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Clergy Marriages: Couple Perceptions of Marital Adjustment as the  
Husband Serves as a Bishop in The Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Deena D. Strong

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2010

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## ABSTRACT

Clergy Marriages: Couple Perceptions of Marital Adjustment as the  
Husband Serves as a Bishop in The Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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Department of Marriage and Family Therapy

Doctor of Philosophy

This qualitative study was designed to produce a theoretical model to illustrate marital adjustment as a husband becomes a bishop (a lay-clergy position) in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Individual interviews were conducted with the husband and wife of six married couples wherein the husband was currently serving as a bishop. Grounded theory methods and elements of phenomenological research were used to collect and analyze the data.

The model presented depicts the adjustment process that begins with the marital relationship prior to the husband becoming an LDS bishop. The husband then becomes an LDS bishop and begins to perform the duties and responsibilities of his new lay-clergy position. Consistent with systemic thinking, the husband's acceptance of the position of bishop affects the husband and the wife individually in turn affecting the marital relationship. The mutual influences between the husband and wife as individuals and the marital relationship constantly change both in flow and direction. The effects of the calling included both points of satisfaction and points of dissatisfaction/disconnect or a parallel set of experiences both for the individual and for the marital relationship. The parallel set of experiences and the resulting effects of the husband's service as an LDS bishop on the marital relationship produce a dialectical tension between covenants or promises that both the husband and the wife have previously made. One covenant is to serve God by sacrificing to build His kingdom on earth through service to others and the other covenant is to have a strong marriage. Adjustment strategies which included both individual and couple strategies were identified.

Several themes identified in this study are consistent with existing empirical and theoretical literature. However, new themes were identified including the husband experiencing increased empathy towards his wife, wives feeling "left behind" spiritually, the challenge of negotiating issues of confidentiality, the influence of family of origin and current stressors on the adjustment process, and couples seeking support from those in positions of higher authority.

Keywords: clergy marriage, marital adjustment, qualitative study, grounded theory

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Vera and David Mace posed the question, “What’s happening to clergy marriages?” (Mace & Mace, 1980). Prompting this question was an increase in the number of clergy seeking help for troubled marriages. In their book (titled the same as their question) the Maces conclude, “Whatever the reason, clergy marriages today seem to be getting into trouble on a scale that demands a full and careful investigation” (p. 21). Research both prior (e.g. Denton, 1962; Douglas, 1965; Presnell, 1977; Scanzoni, 1965) and subsequent (e.g., Barber, 1982; Danley, 2004; Darling, Hill, & McWey, 2004) to their work has sought to provide answers that would help a clergy population which itself seeks to support others. Most studies of clergy have either focused on the clergy’s professional practice or addressed only the clergyperson or the spouse, with little research focusing on the marital relationship (Lee, 1995; Morris & Blanton, 1994). The purpose of this study was to ask, “What’s happening *in* clergy marriages and how does the marriage relationship adapt to the stressors inherent in fulfilling the role of clergy and clergy spouse?”

Clergy are expected to model for the members of their congregation and the community at large an exemplary life of service to God and others (Brackin, 2001; Mace & Mace, 1980). Publicly, as well as privately, clergy are expected to provide temporal, moral, and spiritual leadership, evidenced by the manner in which they live their lives as well as their effectiveness in serving and attending to the needs of others (Barbour, 1990; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Morris & Blanton, 1994). Congregational and community expectations of the clergy have also extended to the spouses of clergy (Brackin; Darling et al., 2004; Hack, 1993; Roberts, 2004), to their children (Darling, McWey, & Hill, 2006; Strange & Sheppard, 2001) and to the marital relationship itself

(Barbour, 1990). Both clergy and their spouses often place high expectations on themselves (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003) and on their marital relationship (Barbour, 1990; Mace & Mace, 1980; Morris & Blanton, 1998). Although clergy couples experience the same marital vicissitudes and stressors as do non-clergy couples (Barber, 1982; Presnell, 1977), there are particular stressors and challenges related to marital adjustment and satisfaction that may be more salient in the marital relationships of clergy couples (Mace & Mace, 1980).

The studies to date have barely dented the surface of understanding clergy marriages. Research must become more precise and clarify what it is about the nature of clerical work and the roles in clergy families that create unique stresses for the husband and wife (Blanton, 1992). More needs to be known about the adjustments required by both parties in the marital relationship related to intimacy, shared responsibilities, roles, rules, expectations, and perceptions. Little empirical research has been found addressing these issues.

The debate continues as to how clergy marriages statistically compare to non-clergy marriages and whether or not those differences are problematic. Compounding the complexity of the debate are the unknown differences and nuances between paid and trained clergy versus lay-clergy. The challenges in the marital relationships of clergy whether trained, paid, or lay have not been fully investigated. Assumptions have been made that all clergy marriages have similar difficulties and differ in the same way from non-clergy marriages.

Uniquely, in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter referred to as the “LDS Church”), a married male lay member accepts the ecclesiastical responsibility for a congregation for a period of time – usually about five to six years. With this group of lay-clergy and their wives, it is possible to look at the adjustments required by a couple as they enter their ecclesiastical role. These couples are in a unique position to act as a control for themselves.

These couples can discuss how they experienced their relationship as a non-clergy couple then how they adapted and adjusted to becoming a clergy couple. To date, there are no formal studies explaining marital adaptation as a husband serves as a bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **Definitions**

The following definitions are included to assist readers with the terminology used in this study, especially as the terms apply to the doctrines and the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Called. Members are “called” or asked by Church leaders, whom Latter-day Saints support as inspired representatives of the Lord, to fulfill various Church assignments and to fill specific administrative, teaching, or service-oriented positions. Members serve until they are “released,” meaning they no longer occupy the position nor have the responsibilities or duties of the position (Ludlow, 1992).

Calling. Callings in the LDS Church are generally requests or assignments, the fulfillment of which benefits the Church. Callings include assignments to serve in the priesthood or to occupy a specific position in the LDS Church (Ludlow, 1992).

Ward. The ward is the basic ecclesiastical unit in the LDS Church. It is comparable to a Protestant congregation or a Roman Catholic parish. Wards take in a specific geographical area with memberships usually ranging between 300 and 600 people (Ludlow, 1992).

Bishop. A bishop is the ecclesiastical leader of a Latter-day Saint ward or congregation. The bishop has comprehensive pastoral and administrative responsibilities for the ward and its members. A new bishop is called when an existing bishop is replaced or a new ward is

organized. The individual nominated by the stake president to serve as a bishop must be a member of the priesthood body of the ward. Only male members of the LDS Church are ordained to the priesthood. The individual does not seek nor apply for the position and no theological degree is necessary. A bishop in the LDS Church is a lay minister and receives no monetary compensation for his services (Ludlow, 1992).

Stake. The stake is usually comprised of between five and twelve wards and totals approximately 3,000 members. A stake covers a specific geographic area that, depending on the LDS population density, may be part of a city or include several cities. In Utah, which is the location of this study, there is a dense population of people who are members of the LDS Church. Therefore, the geographical boundary of a stake is small relative to stakes in other states and countries (Ludlow, 1992).

Stake President. The stake president is the LDS Church officer (also lay-clergy) who presides over several wards that comprise a stake. A stake president is called by a General Authority of the LDS Church to preside over the stake and serves until he is released. As is the case with the bishop, the stake president neither seeks the position nor chooses the time of his release. Stake presidents are the church authority who calls an individual to serve as a bishop (Ludlow, 1992).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). This is the official name of the religion commonly called the Mormon Church. Mormons are Christian and, as such, believe in God and in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Ludlow, 1992).

General Authorities. General Authorities are men called to serve at the highest levels of LDS Church leadership. As general priesthood officers of the Church, they have Churchwide

stewardship and responsibility. General Authorities are lay leaders and do not seek their calling or assignments (Ludlow, 1992).

While it is acknowledged that clergypersons can be both male and female, only males serve as lay-clergy in the LDS Church. As a result, in this study the clergyperson will be referred to as he and the spouse of the clergyperson will be the wife. However, because so few studies exist on the clergy/spouse marital relationship, all studies which could be located were reviewed whether the clergy person was male or female.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

To provide a context in which to place the review of literature on clergy marriages, a brief summary of the role of professional clergy and their wives as well as the role of lay-clergy (LDS bishops) and their wives in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is first presented. Next, the literature on professional clergy, clergy wives, and clergy marriages will be reviewed. Finally, a review of the literature on lay-clergy in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be presented.

### Roles of Clergy and Wives

**The role of professional clergy.** Ministers and clergy of any religious denomination carry a variety of stewardships and responsibilities. These responsibilities encompass attending to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the members of their congregations. A partial list of duties for professional clergy would include preaching sermons, performing religious rites such as baptisms, marriages, and funerals, and providing individual and marriage counseling. The list of responsibilities of professional clergy is almost as endless as the needs of the individual members of their congregation (Benda & DiBlasio, 1992; Darling et al., 2004; Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003; McMinn et al., 2005; Rayburn, Richmond, & Rogers, 1986). Examples of the temporal needs of congregational members could include needing food, shelter, and help with employment. Social needs could include such things as help coping with a difficult spouse, problems with children, mental illness, domestic violence and unplanned pregnancy. Spiritual needs could include helping members with resolution of sin, transgressions, and other undesirable behaviors.

Professional clergy from most religions and churches go into the ministry as an occupation; it is a conscious choice. This career choice most likely requires attending divinity school and other professional training. Inherent in the process of deciding on the ministry as an occupation is the process of evaluating the lifestyle and demands of the ministry. Part of the lifestyle is the reality that needs of the congregation present themselves at any time during the day or night and can be unrelenting. These demands result in tremendous stress, both for the individual and the spouse (Adams, 1991).

**The role of the wife of professional clergy.** The role of clergy wife is more elusive to define than that of clergy resulting in role strain, confusion, ambiguity, conflict, and overload (Cox, 2001; Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Huebner, 1999; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991; Mickey, Wilson, & Ashmore, 1991; Pettitt, 1998; Presnell, 1977; Slack 1979). The role of clergy wife not only differs between religious denominations, but within denominations from congregation to congregation (Niswander, 1982). Historically, some religious bodies have expected that clergy wives serve as unpaid assistants to their husbands. This could encompass such duties as working for the church, leading the choir or playing the organ, training others in church leadership, filling in during emergency situations, being a general resource person, calling on the sick and representing the church at community activities (Douglas, 1965; Scanzoni, 1965).

In addition to being expected to appear at all worship services and meetings of the church (Bouma, 1980), clergy wives are expected to be, “consummate homemakers, wise counselors, competent teachers, gracious hostesses, capable leaders, willing workers, good neighbors, and trustworthy friends” (Pannell, 1993, p. 66). Wives are expected to support the clergy in all his trials by providing a home that is a refuge and protecting his solitude, or quiet time, thus allowing him to ponder and meditate in preparation for his cleric duties. Wives are expected to



follow through with personal and family devotionals, manage limited resources (especially financial resources,) and parent her children well, often without the help and support of her husband (Douglas, 1965).

**The role of bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.** Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are organized into congregations called “wards.” Each ward and all of its members is presided over by an LDS bishop. The specific roles and responsibilities of men who are “called, ordained, and set-apart” (Hales, 1986) as bishops in the LDS Church are outlined in a handbook of instructions entitled, *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS Church], 2010). An LDS bishop’s roles and responsibilities are similar to those of professional clergy. For example, LDS bishops are to preside and care for the members of their congregations including visiting and attending to the needs of widows, the poor, the sick and others who are in need of spiritual or temporal assistance and comfort (Hales, 1986). The average LDS bishop, “gives all his time and efforts for the betterment of the people over whom he presides” (Smith, 1977, p. 185). A summary of the responsibilities of an LDS bishop is included in Appendix A.

Men who serve as LDS bishops do not train for the position, nor do they have the opportunity to deliberate for any great length of time prior to their appointment to the position. They may have limited knowledge of the personal consequences of accepting the lifestyle of an ecclesiastical leader. LDS bishops are lay-clergy, meaning they are not financially compensated for the time (usually 5–6 years) spent in service. As such, they continue to work in their chosen occupations and perform the duties of an LDS bishop in their off hours. Oftentimes, these were hours previously spent with the wife, family, and other personal interests. These new religious demands may make it difficult to invest time in the marriage relationship. Additionally, the

emotional energy of the LDS bishop must often be redirected to church service, which may also affect marital adjustment. Similar to professional clergy, the responsibilities of an LDS bishop are demanding, numerous, time consuming, and can be stressful.

**The role of the wife of an LDS bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.** While bishops in the LDS Church are “called, ordained, and set apart” to preside over a ward and are given a handbook of instructions outlining their responsibilities, the wife has little, if any, instruction regarding her role as the wife of the bishop. Along with all members of the ward, wives are asked to “sustain” the bishop in his calling, meaning she helps and supports him in the discharge of his duties. This includes honoring the bishop, following his counsel, supporting him as he administers to the affairs of the Church and showing love and fellowship to the members of the ward (Hales, 1986).

A search of the LDS Church’s website yielded only two articles (Jennings, 1980; Perry, 1982) that included specific information pertaining to the role of an LDS bishop’s wife. One of the articles, a transcript of a talk by L. Tom Perry, one of the general authorities of the LDS Church, offered the following counsel to wives of LDS bishops and how they could support and sustain their husbands in their responsibilities:

You are carefully evaluated before your husband is approached to be called as a bishop, to determine the type of support you will give to him.... In order for him to be successful, you must sustain him completely. We know this puts added burdens on you. You run a telephone answering service and a mailroom, act as a receptionist, and have to fill in at home when he is called out on emergencies. Often, just by being there, you are exposed to confidential information, which you must keep within yourself and never discuss with anyone. Nothing would destroy

the credibility of a bishop more than having his companion reveal confidential information she happened to overhear or see pertaining to ward business. You have the obligation, along with your husband, of being a role model for the young people and the young married couples of the ward. Yours should be an ideal marriage—one they are striving to emulate by following your example. Your contribution is deeply appreciated and understood. Nothing can relieve the anxiety and load of being a bishop quite like the aid of a supportive companion.

(Perry, 1982, p. 29)

The wife of an LDS bishop is expected to serve as a resource person and be a supportive listener without questioning or being critical of her husband's decisions or actions (Smith, 2004). Illustrative of prevailing attitudes and expectations Jennings (1980) described that the LDS bishop's wife is expected to keep the home clean and cheerful, shirts laundered and suits pressed, and have a meal prepared. The LDS bishop's wife should herself reflect high standards of cleanliness, modesty, simplicity, femininity, and appropriateness. She should also be friendly and gracious. Although women's roles have changed much in the past thirty years, many of these same attitudes and expectations are still evident in the LDS culture.

### **Research on Contributors to Marital Stress for Clergy**

Research on clergy, in general, has identified career-related stressors associated with individual, marital, and family functioning (Ostrander, Henry, & Fournier, 1994). These stressors include identity struggles (Cox, 2001; Morris & Blanton, 1998), expectations (Barbour, 1990; Brackin, 2001; Moore, 2006; Morris & Blanton), family boundary intrusiveness (Barbour; Hill et al., 2003; Morris & Blanton; Lee, 2007; Scanzoni, 1965), and loneliness/isolation (Hill et al.; Morris & Blanton).

**Identity.** In a qualitative study of four pastoral couples, the role and identity of clergy was determined to be both theologically and socially constructed (Cox, 2001). Inherent in these dual sources of identity construction are dialectical tensions between expectations and reality. For example, the role demands and identity as an employee of a specific church may conflict with the individual pastor's expectation that he act as a "man of God." Further, Cox found that clergy's identity is often co-constructed through dialogue with others, producing another dialectical tension; that of balancing one's internal voice with the multiple external voices of the congregation one serves. This concurs with Barber (1982) who suggests that clergy are subject to stereotypes that do not necessarily fit their personal identity resulting in an identity crisis.

Another dialectical tension related to identity is that of authenticity versus perfection (Cox, 2001). The educational, personal, and moral standards for clergy are high. Yet, to facilitate a clergyman's relationship with those to whom he ministers, he must present as a "regular guy." However, clergy showing too much familiarity risk losing congregational respect.

**Expectations.** Moore (2006) studied 31 evangelical Protestant clergy couples who completed the Marriage Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R, 1997; Plake & Impara, 2001), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, 2001; Spanier, 2001), and the Clergy Marriage Questionnaire (CMQ), a brief questionnaire developed by Moore. He found that clergy perceived the expectation that they be public role models. These roles include that of being a model father and husband. Morris and Blanton (1994) surveyed a national random sample of 272 clergy husbands and their wives from six denominations to assess the predictive power of five work-related stressors on variables of marital, parent, and life satisfaction. An identified predictor of life satisfaction was the intrusiveness of feeling that their lives are always on display before the congregation. Brackin (2001) notes that American society considers ordained clergy to be human

symbols of the divine and, as such, are not allowed to express anger, frustration, or sorrow. Consequently, the congregation maintains unrealistically high expectations for the clergyperson, his marriage, and his family.

A qualitative study by Barbour (1990) in which ten pastors and their wives were interviewed, noted that pastors and their wives are required to “wear a mask,” meaning they are expected to maintain charm and poise in every situation. Morris and Blanton (1998) had 136 randomly selected couples from six denominations complete the Clergy Family Life Inventory and a Self Report Measure of Family Functioning. The results indicated that clergy families experience “family idealization,” or the perceived need to maintain a socially desirable public image before others. The need to maintain a public image precluded admitting role overload, resource insufficiency and role strain, negatively affecting the performance of clergy. Lee and Iverson-Gilbert (2003), in a survey of 312 randomly chosen Protestant clergy, found that the expectations and demands placed on clergy contributed to family dissatisfaction.

The community and congregation are not the only source of expectations for clergy. Clergy also have difficulty defining themselves apart from their vocation. Clergy often believe they must be constantly available to their congregants as evidenced by an almost compulsive devotion to their calling including working long hours and trying to meet the unending demands of the pastorate (Mace & Mace, 1980).

**Boundary intrusiveness.** Closely related to expectations are stressors related to boundary intrusiveness. For professional clergy, the roles of family and vocation frequently overlap resulting in the two roles being enmeshed with the vocational role expected to take priority (London & Allen, 1986). In a study of structural conflict between occupational and conjugal roles among clergy 31 couples, Scanzoni (1965) found sect-type (religious

organizations that view the kin group as competing with the organization) couples to be more rigid in their adherence to occupational roles, resulting in less expressive conjugal interaction. Church-type (religious organizations that view the kin group as an ally deserving support) couples resolved this conflict by allowing occupational roles to go unfulfilled on occasion to allow for the expression of conjugal roles.

Barbour (1990) examined various triangles of the clergyperson, the wife, the children, the community and the congregation. Clergy were frequently caught in triangles and had to choose sides either with the congregation and against the spouse or vice a versa. Clergy were enmeshed with their congregations making it difficult to create boundaries between home and work. All of the couples reported experiencing stress within the marital relationship as a result of the husband experiencing stress in his relationship with the congregation.

The issue of clergy responsibilities keeping a clergyperson from home was identified as a stressor in multiple studies (Barbour, 1990; Cox, 2001; Danley, 2004; Darling et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2003; Lee, 1999; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Ostrander et al., 1994; Presnell, 1977). Clergy often believe it is their responsibility to be the servant to all at all times and under all circumstances. Clergy are torn between perceived obligations to God and family, not just job and family. As such, the church and its members get the precious time that the wife wants with her husband (Cox, 2001).

**Loneliness/Isolation.** The issue of loneliness and isolation has been identified as a significant stress for clergy (Hill et al., 2003; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Morris & Blanton, 1998, Warner & Carter, 1984). Mobility issues (the frequent transfer of clergy to different congregations and locations) make it difficult for clergy to establish and nurture enduring friendships. Personal and professional boundaries make it difficult for clergy to find emotional

support as they negotiate the sometimes frustrating and often unrelenting demands of those they serve. They cannot seek solace in the friendship of a parishioner nor can clergy always seek support from fellow clergy (Hill et al., 2003).

### **Research on Contributors to Marital Stress for Clergy Wives**

Research on clergy wives has yielded results similar to that of clergy themselves. Namely, wives experience stress as a result of identity struggles (Cox, 2001; Lanham, 1990; Morris & Blanton, 1998), expectations (Barbour, 1990; Brackin, 2001; Moore, 2006; Morris & Blanton), family boundary intrusiveness (Barbour, 1990; Hill et al., 2003; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Lee, 2007; Scanzoni, 1965), and loneliness/isolation (Barbour; Brackin, 2001; Hill et al.; Morris & Blanton).

**Identity.** A study by Lanham (1990) using a sample of 524 wives of senior pastors in the Church of the Nazarene and utilizing a questionnaire that included the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale found a strong negative relationship between derived sense of identity and self-esteem. Derived identity was defined as the, “sense of self that is overly influenced by and dependent upon relationships with significant others” (p. 23). Lanham found that when a clergy wife’s sense of identity is enmeshed with the ministry of her husband, she often has low self-esteem. However, Brunette-Hill (1999) found a diminished sense of identity in clergy wives is less problematic now than it was in previous decades, prior to the women’s movement. Since the women’s movement, clergy wives have derived a sense of identity from additional sources such as employment, rather than that of their husband’s position of clergy.

**Role ambiguity and expectations.** Closely related to identity is the struggle clergy wives have with understanding the role of the clergy wife (Mace & Mace, 1980) which, as previously mentioned, is elusive to define. In a study by Hack (1993), 111 Seventh-day Adventist pastors’

wives completed packets that included an Occupational Stress Inventory (Osipow & Spokane, 1987), the Clergy Wife Experience Questionnaire (Hack), and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982). It was concluded that role confusion was negatively related to clergy wife role satisfaction.

Numerous studies have concluded that wives experience stress from role expectations (Blackmon, 1984; Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Lanham, 1990; Mace and Mace, 1982; Pettitt, 1998). The wife's perceptions of role expectations, whether or not they are accurate, is salient to the level of stress the wife experiences (Blanton, 1992; Slack, 1979). Only 50% of the 111 Seventh-day Adventist pastors' wives who participated in Hack's (1993) study indicated that their abilities were adequate to meet the role expectations they had for themselves as the wife of a pastor.

Hackley (1990) studied 209 ministers' wives from five denominations and found that wives who reported less role-related stress were older and had been married longer, had fewer young children at home, and had husbands who spent more time with them. They also used a wider variety of coping behaviors. Wives who reported increased levels of stress tended to be younger and used fewer coping strategies.

**Boundary intrusiveness.** Because the role of clergy wife is so nebulous, wives have difficulty drawing healthy boundaries between themselves and their husbands and between themselves and the congregation. Boundary ambiguity refers to the uncertainty about who or what is in and who or what is out of the individual or system (Boss & Greenberg, 1984). Boundary ambiguity includes the concept of the rules and role definitions that define the individual as well as the family subsystem and how they are perceived and carried out (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981).



Boundary ambiguity results in increased stress and pressure for clergy wives (Morris & Blanton, 1998; Ostrander et al., 1994; Pettitt, 1998). For example, clergy wives have particular difficulty drawing boundaries with the intrusive behaviors of members of the congregation. Clergy wives experience frequent interruptions in their lives due to the individual and family crises of members of the congregation. The clergy wife is left to hold the family together while the husband attends to the needs of others (Darling et al., 2004). In Hack's study (1993) wives acknowledged dissatisfaction with the amount of time they have with their husbands who are consumed with meeting the needs of the congregation.

**Loneliness/Isolation.** Loneliness and a lack of social support are challenges for clergy wives (Lee & Balswick, 1989; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Fox, 1997; Warner & Carter, 1984). Lucas (1992) identified loneliness and dissatisfaction with lack of social support as a predictor of depressive symptoms in clergy wives. Brackin (2001) investigated loneliness in 235 wives of ordained ministers working in the Southern Baptist Convention. Results indicated that clergy wives exhibited higher levels of loneliness than would be expected among happily married women. Overall, clergy wives had small social networks.

In a study of Lutheran clergy wives, Baker and Scott (1992) reported loneliness as one of the variables accounting for lower well being scores. Loneliness and isolation occur as clergy and their wives are set apart by their parishioners who see them as somehow different. Mobility issues also make it difficult to establish enduring and lasting friendships. Personal and professional boundary issues also contribute to feelings of loneliness (Hill et al., 2003).

### **Research on Clergy Marriages and Marital Satisfaction**

**Professional clergy and marital satisfaction.** Both clergy and their spouses experience various stressors and concerns resulting from the husband's ministry. Because

these stressors affect marital satisfaction, it is important to understand how the husband and the wife adjust to these stressors. Unfortunately, clergy marriages have received relatively little in empirical study (Morris & Blanton, 1994), with most studies of clergy focusing on the clergy's professional practice or addressing only the clergyperson or the spouse (Lee, 1995; Morris & Blanton, 1994). The few existing studies have yielded incomplete and somewhat contradictory information (Mace & Mace, 1980, Blackmon, 1984; Benda & DiBlasio, 1992; Blanton, 1992; Holling, 1992). Because there are so few studies on clergy marriages, the existing studies are being presented chronologically in an effort to not only review the studies, but to demonstrate the evolution of clergy marital research.

Mace and Mace (1980) provided two often cited baseline studies (e.g., Blackmon, 1984; Benda & DiBlasio, 1992; Commodore, 2004; Danley, 2004; Hack, 1993; Holling, 1992; Lee, 2007; Moore, 2006; Morris, 1992; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Roberts, 2004; Warner & Carter, 1984). Their first study was based on 200 questionnaires, (113 from wives and 87 from husbands), anonymously filled out by clergy couples who had registered for one of five conferences dealing with marriage and family issues for clergy couples. The conferences were held in three states spanning the eastern half of the United States. The participants represented three Christian denominations—Methodist, Moravian, and Southern Baptist in both urban and rural areas. Although the sample came from multiple states and represented multiple Christian denominations, it was not random (Mace & Mace 1980). Because the sampled individuals were attending a conference on marriage and faith, they may have been more receptive and open to self improvement.

The study questionnaires included a list of areas for possible marriage enrichment. The respondents were requested to check only those areas that represented a definite need. Areas of need identified included handling negative emotions, couple communication, family devotions, resolving conflict, separateness and togetherness, and social life and recreation (Mace & Mace, 1980). It should be noted that only percentages were recorded; there was no analysis to determine which differences were statistically significant. A section on the wives' questionnaire listed areas where she might need help adjusting to her husband's ministry. Areas of identified need included, a need for time alone together, a need to understand the role of a pastor's wife, and a need to understand the wife's role in the husband's counseling of congregants (Mace & Mace, 1980).

The second study by Mace and Mace (1980) involved asking couples who were attendees at three clergy couple retreats (held in both the Eastern and Western United States) to take 15 minutes to write down spontaneously and without any collaboration, a list of the advantages and disadvantages of the clergy marriage. The sample included 79 pastors and 42 wives who attended one of the three conferences. The design was biased by a possible overlap of participants with the first study, by self selection of participants.

The top three advantages of clergy marriages were identified as (a) shared Christian commitment and spiritual resources, (b) unity of purpose in ministering to others, and (c) nurturing support of congregation. The top three disadvantages included (a) marriage expected to be model of perfection, (b) time pressures due to husband's heavy schedule, and (c) lack of family privacy—"goldfish bowl" (Mace & Mace, 1980). Although Mace and Mace used convenience, non-representative samples and reported only percentages without noting statistical significance, their work represented an important beginning for clergy marriage research.

Barber (1982) used a convenience sample to compare marital satisfaction of 30 clergy and 30 lay couples. Ten clergy and 10 lay couples were from liberal, moderate and conservative theological persuasions respectively. Each couple completed a packet of instruments that included the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS; Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981) the Marriage Problem Checklist (MPC; Roach, 1977), and a Personal Data Inventory (PDI; Roach, 1979). There were no significant differences in degree of marital satisfaction between clergy and lay couples. Furthermore, there was little difference in the number of claimed marriage problems when they were matched for theological persuasion. Although the sample size for this study was small, making statistically significant results difficult to achieve, the findings were nonetheless intriguing because of the identified expectations placed upon clergy and their wives to be the role model of an ideal marriage. This study was one of the first to debunk the myth that clergy marriages are ideal, showing that clergy marriages are vulnerable to the same vicissitudes as lay marriages.

Baxter (1982) studied the relationship between marital adjustment and role expectation of clergy couples in three denominational groups. Ninety-nine couples from a population of 263 clergy couples in the Episcopal Church, the Christian Church, and the Assemblies of God in north Texas were surveyed. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was used to measure the subjects' level of marital adjustment and the Marriage Role Expectation Inventory was used to measure the subjects' perceived egalitarian-traditional role expectation. Baxter's (1982) research showed that denominational affiliation made no difference in marital adjustment. Also, corroborating

Barber (1982), husbands and wives were similar to the general population in marital adjustment.

Based on prior research, Blackmon (1984) developed a study to build a broad empirical data base on the hazards of the professional ministry. A detailed survey was developed and sent to 1,196 pastors in four southern California denominations. A total of 300 pastors (25.08%) returned the survey, 286 males and 14 females. Eighty-three percent of Blackmon's sample reported their marital relationship to be "warm and supportive" even though a majority of respondents (80%) reported experiencing pressure to be an "ideal" role model and a lack of privacy or "fishbowl" effect.

Blackmon (1984) examined each denomination to ascertain if the ministers' description of their marital relationships was related to their belief that the ministry was a benefit or hazard to family life. No statistically significant relationship was found. Consequently, these data do not support the conclusion that poor marriages are the result of the ministry being hazardous. However, Blackmon indicates this may be a misleading conclusion because of the very low number of reported "poor" marriages.

Each pastor in the Blackmon (1984) study was asked to identify the most significant marital problem experience with his/her spouse. The most frequently reported problems were insufficient time together (38.06%), communication difficulties (24.63%) and problems over money (13.43%). With regards to communication difficulties, the clergy surveyed reported that many spouses feel that their husband/wife has time to listen to the problems of parishioners, but does not have time or energy left to listen to them (Blackmon, 1984).

Limitations exist affecting the generalizability of Blackmon's (1984) study. The sample consisted only of clergy and not clergy spouses. Therefore, the data only reflects each minister's

interpretation of his/her spouse's feelings about the ministry. If the spouses themselves had been surveyed, the conclusions might have been different. Studying other denominations and including other geographic locations would increase the generalizability of the results to other Protestant clergy couples.

Warner and Carter (1984) studied 33 pastors and 28 pastors' wives, comparing the quality of life they reported with that reported by 64 non-pastoral males and 64 non-pastoral females from the same denomination. Loneliness, marital adjustment, and vocational burnout were used as the quality of life indices and were measured by the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1980). The results showed that pastors and their wives experienced significantly more loneliness and a diminishment in marital adjustment than did their non-clergy counterparts. Higher levels of emotional exhaustion were also found among study participants. The subjects in this study were members of one division of a small Presbyterian denomination. They were all married, but the completed assessments did not necessarily represent matched husband-wife pairs.

In one of the first qualitative studies on clergy marriage, Barbour (1990) interviewed 10 pastors and their wives in an effort to examine sources of clergy marital stress. The purpose of the study was to examine the role of a congregational system in the marital stress of the clergy-spouse dyad. The researcher asked specific questions intended to identify specific areas of stress in the clergy marriage in a parish setting. The greatest source of marital stress was not in singular events, but in being caught in triangles, having to choose sides either with the congregation and against the spouse, or against the congregation and for the spouse.

Benda and DiBlasio (1992) studied marital adjustment in 247 clergy who attended a Presbyterian seminary and their spouses. The 36 item Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976, 1979; Spanier & Filsinger, 1983) was used to measure marital adjustment and gender-role differentiation. Four factors were identified as negatively affecting marital adjustment. These included (a) perceived stress from work and family combined, (b) number of children five years old and younger, (c) perceived stress from family, and (d) single earner status. Combined, however, these factors explained only 15% of the total variance in marital adjustment. The limitations of this study included the low number of explanatory variables, and a sample that consisted of only Presbyterian clergy couples.

Holling (1992) administered the ENRICH (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983; Fowers & Olson, 1989; Olson, McCubbin, Barnes, Larsen, Muxem, & Wilson, 1985) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) to 162 randomly selected clergy couples from four North Central United States annual conferences. The sample included couples wherein the husband, wife, or husband and wife were clergy. Although the couples were selected randomly from conference attendees, the sample may be biased because participants share the commonality of being conference attendees. Also, the sample consisted of only United Methodists clergy, reducing the generalizability to clergy of other denominations. Overall, the study found the general level of marital satisfaction in clergy marriage to be neither extremely high nor extremely low. Time issues were listed as a primary stressor. According to the ENRICH subscale, “women in this study were more apt to identify a deficiency in the level of communication necessary to maintain a relationship in a satisfying manner than were men” (Holling, p. 101).

Morris and Blanton (1994) surveyed a national random sample of 272 clergy husbands and their wives selected from official mailing lists provided by six denominations. Five instruments were completed by participants including the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983), the Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton, Morris, & Anderson, 1990), the Edmonds Marital Conventionalization Scale (Edmonds, 1967), Parent Satisfaction Scale (Umberson, 1989), and the Life Satisfaction Scale (Spanier & Thompson, 1984). Work related stress and stressors were found to be inversely related to marital and life satisfaction for clergy and their spouses. Work related stressors included intrusions on marital and family boundaries, lack of time, role ambiguity, and social isolation (the result of the couple being elevated in status as a result of ecclesiastical structure). Demographic data revealed that the sample may represent a later life-span cohort who had developed a repertoire of effective management skills for coping with work-related stressors. Limitations of the study included a possibility of self-selection bias. The response rate was not as high as anticipated. Only ten percent (135/1,321) of the total number of the contacted clergy couples participated. Also, it may be that only couples who were more satisfied with their marriages chose to participate (those who had the time to participate as well as those who felt comfortable commenting on their marriages).

Stonier (1997) studied the marital adjustment of 279 clergymen from the Calvary Chapel churches. A ten question version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier & Filsinger, 1983) was used along with a questionnaire developed by Stonier. Job-related and home-related stress was found to have a negative effect on marital adjustment. Other identified variables affecting marital adjustment and satisfaction included: limited time for leisure activities, communication, limited finances, sexual satisfaction, emotional expressiveness, and social support networks. A



limitation to Stonier's study is that only the pastors were surveyed; the wives were excluded. Including the wives would have provided valuable information as to differences between husband and wife perceptions of shared events and experiences.

Pettitt (1998) analyzed survey responses from 78 clergy couples from the Church of the Nazarene to study marital satisfaction as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983). The primary independent variables included: lack of social support, openness to marital support, lack of privacy, church size, financial strain, social desirability, role overload, and wife's role ambiguity. Other variables investigated included: number of moves, attitude towards divorce, perception of denominational support, pedestal effect, perceived high congregational expectations, and wife as co-pastor. Regression analysis identified four variables that significantly affect marital satisfaction. These included: openness to marital support, lack of privacy, social desirability, and role overload. The pedestal effect was found to significantly affect lack of social support and role overload; perceived high congregational expectations significantly affected lack of privacy and role overload.

A qualitative study by Cox (2001) explored the dialectic between public and private identities in clergy marriages. Four pastoral couples were interviewed, first in same-gender dyads and then in foursomes. A recurring theme was the difficulty in defining and modeling either personal or marital maturity. A second theme identified was that of the difficulty expressing anger. According to Cox, "Both in public and in private, anger is problematic because it seems to imply a lack of spiritual peace and maturity. Yet, the very nature of the tension pastoral couples find themselves in is intensely frustrating at times" (p. 208). A final theme identified was that of the difficulty of maintaining friendships both within and outside the church.

Hill, Darling, and Raimondi (2003) used focus groups and qualitative research methods to study the boundary-related stress experienced in clergy families. Three groups of clergy and two groups of clergy spouses were involved although the clergy and clergy spouses were not necessarily married to each other. Because the purpose of the research was to study boundary-related stress, questions primarily related to various stressors previously identified in clergy research. The qualitative data revealed six key issues which included (a) time, (b) mobility, (c) congregational fit, (d) space, (e) isolation, and (f) intrusions as having an impact on the lives of the clergy, spouses, and their children.

Danley (2004) used a representative stratified sample randomly selected from the churches listed in the Baptist General Convention of Texas 2002 Annual. Four hundred sixty-three couples were invited to participate. Of the 57 individuals who responded, only 19 couples ( $n = 38$ ) could be identified and were included in the study analysis. Of the 15 variables examined, expression of affection, a lack of concern over possible marital infidelity, husband/wife roles, and issues involving in-laws and relatives were found to be statistically significant in relation to marital satisfaction in clergy couples. The pastor's neglect of his own family was found to affect marital satisfaction, but only minimally. A unity of purpose with their husbands in ministering to others was found to have a significant positive effect on marital satisfaction.

Three stressors were identified by Danley (2004) as negatively affecting clergy marital satisfaction. The three stressors were, (a) the usage of the wife as a go-between for the pastor and the members of the congregation, (b) the challenge of being a role model and example, and (c) problems associated with Sundays being the busiest work day for the husband which coincided with Sunday being the day when the wife and the rest of the family were at home.

This study was limited by its small sample size ( $n = 38$ ), low response rate, and by the fact that the churches represented were associated with the single denomination, the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Though the sample was randomly chosen, the actual participants were only those who were willing to share their personal thoughts and experiences. The sample was heavily populated with participants who reported high levels of marital satisfaction and the sample was skewed in age (older) and years married (longer) as well as years in pastoral ministry (longer).

Moore (2006) studied 31 evangelical Protestant clergy couples. Both clergy and their spouses completed the Marriage Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (Plake & Impara, 2001), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 2001) and the Clergy Marriage Questionnaire, developed by Moore. A significant finding was that clergy couples have an expectation that they be public role models. Global marital distress and dyadic satisfaction were reported at similar levels by both clergy and their wives. Insufficient time together was the most common marital problem identified by the clergy couples. Although Moore explored the relationship between the expectation that clergy couples be public role models and role conflict between church and home, statistically non-significant results were found. Similar to Holling (1992), a majority of Moore's sample of 31 evangelical Protestant clergy couples were recruited from conferences. However, subjects were also recruited in the Philadelphia area by word of mouth and advertisement. The small sample size of this study contributed to the difficulty of obtaining statistical significance.

