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Family Stress and the Role of the
Mormon Bishop's Wife

A Thesis

Presented to the
Department of Sociology
Brigham Young University

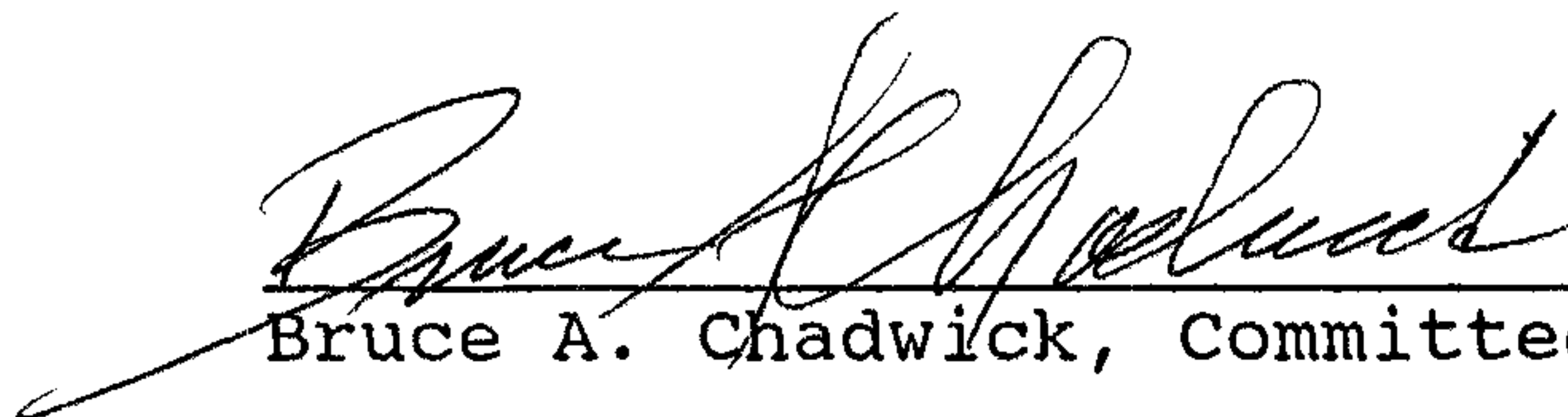
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Science

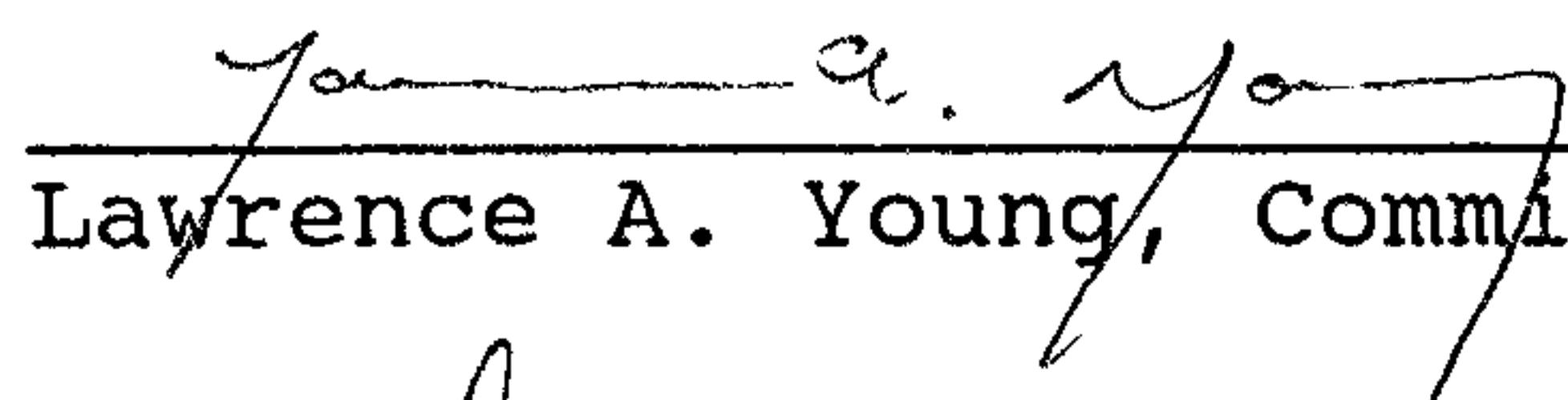
by

Marguerite Irene Adams

December 1991

This thesis by Marguerite Irene Adams is accepted in its present form by the Department of Sociology of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Science.


Bruce A. Chadwick, Committee Chairman


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12-4-91
Date

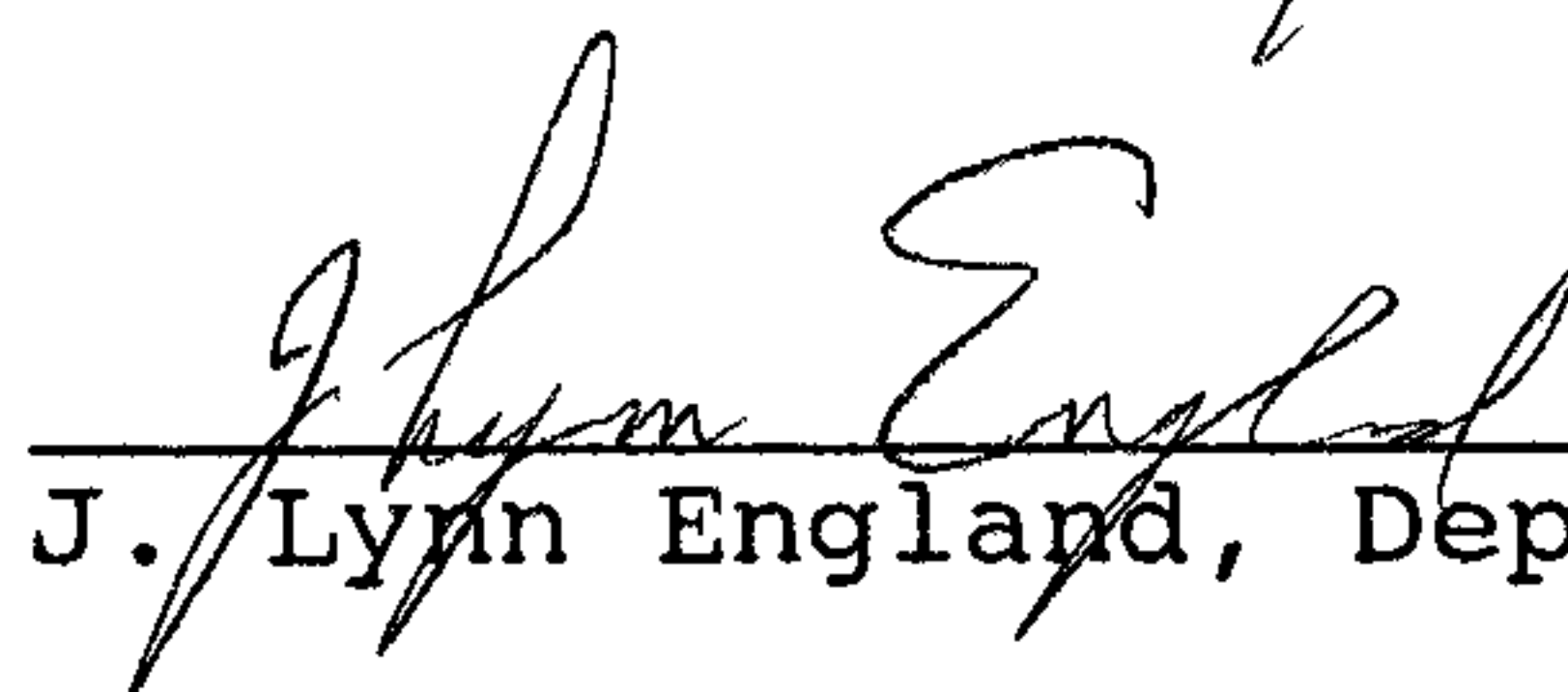

J. Lynn England, Department Chairman

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Ministers carry out religious, administrative, social, psychological, and legal functions for their congregations. They hear confessions, preach sermons, provide some level of individual or marriage counselling, perform baptisms, weddings, and funerals, comfort the sick or their families, and take care of the day-to-day business of the church. Much of their work involves spending time with individuals or families in the congregation, and must be carried on outside of normal work hours. In fact, members' illnesses or crises can call ministers from home any time of the day or night. Much of their time is spent helping and giving to others. When the minister comes home -- for however long he is home before he is called out again or someone comes to see him -- he may not have much emotional energy to share with his family. In fact, one of the reasons for celibacy requirements in the Catholic Church is that the priest's energies would not be divided between his family and the parishioners.¹

¹. Of course, there are female ministers, and their numbers are increasing, but most of the research to date has been done on male ministers and their families. The spouses and families of female ministers may encounter many of the same pressures and stresses as those of male ministers, but there may be important differences related to societal gender

The minister's family may or may not have official duties in the church, but its members are often faced with high expectations. The wife may be expected to lead the women's auxiliary, sing in the choir, attend all social events, organize charity functions, and teach Sunday School. At the very least, she is usually expected to be a full participant in the church and, along with her husband and children, a model of Christian living. Whether the congregation really expects all this of the minister's family is not as important as whether the family thinks it does.

The minister and his family may be provided a home by the congregation. That, plus a modest salary, may relieve him of "worldly" financial concerns and allow him to concentrate on his spiritual duties. To the wife, though, the parsonage may not seem such a blessing. Beside the fact that she may not like the house or it may not be suitable for the size or needs of the family, it is probably close to the church and is considered by many members to belong to the church and not the family. Some members may protest simple changes (i.e. different color house paint), and such restrictions on the wife's personal choices can be stressful. Similar restrictions extend to her clothing and behavior. She should not dress or act in such a way that she gives the impression of being above the rest of the congregation, nor should she dress so poorly as to

role expectations. Since this study focuses on a group with an all-male clergy, ministers will be referred to with masculine pronouns, and their spouses referred to as wives.

reflect badly on them. She should be conservative, but not "frumpy," and educated, but not intellectually superior. She should be friendly with everyone and have no cliquish special friends. While it can be very difficult to live up to all these expectations, openly rebelling against them would reflect badly on her husband, possibly even costing him his job. The children face similar pressures, with peers criticizing them for being "goody-goody," and adult church members expecting either the best or the worst from "the pastor's kids." The family often has the feeling they live in a fishbowl, with church members observing and criticizing their every action. Often, the parsonage is the fishbowl. Located near the church, much church business is conducted in it, and members may feel very free to drop by at any time. Some even walk in without knocking. This puts the family's habits, relationships, and housekeeping skills on continual display.

While many of these pressures are petty irritations, the combination and the relentlessness take their toll. Even when the family tries to schedule much needed time together, a crisis in some church member's life is likely to cancel their plans.

This is not to say that being a minister is an unrewarding and unreasonably demanding job that is impossibly hard on the family. The minister probably felt "called" to this work and received many years of training to prepare him for its requirements. He probably had a good idea of what to expect.

Likewise, his wife probably knew before she married him or early in the marriage that she would be a minister's wife, and had time to prepare for the pressures. While financial rewards may be limited, religious rewards may be great. Status and other social rewards may also be major compensations. The important point is that the minister and his wife generally chose to accept the lifestyle, pressures, and rewards, and had time to learn about and prepare for them.

Bishops in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ("LDS" or "Mormon" church) and their wives do not have the opportunity to choose and prepare for the demanding lifestyle the way other ministers and their wives do. LDS bishops don't specifically train for the ministry. Their college degrees, if they have them, may be in law, business, medicine, history, art, physics, psychology, or any other area, but will almost surely not be in divinity, theology, or religion. The LDS Church has no professional ministry, so no position for trained ministers. LDS bishops train for and work in whatever occupation they have chosen, and do their work as bishops during their off-duty hours. Their calling as bishop is a temporary one, usually lasting about five years, and they do not ask for it, but are asked by church leaders to accept it. Most men in the church will never have the position, but all are potential bishops. They may be called at any age, although most seem to be around forty, and they usually have only a few days' or weeks' notice before being officially placed in the

position. The bishop and his wife may have considered that he might one day be called to the position, or they may never have thought about it. Though they have known many bishops throughout their lives in the church, they probably have a limited concept of the demands the position places on the bishop and his family. But most bishops and their wives seem to view the calling as a good thing, accept the position, and do their best.

These factors make the families of LDS bishops an excellent group in which to study family stress. Bishops carry out most of the same duties as Protestant ministers and Catholic priests, and their families experience many of the same pressures as ministers' families. But bishops and their families neither choose nor have time to prepare exclusively for the position. Therefore, they are facing a sudden change in their lifestyle that has the potential to add considerable stress. While many studies have been done of families facing sudden and stressful lifestyle changes, those studies have usually involved disasters or negative life events (earthquakes, divorce, military separation, family illness or death). Bishops and their families generally view the calling as a positive event, yet it can still be stressful. Does the research on disastrous and negative events apply to families facing stressful positive events? This study seeks to discover through a national survey of LDS bishops' wives whether

families respond to positively-viewed stressful events the same way as to negatively-viewed events.

Statement of the Problem

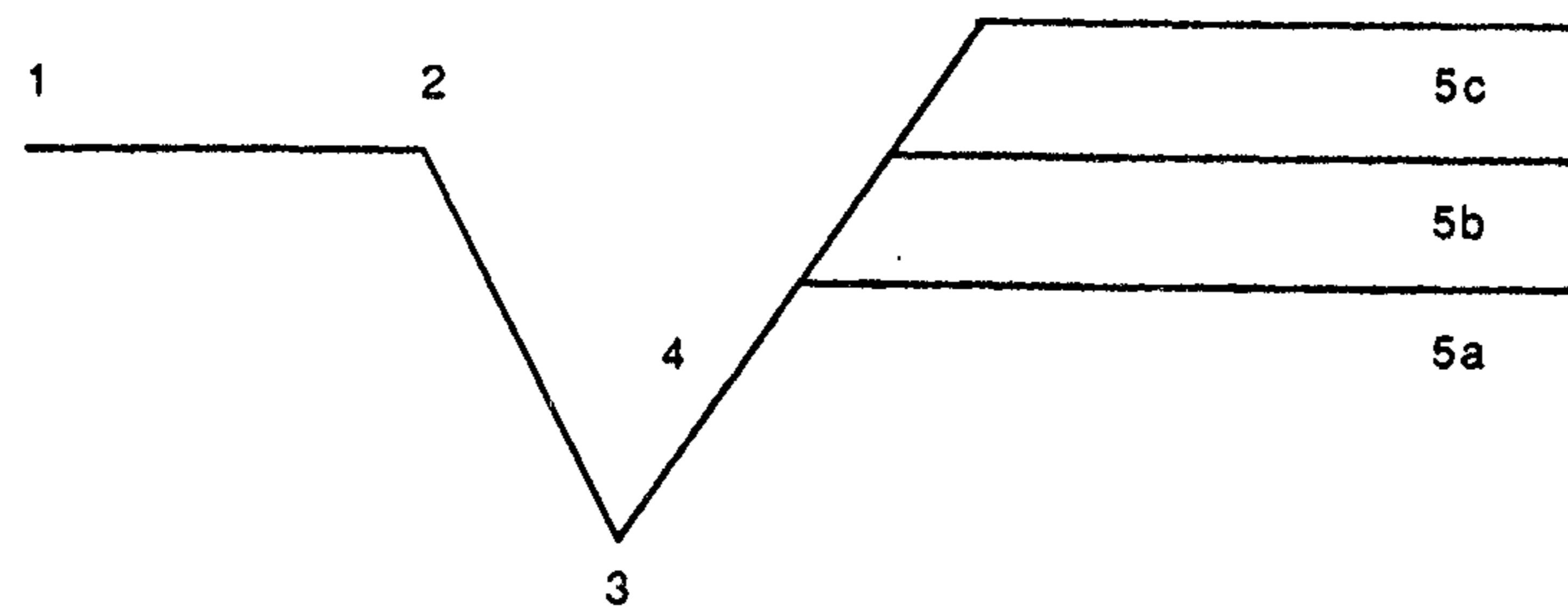
It has long been recognized that individual stress is produced by positive as well as negative events (Selye 1956). Family stress can also result from positive as well as negative events (Boss 1987; Boss 1988). Intuitively, it seems unlikely that families would respond in the same way to positively- and negatively-perceived events, but family stress theory offers only one model of response to family-life-changing events. The purpose of this study is to determine whether a modification of the model might be more appropriate for positively-perceived stressor events, in this case, the event of having the husband/father called to serve as bishop. Additionally, this study seeks to provide greater understanding of the relative importance of various stresses and rewards experienced by bishops' families, and how the families cope with the stresses.

