

NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FOSTERING HEALTHY OUTCOMES FOR COVOCATIONALLY LED COMMUNITIES  
OF FAITH IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE, USA/CANADA REGION  
THROUGH UPDATING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A DISSERTATION AND ARTIFACT  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

STEVEN E. WINGATE

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## Doctor of Ministry Dissertation Approval

**Student Name:** Steven Wingate

**Dissertation Title:** *Fostering Healthy Outcomes for Covocationally Led Communities of Faith in the Church of the Nazarene, USA/Canada Region, Through Updating Educational Opportunities*

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We, the undersigned, determined that this dissertation has met the academic requirements and standards of Nazarene Theological Seminary for the Doctor of Ministry program.



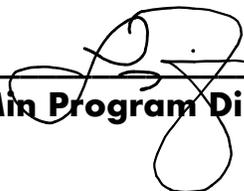
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**Faculty Advisor, Efrem Smith**



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**Second Reader, J Russom**



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**DMin Program Director, Levi Jones**

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## DEFINITIONS

- A. Annual Pastors Report (APR): A means for tracking critical denominational statistics from local congregations.
- B. Bivocational minister (BIVO): This typically describes a member of the clergy who has a secular job and a shepherding role (a dual role) with a local congregation because the congregation cannot fully fund a minister and describes a bifurcated experience.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the author describes that BIVO clergy see this as a temporary position to becoming fully funded.
- C. Calling: We are predestined to become and act more like Jesus (Eph 1:5; Rom 8:29-30). “And, if we do not recognize the variety of callings, we will likely choke out our participation by compartmentalizing structures by attempting to rank our call against one another.”<sup>2</sup> With this, people are called to general and personal vocations (Eph 4:11).
- D. The Church of the Nazarene’s (CoTN) denominational definition of bivocational clergy: The current CoTN research does not include a definition. An anonymous source from the CoTN research center noted, “The difficulty in defining what is bivocational (e.g., working for extra money versus having other sources of income; a working spouse, investment or rental income, social security, military pension, etc.). That is why self-identification is used in the APR supplement.”<sup>3</sup> It seems that this difficulty in defining who is bivocational is why the USA/Canada APR supplement asks, “Does the pastor consider himself or herself to be bivocational?”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Bivocational and Covocational: Definitions,” NAMB 2019, <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/rethinking-bivocational-church-planting-what-is-covocational-2/>.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua R. Sweeden, *The Church and Work: The Ecclesiological Grounding of Good Work* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), location 59, Kindle.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with source from CoTN research center, July 18, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Church of the Nazarene APR is an acronym for Annual Pastor Review that is conducted each calendar year to assess the effectiveness and trends of local congregations and regions.

- E. Covocational minister (COVO): For this dissertation and project, this role describes a member of the clergy or laity who does not bifurcate ministry and a position in the marketplace or obtains income from other sources. This view is a strategic evangelistic and financial decision that lessens the implied bifurcation of BIVO.<sup>5</sup>
- F. District Superintendent (DS): The role of the DS is to provide oversight and spiritual leadership for the pastors and congregations of the district by:
- modeling a life of prayer and devotion to the Scriptures
  - promoting biblical pastoral theology and practices among district clergy
  - promoting Wesleyan-holiness theology and practices throughout the district
  - casting vision for evangelism and planting churches in the district
  - resourcing district congregations toward organizational health.<sup>6</sup>
- G. Fully funded minister (FF): This describes a member of the clergy fully financially supported by a local congregation.
- H. Multi-funded (MF): This describes a member of the clergy who receives a portion of their income from a local congregation, the marketplace, and other streams of income (e.g., investments, marketplace employment, congregation support, social security).

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<sup>5</sup> “Bivocational and Covocational: Definitions,” NAMB 2019, <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/rethinking-bivocational-church-planting-what-is-covocational-2/>.

<sup>6</sup> Church of the Nazarene, *Manual 2017-2021*, (Kansas City, MO: The Foundry, 2021), section 880, <https://nazarene.org/manual>.

## ABSTRACT

Steven E. Wingate

### Fostering Healthy Outcomes for Covocationally Led Communities of Faith in the Church of the Nazarene USA/Canada Region Through Updating Educational Opportunities

Approximately forty-five to seventy-five percent of CoTN congregations in the USA/Canada region need contextual educational changes. Why? Many ministry leaders serve in non-traditional roles or as BIVO or COVO ministers, and their income results from different industries or sources.

To this end, this study includes a theological foundation, historical and key voices, interviews, findings from a recent district leadership survey, and recommendations that set forth a critically important perspective to fully support such ministry leaders within the CoTN USA/Canada Region.

Current educational opportunities rarely appropriately support the unique needs of nearly forty percent of all clergy who serve COVO in the CoTN's USA/Canada region. This situation leads to church boards and fully funded (FF) clergy not sufficiently valuing the COVO minister, laity, expectations, and their unique missional opportunities. Therefore, I propose a new and more relevant track for educational programs and continuing educational events. This project will often substitute the term COVO for bivocational (BIVO).

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## CHAPTER 1: NEED AND OPPORTUNITY

### Introduction

This dissertation presents the experiences and realities of urban and rural congregations led by BIVO and COVO ministers within the Church of the Nazarene (CoTN) USA/Canada. There is no delineation within the CoTN when determining if a BIVO or COVO minister is in a rural or suburban context. Therefore, other research projects should address these distinctions.

The research shows that the issues confronting our world today in urban, suburban, and rural require effective and immediate attention regarding adaptation in educating the large percentage of ministers and leaders having non-traditional streams of income.

#### Part 1 - My COVO Ministry Journey

In 2012, I was honored to become district licensed in the Oregon Pacific District CoTN. During this season, my family owned a business we had started, and we saw it grow to approximately one thousand customers. Simultaneously, I served in several positions in my district—as an interim pastor for a small-town congregation that included a ninety-mile round trip drive from our home. We served as Saturday Night Service coordinators with my wife, as a Life Group Coach for six Life Group leaders—and continued my ministerial education requirements at Nazarene Bible College (NBC).

During this season, I became increasingly curious why FF pastors often ignored those who served as COVO ministers at district, continuing education, and fellowship events. Other COVO pastors in this district shared that we felt like marginal ministers, not good enough, like the so-called “lesser than” stepchildren in fairy tales.

Happily, before I moved on to ministry in another district, this situation was beginning to be addressed by district leadership, which made a significant difference in our hearts. Yet the pace of acceptance of COVO pastors by FF pastors was not adequate from our perspective.

After growing our family business for ten years, we sold our business and continued in the ministries noted above. Later, a senior pastor in another district asked me to be an FF executive pastor. There was a dramatic change in how quickly other FF pastors accepted me as a colleague. I was proud of my past business experience as a follower of Christ. These experiences brought me social capital when speaking with congregants in business or with other marketplace roles. Yet I forgot too quickly the days of the relational struggles of serving as a COVO pastor among FF pastors.

Three years later, a congregation invited me to be a multi-site lead pastor. My vocational history continued to benefit in that context with hard-working farmers and business owners. During this season, the multi-site arrangement experienced a common financial pressure that many congregations in this district faced at that time. The multi-site was experiencing low cash flow, which created a situation where I needed to be the sole preacher. After preaching for these three congregations for more than a year, traveling approximately twenty minutes between sites each Sunday, it became clear that we needed to call at least one more pastor. With the multi-site congregations' financial barriers, the pastors we needed had to begin by being self-supported. Later, we were fortunate to find two ministers with the financial capacity to assist us. Eventually, as a congregational leadership team, we were able to find support for these pastors to serve as FF and multi-funded (MF) ministers. Many on the church board expressed their desire to convert all pastoral positions to BIVO for the financial reasons of the organization.

A year later, I needed to give these two ministers a six-week break by arranging to preach for each congregation. During this period, the Scriptures inspired me to preach the benefits of change and conflict for the body of Christ. I was so tired on the last Sunday of this series that my wife was kind enough to drive home. On the way, I sensed the Spirit reaching deep within me with a new call: “I want you to learn how to support bivocational pastors.” This realization changed my pastoral trajectory. This call led me to pray for discernment to see if I needed additional education and pathways to make this a reality. Therefore, I later pursued a doctorate at Nazarene Theological Seminary to focus on this matter.

My cursory research revealed that the CoTN USA/Canada region had approximately forty percent of its pastors serving BIVO.<sup>7</sup> Another significant percentage served BIVO for additional income. Yet, I found no unique educational track to support this significant number of pastors at any institution or degree program in the Church of the Nazarene USA/Canada Region.