**Lay-clergy in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and marital satisfaction.** Although no research has been done which specifically studies marital satisfaction

as the husband serves as an LDS bishop, a master's thesis was done by Adams (1991) that studied family stress and the role of the LDS bishop's wife. The purpose of Adams' study was:

...to test the hypothesis that positive stressor events produce a honeymoon period of decreased stress and increased family organization before the crisis period predicted by Hill's roller coaster model. (p. 74)

Adams (1991) used LDS bishops' wives because they were a homogeneous group. They all experienced the same stressor event, their family characteristics and strengths were relatively homogeneous, and most viewed the stressor event (their husband serving as an LDS bishop) as a positive experience for the family. A survey was randomly sent to 434 bishop's wives. Sixty-seven percent of the sample (289/434) returned the surveys with completed responses. Four measures were used to test stress and the honeymoon model. Adams concluded the findings did not support or reject the "roller coaster" model or the "honeymoon" model variations of the ABC-X model of family stress.

However, other interesting information was discovered which has pertinence to the proposed study. First, having children at home correlated with higher stress scores. It was found that the younger the children, the greater the stress. The age of the wife and the ages of the children were important factors related to the difficulty of the position. Younger women commented on the difficulty of raising their children essentially alone. Second, wives of LDS bishops showed fewer signs of depression than other LDS women; however, the wives of LDS bishops experienced more loneliness. Third, the stresses of the position decreased over time (Adams, 1991).

## Summary of Review of Literature

Previous research on clergy marriages has identified both advantages and disadvantages to being a clergy couple. Those in clergy marriages experience the same vicissitudes as those in non-clergy marriages. However, the social context and the unique circumstance of one partner being clergy and all that entails, provides additional stress and strain on the marriage relationship (Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Danley, 2004; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991; Moore, 2006).

Clergy research itself has evolved from collecting anecdotal or descriptive information (Denton, 1962; Douglas, 1965) to analyzing surveys (Mace & Mace, 1980, 1982), to current quantitative (Barber, 1982; Baxter, 1982; Benda & DiBlasio, 1992; Blackmon, 1984; Danley, 2004; Holling, 1992; Moore, 2006; Morris & Blanton, 1994; Pettitt, 1998; Stonier, 1997; Warner & Carter, 1984) and qualitative research (Barbour, 1990; Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003) which has used more rigorous methodology. Interestingly, most of the research cited above spanned from the 1970's into the 1990's. Although 15 studies on clergy and clergy spouses occurred in the 2000's only four of those studied the clergy marital relationship. Also, after a search of the literature, only three qualitative studies could be identified (Barbour, 1990; Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003).

Clergy wives identified several advantages of being in a clergy marriage. These include (a) opportunity to travel and meet new people, (b) availability of social support for the clergy family, (c) shared goals with the spouse, (d) the opportunity to engage in spiritually fulfilling activities, and (e) the feeling that their lives make a difference which positively affects their marital and life satisfaction (Alleman, 1987; Denton, 1962; Douglas, 1965; Mace & Mace, 1980). Clergy couples have cited their commitment to God, Christ, or the Church, their commitment to each other or their marriage, and having something in common such as values,

beliefs, or goals to be advantages (Holling, 1992). Danley (2004) found a shared Christian commitment and spiritual resources to be an advantage as well as a unity of purpose in ministering to others, the nurturing support of the congregation, and high status and respect in the community.

The disadvantages of serving in the clergy on marital adjustment and satisfaction have been identified as problems primarily resulting from occupational expectations, in particular, difficulty with boundaries, an almost unending demand on time, and interpersonal problems. With respect to occupational expectations, both clergy and their wives have difficulty with role definition. For clergy, the role of husband and father often conflicts with that of clergyman. For the wife, her role is often nebulous and ill defined. Boundaries and limit setting are difficult for both clergy and their wives resulting in increased levels of stress due to frequent intrusion on family and marital boundaries (Barbour, 1990; Morris and Blanton, 1994; Hill et al., 2003).

The “goldfish bowl” experience, or the pressures clergy and family members experience as a result of being looked to as “idealized” role models, has also been documented (Barber, 1982; Blackmon, 1984; Cox, 2001; Danley, 2004; Mace & Mace, 1980; Morris & Blanton, 1994; Pettitt, 1998; Moore, 2006). The perceived need to maintain an “ideal” public image often does not allow for human responses such as anger and frustration (Cox, 2001). The church and community place high expectations and time demands on clergy both professionally and personally, yet few clergy feel comfortable giving attention to family responsibilities in lieu of church responsibilities (Danley, 2004).

A lack of time and the almost unceasing demands placed by parishioners on clergy is another common stressor affecting marital adjustment and satisfaction in clergy marriages (Blackmon, 1984; Holling, 1992; Mace & Mace, 1980; Morris & Blanton, 1994; Warner &

Carter, 1984). The lack of time (with spouse and family) has been found to contribute to communication difficulties, feelings of loneliness, and emotional exhaustion for both clergy and spouses (Warner & Carter, 1984).

Interpersonal problems occur in clergy marriages just as they do in non-clergy marriages. Loneliness and a lack of emotional intimacy have been identified by Warner and Carter (1984) as contributing to clergy marital maladjustment and dissatisfaction. Mace and Mace (1980) identified communication difficulties as well as difficulty resolving conflicts as salient stressors in clergy marriages. Cox (2001) highlighted the difficulty clergy marriages have in resolving the dialectic of public and private identities especially with regards to the healthy expression of emotion within the clergy marital relationship.

Studies of clergy and their spouses have identified stressors and advantages on marital adjustment and satisfaction. My study expands the current knowledge base by not only exploring what is happening *to* clergy marriages, but what is happening *in* clergy marriages (See Figure 1 and Table 1 for a summary of clergy research and the contributions of this study). In other words, how do the stressors and advantages impact the marital relationship? How does the relationship react to and adapt to the advantages as well as the stressors? How do wives react and adjust and how do husbands react and adjust? How do individual reactions affect the marriage relationship? This research study seeks to identify the marital adjustment process as the husband serves as a bishop for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to produce a theoretical model to illustrate marital adjustment as a husband becomes a bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The grounded theory method and elements of phenomenological research were used to collect

and analyze the data. Although clergy studies have surveyed or interviewed clergy who are married, few studies exist which have interviewed clergy couples, and no clergy studies have been found which examine the marital adjustment process to the husband's role as clergy.

Additionally, there is no clergy research focusing on marital adjustment in lay-clergy marriages. The current study adds to the literature by examining what is happening in lay-clergy marriages where the husband is called as an LDS bishop and the marital relationship adapts to the points of satisfaction and the points of dissatisfaction connected with the husband's performance as lay-clergy.



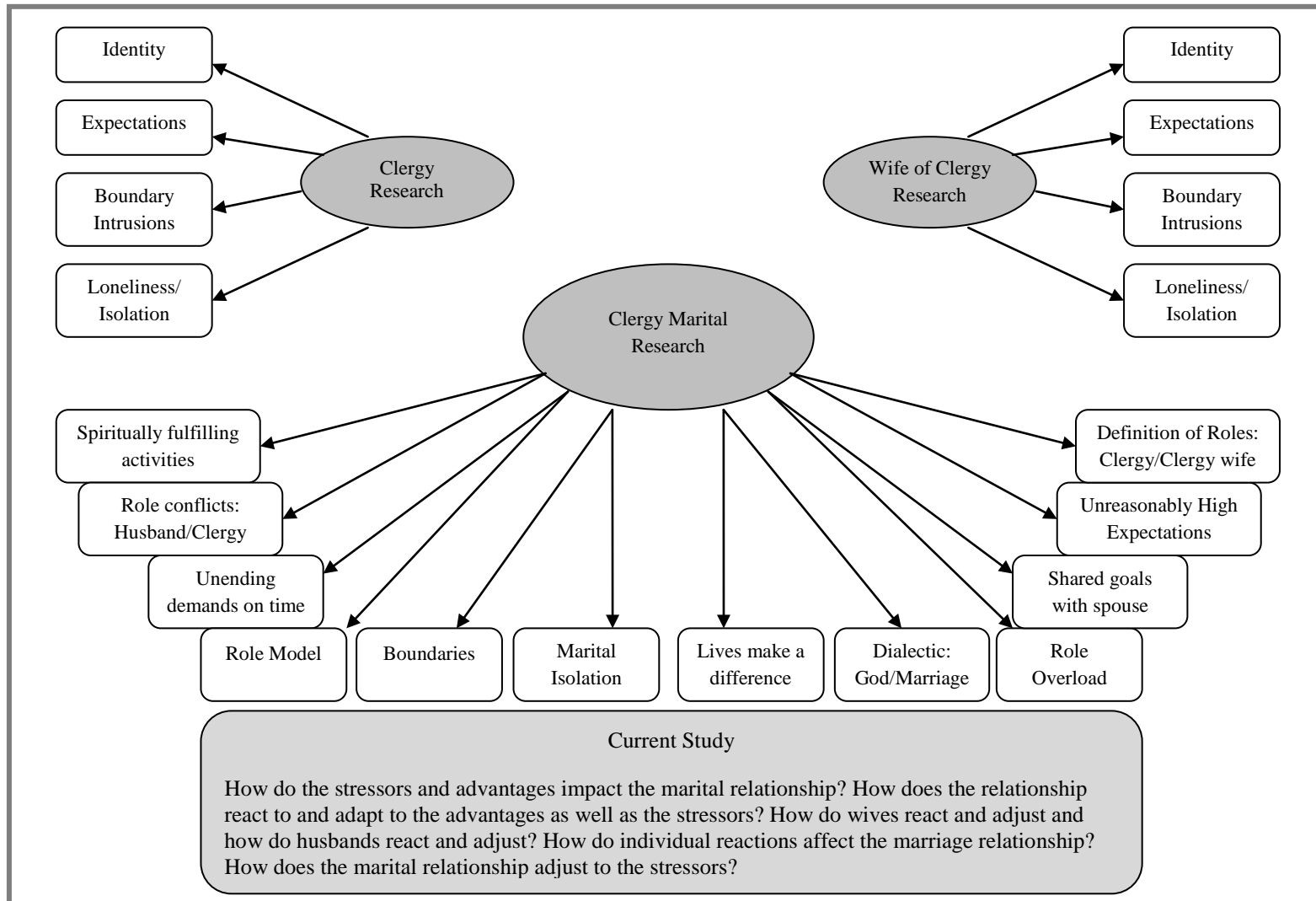


Figure illustrates previous clergy research (arrows originating from “Prior Clergy Marital Research” to boxes indicating findings) and questions to be address in current study

Figure 1. Summary of Clergy Research Literature Review

## **Chapter 3**

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of this research was to examine the question, “How does the marital relationship adapt while the husband serves as a bishop (lay-clergy) in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?” A qualitative research design was chosen to study the issue in depth and included using an “emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes” (Patton, 2002, p. 37). A qualitative design facilitated the study of issues by producing a “thick description” (Geertz, 1975) that increased the detail and depth of understanding of the experience of the couples studied. Furthermore, a qualitative research design permitted the researcher to comprehensively explore and interpret the observations and words produced in the interviews, and to identify underlying patterns and the meaning of the experiences the couples were having as they adjusted to the husband’s service as an LDS bishop (Babbie; 2005, Creswell, 2007; Daly, 2007; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, Lofland, 2006).

This research had two purposes beyond increasing understanding of marital adjustment while a husband serves as an LDS bishop. The first purpose was to inductively generate new theory grounded in the experiences and perceptions of the husbands and wives during the period of service. The second purpose was to provide results that will inform future research, ultimately serving the needs of this particular population and any populations in similar circumstances.

Of the five primary paradigms of qualitative research (narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study) this research used two:

phenomenological research and grounded theory. A phenomenological design provides a deep understanding including meaning, structure, and central features of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals (Patton, 2002). The aspects of phenomenological research that applied to this study were (a) a phenomenon was identified, in this case couples adjusting to the husband's service as an LDS bishop; (b) data was collected from persons experiencing the phenomenon, in this case interviewing couples adjusting to the husband's service as an LDS bishop; and (c) a composite description was developed of the central features of the experience for all of the individuals. The description consisted not only of *what* they experienced, but *how* they experienced it, and the meanings which had been socially constructed (Dahl & Boss, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

This research used the major tenants of grounded theory qualitative research design. The generation of theory was facilitated by a continuous comparative analysis of the data throughout the data collection process. By comparing the different interview responses, the coders and I clarified the essence and meanings of the respondents' experiences. Clarification by comparative analysis occurred both within a particular respondent's interview and by a comparison among the interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

As the interview and comparison process progressed, categories emerged and were coded by myself and four Marriage and Family Therapy master's level student coders. The properties and dimensions of categories and subcategories were identified and developed. New data from the most recent interviews were compared with existing data previously collected and coded. This process expanded and extended the coding scheme to ensure that categories were well developed and saturated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

By continually comparing the data, the developing theory was verified, or amended, as the data indicated. This flexible process allowed the researcher to discover concepts and ideas that had previously been unrecognized. Complementary with phenomenology, grounded theory included the dimension of giving voice to the experience of the participants and interpreting their experiences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### **Sample**

All participants were couples who were married to each other and met the following selection criteria:

- (1) The husband was currently serving as a bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- (2) The husband had served for at least six months, but not more than two and one half years.
- (3) Both the husband and the wife had been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for at least 7 years.
- (4) Participants lived within Utah, Salt Lake, Davis, or Cache counties in the state of Utah.
- (5) Participants did *not* know the researcher.

Originally the length of current service as an LDS bishop was to range from a minimum of at least six months to a maximum of two years. The length of service was increased to two and one-half years due to difficulties in finding couples who were willing to participate in the study. Six couples participated in the study, at which point saturation was reached. Geographically, the couples were located along the Wasatch Front, from Brigham City, Utah in the north to Payson,

Utah in the south. The length of time the husbands had served as an LDS bishop ranged from 12 months to 30 months.

### **Data Collection**

I submitted the research proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Brigham Young University and received approval to begin the study. With consent from the IRB, I began to ask personal and professional contacts if they knew any bishops and their wives who met the selection criteria and might be willing to participate in the study. Once potential participants were identified, a cover letter (see Appendix B) and a *Consent to be a Research Subject* form (see Appendix C) were mailed to the couples. The cover letter included the purpose of the study, an explanation of the study design and procedures and the reason the couple was being asked to participate.

Potential participants were also mailed a form requesting demographic data (see Appendix D) and a Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS; Crane, Middleton, & Bean, 2000) (see Appendix E). The RDAS was used as a screening device. The scores on the RDAS indicated the levels of marital adjustment and satisfaction that a couple was currently experiencing. Once these scores were known, I would be able to select couples that represented a continuum of adjustment and satisfaction experiences. This would be done in an effort to avoid interviewing only distressed or only happy couples. It was hoped that a pool of possible couples could be created from which participants would be selected based on their RDAS scores. However, it soon became evident that this recruitment strategy would need to be adjusted.

I initially contacted a man who was currently serving as an LDS bishop. His length of service exceeded the selection criteria, but he provided names of four other bishops whose length of service met the selection criteria. Those bishops were mailed the previously described cover

letter, consent form, and study packet. None of the letters were returned. I then called two of the couples and spoke with the wives explaining how their names were obtained and asking if they would be willing to participate. Both tentatively agreed but explained that their husbands were very busy and might not be willing to participate. I sent another letter the couples could review choosing whether to participate. Neither couple responded.

From the conversations I had with the first two wives, it was evident that the wives were leery of speaking with someone they did not know. It was as if they thought I was a telephone solicitor, and because they did not know me they did not really listen to what I said. From this experience, I decided to have the initial contact call those whom they had referred to me as potential participants and let them know who I was, the contact's connection to me, and why I would be calling.

Consequently, instead of mailing cover letters and study packets to identified potential participants, I waited for the contact to initiate a call to the potential participant. I then phoned to explain the study and to ascertain if they would participate. I initiated this contact by phoning the husband or wife, whoever the referral source indicated would be the best contact, and offering a brief explanation of the research project and a reminder of how their names were obtained.

These phone calls resulted in one of four outcomes. In six cases the contacted individual indicated the couple was willing to participate. In five other cases, the contacted individual (in each case a wife) indicated that she would be willing to participate, but the husband would not due to (a) a busy schedule, (b) a lack of time, or (c) a lack of interest. In one case the couple refused to return the initial phone call requesting an opportunity to explain the study. In the final two cases, the contacted individual (each time an LDS bishop) initially indicated he and his wife would participate, but subsequently did not respond to repeated phone messages and emails.

When a couple indicated they would participate, they were given the option of having the cover letter and study packet mailed to them or having me bring it to the interview. Three couples opted to have the packet mailed; one filled it out and mailed it back to me. The other two couples misplaced the forms so I had them fill out copies I brought to the interviews. The remaining three couples chose to fill out the forms at the beginning of the interview.

### **Interview Procedure**

Once a willing couple was identified, I made a phone call to arrange interview times with the husband and the wife being interviewed separately. Both the husband and the wife were interviewed because, although they were involved in the same marriage and were experiencing the same phenomena, their experiences and the meanings they attached to those experiences were different largely due to cultural differences (Griswold, 1994). Separate interviews ensured independence of the responses.

Interviews occurred at the location of each participant's choosing. All of the wives chose to be interviewed at home. Four husbands were interviewed at their workplaces, one chose to be interviewed on the Brigham Young University campus, and one chose to be interviewed at home.

Each participant was told the interviews would last about an hour. The interviews with the wives ranged from 38 minutes to 2 hours and 39 minutes with the average interview time being 1 hour and 18 minutes. The interviews with the husbands ranged from 31 minutes to 1 hour and 14 minutes with the average interview time being 51 minutes. I believe the interviews with the wives were longer because the wives took this opportunity to talk about their experience as the wife of an LDS bishop, an opportunity not often afforded them. The participants were not compensated for their time. A copy of the results of the study was offered to all participants. Each couple requested a copy.

Face-to-face interviews were held to enable me to observe non-verbal language and behavior and to respond appropriately by asking additional questions to either clarify or deepen what was being communicated. The interviews began with an explanation of the purpose of the interview, which was to explore the marital adjustment process of the husband and the wife to the husband's calling and service as an LDS bishop. Marital adjustment included (a) role definition, (b) cohesion, (c) emotional intimacy, (d) communication, (e) social isolation, and (f) other issues.

A review of the *Consent to be a Research Subject* form then occurred. I explained that the participant was consenting to having the interview recorded, transcribed, and that portions of the interview could be published. Participants were assured their anonymity would be protected and that they could choose not to respond to any question and could withdraw from the study at any time.

The participants were then asked to complete a brief form that included demographic information (See Appendix D). Once the form was completed, warm-up questions were asked either as a follow-up to the demographic information or to pursue possible commonalities shared between the participant and me. This was done in an effort to ease the participant into the interview process and to build rapport (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997).

The warm-up questions were followed by broad open-ended questions (e.g., For husbands: "How has your calling as an LDS bishop affected your marriage relationship?" For wives: "How has your husband's calling as an LDS bishop affected your marriage relationship?"). Open-ended questions were used to enable me to understand and capture the points of view of participants without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories" (Patton, 2002). To facilitate the gathering of responses to



open-ended questions, in accordance with grounded theory, a semi-structured interview format was used. This format was flexible and open enough to enable me to hear the story of the individual being interviewed yet allowed for specific information to be obtained as necessary for analysis across participants (Hill et al., 1997).

Four types of questions were used: sensitizing, theoretical, practical and structural, and guiding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These questions were initially open-ended, but became more specific and refined as the research evolved. By using a combination of these types of questions, enough information was gathered to ensure understanding of the participants' experiences. For example, several participants indicated that they felt disconnected from their spouse. These participants were then asked how the relationship adapted to those feelings. Finally, participants were asked if specific coping strategies were used to address that issue. As the interviews progressed, information about experiences given by previous participants was shared with other participants (described in general terms to maintain confidentiality) to determine if the experiences were comparable and, if so, in what ways.

An initial literature review contributed to the creation of interview questions that were grounded in existing findings. Other questions explored areas that had not been addressed in the literature (Hill et al., 1997). For example, questions were posed which explored the adjustment process and the participant's experience of that process. The personal experiences of the researcher as the wife of a currently serving LDS bishop contributed to the creation of some questions. Open-ended, unbiased, and non-leading questions were used to allow participants to respond freely (Hill et al.). As participants shared their experiences, additional questions and topics were pursued to develop the properties and dimensions of the identified themes. The interview questions are included in Appendices E and F.

## **Saturation**

I interviewed six couples, at which point I believed saturation, the point at which no new information is being acquired through interviews, was reached (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Saturation is also reached when, using constant comparison, no new themes emerge, no new properties of categories can be formed, and there are no gaps in the existing categories (Corbin & Strauss). I believed saturation was reached after the fifth pair of interviews; nevertheless I conducted an interview with a sixth couple to be certain.

## **Transcription of Data**

Audiocassettes of completed interviews were given to a professional transcriber. The transcriber, who had signed a confidentiality agreement, was trained by me as to the purpose and scope of the research project. The interviews were transcribed verbatim; however, to maintain confidentiality, identifying names were removed prior to coding by the research team.

No more than two couples were interviewed before the interviews were transcribed and coded. This was done to identify emerging themes that could be explored further in subsequent interviews. I reviewed each transcript for errors. Grammatical and spelling errors were identified, but no content errors were found. Prior to being coded, transcripts were e-mailed to eleven of the twelve interviewed participants with a request to review the transcript to validate the content and intent of the answers. The twelfth participant, a husband, requested that he not be e-mailed a transcript. The reason for this request will be addressed in the discussion section. None of the wives made corrections to the transcripts. Two of the husbands returned transcripts with corrections. In one instance, extensive editing was done, correcting spelling and grammar. However, the changes did not significantly alter the meaning or intent of the original answer. In the second instance, minor editing was done again focusing on spelling and grammar. However,

the interviewee also corrected the statement, “I am a *worse* person” to “I am a *words* person” with reference to a comparison between himself and his wife. This significantly clarified his response.

In total, 12 interviews were conducted. Two tape recorders were used to minimize the likelihood of losing an interview due to tape recorder malfunction. Despite this precaution, 7 minutes into an interview with a husband, the researcher noticed that neither recorder was operating. The interview was interrupted while the recorders were restarted, the participant was asked to summarize his previous responses and the interview continued. Therefore, 11 interviews were transcribed as the interview originally transpired and one was transcribed while the twelfth included a brief summary of the first 7 minutes.

### **Analysis of Data**

Four data analysts, one male and three female, completed the research team. Each analyst was given *Basics of Qualitative Research* by Strauss and Corbin (1998) to review in preparation for three, 2 hour training sessions. During session 1, I assessed each analyst’s familiarity with qualitative research. All four analysts had been exposed to the tenets of qualitative research in a masters’ level research methods class and had a basic understanding of qualitative research methods. I then covered additional topics including (a) a review of the components of qualitative research, (b) grounded theory and phenomenology qualitative research, (c) the difference between theory and description, and (d) analysis through examination of the data. Session 2 focused on coding; especially "open coding." During this session, the research team practiced coding a portion of a practice transcript. At the conclusion of the second training session each analyst was given a transcript of a second practice interview I had done and was asked to code the transcript in preparation for training session 3.

During the third training session, the practice transcripts, which had been coded by the research team, were reviewed to assess the understanding and competency of the analysts. Questions were answered and coding procedures and concepts were clarified. By the conclusion of the third session, all analysts were competent coders as evidenced by inter-rater consistency. Training in qualitative research methods continued and more advanced concepts such as axial coding, selective coding, and developing theory were taught and discussed.

Each analyst was trained to use the qualitative software program NVivo 8, which was used to code the transcripts in this study. I received my training in NVivo 8 via attendance at a 1-day "beginning" workshop in Phoenix, Arizona and a 2-day on-line "intermediate" course. I trained each team member individually and provided on-going training as questions arose.

All four analysts were working towards their master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy and had a desire to learn more about and participate in a qualitative research project. All of the analysts are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am also a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. One of the analysts had a father who had served as a bishop in the LDS Church. I likewise had a father who served as a bishop in the LDS Church. The male analyst, who was married, had not served as an LDS bishop. One of the other three female analysts was married, and her husband had not served as an LDS bishop. I am married and my husband was currently serving as an LDS bishop.

The transcripts from the interviews were analyzed and coded using qualitative data analysis and procedures outlined by phenomenology analysis and representation as well as the specific procedures outlined by grounded theory analysis and representation. The strategies of phenomenology and grounded theory were not separated in the analysis, but were interwoven

throughout the analysis process. For ease of discussion, however, the strategies are presented separately.

**Phenomenology analysis and representation.** The team of analysts began by identifying and highlighting significant statements, sentences, or quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon (e.g., husband-wife communication difficulties). Next, the team developed *clusters of meaning* from the significant statements that were then identified thematically. The statements and themes were used to create a *textural description*, which is a description of *what* the participants experienced. In addition to a textural description, a structural description was produced. This was a description of the context or setting that influenced *how* the participants experienced the husband's calling as an LDS bishop. From the structural and textural descriptions I wrote a composite description that presented the essential, *invariant structure* or *essence* of the phenomenon. This primarily focused on the common experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007).

**Grounded Theory.** Coding was used to reduce the data into categorical themes. Three coding processes were used: open, axial, and selective. Relationships among the themes were then analyzed, resulting in a grounded theory model. The team of analysts began with open coding, which is coding the data for major categories of information. Concepts were identified and their properties and dimensions were explored. Axial coding was then used to identify a single open coding category upon which to focus. The process of axial coding included going back to the data to identify categories, themes, and patterns surrounding the core phenomenon. The categories, themes, and patterns were linked at the levels of properties and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 1998).

The final step was selective coding wherein I took the emerging model and formed propositions or hypotheses that connected the categories. The emerging theory was integrated and refined. As the emerging theory was refined the data were evaluated in the context of existing research, data, and theory (Creswell, 2007).

Adhering to the methodology previously described, the team of analysts coded the interviews using the constant-comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This entailed the team initially coding the first two couples' interviews as a team. The team began coding the interviews together for the purpose of discussing the ideas and themes that were emerging and then giving those concepts and themes names. This provided a greater understanding among the coders as to the definition and meaning of concepts and themes, allowing for greater consistency between coders. As the team became increasingly familiar with the data, the labeling of concepts and themes was refined. This was done to accurately portray the nuances of participant's experiences and the meanings of those experiences.

After the first two couples' transcripts were transcribed as a team, each individual team member independently coded subsequent transcripts. The team met weekly to review the coded transcripts. Prior to the meeting, the lead researcher merged the independently coded transcripts into one document using the NVivo 8 software. A "coding comparison" query was then performed, which compared the coding done by two groups of people. In this case I was one group and the four analysts were the second group. A coding comparison query provided a way of measuring inter-rater reliability or the degree of agreement between analysts (QSR International, 2008). For each concept or "node," the software identified the percentage agreement (the number of words of agreement divided by the total number of words identified). For the purposes of this study, it was decided that each concept or theme would have an inter-

reliability rating of at least ninety percent. If a concept or “node” fell below the ninety percent cutoff, the team discussed the identified concepts until there was consensus. If there was a disagreement among analysts, I made the final decision. However, the team most often came to consensus and I was rarely required to make a final decision.

At the beginning of each team meeting, prior to discussing the coding, the team discussed reactions to the transcripts, refined definitions of concepts and themes, and the emerging theory. It was during this time, particularly, that the tenets of phenomenology and grounded theory were woven together. The integration of phenomenology and grounded theory provided for the meaning of the experiences to be explored as well as the formulation of a theory.

### **Validation and Reliability**

Creswell (2007) notes that, “Many perspectives exist regarding the importance of validation in qualitative research, the definition of it, terms to describe it, and procedures for establishing it” (p. 202). Glaser and Strauss (1967) use the term “credibility” meaning “believable,” rather than “validity” when they explain that researchers have a conviction that although their analysis may not be the only plausible one based on the data, there is high confidence in the credibility of the analysis. Glaser and Strauss suggest two ways that credibility is judged. First is for the readers of the results to vicariously become the researcher in the field and judge for themselves the credibility of the theory. Second there is sufficient evidence on how data was gathered and analysis conducted that the reader is able to assess how the researcher generated the study conclusions. To satisfy both of these criteria, I have given descriptions of each theme and supporting quotations as examples of those themes. I also provided a detailed description pertaining to how the data was collected and its analysis. Credibility was further ensured by using triangulation, clarification of researcher bias, and member checking.

**Triangulation.** The use of four analysts in the coding process provided corroborating evidence on the conclusions drawn in regards to themes and perspectives. The analysts underwent thorough training in qualitative research methods, coding, and use of NVivo 8. The team of analysts coded the interviews using the theoretical comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) method of analysis to extract major themes. The team initially coded the interviews together to provide consistency in the coding method. Then, each transcript was coded independently. The team of analysts met together to discuss the themes found in each of the interviews in order to reach consensus. This process occurred during each of the three types of coding conducted: open, axial, and selective.

**Clarification of researcher bias.** At the time of the study, I was married and my husband was serving as an LDS bishop in the Salt Lake City, Utah area. The fact that my husband was currently serving as an LDS bishop relates directly to the insider/outsider dilemma all researchers face when doing qualitative research. The advantages of insider fieldwork include a higher degree of trust, an easier access and understanding of the nuances of local interaction and meaning, and easier entrance (Lofland et al., 2006). To be as reflexive as possible, I tried to be as aware as possible of my own prejudices. I did this by engaging in frequent conversations with the members of my researcher team and my major professor to “check out” my conclusions. Additionally, I minimized imposing my own interpreting responses by including four other analysts on the research team. Their perspectives and contributions to the discussions were highly valued and carefully considered.

**Member checking.** I solicited participants’ views of the accuracy of the model by giving all participants a graphic of the model and a written explanation of the model (Creswell, 2007). A request was made for the participants to review the model and to offer feedback as to its



accuracy in representing his/her experience as he/she adjusted to the effects of his/her husband's service as an LDS bishop on the marital relationship. All couples agreed that the model was "a good one" and it "captured many of the complicated dynamics of what is going on."

In summary, this study has produced thick description to convey the experiences, emotions, and meanings attached to marital adjustment while the husband serves as a bishop for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as related from the perspective of those having the experience. This study has, "provide[d] for the voices of the participants, a reflexivity of the researchers, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and a study that adds to the literature" (Creswell, 2007, p. 51). The model presented from the grounded theory is, "a set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 15)

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

In this chapter, a brief description of the participants is presented followed by a presentation of the theoretical model that emerged from the data (Figure 2). The major domains, categories, and subcategories will be presented and direct quotes from the participants provided to illustrate the findings. The application of the theoretical model to a case will be presented. Finally, the major findings of the study will be summarized.

#### **Description of Participants**

Six couples were interviewed for this study, with husbands and wives being interviewed separately. Table 2 describes the individual participants. The average age of the husbands was 44 years-old with a range from 34 to 54 years. The average age of the wives was 42 years-old with a range from 33 to 50 years. The average length of service as an LDS bishop was 19.5 months with a range from 12 to 30 months as reported by the husbands and an average of 18 months with a range from 11 to 28 months as reported by the wives.

The average hours per week spent performing bishop duties was 19 hours with a range of 12 to 25+ hours per week as reported by the husbands, and 16 hours with a range of 11 to 25 hours per week as reported by the wives. Eleven of the 12 participants were born and raised as practicing members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had been baptized when 8 years-old. One husband converted to the church when he was 18 years-old and had been a member for 36 years.

All couples were in their only marriage. The average duration of marriage was 21 years 4 months with a range of years married being from 12 to 31 years as reported by both husbands

and wives. The average Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) score<sup>1</sup> for the husbands was 54.5 with a range from 49 to 59, all above the clinical cut-off of 48. The average Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale Score for the wives as 51.3 with a range from 40 to 59, with one wife scoring below the clinical cut-off of 48. Both husbands and wives shared similar perceptions of the amount of time they spent alone as a couple. The average amount of time spent alone as a couple was 5 hours per week as reported by the husbands and 7 hours per week alone together as reported by the wives. The range of hours spent together was between 1 and 10 hours per week as reported by the husbands and from 1 to 14 hours per week as reported by the wives.

All participants were Caucasian and lived along the Wasatch Front from Brigham City, Utah to the north to Payson, Utah in the south. All six of the husbands were employed, two wives were employed, one wife was a full-time student and three wives were full-time homemakers. The husbands worked an average of 46 hours per week as reported by the husbands and 47 hours as reported by the wives. The range of hours worked per week was 40 to 55 as reported by the husbands and 40 to 60+ as reported by the wives.

All six couples had children; three couples had five children, and three couples had four children. Five of the six couples had children still living at home while one couple were “empty nesters,” meaning all children were grown and no longer living at home. Husbands reported engaging in family activities (when those living at home were all present, including dinner) an average of 11 hours per week with a range of 2 to 21 hours per week. The wives reported engaging in family activities an average of 10 hours per week with a range of 2 to 25 hours per week.

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<sup>1</sup> RDAS has a cut-off score of 48 with scores 48 and above representing a non-clinically distressed population (Crane, Middleton, & Bean, 2000). Scores of 47-42 represent mildly distressed couples, 41-32 represent moderately distressed couples and <31 represent severely distressed couples (D. R. Crane, personal communication, January 30, 2008).

### **Theoretical Model: Marital Adjustment as a Husband Serves as an LDS Bishop**

This model represents the process the couple experiences as the marital relationship adapts to the husband's calling as a bishop (lay-clergy) in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as grounded in participants' perspectives (Figure 2). My training in systemic perspectives has influenced my thinking about how the components of the adjustment process influence each other. According to systems theory, one part of a system influences and affects other parts of the system. Figure 2 shows mutual influences that may be constantly changing the flow and direction of the adjustment process. Although the mutual influences are constantly changing both in flow and direction, for ease of discussion the model will be presented in a linear format. Table 3 illustrates the major domains, categories, and subcategories.

The model begins with the marital relationship prior to the calling. Next, the calling of bishop is added. The calling affects the husband and wife individually as well as the marital relationship. Bi-directional arrows from the calling to the husband and to the wife indicate that the calling affects both the husband and the wife individually. The husband and wife each have their own way of processing and understanding the calling. The effects of the calling on the marital relationship are represented by a dashed line around the "Marital Relationship" sphere. A dashed line has been used to indicate a change or disruption to the marital relationship as a result of the husband's performance of his calling. Bi-directional arrows from the husband to the "Marital Relationship" and from the wife to the "Marital Relationship" illustrate the reciprocal nature of the effects of the calling between the individuals themselves and the calling.

Single direction arrows connect the husband and the wife to two boxes labeled "Points of Satisfaction" and "Points of Dissatisfaction/Disconnect." This is to illustrate that the calling

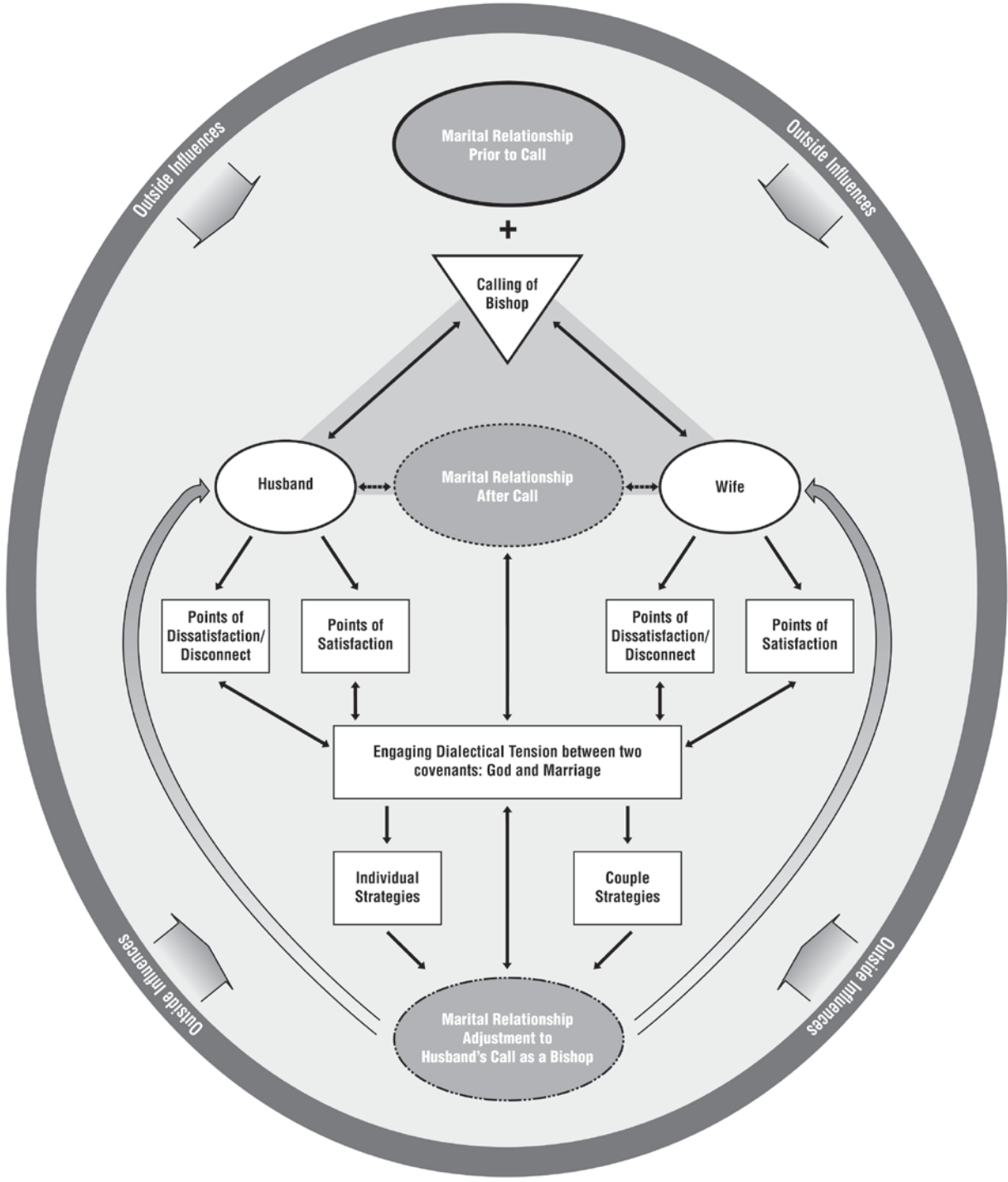


Figure 2. Model of Marital Adjustment as a Husband Serves as an LDS Bishop

produces two experiences at once, or a parallel set of experiences. One set of experiences is conceptualized as satisfying for the individual or helpful to the relationship and the other set of experience is dissatisfying to the individual or disconnecting to the relationship.