Family Stress Models

Reuben Hill's ABCX model of family stress provides a framework for family stress theory (Boss 1987). The model consists of three variables that may combine to produce stress and crisis. "A" is the provoking event or stressor, "B" is the resources or strengths the family has at the time of the event, "C" is the meaning that the family attaches to the

event, and "X" is the stress and crisis that may result (Hill 1958; Hill and Hansen 1962; Hansen and Hill 1964; Boss 1987; Boss 1988). The same stressor can affect families very differently because one family may have fewer resources (adaptability, health, economic stability, unity, common interests, affection, etc.) or may define the stressor as more threatening or hardship-provoking (Hill 1958; Hill and Hansen 1962; Boss 1987). When stress overwhelms the family's resources and ability to maintain its structure, crisis results (Boss 1987).

Hill theorized that family function deteriorates rapidly, if not immediately, after a stressor event (an event that has the potential to change family relationships and functioning) (Hill 1958; Hill and Hansen 1962; Hansen and Hill 1984; Boss 1987). As Figure 1 shows, a stressor event is followed by a period of disorganization, during which previous interaction and coping patterns are inadequate or ineffective. After a period of time, the family enters a recovery phase. The family reorganizes at a level of functioning above, below, or equal to its pre-stressor level. Boss (1987) states that the variation in levels of recovery seems to be supported by clinical observation, although it has not been empirically verified.



1. Level of family functioning before event occurred.
2. Event occurs.
3. Low point in period of disorganization (hitting bottom).
4. Period of recovery.
5. Level of reorganization:
 - a. Below previous level of functioning.
 - b. Equal to previous level of functioning.
 - c. Higher than previous level of functioning.

Figure 1. Hill's Family Crisis ("Roller Coaster") Model
(Boss 1987, 697)

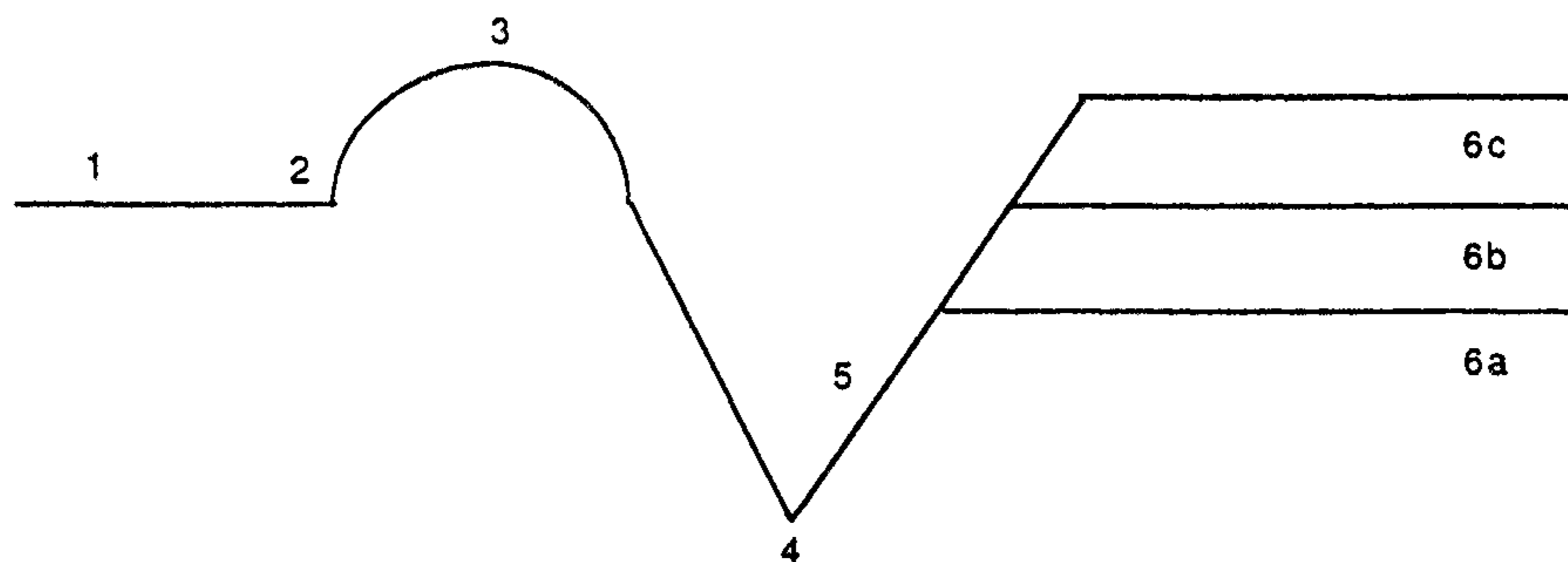
Considerable research has gone into determining what events can trigger a crisis (Hill 1958; McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; McCubbin and Figley 1983; Patterson and McCubbin 1984; Boss 1987; Pittman and Lloyd 1988), how families vary in their vulnerability to crises (Hill 1958; Hill and Hansen 1962; McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; Pilisuk and Parks 1983; Boss 1987), what resulting stresses the families experience (McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; McCubbin and Figley 1983; Boss 1987), and how families cope with the stresses (McCubbin et al. 1976; Boss, McCubbin, and Lester 1979; McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; McCubbin, Boss, et al. 1980; Ventura and Boss 1983; Pilisuk and Parks 1983; Patterson and McCubbin 1984; Boss

1987; Pittman and Lloyd 1988). Each of these areas is related to Hill's ABCX model.

Modifying Family Stress Models

While the ABCX model has been researched (McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; McCubbin and Figley 1983; Boss 1987), supported (McCubbin, Boss, et al. 1980; McCubbin and Figley 1983; Boss 1987), and criticized or expanded (Klein 1983; McCubbin and Patterson 1983a; McCubbin and Patterson 1983b; Boss 1987; Burr 1989), it seems as if the "roller coaster" model of disorganization, recovery, and reorganization has been accepted without notable dissent. Family stress researchers cite the roller coaster model before moving on to explore and test components of the ABCX model (McCubbin et al. 1976; McCubbin et al. 1979; McCubbin, Joy, et al. 1980; Boss 1987). At least two reports leave open the possibility of a modification in certain circumstances. Hill (Hill 1958; Hill and Hansen 1962; Hansen and Hill 1964) wrote that community-wide disasters (floods, earthquakes) often resulted in an "almost euphoric increase in family solidarity . . . in the first weeks after the disaster" (Hill 1958, 147), but this euphoric period occurred after the disorganization and beginning of recovery. Smith (1983) describes a honeymoon phase as one of the stages that follow a community-wide disaster. But she does not contrast her stages with Hill's roller coaster model. Both these potential modifications applied only to community-wide disasters.

On the other hand, observation, anecdotes, and even popular language challenge the idea that the roller coaster model adequately describes the pattern of stresses and coping seen when the event that brought about the stress is viewed positively by the family. The common phrase "honeymoon period" is an indication of the difference. One is unlikely to hear a tornado victim referred to as being in the honeymoon period of rebuilding, but the phrase is often used to refer to a period of adjustment to a new job or role as parent. The honeymoon period is a time of high expectations and effort, expected to end "when reality sets in." At this point, the predicted disorganization-recovery-reorganization pattern may follow. Figure 2 diagrams the modified roller coaster model, showing the honeymoon period.



1. Level of family functioning before event occurred.
2. Event occurs.
3. Honeymoon period.
4. Low point in period of disorganization (hitting bottom).
5. Period of recovery.
6. Level of reorganization:
 - a. Below previous level of functioning.
 - b. Equal to previous level of functioning.
 - c. Higher than previous level of functioning.

Figure 2. Modified Roller Coaster Model

The difference between responses to positively- and negatively-perceived events is the honeymoon period. Unlike the "euphoric" or honeymoon phases Hill and Smith referred to as following community-wide disasters, the honeymoon period proposed here occurs between the event and the crisis. Because the family views the event positively, it works to absorb the new requirements and stresses without changing family structure or behavior patterns that have worked up to this point. "Reality" sets in as the family realizes it can't do all that it once did because of the additional requirements and demands, but the realization often comes after the family has overextended, worn itself out, and collapsed into a crisis. This scenario is a familiar one, but is this common-knowledge experience an empirical reality? That is one of the questions this study seeks to answer.

In order to test the hypothesis that a positively-viewed stressor event will produce a period of increased organization and family function before deterioration and rebuilding phases, a questionnaire was sent to a national sample of 434 wives of Mormon bishops. Wives have been the subjects of many studies of family stress, especially those in which the father's physical or emotional absence was a major source of the stress (McCubbin, et al. 1976; Boss, McCubbin, and Lester 1979; McCubbin, Boss, et al. 1980; Skinner 1983; Boss 1987). Since LDS bishops are often less available to their families during their term as bishop, it makes sense to measure family

stress via the wives' perceptions. The wives in the sample were questioned about the length of time their husbands have served as bishop, some demographic variables, how they perceived the calling at the time it was extended, what problems and rewards they have experienced, how they cope with pressures, and what advice they would give new bishops' wives. They were also given general stress measures, so that patterns of stress over time in the position could be examined.

Background on Study Subjects

In the LDS Church, bishops are active and committed members of local congregations (wards) who have been officially "called" to serve with responsibilities and duties similar to those of other ministers. A bishop, along with two counselors of his choosing, presides over a ward of three-to-four hundred people. He carries out many of the same functions as a Protestant minister or Catholic priest. He also oversees the provision of church welfare assistance, and calls ward members to or releases them from any of the hundreds of church positions found in the lay-run wards. He may formally interview a large percentage of the adults each year, have a briefer interview with each family annually, and interview most of the adolescents twice a year. He is also responsible for counselling members as needed, or for determining whether professional counselling is needed. He may be called upon to provide short-term housing for visiting leaders or others visiting the area. In short, he has responsibility for the

spiritual, temporal, and emotional needs of the members of his ward. The bishop serves without pay, carrying out ward business in addition to his regular employment and family duties. Though some bishops are given an idea of how long they can expect to be in the position at the time they are called, there is no set term of office: in unusual cases, bishops may serve for as little as one year or as long as ten years. The average is somewhere between three and six years. It is definitely a temporary position, as are most positions in the LDS Church. When the bishop is released, he is given another church calling, but only rarely is the new position as physically and emotionally demanding as that of bishop.

The bishop's wife also holds various church positions through her lifetime, although she may be released from them during her husband's term as bishop. She is also interviewed by church leaders, and must consent before her husband is called as bishop, but she is not called to be a co-bishop. Her husband cannot discuss church members' problems with her and she cannot share his decision-making responsibilities. This may be the first time during their marriage that her husband has been unable to discuss important problems and decisions with her. During the main worship service, the bishop sits on the stand at the front of the church and his wife and children sit with the rest of the congregation. Since Mormons tend to have larger-than-average families (Heaton and Goodman 1985), the bishop's wife may be trying to keep several small children

quiet without her husband's assistance. Sunday is generally the bishop's busiest day, so his wife may be alone in caring for the children most of that day, and have to take his place in many family activities during the week, as well. Even when the bishop is home, he may be on the phone with church members, or preoccupied with concerns related to his calling. One former bishop's wife said it was easier on her and the children when her husband stayed at church to conduct his business, because when he was at home they had the false illusion that he was available to them.

Still, a bishop's calling is generally viewed positively by the family. Since the call is considered to originate with God, it represents God's trust and confidence in the couple. There is satisfaction in serving others, and there are social and spiritual rewards, including the opportunity to participate in special functions the couple would probably not otherwise attend.

Research Question

When an event with the potential to change family structure or interaction patterns is viewed by the family as a good or positive event, does a "honeymoon period" of decreased stress and increased functioning precede the disorganization predicted by Hill's roller coaster model of family stress? More specifically, do the families of Mormon bishops experience a pattern of family functioning over time that includes a "honeymoon" period of increased effort and

organization and decreased stress before periods of disorganization, recovery, and reorganization?

Importance of the Study

Many families prepare carefully for such expected events as parenthood, relocating, having children leave home, and retirement. Some also prepare themselves for dealing with unexpected events, such as natural disasters, unemployment, a parent's illness, or death in the family. Others take advantage of support groups or counselling to help them through stressful situations such as returning to school, divorce, bankruptcy, or a child's illness. Since the roller coaster model is so widely accepted, it may be the only model families are exposed to in their preparation or while they are trying to adjust. Therefore, they will expect the most disruptive and stressful period to occur very shortly or immediately after the initial event. If the honeymoon period is a reality, families facing a positive stressor will experience relatively low stress and high functioning for a certain period of time after the event. They may think they have gotten through the high-stress period exceptionally well, and expect better times now. To have "reality set in" and to experience disorganization after such an easy period and such high expectations of the future may cause additional confusion and stress. Families could be better prepared and avoid the additional confusion if they are provided with a more accurate model of stress and functioning patterns (see Hansen and Hill 1964). Since many of

the life-changing events are ones that families are actively pursuing or hoping for, or those they simply see as welcome challenges, providing a realistic picture of stress patterns produced by such events can help a substantial number of families become better prepared for and more easily cope with the stresses they will experience.

Appropriateness of Study Subjects

There is considerable literature related to the pressures and stresses of being a minister's wife. Leading causes of stress include:

1. the feeling of "living in a goldfish bowl," or being expected to be examples of Christian living at all times and in all situations (Blackwood 1951; Denton 1962; Douglas 1965; Mace and Mace 1980; Schoun 1982; Hsieh and Rugg 1983; Hart 1984; Cornell 1991),
2. lack of time with the husband (Denton 1962; Jennings 1980; Mace and Mace 1980; Rediger 1982; Schoun 1982; Cornell 1991),
3. the husband's being on call at all times (making it very difficult to have uninterrupted time together or to plan trips or vacations) (Denton 1962; Platt and Moss 1976; Mace and Mace 1980; Schoun 1982; Hart 1984; Cornell 1991),
4. the husband's preoccupation with others' problems even when he is home (Platt and Moss 1976),
5. lack of friends in the congregation with whom she can just be herself (Blackwood 1951; Denton 1962; Douglas 1965; Platt and Moss 1976; Troost 1978; Mace and Mace 1980; Hart 1984),
6. uncertainty about her role and what is expected of her (Denton 1962; Platt and Moss 1976; Jennings 1980; Mace and Mace 1980; Schoun 1982; Warner and Carter 1984),
7. constant phone calls (Jennings 1980; Hill 1983; Hsieh and Rugg 1983; Hart 1984),

8. the lack of a minister for the minister's family because he is tired from dealing with other people's problems (Denton 1962; Troost 1978; Mace and Mace 1980; Rediger 1982), and
9. loneliness caused by the wife's efforts not to show favoritism or cliquishness, and by members' reluctance to (a) tell her anything she may pass on to the minister, (b) bring themselves to the attention of the minister, (c) take up her valuable time, or (d) associate with her because they are certain the minister has told her everything they told him in confidence (Denton 1962; Hsieh and Rugg 1983; Hart 1984; Warner and Rugg 1984).

