developed over years.	3
		With time comes maturity and it becomes easier.	1
		Total:	4
	Yes, as a result of your faith and calling	Based on your faith and your specific calling; the reason why I am in the ministry should help me to be resilient.	1
		We find our hope and purpose in Christ and He gives us strength when we are weak.	1
		Total:	2

	Yes, by empowering the congregation	Empower the congregation on the demands of ministry versus the pastor's wellness.	1
		Total:	1

From the summary of the responses to question 3 as indicated in table 2-4 above, the following was deduced:

- Out of all the respondents 97,14% indicated that they believed resilience could be developed, and 2,86% indicated that they were unsure whether resilience could be developed.
- The reasons provided by those who responded positively to the question of whether resilience could be developed or not revealed two main streams of thought. One group seemed to think that the development of resilience required intentional action on the part of the church leader denoting to a more active process of development (frequency = 43), whereas the other group seemed to think that the development of resilience was achieved through a more passive process of development (frequency = 12). Although resilience can develop passively with time, experience, and divine intervention, the cultivation of resilience needs to become an intentional, active process in the lives of church leaders who want to persevere passionately, as they deliberately set out to cultivate the competencies that help build resilience.
- Regular practice and self-discipline (frequency = 15), and acquiring knowledge and being equipped (frequency =14) were the two main themes identified in the responses of those who seemed to understand the development of resilience as a more active process on the part of the church leader. Positive relationships (frequency = 7) and spiritual development (frequency = 4) were also recurring themes.
- Experience (frequency = 5), with time (frequency = 4), and as a result of one's faith and calling (frequency = 2) were recurring themes identified in the responses of those who seemed to understand the development of resilience as a more passive process on the part of the church leader.

2.8.6.4 Question 4: In your opinion, which habits will form part of a resilient person's life?

Table 2-5: Summary of qualitative responses to question 4

Process-orientated versus trait-orientated	Main themes	Breakdown of responses	Frequency
Responses that seem to indicate a more process-orientated understanding of resilience	Spiritual disciplines	Consistent, fervent prayer	17
		Reading Bible	4
		Intimacy and time with God; a strong relationship with God	6
		Fasting	2
		Relentless focus on God's calling for your life	2
		Listening to sermons	1
		The most important for me is to have and allow the Holy Spirit to show and lead in a certain direction. A habit of waiting on the Lord.	1
		Total:	32
	Social disciplines and resources	Family time; do not neglect your family	6
		A good network of friends; time with friends	6
		Building strong spiritual people around you; mentors; coaches	5
		Good team; have armour-bearers to avoid burn out	3
		Servanthood; putting others first	3
		Having critical conversations (criticism, upliftment)	1
		Support network, since there is no brotherhood in the AFM (translated from Afrikaans)	1
		Total:	25
	Emotional disciplines	Love and compassion for people regardless of people's attitudes or actions.	10
		Optimism; positive attitude; live positively even when faced with challenges.	4
		Daily forgiveness; constantly searching your heart for any form of offence given and or taken by people.	4
		Practise gratitude; regular check in on all things to be thankful for.	2
		Dealing with criticism – good or bad; learning to know the difference between “I am a mistake” and	3

		"I made a mistake".	
		Self-awareness and reflection; make time to be still; journal; meditate	1
		Total:	24
	Work-Life balance	Enough rest; time off; you need to pace yourself, know when to take "time out" and recharge.	10
		In one line: a healthy balanced life.	4
		Time management; daily planning; keep a balanced schedule.	4
		Diversify your interests! Don't just focus on ministry; go fishing, do a sport, get out in nature, get hobbies.	3
		Boundaries; the ability to say no.	2
		Total:	23
	Physical disciplines	Exercise; physical activity	9
		Healthy nutrition	4
		Good sleep routine.	2
		Taking care of one's health	1
		Total:	16
	Self-discipline	Discipline	5
		Consistency; stability	2
		Being able to stand; stay on course	2
		Self-control	1
		Total:	10
	Mental disciplines	Reading	5
		Study	2
		Spending time with people who do not have the same colour and opinion that you or I have.	1
		A person needs to pause often and look back at the past months' sermons, teachings, etc. A continuous thought pattern in order for him to stay focused on what he wants to achieve.	1
		Problem-solving; the ability to step back from problems	1
		Total:	10
	Self-efficacy disciplines	Lifelong learning; the habit of asking questions; curiosity; exploring	4
		This includes personal development making sure you are competent in the field you are operating in.	2
		Stress management, conflict management, financial management, communication skills	2

		Be a good listener	2
		Workshops	1
		Training	1
		Total:	6
Responses that seem to indicate a more trait-orientated understanding of resilience	Traits/characteristics	Dedication; determination; focus	6
		Diligence; excellence	3
		Strong character; integrity	2
		Galatians 5:22–23 (fruit of the Spirit)	1
		Friendliness	1
		Patience	1
		Faithfulness	1
		Loyalty	1
		Passion, zeal, drive	1
		Strength	1
		Creativity	1
		Being a flexible, teachable individual	1
		Be strong	1
		A good self-image helps	1
		Total:	19

From the summary of the responses to question 4 as indicated in table 2-5 above, the following was deduced:

- Overall, the majority of respondents demonstrated a holistic understanding of the habits that form part of a resilient person's life. However, some responses indicated a more trait-orientated description of a resilient person (frequency = 19) denoting a static understanding of resilience as opposed to a process-orientated understanding of resilience. As mentioned previously in this chapter, more and more researchers argue that resilience refers to an interactive process rather than an achieved state or trait (e.g., Doebling, 2015:636; Dreyer, 2014:1; Elkington, 2013:4; Rutter, 2012:335; Rutter cited by Zylla, 2014:104; Vorster, 2018:473; Windle, 2011:152). A person might respond resiliently in one set of circumstances and fail to do so in another (Dreyer, 2014:2). Understanding resilience as process-orientated amplifies the need for a person to cultivate it throughout their life through the continuous and consistent implementation of certain habits. Viewing resilience as a static or achieved state is dangerous in the sense that a person might neglect or fail to see the need for the cultivation thereof.
- Spiritual disciplines (frequency = 32), social disciplines and resources (frequency = 25), emotional disciplines (frequency = 24), and work-life balance (frequency = 23) were the themes that featured the strongest amongst the more process-orientated responses.

Physical disciplines (frequency = 16), self-discipline (frequency = 10), mental disciplines (frequency = 10), and self-efficacy (frequency = 6) were also recurring themes.

- Dedication, determination, and focus (frequency = 6) was the strongest theme amongst the more trait-orientated responses. Diligence (frequency = 3) and a strong character/integrity (frequency = 2) were also recurring themes.

2.8.6.5 Question 5: Does the ministry make it easy for you to develop resilience in your life? Why or why not?

Table 2-6: Summary of qualitative responses to question 5

Yes	37,68 %		
Yes and no	13,04%		
No	46,38%		
Not sure	2,90%		
Response	Main themes	Breakdown of responses	Frequency
Yes	Ministry creates opportunity through hardship	All the setbacks, challenges, demands, and hardships allow you to develop. No pain, no gain.	8
		In ministry, life provides more than enough opportunity to develop resilience; to choose to go on or to give up.	2
		Feeling isolated in ministry.	1
		Total:	11
	Exposure to a variety of people	One deals with numerous people with different characters and temperaments which give you valuable experience.	3
		Total:	3
	Relationship with God	We are expected to spend time with God and therefore our job requires that we will spend time with Him who renews our strength.	1
		The Word of God encourages and guides me.	1
		To trust God more and more every day.	1
		Total:	3
	Vision and purpose	Focus on the vision and have a mandate for what you are doing; this helps.	1
		Once I know the purpose of the ministry, it becomes easy to be steadfast.	1
		Total:	2
	Opportunity to	I think we have more time to manage ourselves than	1

	manage own time	be managed in another job.	
		Total:	1
	Support	Because of the support received in all levels of the church	1
		Total:	1
	Wisdom	With some wisdom, you can lead people to change.	1
		Total:	1
	Way of life	The ministry is a way of life.	1
		Total:	1
Yes and no	Ministry provides opportunity, but can also pose a challenge	Yes, because at times we are tasked with things that we are not good at or even comfortable with. You learn as you go. No. You can at times feel overwhelmed with responsibility.	1
		Yes, because ministry challenges me to develop. To develop I need to keep reading, resting, sleeping, training, prayer, listening, exploring. No, because I get so busy sometimes that I don't stick to my plan to stay resilient.	1
		Yes and no. My upbringing causes me to think and act in a certain way. The church tends to get stuck in religious and traditional mind-sets. This causes us to be less resilient. However, there will always be someone in ministry that thinks out of the box	
		Total:	3
	Developing resilience is never easy, but ministry provides opportunity	I do not think the learning process in terms of resilience is easy, but the ministry does create opportunity to practice resilience and become fit therein (translated from Afrikaans)	1
		Developing resilience is never easy, but in ministry we do learn to have a bigger resilience to things that can affect our lives as we go through situations and our own capacities increase. I do not think it is intentional but rather a byproduct of the work we do. We work with variables (people), and people go through different seasons. Not all people value integrity as well.	1
		Total:	2
	Depends on the person	It all depends on the person.	1
		Yes, because it keeps you humble, and no, if you lose your humility and listening skills.	1
		Total:	2

	Ministry requires a certain level of resilience in order to enable one to develop higher levels of resilience	Going into ministry, it is necessary to be resilient. As indicated earlier, the ministry is tough. So, I would say that ministry can only make you stronger if you are already a resilient person.	1
		The one builds on the other. Without resilience, you won't make it in ministry, but the ministry will increase your resilience.	1
		Total:	2
No	Challenges and demands	Repeated challenges; ministry is permeated with problems.	4
		Social challenges are overwhelming; working with people makes you feel like you are never done.	2
		It forces me to be resilient.	1
		Due to stresses	1
		Low church attendance	1
		When some develop an attitude and become negative	1
		Results are not always immediate.	1
		Total:	11
	Pressure to perform/expectations	Too many rules are involved in relation to how and where people want you to succeed at ministry level. High levels of expectations of assembly leaders and the congregation.	3
		Ministry does not make it easy to develop resilience due to constant pressure to perform – the pastor must discipline him/herself to make time to work on resilience to achieve it.	2
		There are so many challenges we face, and the demands of a pastor are so much. The pastor has to put so much effort in to be able to force himself to be resilient. The popular answer to many questions is not always the right answer, and therefore it is hard for the pastor in ministry to be resilient and to develop resilience.	1
		People do not always understand that a pastor needs to reload his batteries or that a pastor also struggles at times or gets injured and hurt.	1
		Total:	7
	It remains my responsibility to cultivate	It is not the ministry's responsibility to develop resilience in my life. You must manage ministry, not the other way around!	1

	resilience	The ministry poses a challenge to practise healthy habits to form resilience – however, everything we as pastors do or do not do is our choice – we need to find the balance between expectation imposed ... and what God actually called us to do. I do not believe that God desires a balanced lifestyle for our members – but does not desire it for us as pastors.	1
		Because a pastor sets his own goals and is pretty much his own employer	1
		I have only developed resilience by facing difficult situations.	1
		No, it is something built in your personal capacity ... Your job doesn't teach you resilience, how you adapt and handle things does.	1
		A person's character provides a platform to develop.	1
		Total:	6
	Lack of support	Lack of good leadership or interest from the leaders – self-serving interests	1
		Lack of external relationships for pastors	1
		There are no contingencies in place to develop resilience in the ministry.	1
		Total:	3
	Time constraints	One is often so busy that there is no balance or time for reflection and relaxation.	1
		You give, give, give the whole time and do not get the opportunity to regularly focus on yourself.	1
		Total:	2

From the summary of the responses to question 5 as indicated in table 2-6 above, the following was deduced:

- 37,68% indicated that the ministry makes it easy for them to develop resilience.
- 13,04% responded with yes and no answers.
- 46,38% indicated that the ministry does not make it easy for them to cultivate resilience.
- 2,90% were not sure.
- Amongst those who indicated that the ministry made it easy for them to cultivate resilience, the predominant theme was that ministry creates opportunity through hardship (frequency = 11).
- Amongst those who responded with yes and no answers, the predominant theme was that ministry provides opportunity, but at the same time poses a challenge (frequency = 3).

- Amongst those who indicated that ministry did not make it easy to develop resilience, the predominant theme was that ministry confronts one with a lot of challenges and demands (frequency = 11). Other important recurring themes were the pressures to perform/expectations (frequency = 7) and the view that the cultivation of resilience is church leaders' own responsibility and should not be dependent on the ministry (frequency = 6).

2.8.7 Quantitative results

Below are tables summarising the responses to the questions of the three quantitative sections in percentages. The means and the standard deviations for the group are also indicated:

Table 2-7: Questionnaire results for attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience

<i>Attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience</i>								
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, and praise-and-worship are important contributors towards resilience.	7,1	-	4,3	5,7	22,9	60,0	5,17	1,404
Physical disciplines such as regular exercise, healthy eating, enough sleep and rest are important contributors towards resilience.	7,1	-	4,3	8,6	28,6	51,4	5,06	1,392
Mental disciplines such as developing new skills or improving current ones, reading, and mind-stimulating activities are	8,6	1,4	1,4	2,9	31,4	54,3	5,10	1,466

important contributors to resilience.								
Emotional disciplines such as forgiveness and accepting and embracing your past are important contributors towards resilience.	7,1	-	4,3	4,3	21,4	62,9	5,21	1,403
Social resources such as an appreciative family, a mentor, and supportive friends are important contributors to resilience.	7,1	-	5,7	7,1	22,9	57,1	5,10	1,426
Structural resources such as healthy finances and a satisfying job are important contributors towards resilience.	7,1	7,1	5,7	14,3	35,7	30,0	4,54	1,510
Being able to use one's skills and abilities is an important contributor to resilience.	8,6	4,3	5,7	14,3	30,0	37,1	4,64	1,551
The ability to effectively solve problems is an important contributor to resilience.	7,1	1,4	5,7	17,1	31,4	37,1	4,76	1,419
A realistically optimistic mindset is an important	8,6	1,4	2,9	8,6	32,9	45,7	4,93	1,478

contributor towards resilience.								
Self-confidence is an important contributor towards resilience.	5,7	2,9	5,7	14,3	31,4	40,0	4,83	1,393
Actively practising gratitude is an important contributor towards resilience.	5,7	4,3	2,9	10,0	34,3	42,9	4,91	1,401

From the data on church leaders' attitudes on the holistic cultivation of resilience represented in table 2-7 above, the following deductions were made:

- Overall, church leaders seem to have a relatively positive attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience with means ranging between *slightly agree*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*. That being said, it is a concern that all 11 items, which essentially represent a positive attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience, had between 8 and 14 participants who selected *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, or *slightly disagree*.
- Emotional disciplines were considered the most important of the 11 items, with spiritual disciplines coming in second.
- Structural resources such as healthy finances and a satisfying job was considered the least important out of all the items.

Table 2-8: Questionnaire results for attempts towards cultivating resilience

<i>Attempts towards cultivating resilience</i>								
Statement	Never applic.	Rarely applic.	Sometimes applic.	Often applic.	Nearly always applic.	Always applic.	Mean	Std. Dev.
I invest time and resources in developing my skills and abilities.	-	1,4	15,7	18,6	35,7	28,6	4,74	1,086
I connect and spend time with God in a meaningful way each day; this time is not focused on ministry	-	-	15,7	20,0	25,7	38,6	4,87	1,102

preparation.								
I have a mentor in whom I can confide; I communicate with this person at least once a month.	15,7	14,3	18,6	7,1	21,4	22,9	3,73	1,809
I exercise at least three times a week for more than 30 minutes.	7,1	18,6	17,1	24,3	18,6	14,3	3,71	1,505
I regularly take time to reflect on my successes and mistakes and the lessons learned.	-	8,6	15,7	30,0	32,9	12,9	4,26	1,138
I purposefully take time to work through a process of forgiveness towards those who have wronged me.	-	4,3	11,4	21,4	30,0	32,9	4,76	1,160
I set goals for my personal development towards which I actively work.	-	5,8	13,0	21,7	30,4	29,0	4,64	1,200
When faced with problems, I set aside time to exercise creative problem-solving instead of simply managing the problem.	2,9	1,4	24,3	18,6	37,1	15,7	4,33	1,213
I practise being flexible and improvising to find good solutions.	-	2,9	13,0	24,6	33,3	26,1	4,67	1,094
I take enough time off each week; I do not make a habit of working more than 45 hours per week.	8,6	25,7	11,4	24,3	21,4	8,6	3,50	1,501
I make sure to spend enough quality time with my family.	2,9	2,9	12,9	31,4	27,1	22,9	4,46	1,224

I intentionally practise gratefulness in one form or another.	-	1,4	8,6	24,3	34,3	31,4	4,86	1,011
I make time to reflect on my emotions and think about why I feel the way I do.	4,3	4,3	20,0	18,6	37,1	15,7	4,27	1,307
I regularly make sure my calling is still clear and certain.	-	1,4	11,4	18,6	34,3	34,3	4,89	1,057
I actively choose to focus on and celebrate the positive instead of getting overwhelmed by negativity.	-	1,4	8,7	18,8	34,8	36,2	4,96	1,021
I am currently at a healthy weight for my length and my weight does not vary on a regular basis.	5,7	10,0	15,7	14,3	24,3	30,0	4,31	1,565

From the data on church leaders' attempts towards cultivating resilience represented in table 2-8 above, the following deductions were made:

- Overall, most church leaders seem to be cultivating resilience holistically although their attempts are not consistently implemented. The means of the majority of the items ranges between *often applicable* and *nearly always applicable*. Once again, however, it is a concern that all 16 items, which are essential elements in the cultivation of resilience, had between 7 and 34 participants who selected *never applicable*, *rarely applicable*, and *sometimes applicable*.
- When compared to the means of the items in the attitude section, the means are slightly lower. This seems to indicate that there is a slight divide between belief and practice; although the attitudes of church leaders are generally positive towards the holistic cultivation of resilience, there are challenges when it comes to the consistent implementation of these strategies. As the qualitative section of this study revealed, the majority of the respondents felt that ministry makes it difficult to develop resilience due to factors such as the challenges and high demands, time constraints, the pressure to perform and expectations, and a lack of support.

- Choosing to focus on the positive instead of the negative, making sure their calling is certain, and spending time with God were the three items with the highest means respectively.
- Taking off enough time, having a mentor, and physical exercise were the three items with the lowest means, ranging between *sometimes* and *often applicable*.

Table 2-9: Questionnaire results for current resilience levels

<i>Current resilience levels</i>								
Statement	Never applic.	Rarely applic.	Sometimes applic.	Often applic.	Nearly always applic.	Always applic.	Mean	Std. Dev.
I can be described as hyperactive; I work hard and constantly.	5,7	5,7	24,3	21,4	27,1	15,7	4,06	1,382
I feel responsible for everything and strive to maintain a high standard of perfection.	-	2,9	20,0	24,3	35,7	17,1	4,44	1,085
I tend to forget things.	7,1	31,4	34,3	20,0	5,7	1,4	2,90	1,079
I am constantly in crisis management mode.	2,9	45,7	28,6	14,3	7,1	1,4	2,81	1,054
I have little time to worry about sleeping, exercise, or eating healthily.	10,1	37,7	15,9	21,7	14,5	-	2,93	1,264
I find myself trying to please everyone.	12,9	27,1	25,7	22,9	5,7	5,7	2,99	1,335
I am less ambitious and creative than I once was.	12,9	27,1	24,3	14,3	17,1	4,3	3,09	1,422
I fear not being good enough.	20,0	21,4	24,3	15,7	14,3	4,3	2,96	1,469
I am dissatisfied with my work.	30,4	36,2	13,0	11,6	7,2	1,4	2,33	1,302
I am confused; I am working hard with less results.	26,1	33,3	20,3	8,7	11,6	-	2,46	1,290
I have headaches on a weekly basis.	48,6	22,9	11,4	5,7	8,6	2,9	2,11	1,440
I camouflage my insecurity; I do not let	25,7	28,6	20,0	10,0	11,4	4,3	2,66	1,473

people in.								
I can be described as indifferent; I have no or very little interest or sympathy.	41,4	24,3	14,3	10,0	8,6	1,4	2,24	1,388
I am losing faith in myself and my calling.	55,7	22,9	5,7	4,3	10,0	1,4	1,94	1,392
I tend to be ungrateful; I worry all the time.	44,3	27,1	14,3	4,3	5,7	4,3	2,13	1,403
I am regularly and easily irritated; I have little need for contact with others.	29,0	30,4	23,2	7,2	8,7	1,4	2,41	1,298
I have trouble sleeping and concentrating.	41,4	28,6	7,1	11,4	8,6	2,9	2,26	1,461
My immune system is weakened; I get sick more often.	48,6	24,3	11,4	5,7	5,7	4,3	2,09	1,432
I have no energy; I constantly feel tired.	33,3	31,9	8,7	13,0	11,6	1,4	2,42	1,439
I feel depressed and trapped; I find myself asking: What is the point?	47,1	25,7	8,6	2,9	14,3	1,4	2,16	1,481
I tend to be cynical and distrustful.	50,0	30,0	10,0	1,4	8,6	-	1,89	1,198
I tend to criticise and punish myself.	40,0	31,4	10,0	8,6	8,6	1,4	2,19	1,354
I have stress-related physical problems, e.g., high blood pressure, skin irritations, etc.	52,9	21,4	5,7	11,4	8,6	-	2,01	1,357
I isolate myself; I have lost key relationships or key relationships are degrading.	44,3	21,4	17,1	8,6	8,6	-	2,16	1,315

From the data on church leaders' current resilience levels represented in table 2-9 above, the following deductions were made:

- Feeling responsible for everything and feeling hyperactive were the two items with the highest means, respectively ranging between *always applicable* and *nearly always*

applicable. This is alarming since these items are recognised precursors to burnout. Hyperactivity, an unhealthy sense of responsibility, and a constant strive for perfection can lead to the negligence of healthy habits and overexertion.

- Cynicism and distrust as well as losing faith in calling were the two items with the lowest means, respectively ranging between *never applicable* and *rarely applicable*.
- Analysing the data in terms of means alone can result in some of the alarming data slipping through the cracks. Therefore, the researcher deems it important to stipulate and draw attention to the total sum of the percentage scores for each item for the range between *often applicable*, *nearly always applicable*, and *always applicable*:
 - 64,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as hyperactive;
 - 77,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel responsible for everything;
 - 27,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they forget things;
 - 22,8% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are constantly in crisis management mode;
 - 36,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have little time to worry about sleep, exercise, or eating healthy;
 - 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they want to please everyone;
 - 35,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are less ambitious and creative than they once were;
 - 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they fear they are not good enough;
 - 20,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are dissatisfied with their work;
 - 20,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are confused;
 - 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have headaches on a weekly basis;
 - 25,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they camouflage their insecurity;

- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as indifferent, showing little sympathy;
- 15,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are losing faith in themselves and their calling;
- 14,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to be ungrateful and worry;
- 17,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are easily irritated with little need for contact with others;
- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have trouble sleeping and concentrating;
- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that their immune systems are weakened;
- 26% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have no energy;
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel depressed;
- 10% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as cynical and distrusting;
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they criticise and punish themselves;
- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have stress-related physical health problems; and
- 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to isolate themselves and have key relationships that are degrading.

2.8.7.1 Factor analysis and construct validity

In order to be able to analyse the data more effectively, the data were condensed through a process of factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sample adequacy was used to determine how suitable the collected data were for factor analysis and whether or not it was suitably correlated. The KMO index ranges between 0,0 and 1,0 (Williams *et al.*, 2010:5). KMO

values between 0,8 and 1,0 are generally considered very good (Frohlich & Westbrook, 2001:189).

The section on measuring attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience measured a KMO value of 0,939. Thus, the data collected on the attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience were an adequate sample for extracting compact factors, even though the response rate was low. A simple principal component analysis was carried out with the 11 items that measured the attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience. One factor, namely *Attitudes* (11 items), was isolated that explained 84,574% of the variance. The factor loadings of the variables regarding *Attitudes* ranged from 0,801 to 0,954 as presented in table 2-10 below.

Table 2-10: Pattern matrix for attitudes on the holistic cultivation of resilience

Items	Attitudes
Spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, prayer, and praise-and-worship are important contributors towards resilience.	0,876
Physical disciplines such as regular exercise, healthy eating, enough sleep and rest are important contributors towards resilience.	0,839
Mental disciplines such as developing new skills or improving current ones, reading, and mind-stimulating activities are important contributors to resilience.	0,909
Emotional disciplines such as forgiveness and accepting and embracing your past are important contributors towards resilience.	0,885
Social resources such as an appreciative family, a mentor, and supportive friends are important contributors to resilience.	0,858
Structural resources such as healthy finances and a satisfying job are important contributors towards resilience.	0,641
Being able to use one's skills and abilities is an important contributor to resilience.	0,786
The ability to effectively solve problems is an important contributor to resilience.	0,838
A realistically optimistic mindset is an important contributor to resilience.	0,900
Self-confidence is an important contributor to resilience.	0,880
Actively practising gratitude is an important contributor to resilience.	0,891

The section on the attempts towards the holistic development of resilience measured a KMO value of 0,861. Once again, this is considered a very good rating, as explained above, indicating that the collected data were adequate for extracting compact factors and sufficiently correlated. A simple principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation was carried out on the 16 items that measured church leaders' attempts towards cultivating resilience. Three factors were isolated that explained 63,141% of the variance. The three factors were *Self-efficacy strategies* (five items), *Physical strategies* (three items), and *Emotional and Mental strategies* (eight items). See pattern matrix (table 2-11) below:

Table 2-11: Pattern matrix for attempts to cultivate resilience

Items	Self- efficacy strategies	Physical strategies	Mental and emotional strategies
I connect and spend time with God in a meaningful way each day; this time is not focused on ministry preparation.	0,859	-	-
I invest time and resources in developing my skills and abilities.	0,808	-	-
I set goals for my personal development towards which I actively work.	0,772	-	-
I have a mentor in whom I can confide; I communicate with this person at least once a month.	0,573	-	-
I regularly take time to reflect on my successes and mistakes and the lessons learned.	0,544	-	-
I am currently at a healthy weight for my length and my weight does not vary on a regular basis.	-	0,822	-
I exercise at least three times a week for more than 30 minutes.	-	0,664	-
I take enough time off each week; I do not make a habit of working more than 45 hours per week.	-	0,465	-
I make time to reflect on my emotions and think about why I feel the way I do.	-	-	-0,853
I make sure to spend enough quality time with my family.	-	-	-0,772
I practise being flexible and improvising to find good solutions.	-	-	-0,674
I intentionally practise gratefulness in one form or another.	-	-	-0,626
When faced with problems, I set aside time to exercise creative problem-solving instead of simply managing the problem.	-	-	-0,588
I purposefully take time to work through a process of forgiveness towards those who have wronged me.	-	-	-0,566
I regularly make sure my calling is still clear and certain.	-	-	-0,497
I actively choose to focus on and celebrate the positive instead of getting overwhelmed by negativity.	-	-	-0,437

The factor loadings of the variables regarding *Self-efficacy strategies* ranged from 0,544 to 0,859. The factor loadings of the variables regarding *Physical strategies* ranged from 0,465 to

0,822. The factor loadings of the variables on *Emotional and Mental strategies* ranged from - 0,437 to -0,853.

The section measuring the current resilience levels of church leaders yielded a KMO value of 0,789. Although lower than the KMO values of the previous two sections, a general consensus exists that values of 0,50 and higher are indicative that the sample is suitable and reliable for factor analysis (Frohlich & Westbrook, 2001:189; Williams *et al.*, 2010:5).

A simple principle component analysis was carried out with the 24 items that measured the current resilience levels of the church leaders. The results indicated that two factors explained 53,671% of the variance. The respective factors, according to the results, were *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items), and *Phases 2 to 4: Confusion, Frustration, and Despair* (grouped together) (18 items).

For the purposes of this study, however, phases 2, 3, and 4 (six items each) which were grouped together in the factor analysis, will be distinguished from each other as originally intended in accordance with **xpand's** phase identification. Also, the section on reliability below supports the division of Factor 2 (18 items) into three factors (six items each), namely *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*. This is supported by the Cronbach's alpha and inter-item correlation values. Thus, four factors will be dealt with although the factor analysis yielded only two factors as indicated in the pattern matrix (table 2-12) below:

Table 2-12: Pattern matrix for resilience levels

Items	Phase 1: Hyperactivity	Phase 2: Confusion, Phase 3: Frustration, and Phase 4: Despair
I can be described as hyperactive; I work hard and constantly.	0,555	-
I feel responsible for everything and strive to maintain a high standard of perfection.	0,698	-
I tend to forget things.	0,292	-
I am constantly in crisis management mode.	0,628	-
I have little time to worry about sleeping, exercise, or eating healthily.	0,575	-
I find myself trying to please everyone.	0,656	-
I am less ambitious and creative than I once was.	-	0,464
I fear not being good enough.	-	0,653
I am dissatisfied with my work.	-	0,813

I am confused; I am working hard with fewer results.	-	0,857
I have headaches on a weekly basis.	-	0,613
I camouflage my insecurity; I do not let people in.	-	0,552
I can be described as indifferent; I have no or very little interest or sympathy.	-	0,734
I am losing faith in myself and my calling.	-	0,820
I tend to be ungrateful; I worry all the time.	-	0,578
I am regularly and easily irritated; I have little need for contact with others.	-	0,771
I have trouble sleeping and concentrating.	-	0,709
My immune system is weakened; I get sick more often.	-	-0,823
I have no energy; I constantly feel tired.	-	0,757
I feel depressed and trapped; I find myself asking: What is the point?	-	0,867
I tend to be cynical and distrustful.	-	0,857
I tend to criticise and punish myself.	-	0,819
I have stress-related physical problems, e.g., high blood pressure, skin irritations, etc.	-	0,605
I isolate myself; I have lost key relationships or key relationships are degrading.	-	0,843

The factor loadings of the variables for *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items) ranged from 0,292 to 0,698. The factor loadings of the variables for Factor 2 (18 items) ranged between 0,464 and 0,867.

2.8.7.2 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha and inter-item correlations were utilised to examine the reliability or internal consistency of the measuring instrument. Internal consistency is connected to the inter-relatedness of the items within a test since it explains the extent to which all the items in a test measure the same construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:53). The value of Cronbach's alpha typically ranges between 0,0 and 1,0 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:53). Generally, an acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha is equal to or greater than 0,70 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:54). In cases where factors comprised fewer than 10 items, however, lower values have been deemed acceptable since the size of alpha has been linked to the number of items in the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:54; Vaske *et al.*, 2017:165). Acceptable values for inter-item correlation

typically range between 0,15 and 0,50. Table 2-13 below provides the values of Cronbach's alpha and mean inter-item correlations for the factors:

Table 2-13: Reliability statistics

Factors	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Cronbach's alpha	Mean inter-item corr.
Attitudes	1,00	6,00	4,93	1,322	0,98	0,83
Self-efficacy strategies	2,40	6,00	4,45	1,001	0,83	0,55
Physical strategies	1,33	6,00	3,84	1,145	0,61	0,35
Emotional and mental strategies	2,38	6,00	4,65	0,869	0,90	0,55
Phase 1: Hyperactivity	1,33	5,00	3,36	0,724	0,65	0,24
Phase 2: Confusion	1,00	5,33	2,61	1,091	0,86	0,52
Phase 3: Frustration	1,00	5,83	2,18	1,010	0,88	0,55
Phase 4: Despair	1,00	5,00	2,14	1,119	0,91	0,62

As seen in the table above, the factors measured the following alpha coefficients:

- Attitudes (11 items) = 0,98
- Self-efficacy strategies (five items) = 0,83
- Physical strategies (three items) = 0,61
- Emotional and mental strategies (eight items) = 0,90
- Phase 1: Hyperactivity (six items) = 0,65
- Phase 2: Confusion = 0,86
- Phase 3: Frustration = 0,88
- Phase 4: Despair = 0,91

All of the factors except *Physical strategies* (three items) and *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items) scored acceptable Cronbach alpha values. Nevertheless, the mean inter-item correlations for these two factors, namely *Physical strategies* and *Phase 1: Hyperactivity*, were 0,35 and 0,24 respectively. Thus, the measuring instrument has an acceptable level of internal consistency.

2.8.7.3 Associations with ordered demographical variables

Significant correlations with practical values were identified between the ordered demographic details and the eight factors. Correlations with values of $>0,30$ have a medium effect whereas correlations with values $>0,50$ have a high effect. Table 2-14 below represents the correlations identified between ordered demographics and factors.

Table 2-14: Significant correlations between ordered demographics and factors

	Years in ministry:	Years at current congregation:	Congregation size:
Attitudes	-	-	-0,248*
Self-efficacy strategies	-	-0,248*	-
Mental and emotional strategies	0,304*	-	-

*** Correlation is practically meaningful $r > 0,30$ (medium effect)**

The following correlations were identified between the ordered demographic details and the factors:

- *Attitudes* negatively correlate with congregation size with medium effect. Thus, as congregation size increases, the church leaders' positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience decreases.
- *Self-efficacy strategies* negatively correlate with years at current congregation with medium effect. Thus, as the number of years a church leader stays at a certain congregation increases, the more their attempts to cultivate resilience in relation to self-efficacy strategies decrease.
- *Mental and emotional strategies* positively correlate with years in ministry with medium effect. Thus, as church leaders get older, the implementation of resilience-cultivating attempts focused on emotional and mental strategies increases.

2.8.7.4 Associations with non-ordered demographical variables

Significant correlations were also identified between the non-ordered demographic details, namely gender, race, ministry status, and current ministry position.

A t-test was conducted to measure the statistical significance of the differences between the means of the male and female groups. Please note that since this is not a random sample, p-values are irrelevant and the focus should be placed on effect sizes. The effect size is a

measure of practical significance and is independent of sample size (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:51). Practical significance should be understood as a difference large enough to have an effect in practice (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52). A small effect = 0,2, a medium effect = 0,5, and a large effect = 0,8 (Cohen as cited by Ellis & Steyn, 2003:52). Nevertheless, p-values are reported for the sake of completeness. See table 2-15 below:

Table 2-15: Significant correlations between gender and factors

Factor	Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.	p-value	Effect size
Attitudes	Male	4,95	1,30	0,78	0,11
	Female	4,78	1,58		
Self-efficacy strategies	Male	4,44	0,99	0,94	0,03
	Female	4,48	1,15		
Physical strategies	Male	3,92	1,13	0,12	0,63**
	Female	3,21	1,11		
Emotional and mental strategies	Male	4,64	0,87	0,82	0,09
	Female	4,72	0,93		
Phase 1: Hyperactivity	Male	3,39	0,75	0,13	0,39**
	Female	3,10	0,43		
Phase 2: Confusion	Male	2,66	1,13	0,22	0,34
	Female	2,27	0,74		
Phase 3: Frustration	Male	2,19	1,12	0,69	0,13
	Female	2,04	0,97		
Phase 4: Despair	Male	2,13	1,12	0,94	0,03
	Female	2,17	1,21		

**** Effect size has a medium effect $\geq 0,5$**

The following can be deduced from the effect sizes above:

- Males reported a significantly higher tendency to implement physical resilience-cultivating strategies than females. Means differed with medium effect; effect size = 0,63.
- Males reported significantly higher levels of hyperactivity than females. Means differed with medium effect; effect size = 0,39.

An ANOVA test was used to measure the statistical significance of the differences between the three racial groups, namely black, coloured, and white. See table 2-16 below:

Table 2-16: Significant correlations between race and factors

Factor	Race	Mean	Std. Dev.	p-value	Effect size	
					Black with	Coloured with
Attitudes	Black	5,18	1,03	0,01	-	-
	Coloured	3,95	1,93		0,64**	-
	White	5,15	0,91		0,03	0,62**
Self-efficacy strategies	Black	4,32	1,32	0,35	-	-
	Coloured	4,67	0,97		0,31	-
	White	4,73	1,11		0,42**	0,06
Physical strategies	Black	3,83	0,98	0,99	-	-
	Coloured	3,86	1,00		0,02	-
	White	3,89	1,16		0,04	0,02
Emotional and mental strategies	Black	4,62	0,99	0,40	-	-
	Coloured	4,89	1,39		0,33	-
	White	4,40	1,14		0,18	0,41**
Phase 1: Hyperactivity	Black	3,41	0,83	0,71	-	-
	Coloured	3,25	0,77		0,15	-
	White	3,26	1,21		0,22	0,01
Phase 2: Confusion	Black	2,66	0,87	0,88	-	-
	Coloured	2,49	0,62		0,15	-
	White	2,57	1,06		0,06	0,06
Phase 3: Frustration	Black	2,66	0,68	0,75	-	-
	Coloured	2,49	0,72		0,19	-
	White	2,57	1,03		0,06	0,18
Phase 4: Despair	Black	2,21	1,09	0,47	-	-
	Coloured	1,99	1,48		0,26	-
	White	2,31	1,09		0,14	0,36**

****Effect size has a medium effect $\geq 0,5$**

The following can be deduced from the effect sizes above:

- Coloured participants demonstrated a significantly less positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience when compared to black and white participants. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size between coloured participants and black participants = 0,64. Effect size between coloured participants and white participants = 0,62.
- White participants demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement self-efficacy strategies than black participants. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,42.
- Coloured participants demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement emotional and mental strategies than white participants. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,41.
- White participants demonstrated significantly higher levels of *Phase 3 – Despair* than coloured participants. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,36.

A t-test was conducted to measure the statistical significance of the differences between the means of the full-time and part-time groups. See table 2-17 below:

Table 2-17: Significant correlations between ministry status and factors

Factor	Ministry status	Mean	Std. Dev.	p-value	Effect size
Attitudes	Full time	4,97	1,21	0,81	0,08
	Part time	5,10	1,58		
Self-efficacy strategies	Full time	4,46	1,02	0,73	0,12
	Part time	4,33	0,96		
Physical strategies	Full time	3,83	1,087	0,54	0,22
	Part time	4,15	1,44		
Emotional and mental strategies	Full time	4,68	0,83	0,37	0,32
	Part time	4,32	1,130		
Phase 1: Hyperactivity	Full time	3,31	0,76	0,01	0,55**
	Part time	3,72	0,34		
Phase 2: Confusion	Full time	2,63	1,16	0,38	0,18
	Part time	2,43	0,52		
Phase 3: Frustration	Full time	2,21	1,133	0,16	0,36**
	Part time	1,80	0,72		

Phase 4: Despair	Full time	2,14	1,16	0,28	0,23
	Part time	1,87	0,57		

**** Effect size has a medium effect $\geq 0,5$**

The following can be deduced from the effect sizes above:

- Part-time church leaders reported significantly higher levels of hyperactivity than full-time church leaders. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,55.
- Full-time church leaders reported significantly higher levels of frustration than part-time church leaders. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,36.

An ANOVA test was used to measure the statistical significance of the differences between the three ministry position groups, namely senior pastor, co-pastor, and other (youth leader, worship leader, and elder). See table 2-18 below:

Table 2-18: Significant correlations between current ministry position and factors

Factor	Current ministry position	Mean	Std. Dev.	p-value	Effect size	
					Senior with	Co-pastor with
Attitudes	Senior pastor	4,53	1,40	0,26	-	-
	Co-pastor	5,09	1,24		0,40**	-
	Other	4,51	1,69		0,01	0,35**
Self-efficacy strategies	Senior pastor	4,00	0,95	0,16	-	-
	Co-pastor	4,54	0,98		0,55**	-
	Other	4,63	1,10		0,57**	0,08
Physical strategies	Senior pastor	3,64	1,19	0,70	-	-
	Co-pastor	3,89	1,10		0,21	-
	Other	3,62	1,43		0,02	0,19
Emotional and mental strategies	Senior pastor	4,22	0,97	0,04	-	-
	Co-pastor	4,82	0,77		0,62**	
	Other	4,38	0,94		0,16	0,47**
Phase 1: Hyperactivity	Senior pastor	3,13	0,70	0,25	-	-
	Co-pastor	3,37	0,76		0,31	-
	Other	3,69	0,48		0,78***	0,41**
Phase 2: Confusion	Senior pastor	2,80	1,13	0,34	-	-

	Co-pastor	2,47	1,05		0,30	-
	Other	3,02	1,32		0,17	0,42**
Phase 3: Frustration	Senior pastor	2,57	1,42	0,19	-	-
	Co-pastor	2,00	0,96		0,40**	-
	Other	2,40	1,20		0,11	0,34
Phase 4: Despair	Senior pastor	2,43	1,20	0,39	-	-
	Co-pastor	2,00	1,10		0,36**	-
	Other	2,33	1,11		0,08	0,30

****Effect size has a medium effect $\geq 0,5$**

*****Effect size has a large effect $\geq 0,8$**

The following can be deduced from the effect sizes above:

- Co-pastors demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience than senior pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) respectively. Means differed with medium effect. Effect sizes = 0,40 and 0,35 respectively.
- Co-pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) reported a significantly higher tendency to implement self-efficacy strategies than senior pastors. Means differed with medium effect. Effect sizes = 0,55 and 0,57 respectively.
- Co-pastors reported a significantly higher tendency to implement emotional and mental strategies than senior pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders). Means differed with medium effect. Effect sizes = 0,62 and 0,42 respectively.
- Other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* than senior pastors and co-pastors. Means differed with high effect between other church leaders and senior pastors, and with medium effect between other church leaders and co-pastors. Effect sizes = 0,78 and 0,41 respectively.
- Other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* than co-pastors. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,42.
- Senior pastors reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* than co-pastors. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,40.
- Senior pastors reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 4: Despair* than co-pastors. Means differed with medium effect. Effect size = 0,36.

2.8.7.5 Relationships between attitudes, resilience-cultivating attempts, and resilience levels

Table 2-19 below indicates the significant correlations between attitudes, resilience-cultivating attempts, and resilience levels.

Table 2-19: Significant correlations between factors

	Attitudes	Self-efficacy strategies	Physical strategies	Emotional and mental strategies	Phase 1: Hyper-activity	Phase 2: Confusion	Phase 3: Frustration	Phase 4: Despair
Attitudes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-efficacy strategies	-	-	0,377*	0,749**	-	-0,319*	-0,438*	-0,322*
Physical strategies	-	0,377*	-	0,478**	-	-0,251*	-0,351*	-0,355*
Emotional and mental strategies	-	0,749**	0,478**	-	-	-0,401*	-0,488**	-0,488**
Phase 1: Hyper-activity	-	-	-	-	-	0,435*	0,410*	0,315*
Phase 2: Confusion	-	-0,319*	-0,251*	-0,401*	0,435*	-	0,777**	0,743**
Phase 3: Frustration	-	-0,438*	-0,351*	-0,448**	0,410*	0,777**	-	0,811**
Phase 4: Despair	-	-0,322*	-0,355*	-0,488**	0,315*	0,743**	0,811**	-

* Correlation is practically meaningful $r = 0,30$ (medium effect)

** Correlation is practically meaningful $r = 0,50$ (high effect)

The following correlations between the factors were identified:

- Interestingly, church leaders' attitudes had no significant correlations with their attempts to cultivate resilience or with their levels of burnout.
- Self-efficacy positively correlated with physical strategies with a medium effect, and positively with emotional and mental strategies with a high effect. It also negatively correlated with medium effect with *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase*

4: *Despair*. Thus, as the implementation of self-efficacy strategies increases, so does the implementation of physical strategies increase and even more so the implementation of emotional and mental strategies, whilst the levels of *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair* decrease.

- Physical strategies positively correlated with self-efficacy strategies with medium effect, and with emotional and mental strategies with high effect. At the same time, it negatively correlated with medium effect with *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*. Thus, as the implementation of physical strategies increases, the implementation of self-efficacy strategies and even more so the implementation of mental and emotional strategies also increases. In addition, the levels of *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair* decrease.
- Emotional and mental strategies positively correlated with physical and self-efficacy strategies with high effect. It also negatively correlated with medium effect with *Phase 2: Confusion* and with *Phase 3: Frustration*, and with high effect with *Phase 4: Despair*. So, as the implementation of emotional and mental strategies increases, the implementation of physical and self-efficacy strategies significantly increases whilst the levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* also decrease and the levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* and *Phase 4: Despair* significantly decrease.
- *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* positively correlated with medium effect with *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*. As *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* increases, so does *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*.
- *Phase 2: Confusion* negatively correlated with medium effect with self-efficacy, physical, and mental and emotional strategies whilst it positively correlated with *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* with medium effect and with high effect with *Phase 3: Frustration* and *Phase 4: Despair*. Thus, as *Phase 2: Confusion* increases, the implementation of self-efficacy, physical, and mental and emotional strategies decreases whilst the levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* increase, and the levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* and *Phase 4: Despair* significantly increase.
- *Phase 3: Frustration* negatively correlated with medium effect with self-efficacy and physical strategies and with high effect with emotional and mental strategies whilst it positively correlated with medium effect with *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* and with high effect with *Phase 2: Confusion* and *Phase 4: Despair*. Thus, as *Phase 3: Frustration* increases, the implementation of self-efficacy and physical strategies decreases whilst the implementation of emotional and mental strategies significantly decreases. At the same time, the levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* increase and the levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* and *Phase 3: Despair* significantly increase.
- *Phase 4: Despair* negatively correlated with medium effect with self-efficacy and physical strategies, and with high effect with emotional and mental strategies whilst it positively

correlated with medium effect with *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* and with high effect with *Phase 2: Confusion* and *Phase 3: Frustration*. So, as *Phase 4: Despair* increases, the implementation of self-efficacy, physical, and emotional and mental strategies significantly decreases whilst the levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* increase and the levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* and *Phase 3: Despair* significantly increase.

2.8.7.6 Frequencies of low attitudes, low cultivating strategies, and high levels of burnout

In summary, the bar graphs below provide an overview of the frequencies of each factor. The first graph (figure 2-1) highlights the percentage of individuals who predominantly chose values between 1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, and 3 – slightly disagree with *Attitudes* (11 items), indicating a negative attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience. It also shows the percentage of individuals who predominantly chose values between 1 – never applicable, 2 – rarely applicable, and 3 – sometimes applicable with *Self-efficacy strategies* (five items), *Physical strategies* (three items), and *Emotional and Mental strategies* (eight items), indicating a lack of implementation of these resilience-cultivating strategies.

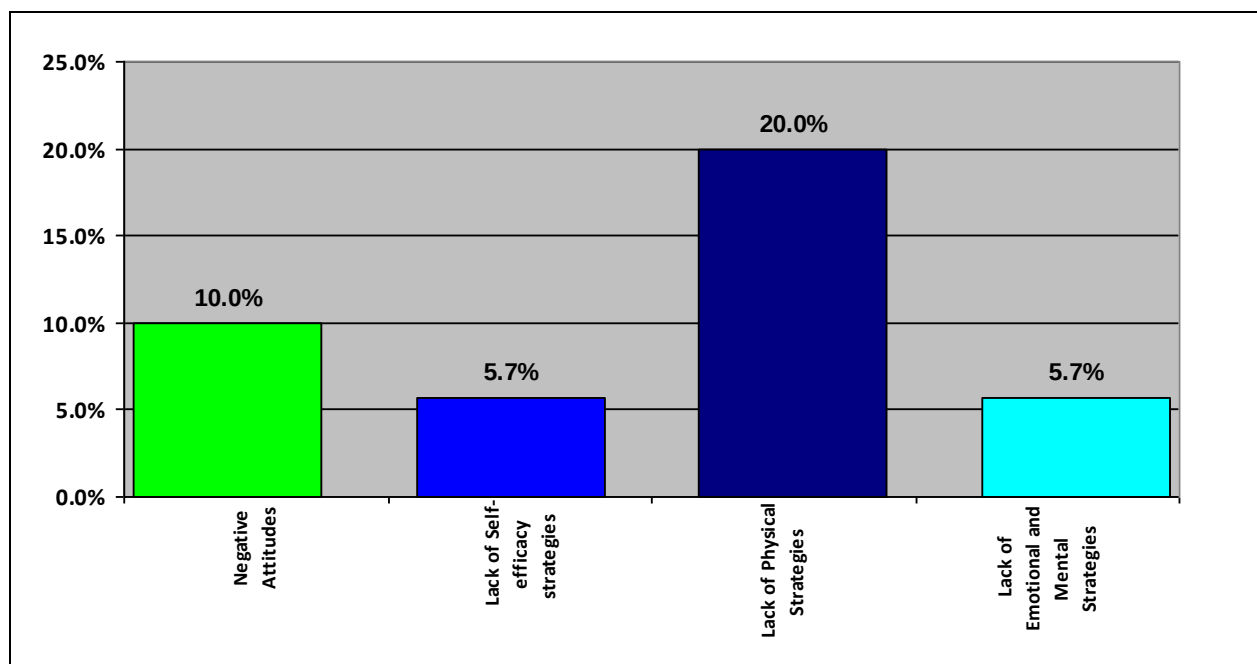


Figure 2-1: Low attitudes and low cultivating frequencies

From the bar graph above (figure 2-1) it is clear that although the overall means of the factors are high, there remains reason for concern about the fact that:

- 10% of the respondents demonstrated a negative attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience in ministry;

- 5,7% of the respondents do not implement resilience-cultivating strategies related to their self-efficacy;
- 20% of the respondents do not implement physical resilience-cultivating strategies; and
- 5,7% of the respondents do not implement emotional and mental resilience strategies.

The second graph (figure 2-2) highlights the percentage of individuals who predominantly chose values between 4 – often applicable, 5 – nearly always applicable, and 6 – always applicable with *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items), *Phase 2: Confusion* (six items), *Phase 3: Frustration* (six items), and *Phase 4: Despair* (six items), indicating low levels of resilience and symptoms of burn out.

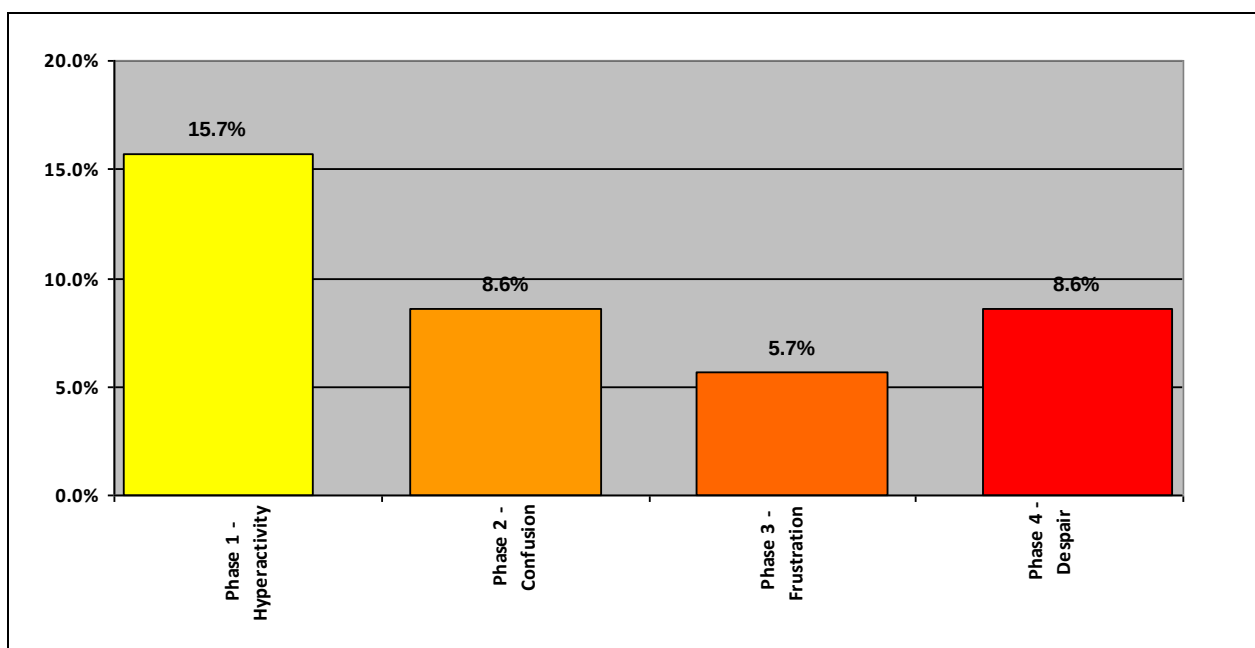


Figure 2-2: High burnout levels frequencies

From the bar graph above (figure 2-2) it is clear that although the majority of the group of church leaders who responded to the questionnaire does not demonstrate serious levels of burnout, there is in fact still reason for concern because:

- 15,7% of the respondents reported high levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* which includes working hard, constantly feeling responsible for everything, and perfectionism. *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* includes the neglect of healthy habits and resilience-building activities. *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* opens the door to the full onset of burnout and the escalation of negative emotions and thoughts, destructive behaviours, physical symptoms, and relational problems (xpand, s.a.:5);
- 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 2: Confusion*;
- 5,7% reported high levels of *Phase 3: Frustration*; and

- 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 4: Despair*.

2.8.8 Summary of empirical research results

2.8.8.1 Church leaders' cognition of resilience

With regard to church leaders' cognition of resilience, the following deductions were made based on the analysis of the qualitative responses:

- Although the majority of church leaders had a basic understanding of what the concept of resilience denotes, very few responses emphasised the value of resilience that focuses on the presence of positive outcomes, growth, and development despite adversity. Resilience is mainly understood to refer to one's ability to survive or persevere in ministry as opposed to one's ability to thrive and passionately persevere in ministry. Resilience might be undervalued due to this understanding.
- All church leaders agreed that resilience is important for perseverance in ministry. The predominant themes that were identified is that ministry is a challenging environment and that without resilience one would not make it in ministry.
- The majority of church leaders believed that resilience can be cultivated although a few individuals were unsure. Two streams of thought were identified from the responses; the majority of church leaders believed in an active development process on the part of the church leader which involves regular practise, self-discipline, acquiring knowledge and being equipped, amongst other things, as opposed to those who believed in a more passive development process on the part of the church leader which involves the cultivation of resilience as something gained with time, amongst other things.
- Overall, church leaders had a holistic understanding of the strategies required to cultivate resilience. Spiritual disciplines, social disciplines and resources, work-life balance, emotional disciplines, physical disciplines, self-discipline, mental disciplines, and self-efficacy disciplines were identified from the responses. Nevertheless, several responses indicated a more trait-orientated or static understanding of the concept of resilience which gives the idea that resilience is an achieved state rather than a dynamic process that requires constant and continuous implementation of deliberate strategies.
- The majority of church leaders indicated that the ministry makes it difficult to cultivate resilience due to the many challenges and demands, the pressures to perform and of expectations, the time constraints, and the lack of support. Others strongly felt that it is not the ministry's responsibility to cultivate resilience but that it remains the responsibility of the church leader.

