



## CLERGY CONSENT FORM

I, M. Wesley Buch ([wbuch@telus.net](mailto:wbuch@telus.net)), am conducting postdoctoral research at Toronto School of Theology (TST) and Vancouver School of Theology about ordained ministers and deacons of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) and their experience of church-based social wounding, self-criticism, conflict style, and depression risk in the current aftermath of the Pandemic. You have been invited to participate if employed or licensed for active, full/part-time ministry since Pandemic lockdown in March 2020. You have been asked to complete an online survey (20 minutes).

The results of the study will be used to update both Presbyterian ministers/deacons and governance about Presbyterian clergy mental health in the aftermath of the Pandemic and to inform both clergy and governance regarding prevention and treatment recommendations.

**Your participation is voluntary.** You may withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. You may decline to answer any survey item without negative consequences.

**Your participation is anonymous.** When you have completed your online survey and click on the “Done” button, your numerical responses are anonymously sent to my SurveyMonkey account, that is, there is no personal, identifiable information linking you to your data anywhere. This also means that I have no way of contacting you to thank you. Your responses are kept for 6 months and then purged. Within one month when all responses are in, I will export the anonymous database of these responses to the statistical software on my computer for analysis. Your data is not used for individual analysis but as part of an anonymous group dataset. Your data is kept in an encrypted<sup>1</sup> file on my secured computer that has a password known only to me. I note that the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board may seek a confidential review of all study anonymous data in order to ensure that participant protection procedures are followed.

Your responses together with those of hundreds of other Presbyterian ministers and deacons across Canada will allow an emotional audit of clergy depression risk and its possible association with church-based social wounding, harsh self-criticism, and conflict style for the sake of clergy care.

**Risk.** There is some risk of emotional distress associated with the study. Some questionnaire items about depression, anxiety, social wounding and self-criticism may trigger a mild to moderate degree of distress. Alternatively, the questionnaires may be experienced as cathartic and feeling understood. *Nevertheless, if you experience increased distress as you complete the questionnaires and you require help, please consider a call to a trusted friend or colleague, your physician, local crisis line, or your Employee Assistance Program.* All ethical requirements for human research by the University of Toronto have been met.

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<sup>1</sup> Data encrypted with AxCRYPT software (AES-258 encryption): <https://www.axcrypt.net/>



If there is any conflict or questions regarding the study, these may be addressed to my supervisor, **Dr. Christopher Brittain** (Dean of Divinity, Trinity College) at [chris.brittain@utoronto.ca](mailto:chris.brittain@utoronto.ca) (416-978-2522) or the **Office of Research Ethics** at [ethics.review@utoronto.ca](mailto:ethics.review@utoronto.ca) (416-946-3273).

You will be asked to check off a mandatory consent box at the beginning of the online survey. By doing so, you are agreeing to participate in this research project. You may wish to save a copy of this form for your records. The following is what you agree to when you check off your online consent:

- I agree to participate in this Presbyterian clergy survey which is part of the Canadian Clergy Depression Project, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto and Vancouver School of Theology, University of British Columbia.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and decline to answer any question without negative consequences.
- I am aware that all my responses are sent anonymously, that is, they cannot be traced back to me. My responses will be kept securely and confidentially by the researcher, Dr. Buch. My responses will become part of an anonymous group dataset; that is, I cannot be identified in this study. Rather, anonymous group data only will be presented in the study.
- The anonymous data of the study cannot be accessed by anyone but Dr. Buch. The University of Toronto Research Ethics Board may seek a confidential review of my anonymous dataset in order to ensure that participant protection procedures are followed.
- I acknowledge that there is a mild to medium risk of emotional distress associated with the study. If I become upset, I can talk to a trusted member of my support system, call my physician or local crisis line, or contact the counselling services provided by my Employee Assistance Program.
- I understand that this research study is independent of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. My anonymous data cannot compromise my position as a leader in the Presbyterian Church in Canada in any way.
- I acknowledge that the contact information of the researcher and his supervisor have been made available to me and I can copy this consent form for my records.

M. Wesley Buch

Researcher's Full Name

Researcher's Signature

September 19, 2025

Signed Date