The parallel set of experiences and the resulting effects of the husband's service as an LDS bishop on the marital relationship produce a dialectical tension between two promises or "covenants" previously made by the husband and the wife. One covenant is to serve God by sacrificing to build His kingdom on earth through service to others and the other is to have a strong marriage. This is represented by a box labeled "Engaging Dialectical Tension between two covenants: God and Marriage." To illustrate how experiences of the individuals influence the dialectical tension and how the dialectical tension affects the husband and wife, bi-directional arrows have been drawn from the husband's and the wife's "Points of Satisfaction" and "Points of Dissatisfaction/Disconnect" boxes to the "Dialectical Tension" box. A bi-directional arrow from the "Dialectical Tension" box to the "Marital Relationship-Post Call" sphere then illustrates the back and forth influences between the status of the relationship and the process of resolving the dialectical tension that has been created by trying to fulfill both covenants.

The bubble at the bottom of the figure represents the marital relationship in its adaptive state. A broken line, as well as two arrows, one leading back to the husband and one leading back to the wife, indicates that relationship adjustment is a continuous process. This process is influenced by how the husband and the wife are resolving the dialectical tension between service to God and having a strong marriage as well as how they are negotiating the effects of the calling on their relationship. A bi-directional arrow between the "Dialectical Tension" box and the "Marital Relationship in its Adaptive State" bubble represents the ongoing nature and back-and-forth relationship between the two.

Two boxes, one labeled “Individual Strategies” and the other “Couple Strategies” illustrate the two types of strategies used by the couples as they attempt to resolve the demands of the calling with the needs of the relationship. Bi-directional arrows between the “Dialectical Tension” box and the “Strategies” boxes as well as the “Strategies” boxes and the “Marital Relationship Adjustment to Husband’s Call as a Bishop” box illustrate the systemic nature of each of these factors influencing each other. The entire model is encircled by a line labeled “Outside Influences.” This is done to illustrate the on-going influence of other factors that impact all components of the model at one time or another.

Each of the components of this model will now be described. Quotes from participants will be presented to illustrate the components and the participants’ experience with that component. First, the participant’s description of the marital relationship before receiving the calling is given to provide a context in which to place the effects of the calling on the marital relationship. Second, the effects of the calling on the marital relationship are described. This is followed by a discussion of the effects of the calling on the husband and on the wife individually. Although “Outside Influences” are experienced during all stages of the model, a discussion of the identified influences is given next.

The “Dialectical Tension between Two Covenants, God and Marriage” is then presented. The strategies used by the participants to adapt to the husband’s calling as an LDS bishop will be explained. It is important to remember that, although the model is being presented in a linear fashion, all of the components are influencing each other simultaneously. At the conclusion of this chapter a case is presented to illustrate how the model applies to one couple’s adjustment to the husband’s calling of bishop and the effects of the calling on the marital relationship.

### **Marital Relationship Prior to the Husband Assuming the Calling of LDS Bishop**

Although this study focuses on the marital adjustment to the husband's call, the participants' descriptions of their marriage prior to the call provide a context in which to place the relationship changes that occurred after the role of LDS bishop had been assumed. Two themes emerged from the participants' descriptions. First was the participants' perception of marital satisfaction and factors that influenced the quality of the relationship and second was viewing the marital relationship as a triad instead of a dyad with Christ being the third member in the relationship.

**Description of marital relationship prior to call.** Several of the participants described having a "great marriage." Included in the description was often the reference to being best friends. For example, Couple 1 Wife explained, "I mean we've been best [friends], I think we've got a great marriage. I think he'd probably agree. Things have just gone really well." Similarly, Couple 5 Wife described sharing with the stake president at the time of her husband's call that she had a great marriage.

And then he asked me, "I want to know about your marriage. How's your marriage?" And it really brought tears to my eyes because we have a great marriage. And I told him that. I said, "I have a great marriage." I said, "He's a great friend, I'm his hobby." . . . He's just the most giving and concerned man in the world and so I told the stake president, "We have a great marriage."

Couple 2 Wife described her husband as having, "A long and lasting love." According to Couple 2 Wife, the marital relationship benefitted as a result of her husband's love when she explained, "We've always, been really close that way. And so I think we've been blessed that way too and we just have a good relationship." Prior to the call of bishop, Couple 1 Husband described a "comfortable" relationship with his wife, "I think we were in a mode of operation,



and the relationship was at a point where it was comfortable, and we were moving forward and communicating effectively given our situation.”

In contrast to the positive terms used above to describe the marital relationship, other participants used descriptors indicative of a more detached relationship. Couple 3 Wife, described a preoccupied “workaholic” husband whose absence prior to the call had resulted in her filling her time with other activities and relationships.

He has a workaholic mindset that I’ve always dealt with. . . Since we were, when we were back at B.Y.U. [Brigham Young University], and I had a child, soon after we were married, he never saw that baby because he was working full time and going to B.Y.U. And then as time changed, where he left off school, he filled it in with something else. So it was still kind of like, “You’re not home very much.” And I’ve learned to fill my time with stuff I want to do, rather than waiting for him to get home to do stuff. We, me and the girls, go do what we want to do.

Couple 6 Wife described feeling anxious that her petty behaviors were an annoyance to her husband, and those issues had always been present in the marriage.

My petty little problems that annoy him, that always have annoyed him. Always going, “Now he’s upset with me.” . . . But are really, in comparison, I’ve always thought, “You know, you don’t have it so bad.” I mean they’re just, dumb things that annoy him. Like my tardiness, which is not good. I [pause] but yeah, it’s annoying. And having dinner late all the time and not cooking very well. . . . A lot of the issues have always been there.

Couple 3 Husband said that, prior to his call as bishop, conflict was used as a way to engage each other, “Before we used to go on dates, and we’d spend the first half hour arguing or just whatever.”

During the interviews, participants reflected on events or factors that had defined their marital relationship prior to the husband receiving the call of bishop. Couple 5 Husband described a relationship that had matured over the 30 years of their marriage. He also described learning to adjust and adapt to the circumstances at hand.

I try to enjoy the time I have with my wife and look forward to that. Because of our age and that we've been married over 30 years, this works for us. Early on in our married life I think it would've been much more difficult to serve in a capacity because we would have had to work out other things and we've just learned how to adjust and it's kind of like, the fox trot. We have learned who leads and who follows, and at what time and what direction and this is what life has taught us. If we're going to be successful in a marriage there are times that she's doing her thing and times I'm doing my thing and enjoy[ing] the time that we have together.

Many of the lessons they learned over 30 years of marriage came as a result of enduring a "refiner's fire" during which they discovered they were committed to each other, and to their relationship.

I think we're like every marriage. We've had a refiner's fire that we went through and we've learned we've always been committed. I think in most marriages, the commitment is not there and that's [why] we have so much divorce. But we've always been committed to our relationship and working through problems. And because of that, problems have come up now and again and we'll just work it out. And we'll work through it.

Couple 5 Husband also described learning to listen to his wife and supporting her in her problems and concerns.

Men want to fix things and some things you just can't fix. My wife's taught me that sometimes you just need to listen. We have learned over our long married life that when my wife shares with me her problems, she doesn't want me to solve them. . . . She just wants to share them.

Participants described strategies used to maintain marital connection and satisfaction. Most participants described limited time together. For example, both the husband and wife in Couple 2 spoke of maintaining marital connection despite busy schedules and limited time together. This occurred mostly through conversations on the phone. Couple 2 Wife stated:

We don't talk a lot but we get little bits here and there. And um, I do, I mean we do [pause] when I talk to him I try and focus first on things that need to be talked about. Or, things that are maybe important to me. And, you know, kind of get conversations going that way. Because I [pause] I don't think we have a lot of time to talk. And it's fairly short. But, but uh, I think we do connect when we have the time to talk. We try and connect. And he tries to really listen to the issues

I'm bringing up. And then address those when he can. It might be two days down the road or whatever.

Couple 2 Husband described connecting with his wife via telephone conversations:

I think that the most important thing has just been the communication on a daily basis. She knows she can call in here [husband's work]. And usually if I don't hear from her, I call her, just because, I need to talk to her. She usually will call in to here and like I said if I just say, "Hey can I call you back?" She knows I'm in the middle of a meeting or something. I usually try to answer when she calls. And it usually doesn't matter if, [or] who's in my office.

Raising children was identified by Couple 3 Husband as affecting his marital relationship when he explained, "Our relationship, and we have such a great relationship, personally. But, I think right now a lot of it's been shelved to raise five children."

**Marital triad: Including Christ in the marriage.** When describing their marriages, participants identified a core belief that Christ is a part of the marital relationship. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are taught that, "The Lord Jesus Christ is the focal point in a covenant marriage relationship" (Bednar, 2006). As both the husband and wife individually live lives focused on becoming like Christ, the marital relationship is benefited. This occurs as a result of the husband and wife being drawn to the Lord as they learn to serve and cherish each other. Sharing life experiences, growing together, and being united in purpose allow the individual and the marital relationship to flourish. By focusing on inviting the influence of Christ into their lives and striving to be like Him, the couple grows closer to one another through the redeeming power of Christ (Bednar). Participants in this study believed that adopting this view strengthened their marital relationship. For example Couple 4 Wife explained:

I think a big part of it is whether you view the marriage relationship as dyadic or whether you view it as triadic. We have a couple's motto that we say every night together before we go to bed. And the very first part of it is, we acknowledge the Lord as the first member of our marriage relationship. And are working to become closer to him because when we come closer to him, we become closer to one another.

Couple 6 Husband spoke of sharing a common goal of believing in God, seeking to learn from Him, and ultimately becoming like Him. By engaging in this process, the husband explained, marital differences are overcome.

That is a first priority, fortunately. (Wife's name) and I, our first goal and priority is our belief in God and seeking to learn from Him and ultimately become like him. . . If, in fact, your ultimate goal is to become more like Heavenly Father, then it really doesn't matter where you're at here. Because as you grow towards that you become more like Him and more like each other and you'll work out the differences. And we certainly found that. (Wife's name) and I are in many ways as opposite as they come. She's a city girl, I'm a country boy. I'm quite conservative, she's more liberal. She's a woman, I'm a man. She's a mathematician, I'm a words person. See how the list goes on. But, because we have that as a first priority for both of us, that is the only way it works, it really is. And because of that, other things fall into place.

Couple 2 Husband believed that having a relationship with God (Heavenly Father) and accessing the power of Christ's atonement creates attributes that carry over into the maintenance of earthly relationships, particularly the ability to forgive and be forgiven.

I realized now what's fundamental and important to the Gospel is your relationship with the Lord, and with your Heavenly Father through the power of the Atonement. And then as that's evolved, it's like the power of the Atonement not only repairs that relationship with your Heavenly Father, it repairs your relationship with others if you'll utilize them that way. It gives you the power to forgive and to be forgiven. And so much of relationships is always dependent upon willingness to forgive.

To summarize, each of the participants in the study offered a description of his/her experience of the marital relationship prior to the husband assuming the calling of being an LDS bishop. As participants reflected on their marital relationship prior to the husband's call two themes emerged: (a) their relationships all had strengths and weaknesses typical of most marriages, and (b) the belief that the marital relationship should include Christ. Examples of the range of marital relationship experiences ranged from "great marriage" to "detached" and "anxious" were given. An additional conceptualization of the range of marital relationship

experiences described by participants would be along an attachment continuum from anxiously attached to securely attached. Factors identified as influencing the experience of the marital relationship included an increased commitment to each other as a result of experiencing the “refiner’s fire” and putting the marital relationship on hold to “raise the children.”

### **Marital Relationship Subsequent to the Husband Assuming the Calling of LDS Bishop**

Participants described multiple effects of the husband’s calling on the marital relationship and on the husband and the wife individually. Consistent with systemic thinking, the direction and intensity of the influences constantly change and shift. For discussion purposes, first, participant descriptions of his/her perception of the effects of the calling on the relationship will be presented. Next, influences identified by the participants as contributing to the relationship disruption will be reviewed.

The effects of the calling on the husbands will be presented followed by the effects of the calling on the wives. As interviews with the participants progressed, a parallel set of experiences emerged. One set of experiences has been conceptualized as “Points of Satisfaction” and the other as “Points of Dissatisfaction/Disconnect.” Outside influences are described which influenced all facets of the adjustment experience.

**Effects of calling: Marital relationship.** All participants in this study described the husband’s calling as an LDS bishop as having a disruptive effect on the marital relationship. Each participant acknowledged that the calling affected the closeness previously experienced by the couple, a phenomenon which in this study is labeled a “disruption.” The intensity of the disruption was different for each individual.

Each of the husbands described the relationship disruption resulting from his service as bishop. Words such as “more fragile,” “disconnected,” and “strained” were used to describe the

impact of the call on the marital relationship. Couple 1 Husband referred to the calling as producing a “major shock” to the relationship which, after a year, was still adapting.

I think it’s [the relationship] a little bit, more fragile than it was before. I think we were in a mode of operation and the relationship was at a point where it was comfortable and we [were] moving forward and communicating effectively, given our situation. But, with the dynamics of the call thrown into the mix, I think we’re, after a year we’re still, we’re getting better at communicating, but we’re still a little bit fragile. Still learning the ropes and learning the rules and what works for her and what works for me. We’re not to the level of comfort in terms of the relationship and the harmony of the relationship that we had achieved prior to the call. . . . I think this was a major change, a major shock to the marriage. And, I think after a year we’re still, we’re still adapting.

Impacts on the marital relationship were attributed to (a) the time commitment required to fulfill the calling, and (b) being distracted by the needs of the ward members. Husbands described reacting to the phenomenon of dealing with the needs of the ward members with words such as “preoccupied,” “complete turn off,” and being “meeting’d out,” thus explaining why it was often difficult to then attend to activities meaningful to the wife. The time required to fulfill the duties of a bishop was identified as “straining” the relationship. Couple 4 Husband described Sundays as being especially difficult. Sundays are supposed to be a day of worship with spouse and family; ironically the bishop is not home.

It’s a strain on the relationship with my wife. Especially on Sundays, I get up in the morning, we pray together, I give her a hug and usually I don’t see her, I don’t have interaction with her until, like this past Sunday, until church ended. So I left at 6:30 in the morning and I didn’t actually have any interaction with her until after church ended at 4:00. So, that’s tough.

Husbands described withdrawing from their wives as a result of preoccupation with the needs and problems of ward members.

I think it definitely has [had an] impact on our relationship. My wife will be talking and I’ll be zoned out. I’ll be thinking about 20 other problems and it’s a conflict for me because I look at the fact that my wife is the most important thing in my life and I don’t have the energy or ability with everything going on to focus

on that. I'm over here, thinking about something else that is on my plate. . . She realizes I'm not with her. (Couple 5 Husband)

You do tend to be kind of a lot more preoccupied due to the fact that you become privy to a lot of very important matters to individuals. Even though others might not feel them as weighty, because we know and we love these people [I'm preoccupied]. They're our friends and neighbors and all of a sudden you become privy to a lot of difficulties that they're facing. Problems that you and probably the majority of other people in the neighborhood and ward family have no idea concerning. So, sometimes you worry and you do become more withdrawn and unresponsive [to your spouse]. (Couple 6 Husband)

Another husband described how knowing about the problems of ward members affected his responsiveness to his wife.

I think that's been the biggest thing. I mean some nights you'll go hear things [referring to interviews with ward members], and it's a complete turn off. I mean you just want to go [home], watch Sports Center, [and] fall asleep eating a bowl of ice cream in the corner twitching. I mean it's hard. Because you don't, you don't want to really come home and feel responsive. (Couple 3 Husband)

Being unable to attend to the emotional needs of the wife was also identified as influencing the marital relationship.

However, I don't often deal with the emotional side with my wife; as much as I would like to. I can't focus on it for numerous reasons, being the bishop happens to be one of them. (Couple 5 Husband)

An example of not taking advantage of an opportunity to connect emotionally with his wife was given by Couple 2 Husband when he explained that, despite frequent impressions to take time to pray with his wife, he is often just too "meeting'd or prayer'd" out.

Companionship prayer has really suffered. Sometimes I just feel "meeting'd" out and "prayer'd" out. I should not feel that way. I guess part of it's my pride and part of it is I don't feel like I need to weary the Lord about every issue in my life. It's like, once I've explained them to Him, I've never felt like I need to keep repeating it for Him. But there is part of me that doesn't communicate enough that way with the Lord. I know that she would value more just the fact that I take the time to pray with her. So that's probably the one thing. I get those impressions fairly often. It's like, straighten up. Go do what you're supposed to do. She needs it. Even if you don't, she needs it. So, that's been the one area where I've kind of felt a little disconnected.

The wives also described the husband's calling as having disruptive repercussions on the marital relationship. However, the wives' descriptions differed in properties and dimensions from the husbands'. While acknowledging the effects of their service as bishop, the husbands focused on the busy schedule and emotional demands of the calling while not acknowledging the emotional disruption of the wife. The wives acknowledged the disruption to the marital relationship while recognizing the demands on their husbands. In contrast, the wives primarily shared their emotional experience of the shift in the marital relationship, which comprised a continuum from anger and hurt to resignation. The husbands' responses acknowledged a shift in the relationship, but did not include their personal experience of that shift.

Wives described experiencing a shift in the relationship from one of "rallying the troops" and a "we" experience to parallel lives that were not as connected.

I think with the disconnectedness, there's probably, initially when you're called, you kind of rally the troops, so to speak. You kind of think about what you're in for, you're behind each other. Then things kind of slow down a little bit, or maybe don't slow down, but kind of get into a routine. I think for us that's mostly what it was. Things got into a routine. I'm kind of doing my thing and he's doing his thing. . . . Probably just a little less maybe emotional interaction between us, between he and I. . . . Probably just the emotional disconnect, not as much sharing that way. Both of us busy with our own things. Going parallel instead of together, parallel, but apart. . . . I think it's just a support issue. Feeling like he's not there. I think there's a little bit of a feeling of isolation (Couple 2 Wife)

He [the stake president who issues the call] asked me first, "Will you support him in this?" Because if I would not have supported him, he told us, "We don't call [the husband] if the wife doesn't say she will support [him]." And so, it was a "we". We can do this situation. But from then on, it was a separation. (Couple 5 Wife)

The emotional stresses increased marital conflict contributing to the disruption in the marital relationship.

The first maybe five, six months, it was horrible. It was horrible. I just felt like a wedge was put in our marriage. And a lot of conflict, the only thing that I can say



is there was just so much. It was just so unnatural. And I think it was, or it is, and continues to be, a really difficult adjustment. . . . The wedge, I would describe it as contention, as hurt. (Couple 1 Wife)

It's just he's tired. There have been times, I guess now that I think about it, that he um, he's short with me. He'll be really short with me if he's tired. He'll just have been overloaded. (Couple 5 Wife)

Wives reported feeling hurt, confused, and isolated as they reflected on the change in their marital relationship. Wives struggled with the realization that their husbands were no longer always available to meet their needs to the same degree they had been in the past.

As far as feelings and emotions, a lot of hurtfulness, confusion. . . . And, it [adjustment to the calling] has just been very awkward. I think, you know, I terribly, I really miss him. . . I'm not very open about the tender feelings between (Husband's name) and I and this isolation and the anger and frustration. (Couple 1 Wife)

Is this distance I feel or is this dissonance? That's the word I use a lot that I feel a dissonance between us. Is this something about us, or is this something that you're just dealing with on your own? There's a compartmentalization between him as my husband and him as my bishop. I'm willing to give that part of me and that part of my husband, but I'm not perfect at that and there's that little girl part of me that still [pause] yeah, that still wants my needs to be important. (Couple 4 Wife)

Wives sometimes suggested that the husband's calling merely intensified dynamics that already existed in the relationship. As such, they felt resigned to the status of the relationship.

[He's] not home very much. And I've learned to fill my time with stuff I want to do, rather than waiting for him to get home to do stuff. . . . With the bishop thing and with work, [and] a lot of times he sneaks off to go golfing, but he counts that as work hours. . . . He's a workaholic [it's a] mindset that I am always deal[ing] with. I'm used to having half of his brain, generally. (Couple 3 Wife)

It's much more difficult for him. He's got a lot of burdens and I realize that. But, [for] me as wife, life goes, has just gone on. . . . He carries more burdens and more stress, which I don't wish for him, but I know that that's inevitable. And, there's nothing I can do about that, even though I'd like. I hate to have him have more stress; he has enough in his job. But really, there isn't anything I can do so I tell myself that. (Couple 6 Wife)

**Influences contributing to relationship disruption.** Participants identified three themes as contributing to the disruption of the marital relationship experienced as a result of the husband's calling. First was the theme of "Accessibility of the Bishop." The second theme was "Relationships with Others." The third theme was "Confidentiality/Shared Intimacy."

*Accessibility of the bishop.* The first disruptive influence identified by both husbands and wives was that the needs of the ward members were attended to at the expense of family and marital relationships. While this could also be considered an outside influence, it is discussed here as a dynamic that results from the husband's execution of his calling. How accessible an LDS bishop makes himself to the members of his congregation is a result of his perception and belief about how he should fulfill his calling. A predominant sentiment expressed by the participants in this study was that fulfilling the calling of an LDS bishop requires easy accessibility by the members. Husbands acknowledged that their absence from the home is often difficult on family. Couple 3 Husband states, "I know it's hard for my wife and my kids when people will call and need something right away versus being able to wait." The husbands justified their choices to attend to the needs of members by stating that, on occasion, they believe God inspires or directs them to attend to the needs of a member of the ward. Sometimes they are even willing to "go through the wrath of my wife to do what I feel impressed to do" (Couple 1 Husband). A common belief of the husbands was that they are to do whatever is reasonable to meet the needs of the ward members, even to the point of spending so much time that the calling becomes "a part-time job."

I have gone through times where I would, I'm at the church for 12, 13, 14 hours on Sunday and then I have two nights during the week. And I'm trying to do everything and anything, that I think I'm supposed to do. . . For instance, spending so much time, that it became a second job for me. (Couple 4 Husband)

Obviously, I have to avail myself to people and it's not always convenient for

them or for me. And, if there's some emergency that can't be put on hold, and if it won't be a crisis for my wife; it's then more of a crisis for me. Because in my mind, I have to go, because I'm a bishop. I have to respond if people call me. If they call and need me to go to the hospital, I have to go to the hospital. And I try to have to put my relationship with my wife on hold for an hour or however long it takes. (Couple 5 Husband)

Wives believed that the husband's responsiveness to others often came at the expense of his relationship with her.

Okay, how many dates have we been on where he has been on the phone with bishop things? (Couple 3 Wife)

Not only do wives miss having a relationship with their husbands, but they also experience feelings that they, in essence, are "the sacrifice" sacrificed on the altar of the husband's service.

Often times I don't think he understands how I feel. I don't think they (men in leadership positions) do in general. I don't think they do. Because I have never had a situation and he hasn't really either, that the other person's not been a part of. And it's hurtful. It's hurtful to me. And I don't want to cry. . . . He has no idea, because the stuff that he's sacrificing is with you. You're the one that he's sacrificing. (Couple 1 Wife)

Wives also explained that their husband's responsiveness to others compromised family time, despite efforts to intentionally set boundaries and protect family time. This resulted in frustration on the part of the wife. Her family's needs were seen as second to the needs of others.

We intentionally wanted to set the family balance of, "This is the day that you'll give there and this is the day there and all of those other days are home time, our family time. Our intentional time of you coming here [being home]." And it still happens. You know there are things that come up. Its human needs and as he's shepherding a ward of humans that have things come up, [for example] on the Fourth of July and he needs to take that call. There are some times where I get a little frustrated about that. "But, it's the Fourth of July and you're here with family and fireworks and you don't need to deal with somebody else's husband's pornography issue." (Couple 4 Wife)

***Relationships with others.*** The second influence identified is the time the husband spends with members of the ward, especially women, who seek ecclesiastical counsel. Both the

husbands and the wives acknowledged that the relationships themselves, as well as the topics discussed, were unfamiliar and uncomfortable. For both husbands and wives, the performance of this aspect of the call of bishop challenged boundaries that were formerly in place in the marriage in regards to relationships with others. Husbands described being in situations and discussing topics with women seeking ecclesiastical counseling that they had previously only discussed with their wives.

I think there are many things that I do, and in situations and people that I get involved with, that I previously had not been involved with. I do spend more time visiting with women, than I did before. Some of the topics that I get involved with are topics which would normally not be discussed outside of my relationship with my wife. (Couple 1 Husband)

These situations produced insecurities on the part of husbands and a desire of sense of wanting to reassure their wives that they are loyal and faithful to them.

One thing that's hard for me is uh, my insecurities of wanting to make sure my wife knows that even though I'm in one-on-one with several of the women in the ward that it is only because I have to. I would much rather be home with her. And that my heart is hers. (Couple 4 Husband)

Wives described feeling upset as they observed others, especially other women, getting their husband's time and attention.

There was a sister who, I shouldn't second guess the people in our ward, but sometimes I do. And I think, "Really what are her motives? Does she have too much extra time? Is he the only one that will listen to her?" A single sister will come up to me and say, "I just love your husband. He just listens and I've shared so much with him." And to me it's a knife, just in my heart. (Couple 1 Wife)

***Confidentiality/Shared intimacy.*** The third influence that encroached on the marital relationship was that of confidentiality/share intimacy. One of the tasks of an LDS bishop, as with other clergy, is to provide confidential counseling to the members of his ward. In this role, bishops are to be accessible to all who seek his counsel. Unlike professional clergy whose

ministry is their employment, LDS bishops are lay clergy who perform their clerical duties on top of the hours they spend in their occupation. Consequently, LDS bishops are often required to counsel with members of their congregations during evening hours and, as expected, on Sundays. Much of this demand comes during times the bishop formerly spent with his wife and children. A challenge to remaining emotionally connected as a couple is the need for the husband to maintain the confidentiality of those with whom he meets. He is unable to explain why he is making the choices he is making and why he is unavailable both physically and emotionally, which often leaves the wife “in the dark.”

If there is a need and it is immediate then I tend to welcome it and receive it and accept it and it's not a bother to me. That's sometimes a conflict. If I have somebody come over that needs to talk and then they come over to the home and they sit down in the den and sometimes (Wife's name), not knowing fully the circumstance, says, “Well couldn't one of your counselors have talked with this person? Couldn't this have waited? Why do you interrupt our schedule, to meet with this person?” and, “Wasn't this person talking to you last week? Why do you have to meet with the person so often?” So it comes back to maybe her not having a full understanding as to some of the issues and needs for my meeting with that person. I don't by nature, seek out those opportunities. But, I am very receptive and available when they present themselves. (Couple 1 Husband)

Despite understanding the need to maintain confidentiality, husbands described feeling conflicted, indicating that at times they almost feel deceptive about what they are doing and where they have been.

Oh it's hard. Because you can't really tell people where you've been or what you're doing and so you feel you've done a good thing, but you almost feel deceptive sometimes when you come home. You can't really be very explicit on why you're an hour late, or why you didn't answer the phone, or where you've been so it makes it a little bit difficult. You'd like to discuss it in some way or to have someone to download on, but you really can't. So it's hard. (Couple 3 Husband)

I think the wives get the brunt of it a lot, unfortunately. Because, they're supposed to just I suppose be accepting and, not ask questions. They wonder why their husbands are more withdrawn, I'm sure, and they wonder why they're not as responsive as perhaps they were previously. It is difficult because you don't feel

like there's a whole lot you can share by the way of detail. (Couple 6 Husband)

Because bishops formerly shared much of their day-to-day life's with their wives, the sudden challenge of not being able to share a significant portion introduces a wall or divide, a "line that has been drawn in the relationship," which neither dares cross.

I have half of my life that I cannot share with my wife. It's hard when I come home and (Wife's name) asks me how I'm doing. She can see the drain on my face. She can see the glow or the downtrodden look on my face and as a sweet, help mate would, she wants to help. Not being able to tell her what happened, what I just went through, it's difficult. That line seems to have been drawn in our relationship. (Couple 4 Husband)

The calling of bishop requires a significant investment of time, energy, and emotion on the part of the husbands. Being unable to fully share in the husband's experience because of confidentiality evoked a variety of responses from the wives. It is not so much that the wives want the husbands to divulge confidences as they are conflicted as to why their husband is so attentive to others' needs which at times may be at the expense of the marriage or other family relationships.

I've always considered it a "we." "We" can do this, because I knew it would be something that we had to do together. I think initially, the first thing that was hard was the confidentiality thing. I'm sure that's an underlying thing for everybody. (Couple 5 Wife)

The need to maintain confidentiality results in the wife observing her husband having experiences and emotions that he cannot share and about which she cannot know. This leaves the wife questioning if or how the husband's experiences and emotions are related to her and their marital relationship.

The other biggest challenge I think from day one until now has been the struggle of the issues of confidentiality. That there's so much going on inside of him, and where we strive to be so open in our communications, it's hard to intentionally have this huge piece of what's working inside of him now, that we just can't go there. We can't talk about that. We can't share it. And I know, he's, so close to tears and so emotional about things and as much as he tries to not bring it home,

you can't separate yourself from that. So he brings it home and it influences things, but we can't talk about it, because of the confidentiality issues. And I struggle with that a lot. I don't want to know other people's issues; we have enough of our own. But, the dimension of how it's affecting him and how he's changing and how he's processing that, and how that affects how he sees our relationship. That's a hard struggle. (Couple 4 Wife)

As a result of this confidentiality barrier, wives felt left out of their husband's world. A disconnected feeling in the relationship ensued with the wife reaching for a husband who is "there, but not there."

I think, for me, the feeling is that he has this whole other world going on in his life, but I'm part of, kind of, but kind of not. Where I feel like I've always been part of his world [until now]. And that to me is a very disconnected feeling. . . . I think it's the inability to share that closeness that we do in every other part of our marriage. It's like, you're reaching for something but it's not there. You can't grab it. I can't have it. But I don't really want that burden that he's bearing. It's just that inability, and to experience the closeness that we did. (Couple 1 Wife)

**Effects of the calling: Husband.** Not only does the calling of bishop affect the marital relationship, but it affects the husband and wife individually. Participants described many examples of how the calling of bishop had affected the husband. Three themes were identified that most profoundly influenced the marital relationship: (a) the weight of the responsibility, (b) the personal and spiritual growth of the husband, and (c) the increased status and attention. In the model, the three themes identified would be included under "Points of Satisfaction" and "Points of Dissatisfaction/Disconnect." However, that which was considered a point of satisfaction by the husband or wife was not necessarily considered a point of satisfaction by the spouse.

**Weight of the responsibility.** Bishops who serve in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints differ from professional clergy in that they are not paid and their calling is time limited, usually 5 to 6 years. Unlike professional clergy, LDS bishops receive no formal training. Instead, training occurs informally throughout a man's life as he attends

priesthood meetings, during which instruction is given on the importance of serving others and how to perform such service. Members of the church are trained for “church callings” or positions of service and leadership by others who usually have prior experience in the calling. The duties of a bishop are formally outlined by the LDS Church in *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (LDS Church, 2010). Although the duties and responsibilities of a bishop are carefully outlined, it is up to each individual bishop to decide how he will perform his calling and how much time he will devote to the execution of his responsibilities. For most bishops, fulfilling the calling requires a significant investment of time and emotion. The following is one bishop’s description of his week.

We have been busy on most nights this week. It’s not only that I have the ward conference, but the stake president says, “Well, we want to visit people.” So it takes a lot of energy to set up the appointments, get them set, to go visit the people. Then I had a missionary that was [to be] set apart. I get home from work, go to the missionary setting apart, and [then] try to grab dinner. Then we visit people until 8:00. Then we have a bi-monthly bishop training meeting, which is as far from training as I’ve ever seen and that meeting went on until 10:00 at night. My wife and I never did see each other till late at night. . . . I’m usually just exhausted. Then Wednesday night is mutual. Last night was temple night. So I am looking forward to tonight actually. There’s nothing that I’m aware of that we have on our plate tonight. But then the weekend obviously starts and there are meetings and more meetings. . . . When you’re a bishop, there’s no decompression time. It’s always, and it’s ever present, because you are intimate with people and their problems. And whether the problems are spiritual or whether they are temporal, the problems inflict themselves upon you. It is lonely and it’s a hard thing. It’s back to my word “overwhelming.” It’s overwhelming and it never leaves you. (Couple 5 Husband)

As a result of the demands of the calling, husbands often described feeling fatigued, oppressed, and exhausted.

I’m in continual awe of what is expected of the bishop. Sometimes you think, “I don’t remember signing up for this issue or this challenge or what-not.” It’s very significant in challenges. I come home absolutely fatigued and exhausted . . . on a Sunday night after a full day. (Couple 1 Husband)



Initially, it's very oppressive, probably for the first year, year-and-a-half, because you read things in the *Church Handbook of Instructions*. It was very oppressive. And, that's a good word for it because every other sentence is, "The bishop is in charge of..." (Couple 6 Husband)

For me, it's been hard, because at first it wasn't really much of a shift or much of a change the first few months. And then, I mean mentally, it was mentally exhausting. (Couple 3 Husband)

Adding to the pressure of the calling is the nagging possibility that the manner in which the husband chooses to perform his calling will not be acceptable and he will be "released" prematurely. The fear is that if there is a premature release others might interpret this as being due to "sin" or "emotional problems."

I think the brethren [referring to general authorities] and the auxiliaries [other general leadership in the LDS Church] all understand that the heart of the church is the ward and the ward [has] a bishop. I just think its human nature, we're all made differently. And everybody goes about doing it [calling of bishop] a little bit differently, deals with it differently, and there's no right or wrong. There's just the time you serve, and if you don't survive, they release you. You've seen it, I've seen it. I mean some serve their whole term and others just for whatever reason get released. The service just weeds them out. Some can't do it. It's kind of like a missionary. Some missionaries do their full two years and others just come home early. Whether its sin or whether it's just emotional problems, they just can't get with it, just kind of like a refiner's fire. (Couple 5 Husband)

***Personal and spiritual growth.*** Although the calling of bishop has been described as overwhelming, fatiguing, and exhausting, husbands and wives reflected on the positive changes that have occurred in the husbands as a result of the calling. Most frequently, the husbands spoke of shifts in how they regarded their wives and their marriage. The experience of being an LDS bishop provided the husbands a larger context in which to place their perceptions of their lives, wives, and marriages.

The best thing that's happened is perspective. Honestly. Because I was never, I'm very right brained, and so I was never worried about finances, [I'm more,] "Oh, it will work out." He just gets so intense; he's just, very opposite that way of me. Just counts ever dime and he's on the computer with . . . what's it called? [pause]

He has a program he uses it's [pause] oh dear, it's left me. It's a budget program. He pulls it out all the time. I'll remember it in a minute. It's, he just gets on the computer every day and is balancing our accounts, and he's got accounts over here, accounts over there, he's got his money everywhere and watches things. Being the bishop has really given him a perspective of, "We don't have any problems. We just don't. We don't have any problems with our kids, we don't have any problems with our marriage, we don't have any problems with finances." He used to worry about everything. And now, he comes home and it's like, "my life is good." He has perspective because he sees these other problems in marriages and in kids and the parents with their children and their finances. I mean it's just [on] everything that his perspective has just made a complete turn. That's been really refreshing, actually. That's been a good thing. . . . He comes home and he says, "We have enough." Perspective happened, it was a good thing. (Couple 5 Wife)

As he would talk to people and their problems he would be a little more easy on my petty little problems that annoy him . . . . He's much more patient with what I considered just goofy petty things and I think he's seeing as that too. Because [now] he's dealt, he sees really what serious problems occur in people lives and relationships. This is what I'm thinking. I mean he made one comment once. He said, "Oh, I guess we don't have it so bad. After being bishop and hearing [and] learning things that go on in people's lives, ours in comparison are very simple and not a problem." They're really not a problem. They're just kind of life's annoyances. So, he kind of made a comment and alluded to that once. But, I kind of notice[d] and felt that he was less concerned about the little things. Because I think he had just greater burdens and added a little perspective. I think he put a little perspective [to things] which actually helped in home life here. (Couple 6 Wife)

As a result of ecclesiastical counseling with distressed couples, husbands reported beginning to understand how a husband can "drive his wife crazy" and "drive her to low self esteem." This resulted in husbands taking the opportunity to treat their wives with more compassion, respect, reverence, and patience.

I think the biggest blessing has been to be more compassionate with my wife and to understand. I haven't had a lot of brethren I've had to counsel with. It's mostly been with wives that have stepped out and been unfaithful, and to really analyze and figure out why. I think to me that's been one of the biggest blessings in my own personal life, maybe not in theirs, but in my own. To recognize that a husband can drive his wife crazy and drive her to such low self esteem she's reaching for anything that she can. So, I think the biggest blessing has been to be more compassionate at home . . . . As far as my own expectations of myself as bishop I feel like I could be nicer to my wife and more considerate. Those things I

think about when I listen to other people. I think, for me, it's been a good realization when I hear these sisters come in and complain about their husbands. I sit there and I think, "That's me. I mean that's me." And then I'll go home and say, "And how do you feel when I behave this way?" [And my wife will say], "I hate it." So, I think [in] that way it's actually improved a lot of areas of our relationship. (Couple 3 Husband)

It's very humbling, but you realize that God certainly would treat His spouse with much more respect, with much more reverence and patience than we usually do. That changes your perspective a great deal. (Couple 4 Husband)

One wife saw her husband exercising greater focus and care towards her as a result of his experiences as a bishop.