The CoTN Research Services coordinator provided me with survey results to help show that the need was genuine.

“Does the pastor of this church consider himself/herself to be bi-vocational?”

	All Churches		<i>With Pastors</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%*</i>
No	2,411	47.8%	2,411	53.5%
Yes, it is necessary to supplement their family income	1,607	31.9%	1,607	35.7%
Yes, the extra income is not necessary, but their second career makes their ministry more effective.	213	4.2%	213	4.7%
Yes, other	272	5.4%	272	6.0%
Not applicable; the church currently has no pastor.	541	10.7%		
Total	5,044	100%	4,503	100%

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with research services for the Church of the Nazarene, by author, October 2021.

The Nazarene Research Services partially analyzes the Annual Pastors Report (APR) to help the local congregation and its leaders know more about their local context.

Respondents who chose to report their APR noted that approximately 40% of pastors in the USA/ Canada Region serve BIVO.<sup>9</sup> Three district superintendents (DS) who desired anonymity cited that the percentage of bivocational ministers in their districts is 60-75% when a pastor's spouse needs employment for retirement, debt reduction, and insurance.<sup>10</sup>

As I continued my initial research, I came across Master of Divinity (M.Div.) programs with a BIVO educational studies track within the Southern Baptist Convention,<sup>11</sup> the Quakers,<sup>12</sup> and the Mennonites, which uniquely support BIVO/ COVO ministry.<sup>13</sup>

Within the Southern Baptist Convention is a ministry called the North American Missions Board (NAMB). The NAMB offered a four-week online educational opportunity with Brad Brisco. One of the many things I came away with was a new term: covocational. This term helps ease the unnecessary and unrealistic realities that lead to bifurcation and labeling ministers as bivocational.<sup>14</sup> The BIVO and COVO must be honored and supported to receive appropriate education, and their stories must be told.

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<sup>8</sup> Church of the Nazarene Research Services, USA/Canada APR Supplemental Questions, 5,044 active churches, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> This data can be acquired by connecting with the Church of the Nazarene Research Services.

<sup>10</sup> All interviews were confidential; the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement, October 2021.

<sup>11</sup> "Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network 83% of all Southern Baptist churches report a Sunday School attendance of fewer than 125, most of these churches have bivocational pastors. Other evangelical denominations report similar statistics," FJ News Editors, accessed July 25, 2022, <https://bscln.net/about/>.

<sup>12</sup> "ESR launches Congregational Leadership Center," *Friends Journal*, January 14, 2022, <https://www.friendsjournal.org/esr-launches-congregational-leadership-center/>

<sup>13</sup> Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, "Graduate Certificates," Accessed July 25, 2022, <https://www.ambs.edu/graduate-certificates/>.

<sup>14</sup> Brad Brisco, "Bivocational/ Covocational Ministry," Online Lecture, October 2021.

Initially, I examined these insights to see if there was an actual need and opportunity within the CoTN more fully during a year of doctoral work at Portland Seminary. During part of that year, I developed a discovery workshop with stakeholders from various vocations. This workshop was adapted to help launch a further examination of the need to help me with this dissertation. The Holy Spirit helped me discover and learn how to support COVO ministers better. These stakeholders assisted me in obtaining a better understanding of what the real needs and opportunities were as I continued down the academic pathway.<sup>15</sup>

## Part 2 - Discovery Session Process

The discovery session I facilitated was fashioned to help me answer my initial problem statement: “COVO pastors are not yet fully recognized as pastors compared to FF pastors in the \_\_\_\_\_ District of the CoTN.”

The ten stakeholders invited included FFs in the CoTN, those who considered themselves BIVO pastors, a retired international missionary, a fifth-grade schoolteacher, and one bona fide BIVO pastors’ coach who works for World Impact Ministries. When it came down to the event, we realized that the number of people who could attend was eight, including my wife, who served as our recorder, and myself. My wife maintained a photographic story and note-taking for my review later.

Interestingly, during the introduction session, everyone said they felt uncomfortable and did not know why I invited them. I conveyed that I respected them and sought various views on my research topic. Three of the attendees looked back at the question and began to speak up quickly and agreed in unison that they wondered if the COVOs felt like a fish out of water, so to speak, in a group setting of FFs. That near-immediate realization is what I and

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<sup>15</sup> See the Discover Workshop outline in Appendix 1.

others felt early on in my ministry experience. That begat and invited more insights and questions about understanding this immediate disparity which garnered more sympathetic insights. The two FF pastors in our group confessed that they began to realize that their struggles may not be that different from the COVO pastor yet were more elevated, and they ought to find one and befriend them. These insights will be addressed later in this dissertation.

Following this initial engagement, we walked through a Discovery Session<sup>16</sup> where other friends who were project facilitators in another doctoral program had influenced me to adapt my research. The Discovery Session statements we discovered were as follows.

### Part 3 - Discovery Statements

Considering the problems surrounding the COVOs, my stakeholders felt that the congregation and learning opportunities were the most influential audience and needed to consider in the life of the COVO ministry. The second most affected audience was the COVOs family. Marc Donaldson addressed the COVOs family issue, which can be found further in this dissertation. Therefore, we addressed the congregation and its leaders, including the COVO pastor.

We discussed that the COVO minister has such a unique role that they are left out of discussions with other ministers receiving total funding from their congregations. As we sought to address this, the group discussed the fantastic opportunities CoTN districts and educational institutions would have if they created adaptations of current educational pathways for COVO ministers. However, the impact would need to be followed by mentoring and training tracks for the entire COVO leadership team and their congregations. There was a

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<sup>16</sup> See Discovery Session Guide: Appendix 1.

consensus on the need to begin discussions with DSs regarding opportunities between traditional and non-traditional strategic pastoral leadership entities and institutions.

In summary, local congregations and districts need to reconsider their educational pathways that realize and support the opportunities and needs of a significant population of ministers and laity serving differently than the FF. The need and opportunity reach beyond the clergy. Discounting the laity as less than others is not God's plan: "The laity are not fragments scattered about in culture that then become the church when they gather again for worship and fellowship. They are the new humankind, or the body of Christ, in both their scattered and their gathered form."<sup>17</sup>

If leadership and educational institutions addressed these ministry realities based on research, it would mean that the COVO pastor and congregation would think and feel celebrated. These ministers would be empowered, part of district leadership, bona fide, normalized, more equity and worthy, and feel included overall.

#### Part 4 - Critical Insights Gained from the Discovery Session

I began to become aware of various directions my research could take after the Discovery Session meant that I needed to set aside my initial perceived solutions. That was a critical orientation for me if I was to gain more significant learning to support COVO ministries. One learning point was that there are several options for my research to consider building up the COVO minister and their congregational leaders. Yet, core issues will most influence the health of the COVO and their congregational leaders and need champions in the district and university institutions. Another learning point was that there is a complicated web of potential critical root problems in the world of COVO ministry. One of those root

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<sup>17</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, "The Christian Layman in the World and in the Church," *National Christian Council Review* 72 (1952): 185–89.

problems discussed was that there might be a mindset of ministry leaders who had never had a vocation outside the church.

It was difficult to choose just one issue and the root cause of the problem I came in with, but for our consideration, we found a point of consensus for the proposal. COVO ministry leaders need unique educational pathways to facilitate healthier congregational views. A side note: I came away with a novel word I created: *permulate*. The session permeated my being and stimulated my endeavors for the sake of others to obey the Lord's call on my life.

#### Part 5 - One-on-One Interview Sessions and Insights

Each expert in the Discovery Session expressed that the COVOs they knew spoke about an undercurrent that something was wrong. They perceived that the COVOs felt lesser than compared to the FF. One expert thought I might not have introduced the topic well enough, leading each member to believe they could provide sufficient assistance and insights. This expert felt that a more straightforward introduction to each member would have aided them to feel that they would measure up to speaking to and discovering real needs. Another of the experts expressed that it is likely a problem that COVOs have a poor self-image issue due to not sensing equality among ministers or district leadership.