2.8.8.2 Church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience

With regard to church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience, the following deductions were made based on the analysis of the quantitative responses:

- 10% of the participants had a negative attitude towards the holistic development of resilience.
- Co-pastors demonstrated a significantly more positive attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience than senior pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) respectively.
- Coloured participants demonstrated a significantly less positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience when compared to black and white participants.
- As congregation size increased, church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience decreased.
- Emotional disciplines were considered the most important of the *Attitudes* (11 items), with spiritual disciplines coming in second.
- Structural resources such as healthy finances and a satisfying job were considered the least important of all 11 *Attitude* items.
- When compared to the means of the items in the "Cultivating attempts" section, the means were slightly higher. This, along with the fact that no significant correlations were found between attitudes and cultivating attempts, seem to indicate that there is a slight divide between belief and practice; although the attitudes of church leaders were generally positive towards the holistic cultivation of resilience, there seemed to be challenges when it comes to the consistent implementation of these strategies. Another alternative is that church leaders have the knowledge of what is considered beneficial, but they do not fully comprehend the value of cultivating resilience, and therefore knowledge does not result in behavioural change.

2.8.8.3 Church leaders' attempts towards the holistic cultivation of resilience

- 5,7% of the participants did not really implement emotional and mental resilience-cultivating strategies.
- Co-pastors demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement emotional and mental strategies than senior pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) respectively.
- As church leaders become older, *Phase 4: Despair*, and their implementation of emotional and mental resilience-cultivating strategies increases.
- 20% of the participants did not really implement physical resilience-cultivating strategies.

- Males demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement physical resilience-cultivating strategies than females.
- 5,7% of the participants did not really implement self-efficacy resilience-cultivating strategies.
- As the number of years that church leaders spent at a specific congregation increased, their implementation of self-efficacy strategies decreased.
- Co-pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement self-efficacy strategies than senior pastors.
- White participants demonstrated a significantly higher tendency to implement self-efficacy strategies than black participants.
- Choosing to focus on the positive instead of the negative, making sure their calling is certain, and spending time with God were the three items with the highest means respectively.
- Taking off enough time, having a mentor, and physical exercise were the three items with the lowest means, ranging between *sometimes* and *often applicable*.
- Positive relationships exist between self-efficacy strategies, physical strategies, and emotional and mental strategies.
- Negative relationships exist between self-efficacy strategies, *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*.
- Negative relationships exist between physical strategies, *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*.
- Negative relationships exist between emotional and mental strategies and *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*.
- Emotional and mental strategies had the strongest mitigating impact on *Phase 2: Confusion*, *Phase 3: Frustration*, and *Phase 4: Despair*.

2.8.8.4 Church leaders' current resilience levels

- Before performing factor analysis as a means of condensing the data, the total sum of the percentage scores for the range between *often applicable*, *nearly always applicable*, and *always applicable* was stipulated for each item included in the four phases of burnout. The following alarming statistics became evident:
 - 64,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as hyperactive.
 - 77,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel responsible for everything.

- 27,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they forget things;
- 22,8% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are constantly in crisis management mode.
- 36,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have little time to worry about sleep, exercise, or eating healthy.
- 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they want to please everyone.
- 35,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are less ambitious and creative than they once were.
- 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they fear they are not good enough.
- 20,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are dissatisfied with their work.
- 20,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are confused.
- 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have headaches on a weekly basis.
- 25,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they camouflage their insecurity.
- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as indifferent and showing little sympathy.
- 15,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are losing faith in themselves and their calling.
- 14,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to be ungrateful and worry.
- 17,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are easily irritated with little need for contact with others.
- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have trouble sleeping and concentrating.

- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that their immune systems are weakened.
- 26% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have no energy.
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel depressed.
- 10% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as cynical and distrusting.
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they criticise and punish themselves.
- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have stress-related physical health problems.
- 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to isolate themselves and have key relationships that are degrading.
- 15,7% of the respondents reported high levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items) which includes working hard and constantly, feeling responsible for everything, and perfectionism.
- Other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items) than senior pastors and co-pastors.
- Part-time church leaders reported significantly higher levels of hyperactivity than full-time church leaders.
- Males reported significantly higher levels of hyperactivity than females.
- 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* (six items).
- Other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* (six items) than co-pastors.
- 5,7% reported high levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* (six items).
- Senior pastors reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* (six items) than co-pastors.
- Full-time church leaders reported significantly higher levels of frustration than part-time church leaders.
- 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 4: Despair* (six items).
- Senior pastors reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 4: Despair* (six items) than co-pastors.
- White participants reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 4: Despair* (six items) than coloured participants.

- Feeling hyperactive and responsible for everything were the two items with the highest means respectively, ranging between *always applicable* and *nearly always applicable*.
- Cynicism and distrust as well as losing faith in their calling were the two items with the lowest means respectively, ranging between *never applicable* and *rarely applicable*.
- Positive relationships exist between *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* (six items), *Phase 2: Confusion* (six items), *Phase 3: Frustration* (six items), and *Phase 4: Despair* (six items).

2.9 DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS' COGNITION OF RESILIENCE, THEIR ATTITUDES AND ATTEMPTS TOWARDS THE HOLISTIC CULTIVATION THEREOF, AND THEIR CURRENT RESILIENCE LEVELS

In this chapter, a descriptive literature study and empirical research were conducted to contribute towards a better understanding of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof.

The following conclusions are drawn from the research conducted:

- Both the literature study and empirical research indicate that passionate perseverance in ministry in the context of 21st-century South Africa presents a great challenge due to a number of factors such as the unrealistic expectations imposed by community and congregation members, financial stress, and lack of support, for example. This reality emphasises the need for the consistent and holistic cultivation of resilience.
- The empirical research confirms that resilience-cultivating strategies as set out in this study, namely self-efficacy strategies, emotional and mental strategies, and physical strategies, have a strong mitigating effect on the presence of stages two to four of burnout.
- From the literature study and empirical research, it is clear that South African church leaders are struggling to rise to the challenge in a manner that does not negatively impact their well-being. Out of the study's participants, 15,7% reported high levels of *Phase 1: Hyperactivity* which includes working hard and constantly, feeling responsible for everything, and perfectionism. 8,6% respondents reported high levels of *Phase 2: Confusion*, 5,7% reported high levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* and 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 4: Despair*.
- The empirical research denotes that the majority of church leaders knows that resilience is important for ministry. Nevertheless, church leaders do not seem to understand and value resilience in relation to its role in passionate perseverance, but rather their understanding and value of resilience are limited to its role in surviving in ministry.

- Furthermore, the empirical research indicates that although the majority of church leaders demonstrates knowledge that resilience needs to be cultivated holistically, some do not fully understand the cultivation process of resilience, viewing it as a trait-orientated achieved state or a more passive process that comes with time and experience.
- The empirical research also shows that there is a definite divide between church leaders' attitudes and the actual attempts they implement to holistically cultivate resilience. Although the majority of church leaders is positive about the holistic cultivation of resilience, their attempts are not implemented consistently and continuously in all areas; this is especially true of physical strategies. Knowledge is not translating into consistent behaviour.

2.10 CONCLUSION

Practical theology has been referred to as a “crisis science” by a number of theologians (Heitink, 1999:4–6; Heyns & Pieterse,1990:86). It flourishes in times of crisis – when a society experiences a revolution of some sorts and when the church's traditional responses and customs no longer seem plausible, and people need new practical guidelines and can no longer blindly continue in their former ways (Heitink, 1999:3; Heyns & Pieterse,1990:86).

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:74) assert that scientific progress only happens once a problem is noticed. Osmer (2008:21) agrees that it is usually only when people experience being brought up short that they become aware of the interpretive activity they have been taking for granted for so long. Browning (as cited in Brunsdon, 2014:1) also asserts that crisis can help expose inadequate structures. This crisis phenomenon can either be perceived as a threat to the accepted and often treasured status quo, or it can be viewed as an opportunity for much-needed renewal (Heitink, 1999:4). This experience has the potential to make people aware of their pre-understandings and opens them up for a dialogical interplay with the text, person, or object they now see anew (Osmer, 2008:23). If embraced, this dialogue could lead to new insights and eventually culminate in new ways of thinking and acting (Osmer, 2008:23).

The church is indeed faced with a time of crisis and the results of the empirical research – which was aimed at answering the question: What is going on? – indicate that some church leaders are not resiliently rising to the challenge. When people are faced with hardship, research indicates that one of three possible outcomes occurs: positive transformation and an escalation in the level of resilience, or response and recovery with no increase in the level of resilience, or breakdown without recovery and decrease in the level of resilience (Forney, 2010:8). Church leaders who fully grasp the value of resilience, not only for the sake of surviving in ministry but

for the sake of passionately persevering in ministry, will respond in a transformative manner that results in increased resilience in their personal lives and in the church they are responsible for, ultimately giving glory to God.

The next chapter will proceed with the interpretive task which aims to answer the question: Why is this going on? The researcher will draw from theories in the communication sciences, sociology, and psychology in an attempt to better understand the patterns and dynamics identified in this chapter (Osmer, 2008:4).

3 CHAPTER 3: INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

From the descriptive-empirical task conducted in chapter 2, it was determined that 21st-century ministry presents South African church leaders with a wide scope of taxing demands that occur not only on a congregational level, but also on a personal level. From the empirical results, one can deduce that a significant percentage of church leaders are struggling to deal with these demands in a manner that is not negatively impacting on their well-being. For many, the demands posed by 21st-century ministry eventually outweigh their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical resources and capacities, making passionate perseverance a seemingly impossible feat.

In light of this reality, the need to actively and holistically cultivate resilience becomes of utmost importance. Church leaders who invest time in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies essentially increase their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical resources and capacities and limit the unnecessary consumption thereof. Unfortunately, the empirical research seems to indicate that although the majority of church leaders is positive about the holistic development of resilience, some church leaders' cognition of resilience is limited or fallacious, resilience-cultivating strategies are not always implemented consistently, and some church leaders are not rising to the challenge without displaying levels of hyperactivity, confusion, frustration, and despair.

Building on the descriptive-empirical task executed in chapter 2, this chapter will focus on the interpretive task which involves thoughtful and wise interpretation. Cartledge (2003:2) motivates that practical theology, as a discipline, is deliberately interpretive. It involves reading or making sense of realities, a process which is inevitably influenced by people's worldviews which are in turn informed by the particular culture, time, and place they exist in (Cartledge, 2003:2). Since practical theology engages real people in real social situations, practical theologians such as Cartledge (2003:15) and Osmer (2008:93) recognise that inter- and interdisciplinary cooperation is essential. Osmer (2008:93) motivates that the interpretive task needs to occur with an attitude that is characterised by an openness to the world and a willingness to learn from the intellectual resources of modern-day culture. Adopting such an approach safeguards the researcher from oversimplifying and drawing superficial and frivolous conclusions for complex problems.

3.2 OBJECTIVE

The authors of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job believe that human life and nature fall into discernible patterns and that insights worth knowing and transferring are yielded when one carefully observes and reflects on these patterns (Osmer, 2008:89). Thus, the aim of this chapter is to gain further insight and answer the question: Why is this going on? in relation to the deductions that were made regarding church leaders' cognition of resilience, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the development of resiliency.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

This study draws from the theoretical framework of Osmer (2008:6–29) who builds forth on the integrative approach of Heitink and proposes that practical theological interpretation involves four main tasks, namely the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:21). As mentioned above, this chapter will focus on the interpretive task.

The interpretive task was accomplished by drawing on theories from the arts and sciences in order to form a better understanding of why the problematic patterns and dynamics, as discerned in the descriptive-empirical task, occur (Osmer, 2008:4). Drawing from the arts and sciences is motivated by the presupposition that no one perspective can capture the fullness of truth and that often times many perspectives are needed in order to understand multidimensional, complex phenomena (Osmer, 2008:83). For this study, different theories and perspectives from the communication sciences, sociology, psychology, and the education sciences were evaluated and applied with thoughtfulness and wise judgement (Osmer, 2008:82–83). The fields of research were chosen because of the value they could add to interpreting the patterns identified in chapter 2.

- The communication sciences deal with the scientific study of human nonverbal and verbal communication (Berger *et al.*, 2010:3). Since interpersonal communication and management play a major part in a church leader's ministry, the communication sciences provided some insight into how the church leader's ability in these areas can positively and negatively affect their ability to passionately persevere in ministry.
- Sociology is the scientific study of "how individuals behave in groups and how their behaviour is shaped by these groups" (Hobbs *et al.*, 2015:12). Sociology reflects on the process by which groups are formed, the dynamics that bring these groups to life, and how these dynamics sustain or change groups or bring about social change (Hobbs *et al.*, 2015:12). Church leaders are also part of various social groups, such as the

congregation where they serve and the denomination to which they belong. Sociology offered insight into how these groups can positively or negatively influence church leaders' cognition of resilience, their behaviour, and in turn their ability to passionately persevere.

- Psychology deals with the study of the mind – the brain and its activities, including emotions, thoughts, and behaviours (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5). More specifically, it is the scientific study of “behaviour, mental processes, and brain functions” (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5). A variety of perspectives or approaches have been developed within the field of psychology, but the research drew from three of these perspectives, namely cognitive psychology, social psychology, and biological psychology (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:5; Eysenck, 2004:3). Due to the general interconnected nature of these perspectives, no distinction was made between them (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:26; Eysenck, 2004:3).
 - Cognitive psychology focuses on areas such as learning, memory, problem-solving, language, attention, and perception (Eysenck, 2004:5). Kruger (2016a:6) motivates that the concept of cognition can be helpful in practical theology by acting as a clarifying lens. This perspective added value to this study by shedding light on the cognitive and thinking processes behind the church leaders' understanding of resilience and the behaviour that eventually leads to them leaving the ministry.
 - Social psychology focuses on the effects that the social and cultural environment as well as individual differences have on human behaviour (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:22). This perspective helped explain how the personality, attitudes, and beliefs of church leaders and the social and cultural environment in which they lead can negatively as well as positively influence their cognition of resilience, their behaviour, and ability to passionately persevere.
 - Biological psychology focuses on the relationship between the mind and behaviour and the underlying biological processes such as genetics, neurotransmitters, hormones, etc. (Cacioppo & Freberg, 2017:21; Eysenck, 2004:4). This added depth to the understanding of why church leaders struggle to passionately persevere in ministry by exploring the biological factors that might contribute to their thinking and behaviour.
 - The education sciences provided perspective on how the theological education and ministerial formation activities of the AFM of SA contribute or fall short in terms of empowering church leaders towards passionate perseverance in ministry.

3.4 INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS' COGNITION OF RESILIENCE

The empirical research conducted in chapter 2 denotes that the majority of church leaders knows that resilience is important for ministry. Nevertheless, church leaders do not seem to understand and value resilience in relation to its role in maximising positive outcomes and passionate perseverance, but rather their understanding and value of resilience are limited to its role in minimising negative outcomes and surviving in ministry.

Furthermore, the empirical research indicates that although the majority of church leaders demonstrates knowledge that resilience can be cultivated and needs to be cultivated holistically, some do not fully understand the cultivation process of resilience. Some church leaders view resilience as a trait-orientated achieved state or something that develops passively with time and experience rather than as a dynamic process and something that could be cultivated proactively. Where possible, the researcher had drawn from psychology theories in an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of these findings.

3.4.1 Interpretive perspectives from psychology

3.4.1.1 Trait theory

Trait theory emerged in the mid-1930s from the work of Gordon Allport, a Harvard University professor and psychologist (Miller, 2019:1). The theory in its simplest form maintains that underlying a person's behaviour is their personality, which is made up of a broad spectrum of established traits or characteristics (Miller, 2019:1). Traits are generally defined as psychological characteristics that are measurable, vary across individuals, exhibit situational and temporal stability, and predict attitudes, decisions or behaviours, and, as a result, outcomes (Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610).

It further asserts that each individual has a unique personality that is shaped by the interplay of a diverse set of traits (Miller, 2019:1). Trait theory seeks to discover and analyse these distinctive personality traits believing that this could help predict which individuals are more likely to thrive in particular situations (Miller, 2019:1). Trait theorists maintain that this could help guide people to happier and more successful lives (Miller, 2019:1).

Trait theory has been applied in a number of research fields, but of particular interest for this study's focus is the area of leadership, to which most church leaders would have been exposed to at one time or another in their growth and development as leaders. Before the 1940s,

leadership research was conducted from the presupposition that leaders are born, not made (Lussier & Achua, 2004:16). This paradigm was referred to as the “Great Man” theory (Germain, 2012:33). Researchers were focused on identifying the inborn traits that distinguish leaders from followers, or effective leaders from ineffective leaders, in order to develop a universal set of traits common to all effective leaders (Lussier & Achua, 2004:16; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2014:344; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610).

The trait theory as sole determining factor in the process of leadership proved inconsistent, however, and lost its stride around the late 1940s and 1950s (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2014:344). In light of a shift in focus towards the impact of situational factors in leadership, some of the arguments against the trait theory paradigm were that it overlooked the needs of followers, it did not separate cause from effect, and it failed to acknowledge the influence of situational factors (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2014:344).

Despite the critique, in recent years leadership literature has been marked by a new-found interest in trait theory (Germain, 2012:33; Swanepoel *et al.*, 2014:344; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610). This new-found interest can largely be attributed to the general consensus reached in relation to the structure of personality by means of the five-factor personality model, often referred to as the Big Five (Colbert *et al.*, 2012:671; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610). A large body of data points to the important role traits play in leadership emergence and effectiveness (Colbert *et al.*, 2012:680–682; Germain, 2012:33; Judge *et al.*, 2009:856; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610). Recently, traits even extended to include biological traits such as height, voice pitch, and facial appearance in addition to psychological traits (Lussier & Achua, 2004:16; Wyatt & Silvester, 2018:610).

Thinking about leadership has greatly evolved since the “Great Man” theory and the trait theory stemming from it. Nevertheless, the influence that trait theory exerts in its many forms is evident in political, organisational, and religious circles. It is common for the media to describe leaders in terms of trait theory (Swanepoel *et al.*, 2014:344). In addition, the traits that emerged from trait theory continue to implicitly and explicitly influence leadership selection. Furthermore, although many concur that certain skills and abilities can be taught, others maintain that certain attributes typically associated with leadership – such as ambition, drive, and extroversion – are intrinsic, stemming from genetic predisposition and therefore cannot be taught (Germain, 2012:33; Judge *et al.*, 2009:860).

The empirical research conducted in this study seems to show evidence of the influences of trait theory on church leaders’ cognition of leadership and in turn resilience. Some church leaders

have consciously or unconsciously been conditioned to think about certain aspects of leadership in terms of trait theory. The idea of “born leaders” still prevails in the minds of many.

With all due respect, the concept of “being called by God”, for example, is often talked about in a static, trait-like manner, as if it is something that guarantees leadership and somewhat frees the church leader from developmental responsibilities. Although passionate perseverance in ministry is indeed impossible without the calling and supernatural endowing of God, people are required to co-labour with God. Likewise, resilience is not a static trait that can be attributed to the calling of God and therefore makes for certain exceptional individuals who will be resilient across all situations throughout their lives.

If church leaders fail to think about resilience as something that can and needs to be cultivated proactively, holistically, and continuously, they will not make the lifestyle changes necessary to do so. If church leaders do not cultivate a lifestyle that promotes resilience, the taxing demands of ministry will eventually be overwhelming and result in them prematurely exiting the ministry. Passionate perseverance in ministry requires a cognition of resilience that underscores the individual’s ability and consequent responsibility to develop a lifestyle that promotes resilience.

3.5 INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS’ ATTITUDES AND ATTEMPTS TOWARDS THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE

From the empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it became clear that although the majority of church leaders had a positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience, this did not translate into consistent and continuous implementation of the corresponding resilience-cultivating strategies. Below follows a closer look at insights from psychology, where applicable, in an attempt to develop a deeper understanding of why church leaders’ attitudes are not consistently translating into the corresponding behaviour.

3.5.1 Interpretive perspectives from psychology

3.5.1.1 Attitude-behaviour relationship

Simply put, an attitude is an individual’s tendency to evaluate something positively or negatively (Maio *et al.*, 2003:283). An individual can have an attitude towards any concrete object or abstract issue in their environment (Ajzen, 2014:241; Maio *et al.*, 2003:284). Historically, a general assumption existed that attitudes exert a persuasive influence on behaviour as a result of the inherent idea that people act in accordance with their beliefs (Megens & Weerman, 2010:299). Consequently, attitudes were and continue to be the focus of many social

psychologists in their explanation of behaviour (Ajzen, 2014:241; Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Megens & Weerman, 2010:300).

Research about the attitude-behaviour relationship can roughly be classified into three generations (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191). The first generation focused on establishing the attitude-behaviour relationship (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191). Empirical research in support of the predictive validity of attitudes, however, continuously yielded mixed results (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Megens & Weerman, 2010:301). Because attitude-behaviour inconsistencies continued to occur, researchers soon realised that attitudes do not always determine behaviour across all circumstances (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Megens & Weerman, 2010:301).

Numerous social psychologists came to agree that attitudes have the potential to exert influence on behaviour, but the actual influence exerted is moderated by certain variables (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Maio *et al.*, 2003:295; Megens & Weerman, 2010:301). Thus, second-generation researchers became focused on identifying and exploring moderators of the attitude-behaviour relationship (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191). It was recognised that the behavioural manifestation of an attitude could be moderated by attitudinal qualities (e.g., strength, ambivalence, and formation through direct or indirect experience), individual characteristics (e.g., self-control and personality), situational factors, and the nature of the behaviour (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Maio *et al.*, 2003:295–296; Megens & Weerman, 2010:300).

The exploratory nature of the field became problematic, however, with each new study seeming to identify and introduce a new variable (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191). This reality gave rise to the third generation of researchers who took a step back and decided that the real question to be answered is how attitudes influence behaviour (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191).

Various models have been developed to address this fundamental question, but the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen's extension of the theory of reasoned action) has been immensely influential in this regard (Kroesen *et al.*, 2017:191; Megens & Weerman, 2010:301–302; Redondo & Puelles, 2017:109). It contains four main constructs: behavioural intention, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2014:250–251; Cheng *et al.*, 2019:570; Megens & Weerman, 2010:302).

Behavioural intention is a central factor in this theory and is assumed to be an indication of the effort an individual is willing and planning to exert to perform a behaviour (Ajzen, 2014:250). According to this theory, behaviour is determined by behavioural intention which in turn is influenced by one's attitude, one's perception of the relevant subjective norms (perceived social pressure or normative beliefs in favour or against the behaviour) and one's perception of their

behavioural control (perceived ease or difficulty; one's ability/self-efficacy) (Ajzen, 2014:251; Cheng *et al.*, 2019:570; Megens & Weerman, 2010:302; Redondo & Puelles, 2017:108). Here it is important to note that a person's perception of their ability to perform a said behaviour is dependent on evaluations of both external factors, such as spare time and access to other's assistance, and internal factors, such as personal ability, confidence, and self-control (Redondo & Puelles, 2017:109).

It is generally assumed that an individual's intention to perform a certain behaviour exists in a direct relationship with their attitude, the subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2014:251). In other words, the more favourable the attitude and the subjective norm towards a certain behaviour is, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger the behavioural intention will be (Ajzen, 2014:251). This model (figure 3-1) can be represented as follows (Ajzen, 2014:252):

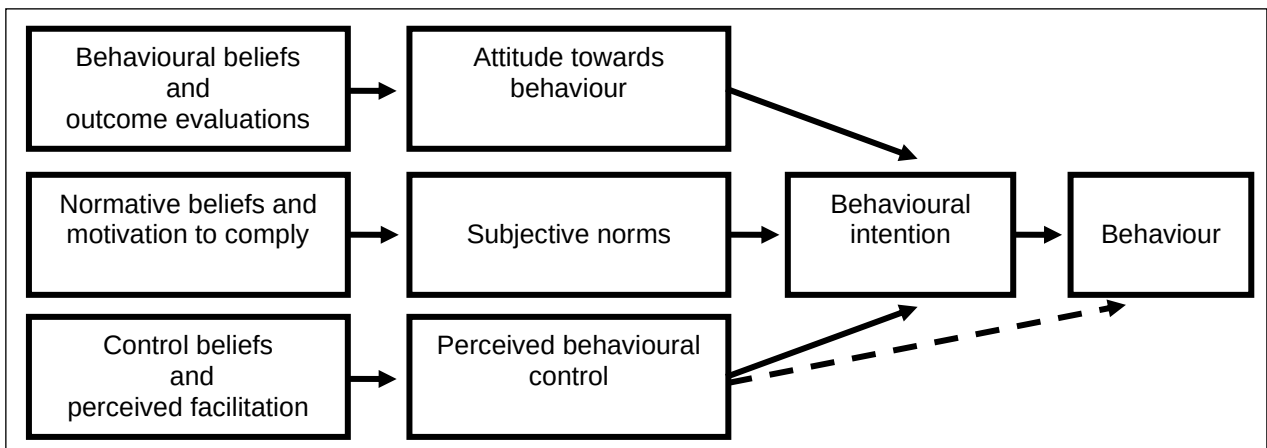


Figure 3-1: Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour

Thus, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, as described by Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, is a complex one in which attitudes have the potential to exert a powerful influence. The influence exerted by attitudes are stronger when:

- attitudes are more accessible, that is, attitudes can be retrieved more easily from memory. Typically, attitudes based on direct experience with the attitude object rather than indirect experience are recognised to be more accessible (Maio *et al.*, 2003:291–295);
- attitudes are less ambivalent (Maio *et al.*, 2003:295). Ambivalence refers to the simultaneous existence of both positive and negative evaluations of the attitude object (Maio *et al.*, 2003:295); and
- attitudes are strongly embedded, that is, attitudes are supported by memories, beliefs, and expectations (Maio *et al.*, 2003:295).

On the other hand, the likelihood of attitude-behaviour consistency is reduced when:

- individuals do not have or perceive that they do not have the required skills, cooperation or approval of others, opportunities, abilities, resources, or self-control to behave in agreement with their attitudes (Ajzen, 2014:251–252; Megens & Weerman, 2010:299,302; Redondo & Puelles, 2017:107,109); and
- behaviours related to an attitude are not perceived as important and having a clear benefit for the actor (Johnson *et al.*, 2014:21). The theory of vested interest contends that attitude-behaviour consistency is negatively impacted upon when the perceived importance and personal benefit is minimised (Johnson *et al.*, 2014:21).

From the empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it was discerned that the majority of church leaders testified to having a positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience. Still, the empirical research indicated that church leaders do not consistently and continuously implement the various resilience-cultivating strategies despite their positive attitude towards it. Using insights from psychology, as discussed above, the following might be reasons for the divide between church leaders' attitude and behaviour:

- As explained through Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, attitude alone does not influence behaviour. Church leaders' perceptions of the relevant subjective norms and their perceived behavioural control also contribute to their behaviour. If church leaders' perceptions of relevant subjective norms are negative and their perceived behavioural control is low, there will be a divide between their attitudes and behaviour. To illustrate this practically, some church leaders might have a negative perception of the subjective norm in relation to the idea of a church leader getting counselling or confiding in a mentor. His/her perception of church and community members' expectations that a church leader should be the perfect example of emotional and mental stability, for example, could prevent him/her from actually reaching out to someone. In addition, church leaders might recognise the benefits of physical exercise but feel that they have a low level of behavioural control due to a hectic schedule and the regular "intrusion" of unscheduled matters, or simply because they do not have the required self-control to bring their actions in line with their attitudes.
- There might be an inconsistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship, because it might be that church leaders do not have a strongly vested interest in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies. From the empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it was discerned that church leaders' value of resilience was limited to its role in ministry survival. Church leaders did not seem to value resilience in relation to its role in passionate perseverance and thriving in ministry. Hence, although church leaders are

generally positive about the holistic development of resilience, they might view resilience-cultivating strategies as important or having a clear benefit only when they are close to burnout or only when their survival in ministry is threatened.

- Church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience, although positive, might not be strong enough to exert enough influence on their behaviour. It might be based on second-hand information rather than direct experience, or it might not be central and embedded enough.

In conclusion, church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience is one of the contributing factors which leads to behavioural intention, which in turn leads to behaviour. If church leaders wish to passionately persevere in ministry, they need to implement holistic resilience-cultivating strategies in a consistent and continuous manner. Developing strong positive attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience will not guarantee success, but it will definitely contribute towards this worthwhile feat.

3.6 INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS' CURRENT RESILIENCE LEVELS

From the descriptive-empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it became clear that some church leaders are struggling to rise to the challenges that 21st-century ministry poses without serious consequences in terms of their well-being. Below, a discussion follows in conversation with the communication sciences, sociology, psychology, and the education sciences to gain better insight into why some South African church leaders struggle and often fail to passionately persevere in this challenging, complex environment.

The first part of the next section will focus on how the intrinsic perceptions and responses of the church leader negatively impact on their well-being and will draw from psychology, sociology, and the communication sciences. Taking time to develop a better understanding of church leaders' intrinsic perceptions and responses that contribute to high burnout levels is not meant to naively assign blame to the church leader fallaciously overlooking the role entire systems, societal beliefs, and organisational structures play in the current problem. Indeed, more research into correcting and improving the systems, societal beliefs, and organisational structures that negatively impact on the church leader's resilience levels is vital, since continued exposure to psychosocial stressors outside one's control can eventually deplete their ability to cope and readjust.

Nevertheless, church leaders cannot sit and wait helplessly for these changes to occur while their well-being and resilience deteriorate. Evaluating and taking control of what they can with the Holy Spirit's help, namely their perceptions and responses, is of paramount importance as the first step towards passionate perseverance in ministry.

From the descriptive task executed in chapter 2, it was determined that church leaders do not always feel adequately prepared for the challenges they encounter in 21st-century ministry (see paragraph 2.5.2.7.2). Acknowledging the foundational role ministerial formation should play in preparing church leaders, the second part of the next section will develop interpretive perspectives by evaluating how ministerial preparation falls short and contributes to the current problem from the perspective of the education sciences. The goal will not be to provide an in-depth exposition of all the programmes implemented at various seminaries, but rather to reflect on shortfalls identified by recent literature and how these can contribute to the church leader's struggle to passionately persevere in ministry.

3.6.1 Interpretive perspectives from psychology

3.6.1.1 Cognitive appraisal theory

Psychosocial stressors are part of human existence. Psychosocial stressors are "either real or imagined events that set the stage for the elicitation of the stress response" (Everly, 1989:25). Although the stress response is often viewed as a villain, it can also be positive (Irvine, 1997:23–25; Nelson & Quick, 2013:236). The stress response can bring about peak performance and assist in managing emergencies (Nelson & Quick, 2013:236). In addition, it is vital for the healthy functioning of people's physical and cognitive capacities (Irvine, 1997:23–24).

The interactive and transactional models of stress acknowledge that stressors are potentially stressful rather than inherently stressful. It extends beyond the more linear models of stress to depict the reactive cyclic pattern between stimulus and response whilst acknowledging the role of the unique intrapersonal dynamics of individuals (Grobbelaar, 2007:62–63; Irvine, 1997:20). The difference in whether psychosocial stressors are perceived and experienced as positive or negative lies not only in the stressor, but also in the cognitive appraisal of the stressor (Everly, 1989:25). Cognitive appraisal refers to how events are interpreted and the meaning assigned to them (Everly, 1989:25; Gomes *et al.*, 2016:1149). It has been found that cognitive appraisal plays an important role in an individual's adaptation to stress in a number of fields (Crum *et al.*, 2017:379; Diefenbeck, 2005:148; Gomes *et al.*, 2016:1448; Gomes *et al.*, 2017:2116; Harvey *et al.*, 2010:587).

People's emotional experiences do not only depend on their concrete situation, but also on their cognitive appraisal of the said situation (Kruger, 2016a:6–7). Cognitive appraisal theory suggests that a person's subjective perception of the demands the situation places on them (primary cognitive appraisal) and a person's subjective perception of their self-efficacy, the available resources and control to cope with the situation (secondary cognitive appraisal) determines if a person will experience the stressful situation as a challenge with significant potential gain, or as a threat with significant potential loss (Crum *et al.*, 2017:379; Gomes *et al.*, 2016:1449; Gomes *et al.*, 2017:2116; Harvey *et al.*, 2010:588).

A stressor is evaluated as threatening when the perceived environmental demands are regarded as more than the perceived resources (Crum *et al.*, 2017:379). Physiologically, threat evaluations have been associated with lower cardiovascular efficiency, negative affect, heightened hormonal response, and poor cognitive performance (Crum *et al.*, 2017:379). Conversely, challenge evaluations are commonly associated with increased hormonal responses and cardio efficiency preparing the body action related to growth and thriving, as well as increased cognitive functioning (Crum *et al.*, 2017:380).

The problem with cognitive appraisal is that it is not fool-proof; in an individual's attempt to make sense of their social environment, other people, situations, etc. people can make mistakes (Kruger, 2016a:7). Through subjective evaluations of early life experiences, fundamental beliefs (schemas) about the self and the world are shaped and maintained (Kruger, 2016a:7; Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:118). Habitual ways of distorted thinking can occur because people, in their attempt to make sense of new information, draw from existing misguided schemas which help them analyse and organise their experiences (Kruger, 2016a:7; Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:118). People, often unconsciously, manipulate the new information received in order to support the existing fundamental beliefs (schemas) through various cognition distortions (Kruger, 2016a:7; Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:118). Cognitive distortions occur “when an active thinking process filters through some faulty reasoning process resulting in an unwanted consequence” (Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:118).

The following are a few examples of cognitive distortions that can impact negatively on the appraisal of psychological stressors, resulting in a negative stress management response which can, in turn, lead to burnout (Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:119):

- Arbitrary inference: the process by which a person draws a negative conclusion in the absence of the necessary information or evidence to support such a conclusion;
- Catastrophising: the evaluation process by which a person believes that the worst possible outcome did or will occur;

- Black-and-white thinking: a person's tendency to view all experiences as fitting into one of two categories (e.g., good and bad) being unable to understand oneself, others, and experiences along a continuum;
- Emotional reasoning: when a person predominantly uses emotions to reach conclusions about themselves, others, and situations;
- Selective abstraction: the process by which a person exclusively focuses on one negative detail or aspect of a situation, magnifying the importance of said detail or aspect to such an extent that the entire situation is cast in a negative light; and
- Personalisation: the process by which a person assumes personal responsibility for the behaviour of others, situations, and events although there is no evidence to support this conclusion.

The insights above highlight the important role church leaders' cognition plays in terms of how they appraise and respond to the stressors they will inevitably encounter in ministry. How church leaders think about the stressors they encounter in ministry and the resources they have available seems to be one of the reasons why some adapt and passionately persevere in ministry while others do not. Some church leaders might be experiencing burnout due to cognitive distortions that lead them to develop negative appraisals of stressors (primary cognitive appraisal), or due to cognitive appraisals in which they do not feel that they have the adequate resources and control to deal with the stressor (secondary cognitive appraisal).

Dr Caroline Leaf (2014:23), a renowned author, communication pathologist, audiologist, and Christian specialising in the field of neuroplasticity, states that besides God, people's ability to think and decide is the strongest thing in the universe. She motivates that people are not victims of their circumstances or biology because they can choose to respond to events in a manner that promotes their physical and spiritual health (Leaf, 2014:18). When thoughts are consciously directed, toxic thinking patterns (cognitive distortions) can be phased out and replaced with healthy thinking patterns (Leaf, 2014:19). Therefore, identifying and replacing cognitive distortions that feed unhealthy stress-management responses is key to fostering resilience in ministry. In addition, if church leaders cultivate resilience more proactively through the consistent implementation of resilience-cultivating strategies, their perception of their self-efficacy and available resources to cope with stressors (secondary cognitive appraisals) is more likely to promote healthy stress-management responses.

3.6.1.2 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is still new in the field of psychology and as a result definitions and conceptualisations are constantly changing; a standardised definition is yet to be recognised. In short, EI basically refers to an individual's ability to recognise and comprehend their own as well as other's emotions and to be able to manage their own emotions in a manner that enhances thought and elicits desired responses from others (Hendron *et al.*, 2014:471; Lee, 2018:731).

The four-branch model of EI originally developed by Salovey and Mayer, who introduced the term "emotional intelligence" in 1990, encompasses a hierarchical approach of "perceiving", "understanding", "regulating", and "utilising" (Hendron *et al.*, 2014:472; Lee, 2018:731). It conceptualises EI from an ability-model perspective and asserts that EI consists of four abilities (Hendron *et al.*, 2014:472):

- *Branch 1 – Perceiving:*
To perceive emotions in oneself and others through a variety of sources such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expression.
- *Branch 2 – Understanding:*
To understand the cause and the effect of emotion as well as how it develops.
- *Branch 3 – Managing:*
To be open to feeling and to adjust and regulate one's own emotions and the expressions thereof to promote inter- and intrapersonal comprehension and growth.
- *Branch 4 – Utilising:*
To create emotion deemed necessary for effective communication.

Since Salovey and Mayer, the concept was popularised by Daniel Goleman in 1995 with the publication of *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ* (Hendron *et al.*, 2014:471). Goleman developed a mixed model (skills and competencies) distinguishing between four interconnected domains, namely:

- *Self-awareness:*
The ability to be aware of and understand one's own emotions, recognising the causes and effects thereof.
- *Self-management:*
The ability to control one's emotions through various strategies in order to achieve determined goals.
- *Social awareness:*
Being attuned to how others feel in the moment (empathy).

- *Relationship management:*

The ability to influence and inspire the emotions of others in order to achieve determined goals (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:30).

The neural systems in the human brain that are responsible for intellect and emotion are separate but yet intimately connected (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:27). The prefrontal area is known as the thinking brain, whereas the limbic system is home to the emotional centres with the amygdala as its trigger point scanning the environment from moment to moment for potential emotional emergencies (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:28). If the amygdala senses a potential threat, it can override certain parts of the brain such as some of the rational centres in the neocortex in order to initiate an immediate response (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:28). Thus, emotions are in essence more powerful than intellect (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:27–28).

Although this relationship protects people in life-threatening situations, it can cause problems when they are hijacked by their emotions in situations such as a church board meeting or family conflict, for example (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:28). EI competencies hinge on the smooth functioning of the prefrontal-limbic circuitry in the brain (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:29). Fortunately, the prefrontal area is the brain's executive centre and as such receives and analyses impulses and information from all parts of the brain before deciding what to do (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:28). Thus, humans have the capacity to veto an emotional impulse through the activation of their prefrontal area in order to make sure their response is more effective, mutually beneficial, and balanced (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:28).

Evidence for EI's moderating influence on burnout, depression, and anxiety levels has been explored and confirmed by a number of researchers in a variety of fields (e.g., Gutierrez & Mullen, 2016:187; Lee, 2018:730; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017:121; Puertas-Molero *et al.*, 2018:2; Yasemin *et al.*, 2016:491). EI has been positively associated with healthier psychological well-being, a greater ability to handle emotional pressures, more adept problem-solving, higher self-esteem, more positive moods, higher-level leadership skills, more effective conflict management, higher levels of job satisfaction, and improved professional and personal social relations (Hendron *et al.*, 2014:471–473; Lee, 2018:730,734–735; Puertas-Molero *et al.*, 2018:2).

Moreover, EI does not only have a positive impact on the individual's personal well-being but has also been found to start a cyclic chain reaction creating a better and more productive working environment for others, which in turn will positively impact on themselves (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:10–11). Thus, leaders can potentially set the emotional standard of a group by driving emotions positively (resonance) or negatively (dissonance) (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:5–7).

In their discussion on the power of emotions in relation to leadership, Goleman *et al.* (2013:7–8) assert that research has confirmed that people working in groups tend to “catch” feelings from one another which can even set off physiological changes in others, such as altered hormone levels, sleep rhythms, immune function and cardiovascular function. Scientists refer to this phenomenon as “interpersonal limbic regulation” and attribute it to the open-loop design of the limbic system (the emotional centre) in the human brain (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:6–7). A closed-loop system, such as the circulatory system, for example, is self-regulating and is not influenced by the circulation systems of others (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:6). The limbic system, on the other hand, is greatly influenced by external sources, resulting in a significant dependence on connections with others for a person’s own emotional stability (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:6).

Church leaders with higher levels of EI, therefore leaders who are more adept in recognising, understanding, regulating, and using their own and others’ emotions, function better in the face of stressful events (Lee, 2018:734). Conversely, church leaders who are constantly in a mode of worry and anxiety will experience erosion in their mental abilities and social skills (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:13). If church leaders lack EI, they will most likely struggle to cultivate and implement resilience competencies such as realistic optimism, discipline, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, making them more at risk for burnout, depression, anxiety.

3.6.1.3 Personality predispositions

Attributing a condition such as burnout or depression solely to personality predispositions without recognising the influence of environmental factors would be a superficial analysis of the problem. Workplace characteristics have been found to be better and more consistent predictors of conditions such as burnout, for example (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:29).

Nevertheless, the connection between conditions such as burnout and depression and a number of personality predispositions has been explored and empirically supported (Armon *et al.*, 2012:405; McCormack & Cotter, 2013:30; Smith *et al.*, 2018:182–183). Neuroticism and introversion, for example, have both been associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Rathi & Lee, 2016:237–238). Emotional exhaustion is one of the key components of burnout (Rathi & Lee, 2016:233). It refers to the feeling of being emotionally exhausted and over-stressed and is exhibited by both a sense of feeling psychologically and emotionally drained as well as physically weary (Rathi & Lee, 2016:233). Emotionally exhausted people feel like their resources are spent and they are at the end of their rope (Rathi & Lee, 2016:233). They tend to use avoidance coping mechanisms and in doing so try to distance themselves cognitively and emotionally from their work (Rathi & Lee, 2016:233).

Thus, certain personality traits might predispose individuals to experience stressors more intensely (Armon *et al.*, 2012:404). Recognising this, in the field of practical theology, Niemann (2017:vii–viii) has explored and confirmed the benefit of personality analysis in relation to preventing church leaders' premature exit from ministry. Thus, three personality traits that have often been linked to a proneness to negative stress responses, burnout, depression, and anxiety will be discussed below.

a. Perfectionism

Perfectionism occurs when someone constantly strives to live up to some external or internal idea of perfection without evaluating the reasonableness of these standards (Smith *et al.*, 2018:182; Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:119). This is often done in an attempt to avoid a subjective experience of failure (Yurica & DiTomasso, 2005:119). The pursuit of unrealistically high standards is usually accompanied by overtly critical evaluations (Smith *et al.*, 2018:182). Hewett and Flett (as cited by Smith *et al.*, 2018:182) developed one of the most influential models of perfectionism which comprises three dimensions, namely:

- *Self-orientated perfectionism:*
An individual's self-directed expectations; the requirement of perfectionism from oneself.
- *Socially-prescribed perfectionism:*
An individual's perception of the unrealistically high standards they believe others require of them.
- *Other-orientated perfectionism:*
An individual's externally-directed expectations; the requirement of perfectionism from others.

In addition to these dimensions, a further distinction is made between perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns (Smith *et al.*, 2018:182). Perfectionistic strivings consist of an individual's setting of high personal standards and striving for perfection (Smith *et al.*, 2018:182). Perfectionistic concerns consist of an individual's negative reactions to imperfection and discrepancies between expectation and reality, the fear of negative social evaluations, and concerns over making mistakes (Smith *et al.*, 2018:182).

Perfectionism in its various dimensions has been associated with higher levels of burnout, depression, anxiety, and negative stress responses in a number of professions

such as human services and sports, for example (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:30; Smith *et al.*, 2018:193). Socially-prescribed perfectionism, for instance, has been found to cause changes in the motivation process amongst athletes (Smith *et al.*, 2018:193). One such change is a progressive shift from intrinsic motivation to amotivation as athletes try to distance themselves from the particular sport as a means to cope with the associated stress (Smith *et al.*, 2018:193). Another change is a progressive shift from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation to amotivation whereby athletes become so driven by the fear of punishment, externally-imposed goals, and the need for validation from others that they eventually feel helpless (Smith *et al.*, 2018:193). Generally, those who score higher levels of perfectionism also display higher levels of stress which in turn impacts on burnout and anxiety levels (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:30).

Likewise, church leaders can perhaps also experience this shift in motivation as well as higher stress levels as a result of perfectionistic tendencies. Church leaders with perfectionistic tendencies will also be less likely to delegate tasks, resulting in a hectic schedule. Moreover, church leaders who are perfectionistic will be less likely to consistently implement resilience-cultivating strategies such as:

- reconciled past – because it might be difficult for them to let themselves and others off the hook in cases where expectations were not met and forgiveness is required;
- realistic optimism – because of their overtly critical evaluations of themselves and others;
- problem-solving – because it requires them to analyse situations constructively instead of only magnifying the negative aspects and outcomes; and
- self-efficacy – because it requires a belief in their own abilities which will be difficult if the standards they set for themselves are always unrealistically high, constantly communicating subjective failure.

b. Neuroticism

Neurotic individuals are prone to experiencing negative emotions such as worry, sadness, guilt, shame, anxiety, anger, and nervousness (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:31; Mohiyeddini *et al.*, 2015:392; Rathi & Lee, 2016:238). They have the disposition to interpret events pessimistically, to expect the worst, to magnify threatening stimuli, and even tend to interpret and classify neutral stimuli as threatening (Armon *et al.*, 2012:406; Mohiyeddini *et al.*, 2015:392; Rathi & Lee, 2016:238).

Individuals with high levels of neuroticism do not only appraise situations as stressful, they also tend to employ maladaptive coping strategies such as self-blame and rumination, leading them to focus inwardly and investing resources and energy dwelling on their emotional state rather than actively working to address the demands posed by a given situation (Armon *et al.*, 2012:406; Mohiyeddini *et al.*, 2015:392). Consequently, such individuals are more reactive to stressful situations and less equipped to cope in a manner that does not result in negative consequences for their health (Mohiyeddini *et al.*, 2015:392).

Church leaders who have high levels of neuroticism will struggle to respond resiliently to the challenges posed by ministry, often allowing their emotions to get the better of them when encountering stressors.

c. Introversion

In their literature review of recent empirical studies conducted amongst the employees of service organisations, Rathi and Lee (2016:237) found that research has shown that individuals who score high in introversion are more likely to find themselves in a situation of role overload caused by extensive contact with others. This is because they do not draw energy from interactions with people like more extraverted people do.

They further found that expressing the organisation's expected or desired emotions is psychologically more taxing for more introverted individuals (Rathi & Lee, 2016:237). Research furthermore suggests that introverted individuals prefer to spend more time by themselves and place a higher value on privacy. Therefore, they may be more sensitive towards feelings of invasion of privacy (Baer *et al.*, 2016:441).

Moreover, more introverted individuals tend to perceive that they have less control over their activities implemented at home in an attempt to recover (Baer *et al.*, 2016:441). Consequently, introverted-inclined individuals are more likely to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion than extroverted-inclined individuals (Rathi & Lee, 2016:232). They tend to react more negatively in terms of work-home conflicts that arise when work spills over into the home domain, job satisfaction, and work engagement levels (Baer *et al.*, 2016:444).

The ministry environment with its vague boundaries and its "life in a fish-bowl" nature will often result in work-home conflicts and invasions of privacy. Additionally, it requires from church leaders to give a lot of themselves emotionally as they have to deal with conflicts

that arise or have to support and encourage others. More introverted church leaders who do not actively implement resilience-cultivating strategies in order to ensure that they remain emotionally recharged will struggle to passionately persevere in ministry.

3.6.1.4 Locus of control

The concept of locus of control denotes a person's beliefs about the future and who or what is perceived to have the power to exert control over it (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32). Johns and Saks (as cited by Forney, 2010:20) define the locus of control concept as "a set of beliefs about whether one's behaviour is controlled mainly by internal or external forces".

Research distinguishes between internals, people with high internal locus of control, and externals, people with high external locus of control (Forney, 2010:20). Internals are people who perceive that it is largely within their power to control and change their environment and workplace outcomes (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32; Niemann, 2017:180). They do not perceive themselves as victims but believe that their own attitudes, behaviour, and actions lead to what happens to them (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32). Conversely, externals are people who perceive that powers or forces outside themselves are largely in control of their future and what happens to them (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32). Externals' behaviour is determined by things such as destiny, fate, luck, chance, or powerful people (Forney, 2010:20; McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32).

Research has found that internals are more likely to implement effective coping styles, perceive things as less stressful, exhibit more hardiness, optimism, and self-efficacy, and less internal distrust (Forney, 2010:20; Niemann, 2017:180). Externals, on the other hand, have been found to be more vulnerable to stress and burnout, because they perceive adversity as something outside of their control, something being done to them (Forney, 2010:20; McCormack & Cotter, 2013:32). They tend to blame others for things that go wrong in the workplace and often feel helpless and frustrated (Niemann, 2017:180).

In ministry, both a purely internal or external locus of control can be problematic. Church leaders with a purely external locus of control will approach adverse contexts with passivity and frustration, sensing no degree of responsibility or control. They will regard themselves as victims of people's expectations and workplace events. They will tend to implement avoidant coping strategies. In relation to God, they might passively use phrases such as "we are waiting on God", "God will make a way", "let's trust God and pray", perceiving themselves as called merely to discover what God has already predestined (Forney, 2010:21).

Contrariwise, church leaders with a purely internal locus of control will experience intense anger, hostility, anxiety, and frustration in situations where their sense of control is threatened (Niemann, 2017:180). They will feel overtly responsible for all events and outcomes. Consciously or subconsciously they will operate from the deistic belief that God exists but does not intervene in His creation (Forney, 2010:21). They will see themselves as called to initiate and invent ministry for themselves (Forney, 2010:21).

Church leaders who want to flourish and passionately persevere in ministry need to pursue a healthy balance between internal and external loci of control. They need to paradoxically believe that they are able to control what happens to them while firmly holding on to the biblical truth that God is sovereign (Forney, 2010:25). They need to understand that they are co-workers with God, called to discover and at the same time to invent ministry (Forney, 2010:21). They need to be able to recognise what they can influence whilst they acknowledge that some things are indeed out of their control (Forney, 2010:25). They need to exert influence on matters they can change and not waste energy on matters they cannot change but submit these to God in trust and hope. The right balance is not precise but always contextually driven (Forney, 2010:25). Sometimes it might be necessary for church leaders to connect with a mentor to help them discern and get a more objective perspective.

3.6.2 Interpretive perspectives from sociology

3.6.2.1 Role expectations

Role theory is an approach in sociology that perceives the majority of interpersonal activity to be the acting out of socially understood and constructed roles (Miller, 2018). Roles are understood to exist independently from those who fulfil them and are a means by which individuals engage with larger social systems (Miller, 2018).

Each role is accompanied by its own set of expectations of what is considered appropriate behaviour (Miller, 2018). Individuals' behaviour and work in fulfilment of assigned roles are to a large extent dictated by these associated expectations (Miller, 2018). Furthermore, the expectations associated with the assigned role generate stress and pressure on the individual (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:485).

Role stressors are recognised as some of the most common sources of strain and burnout amongst employees (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:484). People encounter three major categories of role stress at work which negatively impact on commitment and job satisfaction. These are role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:484).

Role ambiguity refers to when a person is uncertain or confused about role requirements in relation to the expectations and evaluations of others (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:485; Miller, 2015:205; Nelson & Quick, 2013:242). Role ambiguity may occur as a result of a person being unsure of what is expected of them, not knowing how to fulfil the expected task, or not knowing what the consequences will be if they fail to fulfil the expected task (Nelson & Quick, 2013:242).

Each congregation with its own history and current trajectory presents the church leader with a different set of expectations which seldom aligns completely and naturally with the church leader's own expectations of what their ministry should look like (Forney, 2010:16). The empirical-descriptive study indicated that some feel pressured as a result of all the expectations related to their performance. Inevitably, church leaders often experience a sense of disillusionment with regard to their roles which is magnified by the absence of visible results and the fact that they frequently feel inadequately trained to deal with the wide spectrum of challenges urbanised ministry presents (De Bruyn, 2016:684; Dreyer, 2016b:155; Keizer *et al.*, 1983:106; Kruijne, 1983:54). Thus, ministry is permeated with role ambiguity which can lead to increased job dissatisfaction and decreased levels of performance and commitment (Forney, 2010:17).

Role conflict, on the other hand, occurs when a person perceives communicated expectations as contradictory, competing, or inconsistent (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:485; Nelson & Quick, 2013:242). Role conflict might be a result of inter-role conflict, intra-role conflict, or person-role conflict (Nelson & Quick, 2013:242). Inter-role conflict occurs as a result of clashing expectations in terms of two or more separate roles (Miller, 2015:205; Nelson & Quick, 2013:242). A church leader, for example, who has to assist with a member's funeral on a Saturday, missing out on his son's rugby tournament as a result, might experience inter-role conflict. Intra-role conflict occurs as a result of conflicting expectations within a single role. A church leader might experience intra-role conflict when having to support and minister to and at the same time discipline a church board member struggling with alcoholism. Person-role conflict occurs when a person is expected to behave in a manner that violates their perception of themselves, personal values, beliefs, or principles (Nelson & Quick, 2013:242). A church leader who is passionate about a certain dogmatic issue but whose board does not permit them to preach about it, for example, might experience a person-role conflict.

Finally, role overload refers to the degree to which an employee perceives assigned responsibilities or expectations to exceed what their ability and available resources afford them without compromising quality (Jian & Dalisay, 2018:485). The empirical-descriptive task highlighted the time constraints church leaders experience due to all that is expected of them, and other research makes it clear that a feeling of incompetence is not uncommon amongst

church leaders in light of the wide array of responsibilities and expectations they are faced with in 21st-century ministry (Dreyer 2015:3; Godfrey as cited by Morrow, 2018:2; Morse as cited by Joubert, 2018:110).

The effects of the role stressors mentioned above are often aggravated when an individual does not differentiate in a healthy manner between themselves, their values and role performance. This may then result in a merger between the self-concept and the role-concept (Barnard & Curry, 2012:152). It is inevitable that church leaders will experience the role stressors mentioned above to some degree or another, but because church leaders function in roles largely prescribed by systems and expectations, they essentially run the risk of losing themselves (Beebe, 2007:258).

When this self-concept and role-concept merger occurs, church leaders can lose the much-needed perspective to counteract systematic pressures and expectations and respond to interpersonal conflict inappropriately (Beebe, 2007:259). Personal sacrifices and the sacrifice of emotional and physical needs (resilience-cultivating strategies) are then viewed as part of the job and no boundaries are set between work and home (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:30). Church leaders can start to derive a large part of their identity from their role and become dependent on recognition and accolades, making them more likely to burnout (McCormack & Cotter, 2013:30).

3.6.2.2 The looking glass self and perceived mattering

According to the theory of the looking glass self, developed and introduced by Charles Horton Cooley in 1902, an individual's identity is developed by their social interactions in response to their understanding of other's perceptions of them (Gould & Howson, 2019). Cooley divided the process of the development of the self-idea into three key stages: firstly, people imagine how they might appear to others; secondly, they develop a self-idea according to their imaginations of other's perceptions and judgements; thirdly, this self-idea emerges through the attitudes (self-feelings) and thoughts directed towards themselves based on their imaginations (Gould & Howson, 2019).

Accordingly, people often internalise perceived messages and can so be immensely influenced by their perceptions of how others see them and how they are regarded by others (Flett, 2018:5,98). Therefore, interpersonal stressors and negative or unsupportive social interactions are understood to have a significant impact on one's psychological well-being above and beyond the impact of other types of stress (Flett, 2018:41).