I [have] felt an even greater focus and care, I guess. So, that's been a great thing. So, in that respect it's been good for us as a couple. (Couple 2 Wife)

Other wives reported greater compassion and validation as a result of their husbands' experiences witnessing the struggles and suffering of other women in their ward.

He is more compassionate. I find more validation. [For example,] when he goes in to an interview and [then] he comes home and he says, "You know what, I kind of understand what you were saying years ago when you used to say this or when you used to say that." He'd say he [could] see that [now] from a third party perspective. There was no pressure on him to make an opinion one way or the other. He didn't have to pick sides. He just got to clearly hear [both] sides. And so, as a counselor, when he's working as a counselor, that's been a blessing to me. Because I know I'm a threatening person. And, I know when we have our debates, because of our personalities, that he is probably [more] in defense mode, than anything else. Which isn't going to help anybody. But when he's sitting in his bishop's office and he hears the wife make complaints, and hears the husband say that she never gets the laundry done, and he realizes, "Who cares about the laundry, look at how your wife is suffering." Or, whatever the issue is. He doesn't always lean toward the wife, but a lot of times it just lets him see the situation as an outsider, and it makes it clear to him. So I love that. Love that. But, I attribute to that to what the Lord's doing in his life, is carving him into a more compassionate, better listener, all the things we want in a husband. The Lord's doing that. I don't have to do anything. I just hope it stays after he's a bishop. (Couple 3 Wife)

Witnessing the struggles of other couples in the ward provided husbands an opportunity for self reflection that, in turn, produced a more positive perspective of the marital relationship.

As he's counseling couples, as he's counseling people working through addictions, as he's facing these issues with all these other people, it changes a lot how he sees what's going on in his own life. And, what's going on in our marriage. One night he came home from an appointment and just cried and said, "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry for these ways that I've treated you, without realizing it." When women will come in and say, "This is what's going on in my marriage. This is what I want. I'm yearning for that priesthood leader. I'm yearning for that husband to provide these needs that he should. In the gospel he should and he's just not being there and doing that for me." Their hearts are aching and he's counseling them through it. He's self reflective of him[self] and [asking himself], "How many times have I done that same thing to my wife?" That influences [him] a lot so he can come home and say, "we can address some of those things [in our marriage]." (Couple 4 Wife)

One wife observed her husband "blossom" and "come out of his shell" which resulted in him being more comfortable with others.

It's been wonderful to see him, it's almost like he's blossomed. Because he's a very, very private person, very proper. He's kind of come out of his shell a little bit. Towards people he's much more comfortable not just at home, and with me. (Couple 1 Wife)

Husbands believed that being an LDS bishop changed the way their wives perceived them, perhaps enabling the wives to see positive attributes in the husbands that had previously gone unnoticed or unacknowledged.

I think there's been an increased respect and appreciation from her to me; in terms of abilities and what the spirit enables me to do as a bishop. I think these things in time will bless the relationship. I still think it's early on, so there's been an increased appreciation. (Couple 1 Husband)

Maybe in part, (Wife's name)'s liked the fact that I have that calling and that assignment. Maybe it's given her something to see in me that has increased her love and affection for me. (Couple 2 Husband)

Both the husbands and the wives thought that the changes in the husbands benefited the marital relationship. As a result of their experiences, husbands had an increased appreciation for their wives, which resulted in them treating their wives more positively. As a result of the changes in the husbands, the wives had a more positive attitude towards their husbands. This is

an example of shifts and changes in one individual influencing the other individual and, as a result, the relationship is affected. In these cases an increase in closeness or connection occurred.

Although the wives acknowledged the spiritual growth in their husbands and were grateful for the positive benefits, they also had reactions of melancholy. The emotions expressed included envy and sadness. Wives longed to share in the experiences the husbands' were having. Wives felt "left behind" and wished there was "a place for them."

And for so long I've craved having that transformation taking place in him that God is forming in him now. And so for me the issue is, um, I guess the best way to describe it is that I see that taking place. But how I envisioned that transformation happening, I was always more involved. And so it's happening but, I joke about this a lot but that uh, the Lord changed my husband more in a year with this calling than I could change him in the eleven years that we were married before that. That I see all this happening and my – I just wish that there was a pathway or that there was a place for me to be more involved in. (Couple 4 Wife)

And, it does make me sad. It makes me a little envious, actually. Because, there's all this growth that's taking place and I, sometimes I feel like I'm being left behind. And, I would like to grow, and would like to be challenged, and that's been hard. (Couple 1 Wife)

***Increased status and attention.*** Another effect of the husbands' service was an increase in status and attention.

I think there's an emotional draw to the position of bishop. People tend to go to the bishop with needs. They tend to patronize a little bit more the bishop. Often times saying, "Oh what a great person he is." I just think it has challenged the dynamics of our relationship. (Couple 1 Husband)

I think there's some sort of honor to it. You know a lot of people make a lot of comments like, "Oh, you know, (Husband's name)'s the bishop." His word suddenly has clout, which is kind of interesting to me. Because it still doesn't have clout to me. (Couple 3 Wife)

However, while the husband was receiving appreciation from the members of his ward and was "feeling loved by them" the wife was not having a similar experience. She was often left home fulfilling family responsibilities or was left "getting about zero

spiritual experience.” This produced a positive personal experience for the husband but a disruptive personal experience for the wife and consequently the marital relationship.

In many respects I feel she has more challenges than I do. Because I get the good parts of all of this. I get to go and meet with them, feel loved by them and feel valued by all of these young adults and she does on occasion too, but not as often. And what does she get left with? Well, she gets left with, the same thing we were doing before. Hauling the kids to church, and separating them when they’re fussing and trying to get (oldest son’s name) there on time so he doesn’t always walk in late...So she’s kind of left the widow at church. And I think that’s a bigger challenge. (Couple 2 Husband)

But, often times I see him off growing spiritually and people revere him so highly and he’s having all these experiences. And, I’m the ward photographer. I’m getting about zero spiritual experience. (Couple 1 Wife)

**Effects of the calling: Wife.** Two themes were identified as participants shared their experience as the wife of an LDS bishop. First was the personal experience of the wife defining her role as the spouse of a bishop. The ambiguity in the role of the bishop’s wife was addressed by the participants, although the wife’s role was generally defined as “supportive.” One way in which the wife demonstrated her support was to take on additional household and parenting responsibilities. The second theme identified was that of personal growth.

**Role of wife of an LDS bishop.** The role of an LDS bishop’s wife is more ambiguous than that of the bishop. While bishops can refer to the Church’s *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (LDS Church, 2010) to get a “job description” and an understanding of their roles and duties, the wives have no such handbook. Most frequently the role was understood by and defined by the wife as simply “being supportive.”

I made sure that he knew I wanted to be there for him. I wanted to support him in every way I could. I thought he would do great in that calling. But we also understood that it was going to be a stress. It was going to be a big time

consumer. And so I think we came together with words at that point, but also with intent. (Couple 2 Wife)

A bishop is called, and set apart, his wife is called too. She is not set apart, but she is very much called to be a help mate for a man in a unique situation. She needs specifically to understand what that is to be a help mate and a support for him, (Couple 4 Wife)

The Church itself could implicitly be said to define the wife's role as supportive via the method by which the new bishop is selected. This method includes the common practice of the stake president interviewing both the prospective bishop and his wife. During this interview, he determines whether the wife is willing to support her husband. One wife recalled that the stake president asked her directly if she could support her husband.

When they [referring to stake presidency who issues the call to a man to be a bishop] asked him to be bishop, they turned to ask me if I wanted to say anything. I didn't have anything to say. I said, "No, I don't have anything to say." And they said, "Well is he going to be good? Can you support him?" "Absolutely, yes, he would be wonderful, I can support him." (Couple 3 Wife)

Husbands also acknowledged the wife's role as one of support, which was pivotal to the husband's ability to serve.

I'm blessed that I have a companion that is very stable in who she is and what she is. That gives me a stability to serve. It's a foundational piece. (Couple 5 Husband)

Adjusting to it [calling of bishop], she's always been very supportive of it and I think that the strength of it [wife's support] has helped me to be a better bishop. (Couple 2 Husband)

I'm just eternally grateful for a spouse who supports me and sustains me and rejoices to do that. I cannot perform my calling without my wife. There is no way that I could honestly be 100 percent in that office receiving inspiration and counseling people, if it wasn't for my wife. I can't do that alone. I have often times in the past come home later on Sunday then I told my wife. Dinner's cold and they've been waiting. The kids are angry because they're hungry and stuff and I come home and the first thing out of my mouth is, "I'm sorry." My wife will always tell me, "Don't say that." (Couple 4 Husband)

One husband described that his wife's willingness to support him was an extension of her desire to support and serve God (Heavenly Father).

You learn that you've got to rely a lot more on your spouse because she's got to take up a lot of weight here at home. It's not really fair to her, but I found that most bishops' wives are more than happy to do it. Because, while I'm assuming this is true, they have that same spiritual awakening and strengthening. Realizing that this is their way to support Heavenly Father. To perpetuate the dynamic that He has here on this earth to take care of His children. As imperfect as it is, that's what we could be. (Couple 6 Husband)

The ambiguity of the expectations of the wife's role prompted one participant to wonder if she should be doing more.

The expectations sometimes, maybe I don't know fully. In fact, I don't really. I asked one former bishop's wife what, you get these different responses. But, she said, 'Oh I didn't do anything different. I just sat and waved to my husband up on the stand.' I think that's kind of my more like me. You know, and so, the expectation, I'm thinking maybe I am, I'm trying to see if there's a certain expectation that I haven't defined. I'm not sure what that is. You need to put up with them being gone, the normal things. I don't have to take his calls. So yeah, I don't know what the expectation is. You're expected to do this and this, and if I knew exactly what those explicit thing were, then I wouldn't [be wondering]. [I'd know,] "Okay, I'm doing them, good, we're on track." But some[times] I'm feeling like, maybe I don't know and I'm missing the boat here somewhere. I should be doing more. Maybe, should I be involved more or doing more behind the scenes or picking up some of his slack? More, I mean do something I haven't been doing before, to make his life a little better. (Couple 6 Wife)

Two wives requested a formal resource to assist wives in negotiating the challenges of the role.

You know we really need a handbook. The wives need some kind of handbook. You're thrown into this huge situation and given very little direction, especially as a wife. (Couple 1 Wife)

How do you work this [role of bishop's wife]? Because there's not someone there to help me understand what's normal in this transition and what is my role. Because I didn't feel my role was as clearly defined. He [the bishop] had all his hand books of how to respond to everything and what he was supposed to do. But, there was no handbook for the wife. The "pink handbook" is what my husband and I talked about...We somehow missed out on getting the "pink handbook." Could you pass it on along to us? (Couple 4 Wife)



Husbands conceptualized “support” as the wife increasing her participation in or taking over household and parenting responsibilities previously performed by the husband. Specifically, wives assisted more with homework and assumed more of the disciplinarian role.

She’s become a little bit more involved with the children in terms of, oh, even homework. You know maybe I did a little bit more homework with the kids and now maybe I don’t do as much and so she’s done a little bit more. She’s had to make some more important decisions relative to the kids scheduling and classes and whatnot....She’s stepped it up a little bit. I’ve kind of slacked off a little bit, and we’ve perhaps done less recreation as a family. (Couple 1 Husband)

[With reference to parenting] The majority she’s done and that I’ve done the minority and then the big issues dad does and mom sits on the sidelines. I think she has felt that I haven’t been as available to handle the big issues. Such as, with our 18, er, 19-year-old daughter who’s in a serious dating relationship, normally dad would get involved and have conversations and work out a plan and decide what to do going forward and dad has not. I have not been as involved. So, she’s had to continue to worry and try to manage it more herself and I think that’s been a source of frustration. But I think if any [pause] I don’t know that our roles have really changed. Um, she stepped it up a little bit. I’ve kind of slacked off a little bit, and we’ve uh, perhaps done less recreation as a family, but I think as a result. (Couple 1 Husband)

She has to be more of the disciplinarian. . She is the principal person dealing with those [discipline issues] in our family right now. I think that might be a more significant challenge with her than for me. (Couple 2 Husband)

Husbands also described their wives taking on more of the household maintenance and housework roles.

That’s one area that we kind of shifted, as far as the roles went. I think before, I used to do a lot better job at maintenance of my house. That’s kind of slipped a little bit. We have a big home with a lot to maintain. It seems like before I always had a list and kept right on it and that’s kind of slipped a little bit. And (Wife’s name)’s done a lot more there. I used to help a lot more with the laundry and different things and I haven’t been able to do as much. I used to do the dishes almost every night when I’d get home, and it seems like that’s kind of slipped a little bit. The biggest challenge is to try to look for ways to give adequate time and adequate praise and to sort through that because she’s taken on more responsibility. (Couple 3 Husband)

Although the husbands saw the wives taking on new and additional roles and responsibilities, the wives did not share that same perspective. Instead, the wives described being responsible for the same roles, but now having less help and support from their spouse in the execution of those roles.

I find I'm taking on a lot more, just a lot more slack with our families. Pulling slack with our family, listening a lot more, and maybe even protecting him more. If the kids can come to me, I try to encourage them to come to me. And, I don't like that either. I mean, it's not because I really want to. But, I feel like, I need to right now to kind of protect him. I feel like I'm kind of taking on a lot more. I do think it affects our relationship. . . . I'm taking on the role of mother and father. I mean, I'm representing the parents really. I'm trying to work through that one right now, because I don't want to be the mom and dad. I just want to be the mom. Dad should be there. (Couple 1 Wife)

I tend to do more of the organizing of the family, what needs to be done. I'm letting him know what issues there are with the kids that we need to talk about. More of an organizational shift, maybe this is true of all mothers, but I did more of that anyway. But, I think at this point I do even more of that. Trying to schedule things and keep our schedules so that we're all working together and that kind of thing. (Couple 2 Wife)

No. The roles are the same. He's a workaholic. He fills his time, but it has always been that way. So whether it's filled with golf, being a bishop, or work, it's filled. It's time filled. I haven't noticed that being the bishop now he can't help drive kids around, he's never been able to help drive kids around. I'm used to having half of his brain, generally. (Couple 3 Wife)

***Personal growth.*** Wives explained that fulfilling the role of the bishop's wife produced changes and personal growth. Some of the wives expressed growth as it relates to being around other people and some expressed growth in regard to their relationship to the Savior.

I think it's helped me want to focus more outwardly. It's caused me to want to focus more outwardly, with other people and think more about their lives and think about involving them in conversation. Rather than just kind of, I tend to be more of a quiet person and with my own thoughts and that kind of thing. But it's caused me to want to be a little different that way. So I think that's been a positive thing. I think it's been good. (Couple 2 Wife)

I guess just to summarize there's been blessings individually in my development in my relationship with the Savior. (Couple 4 Wife)

## Outside Influences

All marital relationships occur within a context. In this study's model (see Figure 2), each of the components occurs within a context of "outside influences". These "outside influences" affect all aspects of the adjustment process. The "outside influences" ranged from circumstances influencing the couple, such as the birth of a new baby (Couple 3) and drug abuse by a child (Couple 2) to the influence of cultural norms or "expectations" (all couples). Consistent with systemic thinking, each individual has his/her perception of and reaction to the "outside influences" which in turn influences the marital relationship. The themes in this category were classified under two main categories. First were experiences individuals had in their family of origin that then influenced his/her experience of the marriage or the effects of the calling. Second were influences of perceived expectations on the individual with regard to him/herself personally as well as for the marital relationship.

*Family of origin.* One unexpected theme that emerged was that of the influence of prior experiences participants had with a father who served as an LDS bishop and how that experience influenced the participant's perception and experience of his/her current circumstances. Prior experiences of the husband and/or the wife with either a parent who served as an LDS bishop or with an LDS bishop who had stewardship over him/her was identified as influencing how the individual perceived the experience of the husband's calling. Participants whose father had served as an LDS bishop, or in one case as a general authority in the church, described a sense of loss in the relationship as a result of his absence from the family as he performed his duties. Both Couple 5 Husband and Wife described the wife's experience of her father who was gone much of the time fulfilling his calling.

She hasn't had a family. Her parents have been gone her whole life in terms of

church service. Her dad's been a mission president, general authority and they just haven't been around. Her father is still alive. But, he's remarried since her mother died, and he's not accessible. (Couple 5 Husband describing Wife)

My father was always in leadership. He was a bishop, when I was a young age, he was called to be a bishop when he was 29 years old. He has never not been, from my recollections as a girl growing up, in church service. Even as a married girl, with children, and he was gone. He was mission president; he was in the seventy, and everywhere. He was at the Y. You may remember him from the Y. And he's written books and stuff. Because back then when I grew up, they [men in priesthood leadership] were always gone, always gone, meetings, constantly. My mother was alone raising us pretty much. You know he was gone. I feared that, big time. I did not want to raise my children by myself. And yet at the same time, she never complained. But, I just remember watching that and saying, boy she's having to do that. Especially as a mom, when I started, I remember thinking, gosh, I'm glad my husband's home on Sunday's versus hers was never home. So, when (Husband's name) was called to be a bishop, I had two thoughts run through my mind: (1) Alright, he'll be good at this, and (2) I'm glad I don't have any little kids home. I missed my dad. And I knew they would. I knew that relationships would somewhat suffer. Because, I don't believe in the quantity versus quality concept. I think quality time should happen and we should be aware of that. But, to me, quantity and being there in the moments of when a child is home. It makes a big difference with me. I wanted that for my children to have a dad in their life. (Couple 5 Wife)

Couple 4 Wife was determined not to let her family experience what she experienced as a child.

I think a lot plays into my experiences as a child when I saw my dad serving [as a bishop]. I had some negative perceptions of that. Because I was a teenager and didn't feel like my dad spent a lot of time with me. But, I would see youth with special needs in the ward that he would heavily invest in being a positive influence on youth that didn't have dads or that had different situations and he would heavily invest in them. And I felt a little resentful to that because he wasn't there and he wasn't involved in my life like I needed him. But that rule is [was] a bishopric matter took precedence. There was a greater spiritual value on serving someone without, outside of the family, in the ward than were was, investing and validating the needs of me as his daughter. I think my perceptions of the expectations of what it means to be a good bishop and to give, provide for everyone else's needs, are a little bit influenced by that and my strongly held belief that that's not going to happen in our family. (Couple 4 Wife)

Couple 6 Husband remembered feeling left out, "I remember as a child and reflecting back to that, one time seeing my dad go off camping with the priests and feeling very left out,"

However, in his own service as a bishop he adopted an attitude that things would work out. He accomplishes this by “compartmentalizing.”

So because it [the calling of bishop] is so oppressive you really have to reconcile that some way. But, fortunately I had served with another bishop and I grew up with my dad as a bishop and my grandpa was and what not. And I [pause] you just realize, hey they made it through somehow in their own way and so I guess you do look more into compartmentalizing.

Couple 1 Husband explained how he and his wife had differing experiences with a father who served as an LDS bishop and how those differences were then contributing to a difference in perspective as to how he should be fulfilling his calling.

Back to the marital harmony, and what may impact it. There’s a philosophical difference I think towards church. One thing, I grew up my father was a bishop, a stake president . . . in a stake presidency and served all the time and was very generous in giving. Her family . . . her father was a bishop after we were married, not quite as generous with his time, and I think [it] comes back to expectations towards the calling and everything.

***Expectations: Husband.*** Another outside influence experienced by the husband individually was the perceived expectation to be more righteous and worthy of the calling and trust which God and others had placed in him. In an effort to be worthy of the call of bishop and to assure that one was in a position to receive inspiration from God, husbands carefully evaluated their own behaviors. The sources of the expectations were both cultural and personal. Cultural expectations are communicated implicitly and explicitly. An example of a cultural expectation being communicated implicitly occurred when Couple 2 Husband responded to a new neighbors query about his church calling. When he indicated he was serving as a bishop the neighbor’s reply was that he was an “all-star,” implying that someone who is serving as a bishop is more righteous or worthy when compared to others.

We have this one neighbor. I remember when they first moved in. We’d take walks and we’d always go through this neighborhood because there were such impressive homes [being built]. And we were walking out [of home being built]

and we got talking with them [couple building the home], and she was asking, what about the ward. You know, what was it like and what do you do and she said, “Oh well you’re one of the priesthood all-stars.” And I’m like, “Well, that’s not how I’d characterize it, but I suppose from some people’s perspective that’s what it is.” I mean there’s this group of people who do what they’re supposed to, they get called to these callings, whether justified or not. And, you know, they’re kind of the priesthood group that runs things.

The cultural expectations are communicated explicitly. Couple 4 Husband described the stake president recommending that ward members look to him and his wife as examples of how husbands and wives should be. He explained not feeling comfortable, but acknowledged the reality that the role of bishop and bishop’s wife includes being exemplary role models for ward members.

Right before our stake was split our stake president was at our ward, at our ward conference. He was talking about (Wife’s name) and talked about if we as a ward that they [the ward members] if they wanted an example of a husband and wife, then they needed to look at us. Of course that was one of the hardest things to hear because I’m not perfect, our relationship isn’t perfect, to be held up as a standard like that, but in essence you are.

Expectations are also communicated by the LDS Church. One husband explained believing that if he “followed the handbook” he would be a “successful bishop.” However, he soon realized that being a successful bishop involved much more than following the handbook.

On the organizational side of the church, the church lays all these handbooks that say, “Do it this way, do it this way and if you do it this way, you’ll be successful.” You realize that the manuals are written by a bunch of people that just have no clue that everybody is not cut out of the same mold. (Couple 5 Husband)

Whether the expectations are communicated implicitly or explicitly, husbands described the “weight” of the expectation to have a “perfect marriage” and a “perfect family” which, at times, included the need to “keep up appearances.”

I think there is a tendency of bishops to feel the weight of the world in all there is including to have a perfect marriage, a perfect family, and to keep up appearances. You feel that’s a part of the calling. And it’s very easy to slip back in that um, dynamic. But I think when we step back and [look at] ourselves and

the experiences we're having, we realize that that's just not necessary. (Couple 6 Husband)

The feeling of being "watched" intensified the cultural expectation of perfection. The husbands found it difficult to be under such scrutiny.

I think that expectation, that cultural expectation is difficult. I mean it's hard because if you get mad and lose your temper at your kids and someone overhears you yell or if you, just different things. If you have an argument or I mean there [are] a lot of areas that you kind of feel like you're watched and expected to be perfect....There are just a lot of areas that I think it's difficult. (Couple 3 Husband)

Husbands described the expectation that to perform various roles of their calling of bishop (e.g. counseling and "hav[ing] all the answers") they had to set their "life in order."

As a bishop transitioning from, and I don't want this to sound wrong, a regular member of the ward [to being] the bishop, but, all the wards problems, are now put in your lap. You have the expectation to counsel and to have all the answers. [You've] got to set [your] life in order. Personally [you] have to be, need to be, in a position [where] you can kneel down and receive revelation. (Couple 4 Husband)

In an effort to conform to the expectations and image of what a bishop is, some contemplated the need to change themselves to "fit that mold."

And very, very much I suppose the image of what many people would think a bishop is. They are well versed in the gospel, and some may say, perhaps a little rigid in their application. I tend not to be so much that way, which at first was difficult for me to reconcile. I had these expectations; [I] thought that I needed to really change myself in order to fit that mold. (Couple 5 Husband)

The effect of the expectations influenced not only the husbands' public behaviors, but private intimate behaviors as well.

There's no clear guidance in the church on physical intimacy between couples. But the one thing that I wonder is, "Do I disqualify myself with the blessings of the spirit if we do something inappropriate in our intimacy?" I don't want to risk that . . . . The ones I've thought about are the covenants with respect to, chastity and the covenants related to, unclean and unholy and impure practices. I know the one on intimacy is clear and it doesn't really include any restraints other than it's between a husband and wife. But unholy and impure practices might be a

different story. Which I'm not trying to suggest we do, really. But, all is I was trying to point out is that that's always been something that we've tried to maintain an appropriate balance in. But, as a bishop I [have] kind of had a high sensitivity to it. And it's like, but I don't want to lose the ability or opportunity to make her happy and pleasure in our relationship. (Couple 2 husband)

In summary, husbands described expectations being communicated implicitly and explicitly. These expectations included (a) bishops and their wives are role models of personal and marital righteousness, and (b) bishops need to be "worthy" and "righteous" in order to be able to fulfill their calling and meet the performance expectations of God and their members.

**Expectations: Wives.** As with the husbands, wives described experiencing a new set of expectations for themselves, the sources of which were both internal and cultural. While the husbands acknowledged feeling pressure to live more righteously to be worthy to perform the duties of bishop, wives experienced expectations in regards to how to fill a role, specifically, the role of a bishop's wife. In the process, wives were "careful" about their appearance, actions, and speech. They tried to be "the right kind of bishop's wife."

You just see someone and think, "Oh she's so nice, she's such a sweet person," or whatever it is. But, culturally I guess when you think of, when I think of the picture of a bishop's wife, in my mind, I do think of somebody who's dressed very modestly, generally more modest in their hair, in their actions, in their speech. Somebody who is kind to people, who is warm, that kind of thing, maybe who has the typical "culturalized" Mormon family. . . . Initially I worried that I wouldn't be the right kind of bishop wife. I thought, "What am I supposed to be like as a bishop's wife?" "What does that mean?" "How am I supposed to act?" That kind of thing. So I try and be a little bit careful. (Couple 2 Wife)

Although wives spoke of the expectation to act and behave in a manner which behooves a bishop's wife, one wife used the word "stigma" to describe her experience of the expectations put upon her by people. The term *stigma* implies a mark of disgrace or infamy that in this context indicates both the intensity of the experience and questioning of one's self if those expectations are not met.



I probably have a stigma, as bishop's wife. . . . There's a reason to do a little better. To be a little better example and that's a little more motivation because people are watching so it kind of keeps it on the front of your mind a little bit more. . . . That feeling is, maybe it's my own guilt, probably. Just thinking, "Okay, I should be better in a number of ways." (Couple 6 Wife)

One wife described feeling that others expect her to "have it all together" and that her family is put on a "pedestal." She recognized that expectations have been placed on the family, but she also desired a validation of their imperfections. She desired acknowledgement of personal and family weakness while valuing the "struggle" to be "good."

I think a big part of it is the cultural expectation that you have it all together. . . . It's the pedestal, they [the ward members] put the family on the pedestal I don't want to fit into that role that I've seen everybody else fill. Dad is the bishop and yeah that changes some of the expectations of our family. But, I don't know, I think our ward is very good about not imposing the expectation of perfection on our family. But, I think that they also see all of the good and all of the contributions and don't see the human side of it. We get so much, "You guys are so wonderful." Okay, yes, we do a lot, but, just validate our humanity too. If you're going to say, "We're good" also validate that [the humanity/weaknesses], "You guys really struggle sometimes too, don't you?" (Couple 4 Wife)

Two wives expressed anger at being held to a higher standard because of their husband's calling and their role as a bishop's wife. Anger came from realizing they were trying to be something or someone they were not as well as the perception that they must support church leadership and acknowledge the blessings which will come as a part of supporting their husband in his calling.

I think a lot of bishop's wives and maybe even their families feel like they [have to] live up to a certain expectation and I think I brought that on myself. I brought that expectation on thinking, "I have to follow the family that was, behind us." As hard as I could try there's no way I could measure up. I just, I couldn't. So that was kind of difficult thinking, "I have to be this way." Finally I just thought, "you know, whether I'm rebelling or not, this is how it is. This is voluntary and I am not changing. You can take us or leave us." . . . I think the wives support it [husband's calling as a bishop] because they think they're supposed to. I think again it goes to expectation. For me it was, this is what our culture, our LDS culture expects me to do, or to behave. The priesthood being another culture, I'm supposed to be submissive and whatever they say goes. And, I'm trying to think

of an example because we've had, (Husband's name) and I've had this discussion about the priesthood and about, what is my role [as bishop's wife]. And going to our, stake president and he says, "You'll be blessed." And I think, "Am I supposed to just swallow that, because he's my priesthood leader?" I mean I think he's wrong. (Couple 1 Wife)

Another source of anger for wives was the disparity between being expected to live a "higher standard" while at the same time having personal choices questioned or judged by others. In other words, trying one's best did not seem to be good enough.

As far as being the bishop's wife, I'm supposed to live this higher standard. But at the same time, why? Why, you're not going to like what I say anyway. So, let me be me. [For example], I was with a group of eight ladies we just recently, like two days ago, returned from New York City. We were only there four days. All the other ladies wanted to attend sacrament meeting. Well, we didn't get to Greenwich [Village] and Soho and that was big on my list. And I said, "No, I'm not going to church. We are [only] here four days, this is my ox in the mire, I want to experience New York and I'm not going to church. I spend my life there." And because I was the bishop's wife, at first, they're like, "How is she saying this?" "Why is she saying this?" I'm like, "It's fine. Hey, if I was here with (Husband's name), we wouldn't be going to church. We have four days here." I think people do take that higher standard that I'm expected to live by and they do question, "Why is she acting this way?" "Why does she, have that opinion?" (Couple 3 Wife)

One critical way in which the expectations are experienced differently by husbands and wives is the power discrepancy. One husband explained the cultural phenomenon of the wife's increased status as a result of her husband's calling as follows:

Because now she goes from a normal, if you will, person in the ward, that's held down every calling in the ward, now all of a sudden, to being the bishop's wife. And all that that implies, which is huge. Now she's the one that's looked at. She's the one that is, I don't know if idolized is the right word for this, but she's the one that's looked to for different things. [She has] elevated exposure, if you will. (Couple 4 Husband)

Although both husbands and wives experienced increased exposure and were held to a higher standard, this dynamic was experienced differently in a very significant way. Husbands actually had the power that went with the position, but wives did not. Couple 3 Wife explains:

When you go into the room and you're called, you're called as a couple. And he has the mantle of the bishop. He's the one that makes all the discernment; he's the one that works out people's sins. But I still feel like, if the image and you know I'm held to the standard of that I have to act appropriately. But what I have to say and think, for some reason, doesn't level out with how I have to act and behave. And that to me is an unfair, that's an unfair perception. If you're going to hold me to that higher standard, then let what I say have some higher standard as well. I'm not just saying it. . . . But it's that same kind of, "Well she doesn't really know what she's thinking because you know she's not, she's not in that position [of bishop] so she, you know, she's just [the wife]. . ." It doesn't feel good.

To summarize, referring to the model, as the husband fulfills his calling as an LDS bishop, and as the wife negotiates her role as the wife of an LDS bishop, the marital relationship is affected. The husband and the wife each experience points of satisfaction and points of dissatisfaction/disconnect. A systemic perspective acknowledges that not only does the calling affect the individual, the individuals affect each other and that affects the relationship. The experience of the change in the relationship, in turn, affects the individuals. The effect of the calling on the relationship can be best described as disruptive. A dialectical tension builds between meeting the demands of the calling and meeting the needs of the marriage. This tension is described by participants in the next section.

### **The Dialectical Tension**

The calling of bishop disrupts the equilibrium previously experienced in the marital relationship. As a result, a dialectical tension is created between (a) sacrificing and consecrating one's time, talents, and all one has to God, and (b) the commandment to "cleave unto your spouse" and let nothing interfere with that relationship. This resulted in husbands struggling with which of the two directives takes the higher priority: service to God or the needs of the wife and family.

There's a bit of a conflict. At times I'm sympathetic, [and] at [other] times I'm saying, "Hey, buck up and this is the way it is. We're not the first ones to go through the experience, not the last. Good, bad or different, this is what we,

agreed to do.” At the same time, my relationship and marriage to her is first and foremost of importance, and so it’s kind of a conflict, frankly in my mind. Do I cater to her and her needs and to her feelings? Do I following through on what I would be, what I would perceive to be magnifying my calling? And at times there’s a conflict. (Couple 1 Husband)

The struggle is not only experienced cognitively, but emotionally as well.

It’s hard to have to leave. Tuesday nights are mutual night. Every Tuesday night's gone for me. It’s a good thing to be there with the youth. It’s a wonderful thing to be there. But it’s hard to leave my family. It’s hard, to have the struggle between, “Do I attend this meeting or do I stay home with my wife or my kids who need me?”. . . So that struggle, the internal struggle, it rips me apart. Because I’m there [at home] and I know she’s hurting and I know I need to be there, but yet the other half of me, the bishop side says, “You have a responsibility and duty to be there [at church meeting].” And so, that has been the one of the bigger struggles for me. (Couple 4 Husband)

Some husbands believed that if they made service to God their number one priority, God would take care of their family.

I think we’ve both been very willing to, for the most part, put the things that we know we need to do to fulfill our church callings as a priority and do [that] with the understanding that things work out with our family. (Couple 6 Husband)

Others believed that if they attended to the needs of the family first, God would assist them in their efforts to serve Him.

Um, it’s hard because you feel like dad to everyone sometimes and then you have to kind of identify who the most important are and you know I feel like you’re constantly giving everything a priority system. I try to put my family on a different scale but sometimes it’s hard because you prioritize different needs of single mothers for example or different needs of teenagers that may have had some problems that feel a direct need right now to have everything resolved. And so, I think that’s the hardest thing is to try to prioritize exactly who is first on the list and what to do next. . . . If I take care of my family, somehow church will work out. You’d like to do more but you just physically don’t have the time. (Couple 3 Husband)

Husbands reacted to the struggle of negotiating the dialectic of time and attention to their calling versus time and attention to the needs of the wife or family in differing ways. Some acknowledged that the family is their number one priority, but believed that God would inspire

and direct them on a daily basis as to which demands (bishop or family) required his immediate attention.

I think there are blessings associated with fulfilling your calling as a bishop. But I don't believe that you can ignore your family and faithfully serve as a bishop, and do what you're supposed to be doing. I think that the fundamental calling in the gospel for a man is father and husband. Probably husband and then father is the way I would characterize it. So even if I thought it was correct to say, if I go serve the Lord will bless my family, I don't want to miss out on the opportunity of being with my family and I don't think the Lord asks me to. I think there's some sacrifices, associated with serving. There's some time associated with it. If I tell the Lord I want to do what he wants me to do, he helps me to kind of prioritize and figure out, "This is where you ought to be tonight." Because there are times when you have to say, "(Son's name), I'm going to be late to the game. I've got to go do some interviews tonight. There are some people that I need to talk with." (Couple 2 Husband)

Others were resigned that, although the family is first, the demands of the calling that pull him from his family are "something that you must live with."

But from an adjustment standpoint, the crisis is more internal for me and not my wife. I [am] not a man with many hobbies as I alluded to earlier. My hobby has always been my family and the church. That being family first, church second. And so the crisis in my life has been pulling me away from my family and oriented towards the church and so that's been the struggle. . . . The conflict is between all the meetings and your family. You just can't change things. So, it's just something that you must live with. . . . Because time is what we all have and the time that [I] can't spend with my wife has been hard for me. (Couple 5 Husband)

Husbands expressed how difficult it is for the wife to have her husband dedicate so much of his time and energy to his calling.

The dedication of your time and everything to the church has been different for me to understand. I have tried to put on the hat of a sister in the Church and if I was a sister or woman in the Church, and my husband were the Bishop... it would be very difficult to support someone that's gone as much as I am. (Couple 5 Husband)

Although the husbands acknowledged that this is difficult for the wife, there was also an expectation that part of her supportive role is to accept the many demands placed on the husband,

acknowledge that he is conflicted as to where to devote his time and energies, and to help him balance the demands placed on him.

When a bishop is called, and set apart, his wife is called too. She is not set apart, but she is very much called to be a help mate for a man in a unique situation. And so, those needs would specifically be, understanding what that is to be a help mate. And as support for him, the needs of balancing that commitment to God, and commitment to family. The balancing [of] both the time of it and the emotional investment available for that. (Couple 4 Husband)

Wives also struggled with finding a balance between how much to support the husband in his calling, which means not having him at home, and her desire to have him home. As Couple 1 Wife described, “The crazy thing is, I’m supposed to be loving these people, yet they’re the ones that take my husband away. And so that’s really hard.”

Couple 4 Wife described the tension between counsel from higher church authorities emphasizing the importance of the husband’s role as husband and father with the LDS cultural expectations of the service required of the husband and father who is called as a bishop.

Our first stake president in a bishop’s training shared a story. I don’t remember who the general authority was now. But the point from the lesson was, you should never attend a meeting if it leaves your wife home in tears. But, that’s the standard, no meeting is more important than your responsibility to your wife. And that once again was very validating. There has been a time that he didn’t go to a meeting because emotionally I needed him there. And there have been meetings where he has gone and inside I’ve just sucked it up and said, “We’ll just have to deal with that later or you just have to be strong.” So there’s a balance. I think overall, the support from the other priesthood leadership in our stake has made a huge difference. [As far as] me understanding what those expectations are and feeling that there are positive expectations of that role balance that come with the general cultural expectations of perfection and the, “You have it all together and life is easy and you guys just get the gospel easier than the rest of us do.” So, I think that both of those come together and it’s kind of that, polar ends is that we’re here and we’re validating that you have these struggles and yet, culturally there’s that expectation of perfection and total devotion to serving the Lord. And, so it’s kind of finding a balance and it’s a dynamic thing sometimes I feel more on one end and sometimes I feel more on the other end.

Couple 4 Wife described how feeling abandoned as a child by her father while he was an LDS bishop, influenced her experiences of her husband's service. To avoid repeating that experience with their own children, she and her husband intentionally set family time aside. Despite efforts to protect family time, however, intrusions do occur. She acknowledged feeling conflicted when family time is interrupted by her husband attending to the needs of a ward member. She managed her feelings by recalling that she has covenanted her life to the Lord, and was willing to sacrifice and "give that part of me and that part of my husband."