With the aid of one of the experts, I sought to clarify my research. For example, 1) is it better to encourage the COVO minister and congregation, or 2) is it better to adopt a new contextualized researched training program backed by the denominational leaders? One thought by this expert was that COVOs need training on being team-building experts, according to Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4 was a common theme addressed in my one-on-ones. I will address this further in the Proposed Solution and Methodology section. As team building

experts, we must attend to what Dave Ferguson wrote, “to seek God’s kingdom more than my kingdom, his power and purposes are revealed to us and through us.”<sup>18</sup>

## Part 6 – Synthesis and Conclusion

The Discovery Session of Stakeholders began with a brief introduction to the reason for our gathering, followed by a one-on-one session. Each member received a short written introduction and verbal invitation from me. Therefore, I believe the awkwardness the stakeholders felt had more to do with not knowing one another and working in different trades. If I were to hold another stakeholder session, I would begin by genuinely learning how to prepare better and adjust my introduction, as one expert pointed out. During the discovery session noted above, it became more apparent to me that the normal pastoral position has changed; it is like a shadow behind a person that they never look at, yet it limps and desperately needs attention. The changing condition of the pastorate is the condition we face.

Given the large percentage of COVO ministers in the CoTN, each member highlighted their lack of education on the topic, inability to convey their particular needs to academics or fully funded pastors, and not having this concern raised in this type of discussion earlier. Each member highlighted the difficulty in conveying necessary educational updates with the traditional educational mindsets of some denominational leadership and institutions. Additionally, they expressed that COVOs they knew of would benefit from adapted educational pathways to do their necessary work in their local contexts. I will address this in the solution portion.

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<sup>18</sup> Dave Ferguson, *Hero Maker (Exponential Series)*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 28, Kindle.

The one-on-one sessions gave me diverse views of the need; however, we agreed on my course of action. The Discovery Session for a group with diverse experiences and vocations created a guided yet experienced, free-flowing conversation with a successful outcome. We sought to address the opportunity and need to honor and implement new and adapted learning opportunities from existing disciplines for the unique needs of COVO clergy and laity.

Section 4 reveals new learning opportunities. These new learning opportunities take a variety of shapes. Many situations and concerns have presented themselves through interviews and research that this dissertation addresses. The first of these is stewardship of time for the COVO. I prefer to call them managing priorities since time alone cannot be managed. The reader will find later that COVOs and other leaders must adopt a shared leadership strategy to succeed. Paul the Apostle emphasized this in Ephesians 4:11-13.<sup>19</sup> This strategy will succeed if the pastor and other leadership will come to the freeing point of fully trusting and delegating ministry to others what they are gifted to accomplish with an eye on multiplying ministers and ministries.

The delegation practice has not been an emphasis in the church circles to the extent that it is in other circles. Instead, most of my experiences, and those of others, have been that the pastor is a boss. According to Scriptural principles, which we will investigate later, this is not a healthy perspective. Principally, the pastor and other leaders must take the servant position (Mt 23:11).

The church can learn much about delegation, as emphasized in business. Without delegation or shared leadership, a business will undoubtedly face a significant limiting factor

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<sup>19</sup> All scripture citations are from the English Standard Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

to growth. Delegation and shared leadership have been themes I have seen at every business level I have consulted. I also faced this dilemma in businesses I have managed and started.

During the economic downturn of 2008, our business lost nearly one-third of our customers in a few short months. God provided innovative ideas that would help restore and grow our business without delegation and deep listening to our staff; otherwise, innovations would not have been actualized. If businesses do not adopt a shared leadership strategy, as in delegation, they will face the most significant limiting factor to growth. So, to the church.

There are several reasons managers or pastors may shy away from delegating work.

They might:

- Think it would take longer to explain the task than completing it themselves.
- They want to feel indispensable to their team by being the keeper of specific knowledge.
- Enjoy completing specific projects, so I prefer not to reassign them.
- Feel guilty about adding more work onto another employee's to-do list.
- Lack confidence or trust in who they need to transfer the project.
- Believe that they are the only ones who can do the job right.<sup>20</sup>

One often hears discipleship instead of delegation in seminars or local congregations.

By limiting discipleship to their faith journey, we miss the fuller meaning of discipleship.

Jesus focused on faith as a matter of discipleship (Mt 28:6). Yet, Jesus and his apostles also spoke of discipleship as how we train our fellow followers of Christ in every circle of life with an eye on multiplication through love (1 Cor 13:1-8).

For example, in Matthew's Gospel account, we read that we are to teach others all we have been taught. Where does that teaching stop, and who is doing all the teaching? Matthew quoted Jesus as saying, "And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

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<sup>20</sup> Lauren Landry, "How To Delegate Effectively," Harvard Business School: Business Insights, June 20, 2021, accessed September 15, 2022, <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-delegate-effectively>.

In context, this was speaking specifically about the hope and faith in a relationship with Jesus Christ and the family of God. Does the point elicit that we must develop hope and faith in relationships, yet ask where that occurs? Jesus is quoted as saying that he would be with us always. His promise includes places where local congregations meet to worship and teach. The statement aspires to teach us that it includes many working in COVO and BIVO ministries.

Jesus spoke this command to the eleven disciples who had been with Jesus for the last three years preceding his death, resurrection, and ascension. Since Jesus spoke to all eleven, we can assume that taking the Good News throughout their land was being delegated and shared amongst them. For this movement to go throughout all the nations, it meant that the ministry responsibilities had to be shared with many: “As apostles of Christ, we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well because you had become so dear to us” (I Thes 2:7-8).

In Genesis 2:15, God delegated the requirement to care for and cultivate the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve. This Scripture says that God delegated to Adam and Eve specific work to do as his first disciples. God walked in the Garden of Eden, where these two resided, and disciplined them. Even in their failure to obey, God disciplined them. God’s compassion was still present through their disobedience to fulfill his mission through them.

Paul the Apostle, who many refer to as the greatest BIVO in Scripture, was familiar as “a religious worker earning his living.”<sup>21</sup> This means of living was an acceptable situation for a religious worker. The need for the people he ministered to while teaching, planting churches, and challenging norms also included meeting the practical needs of tents and leather works. Yet, in today’s traditional local congregation, having a primary or secondary

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<sup>21</sup> Luther M. Dorr, *The Bivocational Pastor* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), 8.

income beyond the church is not always considered an honorable venture. Secondly, I have known of local church boards which sought this ministry strategy only because they believed they lacked financial resources for a FF. Instead, this ministry strategy is a way to fund the mission and discover new ways to tell everyone the Good News that Jesus commanded.

There is an urgent need to reconsider the fuller extent of COVO clergy in local congregations. In the next section, we will look at the positive impacts of COVO ministry to consider and the neglected outcomes if matters of time and shared leadership perspectives are not valuable components in new and revised educational pathways.

From a larger perspective, we will investigate the matter of the COVO ministry from the viewpoint of literature reviews, expert reflections, dissertations, insights from personal interviews, and key voices that can offer valuable insights into this topic.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEWS AND OTHER VIEWPOINTS**

### **Part 1 – Understanding the Needs and Opportunities**

This section of my dissertation aims to interpret how to encourage flourishing COVO ministries from various viewpoints. This chapter also includes reviews of prominent literature, practices, and approaches for addressing underlying assumptions regarding contemporary views for and against the COVO ministry strategy. Furthermore, this section also addresses the need for educational institutions and district educational opportunities to adapt their offerings to the unique educational needs of COVO leaders and congregations in these ministries.

The array of educational opportunities is vast within the Church of the Nazarene, including, but not limited to, colleges, universities, seminaries, and a course of study leading

to fulfilling educational requirements for ordination. Yet, insufficient educational opportunities speak to a combination of traditional and innovative education or stand-alone training focusing on COVO ministry leaders and their congregants.

COVO pastors and local congregations have a distinctive kind of pathway for the sake of bringing the Good News to their communities. The following texts emphasize that God sends the church with the Good News. The curricula and continuing education must be adapted to support how COVO ministries engage with the Good News in various contexts. The authors cited in this dissertation will show that there is no better bridge to becoming a missional church than by having BIVO or COVO pastors who seek to influence communities with the life-giving message of the Gospel. COVO leaders and their congregations are the authentic missional interpreters of our time.

COVO ministers and congregations put forward a sustainable strategy for the church of today and tomorrow. A church with a COVO pastor is a local congregation that operates upon (and may even self-consciously understand) the pastor's two callings without them being bifurcated. "We believe the bivocational congregation is more likely to survive into tomorrow to do God's will and be God's people because it is essentially organized around spiritual realities in tune with God's redemptive work."<sup>22</sup> To survive and flourish in this strategy, one needs to research the underpinnings of COVO ministry in Scripture and key voices in this ministry.