The impact of some of these pressures is reflected in the rising divorce rates among clergy (Mace and Mace 1980; Goodling and Smith 1983; Warner and Carter 1984). Though clergy divorce rates are still well below overall divorce rates, they are rising rapidly (Mace and Mace 1980).

As mentioned earlier, these and other stresses are part of a lifestyle choice for the wives of Protestant ministers: they generally knew early in the marriage that he intended to be a minister and had the choice of accepting and planning for this lifelong position or rejecting it before it became a fact. The wife of a LDS bishop, on the other hand, doesn't have the opportunity to choose this lifestyle. While she may see her husband as a potential bishop, that characterization may fit most active Mormon men. She may have considered he might be asked to hold the position "when we're older and wiser," and be unprepared for the calling to come when he's forty-one. So, even if she has vague feelings that he'll one day be a bishop, his receiving the calling is still relatively unexpected. For some, it is a complete surprise, as they never

envisioned their husbands in such a position. The unexpectedness of the event, or at least of its timing, is a factor the newly-called bishop's family shares with the family learning that a baby is suddenly available for adoption, or that the perfect job opportunity has just become available but will require a cross-country move.

Many positive events have long periods of anticipation (nine months of pregnancy, an unspecified time during which a family has prepared for the mother to return to school, etc.), and this planning period may mediate stress or mask the pattern of adjustment. Bishop's wives generally have only a few days' or weeks' notice, so are likely to more clearly show whatever pattern does hold true for families facing positive stressors.

Another difference between an LDS bishop and other ministers is the fact that the bishop almost always has a full-time occupation apart from his church position. That occupation is the one he has trained for, and its lifestyle requirements are the ones he and his wife have chosen to accept. His position as bishop adds duties, responsibilities, and opportunities to an already busy lifestyle. Instead of a single demanding job, he has one full-time paid occupation and a second, unpaid position that takes up much of his free time and energy. The amount of time and energy he must give to his two jobs puts his family in a position similar to one in which a parent is working full-time and going to school full-time, or holding

two jobs. Again, the wife must take over many of the duties and responsibilities formerly carried by the husband.

The third factor that makes a bishop's wife different from a minister's wife is the term of the position. A minister may move to different congregations and may even eventually leave the ministry, but he enters with the intention of being a minister until retirement or death. The LDS bishop's position is temporary, not lifelong. So most of the adjustments the family will need to make are temporary as well. The temporariness of the position gives the bishop's family much in common with families experiencing a parent's return to school or a member's prolonged absence to serve in the military.

Other reasons for using LDS bishops' wives to study the pattern of family stress include the opportunity to approximate a longitudinal study at one point in time, an available sampling frame encompassing almost all of the population, the similarity of all the subjects on many important variables, and the fact that these families tend to successfully cope with their challenges. Each of these points will be discussed in turn.

Since there is no standard time or term for a bishop to serve, at any point in time bishops in the 7,749 wards throughout the United States will vary from having served only a few days or weeks to being just about to be released. So a

one-time survey can measure stresses experienced at various points throughout the term of service.

All bishops are originally cleared through the Salt Lake City headquarters of the church, and an annually updated directory of bishops is produced by the church. The directory is highly accurate and complete, missing only the most recent changes, and makes an excellent sampling frame.

The bishops' wives have a great deal in common with one another in terms of Hill's ABCX model. The wives likely do not see themselves as of a type, but all of them are committed Mormons who have passed rigorous requirements to be married in a Mormon temple and are willing to let their husbands take on the position of bishop. All of them face the same stressor event (Hill's factor A), their husbands' calling as bishop. They generally have similar resources (Hill's factor B), tending to have strong families, strong values and religious faith which are shared by their husbands, and a view that difficulties are an important part of life and an opportunity for growth. It is expected that all will share similar perceptions of the stressor event (Hill's factor C), seeing the calling of their husbands and their own new role as primarily positive, although resulting stresses may be perceived and experienced differently by each wife. Facing the same stressor event with similar resources and similar perceptions makes this an almost ideal group in which to test the hypothesis about family stress patterns. If there is a

pattern, it should show more clearly in this group than in groups in which the families vary greatly in initial stability and resources, and whose stressor events cannot be readily compared or standardized.

A final reason for studying bishops' wives is that they, as a group, manage to cope with whatever stresses befall the family. At the very least, they manage to endure them. There are no available statistics, but divorce or dropping out of the church is probably very rare for former bishops and their wives. During preliminary interviews of past bishops' wives, women in this position were asked if they knew of any former bishops who were now divorced. Through their lifetimes, each of these women were familiar with many bishops, and none could think of more than one or two that eventually divorced, while several could not come up with even one. The closest available statistics are those which compare marriages performed in Mormon temples to other marriages. Temple marriages, which all the bishops have, have a divorce rate one-fifth that of non-temple-marriages (Christensen and Cannon 1964; Steed 1969; Kimball 1976; Heaton and Goodman 1985). The interviewed women were also asked about the overall experience of being the bishop's wife, and all said it was a good experience, although most were glad it was over. Again, a sample of successfully coping families will more likely show the stress patterns than a group containing some who coped and some who quit at various

points, perhaps never reaching the recovery and reorganization stages.

CHAPTER 2
METHODOLOGY

Population

In order to limit the effects of language, government, and other cultural variables, and because most of the family stress research has been carried out on American families, only wards within the United States were included in the population. There were 7,749 wards in the United States as of December 31, 1990 (Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac). Wards made up of college students are different in many important ways from the more typical, multigenerational family wards. Wards designated for single members are also highly unusual in many respects that can affect this study. Therefore, student and singles' wards were excluded from the population. This left a population consisting of the wives of bishops presiding over the 7520 non-student family wards in the United States.

Sampling Frame and Sample Selection

The sampling frame was the 1991 Directory of Stakes, Wards, and Bishops produced by the church. This directory contains the names and phone numbers of all LDS bishops as of December 31, 1990. A stratified random sample of 546 wards

from the United States was selected, half from the states that have a large LDS population -- Utah (77.2% Mormon), Idaho (29.2%), Nevada (10.1%), Arizona (6.8%), and California (2.5%, but chosen anyway because of the sheer number of Mormons, second only to Utah) (percentages as of December 31, 1990 from 1991-1992 Church Almanac) -- and half from the remaining states. Members in the five states are likely to live in wards composed of smaller geographic areas, in which members have more frequent non-church-related interaction with each other than in the states in which wards cover much larger geographic areas. Additionally, members from the five "Mormon states" may be much more likely to be second- or later-generation members of the church. This can affect expectations of the bishop's wife role, especially since some of these women will have family members who have been in the role and can help them know what to expect and how to cope. Having grown up in areas where the church is strong and having seen many women in the role of bishop's wife may make the challenges and expectations of the role very different than the challenges and expectations experienced by a wife who joined the church later and lived where Mormons were fewer and more widely dispersed.

After eliminating student and singles' wards, a count was made of the wards in the "Mormon states" and in the "Other states." The five states contained 4902 wards (65% of the population of 7,520 wards) and the rest of the states contained 2618. A systematic sample of each subset of states

resulted in the selection of 272 wards from the Mormon states and 262 from the other states, for a total of 534 wards. No attempt was made to include every state, since the major differences expected to affect this study were between the five states and all other states. Phone books were used to obtain addresses, matching the bishops' names and phone numbers. Out of 534 names selected, addresses were found for 456 (240 in "Mormon" states and 216 in "Other" states), and questionnaires were sent to this group on June 28, 1991. Instructions included with the questionnaire explained the purpose of the study (see Appendix A). If her husband was no longer bishop, the recipient was requested to pass the whole packet on to the new bishop's wife. This was the only way to get questionnaires to those who had become bishop's wives in the six months following publication of the 1991 Directory. While it would have been preferable to oversample the newest bishops' wives in order to get a better picture of the early pattern of stress and to test for the honeymoon period, the sampling frame did not allow this. In fact, new wives were likely undersampled, since several undeliverable questionnaires indicated that the addressee had moved. Obviously, there were new bishops in these wards, but the questionnaires could not be passed on to them.

Instrument Development and Pretesting

Information needed to test the hypothesis that a honeymoon period would be experienced between the event (the

husband's being called to the position of bishop) and any resulting crisis includes the length of time since the call and some measure of family functioning. A questionnaire was developed to gather this data. In-depth interviews were conducted with the wives of four former bishops and the wife of one current bishop. One current and one former bishop were also interviewed about their and their families' experiences. An additional interview was conducted with a Mormon therapist (female) who has spoken to several bishops' wives on an informal basis about the stresses inherent in their role. Information from these interviews, together with material gained from a review of relevant literature, was used to develop the questionnaire (see Appendix B), which was then pretested on a sample of eleven current and former bishops' wives in Utah.

Family functioning was not directly measured. Instead, general and specific stress measures were used, on the assumption that decreased family function and increased disorganization results in increased stress in the family, especially in the wife/mother, whose traditional role it is to maintain family function. Stress measures, then, were expected to show a pattern that is the inverse of the "roller coaster" or honeymoon models.

Four general stress measures were included in the questionnaire. The wives were also asked to rate the prevalence and intensity of seventeen difficulties and advantages

of the position. Each of these measures was designed to allow comparison of stress levels over time in the position. Finally, respondents were asked to complete four open-ended questions dealing with the best and hardest things about the position, how the wives cope, and what advice they would give a new bishop's wife.

The first general stress measure asked the wives to compare their families' experience against statements that represent five different patterns of stress and adjustment. The pre-test group reported no difficulty understanding or differentiating between the statements, and only one felt there was some differential social desirability between the statements. The second stress measure was adapted from the National Study of Families and Households, so that results could be compared against data from that survey and from a national survey of Mormon women that included the same adapted measure. The third measure asked respondents to rate the experience of being the bishop's wife in comparison with selected standard items on the Holmes and Rahe Life Stress Scale (Nan, et al. 1979). A fourth measure asked the wives to rate the overall experience of being a bishop's wife on a scale ranging from -10 to +10.

Because the LDS Church encourages viewing hardships as opportunities, because the socially desirable responses would be entirely positive, and because the questionnaire was sent from the church-sponsored university (all three factors that

would increase the likelihood of respondents giving only positive responses), the questionnaire was intentionally designed to allow and even encourage negative as well as positive responses. The pretest sample was specifically asked whether the questionnaire seemed to elicit honest, rather than "correct," answers. Without clear "permission" to discuss problems and hardships, it was felt that respondents would give only positive, socially acceptable responses. Therefore, the questionnaire does have a somewhat negative focus.

Survey Methodology and Response Rate

Each woman in the sample was mailed a questionnaire, a signed cover letter, and a business reply envelope. Of 456 questionnaires originally sent out, fifteen were returned as undeliverable, three were mistakenly sent to women whose husbands were bishops of student or singles' wards, and four were unusable (one woman's husband had never been a bishop, three were so new to the position that they didn't feel able to complete the survey). These twenty-two questionnaires were deleted from the sample, resulting in an adjusted sample size of 434 (229 from "Mormon" states and 205 from "Other" states). Three other questionnaires were returned blank, in accordance with instructions to do so if the respondent preferred not participating. Sixty-seven percent of the sample (289/434) returned completed responses. Responses came from all parts of the United states, with a 69 percent return rate from "Mormon" states and 64 percent return rate from "Other" states.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS

Respondent Characteristics

The sample was stratified in order to test for differences between "Mormon" and "Other" states. In order to make inferences about the entire population, the responses were weighted. Bishops' wives in "Mormon" states make up 65 percent of the population, but had a 50 percent chance of selection. Therefore, their responses were weighted at 65/50, or 1.3. Bishops' wives in "Other" states had a 50 percent probability of selection while making up 35 percent of the population, so were weighted at .7. Except for tests involving direct comparison between "Mormon" and "Other" states, all results reported here used weighted cases. The weighted sample size is 297.

Respondents' age at the time the husbands were called to be bishops ranged from twenty-five to seventy-two (median = 40), and they had been bishop's wives for one to eighty-two months (median = 32). Most (79 percent) were raised Mormon, and an overwhelming majority reported viewing their husbands' calling as a positive event (75 percent declared it "good," another 7 percent said it was "okay," 17 percent rated it "good and bad," and only 1 percent considered it "not too

good"). None felt it was a "bad" thing for the family, but younger women rated it less positively than older women. The average age of those who rated it "good" was 42, while those rating it "good and bad" averaged 39 years, a difference significant at the .05 level. One third (33 percent) of the respondents were given an estimate of how long to anticipate being in the position, and five years was, by far, the most common estimate (78 percent).

The respondents were well educated (see table 1). Eighty-four percent had at least some college, 32 percent had bachelor's degrees, and 10 percent had done graduate work. The husbands were even more educated. Ninety-five percent of them had some college, 70 percent had at least a bachelor's degree, and 44 percent had done graduate work.

Table 1. -- Education Level of Respondents and Their Husbands

Level	Respondents			Husbands		
	N	%	Cum. %	N	%	Cum. %
Less than H.S.	1	0	0	3	1	1
High School	48	16	16	13	5	5
Some College	109	37	53	54	18	23
Associate Degree	43	15	68	19	6	30
Bachelor's Degree	66	22	90	78	26	56
Graduate Work	30	10	100	130	44	100
Total	296			296		

Over one-third (40 percent) of the respondents had jobs outside the home, with 36 percent of these working thirty hours or more per week. Of those who were employed outside the home, 30 percent worked in education and 29 percent worked in clerical/secretarial positions.

The questionnaire asked how many children lived at home, rather than how many children the women had, so the numbers given were less than the actual family size. Respondents ranged from having none to nine children at home. Twenty-three (8 percent) had no children at home, but the median number of children was four. The children's ages at the time the bishop was called ranged from all under age five (5 percent), to all over twenty (3 percent), with the majority either between ten and twenty (26 percent) or mixed ages under twenty (43 percent).

Results of Stress Measures

Descriptive Statements

The first stress measure asked the wives to select the statement that most closely matched the pattern of stress she and her family experienced since the bishop was called. Table 2 shows comparisons between respondents selecting each statement. The wording, intent, and rate of selection of each statement follows.

Table 2. -- Characteristics of Respondents Selecting Each Descriptive Statement

Choice	N	%	Means				
			Months	Age	Stress	Rating	Depression
A. Honeymoon	36	12.5	33.0	40.1	43.7	6.7	55.4
B. Roller Coaster	6	2.1	31.0	38.7	49.3	6.1	47.2
C. Up-and-Down	33	11.7	25.6	37.6	44.4	3.1	58.4
D. Early Honeymoon	25	8.9	33.7	38.1	45.7	3.4	54.9
E. Like Any Other Calling	184	64.7	33.9	42.5	29.8	7.9	18.7
Groups Differing at .05 Level			none	C+E	A+E C+E D+E	A+C A+D C+E D+E	A+E C+E D+E

A. "At first we were determined to do everything right, to be the best bishop and family we could be. For a while it wasn't hard. Then we found ourselves too tired, too tense, and upset a lot. Finally, we realized we couldn't do everything perfectly, and we concentrated on the things that mattered most. From that point on, things went much better for us."

