

The Resilience Journey 2020: Wilderness Wanderings & Desert Teachings

A Formation Process for CBAC Pastors

Sponsored by the Clergy Formation & Wellness Department



Introduction:

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of

stress It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences. (American Psychological Assn)

Resilience is the ability to cope and grow through adversity. As a society we are losing our resilience—the skills to cope.

Doctors Southwick and Charney (2012, 15) ask “**Are we adequately preparing ourselves, our families, our children, and our communities to weather the inevitable storms ahead and to thrive in times of stress and hardships?**” This is also a question for pastors and the church. Pastors and churches are still on the front lines of helping others cope with the adversities of life. As life and our world becomes more complex, leaders are challenged more personally and vocationally. Pastors are feeling more ill-equipped to cope with the growing pressures and stresses. They are seeking tools to help them to be more resilient spiritual leaders. This includes greater spiritual, emotional, social, physical and psychological resilience.

The church needs well-formed resilient spiritual leaders who can lead the church into being more resilient communities in the midst of a world that is losing its resilience. Leaders who can lead themselves and others through difficulty and challenges relying on the rich resources found in relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

If this question of cultivating resilient Christian leaders is not addressed, then the number of pastors who stumble and fall in ministry will continue to rise causing damage to clergy, clergy families, churches, denominations and communities. And the Church will lose

an opportunity to be an even greater witness to the power of God to sustain and bless. Addressing this question is timely because pastors are becoming more aware of their need for greater resilience and they are seeking support.



What Makes Pastors Resilient?

Factors that facilitate resilience generally, and specifically in pastors, have been the focus of much research recently:

Resilience by Southwick & Carney (2012) is a far-reaching study of resilience in adults who experienced great adversity. They identified **10 resilience factors**, namely:

1. Realistic optimism.
2. Facing fear.
3. Moral compass, ethics.
4. Religion & spirituality.
5. Social support.
6. Resilient role models.
7. Training physical fitness and strengthening.
8. Brain fitness: challenge mind & heart .
9. Cognitive & emotional flexibility.
10. Meaning & purpose and growth.

In the **intersection between faith and resilience** Allain-Chapman in her book “**Resilient Pastors**” identified **struggle, self and relationships** as three themes from resilience literature that are significant in the development of a pastoral theology of resilience. (Allain-Chapman 2012, 20).

Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman and Donald C. Guthrie in their study, **“Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving,”** (2012) have identified 5 areas as significant for resilient ministry:

- **spiritual formation,**
- **self-care,**
- **emotional and cultural intelligence,**
- **marriage and family and**
- **leadership skills.**

Resilience can be learned & increased.

Research has shown that resilience is ordinary, not extraordinary. People commonly demonstrate resilience. ... Being resilient does not mean that a person doesn't experience difficulty or distress. ...

Resilience is not a trait that people either have or do not have. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone.

(American Psychological Assn)



What is The Resilience Journey?

The Resilience Journey is a formation process and community for pastors that seeks to help raise awareness and increase resilience in pastors. It uses online sessions and spiritual retreats as learning venues.

RJ is a bit of an experiment. It began as a concept in a D.Min thesis entitled, **“The Art of Belonging: Clergy Formation & Wellness”**, became a grant proposal, and then a pilot project funded by a grant from Duke Divinity.

The first cohort **RJ 2017** of 7 CBAC pastors began in February finished at the end of November 2017. It was very successful and now we are offering a **fourth cohort**, **RJ 2020** partially funded by the Baptist Foundation.

You can read comments from former RJ participants.

Comments from RJ Participants

- After coming out of a church culture that was much about external conformity (behave/perform/live the right way) and little about internal awareness and growth (holistic health/resilience/soul care), this course has been revolutionary to reorient how I engage God, self and the world around me. **It has given me the grace and permission to struggle, all the while moving me toward God and a deeper awareness of my own brokenness for the purpose of healing, renewal** and the privileged opportunity to be “beholding the glory of the Lord...being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18). I can confidently say that ministry has been becoming for me a reality in which I am able to be more present, more self-aware and more able to empathize with those to whom I minister than ever before, and it is because I am learning to know God and be known by Him in the context of a journey that is shaped by the deepest kind of relationship I have ever known. Thank you, Cheryl Ann, CBAC and the Board for investing in a ministry such as this! When it comes to serving pastors and the local church, you truly have found a diamond in the rough.
- Being a part of both Cheryl Ann’s **EHS group** and now **the resilience journey** is playing a huge role in my own growth toward greater self-awareness, emotional health, and wholeness in Christ. It is helping me to have a healthier idea of ministry. What I am learning in this process, if I continue to be intentional about this journey, will be what sustains me in pastoral ministry. Without this, even if I were to remain in ministry, it would no doubt become about surviving rather than thriving. I am also realizing that this journey is part and parcel of seeing the gospel at work in my life and in the lives of others. What Cheryl Ann is doing through her ministry is not peripheral to our health as leaders in ministry; it is central and vital. It’s difficult but good.