The first step in helping these ministers is to find contextually appropriate education. In addition, it is necessary to locate mentors with a team building and multiplication mindset for this ministry mode.<sup>23</sup> The second step is to help them flourish. Green stated this emphasis within the Apostle's Creed, "All are members of Christ's 'one holy, catholic, and apostolic

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<sup>22</sup> Alban Institute, "The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow's Church?," *Congregations* 35, n. 1 (Winter 2009), <https://alban.org/archive/the-bivocational-congregation/>.

<sup>23</sup> Henry W. Spaulding II, Phone interview by author, August 31, 2022.

church.”<sup>24</sup> Hence, this step must assist the entire local congregation in seeing themselves as COVO ministers.

Regardless of one’s unique call, the Church is God’s mission<sup>25</sup> to love the world and always exists with intentional relation to God and caring for others. A call exists in local congregational contexts that seeks to encourage others to understand better who God is and what partnership with him requires, which is more elevated in a COVO experience (Gn 1:27-28, Mt 28:19-20; Jn 3:16.)

Though my research focuses upon the COVO pastor as a beginning point, there is a general call to mature, make disciples, and love their neighbor. In this work, the goodness of God must be modeled by whatever means and wherever followers of Christ find themselves (1 Cor 9:22). This would include the marketplace, places of worship, the family, and other unorganized or organizational experiences.

Amy Sherman wrote, “Conversion is the beginning of active solidarity with the purposes of the kingdom of God in the world. This arresting view of salvation provides a rich foundation for life as the *tsaddiqim* (called ones).”<sup>26</sup> Additionally, as Ephesians chapter 4 highlights, one may well receive a personal call to build up the body. The COVO minister and congregation have a more influential opportunity to do so in their local context due to the nature of the ministry.<sup>27</sup>

There is a clear Scriptural emphasis on God’s vocational calling for some to the pastorate (Jer 3:15; Eph 4:11-12; 1 Pt 5). There, we find the pastor’s shared reading and call

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<sup>24</sup> Gene L. Green, *The Church from Every Tribe and Tongue: Majority World Theology Series*, (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2018) locations 192-193, Kindle.

<sup>25</sup> Michael W. Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2018), location 68, Kindle.

<sup>26</sup> Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2001), Kindle.

<sup>27</sup> Brad Brisco, “Rethinking Bivocational—What is Covocational Church Planting?,” April 4, 2021, <https://gccooperative.org/article/rethinking-bivocational-what-is-covocational-church-planting/>.

to build up the body. The Hebrew verb for “to pastor” is *ra'ah* (e.g., to care for). This standard translation originated with the vocational assumption that a pastor took care of animals (Gn 4:2; 13:7; Jer 3:15; 10:21; 12:10; 22:46; Lk 2:8, 15, 18, 20). Figurately, God shepherds, feeds (Jer 3:15; Jn 21:16), cares for (Acts 20:28), and leads (1 Pt 5:2) his people, who are his flock.

In the Pastoral Epistles, one finds detailed instructions regarding how church leaders care and build up the body of Christ. Preeminently, these are ideas applied to and fulfilled in Christ. Christ is the premier shepherd for individuals and humankind at large (Is 40:11; Mt 2:6; 25:32; Jn 10:11, 14; 1 Pt 2:25; Rv 7:17). However, we need to note that Scripture does not differentiate between pastors who are FF, MF, BIVO, or COVO in meeting this mandate.

The BIVO and COVO pastor orientation is a relatively new research-oriented classification. The Bible does not seem to make a distinction between full-time ministry and other types. In NT times, the Bible does not indicate that anyone would have served strictly as a full-time minister and not need another profession or the freewill offering of their hearers. Sometimes ministers would be funded by wealthy patrons (Phil 4:15–18), but even then, they might still need a trade or other source of income to meet daily needs. Paul was COVO and has long been used as the strategy for this type of ministry (e.g., tent making). As the organized church was still in its initial stages before and during the writing of the NT text, it makes sense there was no larger organization to fund pastors of churches. While the church was establishing itself, many early Christian converts appeared to have been among the poor. So, they were unlikely to be able to help.

## Part 2 – Literature

The following are views from influential authors on the topic of my dissertation.

Dr. Dennis Bickers: I met Bickers after a recommendation to visit him during a discussion with the CoTN Indianapolis DS, Dr. Ron Blake. I read all his books to prepare for my interview with Dr. Bickers. *The Bivocational Pastor: Two Jobs, One Ministry* was the book that spoke to me most because it represents the BIVO bifurcated realities.

In chapter ten of *The Bivocational Pastor*, Dr. Bickers highlights a key point for the success of a COVO-led congregation, “The modern church stands in dire need of a true theology of the laity.”<sup>28</sup> This sentence corresponds to Paul's encouragement in his letter to the Ephesians. “So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11-13).

All congregations should practice this dialectic if they seek to be Christ-like, given that Jesus Christ works unseparated within the Trinity, which is the primary example of the Church working together in an un-bifurcated existence. Instead, the Trinity is the perfect strategy for the church to do what it is called: to be the cooperative, followership mission of God's love in whatever context. We will discuss cooperation more in this dissertation's proposed solution chapter.

Dr. Bickers highlights that BIVO ministers primarily serve in their roles because of local congregations' growing lack of resources.<sup>29</sup> This situation carries both benefits of helping smaller and declining churches move forward with the pressures of filling the gap of resources for ministry and personal budgets.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dennis Bickers, *The Bivocational Pastor: Two Jobs, One Ministry* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 2004), locations 1621-1622, Kindle.

<sup>29</sup> Dennis Bickers, *The Art and Practice of Bivocational Ministry* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 2013), 35.

<sup>30</sup> Bickers, *Bivocational Pastor: Two Jobs, One Ministry*, EbscoHost, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=937002&site=ehost-live>.

Rev. Brad Brisco: Brisco historically has been a church planter within the NAMB. He is also an author, conference speaker, and teacher. In an article entitled *ReThinking Vocation*, he shares that as believers, we must consider that there is no dualism or bifurcation in life as a follower of Christ. He writes, “Dualism, simply put, is wrongly dividing something that should not be divided. The Greco-Roman thought was that the world is divided into two competing domains: the sacred (spiritual) and the secular (material).”<sup>31</sup> My local congregation experiences have often revealed that clergy with multiple income streams or income outside a congregation’s budget are not respected as FF ministers. Brisco conveys that dualism: the bifurcation of vocations instead of seeing the benefit of a cooperative position, can be changed by those in higher leadership positions, educational institutions, and local congregations.<sup>32</sup> In essence, we need to honor the covocational followers of Christ: clergy and laity ministers.

Luther M. Dorr: Dorr highlights the fallacy of considering BIVO pastoring a “lesser than” ministry. Dorr writes that Scriptures like “you cannot serve both God and money” (Mt 6:24) do not mean that only the FF pastor is legitimate. He connects four arguments to this fallacy. First, there is no legitimate reasoning where one is led to believe serving God is only meant to be done within a church context, not in the marketplace or one’s home. Second, one cannot assume that a BIVO pastor serves money anymore or less than the FF pastor serves money. BIVO, by itself, cannot support this fallacy. Third, in 1 Cor 9:14, Paul says: “the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” This principle leads some people to believe that the Lord and the people alone must provide adequate financial support. Paul the Apostle did commend local churches who fully

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<sup>31</sup> Brad Brisco, “ReThinking Vocation,” Send Institute: Missiology, August 20, 2018, <https://www.sendinstitute.org/rethinking-vocation/>.

<sup>32</sup> Brad Brisco, “ReThinking Vocation.”

supported their ministers (1 Cor 9:1-18). However, Paul also described himself as being self-supported. Fourth, Dorr notes that a more accurate Scriptural review does not give proof that BIVO or COVO ministry is illegitimate<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Terry Dorsett: Dorsett wrote, “Regardless of whether the term ‘bivocational’ is used to describe the pastors or the churches they serve, many denominations and their various institutions, agencies, and theological educational programs have routinely neglected the unique needs of bivocational pastors and the churches they serve. This neglect may have been unintentional.”<sup>34</sup>

Dr. Dorsett’s book *Developing Leadership Teams in the Bivocational Church* speaks to smaller-sized church development and its issues, primarily about bivocational aspects. He notes that one of the most challenging aspects of this ministry is developing and creating a team atmosphere. He states his goal is “to help these pastors develop leadership teams so that they are not doing the entire ministry themselves.”<sup>35</sup>

His book is fashioned like a textbook and resembles the genre of self-discovery and self-help. He was referred to me by Dr. Dennis Bickers, another author who addresses BIVO ministry leadership. Dr. Dorsett’s value to this discussion expands upon Eph 4:11-13, and 1 Pt 2:5. 1 Peter particularly reveals that all Christians are priests of Jesus Christ. Peter wrote, “You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (I Pt 2:5). His words help us focus on the variety of functions that help equip the Church to be more representative of Jesus Christ in and outside the Church.