Statement "A" was meant to reflect the "honeymoon" pattern proposed in this thesis. This statement was selected by 13 percent of the respondents.

B. "When he first became bishop, it seemed that suddenly we couldn't do anything right. There was confusion about who was supposed to do what jobs in the family -- paying bills, disciplining the kids, taking care of repairs, and such -- and a lot of things were only halfway done, if done at all. Eventually, we had to sort out what jobs each of us would do and how we would handle other problems that came up, and how to arrange for time together. Then we were able to get things done and be a family again."

Statement "B" was meant to reflect the "roller coaster" model. Only two percent selected this statement.

C. "It's been absolutely up and down right from the start! Sometimes we're doing fine, and sometimes everything seems to fall apart. It doesn't really seem to get any better or worse. I guess we can just keep it up so long, then we crash, regroup, and do it again for a while."

Statement "C" reflected an "up-and-down" pattern without the leveling off seen in the "honeymoon" and "roller coaster" patterns. This choice was selected by twelve percent of the respondents. This group, on average, had been in the position for the shortest time, was slightly younger than the other groups, and gave the lowest rating to the experience. All of the negative ratings were given by members of either this "up-and-down" group or of the next group to be discussed. Table 3 shows that respondents who chose Statement "C" are more likely to have children who are all under ten years old, and may be less likely to have husbands with graduate-level education.

Figure 3. -- Relationship Between Choice of Descriptive Statement and Ages of Children, Husband's Education

Choice	Children's Ages			Husbands' Education		
	None, mixed, all 20+	All under 10	Totals	Up to BA/BS	Graduate work	Totals
A	11.3%	10.7%	11.2%	9.8%	13.0%	11.2%
B	2.7	1.8	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.5
C	10.4	17.9	11.9	14.4	8.9	12.0
D	6.3	19.6	9.0	8.5	9.8	9.1
E	69.2	50.0	65.3	64.7	65.9	65.2
chi-sq	p = .009 n = 277			p = .654 n = 276		

D. "In the beginning, it was all new and important and even kind of exciting. That made it easy to go to the extra efforts necessary. But, as time went

on, it lost its newness and excitement, and became more and more of a strain. We still try to do all we can, but it seems harder now."

Statement "D" was meant to reflect the early part of the honeymoon pattern, and was expected to be chosen by those who had been in the position too short a time to have passed the crisis period. In fact, the twenty-five women who chose it (9 percent of the total) had been bishops' wives for an average of thirty-four months, compared to thirty-three months for those who chose the "honeymoon", thirty-one for those who chose the "roller coaster", and twenty-six for those who chose the "up-and-down" pattern. The wide range within groups choosing each statement make the differences between means insignificant, but the tendency for women who'd been in the position longer to select this "early honeymoon" statement indicates the underlying assumption was wrong. As mentioned earlier, women who selected Statement "D" were the only ones besides those who selected Statement "C" to give the experience a negative rating. As a group, these respondents gave the experience the second lowest rating. Those who selected Statement "D" were even more disproportionately likely to have children who were all under ten years of age.

E. "It was pretty much like any other calling, even though busier. It didn't cause any particular problems; but, of course, it became easier as we got more used to the duties and settled into the routine."

The last statement, designated "E", was really not expected to be chosen. It, like the "honeymoon" statement,

closely followed the phrasing of one of the women interviewed during questionnaire development. This woman had been a bishop's wife eight years earlier, and the statement seemed to reflect either her having forgotten the stresses, or a personal characteristic of taking everything in stride. During the pre-test, one wife commented that no one would select that ridiculous statement because the position of bishop is unlike any other. Another wife did select it, though, so it was left in. Two-thirds (65 percent) of the sample selected this "like any other calling" statement. Since it is the least detailed pattern, it may have been easiest to select, but it also gives the least information about how family stress varies over time. It may also be worded in a way that is too inclusive: several respondents selected "like any other calling" and then made comments elsewhere on the questionnaire that indicated things were much harder or much easier in the earlier months in the position, a pattern that should have caused them to choose one of the other statements.

This series of statements may not have been as clear, comprehensive, and distinct as hoped. However, those selecting each statement did differ significantly ($p < .05$) in several ways. While the number of months in the position had no significant effect on the choice of statements, age did. Those selecting "like any other calling" were an average of five years older than those selecting either "up-and-down" or "early honeymoon". Those who chose "like any other calling"

also reported considerably lower average stress scores than those who chose "honeymoon", "up-and-down", or "early honeymoon" when they compared the bishop's wife role with other life stresses on the Holmes and Rahe scale. The "like any other calling" and "honeymoon" groups also rated the overall experience of being a bishop's wife much higher than the "up-and-down" or "early honeymoon" groups. Those selecting "like any other calling" also included the women who had been in the position longest (three women who had been bishops' wives between 67 and 82 months), and all six of the women over age 58. Women who chose this statement also reported significantly less depression than those who chose other statements. However, they were considerably less likely to have children who were all under ten years old. There is no relationship between their husbands' educational level and their selection of descriptive statements. Therefore, wives of professionals who are used to their husbands spending considerable time at work and being on-call frequently or preoccupied with their work are no more likely to see the calling of bishop as "like any other" than wives of men whose work requires less time and off-duty attention. It appears that the age of the wife and the ages of the children are the important factors related to the difficulty of the position as expressed in the selection of the descriptive statements.

Depression Scale

The second stress measure is an adaptation of the depression scale used in the National Study of Families and Households (NSFH). A large-scale study of Mormon women conducted by Chadwick and Garrett (in progress) used the adapted scale because the NSFH scale was not sufficiently sensitive, and a subset of their data was used to compare the scores of bishops' wives with other married Mormon women in the same age range. While the adapted measure asks how many days last month each of ten problems was experienced, in the NSFH study respondents were asked how often the problems occurred last week. In order to compare results, the NSFH scores were multiplied by 4.3 to get a monthly score.

The scale asked the number of days in the past month the wives: (1) felt bothered by things that didn't usually bother them; (2) felt that they could not shake off the blues, even with help from family or friends; (3) had trouble keeping their minds on what they were doing; (4) felt depressed; (5) felt that everything they did was an effort; (6) felt they could not get going; (7) felt fearful; (8) slept restlessly; (9) felt lonely; and (10) felt sad. Table 4 shows the percentage of respondents experiencing zero, 1-4, 5-8, and over 8 days of each symptom of depression. In every case, the modal category for bishops' wives was zero, meaning the respondents had not experienced the symptom in the past month. This is also true of the women in the NSFH study, but not true of the

Mormon women in Chadwick and Garrett's study. (The latter group peaked at 1-4 days on seven out of ten symptoms.) Bishops' wives also had the lowest percentage of respondents reporting more than eight days of each symptom except loneliness. Bishops' wives had the highest percentage of respondents reporting feeling lonely more than eight days. Earlier, loneliness was identified as one of the special problems bishops' wives face.

The biggest difference between bishops' wives and other Mormon women was in the percentage reporting zero days for each symptom. Only 21 percent of Mormon women reported having no days in which they felt bothered by things that don't normally bother them. Twice that percentage (41 percent) of bishops' wives reported not experiencing that symptom in the past month, and differences of fifteen-to-twenty percentage points at zero days are seen in six out of ten symptoms.

The NSFH data are given for comparison, even though the scales used in the two studies were not identical. Interestingly, the percentage of symptomless bishops' wives is almost always closer to the percentage of symptomless NSFH women than to other Mormon women. This is not true in the case of loneliness (which both bishops' wives and other Mormon women experience more than other women), and in inability to shake the blues (which bishops' wives and other Mormon women experience less often than women in the NSFH study).

Table 4. -- Comparison of Symptom-Days of Depression Between Bishops' Wives, Mormon Women, and Women in General

Symptom	Group	Percentage Experiencing Symptoms			
		0 days	1-4	5-8	over 8
Bothered	Bishops' Wives	41	35	15	9
	Mormon Women	21	48	19	12
	NSFH Women	38	23	16	24
Can't Concentrate	Bishops' Wives	54	21	12	13
	Mormon Women	34	36	12	17
	NSFH Women	47	20	13	21
Blues	Bishops' Wives	60	27	6	7
	Mormon Women	49	31	10	11
	NSFH Women	47	20	12	21
Depressed	Bishops' Wives	42	39	8	11
	Mormon Women	29	42	13	16
	NSFH Women	47	23	11	19
An Effort	Bishops' Wives	42	27	14	17
	Mormon Women	26	38	14	22
	NSFH Women	45	22	10	23
Fearful	Bishops' Wives	76	15	5	4
	Mormon Women	65	21	6	8
	NSFH Women	71	12	5	12
Can't Get Going	Bishops' Wives	41	29	15	15
	Mormon Women	24	40	15	21
	NSFH Women	43	21	13	22
Poor Sleep	Bishops' Wives	42	30	12	16
	Mormon Women	35	32	12	20
	NSFH Women	46	17	12	24
Lonely	Bishops' Wives	52	20	10	18
	Mormon Women	55	22	10	14
	NSFH Women	66	11	8	15
Sad	Bishops' Wives	43	34	12	10
	Mormon Women	33	38	12	17
	NSFH Women	49	21	11	19

In general, then, bishops' wives show fewer signs of depression than other Mormon women, and seem to do at least as well as women in the NSFH study, except that bishops' wives experience more loneliness. Loneliness also leads the list of symptoms when ranked by the mean number of days bishops' wives experience them (see table 5). Each symptom was also plotted against time in the position and against age. Sadness, depression, and the feeling of being bothered decreased significantly over time. Loneliness, the feeling that everything is an effort, inability to get going, inability to concentrate, sadness, feeling bothered, and fearfulness were significantly less of a problem as age increased.

Table 5. -- Relationship Between Depression, Time in Position, and Age

		Number of Days Had Symptom Last Month			Regression Statistics			
					With Time		With Age	
Scale	<u>N</u>	Mean	Med	Mode(%)	r	p	r	p
Lonely	269	4.5	0	0 (51.8)	-.09	.16	-.21	.00
An Effort	262	4.3	2	0 (42.5)	-.08	.22	-.18	.00
Poor Sleep	266	4.0	2	0 (42.2)	-.00	.97	-.09	.16
Can't Get Going	263	3.9	2	0 (40.7)	.00	.99	-.22	.00
Can't Concentrate	262	3.3	0	0 (54.4)	-.01	.88	-.12	.05
Sad	268	3.1	1	0 (43.4)	-.17	.01	-.15	.02
Depressed	268	3.0	1	0 (42.3)	-.16	.01	-.07	.29
Bothered	268	3.0	2	0 (41.2)	-.15	.01	-.20	.00
Blues	268	2.0	0	0 (60.1)	-.07	.29	-.08	.20
Fearful	270	1.3	0	0 (75.6)	-.05	.42	-.12	.05
Total Depression					-.13	.04	-.26	.00

Bishops' wives were given a total depression score produced by summing the number of symptom days for all ten symptoms. In attempting to build an equation for the total depression score, the number and age of children, the husband's and wife's education, whether the wife was employed, had someone to talk to, or was raised LDS, whether they live in a Mormon state, how long they have been in the position,

and the wife's age were all considered. The best fit, explaining 8.14 percent of the variance in total depression, uses the variables in table 6 (multiple $R = .285$, $R^2 = .081$, sig. $F = .001$).

Table 6. -- Relative Strength of Age, Time, Children's Ages, and Husband's Education in Predicting Depression Score

Variable	Beta	Sig. T
Age	-.233	.001
Time in Position	-.148	.024
Children's Ages	.068	.318
Husband's Education	-.043	.526

Since husband's education and children's ages were coded as ordinal variables, their use in a regression equation may not be appropriate. However, deleting them reduces the fit of the equation to $R^2 = .064$. In every combination of variables, age had the most powerful relationship (when standardized coefficients are compared), and age and time were the two most consistently significant or near-significant variables.

Since the honeymoon effect is a function of time, the relationship between depression and time was examined. The total depression score was compared against the number of months as a bishop's wife, and yielded a correlation of $-.133$ ($p = .04$). Though the effect was not great, total depression did decrease over time in the position. A regression plot of depression over time indicated that a change occurred around nine months into the position (up to nine months, the correla-

tion between time and depression is .156, but from the tenth month on, the correlation becomes negative at $-.086$, though neither of these values is significant at the .05 level). The mean depression score for those in the first nine months was 47, while the mean score for those over nine months is only 30 ($t = 1.85$, $p = .066$). Figure 3 shows the mean depression scores for each five-month period. The average score over the entire span is 32, and the mean for the first five months is very close to that. The second five-month span shows a tremendous increase in reported symptoms of depression, though. The scores fall considerably in the next period, but don't return to the overall average until after the first 15 months. From there on, scores are generally below the mean and never vary more than nine points from it, in contrast to the peak of 20 points above the mean in the second five-month period. Because of the great variability in respondents' scores and the relatively low number of cases in many of the time periods, the differences between means are not significant. This is also true when the time spans are increased to ten-month periods. However, the pattern is consistent with the t-test results. The fact that the mean for the first five months is right around the overall average, and then a sharp increase in depression occurs before a slow decline and relative stabilization is strong evidence of a honeymoon period.