Reasoning from this foundation, the concept of “mattering” – a somewhat under-researched concept when compared to others related to the self – is viewed as an important contributor to one’s mental health and well-being and reflects one’s basic need to feel valued and seen by others (Flett, 2018:4; Jung, 2015:194). Mattering is a phenomenon that is important to most people to some degree (Flett, 2018:4). It is important to note that mattering is subjective rather than objective, thus the use of the term “perceived mattering” (Flett, 2018:34). The components of mattering are:

- *Attention:*
When an individual feels as though they and their actions are noticed by others.
- *Importance:*
When an individual feels significant to someone who cares about them.
- *Dependence:*
When an individual feels they are important because someone relies on them.
- *Ego extension:*
When an individual recognises that someone else is emotionally invested in them and that what happens to the said individual also impacts on the other.
- *Noted absence:*
When an individual feels they are missed by someone.
- *Appreciation:*
When an individual feels they and their actions matter to someone.
- *Individuation:*
When an individual feels that someone makes them feel unique and special, and centres on how they regard the said individual’s true self (Flett, 2018:31–32; Jung, 2015:197; Owens & Samblanet, 2013:237).

Mattering can be considered in a general sense, such as in relation to society (societal mattering), or in specific life relationships and roles and their contexts (interpersonal mattering) (Flett, 2018:6; Jung, 2015:197). Both these types of mattering are important for one’s overall sense of self (Jung, 2015:201). Someone who feels that they matter is more resilient and engaged, whereas someone who feels that they do not matter is likely to experience more stress and distress that can escalate into intense feelings of psychological pain (Flett, 2018:6).

Ideally, people who feel that they do not matter will respond to such feelings by pursuing connection with others without giving up their sense of self (Flett, 2018:38). Unfortunately, however, someone who allows themselves to be controlled by these feelings will exhibit a broad range of negative behaviours such as disengaging, conforming, withdrawing, and becoming submissive or masochistic (Flett, 2018:11,38). Moreover, there are established links between

suicidal tendencies or ideation and feelings of not mattering (Flett, 2018:45; Owens & Samblanet, 2013:238).

Although reasoned from a humanistic approach, the concepts of the looking glass self and perceived mattering can add value to this attempt to form a deeper understanding of why some church leaders are struggling to passionately persevere in ministry. In case studies, people have often reported perceptions of not mattering when their emotional experiences and feelings have been ignored, denied, minimised, or invalidated (Flett, 2018:40–41). In addition, a role approach to mattering suggests that a change in roles, such as that which occurs at retirement, for example, can also result in a change in overall perceived mattering and sense of self (Flett, 2018:59).

Therefore, church members coming and going without consideration or pause, counselees not changing their behaviour despite numerous sessions, the overwhelming and never-ending emotional burdens of congregation and community members, insensitive remarks, ageing, the secularisation of society, and even essentially positive changes such as the priesthood of all believers, or the rise of a new generation of young leaders, can make church leaders feel redundant and communicate messages of not mattering on a societal or interpersonal level. If not dealt with in a healthy manner, church leaders can become threatened and insecure in their roles. This can give rise to behaviours that will compromise their resilience such as struggling to delegate tasks and kicking into performance mode, trying to please in a need for affirmation.

3.6.2.3 Social intelligence

Recent discoveries in neuroscience confirm what God, the Creator, declared from the beginning when He looked at Adam and said that it is not good for man to be alone. Humans are designed to connect and be in relationship with others; their brains are by design sociable (Comstock, 2018; Goleman, 2011:4). Even daily social encounters that might be considered routine, act as regulators as they prime emotions (Goleman, 2011:4–5). The resulting emotions, positive or negative, have a ripple effect throughout the body as cascades of hormones that regulate biological systems such as the immune and cardiovascular systems are released (Goleman, 2011:5).

Nourishing relationships can positively impact health by improving mental health, increasing access to resources, decreasing depression levels, acting as buffers against stress, managing blood sugars, reducing cardiovascular mortality likelihood, increasing likelihood of cancer survival, and decreasing posttraumatic stress disorder (Comstock, 2018; Glover, 2018:25;

Goleman, 2011:5; Kaye & Singer, 2019:4). Toxic relationships, on the other hand, can slowly poison the body (Goleman, 2011:5).

Even so, it is not only the presence of positive or negative relationships that can have an impact on people but also the absence of particular types of relationships. Feelings of social isolation or loneliness can be triggered by a number of relationships because there is a diverse spectrum of interpersonal needs which are usually associated with different types of relationships (Ciolfi, 2019:26).

Recognising this, Weiss (as cited by Ciolfi, 2019:26) developed a framework which continues to be influential consisting of six social provisions. These are

- the need for attachment, which is usually fulfilled by an intimate partner or spouse;
- the need for social integration, which is usually fulfilled by friends;
- the need for nurturance, which is usually fulfilled by an individual's children;
- the need for worthiness, which is usually fulfilled by an individual's colleagues or co-workers;
- the need for alliance, which is usually fulfilled by relatives and family; and
- the need for guidance, which is usually fulfilled by persons who act as mentors or teachers (Ciolfi, 2019:26).

Despite the benefits of healthy relationships and the presence of a wide array of interpersonal needs, there has been significant social corrosion in contemporary society leaving many, church leaders included, socially deprived and even handicapped (Glover, 2018:25; Goleman, 2011:8; Kaye & Singer, 2019:4).

Obviously, church leaders cannot assume responsibility for the manner in which others respond and behave, but church leaders, at times, contribute to unhealthy relationships and their own isolation. Some simply fail to appreciate their different interpersonal needs and the extent to which they have been wired for connection, not only with their family but also with a wider social network, and so intentionally cultivating relationships can often go on the back burner. Moreover, as explained under the section dealing with social role theory, some church leaders become so enveloped by their role as church leader that they no longer have hobbies or interests outside ministry, making it difficult to meet new people and cultivate relationships outside the congregation. On the other hand, others simply have not developed the necessary social intelligence to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships.

Social intelligence is generally defined as an individual's "ability to understand thinking, feelings, and behaviours of other people; to interact with them properly; and to act effectively in various situations" (Rahim *et al.*, 2018:488; Zanna *et al.*, 2012:17). Zanna *et al.* (2012:22) argue that social intelligence, at its most fundamental level, requires that people recognise the humanity of others. Social intelligence needs to commence from a place where others are perceived as real humans who are aware and able, instead of objects that need to be manipulated (Zanna *et al.*, 2012:22). Social intelligence consists of four abilities, namely:

- *Situational awareness:*
An individual's ability to assess and comprehend various social situational contexts. It involves gathering relevant information in order to be able to correctly diagnose and formulate problems.
- *Situational response:*
An individual's ability to use the gathered information in order to make effective decisions and adapt to obtain desired results.
- *Cognitive empathy:*
An individual's ability to understand the emotions, thoughts, and needs of others.
- *Social skills:*
An individual's ability to speak in a manner that is clear and convincing; knowing what to say when and how to say it (Rahim *et al.*, 2018:488–490).

A socially intelligent church leader will be more adept in problem-solving, negotiating, communicating, conflict management and decision-making, they will be better able to understand and adapt to various social situations, and they will manage their relationships in a healthier manner. Applying social intelligence has become indispensable for church leaders who need to cultivate new and manage a wide scope of current relationships in a healthy manner should they wish to be resilient.

3.6.3 Interpretive perspectives from the communication sciences

3.6.3.1 Conflict-management style

As indicated by the descriptive-empirical task, conflict is one of the major taxing demands of ministry that seldom gets better or resolved on its own. Interpersonal conflict occurs when a struggle ensues between a small number of interdependent people (usually two) as a result of one person perceiving interference from another that is threatening the achievement of a goal in which they have a vested interest (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:7). Note the use of the words "perceiving interference" that highlight the subjective nature of the analysis and interpretation of

another's behaviour. A number of factors such as stress levels, personality types, power distribution, policies and procedures, norms, cultural differences, trust levels, and verbal and nonverbal messages can contribute to people perceiving or interpreting interference (Collins, 2009:25–26).

Interpersonal conflict differs from causal disagreements, intellectual arguments, and mild differences because of this felt struggle stemming from an emotional and/or relational interest in the outcome (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:7). Conflict begins to germinate internally because of the felt disequilibrium, but it inevitably manifests externally as these feelings leak and affect communication and behaviour towards the other (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:7).

Interpersonal conflict is an inevitable part of life that church leaders will encounter at some point or another, whether they are directly or indirectly involved (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:4). Church leaders cannot change others, but they definitely are not powerless when faced with conflict (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1). The conflict-management style church leaders choose to implement will have a great impact, if not immediately, then in the long run, on not only the desired outcomes, but also on their personal well-being. Conflict-management style refers to the preferred manner in which an individual tends to respond to conflict (Collins, 2009:30).

The purpose here is not to give a detailed exposition of the commonly accepted conflict-management styles, but rather to emphasise how the utilisation of some of these styles can contribute to church leaders' failure to passionately persevere in ministry. Before discussing some of these styles, however, the researcher deems it important to draw attention to the pillars on which effective conflict management rests.

Effective conflict management rests on three pillars (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1). The first is knowledge of conflict theory, patterns, causes, and tactics (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1,4). Too often conflict is approached counterproductively from the very beginning with affixing blame and finding fault analysis strategy rather than a true desire to understand and problem-solve accordingly (Collins, 2009:25). The second is the right attitude towards conflict, embracing it as something that can be invigorating and producing creative and productive energy (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1). Finally, the third is the skills to adopt different styles of conflict management and problem-solving as appropriate; an individual needs to be able to analyse the nature of a conflict and draw from a wide scope of skills as deemed appropriate. Simply utilising the same style, even though it does not result in desired outcomes, is poor conflict management (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1,4).

The discussion will now turn to some of the conflict-management styles that are considered counterproductive and unhealthy when implemented habitually without due regard for the contextual situation and nature of the conflict:

- *Avoiding style*

The avoiding style is characterised by the desire to avoid unpleasant exchanges, conflict, or disagreements with others (Collins, 2009:31). Avoidance can be accomplished through a number of techniques such as withdrawal, denial, or even intimidation (Collins, 2009:31; Rahim, 2016:203–204). Although situational factors can at times make this the best response, church leaders who habitually employ this style at the expense of themselves and the desired outcome will struggle to persevere passionately. Most conflict situations escalate when not resolved or managed; eventually, they have to be addressed anyway, but by then negative emotions have festered and others have become involved making the conflict even more difficult to resolve (Collins, 2009:31).

- *Accommodating style*

This style is characterised by a tendency to give in to the wishes of others (Collins, 2009:31). Harmony is prioritised above individual needs and interests (Collins, 2009:31; Rahim, 2016:203). Accommodators often say “yes” when they would rather say “no” simply because they do not want to hurt someone else (Collins, 2009:31). Accommodators often do not realise they can compassionately say “no” and that it is healthy to have and enforce boundaries (Collins, 2009:31). Although being accommodating can be a useful approach at times, the danger lies therein that individuals who are habitually accommodating might become resentful (Collins, 2009:31).

- *Dominating style*

This style is characterised by a win-lose mentality (Collins, 2009:32; Rahim, 2016:203). Individuals who utilise this style tend to argue their position but resort to the use of authority and power if arguing fails to persuade the other (Collins, 2009:32; Rahim, 2016:203). This style is at times necessary and required by one’s role, but it can become destructive because of the low regard for others expectations and needs if employed habitually (Collins, 2009:32; Rahim, 2016:203).

Beyond employing ineffective conflict-management strategies, church leaders can also make attribution errors (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:22). Attribution theory asserts that people are constantly trying to attribute meaning to the world around them (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:22).

Internal attributions occur when behaviour is attributed to an individual's characteristics, personality, and values (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:21–22). External attributions occur when behaviour is attributed to situations outside an individual's control (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:22).

Attribution errors occur when one assigns internal or external attributions to individuals' behaviour without facts (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:22). This can give rise to a self-serving bias through which people start looking at the other person as the source of the conflict, attributing the other person's behaviour to internal factors whilst attributing their own behaviour to external factors beyond their control (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:21–22). The moment another individual is labelled "the problem", all attempts to problem-solve are thwarted because "the problem" now holds all the power to effect change, and it is very unlikely that they will willingly accept all the blame and be motivated to change (Collins, 2009:25).

Interpersonal conflict which is not managed properly can lead to church leaders becoming emotionally exhausted and eventually cutting themselves off emotionally (Beebe, 2007:259). The cost of poorly managed conflict on relationships, self-confidence, health, and work performance and productivity is high (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:3–4). Although it takes two to tango, church leaders who are more adept at conflict management can enhance the probability of an unproductive conflict scenario turning it into an opportunity (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:1). Those more competent in conflict management and problem-solving will be more likely to reach the goals and objectives they feel God has laid on their hearts and have and facilitate healthier relationships, which are vital for anyone who desires to be resilient in life.

3.6.3.2 Decision-making style

Decision-making refers to an individual's ability "to select between competing options of actions while taking into account the relative value of their consequences" (Michailidis & Banks, 2016:279). Research has distinguished between five distinct, but not mutually exclusive, decision-making styles individuals tend to use (Allwood & Salo, 2012:35; Michailidis & Banks, 2016:280):

- *Rational:*
A planned approach which involves gathering information and systematically evaluating the alternatives presented.
- *Intuitive:*
Involves a tendency to rely upon premonitions or one's feelings.

- *Dependent:*
Characterised by a dependency on the advice of others.
- *Avoidant:*
Characterised by a tendency to delay decision-making, trying to avoid having to make a decision.
- *Spontaneous:*
Characterised by the desire to reach a decision quickly.

Although one style is usually dominant, individuals tend to have different levels of all five styles (Allwood & Salo, 2012:35). Although the research on the relationship between the different dimensions of burnout, acute stress, and decision-making is still early, it seems to suggest a bidirectional relationship between these phenomena (Masiero *et al.*, 2018:2696).

The rational decision-making style tends to be associated with positive outcomes and low levels of burnout (Allwood & Salo, 2012:35; Michailidis & Banks, 2016:280). However, individuals who employ avoidant decision-making styles seem to be more susceptible to burnout and acute stress as well as individuals who employ dependent decision-making styles, although their susceptibility is to a lesser degree (Allwood & Salo, 2012:35; Masiero *et al.*, 2018:2696; Michailidis & Banks, 2016:280). At the same time, burnout and acute stress negatively impact on an individual's cognitive functioning, resulting in more automatic processes as opposed to rational and logic processes (Masiero *et al.*, 2018:2691–2692; Michailidis & Banks, 2016:288). Thus, burnout and acute stress can lead to poorer decision-making styles which lack logical and rational evaluations (Masiero *et al.*, 2018:2691–2692; Michailidis & Banks, 2016:281).

Church leaders are confronted with a number of decisions on a daily basis – decisions that do not necessarily have a clear right or wrong answer. Although praying about issues and seeking wise counsel is important, these supposed strategies can become disguises for avoiding decisions if church leaders are not careful. Church leaders who tend to apply an avoidant style of decision-making do not only cause stress for themselves by delaying the process but also for their staff and volunteer teams. Moreover, if church leaders become too dependent on others in the decision-making process, trying to please every party involved, they will inevitably experience higher levels of stress when faced with decisions since pleasing everyone is essentially an impossible task.

3.6.4 Interpretive perspectives from the education sciences

Theological training is crucial for church leaders as it sets out to facilitate and promote mature development of personal and occupational identity and foster a coherent cognition of their function and role in ministry (Naidoo, 2015:164). Moreover, the training experience is influential in forming church leaders' perception of effectiveness and success (Naidoo, 2015:166). Theological education and ministerial formation have the potential to play a critical role in preparing and equipping church leaders for passionate perseverance in their calling to ministry. Putter and Lotter (2010:102) refer to research conducted in 1990 by Erasmus which found that AFM pastors who completed shorter training courses than Dutch Reformed pastors, for example, were more prone to burnout when compared to other helping professions and denominations.

Although the role fulfilled by theological institutions is acknowledged, Naidoo (2015:165) points out that theological education has been in a continuous state of change and uncertainty globally over the past few years. Naidoo's conclusion is evidenced by the numerous articles and theses that make reference to or have been written in response to this reality, which some even refer to as a "crisis" (e.g., Buys, 2016:16; Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:1; Coetzer, 2006:21; Elkington *et al.*, 2015:1–2; Grobler & Van der Walt, 2008:738–739; Hernández, 2018:iii; Joubert, 2018:148; Maré, 2005:432; Miller, 2017:4–5; Nell, 2013:736–737; Niemandt, D., 2015:3; Putter, 2010a:1; Putter & Lotter, 2010:101). A general concern about the current ability of institutions to prepare and serve upcoming generations of Christian leaders is discernible amongst scholars.

South Africa has an impressive infrastructure for theological education when compared to the rest of Africa (Naidoo, 2015:165), and yet it has not remained unscathed by the state of flux experienced globally. The rapid and permeating globalisation, the fragmentation of cultural and social systems that once held religious identities and traditions, the pervasive process of rationalisation within education and ecclesiastical institutions, the new political arena, and the vocation crisis experienced in the ministry in general, are just some of the factors contributing to the need for reorientation within the approach taken not only to theological education and ministry formation, but also in the approach to Christian leadership and the paradigm from which theology is done (Naidoo, 2015:165–166).

The call for a new approach is essentially true for all South African denominations and institutions. Since the majority of respondents of the empirical research conducted in chapter 2 belonged to the AFM of South Africa, the next section will focus on critically evaluating this denomination's approach to theological education and ministerial preparation in terms of how it contributes to the seven resilience competencies discussed in chapter 1, namely a reconciled

past, realistic optimism, problem-solving competence, working with one's skills, discipline, self-awareness, and healthy relationships.

This evaluation is not meant to overlook the contribution of the AFM of SA, or to assign all responsibility for church leaders' struggle to passionately persevere to it. Acknowledging the responsibility of the church leader, the majority of chapter 3 has been dedicated to highlighting how the intrinsic perceptions and attitudes of church leaders contribute to their struggle to persevere in ministry. The discussion to follow should instead be seen against the backdrop of the reform required in all denominations and institutions in South Africa that hope to better "form" church leaders who can renovate, create, sustain, and extend assemblies, as Naidoo (2015:166) challenges.

Limited empirical research exists that evaluates the general effectiveness of the theological education and ministerial formation activities of the AFM of SA. Therefore, the researcher will draw at times from insights and principles identified in research conducted by other faith traditions where it seems logical, responsible, and appropriate to do so. It will be clearly indicated when this is done. Continuous research is required to gain more insight into AFM church leaders' experience of their theological training since the partnership established between the North-West University and the AFM of South Africa, leading to the registration of the first students in 2013.

3.6.4.1 Historical development

In order to form a comprehensive understanding of the current approach the AFM takes in terms of ministerial formation, it is important to start by reflecting on its historical development. The purpose of this study, however, will not allow for an in-depth excavation of the past, and therefore only key developments relevant to the focus of this study will receive attention.

The pentecostal movement emerged at the beginning of the 20th century with believers receiving what they perceived as the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by the act of speaking in tongues (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1). These believers immediately began witnessing about the pentecostal blessing they had received although many of them were illiterate or at best theologically illiterate (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1). Many became the leaders of local assemblies which consisted not of professional academics but rather of the less fortunate, labourers, peasants, and artisans (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1).

In the first 30 to 40 years since inception, Pentecostals saw no need for any kind of theological training since they deemed the Spirit's guidance to be sufficient (Nel & Janse van Rensburg,

2016:1). Their argument was based on Jesus' promise that the Spirit would provide the words that believers need to bear witness and to defend their faith (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1). Moreover, since the congregation members were in most instances theologically and academically uneducated, further education was simply not valued (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1). Early Pentecostals thought of theology as undermining belief and as such considered it to be a threat to a Spirit-filled believer (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:1–2).

Rooted in the pentecostal movement, the AFM of SA defined itself as a missionary movement initiated and sustained by the Spirit to restore the ministry of the Holy Spirit that was characteristic of the early church (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3). It did not want to become like the mainstream, institutionalised denominations of the day which was thought of as too formalised (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:2–3; Putter, 2010a:2). Therefore, the AFM of SA initially did not require theological training for any level of ministry (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:2; Putter, 2010a:1). The supposition was that studying the Bible on one's own and being equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be sufficient for ministry (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:2). Anyone who felt anointed and called by the Spirit to preach could do so and only needed a certificate from the executive council confirming their calling (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:2; Putter, 2010a:1). No titles were used and only at a later stage did larger assemblies employ leaders on a full-time basis (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:2).

Naturally, the Pentecostals' lack of training closed many doors due to the prejudice it created amongst community members (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3; Putter, 2010a:1). After World War 2, more members came from the middle class and the AFM of SA joined the pentecostal drive for greater acceptance and recognition (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3). And so the era of Bible schools was ushered in with a decision to establish a Bible school in 1920 (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3).

Initially, however, the Bible-school training was a recurring matter of debate; it was not considered compulsory for prospective pastors and consisted of one year theoretical and two years practical training (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3). The theoretical training was concerned with basic knowledge of biblical data and its application (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3). At this early stage, Pentecostals avoided systematic or critical thinking that could be associated with academic or theological expertise which, as mentioned earlier, was perceived as a threat to faith (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3). Thus, the Bible was interpreted rather literally and used superficially in its application (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:3).

Eventually, the AFM of SA came to accept that its pastors and leaders needed sufficient training in order to be able to responsibly lead believers and deal with the challenges posed by ministry

(Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:5). From 1970, this realisation and a new theological paradigm resulted in the acceptance of theological training by the AFM of SA and so negotiations began with various universities (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:4). The period between 1970 and 2009, however, was marked by change and instability for the theological education of the AFM of SA which will not receive attention here.

In 2008, the decision for one unified theological institution was made meaning that the constitutional existence of Sarepta Theological College, Auckland Park Theological Seminary, and AFM of SA Theological Institute would be removed in favour of the Pentecostal Theological Seminary (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:6). This decision, however, sparked a feud between Auckland Park Theological Seminary and the AFM of SA which once again prevented the firm establishment of theological education for the AFM of SA (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:6). Finally, in 2011 a new era for the AFM's theological education arose with the establishment of an agreement with the North-West University (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:6).

3.6.4.2 Critical evaluation of the theological training and ministry formation of the AFM of SA

An empirical study conducted in 1990 by Erasmus (as cited in Maré, 2005:433) with church leaders of the AFM of SA highlighted the fact that church leaders viewed the theological training they received as too theoretical, irrelevant in many aspects, and insufficient on an academic, practical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal level. A few years later in 1999, Wilsenach (as cited by Maré, 2005:434) drew the same conclusions from his empirical research with AFM church leaders. One of the participants in Wilsenach's study commented that "the day you walk out of seminary, you start from the beginning" (as cited by Maré, 2005:434).

In 2005, Maré (2005:437–441) also conducted empirical research with AFM church leaders who studied at Auckland Theological Seminary (ATS) since 1996 and in turn found that although they valued the ability to confidently handle the Bible as a result of their theological training, they too deemed their training as insufficient in many aspects. Later commenting on his research in 2009, Maré (cited in Putter, 2010b:3) is of the opinion that theological training that stretches over a three- to four-year period is insufficient and that theological training which provides the student with a strong foundation in theology and the relevant subjects should be at least a seven-year course. In a more recent article exploring the role expectations of AFM church leaders, Putter and Lotter (2010:115) concluded that continuous theological development is imperative for the church leader who aims to remain relevant and function effectively in a 21st-century ministry environment.

In light of the contemporary role expectations identified from the research conducted with AFM church leaders above, some of the shortcomings will be discussed below. It will be supplemented with findings from other researchers who have identified similar patterns in other denominations and institutions.

a. The chasm between theory and practice

Referring to theological institutions in general, Barna (as cited in Maré, 2005:433) asserts that theological institutions are training theologians instead of pastors who are able to practically fulfil all the requirements of ministry. In support of this statement, Buys (2016:17) asserts that the content of traditional theological training is often irrelevant in relation to the needs of the local assemblies and the world in which church leaders serve.

Nell (2013:1) underscores the concern of many scholars over the divide that exists between what students learn in the classroom and what they need to know once they enter into ministry. Although equipping church leaders in terms of theology and the Bible is not negotiable, there is a definite need for practically-orientated contextual training to exist as a complementary aspect of theological curriculum and training models (Maré, 2005:433).

The empirical studies of Erasmus (1990), Wilsenach (1999), and Maré (2005) confirm the need for a more practical contextual approach within the ministerial formation of the AFM as well (Maré, 2005:433–441). Aspiring church leaders will greatly benefit from more practical exposure to preaching, praise and worship, evangelism, hospital visitation, baptism, consoling members after loss, service planning, counselling, and leadership roles, for example (Maré, 2005:440–441; Putter, 2010b:2).

Moreover, as Hendriks (2015:443) emphasises, the training offered needs to address the contextual issues of the day. A greater focus on practice and the contextual issues of the day will help church leaders foster more realistic role expectations and increase their level of self-efficacy and problem-solving which will contribute to their resilience and in turn their ability to persevere in ministry.

As part of an effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice, the AFM of SA implemented the Ministry Integrated Learning (MIL) programme and accepted its policy in July 2008. The MIL is a one-year full-time or two-year part-time internship that all candidates who have completed an NQF Level 7 theological qualification must partake

in before they can be ordained as pastors of the AFM of SA. It is further required that the church – on regional and national level – should be able to discern that they are called for an assembly (AFM of SA, 2019).

The MIL provides candidates with the opportunity to practically execute the theoretical knowledge gained in academic training (AFM of SA, 2019). In theory, candidates are continuously assessed by a mentor/coach who needs to be an ordained AFM church leader, preferably a senior pastor or alternatively someone who has at least five years' experience in practical ministry (AFM of SA, 2019). The mentor/coach is responsible for submitting a formal quarterly or semester report on the candidate's progress, depending on whether the candidate is full-time or part-time, as well as providing candidates with feedback and corrective suggestions for improvement (AFM of SA, 2019). Candidates are expected to attend four workshops that deal with matters relevant to ministry and to complete four book reports of prescribed books (AFM of SA, 2019). In addition, involvement or at least meaningful exposure under the supervision of a mentor/coach is required in the following areas:

- Leadership – for example (but not limited to):
 - strategic planning
 - vision casting
 - responsibility for a ministry
- Management and administration – for example (but not limited to):
 - business meetings of the church
 - administrative processes
 - financial processes
 - application of the constitution of the AFM of SA
- Contextualised community and social involvement – for example (but not limited to):
 - feeding schemes
 - care for the elderly
 - networking with existing structures in society
 - prisons
 - schools in the area
 - police forums
 - HIV/AIDS prevention projects
- Personal development – for example (but not limited to):
 - time management

- financial planning
- IT literacy
- lifelong learning
- daily devotionals
- developing good self-knowledge and self-esteem
- implementing Christian values
- Pastoral care – for example (but not limited to):
 - ministering to the sick
 - counselling
 - relationship building
 - ministering to the bereaved
- Practical and liturgical skills – for example (but not limited to):
 - preaching
 - serving Holy Communion
 - ministering water baptism
 - dedication of children
 - conducting funerals
 - creatively planning and facilitating an inspiring service
 - the use of relevant technology
- Evangelism and missions – for example (but not limited to):
 - planning and implementing an effective strategy for missions
 - marketing the mission strategy with the objective of generating resources
- Diverse specialised ministries within an assembly – for example (but not limited to):
 - young adults youth group
 - teenager group
 - children's church
 - small groups
 - ministry to singles

In theory, the MIL programme is a vital initiative and has significant potential, but in practice it is immensely vulnerable to what Hernández (2018:157) refers to as the “franchise effect”. In his research on the impact of ministry formation activities within the Roman Catholic Church, Hernández (2018:157) understands the “franchise effect” as a

contributing factor to the discrepancies identified between different participants' experiences of the formation activities under examination.

Hernández explains that in the food industry, the quality of one restaurant in comparison to another might differ significantly in relation to the freedom that the restaurants have that are part of the franchise chain, even though the menus and recipes, in theory, should be exactly the same (Hernández, 2018:157). In the same manner, one MIL candidate's experience with a specific mentor/coach in a particular assembly might be completely different from that of another candidate in terms of the level of exposure and involvement allowed, the depth of the mentor relationship developed, and the quality of the impartation received, for example. Although there are basic guidelines in terms of who can qualify to be a mentor and what is expected of a mentor, and a session in the first workshop is dedicated to explaining mentoring and coaching, the "franchise effect" remains a very real possibility.

b. Management, leadership, and administration

Referring to empirical research conducted by Putter in 2006 and 2009 within the AFM church, Putter (2010a:3) documents "leader" and "manager" as two of the main roles church leaders are expected to fulfil amongst the plethora of role-expectations mentioned. Nell (2015:4) asserts that training in leadership and administration has become essential for church leaders in contemporary society. Of course, some church leaders are able to delegate tasks to some extent, alleviating some of the associated stress, but ultimately, church leaders will always have to act in these capacities on some level or another.

The respondents to Maré's study asserted that the greatest shortcoming they experienced in their theological training was in the area of church management, which included themes such as leadership, vision-casting, staff management, financing, and marketing (Maré, 2005:439). Although these themes receive attention on a postgraduate level, participants felt it would be beneficial if it was included in basic theological training (Maré, 2005:439; Putter, 2010b:2).

Maré's participants also felt they needed more training in relation to the role of statistics (Maré, 2005:441). In light of their empirical research into the management skills required of church leaders from Reformed churches in South Africa, Grobler and Van der Walt (2008:735) also recognise this need and recommend that a course on management should be included in the training syllabus of aspiring church leaders. Equipping church

leaders with basic leadership, administration, and management skills will help them function with more self-efficacy and confidence, better engage in problem-solving, delegate and mobilise more members freeing up themselves, and avoid unnecessary conflict and stress that might arise as a result of their incompetence.

c. Inter- and intrapersonal skills and matters

Putter and Lotter's research highlighted the importance of inter- and intrapersonal skills and competencies in light of contemporary role expectations of AFM pastors (Putter & Lotter, 2010:104,106–107). In Erasmus's study in 1990, AFM church leaders already raised the issue of the need for a greater focus on inter- and intrapersonal skills and related matters in the theological training of aspiring church leaders (Erasmus as cited in Maré, 2005:433).

Maré's research also picks up on this theme in that church leaders felt their theological training did not facilitate the discovery and development of their unique gifts and talents (Maré, 2005:438). In addition, church leaders desired a greater focus on the development of communication competencies and their self-leadership which included themes such as time management and the development of spirituality and character (Maré, 2005:438–439). Maré (2005:438) also explains that the respondents emphasised the need for the development of interpersonal skills based on the high demands ministry places on their families and the high divorce rate.

Writing about the church leader in general, Coetzer (2006:21) contends that the preparation of the person of the church leader is neglected in theological education and ministerial formation. Hendriks (2015:442) also poses the question of whether or not rational analytical knowledge and the formation of maturity and wisdom have been effectively balanced. Coetzer (2006:22) maintains that the church, in general, has failed to cultivate a culture amongst church leaders that respects, much less values, self-care.

Chapman (as cited in Miller, 2016:81) agrees with these observations, asserting that ministry killers are not rooted so much in the church leader's ability to fulfil the expected tasks, but rather in the church leader's life skills, behavioural patterns, and character. Morse (as cited by Joubert, 2018:110) also motivates that theological seminaries need to emphasise the personal ethics and personal effectiveness of church leaders in addition to teaching religious constructs. Commenting on his research of 2009, Maré (as cited in Putter, 2010b:4) is of the opinion that theological institutions need to take responsibility for the spiritual and character development of its students. Maré (as cited in Putter,

2010b:4) argues that the context within which the church functions is growing increasingly hostile towards the church. He further asserts that church leaders, therefore, need to be prepared so that they might flourish in a time marked by great tension and challenges (Maré as cited in Putter, 2010b:4).

Critical factors that are essential to passionate perseverance in ministry such as personal and emotional growth, basic psychological concepts indispensable to interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, dealing with role ambiguity, and dealing with sexual temptation, for example, receive little attention (Coetzer, 2006:22–23). A greater focus on these and related issues will increase the church leader's competence in reconciling their past, self-awareness, healthy relationships, working with their skills, realistic optimism, and discipline.

d. Specialisation

Working with one's skills and self-awareness are resilience competencies that can be promoted by specialised training. Maré's participants raised awareness regarding the need for specialised training in areas such as youth and children's ministry, video production, evangelism, multimedia, service planning, church building, music, and praise-and-worship (Maré, 2005:441). They argued that the church should not merely focus on training generalists but create a platform for church leaders to become experts in areas of ministry that align with their unique gifts and passions (Maré, 2005:441).

In 2009, Maré (as cited by Putter, 2010b:3) still supports the idea that theological education within the AFM of SA should cater for the development of specialists by making it possible for individuals to further build on and develop their potential. Maré (as cited by Putter, 2010b:4) motivates that students complete tests within their first year or at the beginning of their second year to assist them in the discovery of their unique gifts, talents, and personalities. Decisions regarding specialised training should then occur with this new-found self-awareness in mind (Maré as cited by Putter, 2010b:4).

e. Mentorship

Another theme that was raised in Maré's (2005:439) empirical research was the need for mentorship which seems to remain an unfulfilled need for many within the structures of the AFM of SA. As discussed in chapter 1, the regional structures are often filled with suspicion and distrust as some church leaders regard their colleagues as unreliable confidants and do not find support and an understanding ear in their district leaders

(Joubert, 2018:147). In his research, Putter (2010a:5) also mentions the individualistic mindsets of the older generation (the silent generation, baby boomers, and generation X) who tends to think in terms of individual performance as opposed to team performance as a result of the teaching methods of their day, and how this poses a challenge to the continuous development of church leaders.

Mentoring is a broad and complex concept that involves a number of relational processes such as counselling, coaching, teaching, and advising (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:1). Mentorship can be a complementary supportive pedagogy in theological education that helps build the bridge between theoretical knowledge and practice (Maré, 2005:439). Moreover, mentoring can promote the integration of classroom experience and enhance a student's spiritual and character formation (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:1; Maré, 2005:439). Spiritual formation here refers to the inner process of the Holy Spirit by which knowledge of God connects with people's experience of God resulting in transformation (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:4).

Mentorship can build into and develop the church leader's resilience competencies in a manner that academic theoretical content cannot. In a survey conducted in the USA with 100 seminary graduates, only 40 remained in ministry after the first five years and a mere 20 after the first 10 years (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:3). For the 20% that did remain in ministry, mentoring played a vital role (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:3). From another perspective, mentorship can also be a means to preserve the knowledge and experience of emeritus church leaders and at the same time contribute towards their resilience by building into their need for purpose, continuous development, opportunities to utilise their skills, and healthy relationships.

The AFM of SA can greatly contribute to church leaders' passionate perseverance by creating a culture which facilitates the establishment of mentor relationships and teaches students to value these types of relationships in their personal lives. Although the MIL programme aims to contribute to the fulfilment of this need, adopting mentorship as a pedagogy from the onset of theological education can potentially lead to greater spiritual and character development and provide time which allows for the establishment of deeper, more trusting relationships that are more likely to last beyond the seminary. Given the fact that the current theological education structure adopts a distance-learning approach, the AFM of SA needs to creatively consider how mentorship can form a greater part of the current theological training and ministerial formation programme and structure.

As a last word in terms of the critical evaluation of the theological education and ministerial formation of the AFM of SA, it must be stressed that no one theological institution can truly adequately prepare the church leader for all the possible scenarios they might encounter in this complex, ambiguous, ever-changing, diverse, and volatile society people live in. Ministry formation occurs not only through formal theological education but also through the experience of congregational life and social engagements (Naidoo, 2015:167). This reality should stress the need for church leaders who hope to passionately persevere in ministry to assume responsibility for the continuous development of their resilience competencies and partake in continuous theological education.

Putter (2010a:102) stresses the need for AFM church leaders to engage in continuous theological development in light of the current role expectations and the historical development of theological education within the AFM of SA which, until recently, has led to various levels of quality in the education received amongst ordained AFM church leaders. Contemplating the future church at the beginning of the 21st century in 1991, Mead (1991:54) had already emphasised with a sense of urgency the need for continued development and support after seminary that build on the experiences of each successive class. Mead (1991:34) recognises the stress and burnout caused by the growing crevasse between the 21st-century environment and church leaders who were trained by institutions and ordained by denominations and organisations that were primarily shaped by the rapidly disintegrating Christendom paradigm.

In hopes of motivating church leaders to embrace the value of life-long learning, the AFM of SA introduced the Pastor's Continuous Development (PCD) programme in September/October 2012. The programme's purpose is to "enable and assist regions in their responsibility to empower ordained pastors (and where possible and necessary, their spouses) to maintain and improve the standard of their ministry performance" (AFM of SA, 2011). The programme is applicable to all ordained pastors of the AFM church, pastors seconded to other ministries and institutions, as well as active emeriti (AFM of SA, 2011). Briefly, the programme is structured as follows (AFM of SA, 2011):

- Pastors need to collect 200 points per four-year pastoral credential renewal cycle, that is, 50 points per year, by engaging in an array of personal development initiatives that include:
 - Attendance of compulsory national workshops or seminars (e.g., during the General Business Meeting).
 - Attendance of compulsory and elective growth and training opportunities on a regional level.
 - Providing reflective feedback on prescribed books.

- Attendance of accredited national or international seminars, conventions, or speakers (e.g., Willowcreek's Global Leadership Summit).
 - Personal tertiary academic studies, postgraduate theological studies, or accredited distance learning and research opportunities.
 - Receiving or providing coaching and mentoring according to prescribed procedures.
 - Accessing an external consultant, adviser or relevant expert.
 - Producing documentation for a personal development plan and following it.
- The point value of the different options mentioned above and the approved options available for a given cycle are decided on by the National Leadership Forum (NLF) and made known to regions and pastors during the year preceding the next cycle.
 - The annual recording, validation, and submission of the PCD points is the responsibility of each region's PCD coordinator and regional secretary.
 - Pastors who fail to comply and obtain the necessary points in a given cycle will forfeit their pastoral status and will have to follow the process as set out in the constitution of the AFM of SA to restore it.

The first PCD cycle was implemented in 2013–2014 in order to link with the pastoral status renewal cycle (Van Schalkwyk, 2019). The second and most recent cycle was from 2015–2018 (Van Schalkwyk, 2019). In her capacity as the personal assistant to the PCD coordinator from the AFM head office, Van Schalkwyk indicated that 1 300 status renewal certificates have been issued to date for the 2015–2018 cycle (Van Schalkwyk, 2019). According to her, the AFM of SA has just over 2 000 ordained church leaders (Van Schalkwyk, 2019). Van Schalkwyk (2019) mentions that some AFM church leaders failed to see the value of the programme and had expressed some resistance to the initial implementation thereof, but realising that they were jeopardising their pastoral status had resulted in better cooperation (Van Schalkwyk, 2019). Overall, however, Van Schalkwyk (2019) is positive about the response received and indicates that the majority of church leaders has embraced the programme and many, especially those in rural areas, have expressed gratitude.

The PCD programme is a useful initiative of the AFM of SA that certainly motivates church leaders to develop their resilience competencies, increasing the likelihood that they will passionately persevere in ministry. Those who do not embrace the programme perhaps do not value life-long learning and this might be attributed to a number of factors. As mentioned previously, the negative attitude towards theological education in general rooted in the historical development of the AFM of SA and the pentecostal worldview, might play a role in some AFM church leaders' scepticism or hesitance to engage and embrace continuous theological

development, according to Putter (2010a:2–3) and Nel (2015b:32). Nel (2015b:32) asserts that the pentecostal worldview continues to be marked by a high emphasis on experience and non-rational forms of knowing, and a resultant scepticism towards higher education and learning. Cultivating a new culture in which theological education and continuous development are valued will take time, but the AFM of SA is making a serious attempt towards it.

Nel and Janse van Rensburg (2016:8) attest to this reality by emphasising that many of the AFM of SA's leadership and pastors serving as lecturers, hold a relevant doctorate from one of the mainline South African universities. In addition, they argue that most of these theologians are well-published in international and South African scholarly journals, and they also actively contribute to continued research in the research unit of the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University and other universities (Nel & Janse van Rensburg, 2016:8).

3.7 INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVES ON CHURCH LEADERS' COGNITION OF RESILIENCE, THEIR ATTITUDES AND ATTEMPTS TOWARDS THE HOLISTIC CULTIVATION THEREOF, AND THEIR CURRENT RESILIENCE LEVELS

In this chapter, an interdisciplinary literature study was conducted to contribute towards a better understanding of the trends identified in the empirical-descriptive task as related to church leader's cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof.

The following perspective is now offered on the church leader's cognition of resilience in ministry from the interpretive task conducted:

- Trait theory, as applied to leadership, basically suggests that leaders are born and not made. The idea that leadership is the result of intrinsic genetic qualities remains influential despite critique and seems to be translating to the concept of resilience. Thus, resilience is not understood by some as something that can be developed or cultivated but rather as a static trait that makes certain exceptional individuals resilient across all situations throughout their lives.

The following perspectives are offered on the divide between the attitudes and attempts of church leaders towards the holistic cultivation of resilience in ministry from the interpretive task conducted:

- Using the reasoning applied in the theory of planned behaviour, it is possible that although some church leaders have a positive attitude towards the holistic development

of resilience, a divide occurs between their attitude and behaviour because of the obstacles posed by their perceptions of society's or important individuals' expectations of them and their ability to implement the relevant resilience-cultivating strategies.

- The theory of vested interest contends that attitude-behaviour consistency is promoted when behaviours related to an attitude are perceived as important and having clear benefit for the actor (Johnson *et al.*, 2014:21). From the empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it was discerned that church leaders' value of resilience was limited to its role in ministry survival. Hence, although church leaders are generally positive about the holistic development of resilience, they might view resilience-cultivating strategies as important or having a clear benefit only once they are close to burnout, or only when their survival in ministry is threatened. Thus, there is inconsistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship, because it might be that church leaders do not have a strong vested interest in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies.

The following perspectives are offered on why some church leaders' current resilience levels are low from the interpretive task conducted:

- How church leaders think about the stressors they encounter in ministry and the resources they have available seems to be one of the reasons why some adapt and passionately persevere in ministry while others do not. Church leaders who continuously have cognitive distortions that lead them to develop negative appraisals of stressors (primary cognitive appraisal), or who do not feel that they have the adequate resources and control to deal with the stressors (secondary cognitive appraisal) will be less resilient in ministry.
- Church leaders who are more adept in recognising, understanding, regulating, and using their own and others' emotions, function better in the face of stressful events (Lee, 2018:734). Conversely, church leaders who are constantly in a mode of worry and anxiety will experience erosion in their mental abilities and social skills (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:13). If church leaders lack EI, they will most likely struggle to cultivate and implement resilience competencies such as realistic optimism, discipline, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, making them less resilient in ministry and more at risk for burnout, depression, and anxiety.
- Church leaders who score high in personality traits such as perfectionism, neuroticism, and introversion will be more susceptible to negative stress responses, burnout, depression, and anxiety.
- Church leaders who do not have a healthy balance of internal and external loci of control will respond less resiliently in ministry. Church leaders with a purely external locus of control will approach adverse contexts with passivity and frustration, sensing no degree

of responsibility or control. They will regard themselves as victims of people's expectations and workplace events. Contrariwise, church leaders with a purely internal locus of control will experience intense anger, hostility, anxiety, and frustration in situations where their sense of control is threatened (Niemann, 2017:180). They will feel overtly responsible for all events and outcomes.

- Church leaders who do not maintain a healthy differentiation between self and role can start to derive a large part of their identity from their role and become dependent on recognition and accolades, making them more likely to burnout. They will also be more susceptible to role stress caused by role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload.
- Church leaders who find their identities and self-worth in ministry alone and who do not deal with messages of not mattering in a healthy manner can become threatened and insecure in their roles. This can give rise to behaviours that will compromise their resilience such as struggling to delegate tasks and kicking into performance mode, trying to please in a need for affirmation.
- At times, church leaders contribute to unhealthy relationships and their own isolation. Some simply fail to appreciate their different interpersonal needs and the extent to which they have been wired for connection, not only with their family, but also with a wider social network. Others become so enveloped in their role as church leaders that they no longer have hobbies or interests outside ministry, making it difficult to meet new people and cultivate relationships outside the congregation. And yet others simply have not developed the necessary social intelligence to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships.
- Church leaders who apply avoidant, compromising, or dominant conflict-management styles without regard for the nature and context of the conflict, and who make attribution errors arising from a lack of a true desire to understand and resolve the conflict, fail to manage conflict effectively. The cost of poorly managed conflict on relationships, self-confidence, health, work performance, and productivity is high (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:3–4).
- Church leaders who tend to apply avoidant and dependent decision-making styles will experience decisions as more stressful.
- Despite the fact that continuous theological development and education is a necessity for remaining effective and relevant in 21st-century ministry, AFM church leaders are often reluctant to engage in continuous theological education and personal development.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Once again, the researcher deems it important to highlight the fact that church leaders' intrinsic perceptions and responses contributing to their own burnout levels should be viewed in acknowledgement of the reality that entire systems, societal beliefs, and organisational structures also contribute to the problem of church leader burnout and premature ministry exit. This being said, the purpose of this study is to highlight how church leaders should think about their resilience and their ability to proactively and holistically cultivate it in ministry.

This purpose is pursued in light of the belief that church leaders should evaluate and take control of what they can with the Holy Spirit's help, namely their perceptions and responses, as the first step towards passionate perseverance in ministry as opposed to struggling and failing to persevere as they wait for systems to change that might in fact never change.

In the next chapter, the question: What ought to be going on? will be addressed. This will be done by developing a normative-theological perspective appropriate to practical theology.

4 CHAPTER 4: NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From the empirical-descriptive task conducted in chapter 2, it became apparent that the 21st-century ministry environment presents church leaders with a number of challenges that place demands on their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical resources. The empirical research and literature study indicated that:

- some church leaders' cognition of resilience is fallacious;
- although church leaders are predominantly positive about cultivating resilience in a holistic manner, they do not consistently and continuously implement corresponding cultivating strategies; and
- some church leaders are struggling to persevere in a manner that does not negatively impact on their well-being, displaying levels of burnout.

In chapter 3, an intra- and interdisciplinary approach was taken to develop interpretive perspectives on the patterns discerned regarding church leaders' cognition of resilience, their attitudes and attempts towards the holistic cultivation thereof, and their current resilience levels. Theories from psychology, sociology, and the communication and education sciences provided deeper insight into why the identified patterns exist. The focus was placed on the intrinsic perspectives and attitudes of church leaders that contribute towards their difficulty to passionately persevere in ministry since these are the matters they can control with the help of the Holy Spirit. The need for AFM church leaders to engage in continuous theological development was also stressed in light of the history and development of theological education in the AFM of SA and the expectations and challenges church leaders are presented with in the 21st-century ministry context.

This chapter will further contribute to the conversation by developing a normative-theological perspective on church leaders' cognition of resilience, their attitudes and attempts towards its development, and their current resilience levels. Osmer (2008:132) locates the normative task within the prophetic office. The normative task requires prophetic discernment which involves, firstly, listening to the Word, the full and unsurpassable revelation of God given through Jesus Christ and, secondly, interpreting it in a manner that addresses particular events, social conditions, and decisions (Osmer, 2008:136). Osmer (2008:135) stresses that such discernment is a matter of theological interpretation and divine disclosure in the face of official or popular theologies that might be leading catastrophe. Thus, discernment needs to begin by

laying aside self-confidence and acknowledging that one does not actually know what it is one ought to do (Osmer, 2008:138). Only once this admission has been made in humility, one can move forward by actively seeking God's will (Osmer, 2008:138).

4.2 OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the normative task is to develop a normative-theological perspective appropriate to practical theology in order to address the question: What ought to be going on? (Osmer, 2008:130). This will be grounded in the practices and spirituality of discernment as explained in the introduction to this chapter (Osmer, 2008:138–139).

4.3 METHODOLOGY

Osmer (2008:130–132) highlights three approaches to the normative task, namely theological interpretation, ethical interpretation, and good practice and normative reflection. This study will largely rely on theological interpretation as well as ethical interpretation (Osmer, 2008:139,147). Theological interpretation aims to interpret current episodes, situations, and contexts with theological concepts (Osmer, 2008:139). Ethical interpretation uses ethical principles, guidelines, and rules to guide choices and action towards moral outcomes (Osmer, 2008:139).

4.3.1 Scripture as central to the normative task

In the execution of the normative task, Scripture will serve as the primary and authoritative source. Scripture will be approached from a pentecostal paradigm, but at the same time, valuable insights contributed by authors who approach Scripture from other paradigms will also be recognised. The purpose here is not to present a detailed argument for the authority of Scripture or a pentecostal hermeneutic as to convince readers but rather to clarify the metatheoretical departure points from which the normative task in this study is approached.

Scripture is recognised as a written witness to God and His will; it points to Him (Nel, 2015c:36). In faith, it is accepted that all Scripture is inspired by God and is inherently and divinely authoritative (Berkhof, 1996:163–164; De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:5; Nel, 2015c:28). The inspiration of Scripture implies that what is recorded in the Bible, is what God wanted to present to people; it contains what is necessary for sinful man to gain knowledge about God and how to live in a right relationship with Him (Nel, 2015c:35). This inspiration was organic in the sense that God acted upon the writers of the Scriptures in a manner that did not bypass the laws of their inner being (Berkhof, 1996:153). He used them with their unique characters, gifts, temperaments, styles, dictions, education, cultures, and vocabularies (Berkhof, 1996:153). He

illuminated their minds, prompted them to write, suppressed the influence of sin upon their writing, and organically guided them in their word choice and expression of thoughts (Berkhof, 1996:153).

When it comes to a pentecostal hermeneutic or manner of interpreting Scripture, the following three elements are emphasised: the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, and the believing community (Nel, 2015c:24). For the Pentecostal, the Holy Spirit brings the Scripture to life and empowers and equips the believing community to witness and minister in culturally relevant ways (Nel, 2015c:24). The Holy Spirit is the One who animates and quickens Scripture (Nel, 2015c:34). Nel (2015c:34–35) emphasises that biblical interpretation must be preceded by an encounter with God through His Spirit. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is understood to play a central role in realising the distinctive function and nature of the Scriptures within the faith community as He works in human hearts (Nel, 2015c:28–29,37). For the Pentecostal, interpreting Scripture should ultimately lead to affective transformation and knowing God more intimately and not merely to increased knowledge about God (Nel, 2015c:35–36).

The theological-interpretive approach to the normative task of this study will be executed by means of grammatico-historical exegesis and word study of Scriptures that have been strategically selected in light of the focus of this study. As mentioned earlier, Scripture can only be understood when studied under the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:299). The Holy Spirit is the One who opens the Scriptures to the exegete. It must be mentioned, however, that all interpretation is the fallible result of human activity (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:7). As such, it can never be perfect and therefore the researcher does not equate the results of the exegesis and word study conducted in this study with Scripture itself. More on these processes will be said below.

4.3.2 Grammatico-historical exegesis

Grammatico-historical exegesis will be executed on strategically selected pericopes in order to elucidate the servant leader's call to passionately persevere. The term "exegesis" refers to interpretation and implies that the explanation of a text or pericope is preceded by a careful and detailed analysis of that particular text or periscope (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:21). The description "grammatico-historical" indicates that the analysis considers both the language in which the original text was written and the specific cultural context in which the text originated (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:21).

The need for such an approach is highlighted when the equivocal nature of human language is recognised and even more when the significant linguistic and cultural differences between the

original writers and audiences of the Scriptures and modern people are recognised (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:18–20). The exegete will be wise to recognise that Scripture is indeed time-directed and therefore cannot be rigidly applied to modern-day context without due consideration of the original intention (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:7). This, however, does not make Scripture time-bound, a characteristic which, if assigned, would render Scripture of no or little use for people today (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:7).

The pericopes that will receive attention are:

- 1 Corinthians 9:24–27
- 1 Timothy 4:11–16
- Hebrews 12:1–2
- James 1:2–4

These pericopes have been carefully selected in light of the insights they offer on the concept of perseverance. Although the term “perseverance” does not explicitly appear in all of these pericopes, it is implied. Each pericope will be studied separately. The genre and socio-historical background of the book and chapter will be explored in order to provide context and meaning to the selected pericopes (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:15–19,51). In addition, the thought structure of the pericope will be analysed and represented on a macro level in order to determine and indicate the intersentence relationships which will provide further insight into the meaning of the relevant pericope (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:40–42). Furthermore, keywords in the pericope will be identified and studied in order to determine their definitions and how these impact on the intended meaning of the pericope and in turn its application for today (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:63). Finally, other exegetical sources will be consulted to further add value and depth to the study.

In addition to the exegesis of the pericopes mentioned above, the researcher will aim to develop normative perspectives on the cultivation of resilience by theologically researching the seven competencies associated with resilience. This will be achieved by conducting word studies on the following theological concepts:

- forgiveness (a reconciled past), which enables one to respond to crises resiliently and embrace one’s future in a meaningful manner (Donders, 2017:35–36; MacDonald, 2004; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:152);
- hope (realistic optimism), which enables people to escape from despair and move powerfully towards their goals (Donders, 2017:4–5; Kwan, 2010:50);

- working with one's skills, which enables one to passionately and boldly discover, develop, and implement one's intrinsic skills, and at the same time understand one's limitations (Donders, 2017:69);
- problem-solving, which enables one to analyse difficult situations and discover creative solutions (Donders, 2017:60);
- discipline (self-control), which enables one to live healthily by consistently implementing disciplines that aid one physically, spiritually, and emotionally (Donders, 2017:50);
- self-awareness, which refers to a healthy awareness of one's emotions, strengths, limitations, passions, etc. (Donders, 2017:93–101; Kay, 2018:184–185); and
- healthy relationships, which encourage one to grow in kindness, generosity and empathy, and which enable one to cope more effectively in times of crises and suffering (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:49–50; Donders, 2017:104).

Each theological concept will be studied separately using dictionaries, lexicons, and commentaries. Unless stated otherwise, the *Life Application Study Bible New International Version* edition will be used for English Scriptures since it indicates the presence of variant readings which could influence the meaning of the pericope.

4.4 NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S CALL TO PERSEVERANCE IN MINISTRY

4.4.1 Normative perspectives on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

4.4.1.1 Background and socio-historic context of 1 Corinthians

Paul is identified as the author in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians and this claim has generally remained uncontested (Carson & Moo, 2005:419,442; Hays & Duvall, 2011:777–778). The book of 1 Corinthians is recognised as an occasional letter, meaning that it was written to a specific people and aims to address a specific, concrete situation (Carson & Moo, 2005:415). This reality does not make the letter irrelevant today but makes an understanding of the concrete situation vital for forming a greater comprehension of the meaning of the pericope and how it might be applied in today's context (De Klerk & Janse van Rensburg, 2005:21).

The church in Corinth was established during Paul's second missionary journey (Carson & Moo, 2005:420; Hays & Duvall, 2011:777–778). Meanwhile, others such as Apollos and Peter came to Corinth and built forth on the foundation that Paul had laid (Carson & Moo, 2005:421). There is no evidence that these and other leaders cultivated a party spirit by setting out to recruit

personal devotees, but the spiritually immature Corinthians soon formed rival factions that claimed to follow this or that leader (Carson & Moo, 2005:421; Hays & Duvall, 2011:778).