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<sup>33</sup> Luther M. Dorr, *The Bivocational Pastor* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), chapter 5.

<sup>34</sup> Terry W Dorsett, *Developing Leadership Teams in the Bivocational Church* (Bloomington: CrossBooks, 2010), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Dorsett, *Developing*, chapter 10.

Dr. Dorsett addresses current trends within local congregations in the USA. The heartbeat of his work is that smaller-sized local congregations will not function healthily and will face closure if the concept of team leadership is not incorporated into their cultures.<sup>36</sup> I argue that this must be a mandate in all congregations if we are to make disciples who make disciples.

Though this text focuses on small, rural congregations, the lessons do seem to be transferable to urban settings because it is typical that both contexts have BIVO pastors while frequently neglected. My research shows that this is particularly applicable when finding resources, conferences, and training that meet the distinctive needs of bivocational pastors and their congregations. Reading this text gave the impression that the public or church at large assumes most BIVO pastors are in rural settings, which is not necessarily true.

Dr. Mark Edington addresses the BIVO ministry in the most thorough way of the texts I have read. He lays out solutions to pastors' concerns, telling them how to de-escalate concerns into short-term fixes. His work also highlights that a pastor and congregation can adapt healthily to COVO leadership. He states that if fundamental changes do not occur within a COVO or BIVO-led congregation, it will simply become one of the many things that tried to reduce expenses but were not proven effective in Kingdom work.<sup>37</sup>

Edington inspires us to consider that whatever the view we take on this subject, becoming COVO is not just for the pastor but also for the congregation. Churches need to reframe their expectations of the pastor and consider the many roles that other non-clergy parishioners might be able to fulfill. Edington declares that this outcome “is a task for leadership, and the result of both prayer and planning.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Dorsett, *Developing*, chapter 10.

<sup>37</sup> Mark D. W. Edington, *Bivocational: Returning to the Roots of Ministry* (New York: Church Publishing, 2018), Chapter 4, Kindle.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

Andrew Hamilton: Hamilton's work entitled *The Future Is Bivocational: Shaping Christian Leaders for A Post-Christian World* is the best text currently available to help lay out the call to action for the BIVO and COVO clergy. It describes a helpful process for deciding to enter this ministerial strategy. Indirectly, it provides realistic expectations that clergy and laity can glean from the massive opportunities for sharing the Gospel and the personal costs associated with this ministry mode. The author provides recommendations for time management, suggests employment ideas that support the need of a pastor who needs the flexibility to meet the demands of both arenas and helps a congregation understand its responsibilities and obligations, whether serving in an FF or COVO ministry.<sup>39</sup>

Dr. Darryl Stephens: In *Bivocational and Beyond: Educating for Thriving Multivocational Ministry*, Stephens speaks to several warnings and benefits of BIVO ministry noted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though the challenges and warnings should not be overlooked while seeking to do ministry differently than the FF strategy, he writes about the advantages BIVO ministers have because of their marketplace skillsets opening up new opportunities.”

Today, many churches providing valuable ministries in their communities would not survive without bivocational ministers. Small member congregations are being pressured to close their buildings or adapt by combining church parishes, sharing a full-time pastor, or hiring a bivocational pastor. These changes may be prompted by financial necessity, but bivocational pastors are more than simply an answer to decreased congregational budgets. Bivocational ministry can be an opportunity to revitalize the church in mission to the community at large, including ministries with young people, the elderly, and shut-in members of the parish.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. Ed Stetzer: Stetzer wrote, “Already, more than one-third of all American pastors are bivocational, and this number will probably grow.”<sup>41</sup> Dr. Stetzer reflected upon the

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<sup>39</sup> Andrew Hamilton, *The Future is Bivocational: Shaping Christian Leaders for a Post-Christian World* (Ark House Press, 2022).

<sup>40</sup> Darryl W. Stephens ed., *Bivocational and Beyond Educating for Thriving Multivocational Ministry* (Chicago: Atla Press, 2022), 54.

<sup>41</sup> Ed Stetzer, “Bivocational Ministry as an Evangelism Opportunity: One-third of American Pastors are Bivocational,” Coronavirus and the Church, Wheaton College, Billy Graham Center, November 2, 2017, <http://bgcrebuild.projectworldimpact.com/bivocational-ministry-as-an-evangelism-opportunity/>.

strengths and benefits of the COVO pastor. He notes that these strengths come from their marketplace experiences. These pastors are trained in technical areas, finance, and teamwork in the workplace and are typically held accountable for their impacts, outcomes, and cooperation. The effect of our cultures, especially in the USA, is growing increasingly secular. This point is another example that bolsters the need and opportunity for new educational pathways for the COVO and BIVO ministries.

Reading Stetzer's writings, he often compliments several ideas from the authors noted previously. The BIVO and COVO pastors in the workplace can better refute the idea that pastors only work in church offices. Also, he honors the idea that BIVO and COVO relational bonds can help facilitate strong ties in the community.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. David Wright: Reading David Wright's book *How God Makes the World A Better Place: A Wesleyan Primer on Faith, Work, and Economic Transformation*, drew me to John Wesley's view of how far sanctification reaches. "Godly work is not defined by what one does but by the way one does it."<sup>43</sup>

Wright's view of Wesley's theology of being a Christian and earning one's income apart from a local congregation is far more than a means to an end. His view speaks to more prominent themes like my theory that a Christian pastor does not stop being a Christian when they leave their place of worship and earn income besides or in total from other sources than congregational support.

In summary, he encourages us to strongly consider that COVO and BIVO pastors are uniquely positioned to live out their pastoral calling with missionary-like skills to local communities. As a well-equipped and gifted emissary of the Gospel, Wright emphasizes that

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<sup>42</sup> Stetzer, "Bivocational."

<sup>43</sup> David Wright, *How God Makes the World A Better Place: A Wesleyan Primer on Faith, Work, and Economic Transformation* (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2012), 112, Kindle.

“these ministers can lead their congregations by demonstrating the power of evangelism to build the local Church.”<sup>44</sup> Evangelism, part of the discipleship process, is a reasonable expectation of any pastor; the BIVO and COVO pastors probably have a unique advantage in this area. However, I found no empirical data to support the assumption.

Dr. James Scott, Jr.

This author tells readers that BIVO is an idea that he thinks is bad.<sup>45</sup> Scott's article details serious concerns when considering BIVO or COVO ministry. Time management is the primary contention he points to for avoiding this ministry strategy. He addresses that a BIVO pastor will experience less time for God, family, shepherding, and the essential things in life. I will address these valid concerns later in my report.

This ministry strategy makes the pastor and congregation much closer to the call of the Gospel and their community. The closer a pastor is to their community, the better the community can see pastors have a unique vocation, stepping out from behind the pulpit to weep, pray, and live out their faith more consistently with more mutual respect. These experiences create more immediate intersections between those who do not know God's love for all, as told us in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

### Part 3 – Dissertations

The following dissertations will help reveal different benefits, challenges, and creative aspects of the COVO and BIVO ministry within local contexts.

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<sup>44</sup> Wright, *Better Place*, 112.

<sup>45</sup> James Scott Jr., “Why I Think Bivocational Ministry Is a Bad Idea When It Isn't Necessary,” *Church Leaders*, October 10, 2022, <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/396093-why-i-think-bi-vocational-ministry-is-a-bad-idea-when-it-isnt-necessary.html>.

Dr. Aaron Peterson: Of the seven dissertations I reviewed, Dr. Peterson provided the most precise and detailed model for better care for “Working Priests.” He supports this need by ministering within the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA. His dissertation and work are based upon surveys, his serving fifteen years in BIVO pastoral ministry, and his being a public school teacher.

Dr. Peterson is a “Working Priest” (pastor) within the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA. His dissertation began with these compassionate words. “To the working priests all over the world who are called and gifted to minister in what seems like two different worlds.”<sup>46</sup> His goal was to help research this statement, “The impact could be dramatically increased if Vineyard working priests were better cared for and resourced.”<sup>47</sup>

He wrote about the problem and his evaluations of how to better care for BIVO pastors. He seeks to change the term BIVO to “Working Priest.” To his credit, he garnered a one-million-dollar grant from the Lilly Foundation to help support BIVO pastors in the Association of Vineyard Churches, USA. Further research on this type of funding will be considered as the following steps while seeking to engage in and establish an innovative learning hub for COVO and BIVO ministers and their congregations.