I think a lot plays into my experiences as a child when I saw my dad serving [as a bishop]. I had some negative perceptions of that. Because I was a teenager and didn't feel like my dad spent a lot of time with me. But, I would see youth with special needs in the ward that he would heavily invest in being a positive influence on youth that didn't have dads or that had different situations and he would heavily invest in them. And I felt a little resentful to that because he wasn't there and he wasn't involved in my life like I needed him. But that rule is [was] a bishopric matter took precedence. There was a greater spiritual value on serving someone without, outside of the family, in the ward than were was, investing and validating the needs of me as his daughter. I think my perceptions of the expectations of what it means to be a good bishop and to give, provide for everyone else's needs, are a little bit influenced by that and my strongly held belief that that's not going to happen in our family. So, I think we manage the expectations a little differently because of that. When the calling first came, I was very aware of those adolescent feelings, and so that was something we talked about very clearly at the beginning. Which is why we intentionally wanted to set the family balance of, "This is the day that you'll give there and this is the day there and all of those other days are home time. Our family time. Our intentional time of you coming here." And it still happens. There [are] things that come up. Its human needs and he's shepherding a ward of humans that have things come up. [Like] on the Fourth of July and he needs to take that call. You know there are some times when I get a little frustrated about that. But it's the Fourth of July and you're here with family and fireworks and you don't need to deal with somebody else's husband's pornography issue. And so I still have those times that it triggers that little girl in me. It's the struggle of I've consecrated my life to the Lord, and I meant it. And I'm willing to give that part of me and that part of my husband.

Couple 5 Wife gave the example of missing a relationship with her father but relying on the belief that God would take care of things. Although she believes this, she fears that her relationship with her husband will become like her relationship with her father.

You know, sometimes I really feel cheated that he [participant's father] teaches everybody else, but I never got to be taught. Other than family home evening and scriptures, that type of thing, which we did, believe me, we did a lot. . . . The prompting immediately came, "Because your dad served, you were blessed to be taught by the Holy Ghost." It was a brand new concept. I remember thinking that, and then going back in my mind and thinking all the times that I've been studying scriptures by myself and being taught interpretations of the scriptures and it was really a miracle in my life that I had that. So, as far as that's concerned, the Lord, He will teach you and He will make up for that kind of thing if they're willing to serve. That was exactly my dad's attitude, "If I serve, the Lord will take care of my family." And, He did. So, I was complaining, but at the same time that happened. But, I think the relationship [with father] suffered. It just did. That's the way it goes. And that's what I was fearful of with my husband.

In this model, in an effort to restore equilibrium to the relationship and to adapt to the husband's calling with all its ramifications, the husband and the wife must engage and attempt to resolve the dialectical tension created by the conflicting demands of the calling and the marriage. The next section describes the strategies individuals and couples used to adapt to the new marital dynamic.

### **Adjustment Strategies**

As couples experienced a disruption to the marital relationships as a result of the husband's calling, they used strategies to minimize the disruption and restore equilibrium to the relationship. Two main categories of strategies influenced the couples' adjustment. The first were individual strategies including changes within the individual and the use of resources outside the marital relationship. These strategies helped the individuals cope, but did not directly address what was happening to the marital relationship. The second category was strategies the couple used together, in other words, strategies that occurred within the relationship and addressed the disruption. These strengthened the marital relationship.

**Individual strategies.** Individual strategies included recognizing the wife's role as the barometer of the marital relationship. A second strategy was an appeal to a higher church



authority to validate the experience of the husband and/or wife. “Individual Strategies” also included internal processes whereby the individual attempted to resolve within themselves the perceived dialectical tension between the covenants the individual had made to serve God and the covenants the husband and wife made to each other. The individual internal processes were influenced first by an acknowledgement that the individual, the marital relationship, or the family had been blessed by God as a result of the service rendered and second by an individual adapting a kinder and gentler attitude as a result of empathy for the experience of the spouse and the sacrifice he or she was making.

*Wife’s role to monitor the relationship.* Although both husbands and wives described the challenge of finding a balance between honoring their marriage covenants and their covenants to sacrifice and consecrate themselves to serving God, the role of monitoring the relationship and bringing the husband back into the relationship belonged to the wife. Couple 1 Husband explained, “If I were to go unchecked, I think I would spend too much time doing church work. She restores the proper perspective and balance, a proper priority for me there.” Couple 4 Husband described, without his awareness, choosing the bishop role over the marital relationship and trying to do everything he was supposed to do as an LDS bishop. He then acknowledged that it takes his wife to make him aware that he is choosing his calling over her and to “lovingly guide” him back to the relationship.

That hasn’t happened too much. I can think very specifically about two times that it’s happened. Although my sweet wife can probably illustrate more times when I’ve chosen the bishop route over her, which isn’t right. But, sometimes you have to be made aware of those things before you recognize them. . . . have gone through times where I would, I’m at the church for 12, 13, 14 hours on Sunday and then I have two nights during the week and I’m trying to do everything and anything, that I think I’m supposed to do. It’s taken a sweet wife to lovingly guide me and to realize, to get rid of everything that I can, and to do what I need to be doing as a bishop, but more importantly as a husband.

On a more intimate level, Couple 5 Husband described being preoccupied with thinking about the needs of the ward members during times his wife wanted his attention. It was her role to reengage him in the relationship and “tell him” when she needed him.

I think it [calling of bishop] definitely has impact on our relationship. My wife will be talking and I'll be zoned out. I'll be thinking about 20 other problems and it's a conflict for me because I look at the fact that my wife is the most important thing in my life and I don't have the energy or ability with everything going on to focus on that. I'm over here, thinking about something else that is on my plate and she's learned to say, “Where are you?” “What are you thinking about?” She realizes I'm not with her. . . . We've worked through this and to my wife it is reliability and dependability that is important to her, and she knows I'll be there. She knows I'm reliable, she knows that I'll be there if she needs me. All she's got to do is to tell me. . . . I know my wife [has] gently always reminded me of things I could do better.

The couples in this study indicated that the wife assumed the role of relationship monitor by default as opposed to the role being clearly defined or discussed. Thus, this is identified as an individual strategy. None of the husbands described taking the initiative to ask the wife for her assessment of the marital relationship. Instead, it was the wife who brought the husband back to the relationship. This led to wives feeling conflicted between the desire to support the husband in his calling and the desire to feel more secure in the relationship.

It's hard. Sometimes it makes me angry that I have to do that. I feel like I'm, far more doing it than he is. I think I come across as the one, maybe more selfish. I want more of your time or you're spending too much time at church or work or wherever. It does make me angry that I have to do that. We've talked about this too. It is not just unique to the church in our relationship. It's been that way with work. I'd say, “Wait, I'm glad that we've had that experience and again had that skill to be able to communicate it.” But it still makes me angry because I think, “I have to deal with that work. Now I have to do that with church.” I'm always the nag. . . I'd say, “You know what, one more night this week is too much. You can't.” And he would say, “Okay, then could I do it, so I need four more hours. How about Saturday, does that work for you?” So I think those skills were there. I think they were there. I think he's kind of getting tired, maybe because it's more frequently having me kind of pulling back and saying, “Wait. Today is your son's birthday,” or “Today is Father's Day.” I don't know if that's unique to his personality. But, he becomes so focused that it almost takes me to say, “Come on.” You know, “Wake up.” I'm right there pulling him back. And I think he

reads that as a little bit more emotional and maybe even unstable. He's asked me, he has said, "Do you feel more insecure?" Maybe I am insecure, [maybe] that's why I'm trying to pull him back or I'm trying to get him back grounded at home. (Couple 1 Wife)

In addition to engaging the husbands in the marital relationship, the wives also have the role of engaging the husbands in what is going on in the family.

Me needing to make sure he knows about certain things that he should be to. . . . I have to make sure that I'm communicating that to him, so that he knows what's going on and if there's something that he needs to schedule to be to. . . . He'll call me and say, "Hey, will you have so and so do this job?" And finally a couple of times I said, "You know (Husband's name), you need to call and ask them to do that." Mostly because I end up being the chore person. Always telling them, directing them in the chores, you know, instead of dad. I don't always want to be the heavy. . . . I'm the one that does more of that anyway. I'm here, I'm assigning chores and doing this and that, so I get a lot of that anyway. But when he calls with the extra things, I'll go ahead and tell them [the children] but a couple of times I've said, "You need to call and ask him to do that." (Couple 2 Wife)

*Seeking validation from a higher authority.* Another strategy identified by participants was accessing or desiring to access a church authority from whom he/she/they could seek validation of their experience. Couple 4 Husband and Wife described meeting with the stake president (a position of authority higher than a bishop) as a result of the struggles they were facing as a couple. The stake president validated the experience the couple was having and affirmed the importance of the marital relationship. As a result, the stake president now interviews the wives of the bishops every three months. Couple 5 husband requested that the stake president interview his wife because, "she has no one to talk to." While both couples expressed appreciation for the support of the stake president, for the purpose of this study, these are considered individual strategies because the relationship being developed is between the wife and the stake president, not the husband and the wife.

As a member of the stake presidency he's the one who counseled me to make sure you put your family first. So, having priesthood leaders who respect that and too, visibly, I can see them putting their wives first. (Couple 4 Husband)

My husband goes in for his monthly PPI's, and once every three months the wives come with them, which to me is extremely validating. And they don't talk about the confidentiality things, but during that time, we talk about, "How is your marriage relationship going and how's the communication and what are the strains on your marriage?" It's very validating in helping us. Admittedly my husband and I were in there talking about a different issue with the stake president, which is what prompted this to happen. We were talking about some of his life being compartmentalized and some of the struggles we were facing as a couple with that. And that's when he said, "We really need to bring the women in and have them be more involved, more validated. To feel the support of their priesthood leader." That's one issue that I've brought up with my husband. Some of these struggles that other women can take to their bishop, I don't have a bishop that I can take those things to. And that's why when we got the new stake president we intentionally went in to meet with him to say this is who we are and I need you to know that I see you as that role for me. He was very, very open that, "You are welcome to call me anytime." What he said was the bishop's wife has priority. Anytime you need an appointment, we will drop whatever it is that we are doing and we will support you in that. So I think because [of] that support system there is a safety net for me. (Couple 4 Wife)

After I was serving for some time as bishop, I encouraged my stake president, by stating the following, "You know you really need to interview my wife more often. You need to know she has nobody to talk to." And he granted that wish and has visited with her on occasion and I think that's healthy. (Couple 5 Husband)

A desire was also expressed that someone in authority would provide counsel or set policy that would "give permission" to husbands to set boundaries around intrusions on the marital relationship. This included the accessibility of the bishop to the ward members.

But, one big thing with us is, with modern technology right now um, everyone has (Husband's name)'s cell phone. Everyone in the ward, I mean, everybody had it before, but now they use it. They don't call here, unless they can't get a hold of his cell phone. His cell phone is ringing all the time. It's very hurtful, very offensive to me. So, he's been great in that he turns it off now, when were out or whatever. But also, his email, people are starting to text him, and I blew a gasket, at that point we were actually on a date and he received a text. I think that these men need to receive [pause] there needs to be some directive about what's appropriate and not. (Couple 1 Wife)

It's concerning, even as far as relationships, I think these men should be told, "You know what, if it's not an earth shattering thing while you're playing ball with your son, or you're in the car with your wife, where any other thing that is happening, you don't have to get the phone. You don't have to respond. You don't." I just think that they need to be told, "You're not a bad bishop or a bad person if you don't take that call." (Couple 1 Wife)

***Reflecting on the blessings of the calling.*** Acknowledging blessings received from God as a result of service was another strategy used to address the disruption in the marital relationship. As Couple 6 Husband shared, "You do feel that in many ways God compensates." Couple 6 Wife reflected on being "watched out for and protected" when she commented, "It has been a blessing in a spiritual sense. I feel like we're being watched out for. I think we're protected from some of the woes that other people have." Couple 5 Husband described being blessed in ways that cannot be measured and stated that the Lord, "takes care of his bishops."

I believe that my family is being blessed in ways that I cannot measure. Their lives, whether they are temporally or everywhere I look, my family, my children, my grandchildren are doing well. I just know, whether it's a test score, whether it's a friend, whether it's financially, I just know that my family is immersed with the goodness that the Lord and he has blessed them. I believe with all my heart, that's what makes it easy for me to serve. Because, I believe that the Lord takes care of his bishops. I also realize that there are many bishops that have tremendous challenges in their life. In my life, and I can only talk about mine, in my situation, and in my belief system, I believe that if I do the very best I can, that the things that matter most to me will be taken care of. The thing that matters most to me is my family. And I've seen that. And I believe that. And that brings me great peace.

Couple 4 Husband and Wife both referred to being promised that "hands seen and unseen" would be provided to meet the needs of the family. This promised blessing has provided comfort and a sense of hope to both the husband and the wife.

When I was set apart my stake president blessed me that, "Your family will be taken care of by hands both seen and unseen." Those "hands seen" started that first Sunday after I was set apart, and they have not ceased. The "hands unseen" have always, always been there. It has been a wonderful experience. (Couple 4 Husband)

There is another aspect of it though that is very real to me and my experience. I understand it may be very unique, but that is central to this issue to me. When he was set apart, in his blessing he was promised that, “As he consecrated himself and served wholeheartedly in his time as bishop, that the Lord is aware of the needs of his family.” “That, “hands both seen and unseen” would be there to meet the needs of his family as he attended to the sacred calling.” My soul just clung to that day. I have seen that play out again and again every week. We talk about that because it is very real. I have felt not only the support of our ward, those hands that are seen. The first day- the first week after he was called we went and sat down and this older couple in our ward came and sat just as bookends, one on one side of our family, and one on the other side of our family; to help with our children and to help when I needed to take the little one out. I felt those hands seen, and I also feel the grace, the angels that help. My husband will say that when he’s been gone, “I am so sorry I was gone for so long tonight.” And I’ll say, “Do you know what, it was totally fine, because it went better than it would have if you were here because we had that divine help.” And I think that has been a great growing process for me. To allow God’s grace to fill the void that’s created by my husband going to serve the Lord. That has been very real and at the beginning I told you it’s been a very positive experience and that’s largely why. It’s not that there haven’t been challenges. It’s not that there hasn’t been a void. It’s not that we’re not being asked to sacrifice a lot. It’s not that we don’t feel alone. It’s not that, that all of those struggles aren’t there. But, I think because of that sentence in his blessing it framed differently the perspective that I’ve had; you’re not alone in all of that. True, there’s no handbook. True, there are not physical people that understand you, but in those moments where I have had those needs; God has been faithful in providing for those in temporal ways and in spiritual ways. (Couple 4 Wife)

For some, the blessings are anticipated and hoped for at some point in the future. Couple 1 Husband suggested that his wife’s increased respect and appreciation for him could influence the relationship for good.

I think there [has] been an increased respect and appreciation from her to me; in terms of abilities and what the spirit enables me to do as a bishop. I think these things in time will bless the relationship. I still think it’s early on, so there’s been an increased appreciation. . . . I think when all is said and done we’ll look back and agree that the relationship has been enhanced as the result of the calling.

Couple 4 Wife described trusting that God is working in her husband (producing changes in him for good) and hoped that the changes will allow them to process issues together as a

couple. Interestingly, she did not mention processing issues together in the present, but rather in the future when he is “released” (service of bishops is time-limited, usually 5 to 6 years).

It’s just trusting that God is working his work in him and it’s a good thing. Then after it’s all said and done and he’s released, then there will be more openness that we can process through a lot of that together. (Couple 4 Wife)

For Couple 5 Wife, although she sees her husband worry and internalize the stress resulting from his calling, she “will not even enter into” a discussion of her worries with her husband because, “The Lord will provide.”

He lost 35 lbs. That wasn’t what I was worried about. He could stand to lose 35 lbs. But the weight came off because of the weight [of the calling]. He couldn’t not internalize things. He internalized everything. He carried everything. People would tell him their problems and he’d carry it for them. It’s still a concern. He’s very he’s gone extremely gray in the last year and a half. Those are physical things. I’ve done enough research on the body myself, because of the issues I’ve had to know that stress causes physical ailments. So that is a major concern for him. I know it will weigh, it will take its course on him and in five years he will have aged more than he would have had he not served. It is a concern of mine. But again, that’s not something I will even enter into because the Lord will provide. If he’s supposed to age, he will. If he’s supposed to go sooner than I wanted him to he will. If he’s not, He’ll sustain him. So I don’t really worry about that much.

Echoing the belief that God will provide, Couple 4 Wife described the need to understand consecration and sacrifice and the application of those principles to the experience of the husband’s calling. She believes God will not take anything away without providing in greater abundance. However, God is limited in providing His Grace if the participant does not place him/herself in a position to receive it by being willing to sacrifice and “do what is expected.” If the participant feels victimized by the calling, the blessings will not occur.

In the first year, be prepared to understand consecration and sacrifice very differently than you ever have before. Because yes, God is asking a lot of your husband, and of you, and of your marriage, and of your family as a whole. But, God is faithful and he won’t take anything away without providing in greater abundance to fill that void. I believe that with all my heart. I think that we, that in the past I limited myself because I get in the victim role instead of asking for his

grace. Because he's limited in providing His grace if I don't ask for it. It's not that it's not there. It's not that he doesn't want to shower that upon me. It's that I'm stuck in feeling a victim of the calling instead of opening my eyes to the grace of God that's there for me and for my husband and for our family.

While faith in God's blessing as a result of willing service was expressed, ambivalence was also shared. Couple 3 Wife describes hoping for a change in perspective (regarding the current experience she is having as the wife of a bishop) at the end of her husband's service, "And you're looking ahead at the light at the end. I think your perspective totally changes. I'm hoping."

*Empathy for experience of the spouse.* Another influence that contributed to marital adjustment was the softening or empathy that individuals experienced towards their spouse as they witnessed their experience. Wives recognized the "weight" of the calling and its effects on their husbands.

It's the weight [responsibilities of the calling]. It's the weight. [That is] the only word I know that describes it. I saw him go from really a very carefree life to carrying the weight, and I worried for a long time. I still worry; this will age him. (Couple 5 Wife)

They also acknowledged the challenge of supporting a husband who is gone so much.

And so the dedication of your time and everything to the church has been different for me to understand. I have tried to put on the hat of a sister in the Church and if I was a sister or woman in the Church, and my husband were the bishop, it would be very difficult to support someone that's gone as much as I am. (Couple 5 Husband)

When the husbands were sensitive to how much they were gone and attempted to minimize their time away from the family, the wife was able to be more understanding of his absences.

He will go out of his way to help me feel [as] comfortable as possible. I know that he's down there and that he's not dragging whatever meeting he's in as long as he can. But, he's doing everything he can to get home when he can, within reason. And, that's been huge to me. It's been really huge. And because I think there's



give and take, if I feel that then I'm more like, "Yeah, if you need to do your other meetings Tuesday or Thursdays, go ahead." Because I know he'll come back and he's doing everything that he can. I have that understanding, but it took awhile. The first few months it's, "Do you have to go down there again?" "Why?" "What, how many meetings do you have to have?" But now I know he's trying to come home and that's helped a great deal. [He'll say], "I've got BYC and then I've got. . . and then I'll be home." And he does. So I feel like that that's been huge. (Couple 1 Wife)

Empathy in one spouse tended to produce empathy in the other.

I understand how busy he is. And he does the same for me too when I do stupid things. (Couple 2 Wife)

Empathy towards the spouse's experience took many forms ranging from simple acceptance to actively trying to find ways to "give adequate time and adequate praise."

When I saw him go through that, I didn't carry it with him. I felt bad. And he gets exhausted. He's tired a lot easier. I felt bad for him. But, it was just part of what he had to do...He's got a lot of burdens and I realize that. But, [for] me as wife, life goes, has just gone on. He carries more burdens and more stress, which I don't wish for him, but I know that that's inevitable. There's nothing I can do about that, even though I'd like to. I hate to have him have more stress. He has enough in his job. But, really, there isn't anything I can do so I tell myself that. (Couple 6 Wife)

The biggest challenge is just trying to give her adequate time. I feel like I've, we've still been able to maintain everything. But, that's been the biggest challenge is to try to look for ways to give adequate time and adequate praise and kind of try to sort through that because she's taken on more responsibility (Couple 3 Husband)

**Couple strategies.** The second category of strategies used to facilitate adjustment to the marital disruption was strategies used within the relationship or "couple strategies." These strategies include two sub-categories: first was the couple conceptualizing the calling of the husband as bishop as a "couple calling," and the second was sharing as many aspects of the calling as possible.

**Couple calling.** Although the husband is the one formally "called" and "set apart" as bishop, participants indicated that, in essence, the husband and the wife are called together.

Although their roles are different, both are sacrificing, consecrating, and serving. It is the husband's role to attend directly to the needs of the ward members. The wife's role is to attend to the needs of the ward members indirectly by supporting her husband in his calling. Participants described this conceptualization as being helpful.

When a bishop is called, and set apart, his wife is called too. She is not set apart, but she is very much called to be a help mate for a man in a unique situation. And so, those needs would specifically be [to be] understanding what that is to be a help mate. And as [a] support for him. (Couple 4 Wife)

As far as the adjustment concerning me and my wife, we've approached this as a together calling, if you will, and this has been beneficial for me. We've had to rely upon each other for that support. That's kind of a foundational piece for our marriage is that we count on one another and that has probably allowed me to serve more or better. (Couple 5 Husband)

I cannot perform my calling without my wife. There is no way that I could honestly be 100 percent in that office receiving inspiration and counseling people, if it wasn't for my wife. I can't do that alone. (Couple 4 Husband)

Viewing the calling as a "couple calling" brought the couple closer together. So did recognizing the growth that comes from supporting each other and acknowledging the efforts of the other. However, couples experienced the "couple calling" and benefits of supporting each other to different degrees. Some described currently experiencing the benefits.

I just think that there's something positive or strengthening to a relationship that comes out of the process of sustaining. There [have] been times when she's had to handle things on her own because I haven't been there. And, I think that that's just developed in me a greater appreciation for her. (Couple 2 Husband)

I think that you just learn to have a lot more faith in each other. (Couple 6 Husband)

Others hoped that the relationship would reach a point where there would be sharing of the experiences of the calling and mutual feelings of support.

I guess working through different issues and scheduling needs and different things. I think in that sense I think our relationship will be blessed and strengthened as a result of the experience in the items that we do share together. It's still kind of a work in progress and early in the process and so I don't know

that it's really happened yet. But, I think when all is said and done we'll look back and agree that the relationships have been enhanced as the result of the calling. (Couple 1 Husband)

So, at the end of five years then, because of the painful process, I mean, do you think some of this stuff will be in our past, some of this contention? And there will be the growth as the end result that will carry us? I hope so. I hope so. I guess it's, I mean it's too painful just to [pause] I wouldn't do it if I didn't think there was something good that's going to [pause] I mean it's taken me [pause] it took me a long time to think of something really great that's happened. (Couple 1 Wife)

*Sharing and participating in the duties of the husband's calling.* The strategy described by both husbands and wives as best facilitating the marital connection was that of sharing as many aspects of the calling as appropriate. For some, this included attending activities together.

There's been an increased dependency upon me to have her join me in church situations. I performed a wedding over this last weekend and it was wonderful to have her there with me, [to be] together at the ceremony, and other events of the day. There's a dependency when we go visit say the family of a recently deceased member. She's very comfortable. I lean on her, depend on her to be there and to kind of bring a nice warm feeling. I think it increased my appreciation for her strengths and skill sets and her decency. (Couple 1 Husband)

You definitely look for the little rewards [to share] together. My wife was able to come and participate and I think for her that was big because I spent a lot of time with the family activating them and getting their son ready to go to the temple and then being sealed. So, I think for her that was a big payday (Couple 3 Husband)

For others, connectedness occurred when they worshipped and prayed together.

To feel that closeness, even in the temple, and together praying. To be able to go together and share in that [praying for someone], I think those are the things that [bring] you together, when you're on the same page. I mean I feel like these are deep, intimate things that we have never experienced before. Only a little bit here and there. But, it's so much more constant, and I feel that in some ways there is a greater closeness because we're learning to work them out. But they're happening more frequently. And so, I can see the potential of it being a lot closer relationship. (Couple 1 Wife)

Others experienced connectedness as they talked with each other and especially as the husband shared as much as he could about what he was experiencing. Couple 5 Husband explained, "Our stake president encouraged us to share and I appreciated that." Couple 3 Wife

explained how being able to share aspects of her husband's calling created connectedness.

There's actually been blessings in the connectedness. When he comes home from a particularly stressful interview, or situation, you can see it, it's just written all over him. And so, I feel like I'm more connected. I don't know what the situation was. But I feel like, I'm connected because I know he's been through something that was not fun for him. And that it's weighing heavily on him. And I'm happy that I don't know. I'm fine that I don't know. I thought that I wouldn't be but I'm totally fine. I don't want to know, I don't press him for anything, but I just feel like he turns to me for some kind of solace or some kind of ...make it all better. And I like that. I really do. That's been a huge blessing to us. (Couple 3 Wife)

Marital adjustment to the husband's calling and service as an LDS bishop is a process of addressing the disruption precipitated by the husband's performance of his duties. As the husband performs the duties of his calling, both the husband and wife are affected individually, which then affects the relationship. As noted in the model of the adjustment process, influences identified by participants include both points of satisfaction and points of dissatisfaction/disconnect. Although points of satisfaction were identified, participants noted that the calling did have a disruptive effect on the marital relationship. This disruption set into motion a dialectical tension between two sets of covenants made earlier by both the husband and the wife. First is the covenant to serve God and help build His kingdom here on earth. The second covenant is to "cleave unto each other" and let nothing come between the couple. At the crux of the adjustment process is how this dialectical tension was addressed. Individuals and couples employed various strategies to manage the tension, some of which occurred individually and some as a couple.

### **Case Study**

A case study illustrates the model. The couple in the case study will be referred to as John and Mary Smith. John and Mary have been married for 26 years, and it is the first marriage for both. John is 48 years old and Mary is 45. John is employed full-time and reports working

approximately 50 hours per week. Mary is a full-time homemaker. They have five children ages 25, 22, 19, 18 and 11. Four of the children still reside at home. Both John and Mary report John spending 20 to 25 hours per week performing bishop duties. Both report approximately 8 hours per week with each other including meals. John's Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale score was 52, and Mary's was 59. Both scores are above the cut-off range of 48 (a score <48 indicates clinical distress).

**Marital relationship prior to the husband's calling as an LDS bishop.** Prior to John's calling as an LDS bishop, Mary describes a close marital relationship, "I mean we've been best [friends], I think we've got a great marriage. I think he'd probably agree. We just, things have just gone really well." Mary also describes shared activities and interests, "We were pretty much on the same page in most things that we [did]. If there's extra time or socializing, we just assumed [we would] be together, socializing even with other couples."

**Marital relationship subsequent to the husband's acceptance of calling as an LDS bishop.** John describes his calling as "a major shock to the marriage" that has affected a formerly "comfortable" relationship which, after a year, is still adapting.

I think it's a little bit more fragile than it was before. I think we were in a mode of operation and the relationship was at a point where it was comfortable and we [were] moving forward and communicating effectively given our situation. But, with the dynamics of the call thrown into the mix, I think we're after a year we're still [pause] we're getting better at communicating, but we're still a little bit fragile. Still learning the ropes and learning the rules and what works for her and what works for me. So, we're not to the, to the level of comfort in terms of the relationship and the, just the harmony of the relationship that we had achieved prior to the call.

Mary describes making progress in adapting to her husband's calling, but she too describes the calling as being a significant disruption to the marriage.

The first maybe five, six months, it was horrible. It was horrible. I just felt like a wedge was put in our marriage. And a lot of conflict, the only thing that I can say

is there was just so much. It was just so unnatural. And I think it was, or it is, and continues to be, a really difficult adjustment... The wedge, I would describe it as contention, as hurt... It's hurtful. It's hurtful to me. And I don't want to cry.... As far as feelings and emotions; a lot of hurtfulness, confusion... And, it (adjustment to the calling) has just been very awkward. I think, you know, I terribly, I really miss him... I'm not very open about the tender feelings between John and I and this isolation and the anger and frustration.

*Husband and wife points of dissatisfaction/disconnect.* John describes being in awe of what is expected of an LDS bishop and being fatigued and exhausted as a result of trying to attend to all his duties.

I'm in continual awe of what is expected of the bishop. Sometimes you think, 'I don't remember signing up for this issue or this challenge or what-not.' It's very significant in challenges. I come home absolutely fatigued and exhausted... on a Sunday night after a full day.

Mary sees John's fatigue and exhaustion creating a distance in the relationship. She is used to sharing with and supporting her husband but now, because she does not or cannot know the burdens he carries, she describes not knowing how to help.

I think, for me, the feeling is that he has this whole other world going on in his life, but I'm part of, kind of, but kind of not. Where I feel like I've always been part of his world [until now]. And that to me is a very disconnected feeling.... I think it's the inability to share that closeness that we do in every other part of our marriage. It's like, you're reaching for something but it's not there. You can't grab it. I can't have it. But I don't really want that burden that he's bearing. It's just that inability, and to experience the closeness that we did.

When he comes home and I know it's been either a hard day or hard meetings or whatever it is. [His] heart is heavy, and he can't talk, and again it's this whole world. And, I don't know how to share the burden, is what it is. You know, because everything else I've always shared and we've, prayed together, we've... I don't know. He's helped me, I've helped him. And [now] he has to do it alone. I just feel like there's just this huge distance, like, 'Come back. Come back.' That's really hard for me to work through, even right now. Again, there's just something between us, and, it's so different than what we've experienced before.

John acknowledges that his preoccupation with the operation of the ward and ward members resulted in him withdrawing from Mary, which then contributes to Mary being

concerned and wondering if it is something she is doing. She also wonders whether John is simply less interested in her.

I'm more preoccupied at times with items of the ward or ward members and so sometimes even a little bit more withdrawn from my wife. I think that she senses that and basically is concerned and trying to identify what that means and if it's something that she's doing or less interest on my part. I think there are a myriad of dynamics that are occurring.

Mary states that John's preoccupation and reaction towards issues related to his calling and the needs of the ward members are qualitatively different from issues John had been preoccupied with at other times in the marriage. As a result, she describes a "wall" between them, perhaps because John can't share these issues like he did in the past.

With work he'll come home with a problem and he'll be uptight or he'll be angry or tired or, 'Leave me alone.' And this [calling of bishop] is way different. And I don't know how it's different other than he'll come home and he's uptight and he's, sometimes he's angry and he'll say leave, he won't say leave me alone, but that's the feeling I get. But it feels different. It feels different than a work situation or something else that has gone on in his life. When it's the church it's maybe more of an intimate, um...maybe...I'm just thinking out loud. Maybe it's the fact that he can't communicate or can't share. Where when these other work issues or other issues come up, when he's ready he'll talk about it. I'll wake up in the morning and we'll talk and everything will be ok. But, now, sometimes we'll go to bed and there's just this wall between us and it, it doesn't... I don't know.... It just, it really creates a distance.

John describes the challenge of maintaining the confidentiality of the members of the ward and needing Mary's support as he is called away to perform the duties of bishop. He recognizes that it is difficult for Mary to be supportive when she doesn't know what is transpiring or why. This illustrates the trust Mary is required to exhibit in John.

The [area of] confidentiality seems to be a question of how much should I share with my spouse and how much should I not share? On one hand you're saying, 'Hey I need her support,' when I meet with this person every week for a month or whatever. At crazy hours I need her to support me doing that. I need to give her some information or some inclination as to what I'm doing so that she is supportive. But at the same time I don't want to betray, you know uh, confidences that are shared with me as a bishop. And so, that's difficult to reconcile at times.

One area with which John and Mary have struggled is Mary's discomfort with the time John spends engaged in ecclesiastical counseling with members of the ward, especially other women. She describes how she and John had set boundaries for their relationship but now those "rules" no longer seem to apply.

Early in our marriage, there were some things that I did that really bothered John in my interactions with other men. It's just my person[ality] like I would, you know, grab on to their arms, say 'How are you?' or whatever. It really bothered John. And he says, 'Gosh it just seems like, you're just you know, so familiar.' But he said, 'It's very different because that's why I fell in love with you.' I mean because I was that way with him. I told him I said, 'You know, if that makes you feel uncomfortable there's no more questions asked.' I mean, that's fine. It's – that's done and I'll change. And we've kind of had this understanding all along and even as oh about a year, year and a half ago, there was a situation actually at the church and I was helping this gentleman with some music and I mean nothing inappropriate or anything. He said 'But it just kind of bugs me you're in the choir and you're helping this guy.' And you know again it was, 'Ok, you know, well, that's fine.' But so now we're into this situation [John's calling as bishop] and I said, "It's like, it's like all the things that we had [said] in the past and discussed in the past with the discomfort level have come back to bite me. I mean it's like those thoughts and those feelings are disregarded. Because I can't come to you [John] and say, 'I don't feel good about this. I'm feeling weird about this.' And you know there have been situations too with him and I would say, 'This is – I don't like it.' So we've had this great understanding if [there] was ever an issue. And now I feel like there are certain things that are issues with me and the rules have changed, is how I can describe it... The rules I guess just the understanding that we've had in our relationship [regarding being with members of the opposite sex] just because he's the bishop are all of a sudden it doesn't matter anymore because he's the bishop. I have a really hard time with it. I have a really hard time, but I don't have an answer because I know certain things need to be done.

John acknowledged that his calling as bishop does require that he spend time with others, especially with women he would otherwise not. Ward members who patronize John also challenge the relationship.

I think there are many things that I do, and in situations and people that I get involved with, that I previously had not been involved with. I do spend more time visiting with women than I did before. Some of the topics that I get involved with are topics which would normally not be discussed outside of my relationship with my wife. I think there's an emotional draw



to the position of bishop. People tend to go to the bishop with needs. They tend to patronize a little bit more the bishop. Often time saying, 'Oh what a great person he is.' I just think it has challenged the dynamics of our relationship.

Mary's discomfort influenced her ability to support his absences from home. She states that her negative reaction to the time he spends with others is a result of the closeness in their marriage and a feeling that the closeness is compromised.

And it's mostly me I mean that I feel like I'm always coming to him saying, "You can't go one more night" or "This makes me feel uncomfortable when you're with this person" or that kind of thing. I find I really do I think because we are so close, that it really is uncomfortable for me and the relationships he has with these different women in our ward. It's really hard.

Mary had female members of the ward approach her and express appreciation for the bishop and the service he has performed on their behalf. However, for Mary, these interactions had a negative influence. Mary shared an example of a woman who said, "I just love your husband. He just listens and I've shared so much with him." Mary explained her reaction as, "And to me it's a knife, just in my heart."

*Outside influences.* Mary had two incidents, one as a child and one as a young adult being interviewed by her bishop prior to getting married. These created an outside influence that colors her current reaction to John's performance of his duties as an LDS bishop with regards to other women.

As I was growing up, as a young girl, we had a bishop who was just a dear, dear, dear, dear friend of my parents. He and our relief society president had an affair. I was little enough that I knew there was a weird feeling. My parents talked about it. My parents cried. The ward cried. I just remember this disgruntled feeling in our ward for a long time. And the hurt, the hurt of their families and how it was happening right under everybody's nose, yet nobody knew it. And the excommunication it truly destroyed these families. It was hard on the ward. And, you will just think this is so amazing because I do, but the bishop's wife stayed with him and now they've moved. The past is forgotten, yet as a child I just remember thinking, 'Something horrible has happened.' I reflect back a lot on that. I remember my own personal experience with my bishop, before I went to

get married. And, it was horrible. And, you know, he in the interview, I felt like he was asking me questions that made me feel so uncomfortable that I thought, 'Are you getting...?' It was just twisted is what it was. It was – I just – I felt like, 'This guy is twisted.' And, 'Is he, is there, what is he doing here?' And it made me feel uncomfortable and so, I think with those two things, the unfaithfulness happening right there and watching his wife and his family and these families having no idea and then, this bishop who was quite twisted. I really did, I thought, 'Are you getting off on some of the things that I am saying? Or why are you asking me this?' You know, just kind of digging.

John explains that his calling as bishop had resulted in insecurities in his wife, not only because of his relationship with other people but also because he and his wife have less control over time spent together.

I think the biggest thing I've seen is, I think it [calling of bishop for husband] increased insecurity on behalf of my wife... I think there are many things that I do and in situations and people that I get involved with that I previously had not been involved with. I have less control perhaps of my time and conversations with others and she certainly has less influence and control in terms of where I spend my time and how we spend our time together. And so I've seen the increased insecurity...on her part. Um... a little bit more clingy – uh clinging uh from her.

The needs of members of the ward and John's efforts to fill those needs as he fills his stewardship as bishop create interruptions to the marital relationship as well as family relationships. John describes having both planned and unplanned demands on his time.

I think things that are planned, interviews and meetings that are scheduled ahead of time, there's not a conflict. Where a conflict may arise is some of the things that occur spontaneously or that are unplanned events. For example Monday night there's an elderly ward member who is ill in the hospital, pneumonia, could pass away. On the way home from work I felt impressed to stop by and visit. Well, I get home 30 minutes late and [Mary's] very unhappy. She and the kids have had dinner without dad. I failed to call her, which is not appropriate. I thought I would be in and out on a quick visit. Drop in at the hospital and visit. We got talking. I took a need and opportunity to visit that was not tolerated very well by [Mary]. And she's correct I should have had the courtesy to call. I tend to try to, just really discern feelings and how I feel about a situation. I ask myself, "What's more important, am I willing to go through the wrath of my wife to do what I feel impressed to do? And sometimes I am, sometimes I'm not. And so it's really almost a case by case situation. There are some members that tend to be taxing and requiring more time and energy and attention that Mary is uncomfortable with. I've basically concluded that those members I don't spend time with. I've

made that decision, so I don't have to rethink those situations. How many evenings a month to spend doing church work and interviews, I monitor the needs at home, Mary's temperament, where we're at, needs of the members and determine that on a monthly – month to month basis with my executive secretary. Sometimes I schedule more evenings, sometimes I schedule less... really depends upon the mood at home and needs at home.

Mary shares an example of an interruption which took John away while the family was making ice cream.