They were a church full of people consumed with impressing one another and gaining social approval (Carson & Moo, 2005:428). As a result, the church as a whole was not satisfied with Paul's leadership due to immature expectations, and its integrity was marred by issues such as the abuse of the Lord's Table, litigation amongst members, immorality, uncertainties about the place of marriage, the custom of eating food that has been offered to idols, infatuation with what they considered the more spectacular of the spiritual gifts, and a deviant view of the resurrection (Carson & Moo, 2005:421).

The Corinthian church was also invaded by so-called apostles who were pushing their own agenda and served as the lynchpins to the growing animosity towards Paul (Carson & Moo, 2005:422). From 2 Corinthians it can be deduced that Paul's attempts to bring about reconciliation were unsuccessful from his perspective and Paul's relationship with a certain portion of the Corinthian church had severely deteriorated (Carson & Moo, 2005:423; Hays & Duvall, 2011:779).

The challenges and stressors Paul experienced as a leader are remarkably similar to what church leaders today have to deal with. Joubert (2018:44–4) identifies the following stressors in his research to which church leaders of the 21st century can likely relate:

- *The church grew increasingly antagonistic towards Paul*

The opposition against Paul initially came from a small group within the church who were exerting an increasingly bigger influence on the rest of the church which eventually gave rise to an anti-Paul sentiment. In the modern-day context, this reality is all too common. Church leaders are often confronted with conflicts that start with one or two individuals and at times culminate in a church split.

- *Paul's calling and authority were called into question*

Paul's leadership style was in strong contrast with what the more socially elite members of the church expected (Bredenkamp, 2007:23). This gave rise to great offence and eventually led to some questioning Paul's apostleship and authority (Bredenkamp, 2007:23–24). In the postmodern society, church leaders' calling and authority, as well as the authority of Scripture in general, are often questioned. This is even more so when church leaders' leadership styles or personalities are not in accordance with preconceived ideas and expectations.

- *Paul's theological wisdom was called into question*

When the Corinthian church compared Paul's wisdom, the gospel, and his expression thereof through his rhetoric abilities to what they recognised as wisdom, it fell short in their eyes (1 Corinthians 1:17). Church and even community members often measure 21st-century church leaders' sermon content and delivery against what they deem appropriate or valid. Their framework is seldom determined by Scripture but is rather dictated by personal preference.

- *Paul was viewed as not spiritual enough*

The Corinthians had an over-realised eschatological view of their current existence (Carson & Moo, 2005:429). The Corinthians had embraced a "spirituality" that emphasised exciting experiences and intellectual pride (Hays & Duvall, 2011:778). They focused so much on the blessings they ignorantly thought they were already enjoying, that they had little to no anticipation of the blessing to come (Carson & Moo, 2005:429). Church leaders of the 21st century also encounter church members who ignorantly assume that they have reached a state of spiritual perfection and have risen above any form of correction or growth.

- *In the eyes of his opposition, Paul did not have enough status*

Those who opposed Paul were converts who remained caught up in the culture of their day. They were consumed with status and social standing. Some of them possibly felt that Paul supporting himself through manual labour reflected poorly on them, creating the idea that they could not provide for him sufficiently (Bredenkamp, 2007:23). Even today, there are those within the church that idolise social status and foster a certain idea of the lifestyle a church leader should lead. Whether these ideals are translated into an expectation of an upper-class lifestyle or that of a poor man, it can be damaging either way.

Thus, when Paul's exhortation in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 is examined against the historical and socio-historical backdrop, it must be kept in mind that it was not written by someone who was oblivious and unfamiliar with the challenges ministry poses. Paul was all too familiar with the disappointments, unrealistic expectations, and hurts that church leaders encounter in ministry.

4.4.1.2 Normative perspectives on the structure of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

In chapter 9 of 1 Corinthians, Paul uses himself as an example of self-denial and self-control and, at the same time, defends his leadership (Bredenkamp, 2007:24; Carson & Moo, 2005:426). 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 acts as the conclusion to Paul's argument in chapter 9 (Bredenkamp, 2007:25). To follow, is the researcher's analysis of the thought structure of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (figure 4-1) on a macro level.

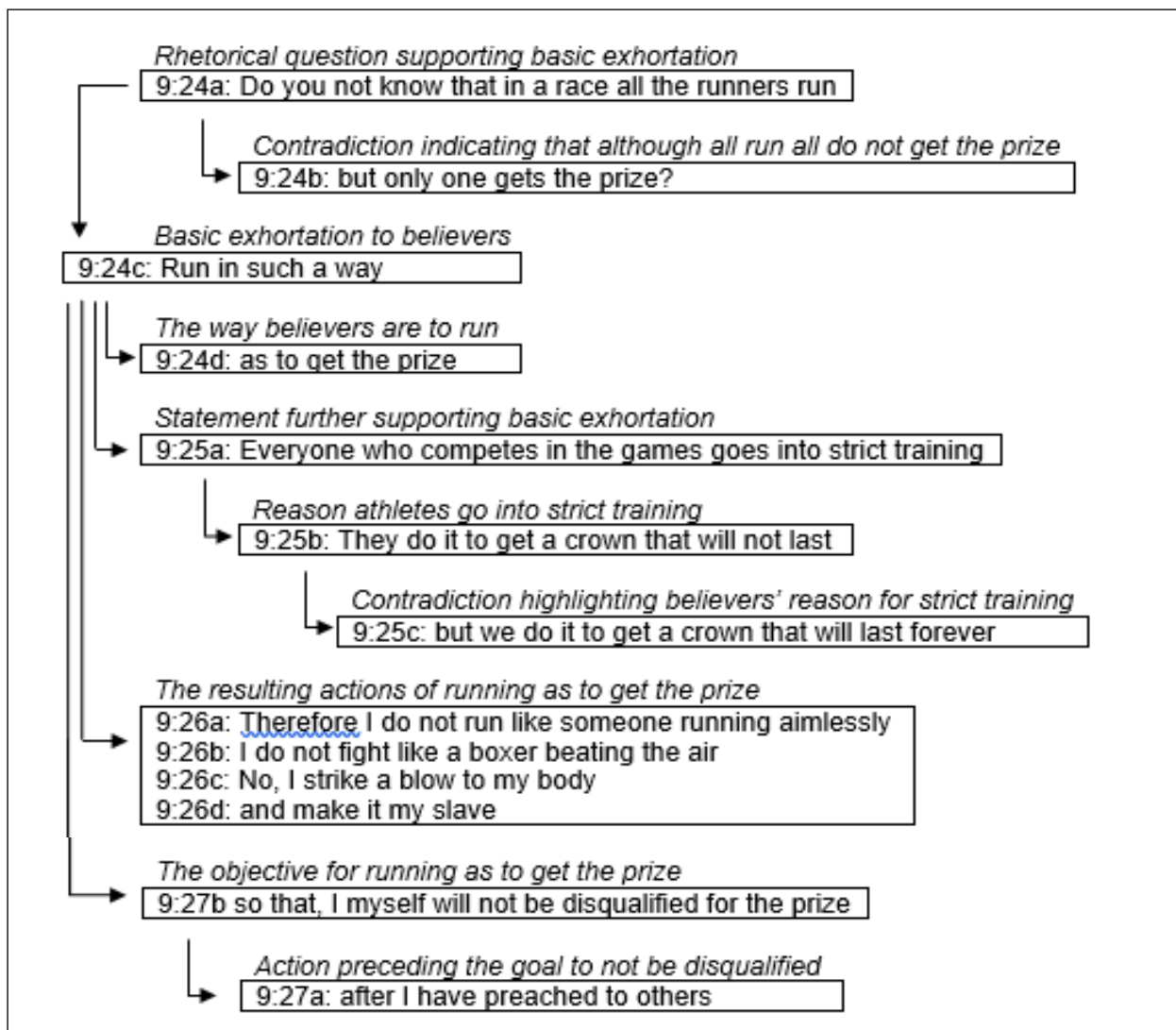


Figure 4-1: Macro-level thought structure of 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

From the analysis of the pericope's thought structure, it is determined that Paul's basic exhortation is found in verse 24. Verse 26 indicates the resulting actions that flow from running as someone who aims to get the prize. The objective of Paul's exhortation is found in verse 27.

4.4.1.3 Normative perspectives on keywords and concepts in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

The following keywords and concepts have been identified and will be studied:

- τρέχω pronounced as *trechō* (run);
- τρέχω pronounced as *brabeion* (prize);
- ἐγκρατεύομαι pronounced as *egkrateuomai* (strict training);
- δουλαγωγέω pronounced as *doulagōgeō* (slave); and
- ἀδόκιμος pronounced as *adokimos* (disqualified).

a. v9:24 – τρέχω pronounced as *trechō* (run)

The concept of “τρέχω” (run) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Price (2010), Zodhiates (1992), Vine *et al.* (1996), and Bredenkamp (2007:29):

- Thayer (2007:630) explains that “τρέχω” (run) is used to refer to running in the literal sense; as of a person who is in a hurry or of runners who physically run a race. It can also be used metaphorically to refer to the act of exerting oneself and striving hard, to spend one’s strength to perform and attain something. The latter is more likely in agreement with what the author had in mind. Thayer (2007:630) further explains that in this sense the word implies in Greek writings the incurrance of extreme peril, which requires the exertion of all one’s effort to overcome.
- Price (2010:325) agrees that Paul uses “τρέχω” (run) metaphorically as he alludes to the Isthmian games that were a popular competition in which ancient athletes competed. Paul employs this allegory throughout 1 Corinthians 9:24–27. As part of the games, ancient athletes competed in six events, namely wrestling, jumping, javelin, discus, and running, and boxing, which are important for Paul’s analogy (Price, 2010:325). Price (2010:325) further states that “τρέχω” (run) is strategically used to remind Paul’s readers of the commitment and perseverance the Christian life requires as well as the likelihood of encountering difficult and unfavourable conditions.
- Zodhiates (1992:1394) also highlights the strenuous efforts that Paul’s figurative use of “τρέχω” (run) implies.
- Vine *et al.* (1996:541) comment that “τρέχω” (run) is used to indicate the effort or swiftness utilised in order to attain a particular end. They assert that it refers to the preserving activity in the Christian course with the focus on obtaining the reward.

It becomes apparent that Paul's allusion to the Isthian games is meant to convey to the Corinthians that persevering in the Christian life in such a manner as to win the prize requires striving, strenuous and focused efforts, and the exertion of all of one's strength. Bredenkamp (2007:29) explains that Paul aims to give everything in preparation and participation and expects this same standard of his audience.

b. v9:24, 26 – τρέχω pronounced as *brabeion* (prize)

The concept of “brabeion” (prize) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Zodhiates (1992), Fee (2014), Price (2010), and Bredenkamp (2007:29):

- According to Thayer (2007:105), it is used in a literal sense to refer to the award or prize the victor takes in the games. In keeping with his metaphor, however, Paul more likely utilised it in a metaphorical sense, which Thayer (2007) explains refers to the heavenly reward for Christian character.
- Strong (2001:1017) comments that in 1 Corinthians 24, “brabeion” (prize) is used metaphorically to refer to “the reward” to be obtained by the believer hereafter. The only other occurrence of the term is in Philippians 3:14. In relation to its use by Paul here, Strong (2001:1017) further explains that the preposition “eis” (unto) indicates the position of the prize. According to Strong (2001:1017), the prize is not the heavenly calling which belongs to all believers who point their aspirations and thoughts heavenward, but it will be bestowed in relation to it.
- Zodhiates (1992:348) agrees with Strong and explains that “brabeion” (prize), when used metaphorically, refers to the future life's rewards of virtue.
- Fee (2014:482) also adheres to the metaphorical interpretation of the prize and explains that Paul later uses the metaphor of the victor's “crown” to impress on his audience that the goal is eternal in nature and of such value that it should affect their present lifestyle.
- Price (2010:325) comments that the word “brabeion” (prize) is used in 1 Corinthians 9 to motivate his audience for a strenuous and methodical fulfilment of the Christian life (Price, 2010:325).

Paul wants to impress upon his audience that their perseverance and self-denial as part of their Christian race are not in vain. Their reward is of an eternal nature, extremely valuable, and is yet to be obtained. Bredenkamp (2007:29) makes an important addition by clarifying that for Paul it is the essence of the gospel to serve, and therefore the goal in itself is not the personal achievement associated with obtaining the prize. Thus, Paul also aims to impress upon his audience that the goal should not merely rest in eventually

obtaining the prize, but also in the impact that living in a manner worthy of the prize will have on the promotion of the gospel in the present.

c. v9:25 – ἐγκρατεύομαι pronounced as *egkrateuomai* (strict training)

The concept of “egkrateuomai” (strict training) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Fee (2014), Price (2010), and Bredenkamp (2007:29):

- Thayer (2007:167) explains “egkrateuomai” (strict training) as the act of exhibiting self-government and self-control. It involves conducting oneself temperately (Thayer, 2007:167). The concept draws from athletes who prepare themselves for the games by abstaining from things such as wine, sexual indulgence, and unwholesome food.
- Strong (2001:1057) adds that “egkrateuomai” (strict training) is the middle voice of “egkratēs” which means strong in a thing (*masterful*), that is to be self-controlled (in appetite, for example). Paul uses “egkratēs” in Titus 1:8 when listing the characteristics that leaders and overseers within the church should exhibit.
- Bredenkamp (2007:28) comments that Paul, still using the Isthmian allegory, uses “egkrateuomai” (strict training) to refer to control over fleshly desires as part of an ascetic plan. Bredenkamp (2007:28) further asserts that Paul wants to convey to his audience that freedom and rights need to be handled with great caution. Freedom can mean that you need to be freed from yourself and in essence give up your rights and exercise self-control in view of the gospel and glorifying God (Bredenkamp 2007:28).
- Fee (2014:482) agrees with Bredenkamp and states that the term “egkrateuomai” (strict training) does not merely refer to foregoing some rights for other’s sake, but entails giving up some things altogether simply because they are incompatible with the Christian “contest”.
- According to Price (2010:326), “egkrateuomai” (strict training) implies the opposite of self-gratification. Athletes had to comply with a strict training regimen if they wanted to do well in the games. Those who taught the gymnastic art in ancient times would, amongst other things, dictate to their disciplines the kind and quantity of meat they were to eat, when they were to exercise and when they were to rest, and they would forbid them indulgences such as wine and women (Price, 2010:326).

Perseverance and obtaining the imperishable eternal reward require self-control and strict discipline. It requires giving up one’s rights, fleshly desires, and things that do not

result in edification and at the same time taking up practices and habits that strengthen for the sake of the gospel. It is about a functional discipline in servitude of a greater purpose, bigger than oneself (Bredenkamp, 2007:29). It literally requires exercising oneself and becoming fit in the self.

d. v9:27 – δουλαγωγέω pronounced as *doulagōgeō* (slave)

The concept of “doulagōgeō” (slave) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Vine *et al.* (1996), Fee (2014), Price (2010), Bredenkamp (2007:29), and Barnes² (2004a):

- According to Thayer (2007:157), “doulagōgeō” (slave) means to make oneself a slave, and this implies a certain type of severe treatment which involves subjection to rigid and stern discipline.
- Zodhiates (1992:482) indicates that “doulagōgeō” (slave), in the context of 1 Corinthians 9, means to bring into servitude or subjection.
- Vine *et al.* (1996:606) agree with Zodhiates, asserting that it means to bring into subjection.
- Bredenkamp (2007:30) explains that “doulagōgeō” (slave) together with “egkrateuomai” (strict training) convey the idea of bringing one’s body into complete and strict subjection so that it may serve the desired purpose.
- Fee (2014:484) clarifies that Paul’s intention by use of the metaphor is not one that promotes a dualistic view which classifies the physical body as an enemy, isolating sin to reside in the body alone, but rather he intends to say that he brings himself into subjection which includes the body, but only as the vehicle for his present life on earth.
- Price (2010:328) further observes that it becomes clear from Paul’s exhortation to self-control that becoming a Christian does not remove all temptation, automatically keeping one from sinning. Therefore, believers need to subject themselves to God’s will and not allow anything to hinder their progress.

Paul indicates that he makes himself subject to God’s will so that nothing might hinder the progress of the gospel. Barnes³ (2004a) states that Paul uses all means possible to subdue his carnal inclinations and not allow it to exert dominion over him.

² https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_corinthians/9.htm

³ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_corinthians/9.htm

e. v9:27 – ἀδόκιμος pronounced as *adokimos* (disqualified)

The concept of “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Zodhiates (1992), Clarke⁴ (2004a), Dake (2010), and Barnes⁵ (2004a):

- Thayer (2007:155) explains that “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) is used for metals or coins that do not withstand the relevant test and as a result are not approved of. Drawing from this terminology, the author uses “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) to refer to that which is regarded as unfit, reprobate, unproved or spurious.
- Zodhiates (1992:477), in agreement with Thayer, defines “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) as unapproved and reprobate.
- Strong (2001:916), much like Thayer and Zodhiates, defines “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) as unapproved, rejected, and an indication of not standing the test. Strong (2001:916), however, also highlights the implication of this rejection as moral or literal worthlessness.
- Clarke (2004a) asserts that in keeping with the allusion to the Isthmian games, “ἀδόκιμος” (disqualified) signifies rejection as by a judge of the games who finds a contender undeserving of a prize.
- Bredenkamp (2007:30) asserts that Paul’s fear is related to not persevering in the fulfilment of his calling in the manner that is expected of him; the emphasis then falls on the great responsibility that is placed on his shoulders in proclaiming the gospel.
- Dake (2010:319) goes further and states that it does not merely refer to “a cracked pot” that is still fit to keep but signifies becoming Christless and literally rejected.

From the word study, it is deduced that Paul’s concern was for his calling and ultimately even his salvation. His concern indicates that church leaders, just like all believers, are vulnerable to not standing the test and as a result failing to fulfil their calling and even renouncing their faith despite the fact that they have preached to many. Barnes (2004a) motivates that Paul did not sit back contentedly as a result of his powerful conversion but felt it important that there be daily evidence of his salvation manifested in the manner he conducted himself.

⁴ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/clarke/1_corinthians/9.htm

⁵ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_corinthians/9.htm

4.4.1.4 Concluding normative perspectives on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27

In relation to the focus of this study, the importance of self-control and discipline in the church leader's call to perseverance was learnt from 1 Corinthians 9:24–27. Paul uses the allegory of the Isthmian games and his own life to depict the rigorous and continuous preparation, striving, and focus church leaders need to implement in order to fulfil their calling to persevere.

He creates awareness of the fact that perseverance requires strict discipline and is not an achieved static or automatic result of faith in Christ. It requires the implementation of spiritual, emotional, physical, relational, and mental disciplines as well as the avoidance of habits or practices that could hinder the church leader's ability to persevere. Amongst other things, the church leader needs enough and regular rest, healthy relationships that stimulate and comfort, physical exercise, time for reflection and emotional rejuvenation, and spiritual disciplines such as prayer, reading from Scripture, and worship.

The church leader has to run the race to win the eternal prize. Entering the race does not guarantee victory. Paul makes it clear that although he has had the opportunity to preach to many, he still needs to continue running in such a way that he himself is not eventually disqualified. Paul also provides motivation for persevering by pointing to the eternal reward that God has in store.

Nevertheless, Paul makes it clear that the goal should not merely rest in eventually obtaining the prize but also in a goal-orientated and focused life that places emphasis on the right matters and aids in the promotion of the gospel in the present. Thus, church leaders do not only persevere for their own sake but also for the sake of others.

4.4.2 Normative perspectives on 1 Timothy 4:11–16

4.4.2.1 Background and socio-historic context

1 Timothy, together with 2 Timothy and Titus, is generally accepted as one of the pastoral epistles (Carson & Moo, 2005:554; Guthrie, 1983:11). Unlike Paul's other letters, which were directed at churches, the three pastoral epistles were directed at individuals with pastoral responsibilities and contain injunctions of a more personal nature (Carson & Moo, 2005:554; Guthrie, 1983:11).

1 Timothy was written to Timothy by Paul, who acted as his mentor (Carson & Moo, 2005:572). It aims to encourage Timothy to persevere and provide Timothy with guidance in his work as a

superintendent of churches (Carson & Moo, 2005:572; Hays & Duvall, 2011:883). As a result of certain moments within the letter, some have argued that the letter was intended for a more general audience, but it is likely that Timothy would have been expected to pass the counsel contained within the letter on to his congregations (Carson & Moo, 2005:573).

From elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:20) it is taught that Paul was very fond of Timothy and spoke of him with great love and trust (Carson & Moo, 2005:574). Paul endearingly compares their relationship to that of a father and son (1 Corinthians 4:17), brothers, and fellow workers (1 Thessalonians 3:2) (Carson & Moo, 2005:574). Paul writes 1 Timothy out of concern for Timothy and the Ephesus Church after he had left Timothy in charge of the church (Harrison, 1971:348; Hays & Duvall, 2011:881).

A recurring theme in all of the pastoral epistles is that of false teaching and the resulting immoral and improper conduct it leads to (Harrison, 1971:349; Hays & Duvall, 2011:883–884). The exact nature of the false teachings prevalent at the time of writing is uncertain, but it is clear that Paul aims to equip Timothy to deal appropriately with those responsible (Guthrie, 1983:36–38).

It is important to note that 1 Timothy has more to say about church leaders than any other New Testament book (Carson & Moo, 2005:575). From the letter, it can be deduced that it was of the utmost importance to Paul that those in ministry are upright and their character above reproach (Carson & Moo, 2005:575). Paul prioritises character and conduct above ecclesiastical duties (Carson & Moo, 2005:575; Hays & Duvall, 2011:887).

4.4.2.2 Normative perspectives on the structure of 1 Timothy 4:11–16

The epistle, in general, purposes to aid Timothy as he fights the good fight (1 Timothy 1:18–20) (Carson & Moo, 2005:571). 1 Timothy 4:11–16 conveys one of the many personal exhortations to Timothy in this letter as Paul, his mentor, aims to strengthen him. 1 Timothy 4:11–16 focuses on Timothy's conduct as a church leader. To follow is an analysis of the thought structure of 1 Timothy 4:11–16 (figure 4-2):

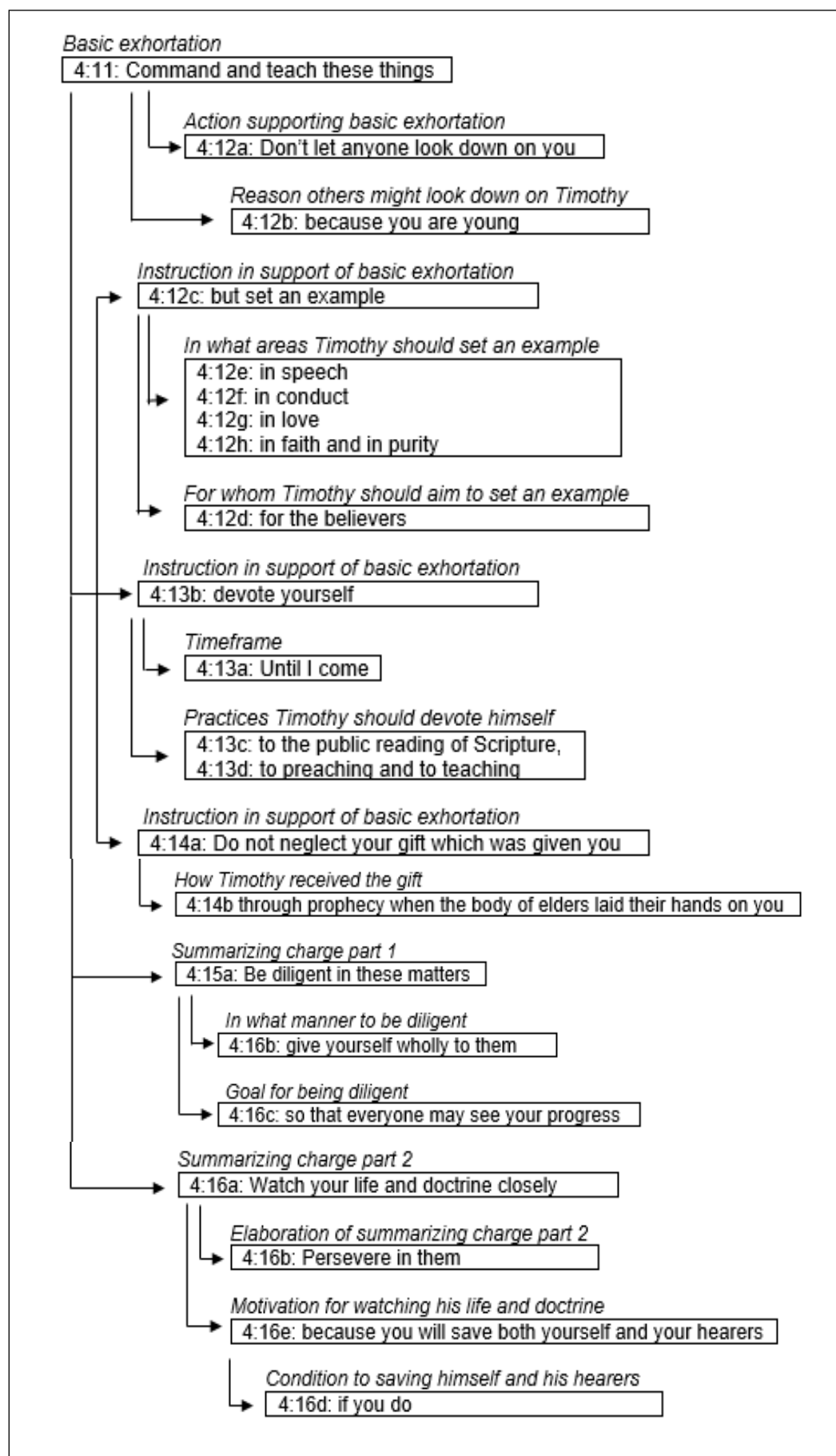


Figure 4-2: Macro-level thought structure of 1 Timothy 4:11–16

1 Timothy 4:6–16 comprises a series of personal instructions to Timothy. 1 Timothy 4:11–16 follows an interlude on godliness in which Paul urges Timothy to watch his own life and doctrine so that he will not fall prey to the false teachings that were circulating at that time and in turn adopt the accompanying godless myths.

From the thought analysis, it is deduced that Paul's main exhortation to Timothy is to teach his hearers about Godly living (1 Timothy 4:11). Paul builds forth and provides Timothy with practical instructions that will enable him to remain faithful to this exhortation (1 Timothy 4:12–14). Paul concludes with two charges which are of special interest to this study and neatly summarise the main thrust of his instruction; Paul charges Timothy to be diligent in these matters, referring to the matters raised in 1 Timothy 4:12–14, and to closely watch and persevere in his life and doctrine (1 Timothy 4:15–16). Paul stipulates that doing this will demonstrate his progress to others and will not only save his own life, but also the lives of his hearers (1 Timothy 4:15–16).

4.4.2.3 Normative perspectives on keywords and important concepts in 1 Timothy 4:11–16

The following keywords and concepts have been identified and will be studied:

- τύπος pronounced as *tupos* (example);
- χάρισμα pronounced as *charisma* (gift);
- μελετάω pronounced as *meletaō* (be diligent in);
- προκοπή pronounced as *prokopē* (progress);
- ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ pronounced as *epechō seautō kai hē didaskalia* (watch your life and doctrine); and
- σώζω pronounced as *sōzō* (save).

a. v4:12 – τύπος pronounced as *tupos* (example)

The concept of “τύπος” (example) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Collins (2002), and Towner (2006):

- Thayer (2007:632) comments that “τύπος” (example), as used in 1 Timothy 4:12, refers to an example to be imitated and is used of men worthy of imitation. It involves showing oneself as an example of good works (Thayer, 2007:632)
- Zodhiates (1992:1399) agrees with Thayer and comments that “τύπος” (example) is used figuratively to refer to an example or pattern to be imitated or followed.

- Collins (2002:128), in agreement with Thayer and Zodhiates, comments that Paul charges Timothy to serve the community of believers for whom he was responsible not only in word, but also in life.
- Towner (2006:314–315) comments that to be a model or to set an example means more than simply offering a pattern that others are to imitate. It involves living life in a manner that has been shaped by faith in the gospel.

Paul motivates Timothy to set an example that will counter the arguments of those in whose eyes he is regarded as too young (Guthrie, 1983:97). Church leaders are called to set an example worthy of imitation that will show that the faults others might find, in fact, have no grounds; that in Christianity authority is dependent on character and not on other attributes such as age (Guthrie, 1983:97). Their lives need to be informed and shaped by the gospel.

b. v4:14 – χάρισμα pronounced as *charisma* (gift)

The concept of “χάρισμα” (gift) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Dake (2010), Longman *et al.* (2013), Collins (2002), Zodhiates (1992), and Barnes⁶ (2004b):

- Thayer (2007:667) indicates that “χάρισμα” (gift), as used in the Pauline technical sense, refers to extraordinary powers or graces or gifts that distinguish certain Christians, enabling them to serve the church of Christ. These gifts are received as a result of divine grace through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. More specifically, as used in 1 Timothy 4:14, “χάρισμα” (gift) refers to the sum of those powers necessary for the discharge of the office of an evangelist.
- Strong (2001:1452) comments that charisma is a favour which one receives without merit of their own. It is a gift of grace, a gift involving grace on the part of God as the donor. In 1 Timothy 4:14, Strong agrees that it is used of God’s endowments upon believers by the operation of the Holy Spirit in the churches.
- Zodhiates (1992:1471) also assumes Thayer’s line of thinking and indicates that it refers to the gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit to the early believers but more particularly to Christian teachers.
- Dake (2010:410–411) also points to the more specific use in that it refers to the God-given gifts and graces that enable Timothy to do the same work as Paul.

⁶ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/4.htm

- Barnes⁷ (2004b) understands “gift” as that by which Timothy was qualified for his work as a minister. Barnes (2004b) elaborates that it does not denote an event but rather the entire train of events by which Timothy had been qualified and recognised as a minister.
- Longman *et al.* (2013:1572) more broadly explain that spiritual gifts need to be seen in light of the new covenant God established through the outpouring of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit endowed the church with power so that it might continue with Christ’s ministry (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1572). The Spirit gifts all Christians so that they might function as serving members of Christ’s body (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1572). Longman *et al.* (2013:1572) further emphasise that without divine gifts, the Christian life would not be able to bear witness to its supernatural origin.

Paul urges Timothy not to neglect, to make light of, or treat carelessly his gift and the accompanying responsibilities and advantages that stem from it, or the task for which he was endowed with the gift in the first place (Barnes, 2004b). Guthrie (1983:99) points out that the exhortation simultaneously emphasises the Holy Spirit’s role in Timothy’s ministry as well as his human responsibility.

Paul aims to inform Timothy that neglecting this gift will result in unfaithfulness to God who is the source of this gift (Barnes, 2004b; Collins, 2002:130). Church leaders have been endowed with God’s supernatural spiritual gift through the work of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their divine calling. They have a responsibility to acknowledge, cultivate (2 Timothy 1:6), and allow this gift to flow through them as they cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

c. v4:15 – μελετάω pronounced as *meletaō* (be diligent in)

The concept of “μελετάω” (be diligent in) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Vine *et al.* (1996), Robertson⁸ (1933), Guthrie (1983), and Clarke⁹ (2004b):

- Thayer (2007:396) provides two closely associated definitions for “μελετάω” (be diligent in). Firstly, it means to care for, to practise, and to attend to carefully. Secondly, it means to meditate upon. The latter, Thayer (2007:396) explains, was commonly used of the meditative pondering and the practice of orators and rhetoricians.

⁷ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/4.htm

⁸ Robertson’s word pictures. (*In* e-Sword database. [Bible software.] 2019.).

⁹ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/clarke/1_timothy/4.htm

- Zodhiates (1992:956) asserts that “μελετάω” (be diligent in) means to consider or to weigh or ponder over something in order to be able to perform well.
- Vine *et al.* (1996:400) define it as meaning to be diligent in, to meditate upon, to practise.
- Robertson (1993) points out that “μελετάω” (be diligent in) is used in the present active imperative meaning in that it conveys the continuous nature of the activity.
- Guthrie (1983:99) also stresses the continuous nature of the exhortation to be diligent in these things (“these things” referring to the previously mentioned instructions in 1 Timothy 4:12–14 and perhaps even the general instructions given throughout the letter), and explains that these things were to become like second nature to Timothy as he continues to immerse himself therein.
- Collins (2002:131) underscores that Paul would have aimed to convey the importance of his summarising charge to Timothy by using the almost repetitive directives together (be diligent in and give yourself wholly).

Timothy must resolve to give himself completely to his task to set an example as a church leader as his faith in the gospel shapes his life (1 Timothy 4:12), to read and teach Scripture (1 Timothy 4:13), and to exercise the gift bestowed upon him (1 Timothy 4:14). Clarke (2004b) adds that Paul’s instruction to Timothy is essentially that the nature, motives, and reasons for his ministry must always be in view of his heart and conscience. Likewise, church leaders are to clear their programmes and minds of clutter and continuously set their minds and hearts on the task assigned to them. They are to engage in spiritual disciplines such as Scripture reading. They are to grow in self-efficacy as they rely on the Holy Spirit and faithfully practise their gifts.

d. v4:15 – προκοπή pronounced as *prokopē* (progress)

The concept of “προκοπή” (progress) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Collins (2002), and Guthrie (1983):

- Thayer (2007:540) defines “προκοπή” (progress) as progress, advancement.
- Zodhiates (1992:1221) indicates that it denotes going forward and is used figuratively of progress, furtherance, or advancement.
- Collins (2002:131–132) gives context to Paul’s choice to use “προκοπή” (progress) by explaining that the philosophers and Stoics of that time often wrote about progress and understood it as referring to a person’s moral and spiritual evolution. Paul thus urges Timothy to remain diligent so that his moral and spiritual development might be visible to those around him and serve as an example and inspiration (Collins, 2002:132).

- Guthrie (1983:99) asserts that Paul aims to impress upon Timothy that it should be his true Christian development that amazes those around him as opposed to superficial qualities such as his personality or brilliant expositions.

Paul urges Timothy to remain diligent so that his development may be continuous and evident to all. Church leaders cannot afford to stagnate in ministry. Their continuous growth needs to serve as an inspiration to those around them.

e. v4:16 – ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ pronounced as *epechō seautō kai hē didaskalia* (watch your life and doctrine)

The phrase “ἔπεχε σεαυτῷ καὶ τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ” (watch your life and doctrine) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Zodhiates (1992), Guthrie (1983), and Barnes¹⁰ (2004b):

- Thayer (2007:231) indicates that “ἐπεχε” (watch) could mean to have or hold upon, to observe, apply, or attend to; in other words, to give attention to. Alternatively, it could also mean to hold towards, hold forth, present, or to check, as in delay, stop, or stay in order to check.
- Strong (2002:1096) clarifies that “ἐπεχε” (watch), as used in 1 Timothy 4, literally means to hold upon, then to direct towards, to give attention to.
- Zodhiates (1992:617) further explains that it is used of the mind, meaning to fix the mind upon, give heed to, and pay attention.
- In relation to the focus of this study, Guthrie (1983:99) draws attention to the significance of how Paul intimately links the teacher and his teaching. Guthrie (1983:99) goes on to comment that moral and spiritual rectitude is a vital prerequisite for doctrinal orthodoxy.
- Barnes¹¹ (2004b) points out that Paul’s instruction to Timothy to take heed of himself can be related to everything of a personal nature that could potentially disqualify him for ministry, thus, his health, his manners, his habits, his temper, his morality, his contact with others, etc. all are important in relation to his work as a church leader. In addition to him taking heed of himself on a personal level, Timothy must also watch that he only teaches what is true (Barnes, 2004b).

Timothy needs to carefully watch over and attend to his personal life and his teaching. The two are inextricably intertwined. Paul adds the reiterative “persevere in them” (ἐπιμένω αὐτός) for further emphasis on the importance and necessity for this to be

¹⁰ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/4.htm

¹¹ https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/4.htm

done without ceasing (Collins 2002:132). Zodhiates (1992:630) asserts that “ἐπιμένω” (persevere) is used metaphorically in 1 Timothy 4, thus meaning to continue in any state or course, to be constant or persevere in. Church leaders cannot afford to cease watching over their personal lives and teaching.

f. v4:16 – σώζω pronounced as sōzō (save)

The concept of “σώζω” (save) was studied by referring to Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Guthrie (1983), Barnes¹² (2004b), and Collins (2002):

- Thayer (2007:610) indicates that “σώζω” (save) in the general sense refers to saving someone or, more specifically, someone suffering from injury or peril by keeping them safe and sound from danger or destruction. In the biblical sense, however, it means to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgement or to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.
- Zodhiates (1992:1353–1354) defines “σώζω” (save) as meaning to save, make whole, deliver, and preserve; safe from loss, danger, or destruction. With regard to its use in 1 Timothy 4, Zodhiates (1992:1354) asserts that it is used specifically to denote salvation from misery subsequent to sin and eternal death, sin, and punishment.
- Guthrie (1983:99) comments that Timothy’s perseverance will serve a dual purpose. By persevering in his life and doctrine, Timothy will not only work out his own salvation, but also support others to do the same (Guthrie, 1983:99). For the church leader, failing to persevere in watching over their own life and doctrine poses a danger, not only for their own salvation, but also for those who follow their example (Guthrie, 1983:99).
- Barnes (2004b) clarifies that Paul’s intention was not to communicate a kind of salvation based on the works or merit of man but rather that Timothy’s faithfulness will be counted as evidence of his own piety and will result in sinners coming to know Christ.
- Collins (2002:132) also comments that God alone is Saviour, but He chose to co-opt Timothy into His salvation plan by bestowing upon him the spiritual gift. If Timothy fulfils his charge, he will not only secure his own salvation, but also those of his hearers (Collins, 2002:132).

Timothy’s perseverance in life and doctrine is vital, not only because it determines whether or not he remains in the truth, but also because it influences the course his

¹² https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/1_timothy/4.htm

hearers will take as he sets an example many are sure to follow. Guarding and remaining in the truth in word and deed will influence whether one's salvation and those of one's hearers are worked out here on earth and ultimately whether or not it is secured eternally.

4.4.2.4 Concluding normative perspectives on 1 Timothy 4:11–16

Although perseverance and endurance are a general exhortation to all believers, 1 Timothy 4 underscores the importance for church leaders to fulfil this appeal. Church leaders, as colabourers of God in His salvation plan, have a tremendous responsibility as they are called to teach others how to live godly lives and remain in the truth. They can only fulfil this calling by continuously setting an example that is worth following so that their way of life does not disqualify them or work against the gospel.

Consequently, they must be diligent students as they engage in spiritual disciplines such as studying Scripture. Moreover, they must be diligent stewards of the gifts the Holy Spirit has equipped them with for ministry. In summary, they must persevere in watching over their own lives (emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually) and doctrine so that they will not end up losing sight of the truth, apostatise and in doing so forfeit their own salvation, thus posing a stumbling block for those who follow them.

4.4.3 Normative perspectives on Hebrews 12:1–2

4.4.3.1 Background and socio-historic context

The authorship, destination, and structure of Hebrews are just some of the matters that have been the focus of much debate (Carson & Moo, 2005:600–604; Harrison, 1971:367–368; Hays & Duvall, 2011:908). The purpose of this study, however, will not allow for an in-depth discussion of the opposing theories currently in circulation, but readers are to bear in mind that a number of theories exist.

In light of the wealth of rhetorical devices present in Hebrews, a number of scholars have suggested that the work was originally a series of homilies that were adapted into the published form of an aberrant letter (Carson & Moo, 2005:596; Harrison, 1971:368). Thus, Hebrews is typically acknowledged as a sermon.

The specificity of the warnings and exhortations that are interspersed throughout the letter gives rise to the idea that a particular audience was intended (Carson & Moo, 2005:596). Although the

ethnicity of the intended audience is uncertain, there exists agreement amongst scholars that the letter was intended for a group of Christians who were urged to maintain their confession (Carson & Moo, 2005:609; Hays & Duvall, 2011:907).

Although the exact nature of the reasons why these Christians were in danger of apostasy is not explicit, some theories include shame that resulted from being ostracised, focus on novel teachings at the expense of the apostolic gospel, and fear of persecution (Carson & Moo, 2005:612; Hays & Duvall, 2011:907). Whatever the reasons might have been, it is the outcomes that concerned the author; the Christians' discipline was fading and Christ and His atoning and priestly work were being relativised to such an extent that it was essentially being denied, making apostasy a likelihood (Carson & Moo, 2005:612).

4.4.3.2 Normative perspectives on the structure of Hebrews 12:1–2

Chapters 11 and 12 of Hebrews focus on faith and faithfulness (Horning, 1978:38). Hebrews 12:1–2 serves as the link that ties chapter 11, which defines faith and uses examples of faithfulness from Israel's history, with chapter 12, which consists of exhortations to be faithful (Horning, 1978:38). Below is an analysis of the thought structure of Hebrews 12:1–2 (figure 4-3) on a macro level:

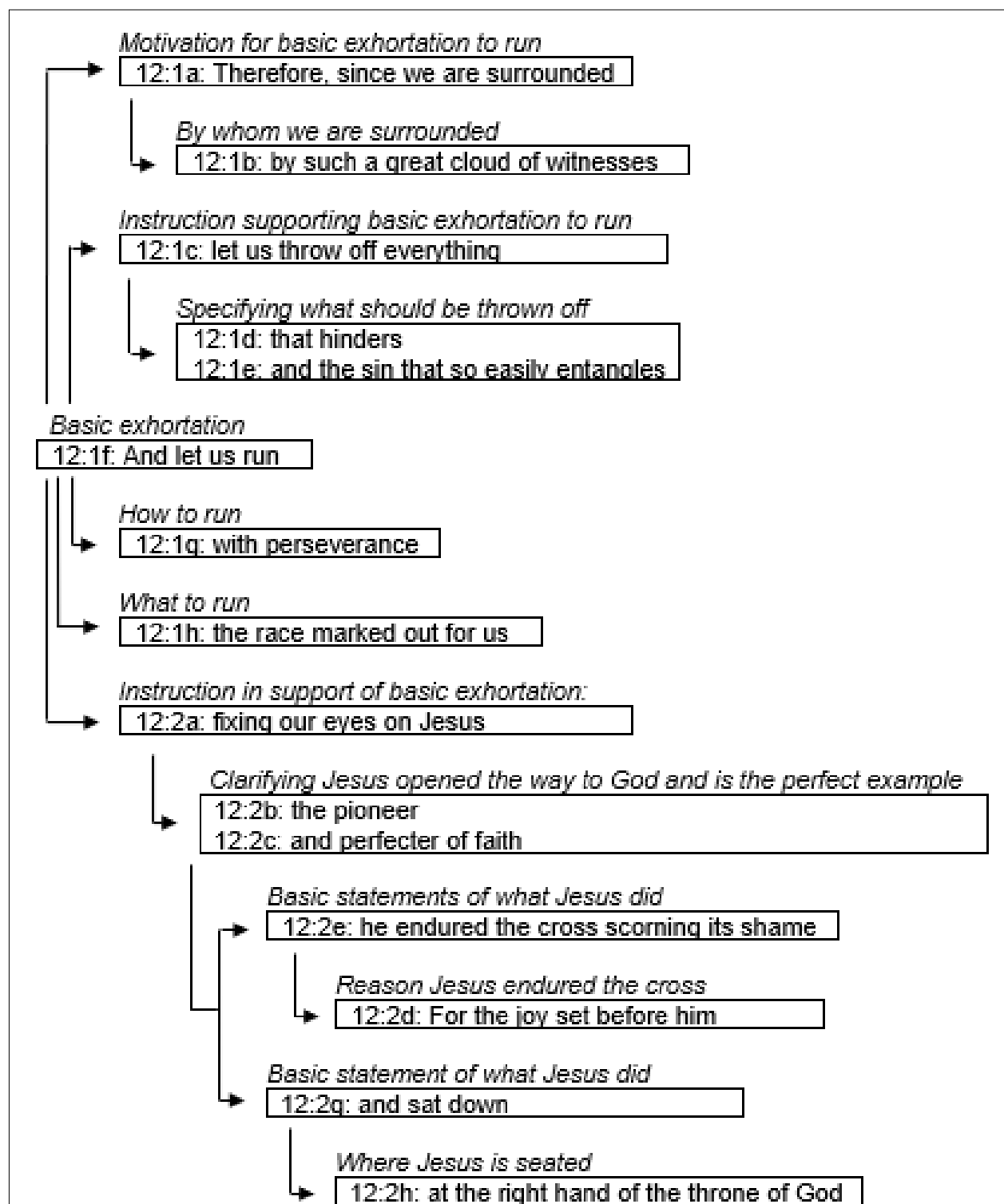
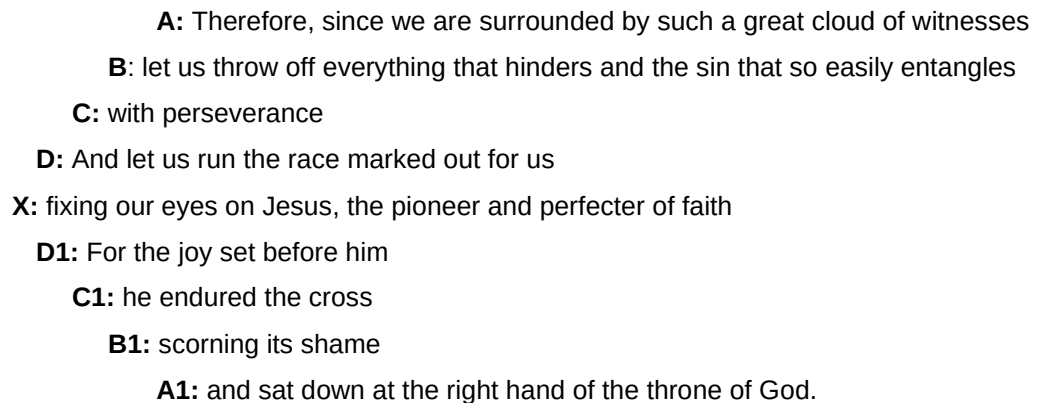


Figure 4-3: Macro-level thought structure of Hebrews 12:1–2

From the thought analysis, it becomes apparent that the author's main exhortation to his readers is to run the race set before them with perseverance (v12:1f, g, h). In order to do this, he asserts that they need to get rid of everything that hinders them in this race (v12:1c, d, e) and look to Jesus as their example (v12:2).

Here it is important to acknowledge, however, that according to Horning (1978:41) and Black (1987:546), Hebrews 12:1–2 has a chiasmic structure which provides further insight into the thought analysis of it. A chiasm is a rhetorical literary device employed in biblical narrative and involves the crossing or inversion of related elements within parallel constructions (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:129). Hebrews 12:1–2 is an inverse parallelism between nine phrases with the middle phrase standing alone (Horning, 1978:40). It is illustrated in the following diagram:



A chiasm was strategically employed by ancient authors and is key for detecting an author's aim since the principal idea or main event is typically placed in the apex (Kaiser & Silva, 2007:130). In the chiasmic structure, as depicted in the diagram above, X marks the pivot or hinge on which the structure hangs (Black, 1987:547). Therefore, although running the race with patience is the author's main exhortation, the apex of the chiasmic structure indicates a shift in focus from believers to Jesus and who He is (Black, 1987:546).

The focal element, therefore, is Jesus and not the past runners or even the present runners (Black, 1987:546). Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of the Christian faith, is the climax and pivot of this pericope. Although the past offers great examples of faith, the author exhorts his audience to run the race set before them with their eyes on Jesus and who He is (Horning, 1978:38). One could say that the author aims to convey the idea that running, in itself, would have been a futile activity was it not for Jesus, the pacesetter in the race of faith (Horning, 1978:38).

4.4.3.3 Normative perspectives on keywords and important concepts in Hebrews 12:1–2

The following keywords and concepts have been identified and will be studied:

- πᾶς ὄγκος pronounced as *pas ogkos* (everything that hinders);
- ἁμαρτία pronounced as *hamartia* (sin);
- τρέχω pronounced as *trechō* (run);

- ὑπομονή pronounced as *hupomonē* (perseverance); and
- ἀφοράω pronounced as *aphoraō* (fixing).

a. v12:1 – πᾶς ὄγκος pronounced as *pas ogkos* (everything that hinders)

“πᾶς ὄγκος” (everything that hinders) was studied using Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Strong (2001), Dake (2010), Allen (2010), and Bruce (1990):

- Thayer (2007:437) defines “πᾶς ὄγκος” (everything that hinders) as follows:
 - whatever is prominent, protuberance, bulk, mass – hence a burden, weight, encumbrance.
- Zodhiates (1992:1025) defines it as a tumour, mass, magnitude, weight, burden, or impediment.
- Strong (2001:1260) also defines it as a mass which causes a bending or bulging as a result of the weight; a burden (hindrance).
- Dake (2010:445) comments that the author’s aim is to encourage believers to lay aside anything that might hinder their Christian progress. Dake uses arrogance and pride as examples (Dake, 2010:445).
- Allen (2010:573) provides further insight in keeping with the metaphor that is used by drawing from the ancient customs of the athletes who partook in the games. Allen (2010:573) explains that ancient athletes would compete virtually naked. They would enter the stadium clothed in grand, long, flowing silk but would then discard these when the games began. Likewise, the author’s audience is to get rid of anything that could thwart progress.
- Bruce (1990:335–336) also points to the significance of the metaphor employed and asserts that athletes need to discipline and free themselves from anything that could act as a weight, whether this might be objects carried about the body or excessive body weight. Bruce (1990:355–336) explains that even things that might be perfectly alright in the sense that it is not sin per se, can become a weight or cause the athlete to become distracted. Bruce (1990:336) further notes that what might be considered a weight for one individual might not necessarily be a weight for another.

In the race of faith, church leaders need to get rid of anything that might distract or weigh them down. What acts as a weight in one person’s life is not necessarily true for another. Thus, prayerful self-awareness is vital. In addition, “weights” are not necessarily always sins. One’s physical health, material wealth, complacency, or even what might be considered a successful ministry can become weights in the race of faith.

b. v12:1 – ἁμαρτία pronounced as *hamartia* (sin)

“ἁμαρτία” (sin) was studied using Thayer (2007), Strong (2001, Zodhiates (1992), Bruce (1990), Dake (2010), and Barnes¹³ (2004c):

- Thayer (2007:30–31) indicates that “ἁμαρτία” (sin) refers to that which is done wrong, an offence, a violation of divine law committed in act or thought. More literally, it means to miss or wander from the righteous path and God’s law and to miss the mark. When used collectively, it refers to the aggregation of sins committed either by many or a single person.
- Strong (2001:935) explains that “ἁμαρτία” (sin), when used a verb, literally means to miss the mark. Strong (2001:935) further comments that it refers to the most comprehensive term for moral deviations.
- Zodhiates (1992:130) puts it this way: To sin means to miss the true scope and end of our lives which is God. Sin refers to an offence in relation to God with emphasis on the consequential guilt (Zodhiates, 1992:130).
- Bruce (2010:336) is of the opinion that the author’s intention is not to single out a specific sin, but rather refers to sin in the general sense as something that will inevitably entangle and trip the runner.
- Dake (2010:445) comments that sin is missing the mark morally and specifies that the sin which so easily entangles refers to the sins people become addicted to due to their particular weaknesses.
- Barnes (2004c) expands on Dake’s understanding and asserts that the sin that so easily entangles refers to
 - the sins one is more prone to due to personality disposition;
 - the sins one freely indulged in before becoming a Christian;
 - the sins one is exposed to due to one’s profession, relationships, or daily life; and
 - the sins that people are especially vulnerable to due to character weaknesses.

There are numerous examples of church leaders, who have been instrumental in the conversion of many, becoming entangled in sin. Some repent and manage to continue in the race of faith but many do not. Moreover, the impact of their actions resonates and often they are remembered for their failures.

¹³ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/hebrews/12.htm>

c. v12:1 – τρέχω pronounced as *trechō* (run)

See section 4.4.1.3.a.

d. v12:1 – ὑπομονή pronounced as *hupomonē* (perseverance)

“ὑπομονή” (perseverance) was studied using Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Zodhiates (1992), and Allen (2010):

- Thayer (2007:644) defines “ὑπομονή” (perseverance) as steadfastness, constancy, endurance. Thayer (2007:644) further explains that it is used in the New Testament as a characteristic of a man who does not swerve from his loyalty to faith and his deliberate purpose in even the greatest sufferings.
- Strong (2001:1431) makes an important clarification stating that it denotes a cheerful or hopeful endurance.
- Zodhiates (1992:1425) defines “ὑπομονή” (perseverance) as a bearing up under, patience, and enduring things or circumstances. Zodhiates (1992:1425) also notes its association with hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3) and indicates that it refers to that quality of an individual’s character which does not allow them to succumb under trial or surrender to circumstances.
- Allen (2010:573) further clarifies that “ὑπομονή” (perseverance) is an active noun and therefore implies active perseverance that involves struggle and effort as opposed to an achieved state or passive patience.

Running the race of faith and fulfilling one’s purpose requires perseverance in the active sense. Passive perseverance in the midst of 21st-century challenges will not enable the church leader to finish the race set before him/her. Instead, continuous effort and struggle under whatever circumstances or trials is required. The chiasmic structure of Hebrews 12:1–2 parallels the exhortation for believers to persevere with Jesus enduring the cross. Just as Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him, church leaders should not persevere under fear or anguish, but with a cheerful, certain, eternal hope founded in Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

e. v12:2 – ἀφοράω pronounced as *aphorāō* (fixing)

“ἀφοράω” (fixing) was studied using Thayer (2007), Strong (2001), Zodhiates (1992), Allen (2010), and Bruce (1990):

- Thayer (2007:90) defines “ἀφοράω” (fixing) as follows: “To turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something.”

- Strong (2001:1003) defines it as “meaning to consider attentively”. As a verb in Hebrews 12:1, it specifically means to look away from one thing in order to see another (Strong, 2001:1003). In other words, to concentrate one’s gaze upon (Strong, 2001:1003). Thus, it does not refer to a swift glance, but rather to a fixed focus.
- Zodhiates (1992:302) comments that metaphorically it means to fix the mind upon or behold in the mind.
- Allen (2010:574) also underscores the fact that “ἀπορράω” (fixing) implies focused attention that requires one to look away from everything else in order to place one’s focus on this one thing or object.
- Bruce (1990:337) asserts that the author points to Jesus as an example *par excellence*. Although the earlier “faith heroes” mentioned in chapter 11 provide incentive, it is Jesus on whom their eyes should remain fixed.

Although those distinguished for their faith in chapter 11 set an example, the author pins his exhortation to Jesus. The author desires that his audience fix their gaze on Jesus in whom faith was made complete and brought to its full expression (Allen, 2010:574). He is the Forerunner and Champion who set the pace and made the way on man’s behalf. He is the Source and the Model of faith (Allen, 2010:574). Church leaders need to practise setting their gaze, their mind, on Christ. It necessitates an active choice to take one’s gaze off the surrounding distraction and circumstances and to place it anew each day on Jesus.