Dr. Jeffrey Todd Barker: Barker’s initial focus for his project quickly changed following a disappointing set of testimonies by pastors in a district assembly of the CoTN. As he listened, he pondered with a profound concern: “What might congregational faithfulness look like in the context in which I find myself? How might any congregational faithfulness be identified and celebrated? In what ways might acts of congregational unfaithfulness be

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<sup>46</sup> Aaron Peterson, “Working Priests: Improving Care for Vineyard Bivocational Pastors” (D. Min diss., Portland University, 2018), iii, <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/254/>.

<sup>47</sup> Peterson, “Working Priests,” iii.

confessed and forgiven? What does it mean to be a faithful pastor? What might pastoral faithfulness look like in vivo?”<sup>48</sup>

His project examined whether a congregation that cannot financially support a pastor automatically indicates a congregation is in crisis. Historically, when congregations consider calling a full-time pastor, they determine the minimum salary necessary for a pastor considered full-time. This was an approach taken by his District Finance Committee. His question from this was, “If a congregation can’t afford a full-time pastor, should they be a church-in-crisis?”<sup>49</sup> This condition is also a concern of Warren Seibert. He noted in *The Calling of a Part-Time Pastor* that a deeper study of the BIVO and COVO ministry “will elevate you in your calling, reminding you that your service and your church is holy and indispensable, and will serve as a valuable guide to effective and faithful part-time or bivocational ministry.”<sup>50</sup> Both authors seem to argue against the idea that a congregation calling a part-time pastor or a pastor with different limitations (such as unique time constraints) indicates a congregation in crisis.

Labeling these situations as critical for a local congregation reveals a bothersome perspective because God is the primary source of an optimistic life and has creative means of giving and sustaining his mission. He can provide options that may differ from how local congregations or people groups have always lived (Phil 4:19).

People—clergy and laity alike—need finances in the church. Nevertheless, finances are not the final determinant of one’s call: God is able if people are willing to explore new pathways (Is 55:8). My grandfather served in more than twenty ministerial roles, planting

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<sup>48</sup> Jeffrey Todd Barker, “Participating Faithfully: Re-Imagining Congregational Assessment As An Ecclesial Practice,” (DMin diss., Nazarene Theological Seminary, 2018), 12.

<sup>49</sup> Barker, “Participating Faithfully,” 17.

<sup>50</sup> Warren Seibert, *The Calling of a Part-Time Pastor: A Guidebook for Small Church Leaders* (Bloomington: WestBow Press, 2016), locations 53-56, Kindle.

twelve churches, starting radio stations, creating rescue missions, and filling chaplaincies. He urged me never to take a ministry based on the dollar. If we do, the dollar becomes God, and we will limit our recognition of God's ability to engage in our lives and ministries.

Reflecting upon Dr. Barker's concern about a church in crisis, it seems that we limit God's creative capacity by indicating a congregation is in crisis if they cannot have an FF pastor. This perspective intimates a poor view of God, a stewardship problem in the congregation, and the need to shift one's perspective of pastoral ministry and how it is done.

Finally, Dr. Barker's research reveals the need to honor the non-traditionally financed clergy better and for us to reconsider what being a more faithful follower of Christ is within his church for the sake of others seeking to make a living in the marketplace.

Dr. Diane Zaerr Brenneman: Of the seven dissertations reviewed, Brenneman provided the best analysis of the impediments to becoming a COVO pastor. According to her research, the most significant stumbling blocks are a pastor's debt and the brief duration of ministry service. These two pieces create a stress level that is often too high for a pastor to survive.<sup>51</sup>

She is the only one to write about the effects a congregation may experience having a BIVO or COVO pastor.<sup>52</sup> Her work speaks to being clear about each other's expectations that could reveal the creative benefits, both financial and missional, of serving COVO and a congregation with the same mindset. The weakness of her hypothesis is that she provides no data supporting her thoughtful, though unfounded, suspicions.

She includes remarks about the lack of notoriety of BIVO pastors in Mennonite circles: "Mennonites have not constructed a solid vision for bivocational ministry, although

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<sup>51</sup> Diane Zaerr Brenneman, "The Bivocational Pastor: Toward A Healthy Part-Time Arrangement For The Fully-Valued Pastor And The Fully-Engaged Congregation" (DMin diss., McCormick Theological Seminary, 2007), ii, <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/DissertationArticle.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Brenneman, "Bivocational," 7.

it's been in practice since our inception.”<sup>53</sup> Her writing provides insights into her feelings that BIVO pastors must be recognized and honored as cultural heroes. I concur, having spoken to several BIVO pastors and sometimes served in this mode. I found her thesis heartfelt, which I must remember going forward with my research.

Dr. Marc Donaldson: Of the seven dissertations I reviewed, Dr. Donaldson was most explicit about his calling. His dissertation had a consistent message of living out his faith beyond the church walls and worshipping God in every aspect of life. He noted that the BIVO ministry offered him this opportunity.<sup>54</sup>

He provided four reasons for his dissertation. The first was his concern that his colleagues who graduated had a weighty accumulation of academic debt, and BIVO ministry may be the solution. It was unreasonable to think they would pay off their student loans on a pastor's salary. This insight led to his concern that pastors typically have only one income stream. The second reason this study is critical is that he found plenty that BIVO pastors can learn from history, from those who served in multiple vocations in Scripture and in the centuries that followed. The third reason for his study was that he believed that the marketplace is a mission field. The final reason was that Christians, clergy, and laity received the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.<sup>55</sup>

His research sought to give credibility and honor to the BIVO pastor. His research notes that a BIVO pastor refers to a pastor who works in the so-called secular world along with their so-called vocation in the sacred. He noted that so-called secular employment is a

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<sup>53</sup> Brenneman, “Bivocational,” 11.

<sup>53</sup> Marc B Donaldson, “A Means to an End: The Sustainability of Bivocational Ministry” (PhD diss., Asbury Seminary, 2016), <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1842&context=ecommonsatsdissertations>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 24.

necessary means of income for the BIVO pastor, and this source of income may be derived from either a full or part-time job.<sup>56</sup>

Donaldson was incredibly influential in my thinking about supporting the COVO minister. He shared that his motivation for selecting this project was “a desire to develop a deeper understanding of bivocational ministry as an intentional way for both pastors leading and congregations being the church.”<sup>57</sup>

Dr. Everett Hayes: Hayes’ dissertation focused on marital stress in COVO ministers: “It was evident that full-time pastors and spouses, as well as bivocational pastors and spouses, have similar stressors. The key may have been that they had a close relationship between spouses. To keep their relationships strong, they needed the Church to do more for the spouses on a universal scale.”<sup>58</sup> Evaluating what course topics to include in new or adaptations of the current curriculum would need to be considered in supplemental tracks by educators with student feedback.

Dr. Gregory Harris Smith: Smith began his dissertation by highlighting a concern that everyone I met in graduate school or completing minimal educational requirements expressed at various levels. “One of the chief worries facing seminary students in Protestant denominations as they approach graduation is whether or not they will be able to fulfill their calling to the ministry by finding a job that suits their vocational and lifestyle needs.”<sup>59</sup> This

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<sup>56</sup> Marc B Donaldson, “A Means to an End: The Sustainability of Bivocational Ministry” (PhD diss., Asbury Seminary, 2016), 37, <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1842&context=ecommonsatsdissertations>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>58</sup> Everett Hayes and Anthony Jurich, “Differences in Marital Quality between Full-Time and Bivocational Pastors in the Church of the Nazarene” (D.Min diss., Kansas State University, 2010), <https://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/handle/2097/3857>.

<sup>59</sup> Harris Smith Gregory, “Effective Strategies for Bivocational Ministry,” (DMin diss., Talbot School of Theology, 2014), [https://media.proquest.com/media/hms/ORIG/2/qZv7H?\\_s=ts%2BVVpMa5%2B9NeCsbUgynQJUyi9I%3D](https://media.proquest.com/media/hms/ORIG/2/qZv7H?_s=ts%2BVVpMa5%2B9NeCsbUgynQJUyi9I%3D).

reality is what I have heard during my formal education. Many pursuing pastoral ministry degrees while also serving as a pastor often found it necessary to acquire supplemental sources of income.