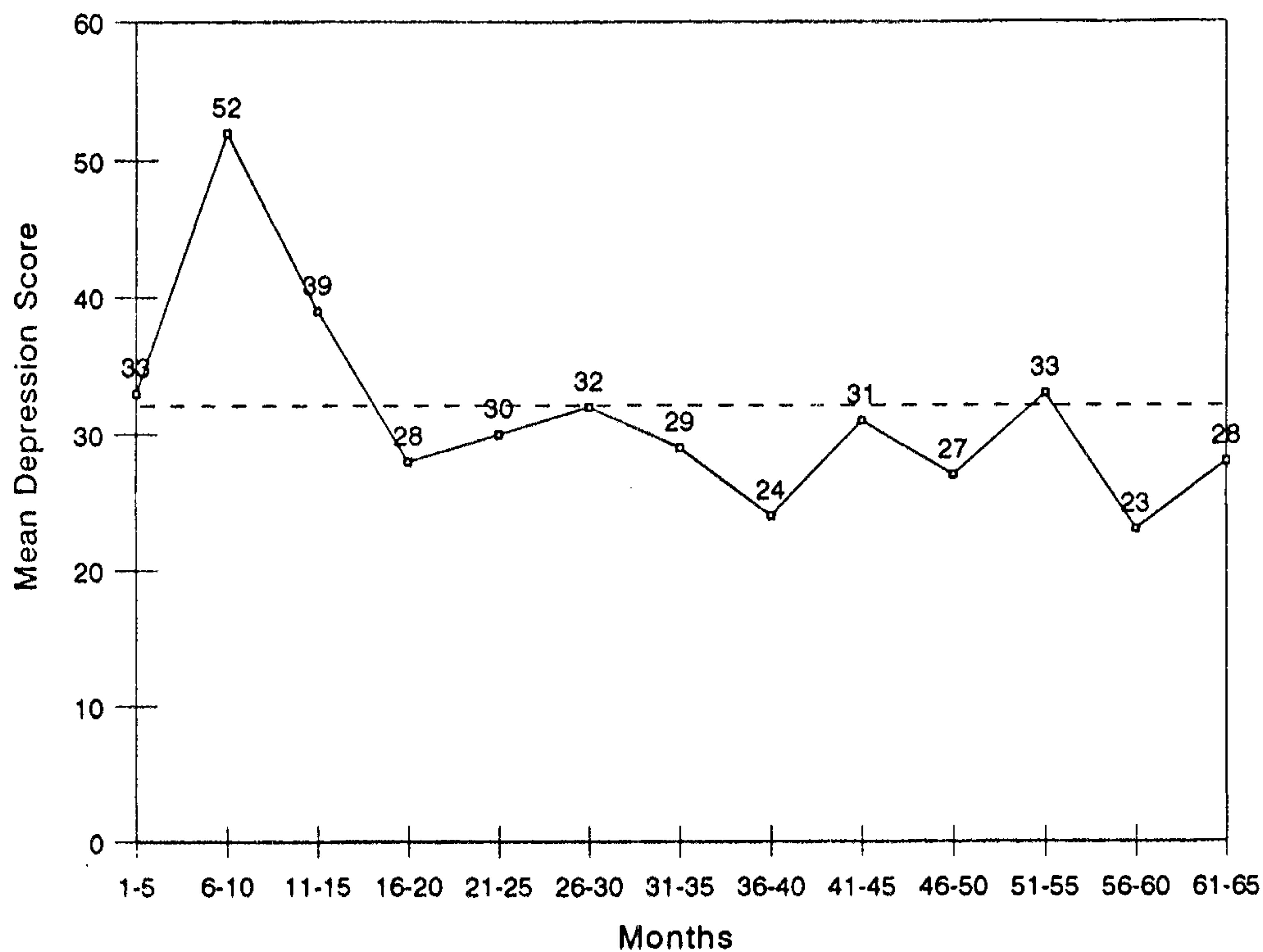


Figure 3. Pattern of Mean Depression Scores Over Time

Total depression was unrelated to whether the bishop's wife held a job or was raised Mormon as opposed to joining the church later, but may have been reduced when the wife had someone to talk to about the position (see table 7). Age had a stronger and negative relationship to total depression, with a correlation of $-.26$ ($p = .00$).

Table 7. -- Relationship Between Depression and Employment, Church Membership History, and Someone to Talk to

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	t	df	p
Employed Outside Home	no	138	30.8	-.28	243	.78
	yes	106	32.3			
Born into Mormon Church	no	53	35.6	-.88	243	.38
	yes	192	30.3			
Someone to Talk to	no	99	37.3	1.81	163	.07
	yes	145	27.6			

Stress Scale

The third stress measure was a list of items from the Holmes and Rahe Life Stress Scale, along with the stress scores assigned to each item. Respondents were asked to circle any item that had occurred in their family since the husbands had become bishops, and then to assign a score between one and one hundred to the amount of stress they have experienced as bishops' wives. Scores ranged from zero to ninety-nine, with a median of thirty. A score of fifty was both the end of the third quartile and one of two modes, being selected by 12 percent of respondents. (Twenty, the other mode, was selected by 14 percent.)

Though number and age of children, husband's and wife's education, whether the wife worked, was raised LDS, or lived in a Mormon state, how long she'd been in the position, and the wife's age were all considered in building a regression equation for the stress score, the best fit was obtained by

using the variables in table 8 (multiple $R = .245$, $R^2 = .06$, sig. $F = .004$), but these only accounted for 6 percent of the variance. Age and time alone do almost as well, accounting for 5.6 percent of the variance in the stress score ($R = .237$, sig. $F = .001$), and age alone accounts for 5 percent of the variance ($R = -.225$, sig. $F = .000$).

Table 8. -- Relative Strength of Age, Time, Wife's Education, and Someone to Talk To in Predicting Stress Score

Variable	Beta	Sig. T
Age	-.215	.001
Time in Position	.113	.068
Wife's Education	.039	.530
Someone to Talk to	.020	.749

Time in the position has a weaker relationship. There is a tendency for the stress to rise over time ($r = .108$, $p = .081$), and the increase is much more consistent over the first nine months ($r = .362$, $p = .063$). From eleven months on through the end of the second year, stress levels appear to fall or level off ($r = -.050$, $p = .685$). Though the linear relationship is not significant for this second time period, the change from the rapid rise of the earlier period may still be important. A t-test comparing the first none months to the remaining months shows little difference between the two means ($t = -.80$, $p = .425$), but figure 4 shows the pattern that emerges when means are computed for five-month intervals. Most of the scores hover close to the overall average of 36, but by

far the lowest mean was in the first five months. The score for this first period was 24, a full 12 points (33 percent) below the overall average, and the difference between the first and second period means (10 points) was the greatest distance between any two adjacent periods. The 12-point difference from the overall average was also the greatest distance from the average, the next greatest being 8 points. Though none of the pairs of means differ significantly (which is also true when the time spans are increased to ten months), the pattern again strongly suggests a honeymoon period of lower stress. Of course, caution must be taken because the stress level before the event is unknown and may be considerably lower than even the first five months, but the fact that the first five months seems to be less stressful than all succeeding periods is still evidence of a honeymoon period.

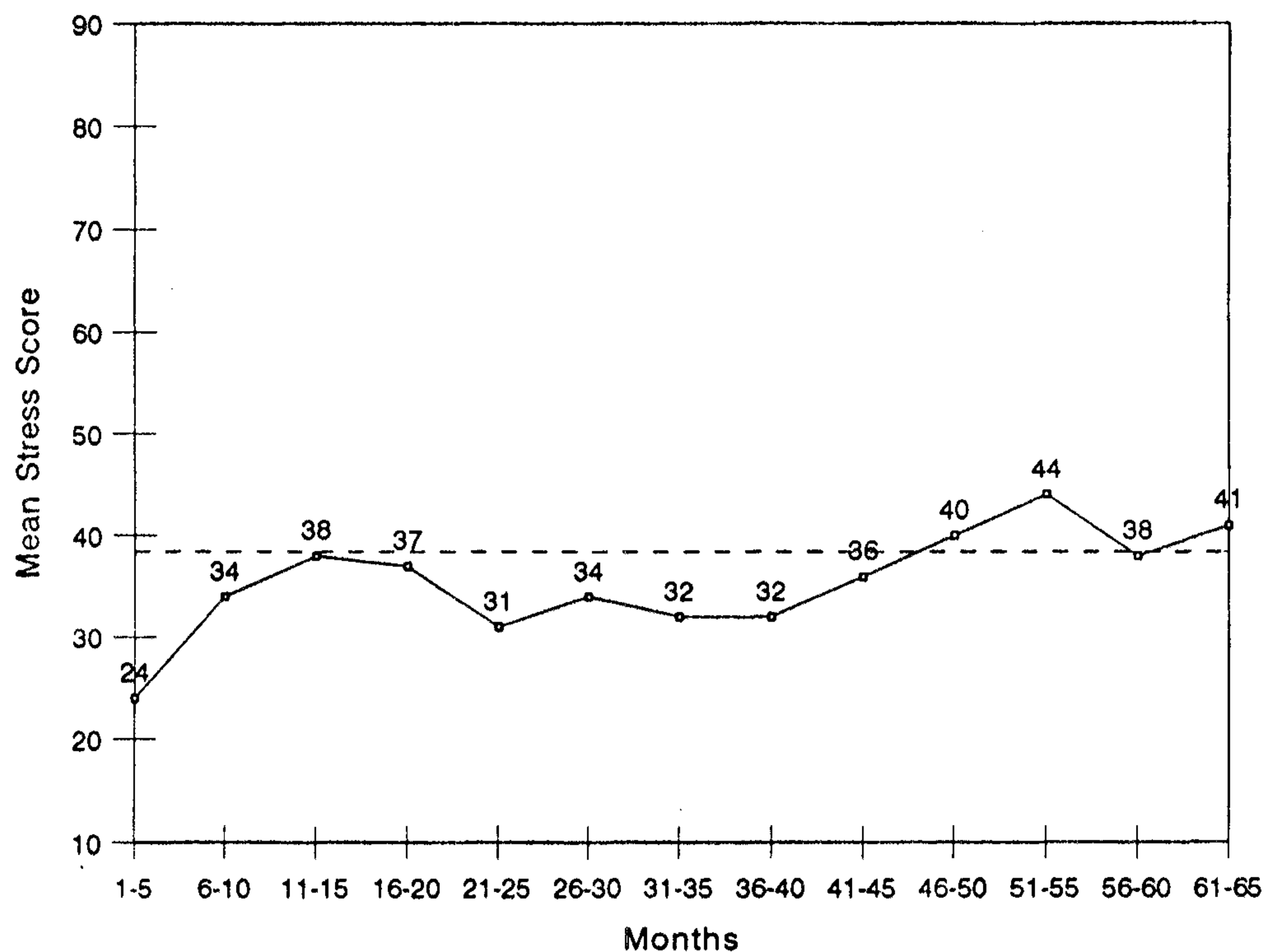


Figure 4. Pattern of Mean Stress Over Time

The stress score, like the total depression score, is strongly correlated with age ($r = -.225$, $p = .000$). The stress score is also strongly related to the presence of children in the home (see table 9). Women with no children at home ($n = 21$) report an average stress score of 15.7, while those with children at home ($n = 243$) report an average score of 37.3 ($p = .000$). In homes where there are children, stress is not related to the number of children, but is mildly and negatively correlated with the ages of the children ($r = -.124$, $p =$

.0556). The score is also unaffected by whether the wife has a friend or relative in a similar position to talk to, or whether the wife was raised Mormon or joined later, works, or lives in a Mormon state.

Table 9. -- Relationship Between Stress and Employment, Church Membership History, Someone to Talk to, State, and Number of Children Living at Home

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	t	df	p
Employed Outside Home	no	157	35.6	.15	263	.88
	yes	107	35.2			
Born into Mormon Church	no	54	31.8	1.38	263	.17
	yes	210	36.4			
Someone to Talk to	no	107	34.2	-.69	261	.49
	yes	155	36.1			
Live in Mormon State	no	113	35.3	-.17	250	.86
	yes	139	35.8			
Children Living at Home	no	21	15.7	-4.40	261	.00
	yes	243	37.3			

Education seems to be related to the stress score in a non-linear way (see table 10). Both depression and stress initially rise with education, peaking with respondents who have completed community college/technical school, then fall with increased education. The differences are not significant at the .05 level, but the pattern is consistent over the two scales. The overall rating follows a different pattern, to be discussed later.

Table 10. -- Relationship Between Education and Mean Stress, Depression and Overall Rating Scores

Educational Attainment	N	Stress	Depres- sion	Rating
Less Than H.S.	1	10		8.0
High School	35	29	29	7.7*
Some College	95	35	31	6.8
Associate Degree	41	43	41	5.8
Bachelor's Degree	63	34	30	6.6
Graduate Work	27	33	26	5.3*
All Levels	264	36	32	6.6

* Groups Differing at .05 Level

Overall Rating of the Experience

The fourth stress measure asks for the respondents' rating of the overall experience of being a bishop's wife on a scale of -10 to +10. The women had already been asked how they had viewed the calling at the time it was received. This fourth measure asks how they view it now. This measure was meant to test whether the wives continue to view the calling positively, in spite of hardships, and it does provide evidence of this fact. The scores range from -10 to +10, but the median is +8, the 1st quartile ends at +6, and the 3rd quartile is at +10. Sixty percent of the respondents gave the experience a score between +8 and +10. While there is a fairly strong negative correlation between the stress score and this overall rating ($r = -.308$, $p = .000$), the correlation is much weaker than would be expected if stress level determined the rating. In fact, 30 respondents gave a stress score of seventy

or more, but 23 of the 30 gave the overall experience a positive rating, anyway. Stress, then, does not cause a negative rating, with less than ten percent of the variance in the overall rating being accounted for by stress. In general, women with higher levels of stress will give a less positive rating, but most of the variation in rating is still unaccounted for.

All of the variables controlled for in building equations for the depression and stress scores were considered in terms of the overall rating as well. The best fit was found to contain the variables in table 11, explaining 12.1 percent of the variance in the rating (multiple R = .349, sig. F = .000).

Table 11. -- Relative Strength of Someone to Talk to, Wife's Education, Time, Age, and Children's Ages in Predicting Overall Rating

Variable	Beta	Sig. T
Someone to Talk to	.203	.001
Wife's Education	-.148	.013
Time in Position	.145	.014
Age	.115	.067
Ages of Children	.089	.153

As earlier stated, children's ages and the wife's educational level were coded as ordinal variables. Removing them from the equation reduces the R^2 to .096 (multiple R = .310, sig. F = .000). As with depression and stress scores, the rating is strongly related to age ($r = .169$, $p < .01$).

The overall rating improves over time in the position ($r = .198$, $p = .001$), rising most consistently and significantly in the first nine months ($r = .318$, $p = .099$). Respondents in the first nine months gave a mean rating of 5.8 to the experience, while those who had been in the position longer than nine months gave a mean rating of 6.6 ($t = -1.11$, $p = .267$). Figure 5 shows mean rating scores by five-month periods. As with depression and stress scores, the differences between means are not significant at either five- or ten-month intervals, but a pattern does emerge. The pattern differs from either of the other two scales. The overall rating in the first months is definitely positive, at 5.3 on a scale of -10 to +10, but the scores for the first fifteen months are considerably lower than at any other time, falling well below the overall average of 6.6. The rating rises sharply over the next two periods, falling briefly in the first half of the third year, then rising to new highs before stabilizing around the average. Regression lines for overall rating over time are almost always positive, no matter how the time period is broken up, so the rating does tend to rise throughout the length of the position, but the low period in the beginning is more prolonged and stable than in the first two scales. This pattern supports neither the roller coaster nor the honeymoon model very clearly.