4.4.3.4 Concluding normative perspectives on Hebrews 12:1–2

Perseverance is centred on an eternal, certain, cheerful hope that originates in Jesus Christ. Without this hope, the church leader would succumb to trials and be overcome by circumstances. In addition, perseverance in fulfilling one’s purpose and the race of faith requires continuous action. It requires one to actively lay down sin and prayerfully practise self-awareness in order to identify and get rid of the weights that weigh down. Furthermore, it also requires one to actively choose to remove one’s gaze from that which distracts and to take up the habit of fixing one’s mind on Jesus.

4.4.4 Normative perspectives on James 1:2–4

4.4.4.1 Background and socio-historic context

The opening verse identifies the author as James (James 1:1). Although it is convincingly argued that the James referred to is James, the brother of Jesus, other theories exist (Carson & Moo, 2005:622–625). Nonetheless, none of these theories is as strong as the argument supporting that the author is indeed James, the brother of Jesus (Carson & Moo, 2005:626; Harrison, 1971:386–388).

The book of James is traditionally categorised as one of the general epistles which, unlike the Pauline letters, were thought to be addressed to the church in general rather than a particular congregation (Carson & Moo, 2005:619). Although the letter does not necessarily address a particular church, it seems likely that it was indeed intended for a specific audience (Carson & Moo, 2005:628). It is believed that the intended audience was Jewish Christians (Carson & Moo, 2005:628; Hays & Duvall, 2011:926). On the one hand, it is suggested that the letter was written by James, the leader of the Jewish church, to minister to Jewish Christians in general (Harrison, 1971:382). On the other hand, however, it is tentatively suggested that the book was written in order to minister to the Jewish Christians scattered due to persecution (James 1:1) (Carson & Moo, 2005:629).

It makes sense then, that in terms of structure, James is thought to be constituted of a series of loosely connected homilies (Carson & Moo, 2005:619). Identifying a clear demarcated structure has proved to be a challenge and a task that up until recently seemed somewhat impossible (Carson & Moo, 2005:619). Today, a number of theories exist for the letter's demarcation – each presented with their own challenges of course (Carson & Moo, 2005:619). Nonetheless, scholars seem to agree that a major concern running throughout the book is the practical expression of true faith (Carson & Moo, 2005:633; Harrison, 1971:384; Hays & Duvall, 2011:926).

4.4.4.2 Normative perspectives on the structure of James 1:2–4

As mentioned earlier, the structure of James is a topic that enjoys the focus of much debate. Nevertheless, a number of key themes have been identified of which “trials” seems to be a recurring theme (Hays & Duvall, 2011:926; McKnight, 2011:68). James 1:2–4 serves as the introductory statement to the topic of trials and tribulations which resurface throughout the book of James. This being said, the purpose statement of the letter is that it is intended to save a person from death (James 5:19–20). Thus, all pericopes should be explored from this

perspective. Below is a schematic representation of the thought analysis of James 1:2–4 on a macro level (figure 4-4):

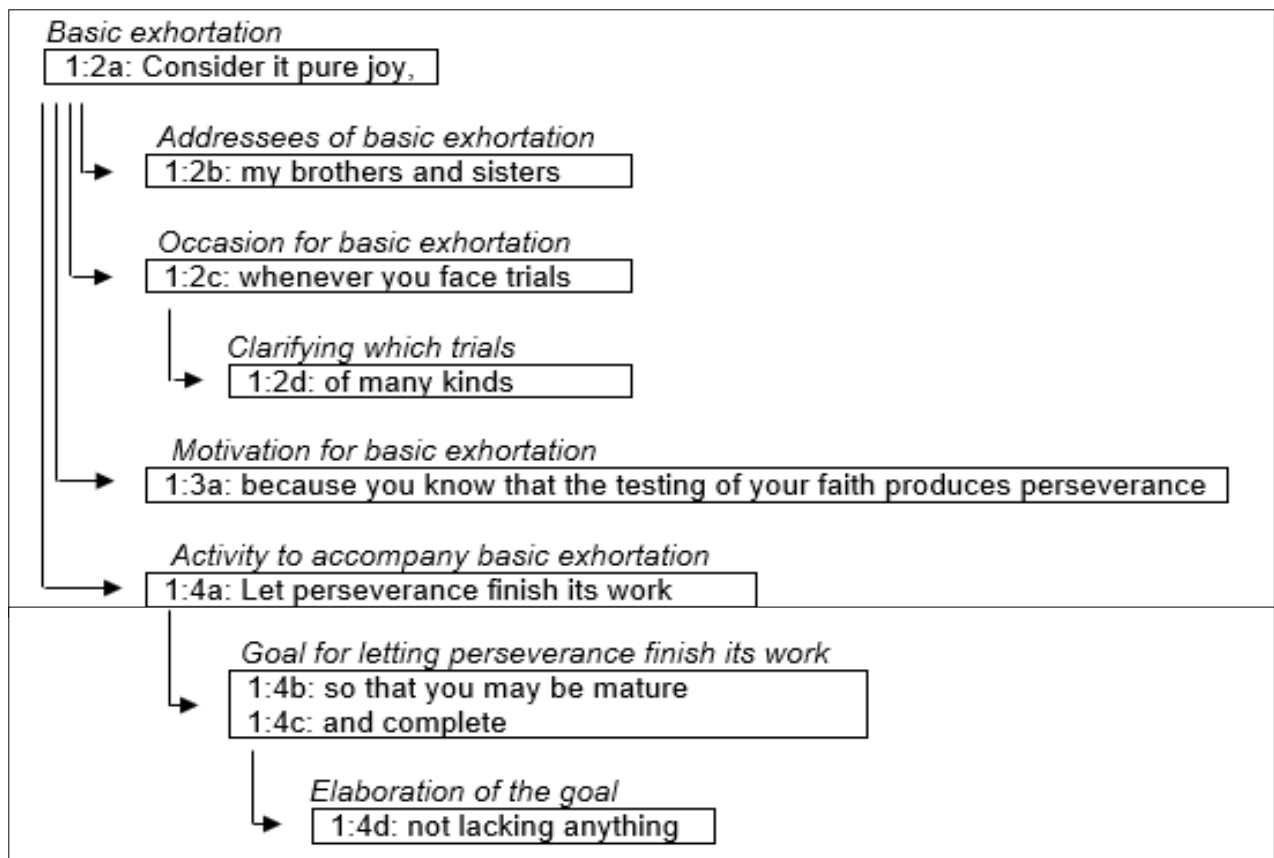


Figure 4-4: Macro-level thought structure of James 1:2-4

From the thought analysis conducted, it is inferred that the main exhortation is to consider it pure joy when faced with trials (James 1:2). The motivation for this is found in verse 1:3 and centres on the idea that trials can produce perseverance. The pericope then continues with a supporting instruction to let perseverance finish its work (James 1:4a), after which it concludes with the objective for perseverance to finish its work which brings maturity and completion (James 1:4b, c, d).

4.4.4.3 Normative perspectives on keywords and important concepts in James 1:2–4

The following keywords and concepts have been identified and will be studied below:

- πᾶς χαρά pronounced as *pas chara* (pure joy);
- ποικίλος πειρασμός pronounced as *poikilos peirasmos* (trials of many kinds);
- δοκίμιον pronounced as *dokimion* (testing);
- ὑπομονή pronounced as *hupomonē* (perseverance); and
- τέλειος καὶ ὁλόκληρος pronounced as *teleios kai holoklēros* (mature and complete).

a. v1:2 – πᾶς χαρά pronounced as *pas chara* (pure joy)

“πᾶς χαρά” (pure joy) was studied using Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Robertson¹⁴ (1933), Will (1997), and McKnight (2011):

- Thayer (2007:664–665) indicates that “πᾶς χαρά” (pure joy), as used in James 1:2, refers to the cause or occasion of joy.
- Zodhiates (1992:1467–1468) explains that it refers to joy, gladness, rejoicing and particularly, as Thayer also mentions, it speaks of the cause, ground, or occasion for joy in James 1:2.
- Robertson (1933) underscores the pureness of the joy stating that it does not refer to some joy and much grief, but to unmixed joy or whole joy.
- Will (1997:234) comments that the exhortation essentially communicates that a habit of panic needs to be replaced with a habit of rejoicing in light of trials encountered.
- McKnight (2011:73–74) clarifies that the occasion for joy here is not only eschatological in nature, focused on heavenly reward and final redemption, although James does touch on these grounds for joy later on (James 1:12; James 2:5). Rather, James draws the focus to discipleship or *imitation Christi* as moral and character formation while here on earth (McKnight, 2011:73–74).

James confidently exhorts his audience to make it a habit to rejoice when they encounter trials, because trials signify an occasion for pure joy. Believers can experience a deep-found contentment and joy as opposed to superficial happiness, because as disciples who seek to imitate Christ, trials offer the opportunity to be transformed morally and in character to be more like Jesus (Hays & Duvall, 2011:927). Resilience by definition is preceded by affliction, trouble, or trauma. The 21st-century ministry is laced with trials of all kinds. James teaches that the church leader needs to look upon these with a deep-found joy recognising and focusing on the positive growth and perseverance they might yield.

b. v1:2 – ποικίλος πειρασμός pronounced as *poikilos peirasmos* (trials of many kinds)

“ποικίλος πειρασμός” (trials of many kinds) was studied using Thayer (2007), Barnes¹⁵ (2004d), Strong (2001), Dake (2010), Davids (2014), Will (1997), and McKnight (2011):

¹⁴ Robertson’s word pictures. (*In* e-Sword database. [Bible software.] 2019.).

¹⁵ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/james/1.htm>

- According to Thayer (2007:498), “ποικίλος πειρασμός” (trials of many kinds) as used in James 1:2 refers to adversity, affliction, or trouble.
- Barnes (2004d) makes the important specification that the trials James refers to are not temptations in the sense that they are direct inducements or allurements to sin, but that they are rather various trials such as poverty, persecution, sickness, etc. that test the religion of man (Barnes, 2004d).
- Dake (2010:455) also indicates that it can be understood as trials of any kind and not necessarily temptation to sin.
- Davids (2014) asserts that 1 Corinthians 10:13 seems to indicate that God is not the cause of these trials but allows and limits them for His purposes.
- Strong (2001:1303) states that “πειρασμός” is used of trials permitted by God with a beneficial effect or purpose.
- Will (1997:234) in turn highlights the sudden onset of these trials of various kinds stating that the author’s use of “περιπίπτω” implies that one falls into them like an animal falls into a snare or a trap.
- McKnight (2011:74) agrees with Will that “περιπίπτω” refers to an unexpected encounter like the man who “fell” into the hands of robbers whilst travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho (Luke 10:30). McKnight (2011:74) further comments that these trials are found within the providence of God as in the case of Jesus’ testing in the desert (Matthew 4:1–11).

The author does not intend to exhort his audience to invite trials or deny the reality of the pain and sorrow associated with them, but instead, he desires that they reframe the trials that will inevitably come focusing on their potential outcome (Will, 1997:235). God is not the cause of these trials but allows and limits them according to His divine wisdom and according to His good purposes. Church leaders need to recognise that although the trials they encounter do not originate with God, God remains sovereign and will not allow trials that will not work out for the good.

c. v1:3 – δοκίμιον pronounced as *dokimion* (testing)

“δοκίμιον” (testing) was studied using Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Strong (2001), Will (1997), Dake (2010), and Hays and Duvall (2011):

- Thayer (2007:155) defines “δοκίμιον” (testing) as denoting proving or a test by which something is tried or proved.
- Zodhiates (1992:476) indicates that it refers to the means of proving. It points to the test or criterion by which anything is tried or proved (Zodhiates, 1992:476).

- Strong (2001:1048) states that it refers to testing which implies trustworthiness.
- Will (1997:235) asserts that “δοκίμιον” (testing) was used to refer to the vessel in which metals were melted and purged from their impurities and dross. Likewise, trials can act as the vessel through which the believer’s faith is tested and purified (1 Peter 1:6–7; Romans 5:3–4).
- Dake (2010:455) asserts that trials test religion and faith and those who remain standing amidst these trials prove their religion and faith to be genuine.
- According to Hays and Duvall (2011:928), James urges his audience to persevere in faith when faced with the pressure of trials rather than attempt to cope by turning to sinful solutions which will inevitably lead to spiritual death (James 1:12–18).

Just like precious metals are taken through a process of purification and testing to remove impurities and worthless waste, the believer’s faith is placed under pressure when encountering trials of many kinds. In such times, one can choose to persevere in faith and reap the added endurance this will build, or one can turn to other unhealthy means of coping.

d. v1:3, 4 – ὑπομονή pronounced as *hupomonē* (perseverance)

See section 4.4.3.3.d

e. v1:4 – τέλειος καί ὁλόκληρος pronounced as *teleios kai holoklēros* (mature and complete)

“τέλειος καί ὁλόκληρος” pronounced as *teleios kai holoklēros* (mature and complete) was studied using Thayer (2007), Zodhiates (1992), Robertson (1933), Vincent (1888), Will (1997), and McKnight (2011:81):

- According to Thayer (2007:618):
 - “τέλειος” (mature) means brought to its end or finished; perfect; wanting nothing necessary to completeness.
 - “ὁλόκληρος” (complete) means complete in all respects, consummate.
- Zodhiates (1992:1372) indicates that:
 - “τέλειος” (mature) stems from “τέλος” which means goal or purpose and refers to that which has reached its end, term or limit; hence it is complete, full, and wanting in nothing.
 - “ὁλόκληρος” (complete) refers to the perfection of man before the fall.

- Robertson¹⁶ (1933) indicates that “τέλειος” means perfected at the end of the task, and “όλόκληρος” means completed in all parts.
- Vincent¹⁷ (1888) asserts that the two words each expresses a different shade of the same thought. According to Vincent (1888), “τέλειος” refers to that which has fulfilled the end, contemplated or reached its maturity. “όλόκληρος” offers a slightly different angle, referring to something that has everything that rightly belongs to it (Vincent, 1888).
- Will (1997:235) comments that the author desired for his audience to allow endurance to run its course in their lives so that they might become spiritually mature and complete.
- McKnight (2011:81) clarifies that James was not adhering to the idea of a universal Christian sinless state but rather urges his audience to strive for such perfection. For James, perfection was not isolated to an internal orientation to God or eschatological reality, but it was something his audience should strive to manifest in their concrete behaviour while still on earth (McKnight, 2011:81).

James exhorts his audience to allow perseverance to complete its perfect work so that they, in turn, might grow in perfection and be complete. Spiritual and moral perfection and completion are what they should strive for, not only as an eschatological reality, but also as a goal to be attained in the here and now. Church leaders, too, need to continuously grow spiritually and morally as disciples of Christ. Perseverance can yield growth if allowed to run its course in their lives.

4.4.4.4 Concluding normative perspectives on James 1:2–4

James is not a masochist exhorting his audience to find pleasure in suffering, but he believes that suffering can be reframed in light of the outcome it could eventually yield if perseverance is allowed to run its course (Davids, 2014). In 1 Peter 1:6–7 the same idea is encountered, namely that trials have the potential to test and purify one’s faith so that one might endure to the end and be saved.

4.4.5 Ethical reflections on perseverance at work

Accepted norms and values embedded in the practices and narratives of communities, congregations, families, etc. are put to the test through ethical reflection (Osmer, 2008:149150). Christian ethics in its broadest sense reflect on what is right, true, good, and loving relationships

¹⁶ Robertson’s word pictures. (*In* e-Sword database. [Bible software.] 2019.).

¹⁷ Vincent’s word studies. (*In* e-Sword database. [Bible software.] 2019.).

with others, just interactions within society, and the appropriate use of the natural environment (Kretzschmar, 2012:127). These reflections are based on a moral vision of God's purpose for the world and who God is which is derived from God's revelation, people's experience of God, and theological tradition (Kretzschmar, 2012:127).

The concept of perseverance in the workplace will be investigated from a Christian ethical perspective in order to provide insights on how the church leader should think about perseverance in ministry. This will be accomplished by discussing a Christian work ethic with special attention to inherent human dignity and worth. Of course, the discussion will be limited to ensure relevance to the topic at hand since a Christian work ethic in all its aspects will distract more than add value to the current matter at hand.

In order to formulate a Christian work ethic, it is important to start by defining what is meant by work. Work includes, but also extends beyond paid employment to include, for example, activities such as cleaning one's house or volunteering at a non-governmental organisation (NGO) (Kretzschmar, 2012:128). If work was not understood as extending beyond paid employment, the unemployed would be disregarded and undervalued within societies where financial gain and success is admired (Kretzschmar, 2012:128). Furthermore, some church leaders are not financially sustained by the congregations where they serve. Therefore, the definition of work used here extends beyond paid employment.

A Christian ethic of work recognises a number of reasons why one ought to work. Firstly, work is a human obligation and a means to survival (Kretzschmar, 2012:134). Work as a means of provision is a recurring theme in Scripture (Kretzschmar, 2012:134). Unfortunately, the consumerist culture and greed has people working for what they desire rather than what they realistically need. In addition, there are those who earnestly desire to work in order to provide, but they do not have access to jobs or do not possess the necessary skills (Kretzschmar, 2012:134). Thus, work experiences can be fulfilling and positive but also difficult and for some even futile (Kretzschmar, 2012:133). Hence, the church leader should understand work as a necessary part of life for survival and as a human obligation.

Secondly, work is also a means through which individuals provide for the needs of their families and others (1 Timothy 5:3–8) (Kretzschmar, 2012:137). Believers are ethically obligated to love and serve others, to work for the common good of the country's people, to cultivate solidarity with others, and to work in a manner that safeguards the integrity of Creation for future generations (Kretzschmar, 2012:138). Work is not meant for the pursuit of self-interest (Kretzschmar, 2012:142). Work, then, is a manner through which the church leader provides for his/her family but also for the needs and common good of the wider community.

Thirdly, work is an expression of creativity (Kretzschmar, 2012:138). Inside people is the ability to create and give expression to their skills, knowledge, and insights to solve problems and develop new innovative ways of doing (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). The life of a single person can make significant contributions to local communities and beyond (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). Work should allow for expression and growth. Work that crushes human dignity cannot be considered good work (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). It offers church leaders the opportunity to express the creativity God has deposited within them.

Finally, work is also recognised as an expression of people's calling and charisma (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). A Christian work ethic differs from a purely secular or materialistic paradigm in that it views work as an expression of someone's God-given calling and spiritual gifts (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). All types of work (except those that are clearly immoral) in this sense become a way in which believers participate in God's salvation and creation (Kretzschmar, 2012:139). For the church leader who feels called to full-time ministry, ministry then becomes an act of obedience. Persevering in ministry is persevering in the call and gifts God has endowed one with. Thus, fulfilment is not found in work itself but in how work is a participation in God's work.

Now that the reasons for work and their relation to the church leader's cognition of perseverance in ministry have been discussed, the focus will turn to the way in which believers are to work. A Christian work ethic needs to embody respect for others and Christian moral values (Kretzschmar, 2012:141). People's work essentially makes a statement about their view of God, the world, others, and themselves (Kretzschmar, 2012:141). A believer's work should be marked by, amongst other things, honesty, discipline, social commitment to people, humility, and high-quality leadership (Kretzschmar, 2012:141).

Here it is important for a Christian work ethic to acknowledge that humans are more than cogs in a wheel (Kretzschmar, 2012:138). God installed the Sabbath day of rest with purpose and wisdom. Thinking of man merely as *homo economicus* or "economic man" does not take into account matters such as the holistic needs of the individual and their family, the inherent dignity of man, the broad ministry of the church, the entire network of relationships that ensures the stability of society, the fragility of the natural world, and moral norms such as justice, wisdom, and compassion (Kretzschmar, 2012:130). A society that dehumanises people to the extent of viewing them as machines will act as a greenhouse for workaholics, burnout, greed, depression, relational problems, mental illness, stress-related illness, physical illness, etc. Because a Christian work ethic and normative perspective on perseverance will be one-dimensional and lob-sided if one does not reflect upon it in light of ethical principles such as inherent human dignity and worth, the researcher deems it important to briefly discuss these ethical principles.

God creates man in His image and entrusts him as His image bearer and representative with the cultural mandate to conserve and nurture the life He has created (Vorster, J.M., 2004:81). It is imperative that man's actions promote the quality of all life (Vorster, J.M., 2004:81). Man is not allowed to destroy life as created by God (Vorster, J.M., 2004:81). In addition, being created in God's image and the responsibilities God gives to man implies ethical principles such as mutual respect, inherent dignity, right to life, etc. (Vorster, J.M., 2004:93–95). In other words, the responsibility to protect life, for example, results in the corresponding right to life (Vorster, J.M., 2004:93–95). It is important to note here that these responsibilities and rights are not attributed to man apart from God but are inherent to man, because God created man and gave him these rights and responsibilities (Vorster, J.M., 2004:95). Man has dignity, because God gives him dignity.

What does this mean for the church leader and perseverance in ministry?

- The church leader works and perseveres because work is man's obligation, part of man's ethical responsibility to care for and serve others, an expression of creativity, and, most importantly, an expression of God's calling and spiritual gifts.
- In and of itself work has only relative value but when performed in relationship with God, others, and the natural world, work offers great rewards (Kretzschmar, 2012:143).
- It is a reminder that man's dignity is ultimately not earned or found in his work but resides in the fact that God created him in His image and likeness. This should safeguard the church leader against adopting workaholic behaviours or a merged concept of self and role in an attempt to prove their worth to others.
- The church leader's responsibility to provide, serve, and to care implies the right to provision, service, and care. In other words, the church leader is not called to self-denial, which is not founded on ethical principles such as equal regard, mutual respect, equality, etc. Work and perseverance in ministry need to be approached from a perspective that recognises the holistic needs of church leaders. Respect for others needs to be balanced with respect for oneself (Osmer, 2008:151). Church leaders are human beings and not machines. Therefore, the church leader's understanding of a good work ethic needs to incorporate and value resilience-cultivating competencies which are critical to human fulfilment and quality of life.

4.5 NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE CULTIVATION OF RESILIENCE IN MINISTRY

In addition to the exegesis completed above, the researcher will now aim to develop normative perspectives for the cultivation of resilience by theologically researching the seven competencies associated with resilience, namely:

- forgiveness (a reconciled past), which enables one to respond to crises resiliently and embrace one's future in a meaningful manner (Donders, 2017:35–36; MacDonald, 2004; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:152);
- hope (realistic optimism), which enables one to escape from despair and to move powerfully towards goals (Donders, 2017:4–5; Kwan, 2010:50);
- problem-solving, which enables one to analyse difficult situations and discover creative solutions (Donders, 2017:60);
- working with one's skills, which enables one to passionately and boldly discover, develop, and implement one's intrinsic skills, and at the same time understand one's limitations (Donders, 2017:69);
- self-control (discipline), which enables one to live healthily by consistently implementing disciplines that aid one physically, spiritually, and emotionally (Donders, 2017:50);
- self-awareness, which refers to a healthy awareness of one's emotions, strengths, limitations, passions, etc. (Donders, 2017:93–101; Kay, 2018:184–185); and
- healthy relationships, which encourage one to grow in kindness, generosity and empathy, and which enable one to cope more effectively in times of crises and suffering (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:49–50; Donders, 2017:104).

4.5.1 Normative perspectives on forgiveness (a reconciled past)

One of the major components of a reconciled past is forgiveness towards others and self (Donders, 2017:35–36). Forgiveness is a complex theological concept and even more so a complex and nuanced reality which is frequently inclined to be made too difficult or too easy (Denton, 2018:1). The purpose here, however, is not to engage in a theological discussion on all the aspects of and motifs associated with forgiveness such as restorative justice, the forgiveness process, or reconciliation (see Denton, 2018; Nel, 2002). Rather, the focus will be on discovering what normative theological insights can be offered on forgiveness in relation to the promotion of an individual's resilience.

A number of scientific studies have linked forgiveness with the promotion of resilience (e.g., Lijo & Annalakshmi, 2017:1552; Worthington & Scherer, 2004:394; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:158).

This reality is highlighted when one understands that the negative emotions associated with unforgiveness, such as guilt, self-condemnation, anger, shame, bitterness, resentment and hostility, can lead to mental and even physical health problems (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253–254; Worthington & Scherer, 2004:394; Worthington *et al.*, 2016:153).

From a theological perspective, interpersonal forgiveness is rooted in the character of God (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Divine forgiveness manifests God's mercy as He pardons the sins of those who confess and sincerely repent (Longman *et al.*, 2013:611). Believers emulate divine forgiveness by extending interpersonal forgiveness to one another (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Thus, humans are both perpetrators in need of forgiveness and victims who have the capacity to exercise forgiveness (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:257).

Humans' relationship with God should provide the pattern for their relationships with one another (Matthew 5:23–24; Matthew 6:12; Matthew 14–15); humans forgive, because God has forgiven them (Luke 7:41–47; Colossians 3:13) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:611). The Gospel of Matthew clearly links the believer's responsibility to forgive trespassers to God's forgiveness of sinners (Nel, 2002:17). Based on his research on forgiveness in the book of Matthew, Nel (2002:202) asserts that believers are to forgive according to the example set by God in order to receive His blessing and not because it will result in a positive response from the offender.

In the New Testament, “ἀφίημι”, pronounced as *aphiēmi*, and “ἀρίζομαι”, pronounced as *charizomai*, are the Greek words commonly used for different variants understood as the act to forgive (Vine *et al.*, 1996:250–251). The words are briefly defined as follows (Vine *et al.*, 1996:250–251):

- “ἀφίημι”, pronounced as *aphiēmi*, denotes “to remit or forgive” and is used mainly in the synoptic Gospels:
 - debts: these being completely cancelled.
 - sins: in this sense, it firstly signifies the remission of the punishment due, and secondly, the complete removal of the cause of the offence. This removal stems from the vicarious atoning sacrifice of Christ.
- “ἀρίζομαι”, pronounced as *charizomai*, means “to bestow favour unconditionally” and is used frequently in the Pauline writings for human and divine forgiveness.

Hunt (as cited by Denton, 2018:4) provides the following three points for what it means to forgive:

- a. To forgive means releasing your resentment towards the offender by giving up your right to be bitter or get even (Romans 12:17–21);
- b. to forgive means you release your rights in relation to the offence. This involves giving up the right to hold on to the offence and dwell on it or the past (Proverbs 17:9); and
- c. to forgive is to reflect Christ's character. Just as God is willing to forgive us, so we are to willingly forgive others by extending mercy and setting them free (Matthew 6:12).

Denton (2018:6) rightly points out that forgiveness is a process whereby accumulated anger, which has translated into a desire for revenge, gradually discharges through a healing process and a growing empathy towards the offender. Although this spiritual process is initiated with the decision to forgive, it takes time to develop (Denton, 2018:6). Logically, refusing to forgive then results in the victim harbouring anger and fostering the desire for revenge. This, according to Scripture, not only gives Satan a foothold in one's own life ultimately jeopardising one's relationship with God, but also gives him a place in the community of believers (Matthew 18:22–35; Ephesians 4:26–27; 2 Corinthians 2:10–11) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:611; Nel 2002:202).

Ephesians 4:26–27 reads: “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” The Greek word for “foothold” is “τόπος”, pronounced as *topos*. Thayer (2007:268) indicates that it is metaphorically used to imply opportunity, power, and occasion for acting. Strong (2001:1415) follows the same line of thought indicating that its metaphorical use refers to giving someone or something condition, opportunity, occasion, or license. Dake (2010:369) explains that it is not the faculty to be angry in itself that is sinful, but the sin that results from it when anger is left unresolved or when it occurs without cause. Leaving anger to fester makes one vulnerable to Satan's temptations to sin. Matthew Henry¹⁸ (2004a) explains that when people persevere in anger or wrath, they allow Satan access to their hearts where he will sow malice which will inevitably translate into all kinds of sinful inclinations.

Unforgiveness and the associated emotions can easily become like the sin and weight that the author of Hebrews exhorts his hearers to get rid of, impeding the church leader's ability to run the race set before them. Forgiveness releases the church leader from the prison of their own emotions such as hatred, bitterness, and anger (Denton, 2018:4). Forgiving has a positive impact on the church leader's spiritual, moral, emotional, and even physical health (Denton, 2018:4). Thus, dealing with the hurt, fear, and grief of the past enables church leaders to handle present emotional pressures in a more constructive manner (Donders, 2017:30). Being able to deal with the present emotional pressures that ministry continuously presents in a more

¹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhcv/ephesians/4.htm>

constructive way, is paramount for the church leader who aims to persevere with passion in ministry.

4.5.2 Normative perspectives on hope (realistic optimism)

Optimism is the tendency to adopt the most hopeful interpretation of any incident (Feder *et al.*, 2011:17). Realistic optimism acknowledges the presence of adversity but chooses to channel energy towards solutions (Dreyer, 2014:4). For a theological theory in support of optimism as a necessary competency for perseverance, the concept of hope will be examined in Scripture. Biblical hope differs from a humanistic optimism in that it is rooted in the transcendent God, His covenant faithfulness and His ability to bring about His good purposes, and not in the immanent self (Du Rand, 2014:3; Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). Hope originates from a trust in God and gives rise to a present strength which is founded on the assurance of God's future accomplishments (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). Lynch, as cited by Du Rand (2014:3), defines hope as follows: "A constant decision to move into the future, a bid to transcend the present with its perceived limits and difficulties, to imagine a way out of that which constrains and threatens to engulf or imprison us into a brighter and better alternative." Thus, faith is not limited to the present but extends into the future through hope (Du Rand, 2014:3).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew words for "hope" are often translated as "wait" (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). By definition then, biblical hope infers that God's promised outcome has not been fulfilled yet and requires some time to come to pass (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). The time between what is and what is to come is filled, however, not with despair, but with an eager expectant hope or longing for God to act (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800).

In the New Testament, hope is closely linked to Christ and His redemptive work and therefore takes on an eschatological nature (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). In light of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, Christian hope is not a merely theoretical concept but should be interpreted as a fixed reality (Du Rand, 2014:2). It is based on God's promise of Christ's return, the resurrection of the dead, the transformation of Christians into the likeness of Christ, and the renewal of all of Creation (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800).

To hope, then, is to trust God fully (Du Rand, 2014:3). More importantly, it does not only involve hoping for a distant future but rather striving for the God of the future and His transcendent end goal (Du Rand, 2014:2). The hope of this eschatological reality should not result in a passive stance towards the here and now, but should prompt believers as God's ambassadors to divine participation in God's commission to manage Creation and live on earth according to His purposes in preparation for His transcendent end goal (Du Rand, 2014:2). The expectation of

this coming reality, thus, stimulates hope for God's plan to be realised for one's own life and the lives of others in the here and now (1 Corinthians 9:10; 1 Corinthians 9:13; Philippians 2:19; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 John 12) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:800).

Christians, therefore, live their lives through hope in Christ; it is considered an essential Christian attribute (Romans 12:12; Romans 15:4; Romans 15:13; 1 Corinthians 13:13). It carries the believer through thick and thin and frees them from all fear and anxiety (Du Rand, 2014:4). It is the belief that crisis is something temporary and can be overcome (Donders, 2017:43). Southwick and Charney (2018:35) maintain that optimism or hope provides the energy necessary to power the other resilience competencies. Biblical authors also imply the foundational nature of hope and often refer to hope in Christ as a motivation for a variety of other virtues and exhortations:

- In 1 Peter 1:3–7 and Romans 12:12, hope in Christ and our internal inheritance in Him is used as motivation for enduring trials and tribulations and even rejoicing despite. It is in light of this hope that Paul forgets what is behind him and stretches towards the future (Philippians 3:13–14) and confidently asserts that for him to die is gain (Philippians 1:21–24).
- In Philippians 4:5, the expectant hope of the Lord's return is used as motivation for moderation (“ἐπιεική”, pronounced as *epieikēs*); that is, behaving in a manner that is considered suitable, gentle, sober and restrained (Barnes,¹⁹ 2004e).
- In 1 Thessalonians 4:13, hope in the resurrection is used as a reason not to be overcome by our grieving and sense of loss here on earth.
- In 1 John 3:3 and Titus 2:11–14 it is stated that the hope of Christ's return should be the fuel that propels one to strive for purity and holiness.

Church leaders who do not have a hope founded in Jesus will struggle and most likely fail to passionately persevere in ministry. They will be overcome and overwhelmed by the challenges and trials of the present life, unable to view them as temporary. Furthermore, they will struggle to tap into motivation to cultivate the other resilience competencies and other Christian virtues that increase their ability to passionately persevere.

4.5.3 Normative perspectives on working with one's skills

Discovering and intentionally finding ways to implement one's intrinsic and extrinsic skills and abilities attribute to resilient responses to adversity (Donders, 2017:71). This resilience competence stems from a place of belief in one's competence, ability (self-efficacy) and one's

¹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/philippians/4.htm>

purpose; that is, the belief that one is called to something greater than oneself (Donders, 2017:69).

Scripture conveys a number of normative principles related to work, diligence, productivity, effectivity, and stewardship which can be translated to the resilience competency of working with one's skills. A theology of work, in general, provides the lens through which working with one's skills should be understood. A biblical theology of work starts with God as the working God and Creator of all things (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). From this perspective, work in its essence is a manner in which the divine image is expressed and ideally all work performed should be done as service to God (Colossians 3:17; Colossians 22–24) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727).

From the get-go, God gave man a mandate to work (Genesis 1:26–28; Genesis 2:15). Although the fall of man introduced negative aspects to work and resulted in dehumanising manifestations of work (Genesis 3:17–19; Genesis 5:29), work essentially remains God's good gift to people (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). Work, therefore, needs to be redeemed to reflect its original, essentially good purpose.

Work is vitally important for the expression of man's God-given inherent dignity, purpose, and provision (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). Therefore, diligence is commended, but idleness is condemned by biblical authors (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). In Proverbs, the slothful person is placed in contrast with a diligent, upright person (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1553). Slothful people are portrayed as persons who indulge in excessive sleep (Proverbs 6:9), who make excuses for inactivity (Proverbs 22:13), who frustrate those who depend upon them (Proverbs 10:26), and who ironically think that they are wise (Proverbs 26:16) but in fact impose their own deprivation (Proverbs 13:4; Proverbs 20:4; Proverbs 24:33–34) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1553). Paul also expresses concern for laziness (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–7) and even associates it with people who gossip and cause division and strife (2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Timothy 5:11) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1553).

Jesus Himself touched on these matters in Matthew 25:14–30 in His parable about the servants and the talents. This parable, when reviewed in light of a biblical theology of work, is rich in normative principles related to working with one's skills, and it is deemed appropriate to spend some more time on it. Luke 19:17–24 offers a similar account of Jesus' parable of the servants and the talents. However, the nature of the relationship between the two Gospel accounts is a matter of strong debate, which will not be the focus of this section. Rather, Matthew 25:14–30 will be the focus of study since it is considered to be the more comprehensive of the two parables.

Dipboye (1995:508) underscores that Jesus used parables to awaken the slumbering consciences of His audiences and call them to a decision leaving no option of neutrality. Parables drew matters into the sharpest contrast and left no room for hearers to devise extenuating circumstances or quibble about how much or how little one needed to do to meet the required level of obedience (Dipboye, 1995:508). Parables, then, were not merely illustrations but should be understood as instruments of controversy used to communicate the inescapable will of God (Dipboye, 1995:508).

According to Matthew, Jesus told this parable in the context of His eschatological teachings focused on warning believers to be watchful and on guard in light of the unexpected suddenness with which Christ will return (Dipboye, 1995:510; Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:66). Biblical scholars point out the parable's allegorical traits which are important for identifying normative principles on productivity, effectivity, and stewardship (rich man = Christ; journey = Christ's ascension to Heaven; servants = believers or the church; return = Second Coming of Christ; settling accounts = final judgement, etc.) (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:69). In addition, the following information on the socio-historical context of the parable also provides further insight worth noting:

- *Ancient slavery*

Slave trade, as was a familiar reality in ancient times, is no longer known or legal in the modern day and age (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:70). There were many kinds of circumstances that could lead to an individual becoming a slave or servant (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1551). Some were coerced into slavery as a result of war, others were sentenced to slavery for crimes committed, others were born into slavery, and yet others chose to become servants as part of apprenticeships (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1551).

Moreover, slaves were not always uneducated manual labourers, instead, some were very competent and skilled in various areas – take Daniel and his friends in the Old Testament who became slaves as a result of war as an example of this (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:70). Thus, there was a wide economic and social scope of slaves (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1551). Those considered qualified and competent were often given high positions of great responsibility and placed in charge of important projects (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:70). Furthermore, slaves did not have to be paid or rewarded for their work (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:70). They were considered their masters' property and what they yielded through their labour belonged to their masters (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:70).

- *The value of the talents*

A talent was a measure of weight employed in ancient times for precious metals such as gold, silver, and bronze (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1707). Although the exact monetary value is debated, it is generally asserted that one talent amounted to about 6000 denari, which were the equivalent of a normal day-worker's wage over a period of 15 to 20 years (Dipboye, 1995:511; Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:72). Thus, even the servant who received only one talent actually had a significant amount to work with.

Now that important factors related to the socio-historical background have been established, the key moments in the parable in light of the purpose of this section will be discussed:

- *The man travelling to a far country (Matthew 25:14)*

For some reason a wealthy man has to go on an extensive journey. He calls his slaves and entrusts them with all of his possessions. Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg (2001:72) explain that the phrase “τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ” refers to everything he owned. Indeed, he appoints them as managers (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:72). It was not an uncommon practice for wealthy landowners to entrust all of their possessions and property to slaves they considered trustworthy while they went away for personal or business reasons (Wilkins & Warren, 2016).

- *The man's trust in his slaves (Matthew 25:15)*

The man entrusts each slave with capital according to each slave's ability and experience (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:72). It is implied that the man knew his slaves and gave each a mandate according to this knowledge of them (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:72). He appoints all three of them without supervision and therefore his trust in all three is indicated (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:72).

- *The actions of the slaves after his departure (Matthew 25:16–18)*

Two of the three slaves diligently set to work straight away and doubled the amounts entrusted to them (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:73). They demonstrated initiative and responsible courage using their skills and experience (Van der Walt & Janse van Rensburg, 2001:73). The third slave, however, decides to bury the amount entrusted to him.

- *Giving account upon the master's return (Matthew 25:19–29)*

The two slaves who went to work with the amounts entrusted to them and grew these according to their ability were praised and rewarded for their diligence. The third slave, however, was declared to be wicked and lazy and what he had was taken away and given to the first slave. Van der Walt & Van Rensburg (2001:73) state that the third servant tried to use his misperception of the master as a defence for his laziness. Wilkins and Warren (2016) agree with this observation stating that the third servant describes his master as harsh, almost as to assign blame to his master for his actions (Wilkins & Warren, 2016).

The third servant's actions, then, stem from his misperception of and wrong attitude towards his master. Had he loved his master and recognised that his master gave him plenty to work with and did not expect to reap where he had not sown, he would have implemented his ability to grow what had been entrusted to him (Wilkins & Warren, 2016).

- *The master's real concern (Matthew 25:23)*

For the master, the real concern was not his possessions which he considered "few things", even though it was established that it was large amounts, but rather the behaviour of his slaves which would prove or disprove them worthy of "many things". It becomes clear that giving account is more important than what each slave originally received.

In light of the discussion above, the following normative principles on working with one's skills can be drawn in relation to the church leader from the parable in Matthew 25:14–30:

- The kingdom of God has been entrusted to the believer and expanding it is considered to be the believer's duty. Therefore, church leaders should not expect a reward or gain but should diligently perform their calling out of love for the Master and not out of fear.
- Each one has been given the necessary skills, gifts, abilities, talents, and experience required to make a success of their mandate (Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2001:74). Therefore, no church leader has an excuse for not diligently employing their abilities to expand upon what has been entrusted to them. As discussed during the exegesis of 1 Timothy 4:11–16, Paul exhorts Timothy as a church leader not to neglect the gifts he had received but to remain diligent in them. Church leaders who recognise that they have been fully equipped by God will grow in self-efficacy, problem-solving, self-

confidence, and purpose. On the other hand, church leaders who fail to acknowledge this reality will fall prey to comparison, passivity, and mediocracy.

- Misperceptions of God will foster a wrong attitude towards work, productivity, effectivity, and stewardship and inevitably result in slothfulness. Recognising Him as a just Master who has generously given to each according to their ability will free the church leader from excuses for not going to work to develop and implement the gifts, skills, and abilities they have been equipped with.
- When giving account, there needs to be some value added. Church leaders are expected to add value whether it is at their work, home, church, or community and to discover and expand their skills (Van der Walt & Van Rensburg, 2001:76).

4.5.4 Normative perspectives on problem-solving

The goal here is not to provide normative perspectives in the sense of a step-by-step problem-solving model, but rather to provide a normative framework of thought or attitude with which problem-solving should be approached. Problem-solving for the believer needs to be framed within an understanding of God's incommunicable and communicable attributes. Proverbs teaches that wisdom, a vital ingredient required in effective problem-solving, begins with a fear of God (Proverbs 1:7). This fear does not refer to horror but is also not limited to respect, as is commonly thought (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1371). It refers to the comprehension and acknowledgement of God and His attributes (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1371). It involves recognising that God is the Creator and exalted above any human being (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1371). Only when believers start to grasp who God is, the right stance can be taken in relation to the problems they encounter in their lives. Therefore, the attributes considered relevant for the purpose of this section will be briefly discussed below.

a. The incommunicable attributes of God

The incommunicable attributes of God are the attributes of Him as the Absolute Self-existent Being, that is, the First Cause of all things that exist and the ultimate ground of all reality (Berkhof, 1996:57). Those deemed relevant for this section include:

- The self-existence of God

God is completely independent, in His being, His virtues, His works, and His decrees (Berkhof, 1996:58). Moreover, He causes everything to depend on Him; through Him alone do all things exist (Berkhof, 1996:58).

- The immutability of God

God is perfect in His being, His promises, His purposes, and His perfections (Berkhof, 1996:58). He is devoid of all change; He is exalted above all improvement or deterioration in His being and perfections (Berkhof, 1996:58).

- The infinity of God

God is free from all limitations (Berkhof, 1996:59). He cannot be confined by this universe or space and time (Berkhof, 1996:59).

b. The communicable attributes of God

The communicable attributes of God are those that stress God's personal nature (Berkhof, 1996:64). Those deemed relevant for this section include:

- God's knowledge is omniscience

God knows all things; He knows what is actual as well as what is possible; He knows all things hidden; He is perfect in knowledge (Berkhof, 1996:67).

- God's wisdom is perfect

God produces the best results possible via the best possible means (Berkhof, 1996:69).

- God is good

God is perfectly good in Himself; He answers to the perfect ideal expressed by the word "God" (Berkhof, 1996:70). He is the fountain from which all goodness flows; His goodness, love, mercy, longsuffering, and grace overflows to His creatures (Berkhof, 1996:70).

- God is sovereign

God is the Creator and is clothed with absolute authority and all things are subservient to Him (Berkhof, 1996:76). God's sovereignty finds expression in His sovereign will and His omnipotence (Berkhof, 1996:79).

c. God's providence

Berkhof (1996:166) defines God's providence as "that continued exercise of the divine energy whereby the Creator preserves all His creatures, is operative in all that comes to pass in the world, and directs all things to their appointed end". God's providence in short then refers to how He continues to sustain and guide His creation according to His sovereign purposes (Berkhof, 1996:167; Longman *et al.*, 2013:1372). From Scripture His providence is evident on numerous levels:

- The created order continues under God's supervision and provision; He sustains the universe at large (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 5:35), the physical world, and brute

creation (Job 37:5,10; Matthew 5:45; Psalm 65:9; Psalm 104:14,16; Job 38:12,22–23; Jeremiah 31:35) (Berkhof, 1996:168; Longman *et al.*, 2013:1372).

- World history is under His sovereign control; God appoints the boundaries of nations (Deuteronomy 32:8), sanctions kings, authorities, and powers (Proverbs 8:15; Proverbs 21:1; Colossians 1:16), and actively works to bring all nations under the rulership of His Son (Ephesians 1:10) (Berkhof, 1996:168; Longman *et al.*, 2013:1372).
- God is also sovereignly in control of salvation history which encapsulates His redemptive purposes (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1372–1373). Scripture reveals how God continuously takes the harm intended and uses it to work together for His intended purposes (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1372–1373).
- The history of individuals is also under His control. People's birth and lot, as well as the outward failures and successes of their lives, are objects of God's providence (Psalm 75:6,7; Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 45:5; Luke 1:52; Galatians 1:15,16) (Berkhof, 1996:168). In addition, God's providential control also exists in answering prayer and supplying in the needs of His people (Genesis 22:8,14; Deuteronomy 8:3; Philippians 4:19; 1 Samuel 1:19; Isaiah 20:5,6; Matthew 6:26,30) (Berkhof, 1996:168).

In light of God's attributes and providence, problem-solving becomes an activity that one does not engage in with a humanistic frame of mind but with the utmost awareness of God's divine will and ability to accomplish His purposes through and in one. The Psalmist exhorts believers not to lean on their understanding but to acknowledge Him and allow Him to direct their paths (Psalm 3:5–6). The church leader who engages in problem-solving from an angle that originates in trust in man and man's devices will always experience anxiety and worry which is counterproductive in terms of resilience. However, the church leader who acknowledges who God is and who earnestly seeks His divine will, which is guaranteed to come to pass, will experience a sense of relief as they engages in problem-solving.

4.5.5 Normative perspectives on self-control (discipline)

The New Testament teaches that self-control (“ἐγκράτεια” pronounced as *egkrateia*) is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). In 21st-century English, the term “self-control” is often used in connection with self-restraint or will power (Boulton, 2016:55). Although this idea of self-regulation no doubt forms part of what Paul had in mind in Galatians 5:23, Boulton (2016:55) argues that the term “self-control” runs the risk of steering one away from all that Paul had in mind. Boulton (2016:55) raises the following arguments against the backdrop offered by

Galatians which shed light on how the resilience competency of self-control should be understood from a normative perspective:

a. Locus of agency

The term “self-control” can seem to shift the decisive locus of agency to the human self, as opposed to Paul’s argument that the decisive locus of agency belongs to the Holy Spirit in an intimate relationship with the human self (Boulton, 2016:55). Boulton (2016:55) argues that for Paul, self-control refers more to the idea of tapping into a realm of strength and dominion than exercising self-restraint by resisting temptation. He explains it as follows:

Like sailboats on a windswept lake, if we move forward gracefully, we do so not only because of something within us, but also and primarily because of something we are within. (Boulton, 2016:55)

Self-control involves being led by and living by the Spirit as opposed to living by the flesh (Boulton, 2016:55). To live by the Spirit, according to Paul, is to experience true freedom, whereas to live by the flesh is to live in slavery (Boulton, 2016:55–56). Church leaders then do not draw upon their own strength in an attempt to exercise control but rather tap into the strength available to them through the Holy Spirit. The church leader actively chooses to live a life led by the Spirit and not by the desires of the flesh.

b. Mode of achievement

The term can also give rise to the idea that self-control is a mode of ongoing human achievement, whereas Paul views it as a mode of ongoing human reception of an ongoing divine generosity (Boulton, 2016:55). For Paul, self-control is a graceful divine gift that is activated in an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit (Boulton, 2016:56). The believer lives in and through an intimate, mystical dependence on God the Creator, Christ, and the Holy Spirit; believers have their beings through and in Christ (Galatians 2:20; Acts 17:28) (Boulton, 2016:57). The church leader, therefore, makes an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit their primary goal and as a fruit thereof enjoys the ability to exercise control over the self.

In summary, self-control involves command over one’s thoughts, words, and actions (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1493). It flows from an “inner strength” that is essentially the strength of the Holy Spirit flowing through believers (Boulton, 2016:58).

The discipline of the self is vital for the church leader who wishes to live a productive life (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1493). From the exegesis conducted on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, it also

became apparent that self-control is closely related to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry. It is important to note that self-control essentially acts as a pillar to the church leader's ability to cultivate competencies and habits that will aid them in this mission to persevere.

In ancient times, the concluding item in a list was often rhetorically crucial, signifying the culmination or summary of the preceding items (Boulton, 2016:56). In line with this thinking, self-control (“ἐγκράτεια” pronounced as *egkrateia*) then underpins the rest of the fruit of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5, namely love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness. All these require strength and resolve which the Holy Spirit provides (Boulton, 2016:56).

In addition, in the Old Testament wisdom literature, a man without self-control is compared to a ruined city whose walls have been broken through (Proverbs 25:28). Gill²⁰ (2004a) comments that Proverbs teaches that such a man has no command over himself and gives the reins of his life to his emotions and passions leaving himself exposed to Satan and his devices. Henry²¹ (2004b) further clarifies that such a man has no government over his thoughts, inclinations, desires, and resentments. Like a city without walls, everything that is good forsakes him, and everything that is evil gains access to him (Henry, 2004b). According to Scripture then, a church leader without self-control becomes liable to many troubles and vexes (Henry, 2004b).

4.5.6 Normative perspectives on self-awareness

Increased self-awareness better enables one to be truly present in one's life. In doing so, one can identify and analyse the obstacles to personal growth so that one might be able to intentionally work towards disarming them (Kay, 2018:184). Self-awareness, as linked to resilience, refers to a healthy awareness and understanding of the following important issues (Donders, 2017:93–101; Kay, 2018:184–185):

- Your strengths and weaknesses, your potential and limitations;
- your story, the successes, crisis, and the unresolved matters in your life and how they might be exerting a conscious or subconscious influence on your current actions and decisions;
- the positive and negative emotions you experience and how they influence your behaviour (emotional intelligence);

²⁰ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/gill/proverbs/25.htm>

²¹ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhcnw/proverbs/25.htm>

- your understanding of others and their perception of you as well as your attitudes and responses towards them; and
- your passions, beliefs, and values.

The antithesis of self-awareness is self-deception. Self-deception involves hiding the truth from oneself (Pak, 2018:405). Self-deception is commonly associated with phenomena such as addiction, hypocrisy, wishful thinking, ignorance, avoidance, delusions, imperfect memory, and false belief (Pak, 2018:405).

Historically, various theologians noticed and wrestled with the impact of self-deception on the Christian life and some came to recognise it as a key element in the explanation of moral failure, God-avoidance, and sin (Pak, 2018:405). From a theological viewpoint, self-deception is intimately connected with sin and detrimental to the believer's spiritual life if left unchecked (Pak, 2018:406). As a result of the Fall, man's heart became corrupt and full of deceit (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:20–23). The Fall made humans capable of self-deception as they pursue their own selfish will and make their own moral judgements (Pak, 2018:407). Self-deception ultimately leads people to justify their sins and undermines their ability to understand the nature of goodness, God, and themselves (Pak, 2018:407–408). That is why the apostle John classifies the person who says that he or she is without sin as deceived (1 John 1:8) (Pak, 2018:408). The very nature of sin is deceptive, and therefore darkness is often used as a metaphor for sin in Scripture (e.g., Proverbs 4:9; Ephesians 5:8) (Pak, 2018:408). Moreover, Satan himself is identified as the father of lies who is devoid of any truth (John 8:44); his work of deception and attempts to draw man away from God is apparent from the beginning of Creation (Genesis 3:16) and will continue to the end of this age (2 Thessalonians 2:9–11) (Pak, 2018:409).

Pride is often associated with self-deception in Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:18; Jeremiah 49:16) and, according to Pak (2018:413) and Knapp (2002:17), it is the root cause of it. Pride exalts the self and places the self at the centre of life (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1355). As such, pride can be both a catalyst for and even a consequence of self-deception on various levels. It can lead to people regarding themselves as more adept in certain skills than what they really are or more intelligent than what they really are (Pak, 2018:413). It can lead people to deny their responsibility in the suffering of others (Pak, 2018:413). It leads people to make their actions or themselves what they are not in order to entertain a desired image of themselves (Knapp, 2002:17). Essentially, it blinds people to areas in which they need to grow and sin they need to lay down.

In light of a theological perspective which acknowledges the true nature and depth of self-deception, mere human reflection is not a sufficient means to expose and address self-

deception and grow in self-awareness. Because of the deception that naturally resides in man's heart, the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13), needs to be invited in humility into the process of increasing one's self-awareness.

David teaches the believer a valuable lesson in terms of overcoming self-deception through increased self-awareness in Psalm 26:2 when he writes: "Test me Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind." In Hebrew, the two terms used for the "heart" refer to functions that relate to the vegetative (physical), noetic (intellectual), emotional, and voluntative (free will, thinking, and planning) nature of man (Lodewyk, 2018:246–247). According to Barnes²² (2004e), David's use of the three words, namely "test", "try", and "examine", convey the Psalmist's sincere desire that God examines him thoroughly, that is, all the motives and thoughts hidden away in the depths of his heart, so that if he was deceived, his deception would be exposed. This highlights the all-knowing nature of God; He alone knows and penetrates the innermost thoughts and motives of the heart, and therefore He alone can render just judgement (Lodewyk, 2018:248). Self-awareness then becomes an activity stemming from the Holy Spirit's work in the church leader's life. The Holy Spirit alone can reveal the true nature and workings of man's heart.

The Holy Spirit can accomplish this task in a number of ways. The Holy Spirit can use Scripture, for example, to illuminate church leaders' hearts as they come to view themselves in relation to God and His standards of righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). John Calvin said (as cited by Knapp, 2002:14): "It is certain that man never achieves a clear knowledge of himself unless he has first looked upon God's face." In addition, the Holy Spirit might often work through the trials and pain church leaders encounter in this life to expose their self-deception (Pak, 2018:415). Trials and pain bring people face to face with the reality of what's been lurking in their hearts. Finally, the Holy Spirit can choose to use other people to expose the church leader's self-deception, as in the case of David and Nathan after David's sin in relation to Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12) (Knapp, 2002:15–16).

4.5.7 Normative perspectives on healthy relationships

Doehring (2015:636) asserts that resilience is a relational process and that people who are rooted in life-giving relationships are more likely to grow under stress. Healthy relationships that encourage one to grow in kindness, generosity and empathy enable one to cope more effectively in times of crises and suffering (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:49–50; Donders, 2017:104). Here it is important to note that social support does not necessarily necessitate multiple relationships, although this is beneficial; research has found that even having only one

²² <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/psalms/26.htm>

healthy relationship with a significant person contributes immensely to resilience (Forney, 2010:30; Garcia-Dia *et al.*, 2013:266).

The idea of man's need for healthy relationships can be grounded theologically in the very nature of the Triune God. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery beyond man's comprehension, accepted in faith, and based on God's self-revelation through Scripture and not on human deduction, experience, or rational thought (Berkhof, 1996:85). Berkhof (1996:87–89) summarises the doctrine of the Trinity as follows:

a. *There is but one indivisible essence within the Divine Being*

God is one in His constitutional nature.

b. *In this one Divine Being there are three Subsistences or Persons*

It means there are three persons who as self-conscious individuals relate to one another (Berkhof, 1996:87–89; Holmes, 2014:3; Longman *et al.*, 2013:1667). Jesus, for example, prays to the Father (John 17), the Father spoke about the Son from Heaven (Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:22), and the Spirit is promised by the Son as a gift from the Father (John 14:16–17; John 16:7–8) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1667).

c. *Each of the three Persons equally possesses the whole undivided essence of God*

There exists no subordination within the Trinity in terms of essential being.

d. *The operation and subsistence of the three Persons are characterised by a definite order*

Within the ontological Trinity, there is a certain order and relationship in that the Father is neither begotten by nor does He proceed from any other person; the Son, on the other hand, is eternally begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

e. *The three Persons are distinguished by particular personal attributes*

There are certain operations that are incommunicable and not performed jointly by the Persons of the Trinity. At the same time, some operations are ascribed more particularly to one Person of the Trinity although they are joint works of the three Persons.