Well this is kind of silly [but] even something as simple as last night. We had home-made ice cream last night. My son, my kids had some friends over and we made home-made ice cream, and I always make the ice cream, and he takes it out and does the ice and the salt and all that. And he got a phone call and he went upstairs and you know, I kind of get this blank stare, like, 'Are you kidding me?' 'You're going to get [the phone call]?' You know, one of those. So I took the ice cream out I put the ice cream in and the whole time I'm pouring the salt on [I'm] going, 'I haven't done this before, I hate doing this, I don't want to do [this], I don't want to start because I'm going to do it forever.' Just something as simple as that, I was just thinking about... I have – he's always done that. That's been his role. Something as simple as that. I find I'm taking on a lot more um, just a lot more slack with our families. Pulling slack with our family, listening a lot more, and maybe even protecting him more. If the kids can come to me, I try to encourage them to come to me. And, I don't like that either. I mean, it's not because I really want to. But I feel like, I need to right now, to kind of protect him. So I feel like I'm kind of taking on a lot more. And I – I do think it does affect our relationship because you know, so much we've done together. Even as simple as sitting out, making ice cream and sitting out on the lawn chairs while the things going. Now he's upstairs and I'm out there alone. And, so some of those rules have changed. It's ok. I'm getting more comfortable with it. But, even going places alone. Family dinners on Sunday. Places with the kids alone, dance competitions, things like that. I thought, 'This is a family thing, and dad's not here.' And I don't like that. Part of it, because I'm taking on the role kind of as mother and father. I mean, I'm representing the parents really. And, I'm trying to work through that one right now. Because I don't want to be the mom and dad. I just want to be the mom. And, dad should be there and... It's not that, you know, but I'm adjusting to that. At first it made me – it used to make me really frustrated. Now I think, ok, yeah, that's part of it.

Easy accessibility to John by ward members, especially via cell phone and text messaging, allows interruptions to occur.

But, one big thing with us is, with modern technology right now everyone has John's cell phone, everyone in the ward. I mean, everybody had it before, but now

they use it. They don't call here, unless they can't get a hold of his cell phone. His cell phone is ringing all the time. And it's very hurtful, very offensive to me. But also, his email, people are starting to text him, and I blew a gasket. We were actually on a date and, he received a text. For me, that didn't work having people text... You know, you're riding in the car, [John] gets a phone call, and so the whole, I mean, you just sit and look out the window while they carry on the conversation and... it does, it sends an instant message.

Mary referred to the feeling of "being the lowest on the list."

And that's hard. Sometimes, I do get angry and then I think, 'I wish it were you that felt like you were the lowest on my list.' Not that I – I mean really, I do. I think, 'Sometimes I wish you felt like you had ten people in front of you and you had to wait. And that you had the feeling.' 'Yeah she knows I'll be here when she gets around to me.' And, you know sometimes I'd like the roles to change a little bit. Or change, just for a little while. Because I feel like it's always me that's either nagging, or on the bottom of the list or giving up time with him. The one that is feeling kind of weird about who he is meeting with. I mean, whatever, the situation is. You know, sometimes it makes me mad. That it's me saying, 'Don't answer that phone call right now.' You know, I mean sometimes we get to that point. 'Don't pick that up right now!'

Changes have occurred in John that are confusing to Mary. It is as if the man she had married has acquired new personality traits, traits that are used to connect with others but not necessarily with Mary. John explains his perspective of the changes in himself and the challenge it has been for Mary.

One change that I did notice, that was very difficult for [Mary] is as you work with people and serve people you learn to love the people. And you're very... I guess I tend to be more of a recluse. When I go home I like to be home. I don't like to be bothered. I don't... I like the kids, I like the family, I like the focus. I really get involved in the neighborhood and I don't socially, I don't like to go out. I see people all day every day at work. And so I'm kind of a recluse. And that's been the pattern for 25 years of our marriage. We go to church. As soon as church is over I'm ready to go home, where Mary's been she loves people she get's charged by people. I'd say people are taxing to me. In this last year that has changed. I enjoy talking to the people. I'm interactive. I'm happy to see the people. I love the people and there's a good exchange and it's been very invigorating for me. It's very confusing to her. I mean my ideal of a great [time] is I take the newspaper and I go by myself and eat and read my paper. I get away and now she says, 'Well gosh, you know, you're Mr. Happy and now you're Mister Available and you like to see people and talk to people.' [Now] she [has been] waiting for me at social events rather than me telling her it's time to go. So

it has been a bit of confusion, a confusing element to her. As I touched on previously, I think people feel like they've got access to the bishop or are reliant, dependent on the bishop and they tend to call. That bothers her.

*Husband and wife points of satisfaction.* Although Mary feels conflicted with respect to her feelings about John's service as an LDS bishop, and struggles with believing that the calling is a blessing, she does acknowledge some blessings or points of satisfaction. Specifically Mary notes that John's work schedule has lightened, and she notices changes within John as a result of his service.

I keep trying to look for great things that are coming... One great blessing or great reward is that, when he was put in as bishop, almost immediately, the demands of his work lessened. And, I mean that was huge in that that's something we've always dealt with our whole married life is just demands at work and things that he did there. That [is] really just amazing to me that his demands at work [are less]. [But], instead of being at work now he's at church. And so as far as even a time adjustment, it's been a time adjustment. The difference was he was compensated financially. You know, when he's at work it is like, 'Ok, that's ok.' But that's really a great thing that's happened. [Also], it's been wonderful to see him – it's almost like he has blossomed. Because he's a very, very private person, very proper. And, he's kind of come out of his shell a little bit. And, you know, even towards people he's much more comfortable just at home and, with me and the kids and, even in a social setting, you know, we'll get out of there as fast as we can and come home where, now he's going out of his way and it's neat to see the people love him. And him love the people. Where I feel like I've always loved people and loved being with him... And it's been neat to see that joy come. That's been neat. So that's been a reward for me just to see him happy.

Mary also describes a closeness that results from worshipping with John and praying together for members of the ward.

To feel that closeness, even in the temple, and together praying. To be able to go together and share in that [praying for someone], I think those are the things that [bring] you together, when you're on the same page. I mean I feel like these are deep, intimate things that we have never experienced before.

John describes personal growth in his life and in Mary's including a refinement and increased sensitivity to the presence of God's spirit in their lives. John remarks about a greater appreciation both he and Mary have for one another's abilities and strengths. He specifically

mentions having Mary join him as he performs some of his church duties. In a moment of reflection he says that he thinks, in time, growth resulting from the calling and the increasing appreciation for one another will bless and strengthen the marital relationship.

I think uh there's been a lot of personal growth in my life as well as in Mary's life. I think there [has been] some refinement and sensitivity to the spirit in both of our lives. Individually, I think there has been an increased respect for one another's skills and strengths. I know she's very good with people, very gifted, and I think very wise and very warm and very encouraging. And it's fun to see her with those skills. There's been an increased dependency upon me to have her join me in church situations. [I] performed a wedding over this last weekend and it was wonderful to have her there with me, [to be] together at the ceremony and other events of the day. There's a dependency when we go visit say the family of a recently deceased member again she's very comfortable. I lean on her, depend on her to be there and to kind of bring a nice warm feeling. So, I think it increased [my] appreciation for her strengths and skill sets and her decency. And like I say, I'm sure in time that this appreciation will strengthen the marriage and bless the marriage. I think there's been an increased respect and appreciation from her to me in terms of abilities and what the spirit enables me to do as a bishop. And again, I think these things in time will bless the relationship. I still think it's early on. So, there's been an increased appreciation. Back to what some of the blessings have been in the marriage, increased appreciation for one another. I think the relationships that we enjoy with ward members has been a blessing. I think she and I both have been blessed with great relationships with ward members and a great love for them and them for us. People that we didn't know a year ago have become very meaningful in our lives and us in their lives. So I think it's the relationships. I think it [service in calling as bishop] creates testimony, in terms of the gospel and spirit in her life and mine.

**Dialectical tension between calling of bishop and marital relationship.** John and Mary described both points of dissatisfaction/disconnect and points of satisfaction which resulted from and contributed to their experience of the marital relationship since John's calling as an LDS bishop. Although points of satisfaction were described, the equilibrium previously experienced in John and Mary's marital relationship is disrupted. A dialectical tension has been created between sacrificing and consecrating one's time, talents, and all one has to God with the commandment to "cleave unto your spouse" and let nothing interfere with that relationship. John and Mary describe navigating the dialectical tension created between the time and support

required by John and Mary so John can fulfill his calling and the needs of the relationship. John explains a difference in perspective between himself and Mary with regards to the priority church service should have with respect to marriage and family relationship. Both John's and Mary's perspectives are influenced by fathers who served as bishops.

Throughout our marriage there has been one fundamental difference in the way we perceive church service. I think it comes to light even more now that I, now with the calling. I'm grateful that she's always viewed the family as, her first priority – and that's very important and that's why we married one another. And so if the church comes and asks for something, if it is consistent with the family, then she's for it. But, if it takes away from family, she doesn't hesitate to say, 'no.' And my philosophy is a little bit different. I will say, 'yes' to church with the expectation that blessings will come, and that I will be compensated through, being more effective as a husband or father as a result of my service. And so, again, I don't think either position is right or wrong, it's just different. And so, she will say, 'no' to the church opportunity and I will say, 'yes.' Therein lies the conflict. And, you know twenty years ago or whatever it was, twenty five years – twenty five years ago I was called to be the stake clerk. [The calling] pulled me out of the ward and away from the kids and the family quite a bit and she could never reconcile that calling. And so after a year I went to the stake president and said, 'As much as I enjoy this, it's just too difficult at home and, I need to be released.' I think uh, maybe that is the way how we approach even this calling I ...if I were to go unchecked I think I would spend too much time doing church work. She restores the proper perspective and balance and a proper priority for me there. Back to the marital harmony and what may impact it. Again there's a philosophical difference I think towards church. And I grew up my father was a bishop, a stake president – in a stake presidency and served all the time and was very generous in giving. Her family – her father was a bishop after we were married, not quite as generous with his time. It comes back to expectations towards the calling and everything I have is, you know the kids can have it, the neighbors can have it, I really don't have anything that is mine. I'm not very possessive, where she is very possessive of cars, clothes, phones. I'm again I don't know if this comes back to the calling or not, but again this in terms of how we approach it in terms of generosity and in terms of time and resources. I'll take the kids in the ward out for dinner or something and don't think anything of it and she's saying, 'Well gosh how can you, you know, take them to get their hamburgers and shouldn't you get reimbursed or shouldn't you – you know how can you do this?' And again I don't think twice about it and no, I'm not going to be reimbursed. It's my treat and it's something that I like to do.

John describes his experience of negotiating Mary's needs with his desire to fulfill his calling and the demands it places on him.

I think it's challenging and it's a matter of managing expectations and relationships. I think there's certain situations and people and different events that sometimes I maybe agree with my wife's position and other times I agree more with, well what is expected and what I feel I need to do... [It's] a bit of a conflict. At times I'm sympathetic, at times I'm saying, 'Hey, buck up and this is the way it is. We're not the first ones to go through the experience, not the last and good, bad or different; this is what we agreed to do.' At the same time, my relationship and marriage to her is first and foremost of importance, and so it's kind of a conflict, frankly in my mind. Do I cater to her and her needs and to her feelings? Do I follow through on what I would be – what I would perceive to be magnifying my calling? And at times there's a conflict.

Mary describes her perception of John's internal struggle as he tries to resolve the conflict between magnifying his calling and meeting Mary's needs.

I think he would probably feel more torn because it's me always trying to pull him back home. And, I think that's constant. And I think he's probably trying to balance – even mentally out. Sometimes I'll say, 'Hello. I'm here. You're with me tonight. You're at dinner. Come back.' And fortunately we're able to joke about it sometimes. But, I think he's torn. I know he's torn. I mean, his thoughts and burdens and things. I don't disagree with what he's doing, that's what's nice. If I didn't have a testimony that would be really hard. But, I think he's really torn. I think it's really hard on him. Because he knows there's this distance, he knows sometimes I'm mad that it's me that's always saying come back... Because I try not to say or do anything that will pull him away from what he's supposed to be doing but, you know he's aware of some of the discomfort I have... I don't want that to be a burden either.

Mary describes being unprepared for the conflicted feelings she has experienced since her husband's calling. Her feelings have been exacerbated by the former bishop's wife telling Mary that being the wife of an LDS bishop is a blessing.

I wish someone would have told me. You're put into this situation and some of the comments like our former bishop's wife. I mean they were 'the family' truly just an extremely wonderful role model. They're the kind of people that all of us would look up to, truly. They're just amazing and her comment to me was, 'It's such a blessing. It's – you'll be so close and it's so wonderful.' And – so I'm put in it and I think, 'I hate this. I hate the way I feel, I don't like it, I don't like [being] at church anymore.' I feel like I'm going go to hell, really, because I have these horrible feelings. And I'm having a hard time with sharing him, with him going and leaving, and spending all this time with these kids [in the ward] when I think, 'I've got kids here that need their dad so badly.' And um, yeah I didn't- I just, I have felt really bad like I should not feel this way. And I wish someone-



and I- maybe it wasn't our former bishops wife, but I wish someone would have said - even when we were called, have said to me, 'You know what? It is hard. And there are times you're going to just hate it.' But, I think that maybe that's not true for everybody... I don't know. I don't know.

On occasion Mary's internal conflicts regarding her husband's calling have resulted in her not feeling comfortable enough to fully participate in aspects of LDS Church Sunday worship services such as the bearing of her testimony.

I haven't born my testimony since he's been put in. And I don't, in fact the last testimony meeting I thought, 'I just can't' It would, it might be five years till I do it again.

Mary also reports feelings of distress while at church and, on occasion, has left the meeting when feeling overwhelmed.

I kind of get in one of those moods like, 'You're taking him away from me again. It's Father's Day.' And that's one of the days I got up and left. I thought, 'I'm not doing this.' I've settled in with now it's ok to do that because I think I don't need to sit there in pain. I don't need to put that pressure on [John], because he knows that I'm upset that he's down at the church on Father's Day and my kids are home waiting to honor him. That to me has been a coping mechanism that has helped a lot. Where originally I thought, 'I have to stay here.' I mean, I was in pain. I would sit there and [think], 'I have to stay here. I am the bishop's wife and I need to be here.' And I'd think, 'No, I don't. It's ok.' And so that's, like I said, that to me, that's progress. I'm ok with that now. And, [John] is too. He's just, 'If that's what helps you.' In fact earlier on he was in the bishopric for five years before he was called as bishop. We kind of had this, we joke about it, it was an understanding. I always say, 'Now, I'll never tell you who to call or how to run the ward or anything about our ward, as long you don't tell me when I have to go to Sunday School.' And that was our understanding. And sometimes I would, and I would leave. He'd just, there was never any guilt. He'd say, 'Ok. Bye.' He kissed me on the cheek and I'd walk out to the car and it was ok. And then I could kind of regroup, and when he came home I was happy and could greet him. I felt like I [be]came available to give him what he needs. And I guess I think that's my role. It's not necessarily to sit in Relief Society and feel this pain, but to kind of come home and regroup and give him what he needs to be useful.

**Adjustment strategies.** Mary and John incorporated both individual and couple strategies as they adapted to the effects of John's calling on the marital relationship.

**Individual strategies.** For Mary and John, individual coping strategies included Mary

sharing her thoughts and feelings with her stake president and seeking professional counseling.

Mary did not have a positive experience when she shared her thoughts and feelings with the stake president. Instead, his comments contributed to her feelings of self doubt and insecurity.

And in fact I saw the stake president just a couple weeks ago and I said, he was asking me, 'How's it going?' and I said, 'You know we really need a handbook.' 'You know, the wives need some kind of [handbook],' Kind of joking, but kind of not. And, he kind of blew me off. He says, 'You'll be blessed.' And I think, 'Am I supposed to just swallow that, because he's my priesthood leader?' I mean I think he's wrong.

Due to Mary's continuing distress, she sought professional counseling at the LDS Church's Mental Health Agency, *LDS Family Services*. Again, Mary did not have a positive experience.

And I've actually I went to family services several months ago thinking, 'I can't be the only one feeling this way.' I know there are some wives that just think this a glorious thing. And I'm sure there – aren't there some? I'm sure there are some. I often times wonder, 'Am I the minority? Am I the only one who feels this way or one of the few that gets angry, or rebellious? Or, [has] this has caused a strain [for anyone else]? Or, are there more that just don't talk about this?' But I went down to social services and I thought, 'This isn't the LDS Church; this is Social Services. They have to deal with this.' And, I kind of got, I came away just feeling so bad about myself because the response was... and I think they were saying what they were supposed to say. They weren't really validating what I was feeling, or saying, 'It's okay to be angry. It's okay to get up and walk out. Because that's what you need.' But nobody says that. They said to me, 'There are going to be blessings in this. Enumerable blessings. This is where you're being stretched and you need to go to the temple, and you need to pray more.' And so I came home feeling pretty low.

As a result of Mary's experiences, she describes becoming isolated and feeling vulnerable to criticism.

I'm not very open about the tender feelings between John and I and this isolation and some of the anger or frustration. Because I think you could be judged and you're vulnerable. And you might get what my stake president and the woman – the Social Worker said, 'You'll be blessed and you need to pray more.' Then, 'Get with it.'

After a particularly difficult Sunday and missing a family barbecue, Mary's father-in-law visited her and gave her the name of a therapist in private practice in the community. This therapist has been supportive and has encouraged Mary in her efforts to encourage John to balance his duties as bishop with her needs and their relationship.

A couple of things happened and it was a long, long day and it was hard here, and I was alone. And I start thinking, 'So what are all the other families doing right now? They're having a barbecue outside or they're playing games or they're out on the golf course. I see them and they're playing with their dad and... And I just – I said I can't – I'm not recovered. I can't go to your family barbecue with you.' And so I didn't. The next day his dad came over. And he said, 'I need you to call someone, if you feel comfortable.' And he gave me this gentleman's name. And, it's been wonderful. It's been great and, I just – I really wish this was just not such a closed thing. Yet I can see in some ways these feelings are so private and so personal and so intimate that if you were to share them, even with somebody like my own sister, she would laugh at me like, 'Are you kidding?' 'Really?' And I think, and I talk to this counselor a little bit about it and I said, 'I just feel like, is it my weakness?' And he looked at me and he said, 'It's your strength.'... And so, it's a strength. And when he said that it's like, 'Ok, we do have something special. And it's good that it bothers me.' And he said, 'You need to use that strength. That's why you need to pull him back, is because your relationship is important to both of you and sometimes he's in a situation now that he forgets. And you need to ground him.' That's been really helpful, it's been good.

*Couple strategies.* Couple strategies included John and Mary communicating more and making the conflict between John's calling as bishop, Mary's needs, and the marital relationship explicit.

I think, to again, to accommodate her, I mean it's very difficult to be a good bishop when your wife is unhappy with you. Harmony in the home and the relationship is important. And so I think I've taken a little bit more time than maybe I normally would have in the morning before I go to work [and] at night and before we go to bed to make sure that we're communicating. Communicating about ward members or work, kids, whatever it might be, just so that I can avoid, you know any confrontation and conflict. It seems to be received well by Mary.

Mary also described how she and John talked about scheduling and using communication skills to let each know what the other is thinking. As a result, Mary believes the relationship has grown closer.

[I'll say to John], 'You don't need to have one more meeting.' And he'll say to me, 'You know what, you're right.' And so that to me, he's really great... I think that has helped our relationship grow closer.

**Marital relationship adjustment to husband's call as an LDS bishop.** In summary, John and Mary are an example of a couple who, although the calling of bishop has introduced a disruption to the marital relationship, are finding ways to address the disruption. They acknowledge the necessity of addressing concerns and remain hopeful that they can continue to resolve conflicts and disruptions arising from the imbalance between time devoted to the calling of bishop and time devoted to the marital relationship. Mary describes the potential for an improved relationship as concerns are addressed and conflicts are worked out.

I feel that in some ways there is a greater closeness because we're learning to work them out. But they're happening more frequently [attempts at resolution of conflicts]. And so, it [the relationship] is not worse. I can see the potential of it being a lot – a lot closer relationship. I can't say that it's a lot closer [now]. But I think that we're acquiring skills. And when we are able to apply those skills, I do feel it is better.

John shares the hope and belief that, as he and Mary work through issues, the relationship will be blessed and strengthened.

Working through different issues and scheduling needs and different things, I think in that sense I think our relationship will be blessed and strengthened as a result of the experience in the items that we do share together. It's still kind of a work in progress and early in the process and so I don't know that it's really happened yet. But, I think when all is said and done we'll look back and agree that the relationship has been enhanced as a result of the calling.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

When a man is called to serve as a bishop (lay-clergy) in the LDS Church, his life suddenly and profoundly changes. The new position places significant demands on his time and resources. It also places new demands and pressures on his wife and on the couple's marital relationship. The husband's calling disrupts the marital relationship and in the process of addressing the disruption couples are confronted with a dialectical tension between two promises or "covenants" previously made. One covenant being to have a strong marriage and the other to serve God by sacrificing to build His kingdom on earth through service to others. As couples engaged the dialectical tension created by trying to meet the demands of both, they had difficulty "serving two masters" (see Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13, King James Version), in this case, two "good" masters. The couple often puts their marital relationship "on hold," knowing the calling is time limited, and hoping time and attention can once again be invested in the relationship after the husband is released. I found the adjustment process to be complex, involving many factors related to personal needs, responsibilities, attachment, intimacy, family conflicts, and time constraints.

Understanding the adjustment requires consideration of four themes (a) the marital relationship prior to the husband's calling, (b) the marital relationship subsequent to the husband's calling, (c) the dialectical tension created by the calling, and (d) the strategies used to cope with the effects of the calling on the marital relationship. These themes are discussed in the context of other empirical and theoretical literature and implications for clinicians are addressed.

### **Marital Relationship Prior to Assumption of Calling as an LDS Bishop**

As I interviewed the participants in my study, I began the interview with questions like, “How has your marriage been affected by your (your husband’s) calling as an LDS bishop?” or “How has your marriage adjusted to your (your husband’s) calling as an LDS bishop?” I did this for two reasons. First was to provide open ended questions to allow the participants to share what they believed were important. Second was to provide participants an opportunity to reflect on the experience of the calling and on the relationship adjustment process. As participants reflected on and answered these questions, I gained insight into the condition of their marriages. I learned that several couples shared the belief that their marital relationship was not a dyad, but a triad with Christ the third member in the relationship.

**Description of marital relationship prior to call.** The descriptions of the marital relationships of the couples in this study prior to the husband’s call provide a context in which to place the couple’s new experiences and their adjustment to the husband’s calling and its effects on their marriage. The couples described a range of marital dynamics from a connected relationship wherein the spouse was considered a “best friend” to a more detached relationship in which the spouse was described as a “workaholic.” As I completed more interviews, I made two observations. First, the participants described marital dynamics that were fairly typical of most couples. Second, I noticed many of the issues that existed in the relationship prior to the calling were now exacerbated by the husband’s new position. For example, Couple 3 wife described her husband as a “workaholic” prior to his call. Now that he is an LDS bishop, she described him as “not home very much”. Prior to her husband’s calling, Couple 2 wife described not having much time to talk and connect with her husband. Subsequent to the call, both Couple 2 husband and

wife indicated that they talk and share via phone conversations rather than face-to-face due to heavy scheduling demands.

**Marital triad: Including Christ in the marriage.** Including Christ as a member of a marital triad is consistent with themes identified in a qualitative study by Lambert and Dollahite (2008) wherein couples reported that religious beliefs and practices helped them include Deity as the third partner in their marriage, positively influencing their marital commitment. Participants in my study expressed a belief that Christ is the focal point and an integral part of their marriage. The participants' commitment to inviting Christ into their marriage is consistent with the doctrines of the LDS Church. A brief description of LDS Church doctrine with respect to the importance of marriage and making Christ part of the marriage is provided to facilitate the reader's understanding of the significance of this theme and the "Dialectical Tension" discussed later.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that marriage is a commandment and an essential step toward creating an eternal family. Similar to other faiths, members of the LDS Church believe that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God. However, not only is marriage ordained of God, but members of the LDS Church believe marital and family relationships can be perpetuated beyond the grave. These relationships are referred to as "eternal marriages" and "eternal families." Having an eternal marriage or an eternal family is a key doctrine in LDS theology with regards to God's plan for the eternal destiny of His children (Bednar, 2006).

Because of the eternal potential and nature of marriage, marriage is not a covenant to be taken lightly or terminated arbitrarily. Instead, marriage is viewed as a sacred covenant with God

that should be binding on earth and throughout eternity. Honoring the covenants of marriage including faithfulness and fidelity are given prime importance and value (Bednar, 2006).

Members of the LDS Church are taught that if they focus on developing Christ-like attributes they will increase in personal righteousness, and relationships, both marital and familial, will benefit. As the couple draws nearer to Christ through personal righteousness, they draw nearer to each other (Bednar, 2006). It is this core belief that study participants described as the foundation of their marital relationship. Members of the LDS Church consider it of the utmost importance to keep the covenants made in connection with what they consider to be the “holy and perfect order of matrimony” (McConkie, 1966, p. 118).

For LDS couples, the doctrinal emphasis on honoring the covenants of marriage intensifies the dialectical tension between attending to the needs of the marital relationship and fulfilling the calling of an LDS bishop. It must be remembered that LDS bishops are lay-clergy chosen from current ward members. Part of the selection process includes the stake president evaluating potential candidates. Couples considered by the stake president as candidates are most likely couples who take their marriage covenants seriously and are trying to live righteous lives. The more a couple honors their marriage covenants, the more likely the husband is to be called to be an LDS bishop. Consequently, men who are called to be bishops, and their wives, are individuals who deeply value their marriage covenants and value serving God. Husbands and wives find themselves in the difficult position of trying to please everyone, and feeling that they could be, or should be, doing more in both the marital and church calling arenas.

### **Marital Relationship Subsequent to the Husband Assuming the Calling of LDS Bishop**

The husband’s acceptance and performance of the calling of bishop affects him and his wife individually as well as their marital relationship. Each component (the husband, the wife,



and the marital relationship) influences the others with the direction and intensity of the influences constantly changing. The focus of this section is on the marital relationship. However, because the husband and wife are affected individually, (in turn altering the marital relationship), the effects of the calling on the husband and wife individually are included. Understanding the dynamics of the interaction requires separate consideration of each component. For discussion purposes, the effects of the calling on the marital relationship will be discussed first, followed by the effects of the calling on the individual. This section concludes with a review of outside influences which impact the husband and wife individually as well as the marital relationship.

**Effects of calling: Marital relationship.** An LDS couple is required to transition from being a non-clergy couple to a lay-clergy couple relatively quickly. It is common in the LDS Church for a husband to be “called” as an LDS bishop by the stake president and, in a relatively short period (2 weeks or less) he is presented before the LDS ward over which he will preside for a “sustaining vote” by the membership. After that meeting, the husband is “set apart or ordained” as the bishop. He immediately begins to execute the duties and responsibilities of his new position. This is in contrast to professional clergy who train, often for many years, and interview for full-time career positions. While many of the stressors and dynamics are the same between LDS lay-clergy couples and professional clergy couples of other faiths, there is a fundamental difference. Professional clergy couples usually have prepared for and gone into the marriage with the intent of being a clergy couple. They expect the clergy to be their career and they expect to devote a minimum of 40 hours per week serving their parishioners. LDS couples do not necessarily expect the husband to be called as an LDS bishop or the marriage to become a “clergy marriage” with all of its inherent stressors.

Participants described the calling of bishop as disruptive to the marital relationship, with the intensity of the disruption being unique to each couple. Husbands used words such as “more fragile,” “disconnected,” and “strained” to describe the disruption to the relationship. Wives used words such as “isolation,” “separation,” and “compartmentalization” to describe their experience.

The descriptions by the husbands and wives of the effects of the bishop calling on the marital relationship are consistent with what theoretical and empirical literature calls “attachment injury” (Johnson, 1998). Attachment in this context is the continuity between attachment experiences and adult relationship functioning. In other words, the level of security and attachment or connectedness experienced within the marital relationship (Brassard, Lussier, & Shaver, 2009; Creasey, 2002; Creasey & Jarvis, 2009; Crowell et al., 2002; Mehta, Cowan, & Cowan, 2009; Shaver, Belsky, & Brennan, 2000; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992; Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004).

Attachment injuries usually result from traumatic events like infidelity or abuse. However, subtle attachment injuries occur when one or both participants experience loss of attention or a sense of abandonment from a partner who no longer participates in activities they shared in the past. The resulting feelings are generally described as disconnected, detached, alienated, or alone. These are similar descriptors to those identified above by the participants.

Attachment styles are often conceptualized along a continuum ranging from insecure to secure and include particular patterns of behavior and feelings about the relationship and the individual (Collins & Read, 1990; Creasey, 2002; Creasey & Jarvis, 2009; Paley, Cox, Burchinal, & Payne, 1999; Shaver et al., 2000). As the husband assumes the calling of bishop and begins to perform clerical duties, an attachment injury occurs due in part to the sudden

transition from non-clergy to a lay-clergy couple. The attachment injury is experienced by the husband, wife, or both. This in turn influences and disrupts the marital relationship (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001). However, the attribution of the source of the injury is more complex. Instead of the injury occurring just between the husband and the wife (Johnson, 1998), an injury may also be experienced between the individual and God. It may be perceived that God (since God is asking the husband to further His work by fulfill the calling of bishop) is disrupting the marital relationship. This is difficult for the husband and/or wife to reconcile as they ask themselves, “Why would God disrupt a relationship He values so much?”

Adult attachment styles are influenced by childhood attachment experiences and fluctuate in response to stress (Collins & Read, 1990; Mehta et al., 2009; Simpson et al., 1992). Four participants in my study noted childhood attachment experiences that intensified the effects of the husband being called as an LDS bishop, contributing to the attachment injuries. Three study participants described past attachment injuries related to church service and noted that “the relationship suffered,” and that they felt “resentful” and “left out” as the father performed his duties as either a bishop or a general authority of the LDS Church. Participants believed that their fathers’ duties were performed at the expense of their own childhood needs. A fourth participant described being raised in a dysfunctional family by an alcoholic father and a co-dependent mother.

Often, as individuals experience subtle attachment injuries, they feel anxious, sad, angry, resentful, and unimportant. They become hyper-vigilant as they look for reasons to explain their feelings. If they are unable to discuss the underlying sense of loss and alienation with their spouse, they may cope by distancing, increasing their independence, or becoming increasingly aware of imagined or actual disruptions to the relationship.

The descriptions by the husbands and wives of the effects of the bishop calling on the marital relationship may also be considered in the context of what Gottman (1999) refers to as the need for friendship and a healthy fondness and admiration system in the marital relationship. The foundation of a healthy marital relationship is a marital friendship and the ability of that friendship to create positive affect in non-conflict contexts. Three components of the marital friendship are (a) cognitive room or the amount of space an individual dedicates to knowing and thinking about his/her spouse, (b) the amount of fondness and admiration spouses have for and express to each other, and (c) a healthy “emotional bank account” which is the ability to turn towards one’s spouse as opposed to away (Gottman).

In addition to the aforementioned components of marital friendship, Gottman (1999) identified additional factors that either add to or subtract from the strength of the marital friendship foundation. The additional factors are (a) the frequency of expressions of disappointment and negativity, (b) the degree of “we-ness” in couple conversations, (c) the degree to which couples demonstrate efficacy as they address their problems, (d) the couple’s experience of chaos and feeling “out of control” of their lives, and (e) the degree to which their differences relate to gender issues.

The strength of the marital friendship then facilitates how spouses interact with each other and how they interpret each other’s behaviors and intentions. When the marital friendship is strong, behaviors and intentions are interpreted in a more positive light. When the marital friendship is weak, behaviors and intentions are interpreted in a more negative light (Gottman, 1999).

The quality of the couple’s marital friendship also influences the couple’s ability to create shared meaning, or the degree to which both spouses feel understood and that their life dreams

are supported. It is the existence of shared meaning that, “is at the heart of the creative resolution of marital conflict” (Gottman, 1999, p. 109). In examining the creation and maintenance of shared meaning four areas of a couple’s experience are examined including rituals, roles, goals, and symbols. As couples discuss and define their rituals, roles, goals, and symbols they are able to create a solid and meaningful couple culture which strengthens the marital friendship.

Gottman has identified that “affectlessness and emotional disengagement in marriages occurs” (p. 109) when spouses do not have a strong marital friendship.

Gottman’s (1999) research has relevance to the couples in this study when it is considered that as the husband fulfills his calling as a bishop the ensuing disruption to the relationship compromises the couple’s friendship status. Couples in this study provided descriptions of their experience of the husband’s service as a bishop which may be conceptualized in terms consistent with Gottman’s research. For example, several participants described being so busy they did not have the time they would like to spend with their spouses. This is similar to the idea of having adequate cognitive room, or the amount of space a person has in their life for their spouse, and knowing about their spouse. On the other hand, the concept of fondness and admiration was evident as couples considered their positive experiences as a result of the husband’s service.

Several couples described that although they considered the calling a “couple calling,” in reality they did not or were not able to share much of the day-to-day aspects of the husband’s performance of his bishop’s duties and responsibilities. Although Gottman (1999) discusses “we-ness” in the context of couple conversations, several participants in this study described feeling disconnected from their spouse as a result of the husband’s busy schedule as well as the need to maintain confidentiality.

Perhaps one of the most significant challenges the couples in this study faced is the degree to which they believed they had the power to set boundaries and determine how they would define the meaning of the husband's service as a bishop individually and to the relationship. Thus, couples often demonstrated little efficacy as they addressed the problems and challenges they faced as a result of the demands of the calling of bishop on the husband.

Finally, with regard to gender differences, Gottman's (1999) research has relevance in that several wives described the expectation that they support their husbands in his calling. As such, support was defined as not complaining and accepting things as they were. In the process, some wives believed they did not have a "voice" which in turn limited the couple's ability to address areas of concern in the relationship thus affecting the quality of the marital friendship.

**Influences contributing to relationship disruption.** Participants identified three themes related to the husband's performance as an LDS bishop that resulted in a disruption to the marital relationship. Two of the themes, "Accessibility of the Bishop/Clergy" and "Relationships with Others" have been identified previously as stressors in clergy marriages (e.g., Barbour, 1990; Blackmon, 1994; Blanton, 1992; Darling et al., 2004; Hack, 1993; Hill et al., 2003; Meek et al., 2003; Morris, 1992; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Pettitt, 1998). A third theme, "Confidentiality/Shared Intimacy," is unique to this study, but related to research on clergy.

***Accessibility of the bishop/clergy.*** Both husbands and wives described the demands of the bishop's calling as intrusive on family time and the marital relationship. The cultural expectation that clergy should be on call, "24/7," results in LDS bishops and professional clergy being called at all hours of the day and night (Blackmon, 1994; Blanton, 1992; Darling et al., 2004; Hack, 1993; Hill et al., 2003; Pettitt, 1998). For example, an LDS bishop's wife who was not interviewed for this study shared with me that she often was called in the middle of the work

day by members wanting to speak with her bishop husband. When she replied, “He is at work,” they were surprised that he was unavailable. Wives in this study shared examples of ward members who expected to be able to speak with their bishop at a moment’s notice.

Wives described family activities and couple time being compromised as the husband leaves both physically and/or mentally to attend to the needs of ward members. The ease of accessibility to bishops is exacerbated by the prevalent use of modern technology, primarily cell phones. Clergy research refers to this as “living in a fishbowl” where a lack of privacy is experienced as congregants believe they have a right to their minister’s time, at all times. (Barbour, 1990; Blackmon, 1994; Blanton, 1992; Darling et al., 2004; Hack, 1993; Hill et al., 2003; Meek et al., 2003; Morris, 1992; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Pettitt, 1998).

The time required to fulfill the calling of bishop was identified by participants as influencing the attachment or sense of connectedness in the marital relationship. Professional clergy have identified lack of time and role overload as primary stressors to marital satisfaction (Hill et al., 2003; Moore, 2006; Noller, 1984; Pettitt, 1998). Exacerbating the issue of the allocation of time to the bishop’s calling is the reality that LDS bishops are not monetarily compensated for the time they devote to their service. Instead, bishops usually have a full-time occupation (unless they are retired or unemployed). The time spent fulfilling the calling of bishop is in addition to the time spent on one’s employment. Therefore, a lack of time is especially salient to LDS couples, because the time the husband spends fulfilling his calling in a large part comes from time formerly spent with wife or family.

Several of the LDS bishops in my study reported a belief that the calling of bishop requires him to be accessible to ward members as needs arise. In part, this is due to the expectation that bishops be kind, loving, compassionate, and available to meet the needs of

others. I have to ask myself, “Do members of the LDS Church have unrealistic expectations of how accessible their bishops should be?” I wonder if they forget he works 40+ hours a week in addition to serving them. Cox (2001) identified fear, obligation, and guilt as tools congregants use to motivate clergy to meet their needs. Perhaps LDS bishops get “caught” by members who, with a smile on their face and a pleading look in their eyes, insist that, “only *he* can help, they need his help *now*” and “it will *only* take a minute.”

As I put more thought into how accessible the husbands made themselves to the members of their wards, I wondered if they were overwhelmed by meeting the needs of both the marital relationship and their church calling so they put the marital relationship “on hold.” In the process of putting the relationship “on hold,” perhaps some used the same tools congregants did (fear, obligation, and guilt) against their own wives to justify why they *had* to attend another meeting or perform a responsibility *only he* can perform. After all, the wife will be around after he is released and this is his “time and season” to serve.

***Relationships with others.*** This theme referred to the potential jealousy of the wife for the time and emotion the husband invests in the performance of his calling. The wife’s feelings of jealousy take both generalized and specific forms. The church or the members of the congregation are perceived as getting the time, energy, and emotions the wife previously received and still desires from her husband. I found this to be especially true when the husband will leave cheerfully to meet the needs of others, while at times, seemingly oblivious to his wife’s needs. Additionally, by the time the husband has tended to the needs of the congregation, he is too physically and emotionally drained to pay attention to his wife.