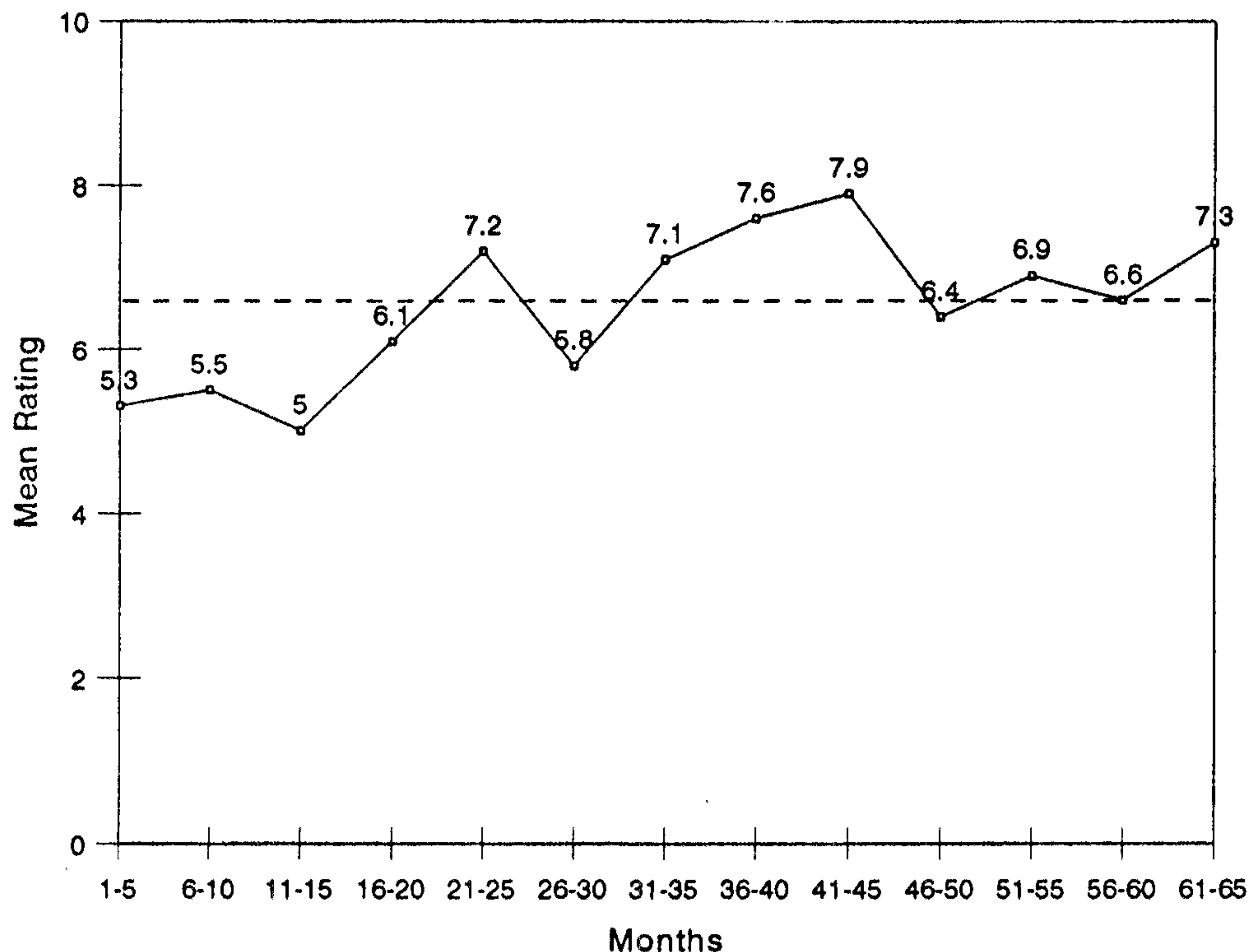


Figure 5. Pattern of Mean Rating of the Experience Over Time

The rating scale seems to be measuring something quite different from the depression and stress scales. Depression and stress are highly and positively correlated ($r = .457$, $p < .01$), while the rating score is less strongly related to either of the other scales. The relationship to stress and depression is a negative one, of course ($-.327$ and $-.330$ respectively, $P < .01$), but not as strong as might be expected. Figure 5 is not the inverse of figures 3 or 4, and the relationship between education and the rating score is unlike,

but not the inverse of, the relationship between education and stress or depression (see table 10). The rating, then, does not support either model, but -- since it does not more strongly reflect the presence or absence of stress -- neither does it disprove either model.

The overall rating improves with age ($r = .165$, $p = .004$). The number of children is not related to the rating, but the ages of the children are ($r = .195$, $p = .001$). Whether the wife has a job, was raised Mormon, or lives in a Mormon state had no effect on her rating of the position of bishop's wife, but having a friend or relative in the same position with whom she could talk about its special demands and opportunities seems to greatly improve her rating (see table 12). Those without such a friend or relative reported an average score of 5.69 on the scale of -10 to +10. Those with someone to talk to gave an average score of 7.30.

Table 12. -- Relationship Between Overall Rating and Employment, Church Membership History, Someone to Talk to, State, and Number of Children Living at Home

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	t	df	p
Employed Outside Home	no	178	6.64	-.20	294	.84
	yes	118	6.73			
Born into Mormon Church	no	61	6.92	-.58	294	.56
	yes	235	6.61			
Someone to Talk to	no	117	5.69	-3.47	191	.00
	yes	177	7.30			
Live in a Mormon State	no	125	6.40	-1.07	241	.29
	yes	156	6.89			
Children Living at Home	no	23	7.38	.98	292	.33
	yes	271	6.60			

Summary of Stress Measures

The results indicate that bishop's wives report few signs of depression compared with other Mormon women and with women in general. The stresses of the position decrease over time but, as predicted by the honeymoon model, total depression and stress scores were low for the first five months, then rose sharply in the next five-month period. Then the depression score falls sharply, and the stress score levels off and hovers around the overall average. Again, most of these relationships are not significant at the .05 level, but the patterns are consistent. The overall rating improves over time to a significant-but-slight degree, rising most consistently in the first 9 months. However, means plotted over time show

a prolonged and stable low point in the first 15 months that is not consistent with either of the other measures nor with either of the models. The relatively low correlation between stress and the overall rating supports the idea that high ratings do not necessarily reflect low stress, so the rating patterns do not necessarily contradict either model.

Having a job, living in a Mormon state, and being raised as a Mormon or joining the church later have no effect on the ease or difficulty of the position. Children at home did correlate with higher stress scores, and the younger the children, the greater the stress. Age of the wife/mother is also an important factor, but may have much of its effect through the presence and age of children. Several older women commented that they have enjoyed the experience of being bishop's wives, but would not have felt that way if they had had small children at home. Younger women often commented on the difficulty of raising their children essentially alone.

Having a close friend or relative who was or had been a bishop's wife was a great help to many women. Several respondents' comments reflected a desire to know what feelings or experiences are "normal" for a woman in this position. Many said getting together with other bishops' wives was a major stress reliever. The high response rate indicates a desire to share their experiences and learn what is "normal" in this position.

In summary, stress and total depression scales show a pattern that supports the honeymoon model, though not always to a degree significant at the .05 level. The peak of family stress seems to be around 9 months after the husbands became bishops. The overall rating does not clearly support nor contradict either model.

Difficulties and Advantages

Bishops' wives were given several statements reflecting difficulties and advantages of the position, and asked to rate how much of a problem or reward they were, if they occurred. In general, the difficulties were rated as less a problem than the advantages were rewards. Tables 13 and 14 list the statements and responses in order from the highest to the lowest mean score.

Table 13. -- Relationship Between Difficulties and Time in Position, Age

Difficulty	N				Regression Statistics			
					With Time		With Age	
					r	p	r	p
Don't Know What's Going On	297	2.24	2	2 (33)	.07	.25	-.20	.00
He's Gone So Much	297	2.11	2	2 (35)	-.08	.16	-.39	.00
Don't Want to Burden Him	296	2.00	2	1 (35)	-.18	.00	-.26	.00
Care for Kids Alone	295	1.83	2	1 (33)	-.09	.14	-.56	.00
Interference With Plans	297	1.83	2	2 (40)	.04	.49	-.13	.02
Can't Share Things	297	1.82	2	1 (45)	-.03	.65	-.13	.03
Model Mormons	296	1.81	2	1 (39)	-.02	.77	-.29	.00
He's Distracted	296	1.77	2	1 (38)	-.11	.06	-.16	.01
Can't Be Myself	297	1.62	1	1 (50)	-.03	.64	-.29	.00

Labels for values: 0 = not experienced, 1 = not a problem, 2 = minor problem, 3 = a problem, 4 = big problem, 5 = major problem

The most difficult problem, according to respondents' ratings, was the fact that while ward members assume the wives know what the bishop knows, the bishops are careful to keep confidences, so the wives know very little about what's happening in the ward. Several comments pointed out the wives' frustration in not being able to help others and even seeming

unwilling to help simply because they didn't know that someone was in need. A related problem, mentioned often in respondents' comments, was the difficulty the wives had watching their husbands worry, struggle with other people's problems, and carry a heavy emotional and spiritual load, even to the point of damaging their physical health, while the need to maintain confidences meant that the wives could not help their husbands talk out solutions. This was a major problem not brought out in the clergy-wife literature.

The next biggest problem is the time the bishop spends away from his family. Several other statements reflect difficulties in finding family time together, and these are rated as more of a problem than pressures to be a model family or the respondent's loss of identity in being seen as "the bishop's wife".

Table 14. -- Relationship Between Advantages and Time in Position, Age

					Regression Statistics			
					With Time		With Age	
Advantage	<u>N</u>	Mean	Med	Mode (%)	r	p	r	p
Know the Work is Important	290	4.40	5	5 (61)	.05	.38	.15	.01
Higher Spirituality	290	3.20	3	3 (36)	.13	.03	.08	.15
Appreciates Peace More	291	3.18	3	3 (28)	.13	.03	.04	.48
Attend Special Events	292	2.79	3	3 (30)	.13	.03	.20	.00
Higher Goals	290	2.63	3	3 (44)	.14	.02	.04	.45
Only Lasts a Few Years	281	2.52	2	1+3 (20)	.04	.50	.11	.06
Relationship with Kids	290	2.43	3	3 (36)	.10	.11	-.31	.00
More Independent	292	1.62	2	0 (32)	.07	.22	-.18	.00

Labels for values: 0 = not experienced, 1 = not a reward, 2 = minor reward, 3 = a reward, 4 = big reward, 5 = major reward

The biggest advantage was in knowing that what the husband was doing was important. Many respondents commented that lots of husbands spend as much time away from their families, but for less honorable reasons. Though the wives often didn't know exactly where their husbands were or what they were doing, they felt comfort in the knowledge that their husbands were serving others. Though the wives couldn't share the husbands' burdens, the second most important advantage was

that they could share the increased spirituality the husbands' experiences produced. A similar advantage was that as the bishops saw the problems others were having, they appreciated their own families more. The fourth advantage was the special events the bishops and their wives attended together. It seems that the heaviest burdens are those that separate the family and the greatest rewards are those that make them appreciate each other and allow them to spend special times together.

Each of the difficulties and advantages was plotted against time in the position and the age of the respondents. In general, the difficulties are not significantly related to time in the position, but are highly and negatively related to age. The relationship to age may reflect increased independence and a more secure self-image allowing the wife to more easily deal with her husband's time away, other people's expectations, disruption of plans, and the inability to share things. More obvious is the very strong relationship ($r = -.56$) between age and the strain of caring for children alone. This is a much bigger problem when mother and children are younger than it is when they are older.

The advantages are more mixed, with some related to time and some to age. In the majority of cases, if there is a significant relationship between an advantage or difficulty and time, that same advantage or difficulty will not be significantly related to age, and vice versa. Over time, the bishop probably learns the administrative routine and can turn

his attention to carrying out, rather than learning, his duties. This may provide more opportunities for spiritual experiences, difficult interviews, and attendance at special events. As a result, the family may experience increased spirituality, set higher goals, and feel the husband/father's greater appreciation for their lack of serious problems. These are some of the advantages affected by time. Age is a more important factor for other advantages. Knowing the husband's work is important may be more consoling to an older wife who would simply like to spend more time with her husband than to a younger wife who feels her husband's work as father is at least equally important. On the other hand, having the opportunity to develop a closer relationship to the children because of extra time alone with them is more likely among mothers of younger children than mothers of teenagers or adults.

A surprising result, though, was that appreciation of the temporariness of the position was not related to time in the position, but was related -- and positively -- to age. It was expected that the temporariness would be more important to younger women, but this was not the case. Many respondents commented that the position was physically and emotionally exhausting, and maybe this was particularly true for older women. Therefore, the temporariness may help them endure the physical and emotional demands.

Respondents' Comments

The following letter, written by a thirty-six year old mother of four who has been a bishop's wife for four months, so perfectly illustrates the positive attitude, the coping, and the need for an accurate picture of the pattern of family stress that it is reproduced in its entirety. It is a continuation of the question, "What advice would you give a new bishop's wife?"

Also -- call me. Sharing experiences with bishops' wives who have experienced many of the same challenges helps me to realize I'm not alone. There honestly was a time when I thought I was going crazy. Never before have I had so many curve balls thrown at me, consistently, one after the other.

Bishops' wives, it seems, receive a great amount of challenges -- a sort of fiery trial, I guess. Perhaps it is because the work is so great that needs to be done: discouragement on the part of a wife can hinder the ability of a husband/bishop to focus fully on receiving inspiration regarding changes in callings. Even though staffing a ward is an ongoing challenge, the initial shifting of a ward after a new bishop has been called can be crucial for continuity in spiritual strength of the ward.

The bishops, I feel, see immediate blessings in the lives of others as they serve. A wife, because of confidentiality, deals only with the adjustment of daddy/hubby not being at home, etc. And when he is at home, he can be distracted, called away, or on the phone.

The stretching that I personally have gone through since my husband's call has been completely overwhelming at times. Quite honestly, I was completely surprised at my reactions. I was and still am thrilled for this great opportunity for my husband to serve. However (and I credit the Adversary with the negative impressions), because of my unexpected reactions -- jealousy, resentment, frustration, sense of overwhelmedness, possessiveness, bitterness, and sometimes anger -- I felt unworthy and my self-esteem dipped. Though I have

felt some of these emotions at one time or another, never have I been so tested in my life!

I would consider myself as a very strong and committed member of the church. After talking with other wives, I realize that what I experienced is very common. This helped greatly in helping me to recognize the source of all the negative feelings. My husband, as always, was very patient and terrific in helping me sort through what I was experiencing. It seems the Adversary knew exactly what kind of situation to throw at me and when, in order to affect my reactions best.

You need to know that none of the emotions affected the relationship with my husband seriously. We have made the adjustments necessary to work things out. We've always, for the past eighteen years, had a healthy, openly communicative relationship. I'm certain this helped tremendously. I look at the past four months as a growth opportunity for me. The Lord only knows I need improvement in my life. In reflecting, it seems almost a nightmare -- one that has resolved itself almost completely.

It is a testimony to me of how great a work there is for my husband to do if the Adversary notices enough to hound us the way he did. What frightens me is the fact that most couples may go through this: what of those who don't survive?

I'm wise enough to realize that it doesn't end here, either. Funny, though, the damage the Adversary tries to do to an individual oft-times is exactly that which they need most for growth in their testimony and resolve to keep the commandments.

I wish in some way someone could have counselled us about potential challenges so I could have said, "Oh, here it comes!" instead of, "What is wrong with me?"

I filled out the questionnaire more on how I felt initially than how I feel now. I still feel the lack of our dad and hubby being with us at times, but to much, much less of a degree.

We are thrilled with this new opportunity for growth and learning. Overwhelmed and humble, feeling unworthy, but faithful in knowing that our Heavenly Father and the Savior love us and there is a work for us to do. God in his great mercy will make both my sweet husband and myself equal to the task at hand.

This letter reflects comments made on many other questionnaires, but brings them together very eloquently. The writer gave the position a stress rating of 50, but also gave the overall experience a +2 score. Her letter illustrates the weakness of the stress pattern statements: she describes it being much harder in the first three months than in this fourth month, and also says she's never experienced anything like it, but she chose Statement E as being the most appropriate. (Statement E is the one that says it's like any other calling her husband has had, only a little busier.)

The writer confirms the statistically significant finding that talking to other bishops' wives is a very helpful coping mechanism. Other respondents also commented on the importance of sharing experiences and having an outlet:

I've told my husband they need to have a support group for bishops' wives. It's good to talk to wives of other bishops and find out I'm not the only one with these feelings. Being a bishop's wife is one of the hardest callings I've ever had.

Or:

There have been many times when I have wished that another bishop's wife had written down her feelings in a book, just so I could see if what I was feeling was normal, and to see how she dealt with difficulties -- particularly someone with young children. Also to see how other wives dealt with their negative feelings about the call, and how they were able to get over them.