The Trinity is indeed one of the most fundamental expressions of relationship and community (Holmes, 2014:3). Since man was created in the image and likeness of God, man was essentially designed for relationship (Genesis 1:26) (Holmes, 2014:3). To affirm this basic truth, the author of Genesis accounts that God declared it “not good” for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18) (Holmes, 2014:3). It would be fallacious to merely attribute God's evaluation to the concept of marriage (Holmes, 2014:3). While it directly relates to the creation of Eve, God's statement is primarily ontological and reveals something of the nature of man (Holmes, 2014:3).

Holmes (2014:3) explains that God's statement did not reflect a failure in Adam as a person, or failure in His divine design, but rather it revealed humanity's limited nature in that no one can be community in himself as God is community in Himself. Man needs community in order to be able to better reflect the image of the Triune God (Holmes, 2014:3).

Man is by creation a relational being whose growth and significance is worked out in God-centered relationships with other human beings (Holmes, 2014:3). Tim Keller (as cited by Holmes, 2014:3–4) makes the profound statement that God created man in such a way that he cannot even enjoy paradise if not in relationship with another.

It is important to note that man's fall into sin, of course, had an immense impact on man's relationships (Holmes, 2014:3). According to Holmes, its effects are evident in at least three aspects (Holmes, 2014:4–6). Firstly, it had a vertical impact in that man became alienated from and hostile towards God. Secondly, it had an internal or motivational impact in that man's motivation for pursuing relationship shifted from glorifying God as His image-bearers to selfish gain. Finally, it had a missional impact in that friendships became about the self and no longer served as a means through which humans communicate and reflect God's love to others.

Through the atoning work of Jesus, humans can move beyond the Fall and experience reconciliation in their relationship with God (Holmes, 2014:6). As a result, Jesus brought restoration vertically and makes relational restoration possible internally and missionally (Holmes, 2014:6–7). Thus, biblical relationships should always have Jesus at its centre (Holmes, 2014:7). Biblical relationship can take on many forms, but for the purpose of this study the focus will be on friendship and mentorship as they contribute to resilience.

Scripture is filled with nuggets that offer insight into the value of biblical friendship in relation to an individual's resilience. Ecclesiastes 4:9–10,12, for example, highlights the following benefits related to friendship:

- v9: friends benefit from each other's labour; they draw upon each other's counsel, assistance, aids, and comforts in terms of spiritual and temporal matters (Gill²³, 2004b). Here Proverbs conveys similar ideas by stating that good friends can sharpen each other like iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17) and that keeping companion with the wise will result in one's own growth in wisdom (Proverbs 13:20). Other Scriptures also warn and advise that the righteous choose their friends wisely, further implying the influence they have (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Proverbs 12:26; Proverbs 18:24; Proverbs 22:24–25). Thus, church leaders who engage in biblical friendship enrich their

²³ <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/gill/ecclesiastes/4.htm>

lives on multiple levels and enjoy the opportunity for growth as they engage in stimulating conversation and seek counsel.

- v10: friends assist each other in times of crises or need. Gill (2004b) highlights that this can be applied in a natural and spiritual sense. A friend offers support in times of poverty, sickness, and affliction or guidance in times of sin and errors in judgement (Gill, 2004b). Thus, church leaders who cultivate biblical friendships increase their support systems and are therefore more likely to persevere through times of crisis and need.
- v11: friends protect, counsel, and cover each other in prayer in times of spiritual attack and temptation (Gill, 2004b). Church leaders who engage in biblical friendships safeguard their ministries, because they are accountable to their friends and open for their instruction.

In addition to biblical friendship, mentorship is also a type of relationship that can add much value in terms of resilience. According to Chiroma and Cloete (2015:2), a mentor shares their experience, knowledge, wisdom, attitudes, and values with another in order to develop the potential competence and capacity of this individual. The concept of mentorship is visible in Scripture although the term is not explicitly used in English translations. In the Old Testament, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Naomi and Ruth are just some of the examples of mentoring relationships. In the New Testament, the idea of an older believer investing in the growth, development, and maturity of a younger believer is replete (Chiroma & Cloete, 2015:2). Paul, Timothy and Titus (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus), as well as Aquilla, Priscilla and Apollos (Acts 18:24–28), are just two such examples. Jesus Himself modelled the idea of mentoring in His relationship with His disciples. As Jesus shaped them for ministry, He applied the following mentoring principles (Newton, 2017:34–36):

- Jesus set an example for His disciples or mentees to follow;
- Jesus demonstrated that He considered His relationship with them a priority;
- Jesus modelled service and love in the manner He chose to lead;
- Jesus mentored with the cross in view. He constantly reminded His disciples of the need for self-denial as part of their choice to follow Him. Each of them would have to bear their own cross just as He had to endure the cross;
- Jesus did not shy away from correcting His disciples; and
- Jesus gave His disciples authority and opportunity to transfer what they had learned to others.

Church leaders who actively seek out mentors and cultivate this type of relationship can avoid making costly mistakes in relation to their personal lives and ministries that could have been

avoided. Furthermore, they safeguard their own lives and doctrine by allowing someone to hold them accountable.

Healthy relationships found in, amongst other things, biblical friendship and mentoring can offer the church leader much in terms of resilience. Choosing to go through life in isolation is essentially denying the nature according to which one was created and is rooted in pride. Reflecting the image of the Triune God can only be done in relationship with others.

4.6 CONCLUDING NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES

This chapter set out to identify and formulate normative principles on the church leader's cognition of their calling to persevere in ministry as well as to develop a practical theological theory for the cultivation of resilience.

From the exegesis conducted on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, 1 Timothy 4:11–16, Hebrews, 12:1–2, and James 1:2–4, and the ethical reflection on work and perseverance, the following normative perspectives on the church leader's cognition of their calling to persevere in ministry were deduced:

- Perseverance is a general exhortation to all believers, but church leaders carry the additional responsibility to set an example worth following. Their perseverance or failure to persevere will inevitably influence others.
- Jesus Christ serves as the ultimate example of faithful perseverance as He endured the cross and its shame for the joy set before Him. Perseverance requires church leaders to focus wholeheartedly on Him.
- Sin and weights (things that are not necessarily sinful, but they cause one to be distracted and weighed down) are obstacles to one's perseverance.
- Perseverance is a virtue that needs to be present in the active and continuous sense. Entering the race does not guarantee that one will finish it. Perseverance requires habitual training, self-control, self-awareness, and discipline. It requires church leaders to be diligent stewards of their gifts continuously growing in self-efficacy, and diligent students of Scripture continuously growing in their knowledge of God.
- Trials are linked to perseverance. God does not cause trials but can choose to allow and limit them according to His sovereign and good purposes.
- Perseverance, when allowed to run its complete course, yields moral and spiritual growth, and the endurance required to finish the race of faith to obtain eternal reward and salvation. These things are considered by the author of James to be of such

extreme value that he views trials and opportunities for the development of perseverance as occasions for deep-found joy;

- Work is man's obligation, an expression of man's ethical responsibility to serve and provide, an expression of man's creativity, and an expression of God's calling and spiritual gifts.
- Work in itself is of relative value; it is only in relationship with God, others, and the world that work becomes meaningful.
- Man's inherent worth and dignity originates with God and not with his work. This should safeguard the church leader against adopting workaholic behaviours or a merged concept of self and role in an attempt to prove their worth to others.
- The church leader's responsibility to provide, to serve, and to care implies the right to provision, service, and care. In other words, the church leader is not called to self-denial or self-sacrifice, which is not founded on ethical principles such as equal regard, mutual respect, equality, etc. Respect for others needs to be balanced with self-respect (Osmer, 2008:151). Church leaders are human beings and not machines. Therefore, the church leader's understanding of a good work ethic needs to incorporate and value resilience-cultivating competencies which are critical to human fulfilment and quality of life.

In addition to the exegesis conducted, each of the seven resilience competencies was theologically researched. It is concluded that the seven competencies, as associated with resilience, can be theologically grounded. The following are some of the important issues that came to light in relation to each competency:

- *Forgiveness (Reconciled past):*

Theologically, interpersonal forgiveness is rooted in the character of God (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Church leaders emulate divine forgiveness by extending interpersonal forgiveness to one another (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Unforgiveness and the associated emotions can easily become like the sin and weight the author of Hebrews exhorts his hearers to get rid of so that their ability to persevere in their race is not impeded. Forgiveness fosters resilience by releasing the church leader from the prison their own emotions of hatred, bitterness, and anger created (Denton, 2018:4).

- *Hope (Realistic optimism)*

Biblical hope differs from a humanistic optimism in that it is rooted in the transcendent God, His covenant faithfulness and His ability to bring about His good purposes, and not in the immanent self (Du Rand, 2014:3; Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). Church leaders should live their lives through hope in Christ; it is considered an essential Christian

attribute (Romans 12:12; Romans 15:4, Romans 13; 1 Corinthians 13:13). It carries church leaders through thick and thin and frees them from all fear and anxiety, and in doing so cultivates resilience (Du Rand, 2014:4). Biblical authors imply that hope in Christ is the fuel for a variety of other virtues and disciplines which also ultimately aid in the development of resilience.

- *Working with one's skills*

Scripture conveys a number of normative principles related to work, diligence, productivity, effectivity, and stewardship which can be translated to the resilience competency of working with one's skills. A biblical theology of work starts with God as the working God and Creator of all things (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). From this perspective, work is a manner in which the church leader expresses the Divine Image and ideally all work performed should be done as service to God (Colossians 3:17,22–24) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). Work, as designed by God, contributes to the church leader's expression of their inherent God-given dignity and sense of purpose, thus building resilience.

- *Problem-solving*

Problem-solving for the church leader needs to be framed within an understanding of God's incommunicable and communicable attributes. Proverbs teaches that wisdom, a vital ingredient required in effective problem-solving, begins with a fear of God (Proverbs 1:7). In light of God's attributes and providence, problem-solving becomes an activity that the church leader does not engage in with a humanistic frame of mind, but with the utmost awareness of God's divine will and ability to accomplish His purposes through and in believers. Problem-solving originating from trust in man and man's devices will always lead to anxiety and worry which is counterproductive in terms of resilience.

- *Self-control*

The New Testament teaches that self-control (“ἐγκράτεια” pronounced as egkrateia) is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). It flows from an “inner strength” that is essentially the strength of the Holy Spirit flowing through believers (Boulton, 2016:58). Self-discipline is vital for the church leader who wishes to live a productive life (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1493). Proverbs teaches that a person without self-control is open to all kinds of temptations and troubles, like a city left without walls. From the exegesis conducted on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, it also became apparent that self-control is closely related to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

- *Self-awareness*

The antithesis of self-awareness is self-deception. Self-deception involves hiding the truth from oneself (Pak, 2018:405). From a theological viewpoint, self-deception is intimately connected with sin and detrimental to the church leader's spiritual life if left unchecked (Pak, 2018:406). Pride is often associated with self-deception in Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:18; Jeremiah 49:16). In light of a theological perspective which acknowledges the true nature and depth of self-deception, mere human reflection is not a sufficient means to expose and address self-deception and to grow in self-awareness. Because of the deception that naturally resides in man's heart, the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13), needs to be invited in humility into the process of increasing one's self-awareness.

- *Healthy relationships*

Man's need for healthy relationships can be theologically grounded in the very nature of the Triune God. Since man was created in the image and likeness of God, man was essentially designed for relationship (Genesis 1:26) (Holmes, 2014:3). Man is by creation a relational being whose growth and significance is worked out in God-centred relationship with other human beings (Holmes, 2014:3). Biblical relationships should always have Jesus at its centre (Holmes, 2014:7). Healthy relationships found in, amongst other things, biblical friendship and mentoring can offer the church leader much in terms of resilience. Choosing to go through life in isolation is essentially denying the nature according to which one was created and is rooted in pride. Reflecting the image of the Triune God can only be done in relationship with others.

The next chapter will serve as the culmination of this study. It will consist of the pragmatic task which will convey a strategy formulated in light of the descriptive, interpretive, and normative tasks that have been conducted thus far. It aims to offer practical solutions, and at the same time stipulate areas that require further research and development.

5 CHAPTER 5: PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters contributed in different ways to the collection of data by answering the questions: What is going on?, Why is this going on?, and What ought to be going on?. Each task completed thus far uncovered puzzle pieces to form a more in-depth understanding of the problem and its causes, the desired situation, and by implication the gap in between.

The descriptive task, which was completed in chapter 2 by means of a literature study and empirical research, determined that ministry in 21st-century South Africa could be considered difficult and potentially hazardous, highlighting the importance of resilience. It further denoted that although church leaders understand that resilience is important in ministry, many undervalue it in its relation to perseverance and do not consistently implement the associated competencies. What is more, the descriptive task also indicated that some church leaders are struggling to persevere in ministry without negative implications for their health and general well-being.

The interpretive task completed in chapter 3 indicated that this is due not only to external factors and structures, but also to internal or personal factors. The normative task completed in chapter 4 highlighted the importance of the church leader's perseverance, not only for their own sake, but also for the sake of others and the furtherance of the gospel. It further demonstrated that resilience, as defined in this study, and the seven associated competencies can be theologically grounded and can greatly contribute to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry. Finally, it strongly emphasised that perseverance is not an achieved or static reality but a continuous endeavour that requires striving, discipline, and strict training.

The data collected and the insights gained from these tasks will now be integrated and used to formulate specific, actionable strategies aimed at leading change in order to facilitate the desired outcomes (Osmer, 2008:176). According to Osmer's model (Osmer, 2008:175–176), this phase of practical theological interpretation is referred to as the pragmatic task.

5.2 OBJECTIVE

The pragmatic task lies at the heart of practical theology which aims to move beyond theoretical knowledge and put God's revelation into practice as purely and directly as possible (Browning,

1996:5). It aims to answer the question: How might we respond? (Osmer, 2008:4). The pragmatic task yields a humble suggestion, purposed to act as a map setting out a path from the current location to the desired destination.

5.3 METHODOLOGY

Osmer (2008:183) roots the pragmatic task in a spirituality of servant leadership. Christ is the example in this regard. Christ redefined the nature of authority and power by assuming the form of a servant (Osmer, 2008:184). The pre-existent Christ did not use His equality with God to His advantage, rather He fully entered into the human condition and subjected Himself to humiliation and suffering (Osmer, 2008:188). He became the epitome of God's self-giving love through His obedience and servanthood (Osmer, 2008:188). It is no surprise then, that Jesus teaches that servanthood is fundamental to the mission of His kingdom (Mark 10:42–45) (Osmer, 2008:184). According to Christ's kingdom principles, servanthood is indispensable (Osmer, 2008:184).

With the above in mind, the pragmatic perspectives offered aim to inspire leaders to lead the desired change and transformation, not through authoritarian and autocratic methods, but with self-giving love. The researcher hopes that role players on all levels will be motivated and empowered to influence structures, congregations, and individuals to change in a manner that more fully embodies the servant leadership of Christ (Osmer, 2008:192).

5.4 PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE IN MINISTRY

In light of the insights gained on the complexity of the problem at hand and the various levels at which it originates and is fuelled, it is considered vital that the pragmatic perspectives offered will extend beyond the church leader – although the church leader remains the primary focus of this study. Therefore, pragmatic strategies will be offered on three levels:

- The church leader as an individual;
- the board of the local congregation; and
- the AFM Church.

Each of the sections to follow will start with a discussion of the main issues that became apparent when the preceding chapters were brought into conversation with one another. The hermeneutical interaction of preceding chapters is followed by pragmatic perspectives relevant to each level addressed, although a certain degree of overlap will be evident. The aim is not to

repeat previous chapters, but where insights are deemed relevant in terms of the formulation of pragmatic perspectives, the researcher will mention these.

It is important to note here that the researcher's strong focus on the church leader might give rise to the impression that this study steers back towards the days in which practical theology was regarded as the discipline of pastoral practice by clergy. This, however, is not the case. In chapter 1 (section 1.1.2), it was mentioned that church leaders – who define their role, identity, and calling in light of the fact that Christ alone is Head of His body, the Church, and the theological principles that stem from this – will understand that they are a gift to the body called to fulfil an equipping role, rather than a controlling role. They are servants called primarily for the good and activation of Christ's people (chapter 1, section 1.1.2).

5.4.1 The church leader as an individual

5.4.1.1 Hermeneutical interaction between preceding chapters

When chapters 2–4 were brought into conversation with one another, the following issues pertaining to the church leader as an individual became apparent:

- a. Church leaders are struggling to passionately persevere due to personal and external factors
 - Although recent South African studies were limited, the literature study indicated that South African church leaders' well-being is indeed a matter of concern (chapter 2). Church leaders are at high risk for burnout, compassion fatigue, depression, and physical stress-related illnesses, and unsettling percentages already suffer from these phenomena as indicated by the limited amount of studies that were available (chapter 2, section 2.6).
 - The empirical research also indicated that 15,7% of the church leaders who responded to the study are currently experiencing high levels of phase 1 of burnout, namely hyperactivity, which includes working hard and constantly, feeling responsible for everything, and perfectionism (chapter 2, section 2.8.7.6). Out of the respondents, 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 2: Confusion* (chapter 2, section 2.8.7.6). 5,7% reported high levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* (chapter 2, section 2.8.7.6). 8,6% reported high levels of *Phase 4: Despair*. Senior pastors reported significantly higher levels of *Phase 3: Frustration* and *Phase 4: Despair* than co-pastors.

- The empirical research further revealed the following alarming statistics (chapter 2, table 2-9):
 - 64,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as hyperactive;
 - 77,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel responsible for everything;
 - 27,1% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they forget things;
 - 22,8% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are constantly in crisis management mode;
 - 36,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have little time to worry about sleep, exercise, or eating healthy;
 - 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they want to please everyone;
 - 35,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are less ambitious and creative than they once were;
 - 34,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they fear they are not good enough;
 - 20,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are dissatisfied with their work;
 - 20,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are confused;
 - 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have headaches on a weekly basis;
 - 25,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they camouflage their insecurity;

- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as indifferent, showing little sympathy;
- 15,7% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are losing faith in themselves and their calling;
- 14,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to be ungrateful and worry;
- 17,3% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they are easily irritated and have little need for contact with others;
- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have trouble sleeping and concentrating;
- 22,9% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that their immune systems are weakened;
- 26% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have no energy;
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they feel depressed;
- 10% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they can be described as cynical and distrusting;
- 18,6% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they criticise and punish themselves;
- 20% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they have stress-related physical health problems; and
- 17,2% of the respondents indicated that it is often applicable, nearly always applicable, and always applicable that they tend to isolate themselves and have key relationships that are degrading.
- In chapter 3, a psychological concept named cognitive appraisal theory elucidated one of the reasons why some church leaders struggle to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1). Cognitive appraisal theory suggests that a person's subjective perception of the demands the situation

places on them (primary cognitive appraisal), and a person's subjective perception of their self-efficacy, the available resources, and control to cope with the situation (secondary cognitive appraisal), determine if a person will experience the stressful situation as a challenge with significant potential gain, or as a threat with significant potential loss (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1).

It assumes that a person's emotional experiences do not only depend on their concrete situation but also on their cognitive appraisal of the said situation (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1). Thus, some church leaders might be experiencing burnout due to cognitive distortions that lead them to develop negative appraisals of stressors (primary cognitive appraisal), or due to cognitive appraisals in which they do not feel that they have the adequate resources and control to deal with the stressor (secondary cognitive appraisal). Identifying and replacing cognitive distortions that feed unhealthy stress management responses is key to fostering resilience in ministry.

- Another reason why some church leaders struggle to passionately persevere was identified from psychology in chapter 3, namely low emotional intelligence (EI). In short, EI basically refers to an individual's ability to recognise and comprehend their own as well as other's emotions, and to be able to manage their own emotions in a manner that enhances thought and elicits desired responses from others (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2). Church leaders with higher levels of EI, that is leaders who are more adept in recognising, understanding, regulating, and using their own and other's emotions, function better in the face of stressful events (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2). Church leaders who are constantly in a mode of worry and anxiety will experience erosion in their mental abilities and social skills. If church leaders lack EI, they will most likely struggle to cultivate and implement resilience competencies such as realistic optimism, discipline, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, making them more at risk for burnout, depression, anxiety (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2).
- Certain personality predispositions were also identified as contributors to church leaders' struggle to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.3). Perfectionism, neuroticism, and introversion have been linked to an individual's proneness to negative stress responses, depression, burnout, and anxiety (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.3).
- The psychological concept of locus of control highlighted that both a purely internal or external locus of control can be problematic within ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4). Church leaders with a purely external locus of control will

approach adverse contexts with passivity and frustration, sensing no degree of responsibility or control (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4). Contrariwise, church leaders with a purely internal locus of control will experience intense anger, hostility, anxiety, and frustration in situations where their sense of control is threatened (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4).

Church leaders who want to flourish and passionately persevere in ministry need to pursue a healthy balance between internal and external loci of control. They need to paradoxically believe that they are able to control and influence what happens to them while firmly holding on to the biblical truth that God is sovereign (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4). They need to recognise and exert influence on matters they can change and not waste energy on matters they cannot change, but submit these to God in trust and hope (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4).

- A final contribution from sociology indicated that healthy relationships have been shown to hold numerous benefits for one's well-being, but toxic relationships essentially act as a slow poison in the body (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3). There has been significant social corrosion in contemporary society leaving many, church leaders included, socially deprived and even handicapped (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3).

Research in social intelligence reveals that church leaders often contribute to their own isolation and unhealthy relationships. Some simply fail to appreciate their different interpersonal needs and the extent to which they have been wired for connection, not only with their family, but with a wider social network, and so intentionally cultivating relationships can often go on the back burner (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3). Moreover, some church leaders become so enveloped in their role as church leader that they no longer have hobbies or interests outside ministry, making meeting new people and cultivating relationships outside the congregation difficult (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3). On the other hand, others simply have not developed the necessary social intelligence to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3).

- The communication sciences shed light on another angle of the church leader's struggle to passionately persevere (chapter 3, section 3.6.3). It demonstrated that the church leader's ability to manage conflict effectively is a major determining factor not only in their success as a leader, but also in their personal well-being (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.1). Church leaders who employ an avoidant, accommodating, or dominating style will not manage conflict effectively (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.1). Interpersonal conflict which is not managed properly can lead

to church leaders becoming emotionally exhausted and eventually cutting themselves off emotionally (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.1). The cost of poorly managed conflict on relationships, self-confidence, health, work performance, and productivity is high (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.1).

- The church leader's decision-making style was also identified as a factor that contributes to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.2). Church leaders who tend to apply an avoidant style of decision-making do not only cause stress for themselves by delaying the process, but also for their staff and volunteer teams (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.2). Moreover, if church leaders become too dependent on others in the decision-making process, trying to please every party involved, they will inevitably experience higher levels of stress when faced with decisions since pleasing everyone is essentially an impossible task (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.2).

b. The cultivation of resilience is required from church leaders who aim to passionately persevere

- The literature study conducted in chapter 2 clearly underscored the church leader's need for resilience within a 21st-century ministry environment that is rapidly changing and riddled with challenges that can be attributed to a wide scope of issues. Challenges arise from the complexity and fragmented nature of the worldviews of the people and communities church leaders aim to serve, which is continually influenced by overarching paradigms and processes such as secularisation, postmodernism and globalisation (chapter 2, section 2.5.1).

In addition, challenges arise from the taxing demands commonly associated with ministry such as the often unrealistic role expectations of church and community members, the emotional, mental, spiritual, and even physical demands of pastoral care, the leadership and managerial requirements, the inter- and intrapersonal conflict, and the lack of resources (chapter 2, section 2.5.2). Finally, challenges also arise within the personal life of the church leader due to vague boundaries, family-work conflict, loneliness, and financial stress (chapter 2, section 2.5.2).

- The empirical research conducted also highlighted the prominence of the need for resilience with 100% of the 70 respondents acknowledging that it is important for perseverance in ministry (chapter 2, table 2-3).
- The empirical research further demonstrated the significant mitigating effect of the resilience-cultivating strategies as set out in this study (self-efficacy strategies

– five items, physical strategies – three items, emotional and mental strategies – eight items) on phases 2–4 of burnout (chapter 2, table 2-19).

- Each of the seven resilience competencies, namely reconciled past (forgiveness), hope (realistic optimism), working with one's skills, problem-solving competence, self-control, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, were theologically researched and grounded (chapter 4). Their value and contribution in terms of resilience and in turn perseverance was clearly emphasised.

c. The church leader's cognition of their calling is vital in relation to their ability to persevere

- Chapters 1 and 2 emphasised that the office of the church leader is under immense strain. Church leaders are bombarded with pressures to be and perform according to the expectations of others. Moreover, their own expectations also add additional pressure to the mix. Thus, church leaders are continuously at risk of losing sight of their calling and adopting a cognition of their role that is not biblical or healthy.
- The descriptive-empirical research conducted and discussed in chapter 2 revealed the key role that calling plays in terms of the strategies employed by church leaders who participated in this study. Choosing to focus on the positive instead of the negative, making sure their calling is clear and certain, and spending time with God were the three items with the highest means respectively.
- From role theory in sociology, it was determined that role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload are contributors to the church leaders' experience of role stress which negatively impact on commitment and job satisfaction (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1). The role stressors mentioned are often aggravated when church leaders do not differentiate in a healthy manner between themselves and what they value, and their performance in their roles, resulting in a merger between the self-concept and the role-concept (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1). When this self-concept and role-concept merger occurs, church leaders can lose the much-needed perspective to counteract systematic pressures and expectations and respond to interpersonal conflict inappropriately (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1). Personal sacrifices and the sacrifice of emotional and physical needs (resilience-cultivating strategies) are viewed as part of the job and no boundaries are set between work and home (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1). Church leaders can start to derive a large part of their identity from their role and become dependent on

recognition and accolades, making them more likely to burnout (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1).

- Two other phenomena in sociology that provided insight into why some church leaders struggle to persevere were the looking glass self and perceived mattering (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2). According to the humanist approach of the theory of the looking glass self, an individual's identity is developed by their social interactions in response to their understanding of other's perceptions of them (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2). Accordingly, church leaders, like all people, are vulnerable to internalising perceived messages and can so be immensely influenced by their perceptions of how others see them and how they are regarded by others (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2).

Reasoning from this foundation, the concept of "perceived mattering" further informs that church leaders have a basic need to feel valued and seen by others (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2). Someone who feels that they matter is more resilient and engaged, whereas someone who feels that they do not matter is likely to experience more stress and distress that can escalate into intense feelings of psychological pain (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2).

Consequently, church members coming and going without consideration or pause, counselees not changing their behaviour despite numerous sessions, the overwhelming and never-ending emotional burdens of congregation and community members, insensitive remarks, ageing, the secularisation of society, and even essentially positive changes such as the priesthood of all believers, or the rise of a new generation of young leaders, can make church leaders feel redundant and communicate messages of not mattering on a societal or interpersonal level (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2).

If not dealt with in a healthy manner, church leaders can become threatened and insecure in their roles (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2). This can give rise to behaviours that will compromise their resilience, such as struggling to delegate tasks and kicking into performance mode trying to please others in a need for affirmation (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2).

- The normative task revealed that New Testament leaders like such as Paul were all too familiar with the disappointments, unrealistic expectations, conflicts, and hurts associated with ministry. However, they understood that they were called to persevere, not only for their own sake and the eternal award that awaits them, but also for the sake of others and the furtherance of the gospel, here and now,

just as Jesus endured the cross set before Him (chapter 4, section 4.4.1.1; chapter 4, section 4.4.1.4).

d. Some church leaders' cognition of perseverance and in turn resilience in ministry is fallacious or limited

- The empirical research showed that only six of the 70 responses revealed a broader appreciation for resilience, acknowledging its role in thriving or *passionate* perseverance as opposed to merely acknowledging its role in ministry survival (chapter 2, table 2-3).
- The empirical research further indicated that 2,86% of the respondents were not sure if resilience could be developed, and out of the 97,14% who believed it could be developed, 12 responses implied a passive development process brought on by time, experience, one's faith or calling, and the congregation rather than active cultivation on the part of the church leader (chapter 2, table 2-4).
- Of great concern is that the empirical research indicated that 10% of the respondents demonstrated a negative attitude towards the holistic development of resilience (chapter 2, figure 2-1)
- Finally, the empirical research demonstrated that although the majority of the respondents' descriptions of a resilient person denoted a process-orientated understanding of resilience, 19 of the responses indicated a more static or trait-orientated understanding of resilience alluding to the idea that resilience is an achieved state (chapter 2, table 2-4).
- From the interpretive task conducted in chapter 3, it was determined that theories such as trait theory have perhaps exerted a strong influence on how church leaders think about leadership and in turn resilience (chapter 3, section 3.4.1.1). Trait theory is a school of thought in psychology that, in its various forms, gave rise to the presupposition that leaders are born and not made. With all due respect, the concept of "being called by God", for example, is often talked about in a static, trait-like manner as something that guarantees leadership and resilience across all situations and somewhat frees the church leader from developmental responsibilities. Passionate perseverance in ministry requires a cognition of resilience that underscores the individual's ability and consequently responsibility to develop a lifestyle that promotes resilience.
- The normative task (chapter 4) strongly emphasised that perseverance is not a static or passive achievement that results from faith or calling. It is an active

process that requires strict discipline, continuous striving, self-control, the diligent development and utilisation of one's gifts, prayerful self-awareness, careful watch over one's personal life and doctrine, the adoption of habits that contribute to one's spiritual, mental, emotional, relational, and physical health, getting rid of all distractions and things that act as weights whether it be sin or habits, fixing one's mind on the hope found in Christ, and cognitively perceiving trials as an occasion for joy because of the occasion it offers for growth.

- Normative perspectives further indicated that trials and tribulations should be considered an occasion for joy, according to New Testament authors, because of the opportunity it offers for perseverance to run its course and yield growth in perfection and maturity, not only as an eschatological reality, but also as a reality here on earth.
- The normative task indicated that as part of a Christian work ethic, work is not only understood as a human obligation and means of survival, a means through which to provide for the needs of others, and an expression of creativity, but it is also an expression of believers' Christian calling and charisma (chapter 4, section 4.4.4). Persevering in ministry is persevering in the call and gifts God has endowed one with. Thus, fulfilment is not found in work itself but in how work is a participation in God's work. In light of this, the manner in which people work is understood as a reflection of how they view God, the world, others, and themselves.
- Finally, the normative task emphasised that perseverance needs to be framed within the ethical principle of inherent human dignity and worth (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). Man's dignity is ultimately not earned or found in his work but resides in the fact that God created him in His image and likeness (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). This should safeguard the church leader against adopting workaholic behaviours or a merged concept of self and role in an attempt to prove their worth to others. The church leader's responsibility to provide, to serve, and to care implies the right to provision, service, and care. In other words, the church leader is not called to self-denial, which is not founded on ethical principles such as equal regard, mutual respect, equality, etc. (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). Work and perseverance in ministry need to be approached from a perspective that recognises the holistic needs of church leaders (chapter 4, section 4.4.5).

e. There exists a divide between church leaders' attitudes and attempts to cultivate resilience

- Generally, the empirical research indicated that the majority of church leaders was positive about the holistic cultivation of resilience although, as already mentioned, 10% demonstrated a negative attitude towards the holistic cultivation of resilience in ministry which remains a concerning reality. Coloured participants demonstrated a significantly less positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience when compared to black and white participants (chapter 2, table 2-16). Co-pastors demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience than senior pastors and other church leaders (youth leaders, worship leaders, and elders) respectively (chapter 2, table 2-18). It was further determined that as congregation size increases, church leaders' attitude towards the holistic development of resilience decreases (chapter 2, table 2-14).
- The empirical research further showed that 5,7% of respondents do not implement resilience-cultivating strategies related to their self-efficacy; 20% of the respondents do not implement physical resilience-cultivating strategies; 5,7% of respondents do not implement emotional and mental resilience strategies, and overall, church leaders' attempts to holistically cultivate resilience are not always consistently implemented (chapter 2, table 2-8). A slight divide between attitude and attempts was identified which shows that belief does not consistently translate into practice, especially in relation to physical strategies. It was also determined that as the number of years a church leader stays at a certain congregation increases, the more their attempts to cultivate resilience in relation to self-efficacy strategies decrease (chapter 2, table 2-14). Finally, as church leaders get older, the implementation of resilience-cultivating attempts focused on emotional and mental strategies increases (chapter 2, table 2-14).
- In chapter 3, a psychological model referred to as Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour shed some light on the attitude-behaviour divide identified by the empirical research (chapter 3, section 3.5.1). It assumes that an individual's intention to perform a certain behaviour exists in a direct relationship with their attitude, the subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. It posits that the stronger the attitude and the more favourable the subjective norm towards a certain behaviour is, and the greater the perceived behavioural control, the stronger the behavioural intention will be. Thus, if church leaders' perceptions of relevant subjective norms are negative and their perceived behavioural control is

low, there will be a divide between their attitudes and behaviour. In addition, there might be an inconsistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship, because it might be that church leaders do not have a strongly vested interest in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies. Finally, church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience, although positive, might not be strong enough to exert enough influence on their behaviour.

5.4.1.2 Pragmatic perspectives on the church leader as an individual in relation to the church leader's call to passionate perseverance

In light of the hermeneutical interaction discussed above, the pragmatic perspectives offered in this section will focus on offering strategies and guidelines in terms of the following:

- The church leader's cognition of calling.
- The church leader's cognition of perseverance and resilience in ministry.
- The divide between the church leader's attitude and attempts towards the holistic development of resilience in ministry.
- Practical strategies for the holistic and proactive development of resilience in ministry.

a. Guidelines for the church leader's cognition of calling

- When church leaders experience disillusionment with regard to the nature of their calling, it can severely hinder their ability to passionately persevere. As mentioned in chapter 1, church leaders' cognition of their calling exerts an inevitable influence on their behaviour and the manner in which they will experience and interpret their function. Church leaders who do not fully understand their calling will easily fall prey to the weight of unrealistic responsibilities, expectations, and other unhealthy drivers such as fear and guilt. They will get stuck in a devastating cycle of self-idealisation and self-disdain which will prove to be an obstacle to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry. It will affect not only their personal well-being, but also their family and the congregation they are leading.
- Nel (2002:152; 2016:5) contends that the calling to full-time ministry needs to undergo a type of healthy "secularisation" in order to be reinterpreted in a manner that remains true to the missional nature of the church. The Christendom era placed the office of the church leader on a pedestal and resulted in a passivity amongst church members. Calling should not be reserved to the church but has to do with God and His world (Nel, 2002:153).

Scripture, however, teaches that all are called as the working people of God to certain professions and should consider all work done (apart from clearly immoral work) as calling and do it in the spirit of Colossians 3:23 (Nel, 2016:5). The entire congregation should be thought of as a congregation being in mission and not just as a congregation participating in or doing missions (Nel, 2016:5).

Thus, it is no longer only those who work as full-time ministers who are understood to be called by God. Nel (2016:6) argues that a church leader's calling is essentially not that different from any other Christian who is called to be a good and faithful servant regardless of the profession they find themselves in. What makes the calling entrusted to church leaders special, is the specific nature of the job, that is, to prepare God's people for their ministry (Nel, 2016:6). A call to full-time ministry means being called from amongst the working people (as one of them) with a specific calling to serve those same people (Nel, 2016:5). This view will inevitably make the church leader's cognition of calling more biblical and ultimately result in healthier behaviour.

- In his study that examines the calling and struggles of two Reformed church leaders, namely H.Ph.J. Pasch and G.B.S. Pasch, Venter (2014:ix) concludes that calling to ministry has to be the main driving force and motive for lifelong perseverance in ministry.

Truth is, not all persons who have the title and fulfil the function of a church leader have, in fact, been called by God to that specific function. Martin (as cited by Venter, 2014:9), an American theologian, discerns at least six reasons why people might be wrongly drawn to the pastorate:

- A wrong view of gifts and abilities.
- An uncontrolled desire for attention and the exercise of power.
- An imbalanced idea of spirituality and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. According to Martin, gifts cannot be assumed to reflect a person's degree of spirituality or calling.
- An inaccurate view of natural talent and ability.
- An uncontrolled psychological need for personal recognition and identity.
- The ambitions of other persons such as parents, for example.
- The researcher would like to add a seventh reason which is recognisable especially in a South African context of poverty and unemployment, namely economic and financial gain.

Being called to full-time ministry, according to Nel (2016:5) and Bouwman (as cited by Venter, 2014:23), implies that:

- A person understands the calling as a fulfilment of one's life purpose as a creature (like all other creatures) of God;
- a person is committed and willing for what the call to ministry requires. One needs to understand the self-denial required and cannot be focused on one's own benefit. God's glory and the expansion of His kingdom needs to be and remain the primary goal;
- a person has the assurance that God as the Sender will provide the means to fulfil the task He assigns, but is at the same time willing to engage in training and lifelong learning in order to faithfully fulfil the calling; and
- a person, as part of the privilege to be and remain in this profession, is committed to lifelong evaluation.

The person who enters ministry not as a result of God's calling but with the wrong motives, will most likely not persevere with passion at their own expense, the expense of their families, and ultimately the expense of Christ's Church. It is God's calling to ministry that gives the individual the mandate and the ability to fulfil this calling with authority and perseverance (Venter, 2014:21). The same God who calls is the God who equips through His Spirit (Venter, 2014:22). Aspiring church leaders need to be sure of their calling to full-time ministry and keep this front and centre.

- Venter (2014:23) distinguishes between internal and external calling. Internal calling happens in the heart of a person as God works to create a greater awareness and desire to serve Him by means of full-time ministry (Venter, 2014:23). Internal calling is experienced as an inescapable urge which, despite the possibility of rational resistance, eventually presses through (Venter, 2014:23). External calling refers to the legal appointment of a church leader at a local congregation which affirms the internal calling as God, through His Spirit, works in and through man to provide opportunity for the fulfilment of the internal call (Venter, 2014:24). Church leaders need to understand that legal appointment at a local congregation cannot act as substitute for internal calling. External calling based on gift and ability alone will not suffice in ensuring passionate perseverance in ministry.
- It is important to be cognisant of the fact that calling implies being called before being sent; it is an invitation before it is a task (Nel, 2016:1; Venter, 2014:25).

The disciples were firstly invited into a special relationship with Jesus and then they were sent as apostles. Church leaders should firstly view themselves as followers and children of God and secondly as leaders called to serve. Church leaders cannot afford to get so caught up in “leading” that they forget to be followers of Jesus who is the foundation of all Christian leadership (Nell, 2015:6). When church leaders abide in Christ, their leadership and ministry can be truly healthy as an extension of their relationship with Jesus (Burns *et al.*, 2013:32). Church leaders’ relationship with and faith in God, therefore, needs to be authentic and not just a professional persona (Burns *et al.*, 2013:32).

In chapter 1, it was clarified that from a theological perspective, church leaders’ callings are not rooted in what they do per se, but rather in who they are where God has placed them (chapter 1, section 1.1.2). Church leaders need to be careful not to allow their self-concept and their role-concept to become merged (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1). Their understanding of their identity needs to be based on their relationship with the One who calls and sends and who He is, and not on what they do for Him. If they begin to equate their identity and value with their role as a church leader, they run the risk of becoming dependent on the accolades and approval of others (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1).

- The following theological principles should serve as the framework within which church leaders formulate their understanding of their calling (chapter 1, section 1.1.2):
 - Christ alone is the Head of His body, namely the church, and He, as the source and origin of life, is committed to meet the needs of His body.
 - Christ’s power and authority are not characterised by command and control but by servanthood, a self-giving orientation towards others, and self-sacrifice.
 - The church is not an institution but a living organism in which each part is inseparably connected to its Head and essential for the wholeness of the body.
 - God calls and shapes His leaders to be servants of His body. He is personally committed to them and they choose to respond to His calling from out of a covenantal relationship.
- Church leaders are a gift to the body of Christ, called to fulfil an equipping rather than a controlling role (chapter 1, section 1.1.2). Church leaders may not intrude into the realm of Christ’s prerogatives and Headship. They are servants called to “guide people towards understanding and responding to God’s redemptive and

healing purposes” (Smit, 2001:25). Church leaders should foster a culture of shared leadership and acknowledge the priesthood of all believers. Church leaders need to understand that they are not called to take over the ministry of the people, but to equip and support the people for the ministry only they can fulfil (Nel, 2016:6). This will free the church leader from the weight of unrealistic expectations, humanistic efforts, and role overload.

- Burns *et al.* (2013:64) observe in their empirical research that beyond making sure that those who want to go into full-time ministry are indeed called by God to do so, it is important that these church leaders are sure about the particular congregation they feel called to at that specific time. Church leaders need to be sure that they are serving at the right place at the right time (Burns *et al.*, 2013:64). If church leaders are not sure that they are indeed where God wants them, they can easily grow in doubt when hardships arise and be tempted to get out of the ministry. However, when these doubts do arise, church leaders need to firstly examine their hearts in light of Paul’s exhortation to be content in whatever situation you might find yourself (Philippians 4:11–12), and secondly, prayerfully process these doubts with a trusted, spiritually mature friend, mentor, or coach (Burns *et al.*, 2013:65).
- Nel (2002:154) takes it a step further and motivates that a calling to a local congregation also needs refinement. It necessitates finding one’s place in accordance with one’s gifts and abilities in context of the totality of ministry (Nel, 2002:154). Obviously, this is not easy in congregations with only one church leader but the principle remains. Church leaders need to understand that a call to full-time ministry in its totality does not imply excellence in all areas of ministry (Nel, 2002:154). It implies at most responsibility as a result of the situation (Nel, 2002:154). Church leaders will be wise to accept that they will be weaker in certain areas than others, and this is okay. They can and should invest in their personal development but should foster realistic expectations in relation to themselves and their abilities.
- Cordeiro (2009:73) makes the important distinction between concern and responsibility. Not everything that concerns church leaders is or should become their responsibility. Each leader needs to determine in their heart what it is God has specifically called them to do at a particular point in time. God will not hold people accountable for how much they have done, but rather for how much they have done of what He actually asked them or called them to do (Cordeiro, 2009:79). Much of the activities that fill church leaders’ schedules are concerns

that can easily be delegated. Very little of what church leaders focus on are necessarily responsibilities that only they can fulfil in light of God's calling and sending. When the lines between concerns and responsibilities become blurry, the world can easily come to rest upon the shoulders of a church leader. Church leaders need to make time to identify what God has called them to do and then make every effort to run the race by staying in their lane.

b. Guidelines for the church leader's cognition of perseverance and resilience in ministry

- Church leaders' cognition of perseverance needs to be informed by biblical principles. The following aspects were emphasised by the normative task (chapter 4, section 4.6.2):
 - Perseverance is a general exhortation to all believers, although church leaders carry the additional responsibility to set an example worth following. Their perseverance or failure to persevere will inevitably influence others.
 - Perseverance is a virtue that needs to be cultivated in the active and continuous sense. Entering the race does not guarantee that one will finish it. Perseverance requires habitual training, self-control, self-awareness, and discipline. It requires church leaders to be diligent stewards of their gifts continuously growing in self-efficacy, and to be diligent students of Scripture continuously growing in their knowledge of God.
 - Perseverance is a virtue that, when allowed to run its course, yields moral and spiritual growth, as well as the endurance required to finish the race of faith and obtain eternal reward and salvation. The author of James considers these things to be of such extreme value that he views trials and opportunities for the development of perseverance as occasions for deep-found joy.
 - Perseverance is a virtue of which Jesus Christ is the ultimate example as He endured the cross and its shame for the joy set before Him. Perseverance requires church leaders to focus wholeheartedly on Him.
 - Perseverance is a virtue linked to trials. God does not cause trials but can choose to allow and limit them according to His sovereign and good purposes.

- Perseverance is a virtue that can be thwarted by sin and weights (things that are not necessarily sinful, but they cause one to be distracted and weighed down) if these are not dealt with.
- Church leaders' cognition of perseverance needs to be framed in acknowledgement and respect of the holistic integrated nature of humankind. As mentioned in chapter 1 (section 1.1.3), church leaders seldom forget that they are Christians but often forget that they are human beings with emotional, mental, and physical needs in addition to spiritual needs.

The doctrine of humankind, according to pentecostal theology, acknowledges that humankind comprised a material and immaterial component²⁴ (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:130). Moreover, it acknowledges that God created humankind as a unity (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:132). Body, soul, and spirit are separate functions rather than separate substances of a person (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:132). When thought of in this manner, it becomes clear that perseverance cannot be understood as a spiritual matter alone. More and more health care practitioners are also realising the importance of treating the whole person (Clarke, 2010:649; Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:132).

The empirical research conducted indicated that 20% of the respondents do not regularly implement physical resilience strategies which include regular exercise, eating a balanced diet, and taking off enough time (chapter 2, figure 2-1). When compared to the lower percentage of 5,7% respondents who neglect self-efficacy, and mental and emotional strategies, it seems that church leaders tend to think of perseverance in a manner that does not sufficiently value or regard the needs of the whole person, especially in terms of one's physical body.

Christianity has often been criticised for denigrating the body and being dualistic, viewing the body as bad and the soul-spirit consciousness as good (Clarke,

²⁴ More specifically, depending on the school of thought adhered to, man is either understood as being constituted of three parts (body, soul, and spirit) or two parts (body and soul/spirit) (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:130). According to the trichotomious model, the spirit represents our God-consciousness, and it is with our spirit that we can comprehend eternal truths (Clarke, 2010:650). The soul is understood to be a person's life force which gives consciousness to and animates the body; it is with our soul, which includes the mind, that we engage in rational and intellectual analysis of data (Clarke, 2010:650). The body is the material aspect of our person (Clarke, 2010:650). This model also asserts that all creatures have souls but only man has a spirit (Clarke, 2010: 650; Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:188) According to the dichotomious model, soul and spirit are used interchangeably to refer to the immaterial part of man (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:190–191). This being said, this model acknowledges that in their more precise use they do refer to different relationships within man's inner-self, although soul and spirit cannot be separated (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:190–191). The researcher adheres to the trichotomious model, but the focus here is not to argue for either of these schools of thought, but rather to highlight some of the teachings that should inform church leaders' understanding of the relationship between the material and immaterial components of man.

2010:649–650; Consiglio, 2015:8). Many of the ancients and especially the Greeks thought of the body as inherently evil and considered it to be a tomb or a prison for the soul (Consiglio, 2015:9; Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:125). A false Christian cult, the Gnostics, went so far as to deny the incarnation of Jesus in light of their low esteem of the physical body (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:125). Unfortunately, many of the early Christian writers also seemed to adopt this dualistic view, although not to the extreme of the Gnostics (Consiglio, 2015:9).

Even though the church has come a long way, it is the Greek pessimism towards the body that still seems to exert significant influence on the anthropology most people have inherited. Clarke (2010:651) comments that it is paradoxical that Christianity, which is at its essence so optimistic about the body, has become so associated with denial of the body. Topics related to sexuality or bodily functions, for example, are still considered taboo in some Christian circles and the source of shame (Consiglio, 2015:8). The body and its functions are often regarded as something that should be oppressed, suppressed, and repressed (Consiglio, 2015:8). Many have misunderstood Paul's contrast between the spirit and the flesh as referring to a contrast between the spirit and the body (Clarke, 2010:652). However, the terms translated as "flesh", as used by Paul, refer to humanity in its separated state from God (Clarke, 2010:652). Scripture actually teaches that the body should be honoured and respected as God's creation (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:188).

How church leaders take care of their physical bodies will have a profound influence on their ability to persevere in ministry. The following truths regarding the body are considered relevant for this discussion (Duffield & Van Cleave, 2008:126–129):

- The body is mortal and will return to dust, but at the resurrection the body of the redeemed will be transformed into a glorified body (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 104:29; 2 Peter 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:16b; 1 Corinthians 15:50). As a seed is related to the plant from which it sprouted, so the glorified body will be related to the earthly body. Thus, bodies are not merely vehicles for earthly life done away with after death. Christ's atoning work redeemed the whole person (Romans 8:23).
- Although the body was formed from mere dust, God made man in His image and declared that man was made good (Psalm 139:14–16). Today, science is continuously making discoveries that confirm just how

wonderful and complex God has created the human body. God created man's body with great wisdom and consideration.

- As a temple of the Holy Spirit, the body of the redeemed man must not be used as an instrument for sin (1 Corinthians 6:19,20). Man is considered "fallen" and in need of redemption, not because of the body, but because of man's moral choice and will to turn away from God (Clarke, 2010:650). Therefore, the bodies of people are not inherently evil but can be instruments of sin.
 - When man's body is dedicated to Christ, it is considered a living and holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1). God is not only worshipped through the soul and spirit but also through physical bodies.
 - Man will be judged according to what he has done in his body, whether it be good or bad (1 Corinthians 9:27). The body is not automatically judged as the source of all evil.
- Church leaders' cognition of perseverance needs to be framed in the acknowledgement and respect of the relational nature of man. As discussed in chapter 4 (section 4.5.7), man was created in the image of God, hence, man is by design a relational being. Therefore, Tan (2019:43) rightly asserts that believers need to accept that at times they need to rely on God-care and the "we-care" of the community of believers. God desires to care for His children through friendship with others and will at times allow them to be knocked off balance for this very reason (Tan, 2019:43). No one individual has everything within them that is required to flourish in ministry (Fuller, 2018:9).
 - Church leaders' cognition of resilience needs to be accurately informed. The empirical research indicated that some church leaders seem to view resilience as a static, achieved state, attribute it to a more passive process of development, and limit its value to surviving in ministry as opposed to thriving and passionately persevering (chapter 2, section 2.8.6.3). Church leaders need to understand that (chapter 2, section 2.4.1.a to 2.4.1.e):
 - *Resilience is linked with adversity*

The process of resilience is always preceded by some adversity, whether in the form of challenge, change, or disruption. Dekker sums it up powerfully stating that resilience "is birthed in the process of adversity" (Dekker, 2011:69).

- *Resilience involves bouncing back*

People who respond resiliently still experience the effect of the trauma, but instead of being overcome by it, they find healthy and constructive ways to deal with and absorb it and can continue to live a meaningful life.

- *Resilience emphasises strength, competencies, capacity, and healthy development as an alternative to risk and deficit theory*

For a long time, the social sciences concentrated on the disease model, studying the worst of human behaviour. The last two decades, however, have been marked with the tendency to focus on and promote the best in human behaviour. Resilience research directs attention towards positive outcomes and contributing factors.

- *Resilience is process-orientated rather than trait-orientated*

Rather than an achieved state or static trait of an individual, more and more researchers argue that resilience refers to an interactive process. A person might respond resiliently in one set of circumstances and fail to do so in another. It is an active process of perseverance, overcoming, recovery, and growth in response to adversity.

- *Resilience can be cultivated*

Flowing from the element of resilience discussed above, is the developmental nature of resilience. Resilience is not something one is born with or without; it can be taught and it can be learned.

c. Guidelines for the divide between the church leader's attitude and attempts towards the holistic development of resilience

- Church leaders need to refrain from allowing subjective norms to pose an obstacle to the implementation of resilience-cultivating strategies:
 - As explained through Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour, attitude alone does not influence behaviour (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). Church leaders' perceptions of the relevant subjective norms also contribute to behaviour. If church leaders' perceptions of relevant subjective norms are negative and they allow this priority in their decision-making, there might be a divide between their attitudes and behaviour.

Chapters 1 (section 1.1.1) and 2 (section 2.5.2) highlighted that church leaders are bombarded with the often unrealistic expectations of others on a daily basis. Cordeiro (2009:160) points out that many people live a life of conformity as opposed to an intentional life. A church leader who lives a life of conformity allows the opinions, pressures, and expectations of others to control their time and dictate the allocation of their energy (Cordeiro, 2009:160).

- Chapter 3 indicated that internal issues can make the church leader more vulnerable to succumbing to the expectations of others and in turn burn out.

Social role theory explained that church leaders who cannot differentiate between themselves and what they value, and their performance in their roles, will lose the much-needed perspective to counteract systematic expectations and pressures (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1).

Moreover, the concept of perceived mattering also draws attention to the fact that church leaders who find their sense of mattering in people and who allow themselves to be consumed by the need for feeling that they matter, will not be able to deal with the insensitive remarks and disappointments they will encounter in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.2). They will operate from a place of insecurity and not from a place of divine authority and calling.

In addition, personality predispositions such as perfectionism, for example, can make it difficult for a church leader to deal with criticism or the idea of disappointing others (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.3).

It is of the utmost importance that the church leader identifies these internal issues and in partnership with a mentor, coach, or trusted friend develop strategies to manage these effectively. Failure to do so will inevitably result in a divide between attitude and behaviour. More practical insights will be offered on managing the internal issues that can act as catalysts for burnout later in this chapter.

- Coetzer (2006:22) maintains that the church, in general, has failed to cultivate a culture amongst church leaders that respects, much less values, self-care. Rather, what is elementally self-neglect is considered being responsible, self-sacrificial, and virtuous. In light of Scriptures such as Mark 8:34, some circles and expressions of Christianity foster a kind of

martyrdom spirit that equates holiness with total self-denial (chapter 1, section 1.1.3). Based on this type of reasoning, some conclude that self-care is a disguise for self-indulgence and that it is theologically problematic (Fuller, 2018:6).

Burns *et al.* (2013:61–63) offer further insight by observing the following reasons why church leaders seem not to value self-care: the unrealistic expectations they and others place on themselves pose an obstacle; they do not fully recognise the impact of ministry upon them and as a result fail to view self-care as an ethical imperative; and they “spiritualise” their need for it away through a kind of dualistic thinking. With these subjective norms in circulation, the idea of self-care may sound selfish and sinful to many church leaders and may even be labelled as such by colleagues and congregation and community members.

Consequently, many church leaders feel guilty or uncomfortable with the idea of self-care and restrict the scope of their coping mechanisms to spiritual disciplines which are deemed more in stride with the call to ministry. Church leaders need to realise that responsible self-care extending beyond spiritual disciplines is in truth essential for perseverance in ministry. This requires a correct understanding of the concept of self-care and a pastoral theological approach to it.

Firstly, responsible self-care is purposed at refuelling and revitalising one’s ministry over the long run (Fuller, 2018:8). It is not made up of quick releases which are earned as rewards for hard work done (Fuller, 2018:16). Instead, it involves the development of sustainable practices such as investing in healthy, nurturing relationships, reflection, and setting boundaries on one’s time (Fuller, 2018:16).