(You can read more comments at end of this information package.)

The Resilience Journey process is ...

- ... **Biblical.** The RJ explores biblical themes like: wilderness, struggle, and suffering. Resilience in the life of Jesus and the disciples and other biblical figures, such as Paul and his life and teaching. God often forms his leaders through experiences of adversity.
- ... **Spiritual.** The RJ looks at topics like: God's presence and power in our lives in times of adversity, and a theology of suffering and resilience. How does a spiritual leader practically grow in resilience and spiritual maturity?
- ... **Relational.** The RJ is a safe community of pastors journeying together for learning, sharing, growth and healing.
- ... **Holistic.** RJ looks at spiritual, emotional, psychological, physical, social, and vocational aspects of resilience.
- ... **Experiential.** The RJ draws from pastors' personal life experiences of adversity, struggle, resilience and learning. It will also use various exercises, activities, and experiences as teaching tools.
- ... **Transformational.** The RJ intentionally seeks to support pastors in growing deeper in their relationship and experience of the Trinity. It is an opportunity to spiritually explore, discover, heal, grow, and be transformed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

It also has a research component. The data will be used anonymously to help in our ongoing understanding of the needs of pastors.

Resilience Journey Summary

Topics Explored and Goals:

- Experience the presence & power of God.
- Experience spiritual community with other pastors
- Cultivate greater resilience in pastors
- Cultivate spiritual formation
- Explore theology of suffering, adversity & resilience
- Discover how God shapes leaders through adversity
- Explore Resilience and spiritual leadership
- Increase self-knowledge
- Opportunity for self- reflection
- Emotionally Healthy Spirituality (EHS)
- Develop tools & resources to strengthen resilience
- Develop support systems
- Identify potential obstacles to resilience in ministry
- Explore, understand, and further healing of personal adversity and suffering
- Transformation: Healing, growth, freedom & empowerment
- Explore spiritual warfare
- Further our understanding of how to support the development of Resilience in Clergy

Developing Resilience

Rom 5:3-5 NLT

*We can rejoice, too, **when we run into problems and trials**, for we know that they help us **develop endurance**. And **endurance develops strength of character**, and **character strengthens our confident hope of salvation**. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.*

HOW RESILIENT ARE YOU?



Grow your Resilience... Join RJ 2020

- **Begins: Feb 6** **Ends: Nov 28th, 2020**
- **Day & Time:** **Thursdays 1-4pm.** It is usually 3 weeks on and one week off. This allows for prep time.
- **Prep time:** 2-4hrs wk
- **Cost:** **\$400.** per pastor (subsidized cost)
(The actual cost is more than \$1000)
 - Deposit of \$100 with application
 - **Application deadline Dec 1st**
 - balance due by Feb 28, 2020
- **Included:** 20 sessions minimum, two 4-day retreats, assessments, 7-10 books, materials, spiritual direction
- **Extras:** travel costs to retreats.
- **Group size:** 8-10 pastors
- **Activities:**
 - **Online sessions:** 3hrs each, usually 3 weeks on / 1week off
 - **7 Monthly Spiritual direction sessions,**
 - **Mentoring or Counselling**
 - **Retreats:** April 20-23 &
 November 16-19, 2020
 - **Reading & Assignments**

Requirements:

- Open & willing to participate.
- A desire to learn & grow
- A sense of call to participate
- Commitment to full attendance & completion of assignments
- Full attendance at both retreats
- Permission & support from church leadership
- Willingness to share assessments with facilitator
- A computer & internet that can run zoom
- Agreement to participate in research project
- Successful completion of an interview with Cheryl Ann Beals
- Commitment to apply learning

Tentative Dates 2020

- **Feb 6 Orientation,** 13, 20, 27
- **Mar 5, 12, 19, 26**
- **Apr 2, 9, 16, Retreat April 20-23**
- **May 7, 14, 21,**
- **June 4, 11, 18, 25**
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- **Sep 10, 17, 24**
- **Oct 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**
- **November 12, Retreat 16-19, 26,**

Tentative off dates

For More Information & Registration

Contact: **Cheryl Ann Beals**

Email: Cherylann.beals@baptist-atlantic.ca

Cell or text: **902-830-5929**

Facilitators



**RJ Designer &
Facilitator:**

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Ann Beals



**Spiritual Director &
Facilitator:**

Rev. Mark Harris

Rev. Cheryl Ann Beals is the **Director of Clergy Formation & Wellness for the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada**, since 2013, and former pastor of Victoria Road United Baptist Church, Dartmouth, NS. She has been in ministry since 1987 including: Missions in Carolina, Brazil, Christian counsellor, pastoral support, Canadian Ministries Manager & Manager of Global Discipleship for Canadian Baptist Ministries.