And:

Since someone asked, the hardest thing about being a bishop's wife is not having someone to talk to about the stresses that come. This business of always having to remain silent, only knowing partial facts and information when there is trouble, makes the position near to impossible sometimes.

Bishops are dealing with far more serious events than ever before, and wives need somewhere to be able to talk -- some safe place so that confidences are not betrayed, but where she can go to help her maintain a stable mental state so important so a bishop can do his job without having to worry about his wife.

Another respondent explained why the wives can't talk as easily to friends in the ward anymore, adding to the frustration seen in the comments above.

One very specific problem that has bothered me with my husband's calling is my fearfulness in approaching ward members in casual conversation. I am afraid to talk with someone other than a greeting, unless they initiate the conversation, because I am concerned that a question like "How are you?" or "How's your family?" might be misinterpreted. I have no way of knowing which families are having problems, because my husband keeps confidences sacred. But if I say "How's your family?" very innocently to someone in crisis, it may appear as if the bishop has told me things he shouldn't, and I don't want to damage his relationship with ward members.

The desire and need to share and compare experiences is seen in the very high response rate. Sixty-five percent returned the questionnaire in two months with a single mailing. Another two percent were received after the initial data were compiled, with notes explaining their lateness and stating hopes that their information could still be used (it was). Some recipients apparently lost the return envelopes, but mailed responses anyway, addressed to the university. Others added stamps to the postage-paid envelopes. One lady whose husband had been released as bishop passed on the packet, as requested, but not until after she photocopied the questionnaire, which she completed and sent in with the note,

"I don't know if you can use the input, but I appreciated the opportunity to share my feelings about the experience." Several wrote notes of appreciation for the survey and the chance to talk about their experience, or just to feel that someone was aware of them: "It's so nice to have my opinion asked. It's quite lonely being a bishop's wife."

Some respondents took the researchers to task for the negativity of the questionnaire: "I am not making light of your survey by making the position seem stressless and easy. However, by your questions I assume your premise is that bishops' wives are alone, stressed, and feel isolated. I have found this experience no more stressful than supporting my husband in any of his other church callings." (This comment is from a forty-year-old who had been in the position 41 months.) But the following, and very atypical, letter would likely not have been written had the questionnaire not given the writer permission to express such sentiments. The letter is atypical in that the wife is having such a negative experience after being in the position so long. She was only thirty-one when her husband became bishop, and age is a significant and important factor in how stressful the position is for the wives. Though this writer is having an extremely difficult time, the resources common to all bishops' wives (strong family bonds, strong faith, commitment, view of hardships as challenges) and the ability to cope, keeping faith and family intact, are still seen. Perhaps because of her age, this was

one of the few respondents who reported viewing her husband's calling as a negative event at the time it came. Significantly, she also denies having a friend or relative who has been a bishop's wife with whom she can discuss her feelings. Considering the great difficulty the earlier-quoted writer (of the lengthy letter) had until she talked to other bishops' wives and discovered that her feelings were normal, this woman's experience might have been much better if she had had someone to talk to.

I spent the first three years of my husband's tenure as bishop trying to browbeat myself into believing that I was happy he was bishop. I spend the fourth year frustrated, depressed, and trying to find a way to move away from the calling, since that looks like the only way he's going to be released in the near future. I have finally reached a sort of "eye in the hurricane" in which I am willing to submit to the Lord's will and await His release from the calling, but also an acceptance of the fact that I will never, ever like being the bishop's wife. And I think the Lord knows me well enough not to be too surprised.

I am proud that my husband is worthy to be called to this position and proud of what he has accomplished as a bishop of our ward. And I am especially grateful that I will never have to be a bishop, myself. I have shared the burden that my husband has borne the last five years, and have felt the weight pressing down on our family. I have seen it carve new lines in my husband's face as he's struggled to serve wisely while hampered by his own weaknesses. But I still think it is easier to be him than to be me. Yes, people get mad at him, but mostly they stand at the pulpit and sing his praises. He has many responsibilities, many concerns, much service to render, but in the final analysis, each person is responsible for their own choices and how they make them. He does what he can, and then he walks away, maybe even sorrowing, but he isn't required to fix it. But at home, in your own family, responsibility and culpability fall on the parents first. In the home the parents are supposed to fix it, you don't walk away.

Successes and failures are a long time in the making, and whatever praise or condemnation you get will probably be in the future too. It just seems like church service too often gives men an easy out on the home front. It lets them walk away, shifting the responsibility for toughing it out onto the wife's shoulders, while they walk in the spotlight, receiving the cheers for the successes, but no blame for the failures.

I wouldn't want what he has, but it is hard sometimes to walk in the huge shadow cast by a bishop, feeling invisible and unreal. Ward members so often don't even think of us as real people with real problems and real needs, like not having the phone ring at five in the morning or eleven at night. And when they do think of us, it's as someone who is supposed to meet their needs. They pick up a phone and with the push of a few buttons they come between us, never thinking they might be interrupting a fight or a tender moment or a family crisis. I think most of them never realize there could be anything to interrupt. Our worries, illnesses, needs, don't exist next to their urgencies, their worries, illnesses, and needs.

I was raised in the church, but for the past eleven years we've lived (outside the western, "Mormon" states), far away from both our families. Until my husband became a bishop, the ward was our family, our friends, our support. The bishop calling changed that, leaving me feeling isolated, even bereft for much of the time, because I lost my husband, too.

It's affected our personal relationship, too. My husband can't stop being my bishop, or my bishop stop being my husband, so that sometimes I feel like I don't have either one.

I've supported my husband, and supported him well, but I still feel guilty, still feel no virtue or victory, because I didn't like it. I complained sometimes, so doesn't that cancel out the blessings? I would have left my husband, but I happen to like him, even love him a lot. I would have left the church (and I never thought I would even think about that!), but I happen to love the gospel.

I have survived by reading the scriptures, learning to love and rely on them, and because I know with all my heart that God loves me, despite my obvious imperfections. I've learned that even the church can't always give me what I need. I've learned why people become inactive in the church, and I think that's taught me more tolerance.

I wish that this had taught me compassion, but I think I had more of that before this, when I still had illusions about how people accept help, before we had people calling to complain about their welfare orders or screaming obscenities into our answering machine . . .

Hey, you did ask . . .

Again, this letter is atypical, but the types of hardships the writer describes are mentioned by many other wives. This is especially true of the intrusiveness of phone calls, the heavy responsibility for the family that falls almost entirely on the wife, the feeling of invisibility and lack of identity apart from being "the bishop's wife," and the difficulty of watching the husband weighed down by problems he can't share. One respondent circled both -10 and +10 as overall ratings, and added, "Very extreme. I have, with my children, experienced both heaven and hell."

In spite of the negativity of the questionnaire, the "heavenly" portions were emphasized by most respondents. One rated the experience a +6 "and getting better as we adjust. We'll never regret it!" Another's advice to a new bishop's wife was, "You will have opportunities so wonderful that you can't imagine them. I'm so grateful to have had times that I felt heaven could not be one bit better! Your love for your husband will grow as you see him conduct a funeral with sensitivity and love for the bereaved family, put his arm around a troubled teen, stop to chat with a child, take time for an almost-deaf elderly person, and much, much more.

Besides that, you may feel Heavenly Father's appreciation for you! Nothing counts as much!"

Another wife summed up the experience this way:

The rewards have come in many, many ways. I feel like our teenage children, especially, have become more aware of who they are and the kind of example they are setting. I've had to use prayer a lot in coping with situations that arise when he is not home, and I am constantly amazed at how much I feel the presence of the Lord in our lives in helping us to cope and solve our problems, whether they be financial or with the children. The blessings have just been rolling in.

Whenever I feel discouraged or frustrated, I remember the wonderful people in our ward and the lives I have seen changed through the loving, consistent efforts of their bishop. I remember the families that have (returned to church involvement and renewed their marriage vows, but in the temple this time). I've seen the lost teenagers and adults who have been able to repent and come back, and the marriages that have been saved. I remember all the many people who have come to me and told me that my husband is the best bishop they ever had and how much he has helped them and blessed their lives.

It's moments like these that make my heart full and help me not to begrudge the hours he spends away from home. I am confident the Lord is taking up the slack for him here at home.

Overall, the respondents' comments verified that bishops' wives have their lives altered by their husbands' calling as bishop, view that calling positively, experience most of the same pressures and hardships that Protestant ministers' wives experience, and cope with these hardships successfully on the whole. Comments that give any indication of a pattern of stress over time usually say that it was harder earlier and became easier, but don't give enough detail to support or disprove a honeymoon phase. One bishop's wife who was interviewed before the questionnaires were created actually

said, "It was like a honeymoon at first, and then we went into this slump that we're just climbing out of now." (Her husband had been a bishop for one year at the time.) This statement was in response to an open question asking if she'd noted any pattern to the stresses she and her family had experienced. The questionnaire asked about a pattern, but in a closed question that forced respondents to choose the statement that most closely fit. Nothing more was said about patterns, so comments rarely mentioned them, except to say that things were harder in the beginning (In the very beginning? After the first few months?). Therefore, respondent comments cannot be used to support or disprove the honeymoon model.

Summary

Four measures were used to test the honeymoon model. The descriptive statements were of little use in determining any pattern to family stress. The depression and stress scales supported the honeymoon model, with the honeymoon ending and stress/depression peaking around 9-10 months. The overall rating of the bishop's-wife experience produced less clear results, neither clearly supporting nor disproving either the roller coaster or honeymoon models.

Whether a bishop's wife worked, was raised Mormon, or lived in a "Mormon" state had no effect on these measures, but having another bishop's wife available to talk to significantly improved the overall rating of the experience of being a bishop's wife. Having children, especially young

children, at home made the position more difficult in many ways, and this is probably part of the reason age had an important and very significant effect on all these measures and most subscales.

Particular advantages and difficulties of the position were ranked by the degree of reward of problem they presented to respondents. Over time in the position, difficulties showed a tendency to decrease, while advantages increased, but the tendency was generally not significant. Age, though, was an important factor, significantly reducing the impact of problems and increasing several of the advantages.

Respondent comments support the appropriateness of bishops' wives for a study of the effects of positive stressor events on families but are, themselves, only vague about patterns of stress. Most comments that gave any indication of the variation in stress over time simply said it was harder in the first year or "in the beginning."

In summary, two measures (the stress and depression scales) support the honeymoon model, two measures (the descriptive statements and overall rating) neither support nor disprove either model, and comments provide little information on the pattern of stress. The age of the bishop's wife, the ages of her children, the length of time in the position, and whether she has another bishop's wife to talk to are important factors that affect how she experiences the position and what impact being a bishop's wife has on her and her family.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted in order 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. Mormon bishops' wives were chosen for this study because these women all face the same stressor event (Hill's factor A), all have intact and strong families, strong faith, and a general view of hardships as challenges (some of the resources that are part of Hill's factor B), nearly all view the stressor event as something positive for their families (Hill's factor C), and they manage to successfully cope with the pressures of the position with faith and families intact. If there is a pattern to how family stress and time are related after a positive stressor event, it should be clearly seen in such a group.

In fact, the data did not clearly support or reject either the original "roller coaster" model or the honeymoon model. The already-low levels of depression among bishops' wives decrease over time in the position, as do most of the individual symptoms. Difficulties decreased in importance and degree over time, while advantages were rated higher over time. Similarly, the longer the respondent had been a bishop's

wife, the higher the overall perception score she gave the experience.

Stress and total depression scores suggested the possibility of a honeymoon period. Both were relatively low for the first five months, then rose sharply in the 6-10 month period. The depression score then dropped sharply over the next ten months, and neither scale showed such extreme shifts or differences from the overall mean throughout the rest of the time span. The overall rating did not indicate a honeymoon period, but it didn't clearly support the roller coaster model either. While its meaning is not clear, it does not give evidence to contradict the strong support that the depression and stress scales give to the honeymoon model.

Because the number of early cases was so small (25-35 cases used in calculating regression statistics), the results don't have the degree of certainty needed to make more definite statements, but they do suggest that a honeymoon period may occur. They certainly justify further research to determine whether these findings are the result of chance or reflect the actual pattern of family stress.

The need for gaining an accurate picture of family stress patterns in response to stressful, life-changing positive events is clearly demonstrated by the survey respondents, both in their comments and in their extraordinary participation rate.

While time in the position was correlated with several measures, other variables had a more consistent relationship. Age, in particular, was significantly related to almost every measure. As age increased, stress, symptoms of depression, and the impact of difficulties decreased, while the overall rating of the experience increased. Part of the effect of age may be produced by the presence and ages of children in the home. Having older children or not having children at home anymore significantly reduced stress. Increased age may also reflect increased independence, self-confidence, and experience, all of which might reduce the impact of many of the pressures.

Whether the respondent was employed outside the home, lived in a "Mormon state," or was born into the church had no effect on stress, overall rating, or depression. Having a friend or relative in the same position to talk to corresponded with greatly improved overall ratings and depression scores, and many respondents commented that talking to other bishops' wives was the most important stress reliever.

Implications for LDS Bishops' Wives

The woman's age at the time of her husband's calling as bishop has a very significant effect on nearly every aspect of the experience of being a bishop's wife. It would be simple to advise that only older couples with grown or older children be placed in the position by the church, but it is doubtful that age is a major factor in the selection of bishops. Still, the knowledge that the experience tends to be more difficult for

younger women with younger children might help such women understand why they feel as if they are handling the position less competently than older friends and relatives who are also bishop's wives.

When the bishop is called to his position, he receives handbooks and training. Several wives commented that a handbook or clear counselling about what their position can be expected to entail would be a great help. A small handbook could easily be developed from the data gathered here, describing what feelings and problems other bishops' wives have encountered, when the pressures seemed to be greatest, and how other wives dealt with them. The handbook would make it clear that not all bishops' wives experience these problems, but that they are not uncommon. The opportunity to compare experiences and find that what the women are feeling is "normal" could significantly reduce stress and feelings of guilt.

Another way to provide support and perspective to women in this position is to encourage socialization with other bishops' wives. Some respondents and interviewees mentioned annual retreats for bishops and their wives, and said these were tremendously helpful. These were not training, therapy, or "gripe" sessions, but were opportunities to socialize with others who shared similar experiences, and to get away from phones for a while. A semi-annual luncheon at Stake Conferences (a "stake" consists of several wards) would be a simpler

way to provide some of the same benefits, but might leave the group more open to interruptions and may not allow the degree of relaxed interaction a day or weekend away would give.

Ward youth programs might take it upon themselves to help a young bishop's wife take care of her children during church meetings, and to help the bishop with yardwork and household chores he has difficulty finding time for. Both these forms of assistance would reduce the pressures on the bishops and their wives.

It is difficult to discourage members from calling the bishop for needs that could easily be met by others in the ward without leaving some members feeling reluctant to "bother" the bishop even when they need him. Several bishops' wives reported that an answering machine considerably reduced the problem of taking confidential calls and messages, and allowed them more freedom from the phone's constant interruptions.

Finally, bishops could be encouraged to set and strictly hold to a specific schedule for church work, allowing only emergencies to take away from designated family time. Respondents whose husbands did this were very grateful and reported that they and their children were more easily able to handle his time away because they knew when he would be home and available to them.

Problems With the Study

The main problem with the study was the inability to adequately sample those who have been bishops' wives less than a year. Part of the problem was that the sampling frame was six months out of date, but another problem was that the questionnaire was apparently too intimidating for some new bishops' wives. This is based on the fact that three women returned blank questionnaires with notes saying they were too new to the position to answer the questions. It would have been helpful if they had answered the questions that did apply, especially the demographics and the stress, depression, and overall rating scales. The questionnaire could have had instructions to complete whatever questions could be answered if the respondent was too new to answer them all.