Secondly, self-care originates not from a primarily individualistic concern for the self, as some critics argue, but from the recognition that there is an undeniable link between personal and communal well-being (Fuller, 2018:5). Self-care involves “commitment to your optimal health and well-being for your own sake, for those who love and care about you, and in service of God’s kingdom” (Hamman as cited by Fuller, 2018:9). Church leaders who neglect their needs are at greater risk of giving in to temptation, experiencing burnout, and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms such as addiction. When this happens, the people and communities they are called to serve suffer. Therefore, self-care is in a

sense the church leader's ethical obligation (Fuller, 2018:15). Furthermore, responsible self-care acknowledges that self-care cannot occur in isolation and that communal support and relationships are indispensable for healthy functioning within ministry (Fuller, 2018:5).

Thirdly, church leaders need to realise that responsible self-care is fundamentally self-denying self-care (Burns *et al.*, 2013:21). Self-denying self-care involves laying down obsessive or slothful activities such as neurotic exercise, crazy working hours, and inconsistent sleeping habits and making sure to get to bed on time, saying no to work in order to get enough rest, implementing a healthy exercise routine, and eating a balanced diet (Burns *et al.*, 2013:21). Peter Brain (as cited in Burns *et al.*, 2013:21) defines responsible self-care as the wisdom to ensure, as far as humanly possible, an orderly and wise work schedule that lengthens and preserves a pastor's ministry.

Fourthly, responsible self-care is not a sign of pride but begins with the acknowledgement of one's limitations (Fuller, 2018:12).

- Church leaders need to strengthen their perceived behavioural control:
 - Church leaders' perceived behavioural control also contributes to the relationship between their attitudes and behaviour (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). A person's perceived behavioural control is constituted of a person's perception of the difficulty of the task and their ability to accomplish said task (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). It is important to note here that a person's perception of their ability is based on internal factors such as self-control and self-efficacy, as well as their assessment of external factors such as other's assistance, available resources, or spare time (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). If church leaders' perceived behavioural control is low, there might be a divide between their attitudes and behaviour.
 - Church leaders need to strengthen their perceived behavioural control by growing in terms of their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief that he or she can or cannot bring about a particular change or outcome (Yancey, 2018). It exerts a strong influence on how and even whether or not a person approaches a specific task or challenge (Yancey, 2018). It will also be a determining factor in whether or not a person perseveres even if they initially fail at a specific challenge or task (Yancey, 2018).

Self-efficacy is an aspect of the resilience competency called working with one's skills that is utilised in this study. Practical guidelines on its development will be offered later on in this chapter and will not receive further attention here.

- Church leaders need to strengthen their perceived behavioural control by growing in terms of their self-control. Self-control is recognised as a moderator in the attitude-behaviour relationship within the framework of the theory of planned behaviour (Redondo & Puelles, 2017:110). In other words, church leaders might be positive about the holistic development of resilience, but because they do not possess, or feel like they do not possess the required self-control, they will not consistently act according to their attitudes.

Fortunately, self-control is a pliable capacity that can be developed through regular practise (Redondo & Puelles, 2017:115). Small acts of self-control exercised in different life aspects contribute to the corresponding spheres of life (Redondo & Puelles, 2017:115–116). Growth in one sphere positively influences the other spheres as well (Redondo & Puelles, 2017:116). Self-control is one of the seven resilience competencies utilised in this study. Practical guidelines on its development will be offered later on in this chapter and will not receive attention here.

- From a theological perspective, Forney (2010:25) motivates that church leaders need to maintain a healthy balance between internal and external loci of control.

As discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.6.1.4), church leaders who have a purely external locus of control will tend to shift blame and see themselves as victims. They will not assume responsibility for the proactive development of resilience in their own lives. Although they might be positive about the holistic development of resilience, they will not follow through and implement the corresponding behaviours. External factors and people will be allowed to control their schedules. They might come across as very spiritual, relying or waiting on God to renew their strength, but this too stems from an unhealthy perception of their control.

On the other hand, church leaders with a purely internal locus of control will adopt a very humanistic approach to the development of resilience.

They will tend to feel overtly responsible and fail to acknowledge the role of the Holy Spirit in the process. They might “act out” when their sense of control becomes threatened and might resort to unhealthy means to maintain control.

The right balance between the two is not an exact science but is rather contextually driven, and it requires wisdom, humility, and wise council to achieve (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4). Church leaders need to paradoxically believe that they are able to control what happens to them whilst holding firmly on to the biblical truth that God is sovereign (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4). Church leaders need to acknowledge that some things will be outside of their control, and in these situations they need to rely on God and the help of others. At the same time, however, they need to believe that they are stewards of their own well-being and need to and can assume responsibility for it.

- Church leaders need to strengthen their attitude towards the holistic development of resilience:
 - Church leaders’ attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience, although positive, might not be strong enough to exert enough influence on their behaviour (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1).
 - Church leaders can strengthen their attitude towards the holistic and proactive development of resilience by strengthening their vested interest in it. Chapter 3 indicated that there might be an inconsistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship, because it might be that church leaders do not have a strongly vested interest in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). The empirical research conducted in chapter 2 seemed to indicate that although church leaders are generally positive about the holistic development of resilience, they might view resilience-cultivating strategies as important or having a clear benefit only when they are close to burnout or only when their survival in ministry is threatened.

Thus, in order to increase their vested interest in the proactive holistic development of resilience, church leaders need to understand that burnout, depression, mental and physical stress-related illness, compassion fatigue, etc. should not be considered and accepted as the norm for those called to ministry. Church leaders need to recognise that

they are not called to merely survive in ministry but to intentionally persevere with passion. It is in church leaders' passion and perseverance that the greatest impact for God's kingdom is made, especially in a time such as this, which, as discussed in chapter 1 (section 1.1.1), calls for radical transformation, innovation, and reorientation. Church leaders are called to be creative and intentional bringers of life-giving Good News and not as maintainers of systems that are often entrenched in tradition and ritual (Forney, 2010:2–3). When church leaders reflect the hope, joy, and peace found in Christ and not the state of the world around them, Christ is glorified and others are drawn in instead of repelled.

Furthermore, church leaders need to acknowledge the reality and immediate and long-term impact of phenomena such as burnout, compassion fatigue, depression, and other mental and physical stress-related illnesses in order to strengthen their vested interest in the need for the holistic development of resilience. They need to acknowledge that the impact extends beyond them to their families, their congregations, and the communities in which they serve. As the discussion in chapter 2 revealed (section 2.6), burnout, compassion fatigue, depression, and other mental and physical stress-related illnesses are not imaginations of a creative or weak mind, but they are very real phenomena rooted in experience rather than theory. As long as church leaders deny the reality and impact of these phenomena and the fact that it can indeed happen to them, they will not take the cultivation of resilience seriously. Reading books on other church leaders' experiences might be of great assistance here.

- Increased self-awareness can also contribute to the strengthening of church leaders' attitudes towards the holistic and proactive development of resilience (Kruger, 2016b:5). The greater the church leader's ability to cognitively reflect on his or her attitudes, the greater the possibility that it will influence behaviour (Kruger, 2016b:5).
- Church leaders need to make themselves accountable to a mentor, coach, peer groups, or trusted friend:
 - Research suggests that behavioural intention does not always translate into changed behaviour in areas where individuals can and have formed habits (Itzchakov *et al.*, 2018:2). A habit develops when a response is repeated in a given context and therefore habits are understood to be context-response associations (Itzchakov *et al.*, 2018:2). Once a habit has

formed, a person's perception of the associated context acts as a trigger, automatically activating the related response (Itzchakov *et al.*, 2018:2). People tend to resort to habitual behaviour when their self-control falters or their capacity to think is compromised (Itzchakov *et al.*, 2018:2). This is because when people's self-control falters or their thinking capacity is depleted, they are less likely to resist the triggered response, choose an alternative response, or refrain from responding at all (Itzchakov *et al.*, 2018:2).

Therefore, church leaders who struggle to consistently implement resilience-cultivating behaviours, even though their attitudes towards it are positive, will be wise to make themselves accountable to someone in cases where bad habits need to be overcome and replaced with good habits. It must also be said that the principle discussed above is true of both good and bad habits, thus, if church leaders choose to proactively develop good habits, they are more likely to resort to implementing these in times of stress or depletion. It is the disciplines already built into the life of a church leader before the storm hits that will act as lit buoys, guiding the church leader safely into the harbour (Cordeiro, 2009:11).

d. Guidelines for the holistic and proactive development of resilience

Below are practical guidelines for the development of the resilience competencies as identified and theologically grounded in this study. It is important to look at these resilience competencies as mutually interdependent; strengthening or neglecting the one will inevitably influence one or more of the other competencies as well. It is also important to note that strengthening the identified resilience competencies will include, or naturally result, in more effectively managing many of the internal issues that contribute to burnout as identified in chapter 3. Therefore, a separate section addressing these will not be added, but these issues will be intertwined in the discussion to follow below.

The role of the Holy Spirit cannot be undervalued in terms of the development of these resilience competencies. The Holy Spirit is sent as the "paraklētos", the Helper, Aider, Succourer, and Assistant (John 14:16–17) (Thayer, 2007:483). The Holy Spirit is the One who leads in all truth and gives the divine ability and strength to get rid of habits that pose as obstacles to one's perseverance and to form new habits that aid in one's perseverance.

Throughout the practical guidelines offered below, reference will be made to reflection activities. Reflection is a discipline that involves pausing to think intentionally (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48). In Scripture, biblical commands such as “consider”, “remember”, and “think” are found which convey the idea of reflection (e.g., Matthew 6:28; Matthew 16:9–11; Philippians 4:8) (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48). According to Finley (2018:1185), reflection is a tool utilised to influence one’s future by fostering understanding for one’s past and to measure one’s successes, failures, and near-misses. Intentional reflection is necessary for any learning process (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48). It allows one to examine, comprehend, and integrate assumptions, attitudes, core beliefs, knowledge, behaviour, and skills (Finley, 2018:1185). Therefore, it moderates reactive decision-making by grounding it in experience, making a more considerate and insightful approach possible (Finley, 2018:1185).

One does not grow wiser from experience alone, but experience and reflection lead to greater insight which in turn aids in growth and development (Cordeiro, 2009:97–98). In order for reflection to be of value, however, it needs to be a structured, intentional process of critical self-evaluation carried out in honesty, deliverance, and sincerity (Burns *et al.*, 2013:49; Finley, 2018:1185). Moreover, it must be characterised by a spirit of optimism (Finley, 2018:1185). Finally, reflection requires uninterrupted time for thinking and the self-discipline to avoid and eliminate, as far as possible, potential distractions (Finley, 2018:1186).

- **Reconciled past**

Developing the resilience competency of a reconciled past is twofold. It requires, firstly, that one embraces one’s past and secondly, that one forgives (Donders, 2017:33–41). Embracing one’s past and forgiveness are closely intertwined and mutually dependent; the one helps facilitate the other. Accepting one’s past makes it easier to forgive, and forgiving makes it easier to accept one’s past. Both, however, do not imply the justification of actions perpetrated against the individual or performed by the individual. The empirical research demonstrated that the church leaders who participated in this study regarded emotional disciplines such as forgiveness, and embracing and accepting one’s past, as important contributors to resilience. Emotional disciplines were considered the most important of the 11 items, with spiritual disciplines coming in second (chapter 2, section 2.8.7).

Nevertheless, in response to the statement of “I regularly take time to reflect on my successes and mistakes and the lessons learned”, 8,6% indicated that they rarely take time to do this. 15,7% indicated that they sometimes take time to do this, and 30% indicated that they often take time to do this. Moreover, in response to the statement of “I purposefully take time to work through a process of forgiveness towards those who have wronged me”, 4,3% indicated that they rarely take time to do this, 11,4% indicated that they sometimes take time to do this, and 21,4% indicated that they often take time to do this. The inconsistent implementation of this resilience competency places church leaders at risk.

Church leaders who do not embrace their past and/or foster unforgiveness in their hearts are emotionally unstable. An unresolved past becomes like unresolved debts that continuously make demands on people’s emotional resources and energy (Cordeiro, 2009:53). Adams (1970:151), a well-known Reformed author, also acknowledges the need to reflect upon the past, because, according to him, the past may indeed be exerting influence on the present. Reflecting on the past can assist in

- identifying non-biblical response patterns that are at the root of one’s present problems (Adams, 1970:151); and
- identifying unsettled sins that have present effects (Adams, 1970:152).

The church leader who regularly reflects on the past in a healthy manner and chooses to forgive follows the exhortation of the author of Hebrews 12:1 when he states that in order to run the race with perseverance, one needs to throw off everything that can hinder and the sins that so easily entangle (chapter 4, section 4.4.3.3). According to Donders (2017:36–38), reflection on the past can also positively reveal one’s strengths and skills, how one has persevered and overcame challenges, and what the motivating circumstances were that fuelled one’s determination. Thus, it also contributes to self-awareness, realistic optimism, and self-efficacy.

Below are some practical ways how the church leader can proactively implement the resilience competency of a reconciled past. It is important to start by reconciling and forgiving in light of one’s entire history, including one’s childhood. In addition to this, reconciling and forgiveness should become a regular activity since history is made on a daily basis.

With regard to embracing one's past, Donders (2017:37–38) suggests a reflection activity, described below. Take note that it has been expanded upon by the researcher:

- The church leader can start by dividing their life into major periods as they deem fit. It can be according to age or schooling, whatever seems more appropriate.
- The church leader should think of at least three successes and three crises for each period.
- The church leader should prayerfully analyze each success and each crisis. They should reflect upon the skills and strengths they demonstrated in each phase, what motivated them, the positive lessons learned, as well as the lies or fears that might have taken root about themselves, others, etc. as a result of these successes and crises. It is particularly in childhood that subconscious cognitive distortions are developed and dysfunctional roles adopted that eventually come to block a person's transformation (Kay, 2018:185).
- The church leader should take time to think about how these lies and fears influence their behaviour in the present and might influence their behaviour in the future.
- The lies and fears and the accompanying patterns of behaviour identified need to be measured against and replaced by God's biblical truth. The church leader should reflect on their findings with a mentor, trusted friend, or counsellor who can offer scriptural insight and keep them accountable.
- With regard to embracing one's past on a continual basis, the activity discussed can be implemented once at the end of each term.

With regard to forgiveness, the following practical guidelines are offered in light of the practical theological perspectives formulated by Lusse (2009:117–118). It is important to note that it is encouraged to embark on the process of forgiveness with the support and guidance of a counsellor, mentor, or trusted spiritually mature friend. This is especially important in situations where forgiveness is required for severe injustices committed, or in situations where the church leader finds it particularly difficult to forgive.

- The church leader should write the names of persons/groups, the associated incidents, and the resulting emotions on paper. In order to exercise the decision to forgive, the individual needs to come to grips with the injustices perpetrated against them or by them. All forms of denial

need to be dealt with and persons and incidents that trigger negative emotions need to be identified. It is very important that all undealt with emotions are confronted and written down.

Some Christians knowingly or unknowingly adhere to the idea that negative emotions are not appropriate for a Christian, much less a church leader. This will inevitably result in the suppression of negative emotions which might give rise to feelings of guilt which in turn may lead to psychological, neurological, and physical problems. Church leaders who desire to forgive need to refrain from this type of suppression and work with a counsellor or mentor, if necessary, to give expression to and deal with these emotions in a healthy manner.

- The person should then write down the implications of their decision not to forgive. They should think about the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual consequences. They should think of how it has and still could impact on their family, their ministry, their relationships, etc. Here it is important that the church leader identifies and accepts how they have contributed to the present problems or pain they experience because of the unforgiveness rooted in their hearts. The initial wrong might have caused immense hurt, but the decision not to forgive has only exacerbated this hurt and prolonged the negative implications thereof. This might not be easy to acknowledge, but by accepting responsibility, the church leader will also realise that it is within their power to be freed from the pain. The decision lies with them.
- The church leader should take time to reflect on and write down the hidden “treasures” that were cultivated as a result of the pain, for example, wisdom, perseverance, character, and faith. This can help the church leader to cognitively reframe the pain and make the forgiveness process easier.
- Donders (2017:39) suggests that the church leader tries to develop understanding for the perpetrator as another means to make the forgiveness process easier. This does not mean that one needs to justify the perpetrator’s actions, but trying to identify the possible hurts that contributed to the perpetrator’s actions could soften one’s heart.
- The church leader should focus on strengthening their relationship with God and renewing their thoughts in light of Scripture. Unforgiveness and

the related emotions jeopardise the church leader's relationship with God and gives Satan a foothold (chapter 4, section 4.5.1). Ultimately, church leaders should choose to forgive in obedience and gratitude towards God (chapter 4, section 4.5.1). Church leaders are people both in need of forgiveness as well as victims with the ability to grant forgiveness (chapter 4, section 4.5.1). Their decision to forgive should not be dependent or influenced by the response of the offender (chapter 4, section 4.5.1). The church leader needs to remember that to forgive does not mean one approves of the injustice committed, but it involves giving up one's rights to be bitter, to continue dwelling on the offence, and to get even (chapter 4, section 4.5.1).

- Besides working through their personal history, the church leader should make time on a weekly basis for the Holy Spirit to make them aware of any offence and unforgiveness that might have taken root in their hearts so that they can deal with it appropriately.

- **Realistic optimism**

Chapter 3 (section 3.6.1.1) indicated that some church leaders struggle to passionately persevere in ministry because of the manner in which they cognitively appraise stressors. Cognitive appraisal theory suggests that a person's subjective perception of the demands the situation places on them (primary cognitive appraisal), and a person's subjective perception of their self-efficacy, the available resources and control to cope with the situation (secondary cognitive appraisal), determine if a person will experience the stressful situation as a challenge with significant potential gain, or as a threat with significant potential loss (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1). Church leaders with personality predispositions such as perfectionism and neuroticism are more vulnerable to cognitively appraising stressors in an unrealistic or pessimistic manner (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.3).

The resilience competency named realistic optimism or hope, as understood from a theological perspective, speaks directly to strengthening the church leader's ability to cognitively appraise stressors in a manner that is healthier and stimulates growth. Biblical hope differs from a humanistic optimism in that it is rooted in the transcendent God, His covenant faithfulness and His ability to bring about His good purposes, and not in the immanent self (chapter 4, section 4.5.2).

One way in which the church leader can practically develop the resilience competency of realistic optimism is by growing in the emotion of gratitude (Donders, 2017:50). Scripture teaches to be thankful in all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The benefits of both experiencing and expressing gratitude in enhancing optimism is increasingly being evidenced by research (Finley, 2018:1189). Gratitude refers to a general state of appreciation or thankfulness, and it involves the appreciation of what one considers meaningful or valuable (Finley, 2018:1189).

The church leader can work on actively cultivating gratitude by developing the habit of daily or at least weekly gratitude journaling. Daily journal entries expressing gratitude have been shown to improve coping behaviours and mood (Finley, 2018:1189). Moreover, regular focused reflections aimed at stimulating gratitude help one define what is meaningful, valuable, and fulfilling (Finley, 2018:1189). Donders (2017:52) clarifies that gratitude is mobilised when, firstly, a person becomes aware of positive things, secondly, when a person gives expression to that awareness (by writing it down or actually thanking the person), and thirdly, when these activities are done on a regular basis. The church leader can incorporate gratitude journaling into their devotional time once or twice a week by implementing the following reflection exercise, which does not need to take more than 30 minutes – as noted above, reflection needs to be a structured process of critical self-evaluation (see explanation of reflection):

- Reflect on the week and write down three things for which you are thankful. Be specific.
- Reflect on the week and write down three people for which you are thankful. Specify why you are thankful for these people; it can be because of a trait you recognise in them or because of something they did or said. Try to express your gratitude to at least one of these persons in the week to come.
- Reflect on the week and write down five things about yourself for which you are thankful; it can be health-related, skill-related, personality-related, experience-related, etc.
- Take some time to reflect on and write down how God has recently provided for, protected, strengthened, and/or guided you.
- Take some time to reflect on your calling and the promises God has given you with regard to your personal life, family, and ministry. Remembering your divine commission will restore hope (Cordeiro, 2009:105–106).

In addition to gratitude, Donders (2017:52–53) indicates that healthy enjoyment of life also contributes to the resilience competency of realistic optimism. Church leaders need to find enjoyment outside of ministry. Chapter 3 (section 3.6.2.1) underscored the concern that church leaders run the risk of losing themselves and often get so consumed in ministry that they no longer have any hobbies, interests, or friends outside of ministry. The empirical research highlighted that the church leaders who participated in this study regarded a balance between work and life as important for resilience in ministry (chapter 2, table 2–5).

When dedicating time to enjoy life in a healthy manner, church leaders are filling the emotional, mental, and spiritual reservoirs from which they draw on a daily basis. When these reservoirs cannot keep up with the demands, church leaders are more likely to experience stressors and life in general as negative and exceeding their abilities. Thus, church leaders who find and make time for enjoyment in multiple areas of life are more likely to experience life as positive and approach it with optimism and hope.

The following activity is suggested to aid in the increase of one's healthy enjoyment of life. It is based on an activity set out by Cordeiro (2009:89–91):

- Take time to reflect on what fills and what drains your reservoirs (without guilt). Write these down. List at least six things/activities in each category. Ensure that the list of things that replenish you includes at least three activities that are outside the scope of ministry (e.g., fishing, cycling, painting, time with family, etc.).
- Take time to think about and write down how you can minimise the activities that drain you (e.g., can you delegate some of these tasks, can you decrease the amount of time dedicated to these tasks/people each week, can you adapt your approach to these tasks?)
- Take time to think about and write down how you can incorporate the things/activities that replenish you on a weekly basis. Think of what you can work into your daily schedule, what you can work into your weekly schedule, and what you can work into your monthly or annual schedule.
- Schedule the filling things/activities in your diary as you engage in your monthly and annual planning. These activities should not be understood as having less importance than work-related tasks that need to be fulfilled. Share these with a mentor, trusted friend, spouse, or coach so that they

can hold you accountable. Make a commitment not to move or change these things/activities unless there *really* is a crisis that cannot be handled at any other time.

Finally, church leaders can contribute to the development of the resilience competency of realistic optimism by cultivating a greater awareness of the cognitive distortions with which they appraise stressors and intentionally seeking truth.

- When faced with a stressor, take time to reflect and ask the following questions to cultivate a greater awareness of the common cognitive distortions as discussed in chapter 3 (section 3.6.1.1):
 - Am I making an arbitrary inference and drawing conclusions in the absence of all the facts?
 - Am I catastrophising this event/situation by believing that the worst possible outcome will or has occurred?
 - Am I looking at the situation/person through a black-and-white lens simply categorising it as good or bad without taking into consideration that it might be good and bad, or go from good to bad?
 - Am I reasoning primarily emotionally and not engaging in logical or rational thought?
 - Am I selectively abstracting negative information, overemphasising its importance and ignoring all other information that will foster a more balanced perspective?
 - Am I personalising this situation/person's behaviour/event without the supporting evidence? Was it really about me?
- When you realise that you are appraising the situation through a cognitive distortion, intentionally take time to prayerfully seek the truth so that you might adopt a more balanced and healthier appraisal of the situation, person, or event. Trust the Holy Spirit in this process and involve a mentor, coach, or trusted spiritually mature friend in this process if you find it difficult.

- **Working with one's skills**

From the descriptive task (chapter 2, section 2.5.2) and the interpretive task (chapter 3, section 3.6.2) it became clear that role expectations and how the church leader manages these determine to a great extent whether or not the church leader will be able to passionately persevere in ministry. Developing the resilience competency, namely working with one's skills, will increase the church leader's ability to more effectively navigate and temper role-overload, role-conflict, and role-ambiguity. Please note that earlier in this chapter (see section 5.4.1.2.a) guidelines for the church leader's cognition of their calling were discussed, and this needs to serve as the backdrop against which the resilience competency of working with one's skills is understood.

Working with one's skills is a twofold resilience competency: It firstly involves discovering one's unique skills and natural abilities, developing, and using these (Donders 2017:69). Secondly, it requires that one discovers and claims one's God-given purpose in life (Donders, 2017:69). This contributes to one's self-efficacy and ability to find meaning in everyday life and even in the hardships encountered. It further enables one to more effectively steward one's time and energy and deal with the unrealistic expectations of the self and others. Below are practical guidelines for developing the competence of working with one's skills:

Firstly, invest in discovering your unique skills and natural abilities. Donders (2017:71–72) makes a distinction between intrinsic and acquired skills. Intrinsic skills are inborn and come more naturally, so to speak (Donders, 2017:71–72). This does not mean that they do not require development and refinement, however, but a person will have a more natural inclination or ability in these areas. Using intrinsic skills results in an internal release of motivation and energy (Donders, 2017:72). Acquired skills, on the other hand, are skills that are learned through hard work and often out of necessity. These do not result in an internal release of motivation or energy (Donders, 2017:72).

Although being aware of one's intrinsic and acquired skills are both important, in relation to resilience, it is even more important that church leaders invest in discovering their intrinsic and natural skills and abilities. These are the skills and abilities God wisely endowed the church leader with in relation to their specific calling. Not that acquired skills do not contribute to the church leader's ability to

fulfil their calling, but it is the intrinsic skills God equipped the church leader with that release the much-needed energy and motivation they need to passionately persevere. Research has shown that being able to spend 20% of one's time using one's intrinsic skills and abilities within an environment considered motivating and a job considered meaningful, a person should generate enough energy and motivation to complete the remaining 80% of the job requirements (Donders, 2017:70).

In the discovery process of their skills, the church leader can do the following:

- Start by reflecting on past successes and crises. Reflect on and write down the skills and abilities – intrinsic and acquired – that contributed to the successes achieved and the crises overcome.
- Take some time to analyse the resulting list of strengths and abilities and determine which of these resulted in a spur of internal motivation and energy. The church leader should be able to recognise at least some of their natural strengths and abilities as these were likely part of what enabled and motivated them to achieve the successes and overcome the crises experienced (Donders, 2017:72).
- In addition to this reflection activity, there are a number of personality profiling tests the church leader can complete in order to foster a greater understanding of their natural strengths and abilities as enveloped in their personalities. One such test is the scientifically developed and validated new generation DISC test provided by Persolog²⁵. **xpand South Africa** also has a skills workbook that helps in discovering one's unique set of intrinsic skills by assessing 40 main skills²⁶. Finally, the Clifton's Strength Finder Profile²⁷ is another tool that has been effective in guiding people to discover and embrace their natural strengths and abilities.
- Note that as you engage in the journey of discovering your unique skills and abilities, you are also likely to gain more clarity on your weaknesses and limitations. This is also important and forms part of the process.

Discovering one's intrinsic skills and abilities, and recognising one's weakness and limitations, is a process that requires intentional investment and partnership with the Holy Spirit. Upon this journey of discovery, the church leader needs to guard against the pitfall of comparison. From the normative task (chapter 4,

²⁵ <https://xpand.eu/sa/disc/>

²⁶ <https://xpand.eu/sa/produkt/skills-workbook-what-is-your-unique-skill-set/>

²⁷ Buckingham, M.& Clifton, D.O. 2001. *Now, Discover your Strengths*. New York, NY: The New Press.

section 4.5.3), it was determined that God entrusted each one according to their mandate and expects that they add value where they are with what they have been given. Measuring against and comparing with others will impoverish the church leader and not yield greater understanding and insight (2 Corinthians 10:12) (Burns *et al.*, 2013:71). God does not place the emphasis on what a person does not have but on what a person has. Reasoning from this perspective will result in greater self-confidence and self-acceptance which will in turn increase other people's trust in the church leader.

Secondly, invest in developing your unique skills and natural abilities. The empirical research indicated that 5,7% of the participants neglect to implement self-efficacy strategies (five items), which includes disciplines such as setting goals for personal development and actively working towards these, investing time and resources in developing skills and abilities, and spending meaningful time with God outside of ministry responsibilities. The empirical research further demonstrated that the longer church leaders stay at a congregation, the less they make use of self-efficacy strategies (chapter 2, table 2–14).

The PCD programme of the AFM (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2) is a great initiative to keep church leaders accountable to engage in life-long learning, but if a church leader truly wishes to master their skills and unique abilities, this is not enough. Church leaders need to take responsibility to focus their energy in reading books, attending workshops, and investing time in developing their natural skills and abilities.

Although it is important to allocate energy towards strengthening areas of weakness, Buckingham and Clifton (2001:8) maintain, based on the Gallup study, that true personal development is not orientated towards damage control but rather towards personal elevation accomplished by maximising a person's strengths. Buckingham and Clifton (2001:7) conclude that it is a false assumption to believe that with enough training, any person can be competent in anything. They argue that each person's talents are unique and enduring and that a person's greatest room for growth is not in the areas of their weaknesses, but in the areas of their greatest strengths (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001:8). Being able to grow in one's unique skills and natural abilities releases energy and internal motivation, increasing productivity and satisfaction (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001:5; Donders, 2017:75). Therefore, the church leader should strive to manage

around their weaknesses and capitalise on their strengths (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001:28).

In the skills developing process, the church leader can do the following:

- Start by identifying three of your natural skills and abilities that you want to invest in throughout the year.
- Then identify one area of weakness or limitation that you feel is important for learning to manage better.
- Set goals for the year in relation to each of these intrinsic skills and abilities and the area you want to better manage. Indicate how you plan to work towards each goal (read a book, attend a workshop, invest an x-number of hours in exercising the skill or ability each week, get a relevant coach, etc.).
- Goals should be SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound).
- Share your goals with a mentor, coach, or spiritually mature friend who can keep you accountable. Track progress on a termly basis.

Thirdly, make time and reserve energy to use your unique skills and natural abilities. Cordeiro (2009:77) conveys the principle of the top 5% in his book *Leading on Empty*. Cordeiro (2009:77) explains that 85% of what a church leader usually spends their time on can likely be done by anyone and does not require any specialised training or skills (e.g., reading email, responding to messages, etc.). These tasks are usually of such a nature that they can easily be delegated to other personnel. Another 10% of a church leader's time is generally spent on activities someone with a certain degree of training and experience should be able to complete successfully (e.g., leading meetings, counselling, managing projects, etc.) (Cordeiro, 2009:77). Certain facets of these activities can be assigned to other personnel as well (Cordeiro, 2009:77–78). Only 5% of what a church leader does can only be done by them in light of their unique person, gifts, skills, abilities, experience, and calling (Cordeiro, 2009:78). These activities cannot be delegated to others and require the presence and intentional time and energy of the church leader (Cordeiro, 2009:78). Too often, the 95% ends up consuming and controlling the church leader's schedule, leaving little time or energy for the most important 5% which essentially underpins the 95% and gives it validity (Cordeiro, 2009:78). Moreover, church leaders often spend too much time functioning in areas of weakness and limitation simply because of expectations placed upon them by themselves and others.

In the process of using unique skills, the church leader can do the following:

- Reflect on what consumes your time each month. If necessary, take a month and write down what activities you are engaged in, hour by hour, in order to get an idea of what fills your schedule.
- Evaluate your schedule in light of the 5% principle explained above. How much of the activities you are currently engaging in forms part of the 85% that can easily be delegated to others? How much of the activities you are currently engaging in forms part of the 10% that can be delegated to someone with the relevant training?
- Evaluate your schedule in light of your limitations and weaknesses. How much of what you are doing falls into the scope of your weaknesses and limitations?
- Develop a practical plan to facilitate a delegation process. If necessary, discuss the matter with your church board. Clearly explain the logic behind your proposal and how you plan to fill the time that opens up in your schedule.
- When engaging in your monthly planning, try as far as possible to include activities that require the use of your intrinsic skills and abilities in your daily planning and minimise the activities that play in areas of weakness and limitation. Of course, the idea is not to avoid or run away from areas of weakness or limitation; every church leader will have to operate in these areas at some point or another. Nevertheless, intentionally working to delegate activities that fall in this scope acknowledges the church leader's need for others, acknowledges the strengths of others, frees the church leader to spend more time on their 5%, releases greater internal motivation, and ultimately yields more fruit and saves energy.

- **Problem-solving competence**

Church leaders are confronted with scenarios and conflicts that require them to be able to problem-solve and make important decisions on a daily basis. From the communication sciences, it was determined that the habitual utilisation of an avoiding, accommodating, or dominating conflict-management style without regard for the specific context leads to ineffective conflict management, which in turn negatively contributes to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.1). Similarly, the habitual utilisation of a dependent and avoidant decision-making style contributes to the church leader's struggle to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 3, section 3.6.3.2).

Strengthening the church leader's problem-solving competence will positively impact upon their conflict-management and decision-making style.

Problem-solving that contributes to resilience needs to be approached with a certain mind-set. From the normative task (chapter 4, section 4.5.4), it was determined that for the church leader, problem-solving needs to be framed within an understanding of God's incommunicable and communicable attributes as well as His providence. God is self-existent, immutable, infinite, omniscient, perfect in wisdom, good, sovereign, and He created and sustains His creation according to His purposes (chapter 4, section 4.5.4.1.a to 4.5.4.1.c). It is only when the church leader starts to grasp who God is that they can begin to take in the right stance in relation to the problems they will encounter in their lives (chapter 4, section 4.5.4).

Note that understanding the problems they encounter in light of who God is, should not lead the church leader to passivity, avoidance, or even dominance. As the discussion on locus of control aimed to explain (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.4), it is about actively co-labouring with God in order to accomplish His purposes. At times, co-labouring might involve waiting in prayer and fasting, but at other times, it might require prayerful, deliberate action timed at strategic moments.

In order to strengthen their problem-solving competence, the church leader can engage in the following activities:

- Exercise the discipline of prayer and fasting. Church leaders who engage in problem-solving in light of an understanding of who God is will recognise their dependence on God for guidance. As mentioned earlier, God is the source of wisdom and provision.
- Proactively increase your general knowledge about relevant issues through intentional reading. Broadening your general knowledge will increase the resources and information you are able to draw from when faced with problems. During your annual planning, decide on the books you will read throughout the year to come. Choose books based on topics that will contribute to your problem-solving abilities throughout the year. Make summaries of the books you read and save these so that they are easy to recover when needed.

- Refine your focus and assertiveness (Donders, 2017:58). Determining what is important or what you value and are passionate about is foundational in problem-solving. Values act as guiding principles in one's life (Kay, 2018:187; Maio *et al.*, 2003:287). It is easier to make choices when you have clearly determined what you have said yes to in life, in family, and in ministry (Cordeiro, 2009:81–82; Donders, 2017:60; Kay, 2018:187). Set aside time to determine what you are passionate about and what you value in terms of yourself, your family, and your ministry. Write these in front of your Bible, journal, or daily planner, put them up somewhere in your office where you will be reminded of them on a daily basis. Note: if your congregation has not determined what the passions and values are that they aim to uphold, make determining this a priority. Involve people from different levels in this process (e.g., members, staff, board members, elders, etc.). It will make decision-making and problem-solving on every level much easier.
- Commit to grow in your ability to improvise (Donders, 2017:62). The ability to improvise involves being able to think outside the box, the courage to try new innovative avenues, and seeking and developing multiple solutions before deciding (Donders, 2017:67). When something is not working, do not keep at it simply because it is the way things have always been done.
- Familiarise yourself with problem-solving models. In his book *A Kick in the Seat of the Pants*, Von Oech (1986) suggests the following creative problem-solving approach based on four roles:
 - The first role one is to assume is that of an **explorer**, and this part of the problem-solving process involves gathering information (Von Oech, 1986:25–52). Divergent thinking is encouraged in this phase, and the use of a variety of different information sources is encouraged.
 - The second role is that of an **artist** (Von Oech, 1986:58–86). This part of the process involves solution-creation. During this process, divergent thinking is encouraged and the goal is to generate as many as possible solutions based on the information gathered during the explorer phase without consideration for practicality.
 - The third role is that of **judge** (Von Oech, 1986:110). Here, convergent thinking is adopted and generated ideas are critically

evaluated. Questions related to resources, assumptions, timing, implications, etc. are asked. Crazy ideas are not simply thrown out but analysed for nuggets that could perhaps contribute to a solution.

- The final role is that of **warrior** (Von Oech, 1986:118). This role involves eliminating excuses and taking action to implement the solution developed.

Conn and McLean (2018:5–7) suggest a more complex model that consists of the following steps:

- Firstly, clearly define the problem. (What is the problem, really? What are its boundaries? What is the context of the problem?)
- Secondly, dissect the issues. (What are the contributors to the problem? What are the effects of the problem? Who are the role-players contributing to the problem? Who are affected by the problem? Where do you need to gather more information?)
- Thirdly, prioritise the identified issues. (Which issues have the biggest impact on the problem? Which issues can you affect or change the most? Identify and focus on these first. Which issues are outside of your control?)
- Fourthly, develop a work plan which includes timeframes. (How and by when will you gather more information on each identified component? What resources can you consult? Who can you consult that has encountered this challenge before? How can you utilise team members?)
- Fifthly, analyse. (What more have you learned about the nature of the problem? What are possible solutions and their scenarios? What are the costs involved? What are the possible implications and risks?).
- Sixthly, synthesise. (When taken together, what does the gathered information suggest? How can the possible solutions be combined? Consider which of the possible solutions can be considered the most cost-effective, least time-consuming, most effective on the long-term, etc.)
- Finally, communicate. (How and when can we communicate the new course of action?)

- Set aside time on a monthly basis to engage in problem-solving, even if there seems to be no pressing problems at the moment. Take time to imagine possible problematic scenarios that might intensify if not resolved. Effective problem-solving will always require an understanding of the problem at hand. Being able to engage in constructive analysis is therefore essential, but this requires time and once again intentional energy (Donders, 2017:60–61). Regularly engaging in analytic, implicative, and systematic thinking will train your brain and develop these intellectual abilities (Donders, 2017:61).

- **Discipline (self-control)**

In their book *Great by Choice*,²⁸ Collins and Hansen (2011: Chapter 3), well-known authors and lecturers who specialise in the field of business management and company growth and sustainability, highlights the principle of the so-called 20-Mile March. The principle is derived from a 1 400-mile hike to the South Pole that Roald Amudsen and his men successfully completed by hiking 20 miles each day, no more and no less (Matthews & Brueggemann, 2015:162).

The 20-Mile March principle is a lens through which to understand the concepts of discipline and self-control. It communicates the need for two self-imposed discomforts: firstly, the discomfort of a commitment to a constant level of performance regardless of adverse circumstances, and secondly, the discomfort of commitment to restraint in ideal or good circumstances (Matthews & Brueggemann, 2015:162). These self-imposed discomforts build one's self-confidence and ensure the availability of resources when adversity strikes, because it prevents depletion as a result of overexertion.

The 20-Mile March principle conveys the idea of a lifestyle of discipline in contrast to the idea of short bursts of discipline that are dependent on emotions and circumstance. A disciplined lifestyle needs to manifest itself in realistic rhythms than can be sustained over the long run (Donders, 2017:80). When Paul refers to running and strict training in keeping with his allegory of the Isthmian games in 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, he conveys the same idea of consistency despite adversity and self-restraint despite freedom in relation to perseverance in the Christian life (chapter 4, section 4.4.1).

²⁸ Collins, J. & Hansen, M.T. 2011. *Great by choice: uncertainty, chaos, luck – why some thrive despite them all*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Discipline in many ways underpins a resilient life. Without it the church leader will not consistently translate knowledge and attitude into corresponding behaviour. The normative task (chapter 4, section 4.5.5) stressed that self-control originates from an “inner strength” made possible by the Holy Spirit. In pursuit of an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, church leaders can come to enjoy discipline as a fruit as they continuously allow themselves to be led by the Spirit (chapter 4, section 4.5.5.b). Once again, the acknowledgment of one’s dependency on God should not foster passivity, but should inspire the church leader for responsible action in partnership and under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Below are practical guidelines on strengthening the development of the resilience competency of discipline by implementing strategies in three different areas. Of course, these are not the only areas that require discipline, but these areas are highlighted as a means to start strengthening the resilience competency of discipline.

It is further suggested that church leaders focus their energy by choosing only one of these areas (preferably the one that needs the most immediate attention) to concentrate on for the duration of six months before moving on to the next. Because of the interconnected nature of people’s lives, strengthening one area often naturally results in the strengthening of the others. The church leader is reminded of the 20-Mile March principle in relation to the goals they choose to set for themselves remembering that consistency is the key.

- Daily Devotions

The church leader’s ongoing spiritual formation is vital in relation to their ability to passionately persevere in ministry (Bledsoe & Setterlund, 2015:57; Burns *et al.*, 2013:18–19; Chandler, 2010:5; Chartrand, 2017:22; Grobbelaar, 2007:131; Searby, 2015:3). Burns *et al.* (2013:19) explain that spiritual formation refers to an ongoing process of spiritual maturation. It is often assumed that church leaders are always deeply connected with God due to the nature of their work, but research indicates that this is not always the case (Burns *et al.*, 2013:19; Chartrand, 2017:22; Searby, 2015:24). Of the participants in this study, 15,7% admitted that they only sometimes make time to connect with God in a meaningful way outside of ministry preparation (chapter 2, table 2–8).

Professional involvement with Scripture is not the same as intimate involvement during which Scripture is allowed to effect spiritual renewal within the church leader (Chartrand, 2017:24). Prayer, Bible study, worship, etc. can easily become nothing more than tools of the trade if church leaders are not intentional about their spiritual formation (Chartrand, 2017:22; Searby, 2015:19).

Moreover, spiritual formation needs to occur holistically, meaning that transformation into the likeness of Christ needs to occur in the head (orthodoxy), heart (orthopathy), and hands (orthopraxy) (Searby, 2015:20). Church leaders' hearts need to be continuously shaped by God, their minds need to be continuously renewed by God, and their hands need to be continuously used by God for His glory (Searby, 2015:20).

In order to grow in the implementation of spiritual disciplines and, in turn, the resilience competency of discipline, church leaders firstly need to change the way they think about daily devotional time since the wrong cognition can pose an obstacle. Church leaders need to cease legalistically viewing daily devotions as just another responsibility on the to-do list (Chartrand, 2017:26; Searby, 2015:21). Daily devotions are not something the church leader needs to do for God, but it is primarily about what God wants to do for the church leader (Gurgel as cited by Chartrand, 2017:26). In their daily devotions, God wants to serve church leaders and remind them of their pre-eminent calling as children of God (Chartrand, 2017:26). Through daily devotions, God aims to shape the heart of the church leader and renew the church leader's mind. From this identity and prerogative, God desires to give church leaders the wisdom and grace to serve Him in relation to the calling He has bestowed on them (Chartrand, 2017:26).

Secondly, church leaders need to identify daily time to set aside and schedule it into their diaries or calendars. It would be wise to be consistent and schedule the same time every day in order to cement the habit (Chartrand, 2017:28). When deciding on a time, the church leader needs to use wisdom and consider their energy levels and ability to focus (Chartrand, 2017:29). Each person has a limited amount of energy to invest each day according to different energy rhythms (Cordeiro, 2009:118); some experience bouts of high energy early in the morning

and others in the late afternoons (Chartrand, 2017:29). Church leaders need to identify when they function at their best and schedule important activities that require them to be at their best in these slots; less demanding activities should be reserved for slots where they experience lower energy levels (Chartrand, 2017:29). Recognising and working according to one's natural energy rhythms actually saves energy (Chartrand, 2017:29).

Thirdly, the church leader should remove distractions (Chartrand, 2017:30). The church leader must identify a quiet place and switch off all potential distractions. A phone call or a glance at one's emails can too easily suck one back into the rat race and divert one's energy.

Fourthly, adopt a structure for the devotional time. Consider finding a good Bible-reading plan or devotional book or commentary to supplement the reading of Scripture. The church leader can decide to use basic study methods such as SOAP, for example, which consists of four steps speaking to holistic spiritual formation (Cordeiro, 2009:119): 1) Scripture – read a portion of Scripture, 2) observation – determine what stands out in the portion of Scripture read, 3) application – meditate on this and determine how you will apply your observation, and 4) prayer – take some time to pray about your observation and application and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to you. This does not have to be adhered to in a legalistic manner, but it will assist with direction and purpose. Here it is important to note that quality is more important than quantity. Reading large portions of Scripture simply for the sake of reading without meditation and application will yield little fruit.

Finally, in addition to reading Scripture, devotional time can incorporate prayer, and praise and worship as well. Once again, some form of structure will add value in keeping the church leader focused and ensuring that the time spent is of quality. Praying some of the Psalms or working through a prayer book can be fruitful in this regard (Chartrand, 2017:31).

Take some time to work through the guidelines offered above, and compile a plan in terms of developing a discipline of daily devotions.

Share this with a mentor, coach, spiritually mature friend or peer group and ask them to hold you accountable to it.

- Healthy exercise

The benefit of physical exercise in terms of one's well-being is widely acknowledged (Chandler, 2010:5; Cordeiro, 2009:130–131; Donders, 2017:80–83; Emmons, 2015:62; Joubert, 2018:268). Moreover, cultivating a healthy exercise routine can greatly contribute to the resilience competency of discipline in the church leader's life. Once again, the 20-Mile March principle applies. A healthy exercise routine is characterised by consistency; it is not neurotic or obsessive. Unfortunately, physical activity seems to be an area in which church leaders are faltering. According to the empirical research conducted, 42,8% of the participants indicated that they never, rarely, or sometimes exercise for at least 30 minutes three times a week, and 31,4% admitted that they are not currently at a healthy weight (chapter 2, table 2–8).

The following are some practical guidelines that could assist the church leader in cultivating the discipline of exercise. For more in-depth information on exercise and nutrition, however, church leaders need to consult the relevant resources and professionals.

Firstly, start small. Church leaders need to be realistic in the goals they set for themselves. Start with 30-minute sessions twice a week and gradually increase the time and amount of sessions per week. The ideal would be to eventually engage in intentional physical activity on a daily basis.

Secondly, make it enjoyable. Implementing the discipline of exercise will be much easier if church leaders pick something they enjoy doing and perhaps even get a friend or spouse involved to do it with them (Cordeiro, 2009:132–133). Exercising with someone keeps one accountable and more motivated.

Thirdly, get the proper nutrition in order to sustain this newly established exercise routine.

Take some time to work through the guidelines offered above and compile a plan in terms of developing a discipline of healthy exercise. Share this with a mentor, coach, spiritually mature friend or peer group and ask them to hold you accountable to it.

- Rest

It might seem strange, but getting enough rest also requires discipline, especially in a day and age where the work never seems to be done. Unfortunately, the discipline of getting enough rest seems to be widely neglected, even though God set the example of rest (Genesis 2:3) and commanded it in His perfect wisdom (Exodus 20:10) (Burns *et al.*, 2013:53; Chartrand, 2017:2; Swart, 2017:iv,5). Out of the participants of this study, 45,7% indicated that they never, rarely, or sometimes take off enough time and avoid making a habit of working more than 45 hours per week (chapter 2, table 2–8). Moreover, 15,7% can be categorised in Phase 1 of burnout: Hyperactivity (six items) (chapter 2, figure 2–2).

For some or other reason, society and even the church shun people who break the commands not to kill and not to steal, but herald those who break the command to keep the Sabbath. Business should not be equated with success and a purpose-filled life (Swart, 2017:11). Muller (as cited by Swart, 2017:96) is of the opinion that negligence of a day of rest is like an act of violence against oneself, one's family, and one's community because of the associated long-term implications. Fatigue and exhaustion make a person more susceptible to phenomena such as worry, burnout and depression and causes a negative ripple effect that extends beyond the individual's emotions, cognitive functioning, and physical well-being (Cordeiro, 2009:122; Donders, 2017:86; Swart, 2017:iv,4,105).

Healthy rest is an instrument of restoration (Psalm 23:3) and affords the opportunity to see that life and the fruit of one's labour is good (Swart, 2017:6). From an ethical perspective, rest also safeguards human dignity (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). Moreover, rest promotes a lifestyle of reflection and gratitude (Swart, 2017:100). Finally, rest also contributes to one's physical well-being (Swart, 2017:103). The following are practical guidelines for growing in the discipline of healthy rest:

Firstly, ensure that you get enough sleep each night. It is recommended that adults get between seven and eight hours of sleep each night (Donders, 2017:84). In order to develop a healthy sleeping pattern, the following might be of value (Donders, 2017:85–87):

- Commit to cultivating a healthy sleep pattern along with your spouse; this will make implementation easier. Aim to go to bed at the same time each night.
- Develop a routine to prepare your body and mind for sleep – avoid consuming any large meals, alcohol, or caffeine an hour before bed, avoid any mentally stimulating activities such as watching the news, reading email, engaging in difficult conversations, etc. an hour before bed, avoid screen-time an hour before bed, avoid consuming too much liquid three hours before bed.
- Create the optimal sleeping environment – use earplugs if needed, invest in a good mattress, invest in proper security measures to facilitate peace of mind, ensure that the room is completely dark because the human eye pick up on changes in light even when asleep, avoid working in your bedroom since your brain will eventually associate your bedroom with work, ensure that your bedroom is well ventilated, avoid having cell phones, laptops, etc. in your bedroom, rather use an old-school alarm clock, and keep a pen and paper next to your bed so that if you struggle to fall asleep or wake up during the night thinking of something important, you can write it down and go back to sleep without the nagging fear that you might forget it.

Secondly, take a weekly Sabbath day. A Sabbath day is distinguished from a day off from work used for household chores and running errands; it involves stopping all work and recalibrating spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically (Burns *et al.*, 2013:53). At its most fundamental level, the Sabbath helps the church leader to grow in humility and trust in God (Leviticus 23:31–32) (Burns *et al.*, 2013:53; Cordeiro, 2009:126–127).

By taking off, the church leader surrenders control and chooses to believe that God will sustain His creation and His purposes without the church leader's continuous hands-on involvement (Burns *et al.*, 2013:53;

Cordeiro, 2009:126–127). A Sabbath day weans the church leader off unhealthy expressions of the need to be needed such as workaholism, perfectionism, and control (Cordeiro, 2009:126). The following are some things to consider in relation to taking a weekly Sabbath day:

- Preferably, choose a day early in the week since a day later in the week might result in one's mind being plagued by responsibilities in relation to the weekend's service(s) (Cordeiro, 2009:168).
- Schedule and plan your Sabbath day intentionally; spend extra time in devotions and reflection, do not overload your day, but make sure it includes some activities that fill your reservoirs in terms of your personality and interests, limit the use of technology, and set aside time for silence (Cordeiro, 2009:168–169; Donders, 2017:89–92; Swart, 2017:110).
- Have your calls forwarded to the office and switch off your phone. Avoid going into the office or anything work-related that might suck you back into the frenzy of everything that needs to happen.
- Make sure your board and team understand the need for a Sabbath day and know when it is your Sabbath day. Intentionally cultivate a culture that respects Sabbath days. It is a Godly command, after all. Do not entertain thoughts and feelings of guilt or work. Remind yourself of the importance of rest and that God in His wisdom commanded it and also gave it as a gift to His creation.

Take some time to work through the guidelines offered above and compile a plan in terms of developing a discipline of rest. Share this with a mentor, coach, spiritually mature friend or peer group and ask them to hold you accountable to it.

- **Self-awareness**

Self-awareness, as linked to resilience, refers to a healthy awareness and understanding of the following (chapter 1, section 2.4.2.f):

- Your story, the successes, crises, and the unresolved matters in your life, and how they might be exerting a conscious or subconscious influence on your current actions and decisions;
- your strengths and weaknesses, your potential and limitations;

- your understanding of others and their perception of you as well as your attitudes and responses towards them;
- the positive and negative emotions you experience and how they influence your behaviour (emotional intelligence); and
- your passions, beliefs, and values.

A glance at the components of self-awareness described above will reveal that the cultivation of some of the previous resilience competencies already contributes a great deal to growth in the resilience competency of self-awareness. For example, implementing the practical guidelines offered in relation to the resilience competency of a reconciled past will strengthen one's awareness of their story and how this exerts influence on their current behaviour and actions. Implementing the practical guidelines offered in relation to the resilience competency of working with one's skills will increase one's awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, potential, and limitations. Implementing the practical guidelines offered in relation to the resilience competency of problem-solving increases awareness of one's values and passions.

Since these aspects have already been discussed, they will not receive further attention here. Other components deemed important for the practical development of the resilience competency of self-awareness, however, will be discussed below.

Firstly, the church leader who aims to grow in self-awareness needs to develop in the area of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence consists of four abilities related to one's emotions, namely the ability to perceive, the ability to understand, the ability to manage, and the ability to utilise emotions (chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2).

Out of all the church leaders who participated in this study, 28,6% indicated that they never, rarely, or sometimes make time to reflect on their emotions (chapter 2, table 2-8). From the interpretive task conducted in chapter 3 (section 3.6.1.2), the benefit of emotional intelligence in relation to the church leader's ability to persevere was clearly emphasised.

Any person at any age can grow in the skills associated with emotional intelligence by learning and applying them (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:11).

Below are some practical first steps the church leader can take in order to grow in emotional intelligence:

- Expand your emotional vocabulary. Generally, people tend to have a limited range of words they regularly use to describe how they feel (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:47). Developing one's emotional vocabulary aids in the correct verbalisation and in turn appropriate management of emotions (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:47).

A person who cannot discern and acknowledge what they are feeling, positive and negative, will not be able to identify or manage the thoughts and needs that gave rise to the emotional state in the first place (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:47; Kay, 2018:187). Leaving emotions unacknowledged and unlabelled is likely to lead to the intensification of the emotion, making proper management all the more difficult (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:46).

Using a wheel of emotion to start, such as the one developed by Geoffrey Roberts illustrated in figure 5-1 below, can be very helpful in expanding one's emotional vocabulary and labelling emotions that are experienced more specifically (Cruise, 2017). The idea is to start by identifying the emotion that is felt using one of the basic emotions indicated in the middle and then to move outwards narrowing it down from there.

Here it is also important to discern between the primary emotion and the secondary emotions that flow from it (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:56). Usually, secondary emotions are more easily identified than the primary emotions which gave rise to them (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:56). It is the primary emotions, however, that reveal the unmet emotional need, and therefore it is important to trace secondary emotions back to their source of origin, so to speak (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:56).

To provide a practical example of this, a woman might experience anger because her husband is late for a dinner reservation in celebration of their anniversary. Her anger, however, stems from her feelings of neglect and loneliness. Thus, anger is the secondary emotion that is more visibly expressed, but loneliness and neglect are the primary emotions that are less obvious.

emotions as well as emotions experienced throughout the week. The steps discussed above can be slightly adjusted for this purpose:

- 1) Take a moment to prayerfully reflect: What emotions are you currently experiencing? What emotions have you experienced throughout the week? Take a pen and paper and write these down.
 - 2) Determine whether or not these are primary or secondary emotions. If they are secondary emotions, take time to establish the primary emotions that gave rise to them.
 - 3) Determine whether or not these emotions are new or recurring.
 - 4) Determine where you have felt these emotions before and how often do you feel them; is there a pattern?
 - 5) Reflect on the stimuli that gave rise to these emotions this week.
 - 6) What thoughts or needs triggered the stimuli that gave rise to the specific emotions?
 - 7) Evaluate your thoughts and needs in light of Scripture.
 - 8) Evaluate your response: What did you do well? What will you do differently or improve on the next time you feel the same way? What can you do to deal with the unmet need or negative thought pattern, if any exist?
 - 9) Share your emotions and your plan of action with someone.
- The guidelines provided are by no means extensive and focus mainly on identifying and understanding one's own emotions and not the emotions of others. Therefore, it is highly recommended that church leaders who desire to truly strengthen the resilience competency of self-awareness make it a priority to attend workshops, read books, or work through workbooks²⁹ that focus on the area of emotional intelligence.