Cheryl Ann is a graduate of Acadia University with a Doctor of Ministry degree (2016). Her areas of research were Clergy burnout, well-being and resilience. She is also a **trained spiritual director** (2019)

Her passion is to live in a growing freedom in Jesus Christ, while assisting others to do the same, especially Christian Leaders. She has a desire to see healthy resilient spiritual leaders and healthy spiritual communities where people are set free and equipped to follow Jesus, even in the midst of difficulty & suffering.

She takes great pleasure in watching people and things grow. Spiritual conversations about how God is at work thrill her. She enjoys spending time with friends and family, gardening, especially veggies and herbs, thrift shopping, and getting away with God on retreat.

Rev. Mark Harris was ordained by Wolfville Baptist Church. Born and raised in Halifax, Mark did his theological studies at the Acadia Divinity College and Regent College. His studies at Regent focused on Spiritual Theology. Most recently Mark was lead pastor at Grace Chapel in suburban Halifax from 2003 to 2016. Having completed a training program through CenterQuest, **Mark is a trained spiritual director.**

The author of four books, including **Three Faces of Jesus** and **Companions for Your Spiritual Journey**, Mark has a deep passion to see people grow and mature into their life in Christ.

Mark lives in downtown Halifax with his wife Adrienne. They have been blessed with three children and three grandchildren. Mark is a devoted fan of Bob Dylan, contemporary Atlantic Canadian literature and the Detroit Red Wings.

Comments from RJ

What has been most significant?

- I think coming to understand that discipleship and spiritual formation includes my emotional life, and dealing with how my past experiences have impacted my relationship with God as well as my pastoral ministry. And that it's possible to **experience genuine spiritual growth** after believing for a long time that actual change would never really happen, at least not in the areas where I'm beginning to see it. And coming to realize that spiritual change doesn't look or feel like I necessarily thought it would, but that it's harder and better at the same time.
- I have **loved all the resources**. The books have been a great addition to my library. I have benefited from them both personally and spiritually. I love having all these additional tools in my tool box, so I can come alongside and help other leaders. It has brought a **self-discovery** that has been very rewarding.
- Other than the first two books we had to read, it was my one on one with Cheryl Ann at the retreat that was significant because she helped me navigate through some observations she noticed about me and helped me **unpack more of my narrative**.
- The **opportunity to discuss openly** with my peers about God, life and personal life.

How has God been present in this experience for you?

- God has been present in rest of the group, especially as I've seen others share their own struggles and how they are **learning to trust God**. God has been present through Cheryl Ann, as she asks probing questions I wouldn't have thought of, but which lead to **new personal insight**. God has been present as I've done the readings and have tried to incorporate specific tools into my daily life to remind me of his presence. **God was especially present during the retreat**, which I found to be a powerful time of drawing nearer to God and of him meeting me where I was, especially in the cross exercises.
- I am **experiencing God at a deeper level**, being more aware of His presence and His activity. Learning how to identify my needs as an individual not just as a ministry leader. In the past, I rarely came with my own needs, it was always the needs of others or ministry.
- **[God is present] through the content**, daily office, prayer, readings, conversation, scripture, and silence.
- I know that God is up to something, because **my leadership is changing, both at home and in church**, but I am having a hard time nailing down what exactly He is up to. What He wants to accomplish in me and through me is becoming clearer to me than ever. I notice more when I am overtired, stressed or such that I need God more.
- I know there are many things that contribute to leadership development and pastoral ministry, but I can say without reservation that going on this journey—and I'm including the **Emotionally Healthy Spirituality** group—is what's kept me from sinking under waves of discouragement and disillusionment in ministry. While I'm sure God could have used any number of things to strengthen me and keep me going, **I can't imagine where I would be today if not for this process**.
- This has been a **great experience and I am very grateful to be a part of this process**. This journey has been very rewarding. I have grown in maturity as a leader and have become more self-aware as well I have deepened my relationship with God.