These challenging encounters are not unique to ministry students who serve as pastors. Yet their rhythms of seeking income outside the congregation's contributions create missional opportunities that surpass those who are FF. Research reveals that COVOs have great missional and financial benefits for a local congregation; living in two distinct and separate worlds is challenging.<sup>60</sup> An assumption is more traditional congregations will not quickly adopt these points.

Denise George: An author of over thirty books, she writes passionately about COVO ministry for both women and men. She writes that with all the benefits this dissertation has presented, the seen and unseen challenges are also quite impactful on COVO clergy. Denise highlights that COVO pastors have too much to do. Hence their spiritual life often becomes dryer than that of FF pastors. Additionally, while the symptoms of physical exhaustion, illness and grief, and emotional stress are high for any pastor, they are elevated for the COVO. With these real impacts on pastors, her research cites that more than 1500 pastors leave each month due to moral failure, burnout, and contention with their congregations.<sup>61</sup> Pastors need to be supported, honored, and held accountable. Other works already cited by Brisco, and others support the comment that COVO ministry leaders are more impacted than FF leaders when they are not mainly supported.

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<sup>60</sup> Brad Brisco, "ReThinking Vocation," *Send Institute: Missiology*, August 20, 2018, <https://www.sendinstitute.org/rethinking-vocation/>.

<sup>61</sup> Denise George, *What Pastors Wish Church Members Knew: Helping People Understand and Appreciate Their Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), chapters 2-3.

## Part 4 - Interviews

### Brent Hofen:

Brent Hofen is a church planter with the CoTN. Because his gift is in devising strategies, I sought out Brent to discuss what he believes needs to be done better to support BIVO and COVO ministers and ministry leaders. His comments are as follows:

I firmly believe in order to see an army of disciple-makers, we will need to raise up an army of tentmakers. We need to be entrepreneurial in mindset and strategy. The following questions are helpful in formulating this type of mindset: How can I provide for my family and meet the needs in my life in the most efficient way? Is there a skill set that I have or could learn that would allow me to meet my needs in 12-15 hours a week? Is what I am doing simple, duplicatable, and reproducible?<sup>62</sup>

Brent also has some good insights into how education needs to adapt to the COVO and BIVO experience. This insight refers to what the proposal section will consider.

Dr. Jeffrey Barker: Jeff is a graduate of Nazarene Theological Seminary. He began his studies by considering the bivocational benefits and dilemmas. Jeff and I want to see an entire congregation share in the leadership and fully support BIVO and COVO ministries. In an email exchange on how to better educate these ministries, he wrote the following:

Education Needs for Covocational Pastors and Congregations: It seems our approach to covocational/bivocational ministry begins with an assumption of deficiency. That is, congregations unable to fully fund clergy (salary, housing, benefits, etc.) are incomplete. This is also true for the clergy called to serve these congregations. With this starting point much of the language used to describe pastor/congregation points toward a preferred model of ministry: fully funded and singularly employed. Within this model the standard of a professionalized clergy thrived. Unfortunately, this model of ministry is more exception than norm, especially in today's US ministry context. Thus, it is imperative we prepare both pastors and parishioners for ministry in today's context.

Simultaneously with the professionalization of clergy has been the decentering of laity. It will behoove local congregations to education and form the laity as intentionally as the clergy. The focus of formation for laity may be around the shared tasks and responsibilities of ecclesial life. The laity need basic tutoring in theology and Bible. It seems their focus may be in areas of Christian education/formation of the

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<sup>62</sup> Brent Hofen, interview by author, Portland, July 25, 2022.

congregation (discipleship), pastoral care, evangelism, stewardship and the like. Because most clergy will also need additional employment, any formation education should include opportunities to broaden skillsets employable in a variety of fields.<sup>63</sup>

With a glad heart, I note the pastors and doctors in dissertations and interviews who have remained in ministry and continue to support BIVO and COVO strategies. Their valuable comments and those from a DS survey will help develop recommendations for adapting educational pathways for COVO ministers and ministries.

### Part 5 - Key Voices

The availability of BIVO leader texts is quite expansive. Yet, one will not find such an array of research for COVO ministry leaders and their congregations. Therefore, below are key voices of the current dissertations on this topic, followed by other literature.

We will address questions regarding COVO pastors' needs and whether a congregation needs to consider their ministry differently. In this and previous sections, conflicting views on this topic are provided. We will begin to discover where there are common views as to why this ministry mode may be critical for us today.

CoTN: The Church of the Nazarene (CoTN) is a worldwide denomination. There are seventy-eight districts in the United States of America (USA). A District Superintendent (DS) oversees each district. Part of their work is to train this denomination's vast number of COVOs in the USA/Canada region.

CoTN Research Services has surveyed this topic for at least ten years. The numbers help prove that the percentage of those lead pastors serving in COVO roles is increasing. According to an interview with a DS, who oversaw pastoral resources for the CoTN in the USA/Canada Region, the CoTN must take steps to serve their COVO better.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Jeffrey Barker, interview by author, phone calls and email exchanges, August 5-7, 2022.

Dr. David Busic: Our DMin cohort was in a Zoom meeting in the Summer of 2022 with Dr. David Busic, General Superintendent for the CoTN. My summary of that meeting is that he encouraged his online listeners by stating that we must start educating pastors and laity to be like missionaries and to help them consider themselves as covocational. As such, we must retool, retrain, and recalibrate them with a sense of a covocational calling within their contextual challenges.<sup>65</sup> With his vast responsibilities, he might be one of the champions of providing unique educational pathways in said region.

Dr. David Bosch and Dr. Michael Goheen: Similarly, Bosch and Goheen conclude that the Christian faith is missional and must be viewed from that perspective. “What I submit, is intrinsically missionary, interpreting theology in context. It is not the only persuasion that is missionary.”<sup>66</sup> Goheen wrote, “It is the hard work of returning to the Scriptures and asking the deepest foundational questions: Who are we? What is our role in the biblical story?”<sup>67</sup>

History in the holiness tradition, of which the CoTN is a part, conveys how a minister might have had a variety of occupations. Circuit riders and pastors on the edges of established communities served COVO. Their ministry modes were a matter of survival while having a better platform to relate to those in their sphere of influence who needed care. While it may seem that most COVO ministers served in rural settings, that trend increased in suburbia, not as a matter of necessity, but with intentionality that started in The Great Awakening.

We often forget that bivocational ministry was used extensively on the American frontier, especially during the Second Great Awakening (1800-1830). Open-air revivals at camp meetings were followed by fiery evangelists who planted churches

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<sup>64</sup> District Superintendent, Interview by author, Indianapolis, IN., October 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Dr. David Busic, Interview by author, July 14, 2022.

<sup>66</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, 20th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 9, Kindle.

<sup>67</sup> Michael W. Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 2, Kindle.

across the thinly populated countryside. Most of these preachers were neither well-educated nor financially supported. Only later did Americans come to rely on professional ministers, yet we often insist that our later model should be adopted even in situations where a bivocational ministry would be more appropriate.<sup>68</sup>

The mission of God reflects this as a local congregation establishing the outward works of God, which comprise both the local church and the marketplace (Lk 4:21). Lesslie Newbigin wrote with his misgivings, “The primary concern with Christendom was that the church lost its critical relationship to culture.”<sup>69</sup> This problem reveals why the COVO ministry is primed to address this situation and must be educated by a blend of existing and innovative offerings. This comingled relationship the church must have with culture serendipitously helps us become missionaries in the subcultures around it.

The Mennonite Church USA: The Mennonite Church influences us to consider that work in the marketplace does not separate one from their divine calling. My experience has been that they are among the most industrious and serious about family systems. Therefore, it is no surprise that they are serious about the COVO ministry. Yet, I was pleasantly surprised with how diligently this faith tradition supported their COVO ministers. Eriksson wrote, “Nearly half of all congregations have a part-time or a multi-vocational minister.” He wrote that in 2007, 500 out of the 1,000 Mennonite Church USA congregations had less than sixty members.<sup>70</sup> This number, in most cases, probably cannot fully support a pastor. He said that for the COVO pastor, “It’s extremely healthy and wonderful,” and “there can also be economic advantages.”<sup>71</sup> Other advantages and opportunities led to the congregation being

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<sup>68</sup> Robert Reece, “The Need For Bivocational Ministry,” *Mission Frontiers: Slaying the Dragon*, August 2016, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-need-for-bivocational-ministry>.

<sup>69</sup> Michael W. Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation: Lesslie Newbigin's Missionary Ecclesiology*, 190.