A specific form of jealousy felt by many of the wives is focused around other women who seek out the bishop for ecclesiastical counseling. This can unintentionally threaten the



stability of the marital relationship (Cox, 2001). As Couple 1 Wife explained, she is never quite certain of the motives of other women toward her husband. It is difficult for a wife not to get jealous when a woman he is counseling gets more face to face time with her husband than she does. Intuitively she knows that women may be attracted to him because of the power he has by virtue of his position. Yet, “she cannot easily voice her jealousy because the threat is so constant and so vague. How can she get mad at the church? How can she get mad at all the women in the church?” (Cox, p. 190). She can’t, especially if it is her role to be supportive which includes trusting her husband and accepting that he is not available to her, while he is available to others.

***Confidentiality/Shared intimacy.*** “Confidentiality/Shared Intimacy” refers to a phenomenon experienced by LDS bishops and their wives and results from the following factors: (a) LDS bishops are lay-clergy and have no formal training as ecclesiastical counselors, (b) LDS bishops and their wives have a very short time to transition to their new roles, including the husband’s role as an ecclesiastical counselor; (c) as an ecclesiastical counselor, the husband must meet with and form relationships with members of his ward on a much more frequent, intimate and confidential level than experienced prior to his calling as an LDS bishop; and (d) prior to the husband’s calling, the marital relationship had not experienced the frequency or intensity of intrusions on the husband’s time and resources by others.

Both the husbands and wives described the challenge of the husband forming new and deeper relationships with the members of his ward and the necessity of keeping the details of those ecclesiastical relationships confidential. While it is understood that clergy and LDS bishops must respect and keep confidences, LDS lay-clergy couples may be unprepared for the feelings and reactions that arise as the husband forms new relationships while attending to the various needs of ward members. Not being professionally trained, the bishop may be uncertain

what he can and cannot share with his spouse. As a result, he may share little, if anything, of what he is doing or why he is doing it.

Because of this, both spouses felt distanced and disconnected from each other. Husbands described feeling “deceptive,” “conflicted,” and found it “difficult” to be called away by their responsibilities. Wives spoke of the challenge of witnessing their husbands having spiritual experiences that they could not share because of confidentiality issues. This left both husbands and wives feeling that they could not share significant parts of their lives. This ambiguous loss is exacerbated by those occasions when the husband is physically absent, or worse, physically present, but mentally absent (Hill et al., 2003). I found the experience of the wives in my study to resemble that of other clergy spouses in that they often felt they did not have the undivided attention of their husband (Hill et al.). This was painful for the wives who coped by minimizing the pain, considering it the sacrifice God required. As long as they ignored the pain (disconnectedness, injury to their marriage, absent husband, etc.) and “consecrated” their efforts to God, their sacrifice would be deemed worthy and acceptable to Him. They would then be blessed and supported by Him.

For the most part, these wives did not discuss their pain with their husbands. Perhaps, to discuss their pain would be admitting they were not the “ideal wife” who could unconditionally support her husband in his calling. So, while the husband is involved in counseling relationships with others, talking about their pain, the wife is isolated and alone with her pain. Additional feelings of isolation on the part of the wife occurred when, after an evening of attending to the needs of others, the husband arrives home and wants time to himself. This intensifies the disruption experienced in the relationship.

The family system concept of boundaries has relevance to the influences of (a)

accessibility of the bishop/clergy, (b) relationships with others, and (c) confidentiality/shared emotional intimacy that contribute to marital disruption. Maintenance of boundaries is an important component of healthy functioning family systems. Boundaries are the “invisible barriers that surround individuals and subsystems, regulating the amount of contact with others” (Nichols & Schwartz, 1995, p. 214). Clergy families report high levels of stress in maintaining clear boundaries around their family system (Barbour, 1990; Blanton, 1992; Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Lee, 1995, 2007; Meek et al., 2003; Morris, 1992). Clergy experience a career-specific type of boundary ambiguity. For clergy families, boundary ambiguity is not defined by traumatic or ambiguous loss within the family, but by the intrusiveness of extra-familial systems (Lee, 1999).

Husbands and wives in clergy marriages are constantly required to decide, “Who and what to let in and who and what to keep out and when” (Hill et al., 2003, p. 151). The expectation and belief of congregations that clergy and their families are always open and available to everyone at any time make this a particularly difficult issue (Hill et al.). The boundary ambiguities and cultural expectations experienced by the LDS couples in this study were similar to those experienced by professional clergy.

**Effects of the calling: Husband.** The husbands in my study reported various individual effects of the calling of bishop. It is acknowledged that any changes in the husband produce a shift in the marital relationship. Although important, a discussion of all of the individual effects is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, I focus on those that were identified by participants as most profoundly influencing the marital relationship. The husbands included these three factors: (a) the weight of the responsibility, (b) the personal and spiritual growth, and (c) the increased status and attention.

*Weight of the responsibility.* The husbands who participated in my study expressed being in awe of what was expected of an LDS bishop. Descriptions included “overwhelmed,” “fatigued,” “oppressed,” and “exhausted”. Clergy research refers to this as “role overload” (Pettitt, 1998). Role overload is related to three factors: (a) the clergy’s and wife’s expectations for themselves, (b) their perceptions of other’s expectations and (c) the importance of a consistently positive image. The issue of time is an important factor for all busy professionals (Daly, 2001). However, clergy research suggests that it is an even more significant issue for clergy (Morris & Blanton, 1994). Clergy often experience the stress of too much to do and too little time to do it (Darling et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2003; Lee, 1999; Lewis, Turton, & Francis, 2007; Meek et al., 2003). Among the heaviest demands is “the high expectation of being all things to all people” (Hill et al., 2003, p. 161).

In addition to the increased weight of responsibility the husbands feared failure and an “early release” from their calling. As Couple 5 Husband explained,

There’s just the time you serve, and if you don’t survive, they release you. You’ve seen it, I’ve seen it. I mean some serve their whole term and others just for whatever reason get released. The service just weeds them out. Some can’t do it...Whether its sin or whether it’s just emotional problems, they just can’t get with it, just kind of like a refiner’s fire.

The calling of an LDS bishop is time-limited; if a man is released early he is not transferred or given another congregation, as are professional clergy. Instead he returns to being a lay member of his ward. The members of the ward may speculate as to why he was released early (since it is fairly standard that men serve approximately 5-6 years as an LDS bishop). Since neither the husband nor the wife wants to experience this “failure” or the accompanying social

embarrassment more internal pressure is added to perform all duties in an acceptable, if not exemplary, manner.

*Personal and spiritual growth.* Although the husbands in my study described being overwhelmed with the many requirements of their calling, they expressed a level of satisfaction resulting from their service. This was particularly associated with personal and spiritual growth. Clergy report high job satisfaction despite numerous work-related stressors (Charlton, Rolph, Francis, Rolph, & Robbins, 2009; Corrigan, 1997; Crossley, 2002; Doolittle, 2007). Darling et al. (2004) identified spiritual resources as having the greatest total effect on quality of life for clergy and spouse. The attitudes of bishops with regard to their own wives and marriages changed as a result of the husbands acquiring additional perspective consequent to counseling with members in their ward. I found that as the bishops were able to hear and see the problems of others; they realized that their lives and their marriages weren't quite so bad after all. Husbands also expressed regret at the thoughtlessness they had previously exhibited towards their wives. This came as a result of hearing and witnessing the heartbreak of women in their wards describe the effects of their husbands' behavior on them and the bishops realizing they had treated their own wives similarly. These changes in the husbands positively affected the marital relationship in three ways. First, the husbands had increased empathy for their wives. Second, the husbands were able to view their own marriages in a more positive light. Third, the husbands perceived that their wives had a greater appreciation for them as a result of their calling.

I was unable to find other clergy research that addressed how the experiences the husbands were having increased their empathy for the wife enhancing the marital relationship. This may be due to the fact that LDS bishops do not train for the ministry and, therefore, have a limited perspective when it comes to relationships, especially healthy marital relationships.

Working with members of their ward who came to them in crisis provided an opportunity for the bishops to gain additional perspective and adopt a more realistic expectation of their wives and their marriages.

Two husbands commented that, as a result of their callings, their wives had more respect, appreciation, love, and affection for them. For one husband, this increase in respect and appreciation was due to the abilities, (particularly increased people skills and becoming more out-going), he had acquired, and what he believed “the spirit” (referring to God’s help), enabled him to do. The other husband attributed his wife’s increased love and affection to his calling which allowed her to see something in him that was not there previously. However, one must ask, “Since the calling of bishop is time limited (usually 5 years), what will happen when the husband no longer has the calling and the position of power?” and “Will the positive experiences and perceived improvements in the marital relationship remain or will they diminish over time?” Both questions warrant further consideration.

For the husbands, the increase in spirituality was experienced as a positive influence. For the wife, the increase in spirituality the husband was experiencing positively affected the marital relationship which, in turn, positively affected her. Both were points of satisfaction for the husband and the wife. However, for some wives, witnessing her husband’s increase in spirituality, and observing the spiritual experiences he was having, resulted in her feeling “left out of the process” or “left behind.” This was an experience that some wives found difficult to reconcile.

***Increased status and attention.*** As bishop, the husband gains an increase in status and attention. The mere title of “bishop” implies a higher level of spirituality, prestige, and power among the members of his religious community. Members of the ward express appreciation for

his time and service on their behalf. Blackmon (1984) noted that clergy ascribe the most importance to and derive the most satisfaction from their more “public” roles. Cox (2001) described how the congregation’s warm response energizes the clergy and may tap into the individual’s need to be loved and admired. This motivates the clergyperson to give even more to the work. Clergy report being put on a, “pedestal of invincibility, which has the secondary gain of grandiosity” (Hill et al., 2003, p. 157).

The wives in my study did not experience the husband’s increase in status and attention in the same positive way. Increased status as an LDS bishop’s wife is not generally recognized, and wives do not receive attention from the ward members the way the bishop does. The wife rarely gets thanked for “loaning” her husband to the ward. Wives reported usually being in the background, “holding down the fort,” feeling isolated, and dealing with all of the pressures, but receiving none of the accolades. This mirrors the sense of isolation wives in other clergy studies have reported (e.g., Hill et al., 2004).

To illustrate, a wife of an LDS bishop who was not interviewed for this study shared the following with me. While attending an LDS Church worship service, one of the members of her ward stood and publicly acknowledged to the congregation the time and sacrifice the bishop (her husband) spent attending to the needs of ward members. This member proceeded to state, “I don’t think the bishop’s wife even knows all he does or is aware of the sacrifices and time her husband spends serving the members of our ward.” Not only was this comment dismissive of her experience as the wife of an LDS bishop, but it intimated she was oblivious as to how much time he was spending, and how wonderful he was. This individual’s experience echoed the experience of the wives in this study which ranged from being “left out” to mild resentment of the “clout” the husband has with others.

**Effects of the calling: Wife.** Like the husbands, the wives reported various individual effects as a result of the husband's calling, and those effects shifted the marital relationship. The wives identified two primary themes: (a) the role of being the wife of an LDS bishop, and (b) personal growth.

*Role of wife of an LDS bishop.* The role of an LDS bishop's wife was similar to the role of wives of professional clergy in that it was ambiguous. It was not defined. Spouses of professional clergy experience significant confusion (Brunette & Hill, 1999; Hack, 1993; Noller, 1984). Professional clergy literature describes the role of a clergy wife as being defined by the wife's level of participation in the ministry of her husband. These roles may include teamworker, background supporter (with or without children in the home) and individualist (Blanton, 1992; Edsall, 1986). Since there is no "job description" provided by the LDS Church for a bishop's wife, I found in my study, both husbands and wives defined the wife as a background supporter.

The form of support most frequently described by the wives was acceptance of the frequent absences of the husband from the home and taking on more family and household responsibilities. This is consistent with research on professional clergy (Morris, 1994). However, the experience of the wives in my study differed from research on professional clergy wives with regards to loneliness (Brackin, 2001; Hack, 1993) and the wife's role as sole confidant for her husband (Hill et al., 2003). Clergy research indicates professional clergy spouses show higher levels of loneliness than would be expected among happily married women (Brackin, 2001). Although the wives in my study indicated that the marital relationship was disrupted by their husband's calling and service, only one wife (Couple 1 Wife—see case study) actually described feeling lonely.



There are several possible explanations for this difference. First, perhaps bishops' wives do not believe they are being supportive of their husbands and fully submitting themselves to God if they admit that they are lonely or need more attention, help, or support. Second, the wives may have been lonely in the marriage before their husband was bishop so there has not been much of a change. Third, the wife is focusing her energies and emotions on other areas of her life so as to not feel the loneliness. Fourth, because the calling is "time-limited" she accepts her lonely feelings matter-of-factly and does not consider herself to be lonely.

According to Hill et al. (2003) clergy wives sometimes find it difficult to be the sole confidant for their clergy spouse. The wives in the current study had an opposite experience. Several wives reported that their husbands shared very little concerning their activities and experiences as they performed their duties and responsibilities as an LDS bishop. As a result, the wives perceived that a significant portion of their lives were no longer shared with each other. A tentative conclusion concerning the difference in these experiences is that professional clergy share more of their experience with their wives than do the bishop husbands in my study. Perhaps this is because LDS bishops are not trained in what they can share and, fearing they will share too much, they share nothing. This lack of sharing between an LDS bishop and his wife may lead to or perpetuate a disruption or compromise the friendship in the marital relationship due to the stress of not being able to share which results in feeling disconnected from each other (Brassard, Lussier, & Shaver, 2009; Creasey, 2002; Creasey & Jarvis, 2009; Crowell et al., 2002; Gottman, 1999; Mehta, Cowan, & Cowan, 2009; Shaver, Belsky, & Brennan, 2000; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992; Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004).

***Personal growth.*** The wives in my study reported personal growth in two areas. First, they focused more on the needs of others and second, they grew in their spirituality and their

relationship with Deity. The opportunity to focus on the needs of others and to be of service is a positive consequence of the clergy profession both for the clergyman and his wife (Corrigan, 1997; Hill et al., 2003). Spiritual growth has been identified as a trait that moderates the negative effects of the identified stressors inherent in the clergy profession increasing resiliency (Brackin, 2001; Darling et al., 2004).

### **Outside Influences**

Although numerous outside influences affect all couples, participants in this study identified two themes in particular that influenced their adjustment to the husband's call. First were family of origin influences, especially with respect to past attachment histories. Second were expectations, both personal and cultural.

**Family of origin.** Three participants specifically noted family of origin issues as influencing their current experience of the calling of bishop, both personally and within the marital relationship. The family of origin attachment experiences, and the current re-experiencing of those feelings and emotions as explained by participants, is consistent with attachment literature (Collins & Read, 1990; Johnson, 1998; Johnson et al., 2001).

Although many couples encounter circumstances that lead to emotional distress, Makinen and Johnson (2006) note that attachment-related incidents can have particularly harmful effects on the relationship bond. Attachment injuries have been described by Johnson et al. (2001) as perceived abandonment, breach of trust, or betrayal by attachment figures. In my study, it was these past feelings of abandonment, breach of trust, or betrayal that resurfaced and influenced the participants' experience of the husband's calling as an LDS bishop. These same feelings as well as the couple's current attachment style (ranging from anxiously to securely attached) going into

the calling contributed to how the husband, wife, or couple responded to the experience of the calling and its effect on the marriage.

**Expectations.** A consistent theme in clergy research is the stress clergy and clergy wives experience as a result of expectations. The genesis of expectations for clergy and spouses is twofold. First are the perceived expectations of congregants, and second are self-expectations (Blackmon, 1984; Blanton, 1992; Brunette-Hill, 1999; Corrigan, 1997; Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Moore, 2006; Pettitt, 1998). The participants in my study are no exception. In reality, however, the perceived expectations of congregants and the self-expectations of clergy and clergy spouses are not two distinct phenomena. Instead, they strongly influence one another. For example, the perceived expectations of the congregants influence what a clergyman or clergy spouse expects of him. Likewise, the self-expectations of the clergyman or spouse will influence the experience of the expectations of the congregants. Expectations are an outside influence because the meaning attached to the expectations influences the experience the clergy couple has of the occupation of clergy or, in this study, the calling of bishop.

Clergy literature is replete with findings that clergy couples experience stress because they see themselves as public role models. As a result they feel they are living in a “fishbowl,” and are on a “pedestal” constantly open to scrutiny (Blackmon, 1984; Blanton, 1992; Brunette-Hill, 1999; Corrigan, 1997; Cox, 2001; Hill et al., 2003; Moore, 2006; Pettitt, 1998). In addition to the overwhelming pressure to be “perfect,” the fishbowl experience severely limits any sense of privacy (Hill et al.; Moore). This is especially germane to the participants in this study. In Utah, bishops and their wives live in the same geographical area as ward members. Ward members are in a position of observe the behaviors of the bishop, his wife, as well as their children on a daily basis. Additionally, ward members are often privy to information concerning

the bishop, his wife, and the children because ward members and the bishop and his family have often lived in the same neighborhood for a number of years.

Although professional clergy and LDS lay-clergy both experience living in a fishbowl and being placed on a pedestal an important difference exists. Professional clergy train for their occupation and despite not knowing fully what the experience will be like they do at least consider some of the idiosyncrasies of the clergy lifestyle as they contemplate entering the clergy profession. They know on some level they will be expected to be a role model and that it is part of having a professional clergy career. In the LDS Church a couple does not necessarily expect the husband to be called as an LDS bishop. In fact, members are taught not to seek positions or power in the church. Consequently, LDS couples are unprepared for the pressure of their marriage suddenly becoming an “example for all.”

Another nuance unique to this study bears noting. Employer expectations operate at two levels for clergy families. First are the congregational expectations, and second are the expectations of the organized church leadership (Blanton, 1992). For professional clergy, if congregants do not like the individual, it is considered to be a poor “fit” (Hill et al., 2003 p. 155) between clergy and congregation. If the clergy person does not perform to the stipulations of the contract as outlined by the organized church leadership, he will lose the job or be transferred to another area.

For lay-clergy in the LDS Church, the expectations of the congregants or “church” are more implicit and are usually experienced as issues of worthiness or personal righteousness. The husbands in my study expressed concern as to whether or not they were living righteously enough to qualify for personal revelation from Deity, and to know how to best serve the members of their ward. Since LDS bishops are lay-clergy, they are not “transferred” like

professional clergy; instead, they are “released.” LDS bishops live within the boundaries of the ward in which he presides; if he is released early he then returns to the status of being a lay member of the ward. However, everyone in the ward is aware of the early release of the individual although the reasons for the early release are not made public. Unless there is a move to a position of increased authority (such as a stake president) or the ward is disbanded, it is assumed by the membership that the bishop committed a terrible sin or failed in some important way. This brings shame and humiliation on both the husband and wife. This dynamic adds an additional layer of expectation on the bishop and his wife.

### **The Dialectical Tension**

The conflict between work and family is a source of stress for clergy and clergy wives (Barbour, 1990; Benda & DiBlasio, 1992; Cox, 2001; Danley, 2004; Jones & Yutrzenka, 2003; Lee, 2007; Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003; Moore, 2006). Balancing work and family is difficult for all couples, but particularly for clergy couples because they must consider the issue of submitting to God’s will and the selflessness of ministering to others. Blanton (1992) and Cox (2001) discuss the conflicts inherent to balancing vows of ordination (“marrying” clergy to God and the church) with the vows of marriage to their spouse. “God’s omnipresence is certainly a factor in dealing with work/family demands. No other ‘employer’ so thoroughly pervades every aspect of the family experience” (Blanton, 1992, p. 318). These competing roles create a “dialectical tension” through an open-ended demand on time and energy. Since they are, “both expression of one’s loyalty to God, the consequences of one’s responses are enormous” (Cox, 2001, p. 5).

For the participants in my study, LDS Church doctrines of sacrifice and consecration intensify the dialectical tension in the marital relationship. Like professional clergy who take

vows of ordination “marrying” them to God and the church, LDS lay bishops make covenants or promises to sacrifice and consecrate all they have to the building of God’s kingdom here on earth. Not only have LDS bishops made these covenants, but their wives have also. In fact, any member of the church who is desirous and worthy makes these covenants, beginning with the covenant made at baptism. A summary of pertinent LDS doctrines will assist the reader in understanding the church/marriage dialectical tension as it pertains to LDS bishops and their wives.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints consider themselves, “A Covenant Making People” (Anderson, 1976). Members consider a covenant to be a binding compact, agreement, or promise between themselves and God. Although members acknowledge their individual and collective imperfections, each tries diligently to keep the covenants they have made.

A member’s first formal covenants are made at baptism. According to LDS doctrine, at baptism an individual makes three covenants with God. The first is to take upon himself the name of Jesus Christ; second, to keep God’s commandments; and third, to endure to the end (Hales, 2000). To take upon oneself the name of Jesus Christ or, in other words, to come into the fold of God and be called His people, includes, “a willingness to bear one another’s burdens, mourn with those that mourn, comfort those in need of comfort, and stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things and in all places, even until death” (Eyring, 1996, p. 30).

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have covenanted in the waters of baptism to love and serve God, to keep His commandments, and to put the things of His kingdom first in their lives. In turn, God promises that each member will always have His Spirit to be with them and will eventually receive eternal life in His kingdom. The covenants

made at baptism are preparatory to living higher laws. As members keep their baptismal covenants, they are in a position to receive and obey higher laws which prepare them for eternal life with God.

Members strive to live two additional laws that are relevant to my research. First is the law of sacrifice and second is the law of consecration. These laws are referred to as “higher” or “celestial” laws which, if lived properly prepare a person to live with God and Christ after death (McConkie, 1975).

The laws of sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of sacrifice includes being willing to sacrifice all that an individual has for the sake of truth, (the Gospel of Christ). This would include sacrificing one’s character, reputation, honor, accolades, possessions, lands, family, and even one’s life if need be. The law of consecration requires that a member consecrates his time, talents, money, and property to the cause of the Church. If required, a member of the church is to make available any of these for the building of the Lord’s interests on earth (McConkie, 1975).

The principles of sacrifice and consecration have been an integral part of LDS doctrine from the inception of the Church. Joseph Smith, the founder and first president of the church, whom members consider to be a prophet, taught, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary to lead unto life and salvation.” (Smith, 1835, p. 58). While members have rarely been called upon to live the law of consecration, and few have been asked to sacrifice all they have, it is a fundamental doctrine that to gain celestial salvation, one must be willing and able to live both laws to their fullest if called upon to do so (McConkie, 1975).

For both male and female members of the LDS Church, one of the highest religious goals

is to be married or sealed eternally in an LDS temple. Members enter into the “new and everlasting covenant of marriage” believing their marriage is a union not only for mortality, but “through all eternity.” They further believe that “eternal marriage” or “celestial marriage” as performed in the temple is necessary to qualify for exaltation and becoming like God (McConkie, 1966).

Because marriage and families are central to what members of the LDS Church refer to as “God’s Plan of Happiness,” members are encouraged by church authorities to keep their marriage covenants by strengthening the bonds of love and righteousness in their marriage. This includes uncompromised fidelity towards one another and a quest for marital unity (Ludlow, 1992). Fidelity not only includes confining intimate affections and sexuality solely to each other, but being “fiercely loyal one to another” (Hinckley, 1999, p. 2).

Modern day revelation, which LDS Church members consider to be scripture, states: “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:22). Spencer W. Kimball, the 12<sup>th</sup> Prophet and President of the LDS Church, taught:

The words *none else* eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes pre-eminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse. (Kimball, 1972, p. 143)

With respect to the importance to strive for unity in marriage, Henry B. Eyring, a current general authority of the LDS Church, explained:

At the creation of man and woman, unity for them in marriage was not given as a hope; it was a command! ‘Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother,



and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh' (Genesis 2:24). Our Heavenly Father wants our hearts to be knit together. That union in love is not simply an ideal. It is a necessity. (Eyring, 1998, p. 66)

The experience of this dialectical tension was powerfully and poignantly described by study participants. However, husbands and wives experienced the tension differently. Although the husbands described the difficulty of the choice between their calling as LDS bishop and their wives, they took solace in the fact that when they chose the calling over the wife they were “magnifying” their calling and doing what God wanted them to do.

Couple 1 Husband questioned, “Do I cater to her and her needs and to her feelings? Do I follow through on what I would perceive to be magnifying my calling?” I find it interesting that Couple 1 Husband used the word “cater” when referring to meeting the needs of his wife and the word “magnifying” when referring to his calling. “Cater” implies gratifying if not indulging his wife in her “needs” and “feelings” while “magnifying” implies careful attention to and amplifying his calling as bishop. Unconsciously the choice had been made, the calling comes first and his wife second.

Couple 4 Husband explained:

That struggle, the internal struggle, it rips me apart. Because I'm there (at home) and I know she's hurting and I know I need to be there, but yet the other half of me, the bishop side says, “You have a responsibility and duty to be there (at a church activity).” And so, that has been one of the bigger struggles for me.

Couple 4 Husband proceeded to describe leaving home to attend a church youth meeting “when my wife and kids need me.” I ask myself, “How come, despite knowing the wife is “hurting” and that she and the kids “need” him does his “responsibility and duty” of the calling

trump the needs at home?”

Couple 5 Husband described being “caught” between church and family. The church is “about strengthening families,” and yet he is unable to be with his family as much as he would like. He hopes that people do not look to him as an example of spending time with his family because he can’t do all he would like to and for now, his calling as bishop is demanding his time and attention. Couple 5 Husband stated:

Everything should be about strengthening families. That’s where the bishop gets caught... A bishop should live what he preaches. The conflict is between all the meetings and your family. You just can’t change things. So, it’s just something that you must live with. You realize that that’s part of it and now you hope people don’t try to look to you as an example, because you can’t do all that you’d like to do.

Knowing that “a bishop should live what he preaches,” this husband found himself attending meetings in lieu of being with his wife. In fact, he described putting his relationship with his wife, “on hold for an hour or however long it takes.” Again, I ask myself, “Why, despite counsel from the general authorities of the LDS Church on the importance of marital relationships, is it so difficult for husbands to set boundaries between the demands of the calling and their relationship with their wives?”

A possible answer may lie in a belief that Couple 6 Husband shared. He described how he and his wife are, “very willing to, for the most part, put the things that we know we need to do to fulfill our church callings as a priority, with the understanding that things work out with our family.” On some level, despite saying their relationships with their wives are more important than anything else, some husbands believe that if they perform their church callings, God will

bless them and their marital relationships will “work out.” However I must ask, “Are these husbands expecting God to fix what they have neglected, in the name of ‘responsibility and duty to God’?”

For the wives, the dialectical tension is experienced on a much more emotional level. The wives cannot take solace in choosing between “two goods,” God and family. Instead they are left struggling with intense emotions that are confusing and threatening. After all, they should not complain, if they do they are not “supportive”; they don’t have enough faith that, “all will be well.” As Couple 1 Wife descriptively articulated, “I feel like I’m going go to hell, really, because I have these horrible feelings. I’m having a hard time with sharing him, with him going and leaving, and spending all this time with these kids [in the ward].” Couple 4 Wife stated that although there was a time her husband stayed home from a meeting when she “emotionally needed him,” there were other times when he left and she, “sucked it up.” She states:

There has been a time that he didn’t go to a meeting because emotionally I needed him there (at home). And there have been meetings where he has gone and inside I’ve just sucked it up and said (to myself), “Well, I will just have to deal with that later” or “you just have to be strong.”

To summarize, the participants in this study, like that of professional clergy, experienced stress created by a conflict between church-work and marriage. That stress requires that tensions between church-work and marriage be addressed. Directly influencing how the conflict is negotiated and resolved is the dialectical tension between marriage to the spouse and covenants made to sacrifice and consecrate all one has to serving God. The husbands in my study described a belief that their marriage was their first priority; however, the demands of their calling as an LDS bishop often took precedence over their marital relationship. The wives struggled with a

belief that to be a supportive wife included “suck[ing] it up” and “deal[ing] with things later.” Both the husbands and the wives neglect the relationship; the husbands by leaving physically, and the wives by being mute because they feel guilty about complaining so they bury their feelings.

### **Adjustment Strategies**

Clergy couples, both professional and lay, are susceptible to triangulating the role of clergy into the marital relationship. Triangulation described in Papero (1995) is the inclusion of a third person or issue, to diffuse emotional reactivity away from the marital relationship. Whybrew (1984) first discussed triangles as they pertained to clergy couples with the church being triangulated in the marital relationship when the wife begins to feel neglected. The husband justifies his absence from home by declaring that he is serving God and fulfilling his role as husband by providing for the family via his occupation as clergy. The wife is triangulated into the relationship (between the clergyman and the congregation) as the clergyman has difficulty setting authentic boundaries with congregants.

Butler and Harper (1994) describe three kinds of triangles that a couple may establish with God, each of which has pertinence to the couples in my study. First is a coalition triangle in which the husband or wife competes for God’s allegiance, by shunning personal responsibility. Second is a displacement triangle in which the husband, wife, or both project responsibility for marital challenges on to God. Third is a substitution triangle in which the husband, wife, or both achieve an intimacy with God which should be achieved through intimacy with the spouse.

Barbour (1990) interviewed pastors and their wives and determined that the greatest source of stress was not a singular event, but being caught in triangles. The pastors appeared to be enmeshed with the congregations, making it difficult to create boundaries between home and

work. For the couples in my study “calling of bishop” is similarly triangulated into the marital relationship resulting in a disruption to the relationship. The dialectical tension between covenants made to serve God and covenants made to each are constantly vying for the husband’s time. A unique dynamic, which facilitates this process for LDS couples in my study, is that the calling of an LDS bishop is time limited (usually 5-6 years). Because of this, it is a coping mechanism for couples to “put their relationship on hold” and not attend to the distress in the relationship. The belief that the husband is fulfilling his calling from God and the couple is doing what is required of them by God perpetuates the triangulation of the calling into the marriage.

The strategies used by the couples in my study to adapt to the husband’s calling as an LDS bishop are similar to strategies used by professional clergy couples as they negotiate the (church) work/family dichotomy. The strategies identified by the participants can be classified as individual and couple strategies.

**Individual strategies.** The individual strategies used by the participants in this study are those most likely to triangulate the calling of bishop into the marital relationship. Four individual strategies were identified by participants. They included (a) the wife’s role to monitor the relationship, (b) seeking validation from a higher authority, (c) reflecting on the blessings of the calling, and (d) empathy for the experience of the spouse.

***Wife’s role to monitor the relationship.*** Blanton (1992) and Cox (2001) noted that clergy marriages are similar to most other marriages in terms of the emphasis given to work and family domains. In professional clergy couples, the husband focuses on his career while the wife is more sensitive to the quality of the marital relationship. For the couples in my study, the husband focuses on his career and risks being consumed by the demands of his ecclesiastical calling. While the husband may experience the tug between time spent fulfilling his church calling and

time spent with his wife, the role of monitoring the needs of the marital relationship for these six couples clearly falls to the wife. It becomes the wife's role to bring the needs of the marital relationship to the husband.

The wives in my study identified two issues that make it difficult for them to share their feeling with their husbands. First, the role of an LDS bishop's wife has been defined as one of "supporting" her husband in his calling. She is expected to accept (cheerfully and without anger) that her husband will be absent from home and the marital relationship as he attends to the needs of the members of the ward. Second, wives too have covenanted to sacrifice and help build God's kingdom on earth. In this context, the wives perceive their own anger or resentment as selfishness. Since selfishness is the antithesis of sacrifice and service, wives feel guilty and unsupportive (breaking their covenant) if they share negative feelings about the time the husband is devoting to his call. "If I only had enough faith I would be able to do this without whining. If I only had enough faith this wouldn't be so hard." The feelings of selfishness and guilt results in the wives having difficulty approaching their husbands about how they are feeling. This is consistent with clergy research demonstrating the difficulty clergy and their wives have in acknowledging and expressing anger (Cox, 2001).

*Seeking validation from a higher authority.* One or both spouses of three in the six couples interviewed engaged the stake president (who is a higher church authority than a bishop) with respect to the experience they were having individually and as a couple. Research has noted that clergy often feel isolated because they do not believe they have anyone to whom they can turn for their own ecclesiastical support and counseling (Hill et al., 2003). The couples in my study had an experience opposite that of professional clergy in that they accessed higher church authority in the person of the stake president. Of note, however, are the reasons the individual or

couple accessed the stake president. For one wife, it was an effort to communicate the struggles she was having adjusting to her husband's calling as an LDS bishop. I ask myself, "Why did she seek out the stake president?" "Was the stake president a 'shoulder to cry on'?" If so, "Where is her husband's shoulder?" Perhaps she was feeling guilty about struggling and having negative feelings and was seeking the reassurance of the stake president that her feelings were "okay"? Perhaps she did not seek out her husband and went to the stake president instead because she did not want to add to her husband's burdens. Or, possibly she was hoping the stake president would ease the burden of being bishop for her husband because his time away from home was causing distress in their marriage.

In the second case, the husband was seeking additional support for his wife so she would not feel as isolated while he spent so much time away from her tending to the needs of others. He believed it would be helpful for his wife to be able to visit with the stake president. In this case, the stake president was someone to whom his wife could confide and from whom she could feel support without the fear of adding to her husband's burden.

A third couple shared with me that they visited with the stake president after the husband had been serving as bishop about a year. Neither the husband nor the wife would explicitly state why they visited with the stake president. However, during the course of their interviews, they each explained visiting with the stake president because the husband was devoting so much time to his calling, and in the process the wife was feeling very left out of her husband's life. As a result of their visit, the stake president decided to visit with all of the wives of the bishops in his stake on a quarterly basis. When a subsequent stake president was called to preside over the stake, this couple visited with him to make certain that he understood that their family was a priority for them. I find it interesting that, although this study was on the marital adjustment

process as the husband served as an LDS bishop, the feeling of guilt (that they could not keep the covenant to sacrifice) this couple experienced as a result of their struggle with the demands of the husband's calling as an LDS bishop was significant enough that they could not explicitly address the issue with me.

In all three instances, validation of their experience or that of their spouse was sought by husbands and wives outside the marital relationship. Not only was validation sought for outside of the relationship, but it was sought for in a person representing a "higher authority." Perhaps this was the way couples could attempt to lighten their loads without breaking their covenants to serve God. Maybe these were their efforts at validation for adopting an attitude of, "We are letting you know we are struggling with the husband's calling, and we will continue to serve to 'keep our covenants' and our marriage will be #2 until I/my husband is released." Or maybe validation was sought by the stake president to hear, "You're doing a great job. It is hard but you are doing it. You are meeting your covenants and obligations."

***Reflecting on the blessings of the calling.*** Research reveals high work satisfaction among members of the clergy. This is defined as an enjoyment of the personal, social and occupational rewards of the ministry (Charlton et al., 2008; Corrigan, 1997; Doolittle, 2007). Clergy report a sense of calling and purpose to what they do as well as increased self awareness of themselves and their relationship with God (Meek et al, 2003). These attributes contribute to a sense of resiliency that has been shown to buffer against the stressors which contribute to "clergy burnout" (Darling et al., 2004; McMinn et al., 2005; Meek et al., 2003). The participants in my study, especially the wives, did not describe an overall "working satisfaction" commensurate with that described by professional clergy research. However, they did describe God compensating them for the sacrifices they were making. These compensations were referred to as



“blessings.” Whether the blessings were currently being experienced or were merely hoped for (e.g., “If we can just endure for 5 years we will be blessed”), participants used their faith in promised blessings as an individual strategy. This strategy facilitated adjustment to the husband’s service and the effects of that service on the marital relationship.

*Empathy for experience of the spouse.* Empathy for the experience of a spouse is a theme unique to this study. Most likely this is due to the distinct onset of the husband’s calling of bishop as well as the time limited nature of the calling. Because of the intensity of the experience for both the husband and the wife, each is in a position to observe the effects of the calling on the other. However, this is discussed under individual strategies as opposed to couple strategies because, during the interviews, none of the participants described sharing their experience or their observations with their spouses. Feeling attached to another person requires that a person feels seen, known, desired, and supported. When deep emotional experiences are withheld or acknowledging them is avoided, the connection is weakened. The ability to trust the other person to be aware of and to care about them is injured. This is perhaps the most important omission identified in the interviews. Instead, they apparently kept the information to themselves.

**Couple strategies.** At the conclusion of a study by Lee & Iverson-Gilbert (2003) the question is asked, “Do family members have a shared conception of what it means to be a minister’s family?” (p. 255). For my study, the question could be rephrased, “Are husbands and wives sharing their experiences and ideas of what it means to function as a lay-clergy couple in the LDS Church?” If so, what strategies are helpful to the relationship? Two couple strategies were identified by the participants in my study, both of which strengthened the marital relationship. First was the couple conceptualizing the calling as a “couple calling.” Second was the couple sharing and participating jointly in the duties of the husband’s calling.

***Couple calling.*** Shared values, beliefs and goals also strengthened clergy marriages (Holling, 1992). In my study, conceptualizing the husband's calling as a "couple calling" was described as helpful and strengthening to the marital relationship. This created a sense of unity of purpose even though the roles of the husband and the wife differed (Meek et al., 2003). The most often cited strengths in clergy marriages are the couple's commitment to God, Christ, or Church.

***Sharing and participating in the duties of the husband's calling.*** Another strategy that strengthened the relationship of the LDS couples was for the wife to share in as many aspects of the husband's calling as appropriate. Clergy wives report a significant positive effect on their marital satisfaction when they experience a unity of purpose as they minister to others with their clergy husband (Danley, 2004). The wives in my study reported an increased connectedness with their husbands as they attended weddings at which the husband officiated and when they jointly prayed for members of their ward. Wives reported that just being able to listen when he could share his experience was strengthening to the relationship.

### **Implications for Marriage and Family Therapy Practice**

To work effectively with clergy couples experiencing the stress of their roles, clinicians need to consider the special circumstances of these couples including (a) barriers to clergy seeking counseling, (b) the meanings the couple attaches to their clergy calling, and the definition of roles; (c) attachment theory and its application to clergy couples, (d) the systemic concept of triangulation, particularly how couples triangulate God into the marriage; and (e) a review of boundaries and the need for clergy and spouse to set clear boundaries.