Secondly, church leaders can grow in terms of the resilience competency of self-awareness by growing in their understanding of their personality profile. Mention was already made of this in relation to the resilience competency of working with one's skills, but gaining more insight into your personality can contribute to a better understanding of what drains you, what recharges you, what irritates you, how you tend to respond to and handle conflict, how you tend to relax, what type of environment tends to motivate and demotivate you, your perception of and relationship with time, how you tend to function in a team, how you tend to respond to stress, your expectations regarding yourself and others, and the list goes on (Niemann, 2017:vii-x).

²⁹ De Klerk-Weyer, R. & Le Roux, R. 2008. Emotional intelligence: a workbook for your well-being. 2nd ed. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

A better understanding of one's personality will lead to a greater acceptance of oneself and others. People who accept themselves are more confident, not as caught up in other people's opinions of them, can more easily accept their mistakes and focus on the present, are more effective and productive, are more assertive, can more easily take calculated risks, are less likely to fall prey to comparisons, and understand that they are worthy despite failure or success (De Klerk-Weyer & Le Roux, 2008:23).

Thirdly, church leaders can grow in terms of the resilience competency of self-awareness by inviting and allowing the Holy Spirit to convict them of hidden sins, disobedience, self-deception, and pride. As the normative task indicated (chapter 4, section 4.5.6.3), the Fall resulted in man's heart becoming deceitful and corrupt. Therefore, all believers are susceptible to the trap of being deceived and hiding from or justifying their sins and shortcomings (Searby, 2015:21).

The weight of the responsibility to lead and set an example, however, makes church leaders even more susceptible to self-deception (Searby, 2015:21). The role of the Holy Spirit in this process cannot be overlooked or undermined (chapter 4, section 4.5.6). The following are practical guidelines the church leader can implement in order to deal with areas of self-deception:

- Make time on a weekly basis to pray and invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart. It might be wise to do this on your Sabbath day during your devotions to ensure that you have enough time to wait on the Holy Spirit.
- Sincerely ponder the following questions: Are there any habitual sins in my life that I have been ignoring or justifying? Have I been disobedient to anything I feel God's Spirit led me to do? Have my words, actions, or attitudes hurt my fellow human beings in any way? Is there any bitterness or unforgiveness in my heart towards anyone? Is my pride in check?
- When the Holy Spirit reveals something to you, stop and take time to repent. If necessary, determine how you will ensure that you stay in the light in relation to this area.
- Identify a mentor, coach, or trusted spiritually mature friend towards whom you can confess (James 5:16). Invite them to keep you accountable and provide you with honest feedback when they detect blind spots or hints of self-justification.

- **Healthy relationships**

A recurring theme throughout this study was the importance and need for life-giving relationships in relation to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry (chapter 2, sections 2.5.2.6.b to 2.5.2.6.c; chapter 2, section 2.5.2.8; chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3, 3.6.3.1, and 3.6.4.2.e; chapter 4, section 4.5.7). Unfortunately, this also seems to be one of the resilience competencies church leaders struggle to cultivate, especially in regard to friendships outside of ministry and mentors.

The majority seems to understand that social resources are important (chapter 2, table 2-7). Out of the participants, 48,6% indicated that they never, rarely, or sometimes have a mentor with whom they communicate at least once a month (chapter 2, table 2-8). In addition, 18,7% of the church leaders who participated in this study indicated that they never, rarely, or sometimes make sure they spend enough quality time with their families (chapter 2, table 2-8).

From sociology, it was pointed out that a person has different relational needs which are usually fulfilled by different types of relationships (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3). These are: the need for attachment, which is usually fulfilled by an intimate partner or spouse, the need for social integration, which is usually fulfilled by friends, the need for nurturance, which is usually fulfilled by an individual's children, the need for worthiness, which is usually fulfilled by an individual's colleagues or co-workers, the need for alliance, which is usually fulfilled by relatives and family, and the need for guidance, which is usually fulfilled by persons who act as mentors or teachers (chapter 3, section 3.6.2.3). Of course, some relationships might address more than one need, but this framework conveys the idea that church leaders cannot exist in isolation and need a variety of relationships in their lives in order to flourish.

Firstly, the church leader who aims to grow in the resilience competency of healthy relationships needs to actively invest in empathy, trust, and respect. Simply put, empathy refers to a person's ability to take an active interest in others and to recognise, understand, and appropriately respond to their emotional states (Rahim *et al.*, 2018:490). By growing in empathy, church leaders will also grow in their social skills (Rahim *et al.*, 2018:490). Trust and respect act as filters in the communication process (Donders, 2017:112). When there is distrust and disrespect, misunderstanding is almost guaranteed (Donders, 2017:111). The

following are a few practical first steps that church leaders can take and attitudes they can cultivate in order to invest in empathy, trust, and respect:

- Be genuinely interested in and ask about people's stories. Zantry *et al.* (2012:22) argue that social intelligence, at its most fundamental level, requires that people recognise the humanity of others. Often, people focus on the behaviour of others and never stop to think why they do what they do or who they are beyond the roles that they fulfil.
- Grow in your understanding and appreciation of the personality profiles of others. Learning to understand personality profiles will improve your ability to relate, communicate, motivate, influence, and handle conflict and tension situations with others (Seiwert & Friedber, 2013:11). Moreover, it will foster a greater appreciation for the strengths of others and a greater respect and tolerance for individual differences and weaknesses (Seiwert & Friedbert, 2013:11,69).
- Grow in self-trust and self-respect (Donders, 2017:113–114). This will allow church leaders to be more open, self-confident, and respectful in their behaviour towards others (Donders, 2017:113–114). When a person does not trust or respect themselves, it is more difficult to trust and respect others, because fear, insecurity, and cynicism will govern relationships and act as obstacles to communication (Donders, 2017:113–114). Much of what has been discussed in this chapter regarding the church leader's cognition of their calling and the development of the various resilience competencies will contribute to growth in these two areas when implemented.
- Remind yourself that you need people. When humans get hurt in relationships, the natural response is often to withdraw, but the normative task emphasised that humans were created for relationship with others (chapter 4, section 4.5.7). Moreover, no one church leader possesses all the required skills, talents, abilities, knowledge, and experience to ensure their passionate perseverance in ministry.

Secondly, church leaders need to intentionally invest time in their spouses and children. Here it is important to invest correctly. Gary Chapman developed the concept of the five love languages. According to Chapman (as cited by Donders, 2017:187), people have a preferred way in which they experience and express love and appreciation. The five love languages are: 1) Words of affirmation, 2)

Quality time, 3) Receiving gifts, 4) Acts of service, and 5) Physical touch (Donders, 2017:107). Discovering each other's love languages is a means to increase mutual understanding and communicate love and appreciation more effectively (Donders, 2017:187). Gary Chapman offers a free online test³⁰ for couples and has also written books for couples³¹, children³² and teens³³. The following are some practical guidelines for investing in family:

- Make an effort to discover and discuss each other's love languages. Take the free online test, or make time to sit and find out when each person feels loved and appreciated. Write each family member's name and love language down and put it up somewhere where it is visible and serves as a reminder. Each member of the family must aim to do something on a weekly basis for every other member of the family in relation to their respective love languages.
- Eat together as a family on a daily basis. Switch off the television and phones and use this time to talk.
- Make an effort to discover each other's personality profiles.
- Schedule weekly dates and monthly check-ins with your spouse. These dates do not have to involve going out every time but need to be cognisant of each spouse's love language and involve time alone, away from kids and responsibilities.

Identify five areas or needs that are important for ensuring the vitality of your relationship (e.g., relationship with God, quality time, sex, words of affirmation, finances, etc.). Check in with each other on a monthly basis in terms of these five areas or needs.

This exercise is not designed to shift blame but to ensure that unfulfilled needs and frustrations do not begin to fester. It should be approached with a mind-set of teamwork and the mutual desire to fulfil each other's needs and minimise frustrations.

³⁰ <https://www.5lovelanguages.com/>

³¹ Chapman, G. 2016. The 5 love languages: the secret to love that lasts. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

³² Chapman, G. & Campbell, R. 2016. The 5 love languages of children: the secret to loving children effectively. 4th ed. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

³³ Chapman, G. 2016. The 5 love languages of teenagers: the secret to loving teens effectively. 4th ed. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Thirdly, the church leader needs to intentionally invest time in friendships. Every friend does not have to be a “best friend”. Donders (2017:118–121) explains that there are different types of friends and that this is important to recognise in order to come to value each for the respective role they play.

The relaxed friend, for example, is the one who has given their unconditional “yes” to another person (Donders, 2017:119). They do not make one feel obligated to do or say something when around them (Donders, 2017:119). They put one at ease and enabling one to talk about the important and the trivial things in life (Donders, 2017:119). Then there is the motivating friend who draws a person’s focus towards their strengths and abilities (Donders, 2017:119). They are the cheerleaders who find joy in a person’s accomplishments and progress (Donders, 2017:119). In addition to relaxed and motivating friends, there are friends who invest in another person’s growth by providing them with direct and honest feedback (Donders, 2017:119). This type of friend is not afraid to be honest and the relationship is of such a level of trust that their honesty is not perceived as judgement (Donders, 2017:119). Finally, there are the partner friends who share in some of one’s passions. They are like brothers in arms who fuel a person’s enthusiasm and willingly go to battle together for the cause they share (Donders, 2017:120).

Take some time to reflect on the people in your life. Who can be classified as one of the friends described above? Who has potential to become one of the types of friends described above? How can you actively invest in your friendship with them? Commit to scheduling time once a month with a friend or potential friend in order to deepen the relationship.

Donders (2017:121–122) warns that some friends can drain instead of inspire. Due to the fact that church leaders have limited resources and time, it is important that they are intentional in their friendships. It might sound harsh, but why voluntarily waste time with people who are not contributing to your resilience? This is not said in relation to ministry responsibilities but in relation to the church leader’s private life. The following are friendships the church leader needs to avoid (Donders, 2017:121–122):

- The leech. These are people who have adopted a victim mentality in life and have a draining effect on those around them. These are not people who are simply going through a bad patch; they consciously and

subconsciously are in the habit of transferring their responsibilities to others.

- The discourager. These people are orientated towards the negative and sow doubt instead of optimism and hope by constantly emphasising it.
- The excessive critic. These people secretly enjoy your failures and are one-sidedly focused on your weaknesses and limitations. This can be because of narcissism or pride, or because of a deep-seated insecurity and dissatisfaction with themselves.
- The manipulator. These are people that are artists when it comes to getting their way. They use subtle tactics to create fear and place you in a deadlock.
- The aggressor. Aggressors are people with a type of attitude and mannerism that belittles and pressures others. They might not respond well to boundaries and generally give off energy that is not positive or constructive.

Take some time to reflect on the friends in your life. Do you recognise any of the behaviours described above? Prayerfully discern whether or not you are to continue pursuing those relationships. You can change the purpose of spending time together from friendship to ministry opportunity if you feel prompted by the Holy Spirit to do. However, do become intentional about the relationship instead of labelling it friendship when it really is not life-giving and therefore not contributing to your resilience.

Because healthy relationships are a two-way street, take some time to ask yourself what type of friend you are in light of the discussion related to the friendships one needs and those one needs to avoid. If necessary, identify areas you need to grow in and practical ways to do so to become a life-giving friend.

Fourthly, the church leader needs to intentionally invest time in a mentor relationship. This point really cannot be stressed enough. From the normative task, it was highlighted that mentoring is a biblical concept (chapter 4, section 4.5.7.9). Jesus Himself modelled the idea of mentoring in His relationship with the disciples (chapter 4, section 4.5.7.9). Church leaders who actively seek out mentors and cultivate this type of relationship can avoid making costly mistakes in relation to their personal lives and ministries that could have been avoided. Furthermore, they safeguard their own lives and doctrine by allowing someone to hold them accountable (chapter 4, section 4.5.7)

Before approaching someone to ask if they would be willing to enter into a mentor relationship with you, it is important to understand what a mentor does. The following are some of the aspects of a mentor's role. Mentors support and encourage their mentees in discovering their unique gifts, abilities, and calling (Donders, 2017:124). They assist their mentees in developing a structured realistic growth plan and keep their mentees accountable in terms of it (Donders, 2017:124). Mentors offer guidance and constructive and critical feedback in relation to their mentees' professional and personal life (Donders, 2017:124). They willingly share their own experiences, wisdom, attitudes, values, and knowledge with their mentees (chapter 4, section 4.5.7). The following are some practical steps that can be implemented by the church leader who is serious about investing in a mentor relationship:

- Take some time to reflect on the areas of your personal life or ministry in which you need development. Think about people you know who you consider competent or more experienced in the areas you have identified. Just like types of friends, you can have types of mentors. One mentor relationship might strengthen you in the area of management and leadership, whereas another might strengthen you in terms of morality. Important note: when it comes to mentoring in relation to morality, make sure that the person you approach is someone safe (preferably not in your congregation) and a person of integrity.
- Approach these people and be clear about your intentions and the areas in which you desire their mentorship. If they cannot commit to such a relationship, do not be discouraged; approach someone else.
- Decide together on a structure according to which the mentoring will occur and develop clear goals. Meetings need to be purposeful.
- Decide together on how often you will meet or communicate. In this digital age, platforms such as Skype affords one the opportunity to engage in mentorship relationships with people who are on the other side of the world. It is suggested that sessions take place at least once a month.
- Decide together on the period over which the mentoring will occur. Usually, a mentoring relationship lasts between two to three years, but it can also become a lifelong relationship.
- Commit to the process and do not waste the mentor's time.

Working through the information and practical guidelines discussed in this chapter so far can easily give rise to being overwhelmed by the seemingly

colossal task that is cultivating a resilient lifestyle. Church leaders might find themselves asking questions such as: Where do I even start? or Is this even doable considering my already hectic schedule?

Growing in a resilient lifestyle is a marathon and not a sprint. Any change requires loss. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following first steps for the church leader who is serious about growing in a resilient lifestyle and passionate perseverance in ministry:

- a. **xpand** has a Resilience Scan³⁴ which involves a self-assessment of the seven competencies discussed in this study. As a first step, complete this self-assessment in order to identify which of the seven resilience competencies requires the most immediate attention. Decide on the two resilience competencies you need to strengthen and intentionally focus on them for an entire year. Be wary of setting unrealistic goals since this will only demotivate you. Remember the 20-Mile March principles as discussed under the resilience competency of discipline.
- b. Make time to reflect on and evaluate your progress in terms of the goals you set on a monthly basis. If necessary, adjust goals so that they are more realistic.
- c. Do not attempt to work on this alone. Identify a coach, mentor, a trusted spiritual friend, or even start a peer group or meet with your team if your team culture is of such a nature that you will feel comfortable to do so. Schedule and stick to monthly meetings for the purpose of sharing experiences and mutual accountability.
- d. Extend grace to yourself and allow yourself humour and freedom when you fail at times in changing your lifestyle (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48). Replacing old habits with new, healthier ones is never easy (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48). Any change will involve a measure of loss as old practices need to cease in order to make way for new practices (Burns *et al.*, 2013:48).

Although this study focuses on the person of the church leader, it does not fail to recognise the fact that entire systems contribute to the current challenge experienced in relation to church leaders' ability to passionately persevere in ministry. Local church boards as well as the AFM can play a vital role in the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

³⁴ <https://xpand.eu/sa/services/personal-development/resilience-training/>

Therefore, the researcher deemed it important to briefly touch on some aspects in relation to the church board and AFM.

5.4.2 The church board of the local congregation

5.4.2.1 Hermeneutical interaction between preceding chapters

a. Local church boards often contribute to the church leader's struggle to persevere

- The empirical research found that 46,38% of the respondents find it difficult to develop resilience (chapter 2, table 2–6) due to external issues such as the challenges and demands, pressures to perform, expectations, lack of support, and time constraints associated with ministry.
- Perspectives from psychology shed light on the attitude-behaviour relationship and indicated that a church leader's perceived behavioural control might account for the divide between their attitudes and behaviour (chapter 3, section 3.5.1.1). If church leaders feel like they do not have control over their schedules or the required resources, they might neglect implementing resilience-cultivating strategies even though they are positive towards the holistic and intentional development of resilience.
- Perspectives from sociology, as discussed in chapter 2 (section 3.6.2.1), indicated that role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload also contribute to work stress which in turn affects the church leader's resilience.
- The normative task emphasised that perseverance needs to be framed within the ethical principle of inherent human dignity and worth (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). Man's dignity is ultimately not earned or found in his work but resides in the fact that God created him in His image and likeness (chapter 4, section 4.4.5).

In other words, the church leader is not called to self-denial, which is not founded on ethical principles such as equal regard, mutual respect, equality, etc. (chapter 4, section 4.4.5). Work and perseverance in ministry need to be approached from a perspective that recognises that church leaders are not machines and acknowledges the holistic needs of church leaders (chapter 4, section 4.4.5).

5.4.2.2 Pragmatic perspectives on church boards in relation to the church leader's call to passionate perseverance

a. Local church boards often contribute to the church leader's struggle to persevere

- Most professions have a built-in defence mechanism that sets clearly-defined boundaries between being on and off duty (Van der Westhuizen & Koekemoer, 2015:2). As indicated in chapter 2, ministry, unfortunately, does not have this defence mechanism, making it difficult for many church leaders to keep up with the weekly routine tasks as well as the often intrusive and untimely demands and problems of others.

Church boards can contribute to church leaders' perseverance by ensuring that they are allowed and take enough time off. Church boards can assist in cultivating a culture amongst congregation members which honours and values the church leader's Sabbath day and vacation time. Furthermore, church boards can support and teach congregation members to support their church leader's self-care practices (Fuller, 2018:17).

Church leaders who experience this type of support from their boards and congregation members will perceive that their actions are in agreement with relevant subjective norms and that they have greater behavioural control. This can contribute to a greater attitude-behaviour consistency.

- Church boards need to make the personal development of the church leader a priority and dedicate resources to it. Budgeting for it every year and allocating a number of leave days will make church leaders feel more empowered and supported in their endeavour to develop resilience.
- Church boards can encourage and support a more team-orientated approach to ministry. Investing in the development of teams, whether full time or volunteer-based, who share ministry responsibilities is vital. A team approach to ministry has been found to decrease the likelihood of burnout and increase productivity and commitment (Soto, 2015:2).

A team approach to ministry requires the distribution of responsibility and authority and results in less dependence and pressure on the church leader (Soto, 2015:2). Soto (2015:2–3) stresses that a team approach to ministry does not do away with the idea of leadership, but frames it within a new paradigm. The 21st-century environment calls for a leadership paradigm

that understands leadership from a missional perspective and views it as serving an enabling function (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:6).

Due to limited finances, it might not always be possible to appoint additional team members, but the board can assist in and support the establishment of a culture in which the priesthood of all believers is emphasised and actively worked towards. Communicating explicitly and implicitly that pastoral care is not only the responsibility or “job” of the church leader but the responsibility of every member, can assist a great deal in cultivating a culture of teamwork (Fuller, 2018:17).

Of course, this style of shared leadership requires great humility on the church leader’s part and a healthy cognition of their calling as servants of Christ’s body (Elkington *et al.*, 2015:6). Here it is important that church boards recognise that they are also part of the team and take a hands-on approach in accordance with this.

Church boards need to lighten the load, especially in relation to leadership and management functions. Besides pastoral care, church board members can offer support in areas of conflict management, financial oversight, governance, decision-making, strategic thinking, spiritual guidance, prayer, etc. This will not only support the church leader but also benefit the body of Christ.

- Church boards can help church leaders by clearly defining their (the church leader’s) roles and expectations and helping them navigate the unrealistic expectations of congregation and community members. Expectations need to be formulated in light of a theological understanding of the calling of the church leader, a paradigm that views leadership as an enabling function, ethical principles on inherent dignity and worth, and the church leader’s unique skills and abilities.
- Church board members can offer support on a personal level to church leaders and their families. A simple interest in the church leader’s well-being can go a long way in helping the church leader feel appreciated and cared for.

5.4.3 The AFM Church

5.4.3.1 *Hermeneutical interaction between preceding chapters*

a. Ministry preparation and continuous development is not always perceived as sufficient

- Church leaders do not always feel adequately equipped for the challenges associated with 21st-century ministry (chapter 2, section 2.5.2.7). Areas such as leadership and management, as well as preparation of the person of the church leader are perceived as falling short by various researchers.
- Although no one theological institution can truly adequately prepare church leaders for all the possible scenarios they might encounter in ministry, the education sciences highlighted the importance of ministry preparation and formation. Ministry preparation and formation has the potential to play a critical role in equipping church leaders for passionate perseverance in their calling to ministry and instilling a culture that places high value on self-care and continuous development (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.1).

Institutions across all denominations, however, are challenged with reorienting themselves in a changing landscape where the Christendom paradigm is something of the past (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2). Chapter 3 demonstrated that theological education within the AFM is also perceived as falling short because of the experienced chasm between theory and practice, the need for a greater focus on administration, leadership, and management as well as on inter- and intrapersonal skills, the need for more specialised training, and the lack of sustained mentorship (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2.a to 3.6.4.2.e).

The AFM implemented the MIL programme in July 2008 in an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2.a). Although this is a vital initiative, it relies heavily on the quality of the mentorship received as part of the programme and is therefore vulnerable to what is termed the “franchise effect”. The latter could result in inconsistencies in the effectivity and degree of exposure to the various ministry areas (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2.a). The AFM also implemented the PCD programme in an attempt to motivate church leaders to engage in lifelong learning (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2). Overall, it has been received well, but there remains a reluctant few. This reluctance and negativity

towards continuous development might be rooted in the initial pentecostal word view which was marked by scepticism towards higher education and formal learning (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2).

b. Denominational support is not always perceived as sufficient

- Denominational support structures are not always perceived as safe or supportive (chapter 2, section 2.5.2.8). Colleagues are judged as unreliable confidants by some, support structures are often considered competitive in nature rather than supportive, and leadership is at times experienced to be toxic and individualistic rather than understanding and team-orientated.

5.4.3.2 Pragmatic perspectives on the AFM Church in relation to the church leader's call to passionate perseverance

a. Ministry preparation and continuous development can play a vital role in church leaders' ability to passionately persevere in ministry

- Ministry preparation and development can play a cardinal role in the formation of church leaders' cognition of their calling and their attitude in terms of self-care practices and the holistic and proactive cultivation of resilience. Chapman (as cited in Miller, 2016:81) asserts that ministry killers are not rooted so much in the church leader's ability to fulfil the expected tasks but rather in the church leader's life skills, behavioural patterns, and character.

In light of this and the insights gleaned from this study, it is suggested that the AFM Church considers developing a bachelors curriculum that incorporates a subject on the holistic and proactive cultivation of resilience. This should include a focus on critical factors that are essential for passionate perseverance in ministry such as personal and emotional growth, basic psychological concepts indispensable to interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, dealing with role ambiguity, and dealing with sexual temptation.

This subject should have a strong practical focus and involve mentorship and accountability as a pedagogy which will assist students in growing in the resilience-cultivating disciplines throughout the duration of the completion of their bachelor's degree. It will also foster an appreciation for the concept of mentorship and accountability from the very onset of ministry

and offer the opportunity for the establishment of lifelong mentoring relationships.

- As mentioned, the MIL programme contributes a lot to closing the gap between theory and practice, but it is vulnerable to the “franchise effect” (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2.a). Of course, further research is necessary in order to determine what mentee’s experiences are and how effective the MIL programme is in closing the gap between theory and practice, but the AFM could consider to properly train church leaders to act as mentors in the area of mentorship. Mentors need to be screened in order to ensure that they themselves are indeed competent in the key ministry areas that the mentorship programme focuses on, thus offering the mentee the required exposure and guidance.
- Another challenge church leaders experience is in terms of administration, leadership, and management. The AFM should consider conducting research to determine what the experiences were of church leaders in relation to the curriculum offered since the stabilisation of the AFM’s theological training. Perhaps a greater focus is necessary on these key areas of ministry as the 21st century has grown especially critical of the way that churches function, and it is more important than ever that church leaders are competent in areas of administration, management, and leadership.
- The need for more specialised training was also expressed. Maré (as cited by Putter, 2010b:4) motivates that students complete tests within their first year or at the beginning of their second year to assist them in the discovery of their unique gifts, talents, and personalities. Decisions regarding specialised training should then occur with this new-found self-awareness in mind (Maré as cited by Putter, 2010b:4).
- The PCD programme is a great initiative focused on encouraging the continuous development of church leaders (chapter 3, section 3.6.4.2.e). The AFM could consider building a greater emphasis on holistic health into the PCD programme. Despite this programme, church leaders can still fall into the trap of focusing on only one area of their continuous development such as their spiritual health, for example, and continue to neglect their physical and emotional health. This will continue to jeopardise their ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

b. Denominational support can play a vital role in the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry

- The AFM could consider offering opportunities for training church board members in relation to their roles, the church leaders' need for self-care practices, and resilience in order to increase their capacity to support the church leader within the local congregation.
- Denominational support structures should offer continuous support in terms of administration, management, and leadership through workshops, courses, mentoring, etc.
- Denominational support structures should offer continuous support in terms of inter- and intrapersonal skills through workshops, courses, mentoring, etc.
- Leaders selected within denominational support structures need to be trained so that they might foster a healthy cognition of calling and a paradigm of leadership that views it as an enabling function focused at empowering the church leaders they are appointed to support and serve. They need to refrain from cultivating a culture which promotes the idea that success is only determined by attendance, finances, and power.
- Research is required in order to determine how church leaders experience denominational support structures and how they might feel more supported.
- The AFM should consider investing time and resources into facilitating the formation of peer support groups amongst church leaders focused on the holistic and proactive cultivation of resilience.
- The AFM should consider utilising the skills, wisdom, knowledge, and experience of emeritus church leaders through the implementation of an e-mentoring programme. Emeritus church leaders often struggle with their perceived mattering after exiting ministry; therefore, this can be a means to address this need and at the same time offer a safe and trusted environment for church leaders who perceive the colleagues in their immediate vicinity as unsafe or as a threat.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided practical guidelines to aid in the cultivation of the church leader's resilience and in turn ability to passionately persevere in ministry in light of the hermeneutical interaction between previous chapters. It emphasised the church leader's responsibility as an

individual but also offered some insights into how the church board and AFM Church as a whole might contribute to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere.

Hopefully, it became apparent from the discussion in this chapter that a major part of the solution resides in church leader's' cognition of their calling and resilience in relation to their ability to persevere in ministry. Scripture teaches that transformation begins with the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2). The researcher hopes that this study will stimulate church leaders to think differently in terms of their resilience and passionate perseverance in ministry. The final chapter to follow will briefly summarise previous chapters, discuss the limitations of this study, and offer guidance for future research on this topic.

6 CHAPTER 6: FINAL OVERVIEW ON THE CHURCH LEADER'S COGNITION OF PERSEVERANCE AND THE ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN MINISTRY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will reflect in summary on preceding chapters and state the conclusions drawn from each. This will be followed by a final summarised conclusion. Whether or not the goals set out in the beginning of this study have been achieved will also be critically evaluated. Last but not least, the limitations of this study will be indicated and areas for future research will be highlighted.

6.2 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study was that church leaders should comprehend resilience and the holistic cultivation thereof as essential in relation to their ability to persevere in ministry.

6.3 OBJECTIVES

Four main objectives were developed in light of the central theoretical argument. They are stated below in the form of questions:

1. How can a descriptive-empirical study contribute towards a better understanding of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof?
2. How can an interpretive pastoral study contribute towards a better understanding of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their current resilience levels, and their attitudes and attempts towards the cultivation thereof?
3. What insights does the normative task offer on what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and the role that cultivation thereof should play in their lives?
4. What is the pragmatic task concerning what church leaders' cognition of resilience should be and the role that cultivation thereof should play in their lives?

6.4 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

In the completion of this study, four tasks were concluded according to the research methodology of Richard Osmer (2008). These tasks were the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative, and the pragmatic tasks. The conclusions drawn from each are briefly indicated below:

6.4.1 Descriptive-empirical conclusions

In chapter 2, the descriptive-empirical task was carried out by means of a literature study and empirical research. In light of this task, conclusions were drawn in terms of church leaders' cognition of resilience in ministry, their attitudes and attempts towards the holistic and proactive development thereof, and their current resilience levels. These conclusions are briefly stated below:

- Both the literature study and empirical research indicate that passionate perseverance in ministry in the context of 21st-century South Africa presents a great challenge due to a number of factors, such as the unrealistic expectations imposed by community and congregation members, financial stress, and lack of support, for example. This reality emphasises the need for the consistent and holistic cultivation of resilience.
- The empirical research confirms that resilience-cultivating strategies as set out in this study, namely self-efficacy strategies, emotional and mental strategies, and physical strategies, have a strong mitigating effect on the presence of stages two to four of burnout.
- From the literature study and empirical research, it is clear that South African church leaders are struggling to rise to the challenge in a manner that does not negatively impact on their well-being. Out of all the respondents in this study, 15,7% reported high levels of Phase 1: Hyperactivity, which includes working hard and constantly, feeling responsible for everything, and perfectionism. 8,6% reported high levels of Phase 2: Confusion. 5,7% reported high levels of Phase 3: Frustration. 8,6% reported high levels of Phase 4: Despair.
- The empirical research denotes that the majority of church leaders knows that resilience is important for ministry. Nevertheless, church leaders do not seem to understand and value resilience in relation to its role in passionate perseverance, but rather their understanding and value of resilience are limited to its role in ministry survival.
- Furthermore, the empirical research indicates that although the majority of church leaders demonstrates knowledge of the fact that resilience needs to be cultivated holistically, some do not fully understand the cultivation process of resilience, viewing it

as a trait-orientated, achieved state or a more passive process that comes with time and experience. This being said, 10% of the participants in this study demonstrated a negative attitude towards the holistic and proactive development of resilience which remains a reason for concern despite the fact that the majority of church leaders was positive.

- The empirical research also shows that there is a definite divide between church leaders' attitudes and the actual attempts they implement to holistically cultivate resilience. Although the majority of church leaders is positive about the holistic cultivation of resilience, their attempts are not implemented consistently and continuously in all areas; this is especially true of physical strategies. Knowledge is not translating into consistent behaviour.

6.4.2 Interpretive conclusions

The interpretive task in chapter 3 was carried out by means of an inter- and intradisciplinary literature study. This involved drawing from relevant theories in psychology, sociology, and the communication and education sciences. The following summative conclusions were drawn in light of the interpretive task:

a. Church leader's cognition of resilience in ministry:

- Trait theory, as applied in leadership, basically suggests that leaders are born and not made. The idea that leadership is the result of intrinsic genetic qualities remains influential despite critique and seems to be translating to the concept of resilience. Thus, resilience is not understood by some as something that can be developed or cultivated, but rather as a static trait that makes certain exceptional individuals resilient across all situations throughout their lives.

b. The divide between the attitudes and attempts of church leaders towards the holistic cultivation of resilience in ministry:

- Using the reasoning applied in the theory of planned behaviour, it is possible that although some church leaders have a positive attitude towards the holistic development of resilience, a gap occurs between their attitude and behaviour. This is because of the obstacles posed by their perceptions of society's or important individuals' expectations of them and their ability to implement the relevant resilience-cultivating strategies.
- The theory of vested interest contends that attitude-behaviour consistency is promoted when behaviours related to an attitude are perceived as important and

having clear benefit for the actor (Johnson *et al.*, 2014:21). From the empirical research conducted in chapter 2, it was discerned that church leaders' value of resilience was limited to its role in ministry survival. Hence, although church leaders are generally positive about the holistic development of resilience, they might view resilience-cultivating strategies as important or having a clear benefit only once they are close to burnout or only when their survival in ministry is threatened. Thus, there is inconsistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship, because it might be that church leaders do not have a strongly vested interest in proactively implementing resilience-cultivating strategies.

c. The divide between the attitudes and attempts of church leaders towards the holistic cultivation of resilience in ministry:

- How church leaders think about the stressors they encounter in ministry and the resources they have available seems to be one of the reasons some adapt and passionately persevere in ministry while others do not. Church leaders who continuously make cognitive distortions that lead them to develop negative appraisals of stressors (primary cognitive appraisal) or who do not feel that they have the adequate resources and control to deal with the stressors (secondary cognitive appraisal) will be less resilient in ministry.
- Church leaders who are more adept in recognising, understanding, regulating, and using their own and others' emotions function better in the face of stressful events (Lee, 2018:734). Conversely, church leaders who are constantly in a mode of worry and anxiety will experience erosion in their mental abilities and social skills (Goleman *et al.*, 2013:13). If church leaders lack emotional intelligence (EI), they will most likely struggle to cultivate and implement resilience competencies such as realistic optimism, discipline, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, making them less resilient in ministry and more at risk for burnout, depression, and anxiety.
- Church leaders who score high in personality traits such as perfectionism, neuroticism, and introversion will be more susceptible to negative stress responses, burnout, depression, and anxiety.
- Church leaders who do not have a healthy balance of internal and external loci of control will respond less resiliently in ministry. Church leaders with a purely external locus of control will approach adverse contexts with passivity and frustration, sensing no degree of responsibility or control. They will regard themselves as victims of people's expectations and workplace events. Contrariwise, church leaders with a purely internal locus of control will experience

intense anger, hostility, anxiety, and frustration in situations where their sense of control is threatened (Niemann, 2017:180). They will feel overtly responsible for all events and outcomes.

- Church leaders who do not maintain a healthy differentiation between self and role can start to derive a large part of their identity from their role, thus becoming dependent on recognition and accolades making them more likely to burnout. They will also be more susceptible to role stress caused by role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload.
- Church leaders who find their identities and self-worth in ministry alone and who do not deal with messages of not mattering in a healthy manner, can become threatened and insecure in their roles. This can give rise to behaviours that will compromise their resilience such as struggling to delegate tasks and kicking into performance mode trying to please in a need for affirmation.
- Church leaders at times contribute to unhealthy relationships and their own isolation. Some simply fail to appreciate their different interpersonal needs and the extent to which they have been wired for connection, not only with their family, but also with a wider social network. Others become so enveloped in their role as church leader that they no longer have hobbies or interests outside ministry, making meeting new people and cultivating relationships outside the congregation difficult. And yet others simply have not developed the necessary social intelligence to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships.
- Church leaders who apply avoidant, compromising, or dominant conflict-management styles without regard for the nature and context of the conflict and who make attribution errors arising from a lack of a true desire to understand and resolve the conflict, fail to manage conflict effectively. The cost of poorly managed conflict on relationships, self-confidence, health, work performance, and productivity is high (McCorkle & Reese, 2016:3–4).
- Church leaders who tend to apply avoidant and dependent styles of decision-making will experience decisions as more stressful.
- Although no theological programme in and of itself can adequately prepare church leaders for all the challenges they will encounter in an ever-changing ministry environment, a critical evaluation of the AFM's ministry preparation and continuous development programme highlighted the aspects in which it seems to fall short.
- Despite the fact that continuous theological development and education is a necessity to remain effective and relevant in 21st-century ministry, AFM church leaders are often reluctant to engage in continuous theological education and personal development. This could be attributed to the historical development of

the AFM of SA and the early pentecostal worldview which fostered scepticism towards formal education.

- Church leaders do not always experience denominational structures as supportive and safe.

6.4.3 Normative conclusions

In chapter 4, normative perspectives were drawn from relevant pericopes identified and studied in Scripture, theological reflection on the seven resilience competencies as set out in this study, and ethical principles on work and human dignity. The following conclusions were drawn:

a. Church leaders' cognition of their calling to persevere in ministry:

- Perseverance is a general exhortation to all believers, but church leaders carry the additional responsibility to set an example worth following. Their perseverance or failure to persevere will inevitably influence others.
- Jesus Christ serves as the ultimate example of faithful perseverance as He endured the cross and its shame for the joy set before Him. Perseverance requires church leaders to focus wholeheartedly on Him.
- Sin and weights (things that are not necessarily sinful, but they cause one to be distracted and weighed down) are obstacles to one's perseverance.
- Perseverance is a virtue that needs to be present in the active and continuous sense. Entering the race does not guarantee that one will finish it. Perseverance requires habitual training, self-control, self-awareness, and discipline. It requires church leaders to be diligent stewards of their gifts continuously growing in self-efficacy, and diligent students of Scripture continuously growing in their knowledge of God.
- Trials are linked to perseverance. God does not cause trials but can choose to allow and limit them according to His sovereign and good purposes.
- Perseverance, when allowed to run its complete course, yields moral and spiritual growth as well as the endurance required to finish the race of faith to obtain eternal reward and salvation. The author of James considers these things to be of such extreme value that he views trials and opportunities for the development of perseverance as occasions for deep-found joy.
- Work is man's obligation, an expression of man's ethical responsibility to serve and provide, an expression of man's creativity, and an expression of God's calling and spiritual gifts.
- Work in itself is of relative value; it is only in relationship with God, others, and the world that work becomes meaningful.

- Man's inherent worth and dignity originates with God and not with his work. This should safeguard the church leader against adopting workaholic behaviours or a merged concept of self and role in an attempt to prove their worth to others.
- The church leader's responsibility to provide, to serve, and to care implies the right to provision, service, and care. In other words, the church leader is not called to self-denial or self-sacrifice, which is not founded on ethical principles such as equal regard, mutual respect, equality, etc. Respect for others needs to be balanced with self-respect (Osmer, 2008:151). Church leaders are human beings and not machines. Therefore, the church leader's understanding of a good work ethic needs to incorporate and value resilience-cultivating competencies which are critical to human fulfilment and quality of life.

b. The seven resilience competencies as identified in this study:

- *Forgiveness (Reconciled past)*

Theologically, interpersonal forgiveness is rooted in the character of God (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Church leaders emulate divine forgiveness by extending interpersonal forgiveness to one another (Griffin *et al.*, 2014:253). Unforgiveness and the associated emotions can easily become like the sin and weight that the author of Hebrews exhorts his hearers to get rid of so that their ability to persevere in their race is not impeded. Forgiveness fosters resilience by releasing the church leader from the prison created by their own emotions of hatred, bitterness, and anger (Denton, 2018:4).

- *Hope (Realistic optimism)*

Biblical hope differs from a humanistic optimism in that it is rooted in the transcendent God, His covenant faithfulness, and His ability to bring about His good purposes, not in the immanent self (Du Rand, 2014:3; Longman *et al.*, 2013:800). Church leaders should live their lives through hope in Christ; it is considered an essential Christian attribute (Romans 12:12; Romans 15:4,13; 1 Corinthians 13:13). It carries church leaders through thick and thin and frees them from all fear and anxiety and in doing so cultivates resilience (Du Rand, 2014:4). Biblical authors imply that hope in Christ is the fuel for a variety of other virtues and disciplines which also ultimately aid in the development of resilience.

- *Working with one's skills*

Scripture conveys a number of normative principles related to work, diligence, productivity, effectivity, and stewardship which can be translated to the resilience

competency of working with one's skills. A biblical theology of work starts with God as the working God and Creator of all things (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). From this perspective, work is a manner in which the church leader expresses the Divine Image and ideally all work performed should be done as service to God (Colossians 3:17,22–24) (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1727). Work, as designed by God, contributes to church leaders' expression of their inherent God-given dignity and sense of purpose, thus building resilience.

- *Problem-solving*

Problem-solving for the church leader needs to be framed within an understanding of God's incommunicable and communicable attributes. Proverbs teaches that wisdom, a vital ingredient required in effective problem-solving, begins with a fear of God (Proverbs 1:7). In light of God's attributes and providence, problem-solving becomes an activity that the church leader does not engage in with a humanistic frame of mind, but with the utmost awareness of God's divine will and ability to accomplish His purposes through and in believers. Problem-solving originating from trust in man and man's devices will always lead to anxiety and worry which is counterproductive in terms of resilience.

- *Self-control*

The New Testament teaches that self-control (“ἐγκράτεια” pronounced as egkrateia) is a gift of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). It flows from an “inner strength” that is essentially the strength of the Holy Spirit flowing through believers (Boulton, 2016:58). Self-discipline is vital for the church leader who wishes to live a productive life (Longman *et al.*, 2013:1493). Proverbs teaches that a person without self-control is open to all kinds of temptations and troubles, like a city left without walls. From the exegesis conducted on 1 Corinthians 9:24–27, it also became apparent that self-control is closely related to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry.

- *Self-awareness*

The antithesis of self-awareness is self-deception. Self-deception involves hiding the truth from oneself (Pak, 2018:405). From a theological viewpoint, self-deception is intimately connected with sin and detrimental to the church leader's spiritual life if left unchecked (Pak, 2018:406). Pride is often associated with self-deception in Scripture (1 Corinthians 3:18; Jeremiah 49:16). In light of a theological perspective which acknowledges the true nature and depth of self-deception, mere human reflection is not a sufficient means to expose and

address self-deception and grow in self-awareness. Because of the deception that naturally resides in man's heart, the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth (John 16:13) needs to be invited in humility into the process of increasing one's self-awareness.

- *Healthy relationships*

Man's need for healthy relationships can be grounded theologically in the very nature of the Triune God. Since man was created in the image and likeness of God, man was essentially designed for relationship (Genesis 1:26) (Holmes, 2014:3). Man is by creation a relational being whose growth and significance is worked out in God-centred relationships with other human beings (Holmes, 2014:3). Biblical relationships should always have Jesus at its centre (Holmes, 2014:7). Healthy relationships found in, amongst other things, biblical friendship and mentoring can offer the church leader much in terms of resilience. Choosing to go through life in isolation is essentially denying the nature according to which one was created and is rooted in pride. Reflecting the image of the Triune God can only be done in relationship with others.

6.4.4 Pragmatic conclusions

The pragmatic task, as conducted in chapter 5, set out to answer the question: How might we respond? It aimed to offer solutions to the problematic patterns identified in light of the hermeneutical interaction between the preceding chapters. The following conclusions are offered:

a. Church leaders' cognition of their calling, perseverance, and resilience plays a fundamental role in their ability to passionately persevere in ministry

- It is God's calling to ministry that gives the individual the mandate and the ability to fulfil this calling with authority and perseverance. External calling based on gift and ability alone will not suffice in ensuring passionate perseverance in ministry. Church leaders need to be sure that they are indeed called to ministry and that they are serving at the right place at the right time. Furthermore, each leader needs to determine in their heart what it is that God has specifically called them to do at a particular point in time. God will not hold people accountable for how much they have done, but rather for how much they have done of what He actually asked them or called them to do.
- A call to full-time ministry means being called from amongst the working people (as one of them) with a specific calling to serve those same people. Church

leaders are a gift to the body of Christ, called to fulfil an equipping rather than a controlling role. Church leaders should firstly view themselves as followers and children of God and secondly as leaders called to serve.

- Perseverance is a general exhortation to all believers, but church leaders are called to set an example. The church leader's cognition of perseverance needs to be framed in acknowledgement and respect of the holistic integrated nature of man and the relational nature of man.
- Church leaders need to understand that resilience is linked with adversity, involves bouncing back, emphasises healthy development, is process-orientated, and can be cultivated.

b. Church leaders can develop a greater consistency in the attitude-behaviour relationship in terms of proactively and holistically cultivating resilience by

- refraining from allowing subjective norms to pose an obstacle to the implementation of resilience-cultivating strategies;
- strengthening their perceived behavioural control;
- strengthening their attitudes towards the holistic development of resilience; and
- making themselves accountable to a mentor, coach, peer groups, or trusted friend.

c. Church leaders need to assume responsibility for the proactive and holistic development of their resilience by implementing resilience-cultivating strategies in the following seven areas according to the practical guidelines offered:

- Reconciled past
- Realistic optimism
- Working with one's skills
- Problem-solving competence
- Discipline
- Self-awareness
- Healthy relationships

d. The local church board can contribute to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere in ministry by

- assisting in fostering a culture amongst members that honours and values the church leader's self-care practices;
- allocating resources for the personal development of the church leader;

- encouraging and supporting a team-approach to ministry;
- clarifying roles and expectations in light of theological and ethical principles; and
- offering support and showing interest in the church leader on a personal level.

e. The AFM Church can contribute to the church leader's ability to passionately persevere by

- developing a bachelors curriculum that incorporates a subject on the holistic and proactive cultivation of resilience. It should include a focus on critical factors that are essential to passionate perseverance in ministry such as personal and emotional growth, basic psychological concepts indispensable to interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, dealing with role ambiguity, and dealing with sexual temptation. This subject should have a strong practical focus and involve mentorship and accountability as a pedagogy;
- properly training church leaders who act as mentors in the area of mentorship. Mentors need to be screened in order to ensure that they themselves are indeed competent in the key ministry areas the mentorship programme focuses on, thus offering the mentee the required exposure and guidance;
- conducting research in order to determine what the experiences were of church leaders in relation to the curriculum offered since the stabilisation of the AFM's theological training;
- offering opportunity for specialised training;
- building a greater emphasis on holistic health into the PCD programme;
- ensuring that denominational support structures offer opportunities for training church board members in relation to their roles, church leaders' need for self-care practices, and resilience in order to increase their capacity to support the church leader within the local congregation;
- ensuring that denominational support structures offer continuous support in terms of administration, management, and leadership through workshops, courses, mentoring, etc.;
- training denominational leaders to foster a healthy cognition of calling and a paradigm of leadership that views it as an enabling function amongst the church leaders they support;
- conducting research in order to determine how church leaders experience denominational support structures and how they might feel more supported;
- investing time and resources into facilitating the formation of peer support groups amongst church leaders focused on the holistic and proactive cultivation of resilience; and

- considering to utilise the skills, wisdom, knowledge, and experience of emeritus church leaders through the implementation of an e-mentoring programme.

6.4.5 Summative conclusions

It has been established that the research question and the questions that stem from it have been answered by the tasks conducted in the various chapters of this study.

- The central theoretical argument has been supported by the research conducted.
- The objectives set out were satisfactorily achieved.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the aim of this study was achieved, there were certain shortcomings and disappointments that limited the study. Nevertheless, areas for further research became evident and the researcher maintains that a significant contribution has been made.

6.5.1 Limitations

The following limitations were identified:

- The general response to the circulated electronic questionnaire for the empirical research was very disappointing.
- The demographics of the respondents in terms of race were not representative of the AFM Church.
- The research available on South African church leaders' cognition of perseverance and current resilience levels was very limited, especially in relation to the AFM Church, making it impossible to really compare this study's results with those of previous studies.
- Important demographical information that the researcher neglected to gather and that could have been insightful were the participant's education level and location.

6.5.2 Areas for future research

The following areas for future research were identified:

- A more in-depth look at the reasons for the divide between church leaders' attitudes and behaviours, for example church leaders' self-control levels, church leaders' perceptions of the subjective norms related to their self-care practices, etc.

- Empirical research on the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of South African church leaders.
- Empirical research on the internal factors that contribute to church leader burnout, for example South African church leaders' emotional intelligence, South African church leaders' conflict-management skills, South African church leaders' social intelligence, etc.
- How cultural aspects influence church leaders' cognition of perseverance and resilience, their attitude and attempts towards its development, and their current resilience levels.
- A more in-depth look at the experiences and resilience levels of female church leaders within the AFM.
- A model for cultivating a greater value for holistic self-care amongst church leaders.
- The current experiences of church leaders within the AFM in terms of the AFM's theological training.
- The current experiences of church leaders within the AFM in terms of the AFM's denominational support structures.
- The effectivity of the AFM's MIL programme.
- The effectivity of the AFM's PCD programme.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Research related to South African church leaders' well-being in general is limited, but its value for the church leader as an individual, as well as their families and the local congregations and communities they serve, becomes apparent from this study. It was stressed that the church finds itself in urgent need of a paradigm shift if it aims to offer hope and Good News in a manner that is relevant and effective in bringing transformation. The role of its leaders, as servants appointed by Christ as Head of the church, in the accomplishment of this task was duly emphasised. The church needs men and women who are serious about cultivating their resilience and thrive in the face of adversity – men and women who understand their call to passionate perseverance and rise to the challenge with creativity, energy, and resolve.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire:

The church leader's cognition of perseverance: A pastoral study elucidating resilience in ministry

Purpose of Study and Consent

The purpose of this online questionnaire is to gather data for a Masters study on church leaders' understanding (cognition) of resilience and its role in ministry. **The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.** You will not be required to disclose your name or surname. It starts with five open questions and then moves to a monkey-puzzle format. By completing this questionnaire, you consent to your responses being used anonymously in this study. Please note that you can leave the questionnaire at any time since participation is voluntary. Should you wish to be informed about the outcome of this study, please provide your email address below:

Email: _____

(Please note: The questionnaire is based on the Resilience Scan version 3.0 and the Resilience-Training Workbook of **xpand International**, an independent coaching and consulting company. The researcher hereby acknowledges their contribution).

Demographics

Current ordination status: Ordained/MIL programme in progress/Study in progress/Other	Years in ministry:
Current ministry status: Full-time/Part-time	Years at current congregation:
Current position: Senior/Co-pastor/Youth/Music/Children/Other	Denomination:
Gender: Male/Female	Number of people on your congregation's ministry team:
Age: 18-30/31-40/41-50/51-60/61+	Congregation size: 0-50 / 51-100 / 101-150 / 151-300 / 301-600 / 601-1000 / 1000+
Race: Black/White/Coloured/Other	

Cognition of resilience in ministry

1. In your opinion, what does it mean to be resilient?
2. Do you think resilience is important to persevere in ministry? Why or why not?
3. Do you think resilience can be developed? Why or why not?
4. In your opinion, which habits will form part of a resilient person's life?
5. Does the ministry make it easy for you to develop resilience in your life? Why or why not?

Attitudes towards the holistic cultivation of resilience

Please choose a rating between the six options provided:

Likert scale:

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – slightly disagree
4 – slightly agree	5 – agree	6 – strongly agree

1. Spiritual disciplines such as Bible-reading, prayer, and praise-and-worship are important contributors towards resilience.
2. Physical disciplines such as regular exercise, healthy eating, enough sleep and rest are important contributors towards resilience.
3. Mental disciplines such as developing new skills or improving current ones, reading, and mind-stimulating activities are important contributors towards resilience.
4. Emotional disciplines such as forgiveness and accepting and embracing your past are important contributors towards resilience.
5. Social resources such as an appreciative family, a mentor, and supportive friends are important contributors towards resilience.
6. Structural resources such as healthy finances and a satisfying job are important contributors towards resilience.
7. Being able to use one's skills and abilities is an important contributor towards resilience.
8. The ability to effectively solve problems is an important contributor towards resilience.
9. A realistically optimistic mindset is an important contributor towards resilience.
10. Self-confidence is an important contributor towards resilience.
11. Actively practising gratitude is an important contributor towards resilience.

Attempts towards cultivating resilience

Please choose a rating between the six options provided:

Likert scale:

1 – never applicable	2 – rarely applicable	3 – sometimes applicable
4 – often applicable	5 – nearly always applicable	6 – always applicable

1. I invest time and resources in developing my skills and abilities.
2. I connect and spend time with God in a meaningful way each day; this time is not focused on ministry preparation.
3. I have a mentor in whom I can confide; I communicate with this person at least once a month.
4. I exercise at least three times a week for more than 30 minutes.
5. I regularly take time to reflect on my successes and mistakes and the lessons learned.
6. I purposefully take time to work through a process of forgiveness towards those who have wronged me.
7. I set goals for my personal development towards which I actively work.
8. When faced with problems, I set aside time to exercise creative problem-solving instead of simply managing the problem.
9. I practise being flexible and improvising to find good solutions.
10. I take enough time off each week; I do not make a habit of working more than 45 hours per week.
11. I make sure to spend enough quality time with my family.
12. I intentionally practise gratefulness in one form or another.
13. I make time to reflect on my emotions and think about why I feel the way I do.
14. I regularly make sure my calling is still clear and certain.
15. I actively choose to focus on and celebrate the positive instead of getting overwhelmed by negativity.
16. I am currently at a healthy weight for my length and my weight does not vary on a regular basis.

Current resilience levels

Please choose a rating between the six options provided:

Likert scale:

1 – never applicable	2 – rarely applicable	3 – sometimes applicable
4 – often applicable	5 – nearly always applicable	6 – always applicable

1. I can be described as hyperactive; I work hard and constantly.
2. I feel responsible for everything and strive to maintain a high standard of perfection.
3. I tend to forget things.
4. I am constantly in crisis management mode.
5. I have little time to worry about sleeping, exercise, or eating healthy.
6. I find myself trying to please everyone.
7. I am less ambitious and creative than I once was.
8. I fear not being good enough.
9. I am dissatisfied with my work.
10. I am confused; I am working hard with less results.
11. I have headaches on a weekly basis.
12. I camouflage my insecurity; I do not let people in.
13. I can be described as indifferent; I have no or very little interest or sympathy.
14. I am losing faith in myself and my calling.
15. I tend to be ungrateful; I worry all the time.
16. I am regularly and easily irritated; I have little need for contact with others.
17. I have trouble sleeping and concentrating.
18. My immune system is weakened; I get sick more often.
19. I have no energy; I constantly feel tired.
20. I feel depressed and trapped; I find myself asking "What is the point?"
21. I tend to be cynical and distrustful.
22. I tend to criticise and punish myself.
23. I have stress-related physical problems, e.g. high blood pressure, skin irritations, etc.
24. I isolate myself; I have lost key relationships or key relationships are degrading.

APPENDIX B



Faculty of Theology

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION³⁵ FOR CHURCH LEADERS ELECTRONIC ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: The church leader's cognition of perseverance: A
pastoral study elucidating resilience in ministry.

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU – 00742 – 18 – A6

SUPERVISOR: F.P. Kruger

POST-GRADUATE STUDENT: Romien Joubert

CONTACT NUMBER SUPERVISOR: 018 299 1592

CONTACT NUMBER STUDENT: 071 519 2195

Purpose of Study and Consent

The purpose of this online questionnaire is to gather data for a Masters study on church leaders' understanding (cognition) of resilience and its role in ministry. **The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.** You will not be required to disclose your name or surname. It starts with five open questions and then moves to a monkey-puzzle format. By completing this questionnaire, you consent to your responses being used anonymously in this study. Please note that you can leave the questionnaire at any time since participation is voluntary. Should you wish to be informed about the outcome of this study, please provide your email address below:

Email: _____

(Please note: The questionnaire is based on the Resilience Scan version 3.0 and the Resilience-Training Workbook of **xpand International**, an independent coaching and consulting company. The researcher hereby acknowledges their contribution.)

³⁵ The Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office of the North-West University is acknowledged for the use of their document with minor adjustment for use in the Faculty of Theology at the North-West University.

APPENDIX C

Language editor's confirmation

Language-editing certificate

This is to confirm that I, Cornelia Johanna Fopma, did the language-editing of Romien Joubert's master's dissertation: ***The church leader's cognition of perseverance: A pastoral study elucidating resilience in ministry.***

Qualifications:

- Baccalaureus in Business Communication, Potchefstroom campus of the North-West University, 1994–1997
- Diploma in Translation, UNISA, 2004

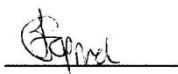
Membership of professional organisations:

- Member of the South African Translators' Institute (SATI).

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CJ Fopma

30 December 2019

Date issued