The other problem was the wording of the descriptive statements. Statement E ("like any other calling") was too inclusive and so general that no information about the pattern of family stress could be identified from this statement chosen by the vast majority of respondents. Other statements may have been too detailed or used too negatively-charged words and phrases, making the least detailed and most positive statement the only choice.

Suggestions for Further Research

A more extensive study of bishops' wives, including more subjects in their first year and using revised descriptive statements, should give more conclusive results. One respon-

dent suggested studying the bishops' families in the period after the bishops have been released. Studies of returning soldiers show the reintegration of a missing member to be highly stressful, yet the return would be a positive event, so such a study might be useful in determining stress patterns. It might be easier to include many "old" bishops than it is to capture new bishops in a survey.

Groups other than LDS bishops' wives who show the same types of similarities and have stable, strong families could also be studied after positive events. This might include families in which a spouse is returning to school, or families relocating for reasons they view as good for the family.

Based on respondents' comments, there is a definite need to know what pattern of stress to expect after a positive stressor event, and further studies should be performed in order to more clearly and certainly discern the pattern, if it exists.

APPENDIX A

The Center for Studies of the Family

at Brigham Young University is conducting a survey of the wives of LDS bishops. The bishop's family receives many blessings because of his calling and service. The family--especially the wife--also experiences challenges because of his position. We want to better understand what those challenges are and how bishops' wives cope with them. To make the study as accurate as possible, a random sample of wards across the United States was carefully chosen. It is important that the questionnaire be completed by the current bishop's wife in each of those wards. If your husband has been released, please give this entire packet to the new bishop's wife. If your husband is still the bishop, please take a few moments to complete and return the enclosed, confidential questionnaire. Feel free to add any comments, using the back of this page if more space is needed, because your feelings and ideas are important to the study.

If you would rather not participate, would you please return the blank questionnaire in the business reply envelope.

Thank you very much for your help.

APPENDIX B

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE WIFE OF AN LDS BISHOP

This study of the rewards and challenges experienced by the wives of LDS bishops is being conducted by the CENTER FOR STUDIES OF THE FAMILY at **Brigham Young University**. The purpose is to discover what the rewards are, what challenges bishops' wives face, and how the wives cope with difficulties. This questionnaire asks about **your** experience as the wife of an LDS bishop.

You are part of a carefully selected random sample of bishops' wives throughout the United States. It is important to the study that **you** complete the questionnaire. Your responses are completely anonymous, so please don't put your name on the questionnaire. After you have filled it out, seal it in the business reply envelope provided and drop it in the mail. No one will ever know which questionnaire is yours.

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your actual feelings and experiences.

Thank you for your help in this important project.

Irene Adams
Project Director

Bruce Chadwick, Director
Center for Studies of the Family

1. How many months has it been since your husband was called as bishop? _____
(If he has served as a bishop previously, check here:)
2. How old were you at the time of his call? _____ years
3. How many children did you have living at home at that time? _____
4. What were the childrens' ages? _____
5. How many children live at home now? _____
6. What is the highest level of formal education that you and your husband have obtained?

YOU HUSBAND

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Less than high school graduation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | High school diploma. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Some college or vocational school. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Completed community college or vocational school. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Obtained college degree (4-year). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did graduate work. |

7. Do you have a job outside the home? no yes
(If yes, occupation _____ and hours per week _____).
8. Were you raised in the Church or did you join as a teenager or later?
 raised in the Church or joined before age 12 joined at age 12 or later
9. At the time your husband was called to be bishop, did you feel that the call would be primarily a good thing or a bad thing for the family?
 good okay good and bad not too good bad
10. When your husband was called to be a bishop, were you and he given an estimate of how long he would serve in that position? yes no
If yes, how long were you told to anticipate? _____ years
11. Do you have a close friend or relative who is now or has been a bishop's wife whom you can talk to about what you are going through? yes no
12. What advice, if any, were you given when your husband was called as bishop? Who gave you the advice? (Stake president, previous bishop, previous bishops' wife, other ward member, friend, relative, etc?)

WHO ADVISED YOU

ADVICE GIVEN TO YOU

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

13. Read through the next five paragraphs a few times to see which one most closely resembles your situation as a bishop's wife. Though none of the paragraphs may perfectly fit your experience, which one comes closest?

(Check one): A B C D E

- A. "At first we were determined to do everything right, to be the best bishop and family we could be. For a while it wasn't hard. Then we found ourselves too tired, too tense, and upset a lot. Finally, we realized we couldn't do everything perfectly, and we concentrated on the things that mattered most. From that point on, things went much better for us."
- B. "When he first became bishop, it seemed that suddenly we couldn't do anything right. There was confusion about who was supposed to do what jobs in the family--paying bills, disciplining the kids, taking care of repairs, and such--and a lot of things were only halfway done, if done at all. Eventually, we had to sort out what jobs each of us would do and how we would handle other problems that came up, and how to arrange for time together. Then we were able to get things done and be a family again."
- C. "It's been absolutely up and down right from the start! Sometimes we're doing fine, and sometimes everything seems to fall apart. It doesn't really seem to get any better or worse. I guess we can just keep it up so long, then we crash, regroup, and do it again for a while."
- D. "In the beginning, it was all new and important and even kind of exciting. That made it easy to go to the extra efforts necessary. But, as time went on, it lost its newness and excitement, and became more and more of a strain. We still try to do all we can, but it seems harder now."
- E. "It was pretty much like any other calling, even though busier. It didn't cause any particular problems; but, of course, it became easier as we got more used to the duties and settled in the routine."

14. The following are some of the difficulties that other wives of bishops have mentioned experiencing during their husbands' term as bishop. Please circle the number that expresses how each of these statements relates to you and your family. (If you have not experienced an item, circle "0").

Difficulties	Not experienced	Not a problem	Minor problem	A problem	Big problem	Major problem
His calling takes him away from the family and me so much that we don't get to spend much time with him.	0	1	2	3	4	5
When he's home, he's still thinking about or involved with ward business. It's as if he isn't really home.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Something always seems to come up in the ward to interfere with planned time together.	0	1	2	3	4	5
A lot of things he's involved with he can't talk to me about, and we can't share as much as we used to.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Difficulties (continued)

	Not experienced	Not a problem	Minor problem	A problem	Big problem	Major problem
I feel reluctant to ask him for time, energy, or attention for the family or myself. I don't want to add to his burdens.	0	1	2	3	4	5
He is careful not to betray confidences, and ward members assume I know everything he knows, so I often don't know what's happening in the ward.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Our family is expected to be model Mormons--model marriage, model children, model church members.	0	1	2	3	4	5
It's hard to just be myself with ward members. No matter where I am or what we're doing, I'm "the bishop's wife."	0	1	2	3	4	5
He's not able to help much with the children, at home or at church, so I end up taking care of them alone most of the time.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Advantages

	Not experienced	Not a reward	Minor reward	A reward	Big reward	Major reward
Since he received his calling, we have set higher spiritual goals for our family.	0	1	2	3	4	5
He has more spiritual experiences, and brings that spirituality home with him.	0	1	2	3	4	5
He appreciates the peace and love in our family more now than ever before.	0	1	2	3	4	5
With so much time alone with the children, I have built a deeper, stronger relationship with them.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I'm learning to do things around the house or with the kids that he would otherwise be doing.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I get to attend special events with him that I wouldn't get to go to if he wasn't the bishop.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I know that what he is doing is important.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I know that his position as bishop will only last a few years.	0	1	2	3	4	5

15. Below is a list of ways you might have felt or behaved during the past month. On how many days during the past month did you:

1. Feel bothered by things that usually don't bother you? ___ days
2. Feel that you could not shake off the blues, even with help from your family or friends? ___ days
3. Have trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing? ___ days
4. Feel depressed? ___ days
5. Feel that everything you did was an effort? ___ days
6. Feel you could not get going? ___ days
7. Feel fearful? ___ days
8. Sleep restlessly? ___ days
9. Feel lonely? ___ days
10. Feel sad? ___ days

16. Below is a list of events that can occur in a person's life. Next to each one is an average score people have given for the amount of stress each one causes. As you can see, there are good and bad experiences listed, since good experiences can also produce stress.

a. Please circle any of the events you and your husband have experienced since he was called as bishop.

100	Death of spouse	26	Wife begins or stops work
63	Death of close family member	26	Beginning or end of school
53	Personal injury or illness	25	Change in living conditions
47	Fired at work	24	Revision of personal habits
45	Retirement	23	Trouble with boss
44	Change in health of family member	20	Change in work hours
40	Pregnancy or process of adoption	20	Change in residence
39	Gain of new family member	20	Change in schools
39	Business readjustment	19	Change in recreation
38	Change of financial state	19	Change in church activities
37	Death of a close friend	18	Change in social activities
36	Change in line of work	17	Mortgage \$60,000 or less
35	Change in number of arguments with spouse	16	Change in sleeping habits
31	Mortgage over \$60,000	16	Change in eating habits
29	Change in responsibilities at work	13	Vacation
29	Son or daughter leaving home	12	Christmas
29	Trouble with in-laws	11	Minor violation of law
28	Outstanding personal achievement		

b. Choosing a number between 1 and 100, how would you rate the amount of stress you have experienced as a bishop's wife compared to the scores for events on the list? _____

17. What are two or three of the best things about being a bishop's wife?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

18. What are two or three of the hardest things about being a bishop's wife?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

19. What are some of the ways you handle the difficulties of the position?

20. What advice would you give a new bishop's wife?

21. Though you may have experienced good times, bad times, or some of both due to your husband's calling as a bishop, what is **YOUR** *overall* perception of the experience, so far? (Please circle a number below.)

-10 -8 -6 -4 -2 0 +2 +4 +6 +8 +10
bad some good, good
 some bad

THANK YOU.

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Family Stress and the Role of
the Mormon Bishop's Wife

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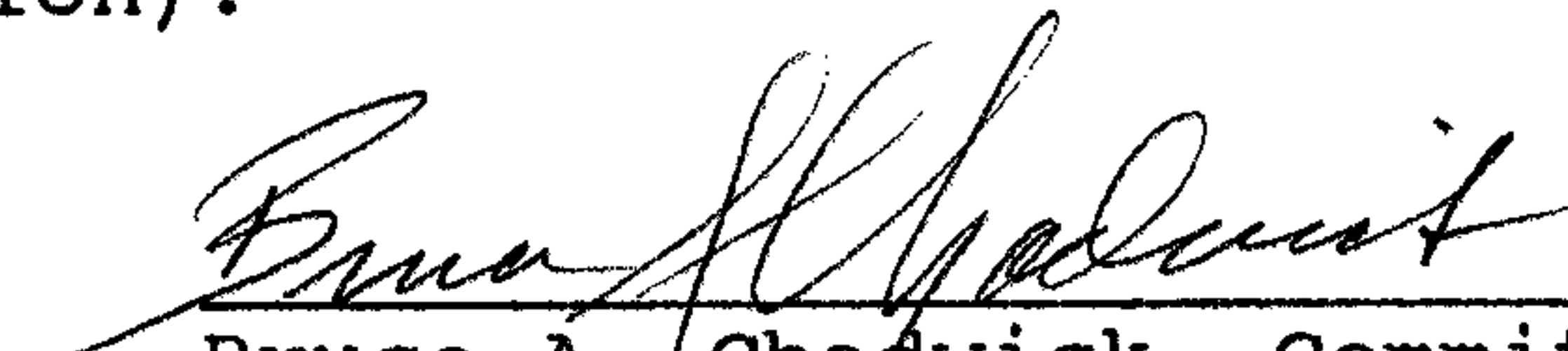
M.S. Degree, December 1991

ABSTRACT

A national survey of 289 Mormon bishops' wives was conducted to determine whether Reuben Hill's "Roller Coaster" model of family stress following a stressor event should be modified to include a honeymoon period when the precipitating event is viewed positively by the family. The honeymoon period was expected to be within the first year, and too few respondents were in their first year to give statistically significant evidence of such a pattern. Several measures did give non-significant evidence of a honeymoon phase, though.

Other factors found to have an important effect on the stressfulness of the position of bishop's wife were: age of the woman (positive effect), presence and age of children (no children or only older children at home is less stressful), and whether or not the wife has a friend or relative to talk to who is also a bishop's wife (which improves the overall rating of the position).

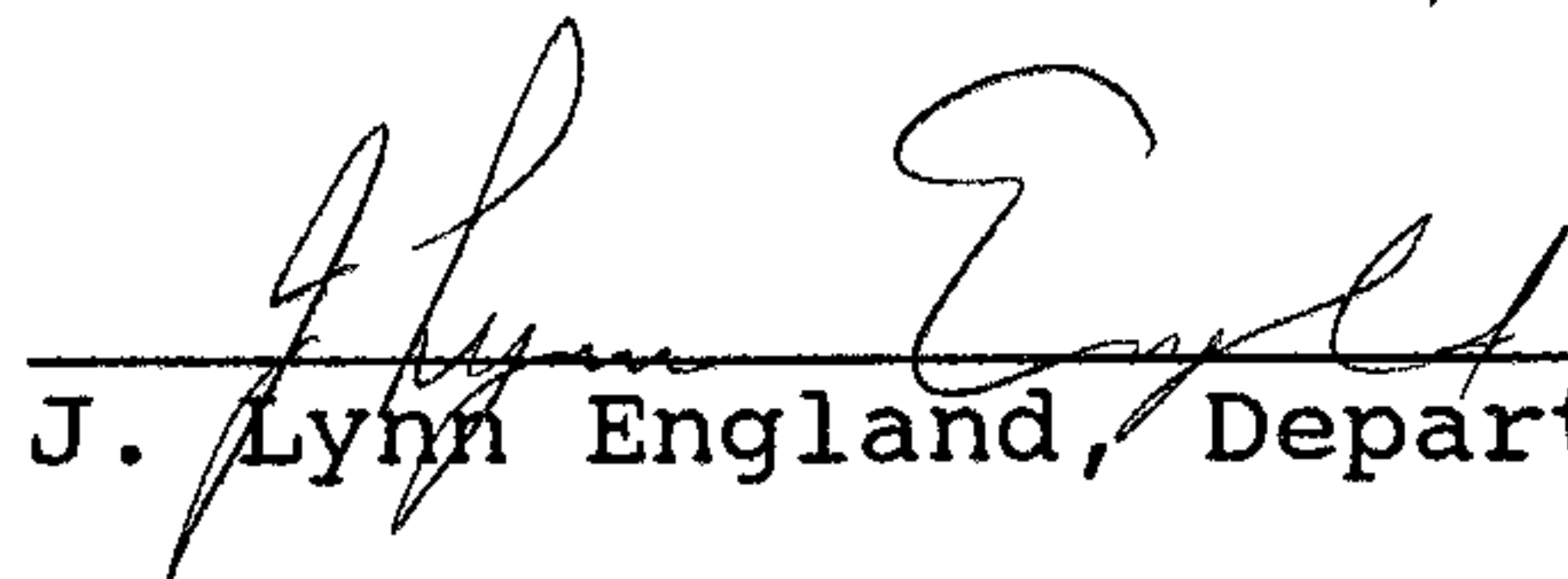
COMMITTEE APPROVAL:



Bruce A. Chadwick, Committee Chairman



Lawrence A. Young, Committee Member



J. Lynn England, Department Chairman