**Barriers to clergy seeking counseling.** Clergy marriages experience some of the same challenges and vicissitudes as lay marriages (Barber, 1982; Baxter, 1982). Because clergy and their spouses are placed on a pedestal and seen as an example of an ideal marriage (Pettitt, 1998),

difficulties in the relationship can cause the couple to view themselves as failing to live the ideals of marital love and unity (Cox, 2001). Not wanting to admit marital difficulties, clergy couples are slow to seek marital counseling (Danley, 2004). Even if they desire counseling, they may be prevented by (a) the lack of counseling services, (b) the financial cost, and (c) a lack of time for therapy. For LDS lay-clergy couples a lack of time is especially pertinent. An LDS bishop, and perhaps his wife, are already working 40+ hours per week at their career in addition to all the church meetings the husband is expected to attend as the bishop. The wife will also most likely have meetings to attend as a part of her own church obligations. There is precious little time left for counseling.

LDS bishops and their wives may be embarrassed that they need help since they are supposed to be the epitome of a good marriage. Finally, an LDS bishop may believe that if he and his wife seek marital counseling, then he is no longer “worthy” to assist the members in his ward who come to him seeking ecclesiastical counsel for their marital difficulties. Therapists who are approached by clergy, both profession and lay, seeking marital counseling can support the clergy couple by acknowledging that clergy are not immune from the challenges to a healthy marital relationship. Their challenges are, in fact, very similar to those experienced by lay couples.

**Exploring the meaning of the calling and defining roles.** It is helpful to explore the meanings the couples attach to the difficulties they have. Clergy couples have reported that the perception of their stressors and difficulties are more significant than the stressors and difficulties themselves (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). Rather than attempting to eliminate the stressors, the therapist will be more successful discussing with the couple their understanding of the effects of the stressors. Exploring questions such as, “How does the couple perceive itself?”

and “How has the husband and/or wife defined his/her role and the impact of that definition on the marital relationship?” may be helpful (Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003). For LDS bishops and their wives, the calling occurred with little or no notice, so the process of defining their roles and how those definitions impact the relationship is especially pertinent.

The couples in my study did not indicate that they had discussed with each other what their new roles would be. Instead, they let their roles be defined for them. For the husbands, the defining process occurred through the LDS Church’s *Handbook 1: Stake Presidents and Bishops, 2010* (LDS Church, 2010) and through their perception of cultural expectations. The wives’ role was largely defined by a perception of cultural expectations. It would be helpful in therapy to make this defining process explicit encouraging the couple to clearly and comprehensively define their roles and responsibilities between themselves. Clear communication of needs and expectations are needed. This would strengthen the couple’s shared sense of calling and create a jointly held and articulated sense of mission. The therapist may need to remind the couple that the husband’s and wife’s roles may need to be redefined due to other outside factors such as addition of children to the family (or an illness) which may necessitate the husband (bishop) being needed more at home.

**Attachment theory and its application to clergy couples.** The couples in my study experienced an attachment injury to the relationship as a result of the husband’s call. Although the intensity of the attachment injury was unique to each circumstance, each couple described some type of stress being introduced to the relationship as a result of the husband’s new position. Several participants described feeling a distance between themselves and their spouse, sometimes referred to as “disconnectedness.” When counseling clergy couples, it will be important to address these feelings of disconnectedness and separateness.

Since the husband has not had previous clergy training he may not know what can and cannot be shared with his spouse. It will be important for the therapist to review with the husband what the husband may share and the more he can share with his wife the more connected they will feel. It is also important to help the couple understand how to be empathetic with each other. A spouse can “hear” his/her spouse’s “story” and “witness” his/her spouse’s experience without feeling responsible for those feelings or becoming defensive. In order for this to occur, one must be willing to share and the other must be will to “hear.” In other words, there is safety and trust in the relationship and attachment is facilitated. Past experiences of attachment injury should be explored, especially focusing on how past attachment injuries are influencing current relationship attachment issues.

Closely related to attachment theory is Gottman’s (1999) research on building a “Sound Marital House” (p. 105). Clergy couples may experience compromises to their marital friendship precipitated by the demands of fulfilling the role of clergy and clergy spouse. As such clergy couples would benefit from addressing (a) the cognitive room that each spouse has for one another, (b) the amount of fondness and admiration spouses have for and express to each other, and (c) the couple’s “emotional bank account” or the ability to turn towards each other as opposed to away from each other. To increase the quality of marital friendship, couples also need to examine the frequency of expressions of disappointment and negativity and the degree of “we-ness” versus “you-ness” in couple conversation (Gottman, 1999; Gottman & Silver, 1999).

**Triangulation.** A salient aspect of counseling with this population will be to motivate the healthy inclusion of God in the marital relationship versus a “couple-God relationship distorted by pathogenic processes in one or both spouses” (Gardner, Butler, & Seedall, 2008, p. 152). Empirical and theoretical literature suggests that relationship triangles involving Deity can be

healthy for religious couples (Butler, Gardner, & Bird, 1998; Butler & Harper, 1994; Butler, Stout & Gardner, 2002; Griffith, 1986). However, harmful interactions precipitated through spiritual practices (in this case when the husband justifies his absences from the marital relationship to perform bishop duties) may be influenced by power dynamics in the relationship (Butler & Harper, 1994; Gardner et al., 2008).

Although Deity can be a significant and influential entity in the marital relationship, care must be taken that this influence remains positive. Therapists can invite LDS clergy couples to talk about their individual and shared perceptions of the influence of Deity in the marriage. The therapist can then assess whether the spouses' experience of Deity's role in the marriage enhances or constrains the marital system (Butler & Harper, 1994). It is during these discussions that the dialectical tension between time devoted in service to God and time devoted to the marital relationship can be discussed and made explicit. In the process, the couple will adopt more of a "we" perspective and less of an "I" perspective as both husband and wife contribute equally to the formation of the couple's identity as clergy (Cox, 2001). Walls built as the husband devotes time to the calling of bishop can be identified and dismantled as the needs of the relationship are identified (Marks, 2005).

**Boundaries.** Finally, as couples define roles together and develop a "couple identity" their identity and roles should be maintained through personal and couple boundaries. Each couple must determine what they will and will not do with respect to the husband's calling. It has been recommended that each partner determine his or her own role, share that role with the spouse, then defend that role with the support of the spouse (Cox, 2001; Gottman, 1999). Setting clear boundaries are not an easy task for clergy couples (Hill et al., 2003). Helping the couple to understand that there will always be some special circumstance and there will always be

someone who is in need is paramount in inviting clergy couples to give themselves permission to set boundaries between themselves and their congregants. Boundaries may include such issues as (a) consideration of the amount of time the husband will be gone performing his calling as bishop, (b) how much time he spends at work since he is also devoting considerable time to his church calling, and (c) how the couple will handle spontaneous interruption such as phone calls. It will be important to make explicit that the clergyman feels good about helping others and receives positive reinforcement from their congregants; where if he does something at home, even something as simple as repairing a fence it is expected (or demanded) of him from the wife.

A unique dynamic for LDS lay clergy which makes setting boundaries even more difficult is the time-limited nature of the calling. It is very easy to rationalize that since the calling is time limited, the relationship can be put “on hold” while time, attention and resources are devoted to service outside the home. It is all the more critical that couples engage in an on-going process of discussing their relationship and how to maintain boundaries that will allow them to balance the demands of the calling with the needs of the marital relationship.

### **Limitations**

A limitation of my study is the relatively small sample size. I experienced unexpected resistance in study candidates as I contacted them to explain my work and to solicit their participation. Although I was able to use the name of a common associate during the initial contact, the potential participants were leery of the invitation to participate in the study. While six couples eventually did participate, eight other couples refused. For three of these eight couples, the contact person initially agreed to be part of the study but did not return subsequent multiple phone calls or emails. A fourth couple simply refused to return the initial phone call requesting an opportunity to explain the study. Four wives indicated that they wanted to

participate, but their husbands refused. Parenthetically, I ask myself, “Are these bishops too busy to see that their wives wanted to talk to me?”, and “Do the wives want to talk about their relationship with their husbands but don’t know how?” Two of those wives expressed regret they could not participate and requested a copy of the study results, indicating that they were not prepared for the experience they were having as the wife of an LDS bishop and wondered how their experience compared with that of other women in the same circumstances.

The reluctance of the LDS couples to participate in this research may be related to the fact that this study required self-reporting by individuals who believe they must not have problems. They may also have believed that if they shared anything negative about their experience it would reflect poorly on the LDS Church and they would then be breaking their covenant to build God’s kingdom on the earth by speaking poorly of His church. Clergy are expected to be positive role models, both individually and as a couple. This may have prevented some clergy couples from taking part in the study. For those individuals who did participate, the need to create a positive image may have distorted their perceptions of the experience they were having. Participant responses may also have been skewed by an unintentional lack of candor. Participants may not have wanted to share parts of themselves or their spouse that would reflect poorly on them or on the marital relationship.

Participants may have been simply unaware of how the husband’s calling had affected their marriage or how they had unconsciously adapted to the effects of the calling. They may be in the “if I can just endure this all will be fine” mode. Several participants displayed avoidance as a coping mechanism by minimizing or denying the husband’s performance of his calling affected the marital relationship. These couples did not address the disruptive effects of the calling and their relationships were impaired. For example, one husband requested that the transcript not be



sent to him for review. He indicated that many of the thoughts he had shared about his relationship with his wife were points of contention between them. He believed the issues had been resolved, but thought if the transcript were e-mailed to him, his wife would want to read what he had said and the issues would resurface. He did not want to risk having to discuss the points of contention again with his wife. This would indicate that the issues were not really resolved but merely buried.

### **Future Research**

This grounded theory study resulted in a model for how LDS couples adapt to the husband's service as a lay bishop in the LDS Church. The study included a homogenous group of couples. All lived along the Wasatch Front in Utah and had been members of the LDS Church for at least seven years. In fact, only one participant was a convert to the LDS Church. Broader application could be achieved by studying couples living outside the state of Utah (which is predominantly LDS). Also, studying couples in which one or both spouses are recent converts (members less than seven years) would be helpful in aiding couples as they acclimate not only to a new religion, but also to the husband's new, highly demanding calling as an LDS bishop.

It would be beneficial to compare LDS couples where the husband is currently serving as an LDS bishop to LDS couples where the husband has been released from his service as an LDS bishop. Anecdotally, several couples who were not a part of this study, but who knew about the work have talked informally with me, sharing their experiences during the time their husbands were serving as bishops. Since they were talking, "off the record" many shared deeper, more complex struggles to find a balance between church service, family, and marital time. Wives shared that it was difficult to transition back to having the husband home after he had been absent so much due to the performance of his clergy responsibilities. By studying LDS lay-

clergy couples after the husband's release, the long-term effects of the calling could be explored.

Finally, this model was developed using lay-clergy. The major contribution of this work is that an LDS lay-clergy population was studied, a population which to date has not been studied. LDS lay-clergy couples are a unique population with a unique set of challenges. The findings of my study have increased understanding of this population and the challenges they face. As a result, therapists are in a better position to address and meet their needs.

### **Conclusion**

This grounded theory and phenomenological qualitative study has produced "thick description" resulting in a greater understanding of the processes and experience of marital adjustment as a husband serves as a lay bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To date, no clergy research has studied the marital adjustment process to the husband's role as clergy, whether professional or lay. This study adds to the body of clergy research in both of these domains (see Figure 3 and Table 1 for the contributions of this study to the body of clergy research).

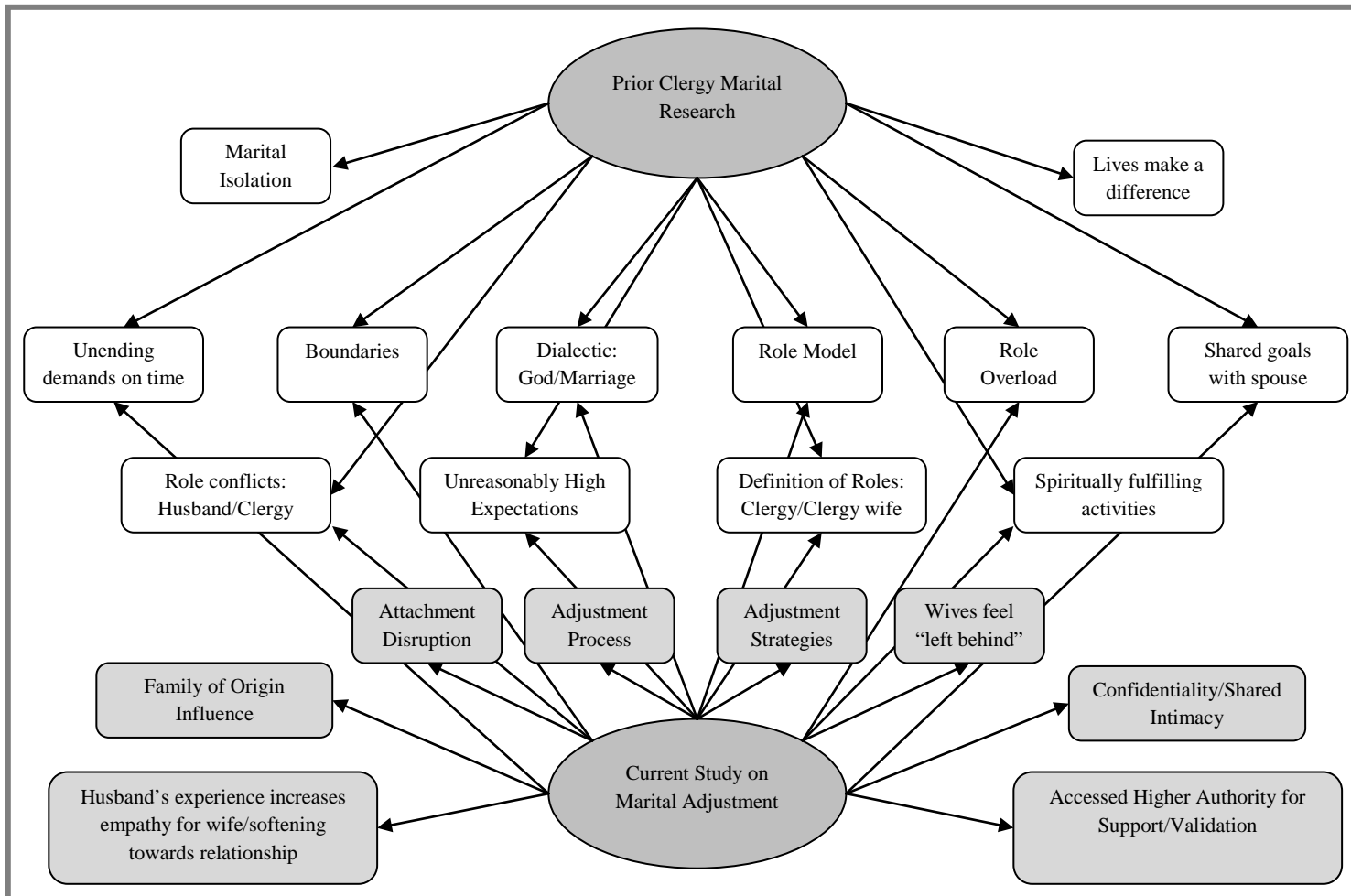


Figure illustrates previous clergy research (arrows originating from “Prior Clergy Marital Research” to boxes indicating findings) and contributions of current study (arrows originating from “Current Study on Marital Adjustment” to boxes indicating support of prior research findings (unshaded) and new findings (shaded))

Figure 3. Summary of Contribution of Current Study to Clergy Research

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**Table 1. Summary of Literature Review**

Topic	Finding	Description of Finding	Author
<b>Clergy-Marital Stress</b>			
	<b>Identity Struggles</b>		
		Roles socially and theologically constructed	Barber, 1982 Cox, 2001
		Authenticity vs. perfection	Cox, 2001
	<b>Expectations</b>		
		Public Role Model	Barbour, 1990 Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003 Moore, 2006 Morris & Blanton, 1998
		Lives always on display (“fishbowl”)	Morris & Blanton, 1994
		Symbols of divine, not allowed to express negative emotions	Barbour, 1990 Brackin, 2001
		Self imposed compulsive devotion to calling	Mace & Mace, 1980
	<b>Boundary Intrusiveness</b>		
		Family and vocation roles enmeshed; vocation role expected to take priority	Barbour, 1990 London & Allen, 1986 Scanzoni, 1965
		Demanding clergy responsibilities keep husband from home	Barbour, 1990 Cox, 2001 Danley, 2004 Darling, Hill, & McWey 2004 Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 Lee, 1999 Lee & Iverson-Gilbert, 2003 Mickey & Ashmore, 1991 Morris & Blanton, 1998 Ostrander, Henry, & Fournier, 1994 Presnell, 1977
	Clergy torn between God (vocation) and family	Cox, 2001	
<b>Loneliness/Isolation</b>			
	Loneliness and isolation is significant stressor	Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 Lee & Balswick, 1989 Morris & Blanton, 1998 Warner & Carter, 1984	
	Frequent moves difficult	Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003	
	Difficulty to find emotional support	Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003	
<b>Clergy Wives–Marital Stress</b>			
<b>Identity</b>			
	Sense of identity is enmeshed with ministry of husband	Lanham, 1990	
	Diminished sense of identity less problematic than in previous decades	Brunette-Hill, 1999	
<b>Role Ambiguity and Expectation</b>			
	Role confusion is negatively related to clergy wife role satisfaction	Hack, 1993	
	Wives experience stress from role	Blackmon, 1984	

Topic	Finding	Description of Finding	Author
		expectation	Hack, 1993 Hackley, 1993 Lanham, 1990 Mace & Mace, 1982 Pettitt, 1998
		Wife's perception of role expectation is critical to role satisfaction	Blanton, 1992 Slack, 1979
<b>Boundary Intrusiveness</b>			
		Boundary ambiguity increases stress and pressure for clergy wives	Morris & Blanton, 1998 Ostrander, Henry, & Fournier, 1994 Pettitt, 1998
		Wives experience frequent interruptions from parishioners	Darling, Hill, & McWey, 2004
		Wives left "holding family together"	Darling, Hill, & McWey, 2004
		Wives dissatisfied sharing husband with congregation	Hack, 1993
<b>Loneliness/Isolation</b>			
		Loneliness and isolation predictors of depression in wives and lower well-being	Baker & Scott, 1992 Lucas, 1992
		Loneliness and lack of social support are challenges	Fox, 1997 Lee & Balswick, 1989 Morris & Blanton, 1998 Warner & Carter, 1984
		Clergy wives exhibit higher levels of loneliness than would be expected	Adams, 1991 Brackin, 2001
<b>Clergy Marriages and Marital Satisfaction</b>			
<b>Areas of Need Identified</b>			
		Handling negative emotions, couple communication, family devotions, resolving conflict, separateness and togetherness, social life and recreation	Cox, 2001 Mace & Mace, 1980 Stonier, 1997 <b>Current Study</b>
		Wives identified additional areas of need: need for time alone together, understand role of pastor's wife, understand wife's role as husband counsels others	Mace & Mace, 1980 Morris & Blanton, 1994 <b>Current Study</b>
<b>Advantages of Clergy Marriages Identified</b>			
		Shared Christian commitment and spiritual resources, unity of purpose, nurturing support of congregation	Mace & Mace, 1980 Danley, 2004
<b>Disadvantages of Clergy Marriages Identified</b>			
		Expectation to have perfect marriage	Barbour, 1990 Blackmon, 1984 Cox, 2001 Danley, 2004 Mace & Mace, 1980 Moore, 2006 Pettitt, 1998 Current Study
		Time pressures of husband's ministry	Blackmon, 1984 Danley, 2004

Topic	Finding	Description of Finding	Author
			Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 Holling, 1992 Mace & Mace, 1980 Moore, 2006 Morris & Blanton, 1994 Stonier, 1997 <b>Current Study</b>
		Lack of privacy “fishbowl”	Blackmon, 1984 Mace & Mace, 1980 Pettitt, 1998 <b>Current Study</b>
		Husband has time for others, but not for wife	Blackmon, 1984 Cox, 2001 Mace & Mace, 1980 <b>Current Study</b>
		Boundaries	Barbour, 1990 Danley, 2004 Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 Morris & Blanton, 1994 <b>Current Study</b>
		Couple Isolation	Morris & Blanton, 1994 Stonier, 1997
		Role Overload	Pettitt, 1998 <b>Current Study</b>
<b>Clergy Marriages and Lay Marriages Compared</b>			
		No significant differences; marriages vulnerable to same issues as lay marriages	Barber, 1982
		Diminishment in marital adjustment	Warner & Carter, 1984
<b>Role Expectations in Clergy Marriages</b>			
		Marital adjustment to roles same as with general population	Barber, 1982 Baxter, 1982
		Husband/wife roles affect marital satisfaction	Danley, 2004
<b>Marital Adjustment in Clergy Marriages</b>			
		Choosing between vocation and family,	Benda & DiBlasio, 1992 Stonier, 1997 <b>Current Study</b>
		Children younger than 5	Benda & DiBlasio, 1992
		Family stress	Benda & DiBlasio, 1992 <b>Current Study</b>
		Single earner status	Benda & DiBlasio, 1992
		Marital satisfaction neither high nor low	Holling, 1992
		Lack of time	Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 <b>Current Study</b>
		Isolation	Pettitt, 1998 Hill, Darling, & Raimondi, 2003 Stonier, 1997 <b>Current Study</b>
		Role overload	Pettitt, 1998 <b>Current Study</b>
<b>Marital Adjustment in Lay-Clergy Marriages</b>			

Topic	Finding	Description of Finding	Author
		Adjustment process	<b>Current Study</b>
		Adjustment strategies	<b>Current Study</b>
		Attachment disruption	<b>Current Study</b>
		Wives feel “left behind”	<b>Current Study</b>
		Confidentiality/shared intimacy	<b>Current Study</b>
		Accessed higher authority for support and validation	<b>Current Study</b>
		Family of Origin influence	<b>Current Study</b>
		Husband’s experience increases empathy for wife/softening towards relationship	<b>Current Study</b>

**Table 2. Participant Demographic Data**

Participant	Age	Years Married	Children at Home	Years a Member	Months as Bishop	Work-Self Report*	Work-Spouse Report*	Service as bishop-Self Report*	Service as bishop-Spouse Report*	Couple Time*	Family Time*	RDAS Score**
Couple 1-Husband	48	26	Yes	48	12	45	50	20	20-25	8	7	52
Couple 1-Wife	45	26	Yes	45	11	0	0	N/A	N/A	7	10	59
Couple 2-Husband	45	23	Yes	45	15	50	50	12	12	1	2	57
Couple 2-Wife	45	23	Yes	45	15	0	0	N/A	N/A	1	2	52
Couple 3-Husband	40	17	Yes	40	12	40	60+	25+	10-15	5	20	56
Couple 3-Wife	36	17	Yes	36	14	0	0	N/A	N/A	5-8	5-8	52
Couple 4-Husband	34	12	Yes	34	30	40	40	16-18	10-12	7-10	21	59
Couple 4-Wife	33	12	Yes	33	28	20-25	40	N/A	N/A	14	25	54
Couple 5-Husband	54	31	No	36	24	50	40	20+	20	6	8	54
Couple 5-Wife	50	31	No	50	16	40	40+	N/A	N/A	10	10	51
Couple 6-Husband	42	20	Yes	42	24	45-50	40+	20+	10-25	2	10	49
Couple 6-Wife	44	20	Yes	44	24	40	30+	N/A	N/A	3	8	40

\*Hours per week

\*\*Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

**Table 3. A Description of Themes and Subthemes**

Theme	Subtheme	Subtheme to Subtheme	Description
Marital Relationship Prior to Assumption of Calling as an LDS Bishop			The marital relationship prior to the husband assuming the calling of an LDS bishop.
	Description of Marital Relationship Prior to call		Participant's description of marital relationship prior to the husband assuming the calling of an LDS bishop.
	Marital Triad: Including Christ in the Marriage		Participant's belief that Christ is to be included in the marriage.
Marital Relationship Subsequent to the Husband Accepting the Calling of an LDS Bishop			The marital relationship after the husband assumes the calling of an LDS bishop.
	Effects of the Calling on the Marital Relationship		Participant's description of the effects of the calling on the marital relationship.
	Influences Contributing to Relationship Disruption		Themes identified by participants as influences which disrupt the marital relationship.
		Accessibility of the Bishop	The belief that the bishop must be accessible to the members of his ward.
		Relationships with Others	The increase in time the bishop spends developing relationships with others.
		Confidentiality/Shared Intimacy	The husband is no longer able to share significant experiences he is having and other aspects of his life.
	Effects of the Calling: Husband		The effects of the calling on the husband individually.
		Weight of the Responsibility	The experience of the demands of the calling on the husband.
		Personal and Spiritual Growth	Positive shifts in the husband personally and spiritually which impacted



Theme	Subtheme	Subtheme to Subtheme	Description
			the marital relationship.
		Increased Status and Attention	Husband receives increased status and respect as a result of his calling as an LDS bishop.
	Effects of the Calling: Wife		The effect of the husband's calling on the wife individually.
		Role of Wife of an LDS Bishop	The role of the wife is one of being supportive.
		Personal Growth	The personal growth experienced by the wife as a result of being the wife of an LDS bishop.
Outside Influences			The contexts in which the marital relationship functions.
	Family of Origin		Previous experiences which participants have had which influence his/her current experience of the husband's calling as an LDS bishop.
	Expectations: Husband		The personal and cultural expectations experienced by the husband.
	Expectations: Wife		The personal and cultural expectations experienced by the wife.
The Dialectical Tension			The dialectical tension between two covenants, (1) to sacrifice and consecrate all one has to serve God, and (2) to have a strong marriage and let nothing come between one's self and one's spouse.
Adjustment Strategies			Strategies used by couples to resolve the dialectical tension and adjust to the effect's the husband's calling of bishop on the marital relationship.
	Individual Strategies		Strategies which are used by individuals.
		Wife's Role To	One of the wife's roles is

Theme	Subtheme	Subtheme to Subtheme	Description
		Monitor The Relationship	to monitor the relationship and bring the husband back into the marriage.
		Seeking Validation From a Higher Authority	Couples and individuals used church leaders in position of higher authority to validate their experience.
		Reflecting on the Blessing of the Calling	Individuals reflected on the blessing of the experience of having the husband serve as an LDS bishop.
		Empathy for Experience of the Spouse	Participants had empathy for the experience of his/her spouse.
	Couple Strategies		Strategies used by the couples which were a shared experience.
		Couple-calling	The couple perceived the husband's calling as a "couple-calling" although the husband performed the duties.
		Sharing and Participating in the Duties of the Husband's Calling	The couple shared in events and activities in which the husband's was participating.

## Appendix A

### Responsibilities of an LDS Bishop

The bishop has five principal responsibilities in presiding over an LDS ward. These include (a) being the presiding high priest, (b) being the president of the Aaronic Priesthood, (c) being a common judge, (d) overseeing welfare matters, and (d) overseeing records, finances, and the use and security of the meetinghouse. These responsibilities are outlined below:

- Presiding High Priest
  - Leadership
    - Spiritual leader in the ward
      - A faithful disciple and witness of Jesus Christ
      - True to his covenants
      - Loyal to his wife and considerate of her
      - Example of righteousness for children, the ward, the community
    - Provides guidance and counsel to other leaders in the ward. Instructs them in their duties
    - Helps members increase their spirituality by teaching them to pray, study the scriptures and receive the saving ordinances
    - Strengthens families
      - Teaches that the family is the most important organization in time and eternity
      - Encourages families to hold family home evening, pray, read the scriptures together and be considerate of one another
      - Ensure that Church callings do not unduly infringe on family responsibilities

- Ensures that Church activities support parents' efforts to raise righteous children
  - Emphasizes the importance of members having the scriptures and the Church magazines in their homes
- Work of Salvation
  - Missionary work
    - Directs member-missionary work within ward boundaries
    - Identifies and prepares qualified members for missionary service
  - Convert retention
  - Activation
  - Temple work
    - Prepares members to enter a temple at the appropriate time
    - Oversees temple preparation classes
    - Interviews members for temple recommends
  - Family history work
- Priesthood
  - Direct the work of the elders quorum president and high priests group leader in watching over quorum and group members and their families
  - Oversees home teaching
- Ordinances and Blessings, directs the administration of the following:
  - The sacrament
  - Naming and blessing of children
  - Baptism and confirmation of 8-year-old children of record
  - Conferral of the Aaronic Priesthood and ordination to offices within the Aaronic Priesthood

- Councils, Committees, and Meetings
  - Presides over ward priesthood executive committee
  - Presides over ward council
  - Presides over bishopric youth committee
  - Plans sacrament meetings other ward meetings
  - Performs civil marriages
  - Conducts funeral and burial services
- Callings and Releases (Issues callings and releases to ward members)
- Auxiliaries and Programs
  - Oversees the ward Relief Society (Women's Organization)
  - Assigns counselors to oversee other ward auxiliary organizations
    - Primary (children ages 18 months-12 years)
    - Sunday School (all members ages 12 and older)
- President of the Aaronic Priesthood
  - Watch over and nurture young men and young women in the ward
  - Oversees Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young women classes (adolescents ages 12-18)
  - Bishop is president of the priests quorum
  - Assigns counselors to oversee ward Young Men organization and Young Women organization
- Common Judge
  - Conducts worthiness interviews
  - Counsel ward members who seek spiritual guidance, have weighty personal problems, or have committed serious transgressions
  - Administers Church discipline when necessary

- Welfare
  - Help members become self-reliant
    - Teach doctrines and principles relating to welfare
    - Instruct leaders in welfare responsibilities
  - Care for the poor and needy
  - Direct the ward's efforts to prepare for and respond to emergencies
- Records, Finances, and the Meetinghouse (oversees records, reports, finances, and the meetinghouse)

## Appendix B

### Cover Letter

Jim and Jane Doe  
123 South Street  
Salt Lake City, UT 84109

Dear Jim and Jane:

My name is Deena Strong and I am conducting a Ph.D. dissertation research project on marital adjustment as a husband serves as a bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (Name of referral source) has given me your names as a couple who may be interested in participating in this project. Your insight and opinions will contribute to the purpose of the study which is to further understanding of marital adjustment as a husband serves as an LDS bishop.

Marital adjustment may include, among other variables, such dimensions as role definition, cohesion, emotional intimacy, communication, social isolation, and other variables that may emerge during the course of interviews. This is a qualitative study, meaning that data will be collected in an interview format. Both the husband and the wife will be interviewed separately and then together as a couple. It is estimated that each interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes.

Once the interviews are completed they will be transcribed at which time any identifying information will be deleted. This is to assure anonymity. Couples who participate in the project will be mailed copies of the interview transcripts to proof read to substantiate accuracy. After transcription, interviews will be reviewed and coded. This process allows the research team to identify common themes and experiences shared by couples as the husband serves as an LDS bishop. At the conclusion of the study, you will also be mailed a copy of the results and asked for input as to the accuracy of the representation of information given. If you desire a final copy of the dissertation, a copy will be made available.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you and/or your spouse may chose to withdraw your participation at any time. If you do choose to participate, please sign all four enclosed "Consent to be a Research Subject" forms (one person per form and keep a copy for yourself), fill out the brief questionnaire containing demographic information, as well as the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The demographic information as well as the results of the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale will allow me to identify potential participants who meet the following criteria for inclusion in the study: (a) The husband is currently serving as a bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (b) The husband has served for at least six months but not more than two years, (c) Both the husband and the wife have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for 20 years, and (d) scores from the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale among potential participants will fall along a continuum of marital adjustment scores.

If you desire further information, please contact me by phone at (801) 870-8188 or by e-mail at [deenastrong@hotmail.com](mailto:deenastrong@hotmail.com). Let me thank you in advance for your help with this dissertation research project. Your insights and experience will contribute much to understanding marital adjustment as a husband serves as an LDS bishop.

Sincerely,

Deena D. Strong, M.S.W.

## Appendix C

### Consent to be a Research Subject

#### **Introduction**

This research study is being conducted by Deena D. Strong, M.S.W. at Brigham Young University to investigate marital adjustment as a husband serves as a bishop for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

#### **Procedures**

You are being asked to participate in an interview about marital adjustment as you (for husbands) serve as a bishop or as your husband (for wives) serves as an LDS bishop. The discussion should last approximately 60-90 minutes. Questions will include inquiries surrounding marital adjustment as the husband serves as an LDS bishop. The interviews will be recorded and then transcribed. All personal identifying information will be kept confidential.

#### **Risks/Discomforts**

There are minimal risks for participation in this study. However, you may feel emotional discomfort when answering questions about personal beliefs. Also, it is possible that you may feel embarrassed when talking in front of the interviewer. The interviewer will be sensitive if you should feel uncomfortable and stop the interview at any request to do so.

#### **Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to subjects. However, it is hoped that through your participation researchers will learn more about marital adjustment for both the husband and the wife as the husband serves as an LDS bishop.

#### **Confidentiality**

All information provided will remain confidential and will only be reported as data with no identifying information. All data, including questionnaires and tapes/transcriptions from the interviews, will be kept in a locked storage cabinet and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them. After the research is completed, the questionnaires and tapes will be destroyed.

#### **Compensation**

There is no compensation.

#### **Participation**

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at anytime during the discussion or refuse to participate.

#### **Questions about the Research**

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Deena Strong at (801) 870-8188 or by email at [deenastrong@hotmail.com](mailto:deenastrong@hotmail.com).

#### **Questions about your Rights as Research Participants**

If you have questions you do not feel comfortable asking the researcher, you may contact Dr. Christopher Dromey, IRB Chair, 422-6461, 133 TLRB, [Christopher\\_Dromey@byu.edu](mailto:Christopher_Dromey@byu.edu).

I have read, understood, and received a copy of the above consent and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix D

### Demographic Information

Please fill out the following. This information will be used to ascertain if you match the study selection criteria. Additionally, this information will be used to summarize characteristics of study participants.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Years you have lived in Utah \_\_\_\_\_ Years at current address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time you, or your husband has been an LDS bishop \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years married \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_ Ages of children \_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week you spend in employment \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week your spouse spends in employment \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week you devote to church service \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week your spouse devotes to church service \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week you spend in recreational/leisure activities \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week your spouse spends in recreational/leisure activities \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week spent engaging in family activities (when those living at home are all together, including meals) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours per week spent together as a couple (without others around) \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E

### Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Agree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Religious matters						
2. Demonstrations of affection						
3. Making major decisions						
4. Sex relations						
5. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)						
6. Career decisions						

	All the time	Most of the time	More often Than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?						
8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?						
9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?						
10. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?						

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?					

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas						
13. Work together on a project						
14. Calmly discuss something						

From: Busby, D.M., Crane, D.R., Larson, J.H., & Christensen, C. (1995). A revision of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for use with distressed and nondistressed couples: Construction hierarchy and multidimensional scales. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 21, 289-308.

## Appendix F

### Interview Questions -- Wife

#### *Warm up Questions*

- (1) Tell me how you know (name of person who referred the couple).
- (2) Tell me about yourself (occupation, family, hobbies, and interests).

#### *Open-ended Questions*

- (1) As you know, this research project is exploring marital adjustment as a husband serves as an LDS bishop. What has it been like for you to have your husband serve as a bishop?
- (2) How would you describe your marital relationship before your husband was called as a bishop?
- (3) How would your husband describe your marital relationship before he was called as a bishop?
- (4) How would you describe your marital relationship now?
- (5) How would your husband describe your marital relationship now?
- (6) In what ways has your marital relationship changed?
- (7) What is your perception as to how the changes have affected your marital relationship?
- (8) How have your roles been affected? How have the changes been negotiated?
- (9) How has parenting been affected, how are parenting decisions made?
- (10) How are financial decisions made?
- (11) How has your sense of marital cohesion been affected?
- (12) How has your emotional intimacy been affected?

- (13) How has communication been affected?
- (14) What changes have you noticed socially?
- (15) To whom do you turn for support?
- (16) What strategies do you use individually to maintain balance as your husband serves as a bishop?
- (17) What strategies do you use as a couple to maintain balance as your husband serves as a bishop?
- (18) What do you and your husband do to address marital issues as they arise?
- (19) What did you most expect to experience as a result of your husband's service as a bishop?
- (20) What did you least expect to experience as a result of your husband's service as a bishop?
- (21) What have been the most challenging aspects of your husband's service with regards to your marital relationship?
- (22) What have been the most rewarding aspects of your husband's service with regards to your marital relationship?
- (23) What positive changes have occurred?
- (24) What is your perspective of the adjustments made?

## Appendix G

### Interview Questions – Husband

#### *Warm up Questions*

- (1) Tell me how you know (name of person who referred the couple).
- (2) Tell me about yourself (occupation, family, hobbies, and interests).

#### *Open-ended Questions*

- (1) As you know, this research project is exploring marital adjustment as a husband serves as an LDS bishop. What has the experience of serving as a bishop been like for you?
- (2) How would you describe your marital relationship before your calling as a bishop?
- (3) How would your wife describe your marital relationship before your calling as a bishop?
- (4) How would you describe your marital relationship now?
- (5) How would your wife describe your marital relationship now?
- (6) In what ways has your marital relationship changed?
- (7) What is your perception of these changes?
- (8) How have your roles been affected? How have the changes been negotiated?
- (9) How has parenting been affected, how are parenting decisions made?
- (10) How are financial decisions made?
- (11) How has your sense of marital cohesion been affected?
- (12) How has your emotional intimacy been affected?
- (13) How has communication been affected?
- (14) What changes have you noticed socially?

- (15) To whom do you turn for support?
- (16) What strategies do you use individually to maintain balance as you serve as a bishop?
- (17) What strategies do you use as a couple to maintain balance as you serve as a bishop?
- (18) How do you and your wife address marital issues as they arise?
- (19) What did you most expect to experience as a result of your service as a bishop?
- (20) What did you least expect to experience as a result of your service as a bishop?
- (21) What have been the most challenging aspects of your service with regards to your marital relationship?
- (22) What have been the most rewarding aspects of your service with regards to your marital relationship?
- (23) What positive changes have occurred?
- (24) What is your perspective of the adjustments made?