<sup>70</sup> Sven Eriksson, “The Changing Face of Ministry: How Is Ministry Changing within the Mennonite Church Canada Context?” *Canadian Mennonite* 8, no. 1 (2004): 6-7, <https://legacy.canadianmennonite.org/vol08-2004/8-01/faithlife.html>

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

more inclusive in ministry leadership and discipleship opportunities in less time by creating a positive, creative ministry environment.

The need for COVO pastors is mounting in the Mennonite Church. Inviting people working in various vocations while simultaneously pastoring in the local congregation is often the only route, especially as small Mennonite congregations tend to be in rural settings. This premise is built upon the following quote from Dr. Sven Eriksson. “In Saskatchewan, for example, several pastors combine farming, business, or university teaching with pastoral work. These include Gary and Margaret Ewen Peters, who farm and pastor the Hanley congregation, and Grant Martens, who combines farming, a computer business and pastoring the superb congregation.”<sup>72</sup>

My research shows that there is also an urban/rural tension regarding what ministry needs are in these contexts from the Mennonite Church. Having ministered in various settings (e.g., urban, rural, and suburbia) and knowing a few Mennonite parishioners and leaders, I’m sure they would agree with Eriksson that the younger generation of pastors is going to change the Mennonite church in very profound ways. This awareness will most likely lead to tensions but can result in exciting new changes, primarily as they support BIVO pastors. This is likely one of the realities the CoTN USA/ Canada will face soon.

The Mennonite Church probably has the most substantial academic support for BIVO pastors and congregational leaders. One of their programs combines various disciplines into an M.Div. degree to help students become more well-rounded. Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary is an excellent example of how the Mennonite denomination addresses this need. Courses range from traditional language studies, biblical history, and preaching to exegeting one’s community and social sciences. The thought is that whatever income stream presents,

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<sup>72</sup> Eriksson, “Changing Face of Ministry.”

the students will graduate with a better understanding of their ministries' psychological and cultural aspects.<sup>73</sup>

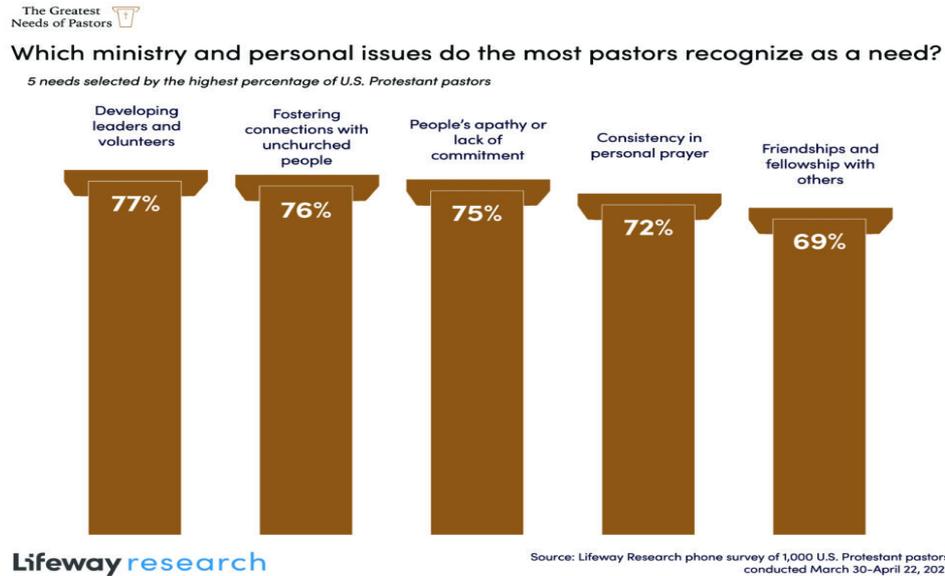
The Mennonite Church also addresses the belief that BIVO ministry is a more excellent outreach strategy at a lower cost. However, the research did not prove that outreach efficiency and cost-cutting positively impacted a Mennonite pastor's compensation. Many local congregations choose to go the way of BIVO ministry to help reduce costs while congregation sizes shrink.<sup>74</sup>

Lifeway Research: Lifeway Research is another critical voice in studying the benefits and challenges of COVO and BIVO ministry from the clergy and laity perspective. Lifeway Research conducted a phone survey of 1,000 pastors approximately one year ago. The survey did not distinguish between COVO, BIVO, MF, or FF ministers, yet these concerns are transferable to each. My interviews, which I will address later, also support these survey results. However, I believe that the research particularly highlighted the following issues: stewardship, time limitations, not having models to know one's context better, and lack of dialoguing about clear expectations shared with an existing congregation or early on in new works.

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<sup>73</sup> Anabaptist Biblical Seminary, 2020, "Graduate Certificates in Theological Studies," <https://www.ambs.edu/search-results?cx=012761546264550570700%3A0civrvt2ani&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=bivocational>.

<sup>74</sup> Rich Preheim, "Localism Is Changing Giving Patterns in the Church," *Canadian Mennonite* 1, no. 6 (1997): 22.



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As stated above, the survey by Lifeway Research did not ask for the ministry strategy: FF, BIVO, MF, or COVO. However, Luther M. Dorr does speak to these from the BIVO perspective. He notes in *The Bivocational Pastor* seven liabilities that undergird the above research results.

(1) Discrimination by denominational leaders; (2) personal weaknesses seen by fellow workers in their secular job which hurt their testimony; (3) independence which tempts them to run away and not deal with church problems; (4) falling into a rut in ways of doing things; (5) lack of time to serve the church as needed; (6) no time for fellowship with other ministers; and (7) shifting their secular role to the church role.<sup>76</sup>

The Earlham School of Religion (ESR): The ESR received a million-dollar grant from the Lilly Endowment to help establish the Quaker Center for Transformational Congregational Leadership. The center is mainly used to support COVO-focused students who will need careers. Gretchen Castle, the ESR Dean, wrote: “The world of churches is changing considerably. Fewer people are entering the ministry and many congregations can

<sup>75</sup> Lifeway Research Services, “The Greatest Needs of Pastors study: Greatest Needs Overall”, <https://research.lifeway.com/greatestneeds/>, accessed August 23, 2022.

<sup>76</sup> Dorr, *Bivocational*, 73.

no longer support full-time pastors.”<sup>77</sup> This support is profound for the ESR because “Bivocational ministry is quintessentially Quaker, but many meetings and churches are struggling with it. The survival of the Religious Society of Friends in this century depends on us getting this right.”<sup>78</sup>

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) Facebook Group.<sup>79</sup> The SBTC has monthly equipping sessions for BIVO pastors. The leaders of this Facebook group have been an encouragement because of their openness to other denominations engaging in this vital topic. Interestingly, they have welcomed clergy who do not favor Calvinistic views. They have found common ground in our belief that COVO ministers need to be honored and equipped with adapted educational pathways because of our passion for supporting BIVO and COVO leaders and our love of Jesus Christ and his church.<sup>80</sup>

The Southern Baptist tribe has one of the best training systems for COVO pastors at the time of this writing.

About 10,000 bivocational ministers were working in the Southern Baptist churches in 1998. By 2004, that number had doubled to 20,000. In 2014, Frank Page, the president of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, “I’m convinced that in the 21st century, the best stewardship is bivocational. Some would say 35,000 of our 46,000 churches — maybe more than that.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> “ESR launches Congregational Leadership Center,” *Friends Journal*, January 14, 2022, Accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.friendsjournal.org/esr-launches-congregational-leadership-center/>.

<sup>78</sup> Robin Mohr, “In Celebration of Bivocational Ministry,” *Friends Journal*, February 28, 2014, <https://www.friendsjournal.org/celebration-bivocational-ministry/>.

<sup>79</sup> Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, “Church Health and Leadership Associate at Southern Baptists of Texas Convention - SBTC,” accessed September 2, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/sbtexas>.

<sup>80</sup> Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, <https://www.facebook.com/sbtexas/>, accessed October 12, 2022.

<sup>81</sup> Rudy Gray, “Is Bivocational Ministry the New Normal?,” *The Baptist Courier* (November 2, 2016), <https://baptistcourier.com/2016/11/bivocational-ministry-new-normal/>— are in the two categories of small church or bivocational.”

With this foundation, we will consider the prominent theological and biblical foundations of covocational ministry.

### **CHAPTER 3: THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COVOCATIONAL MINISTRY**

This section will help demonstrate that serving BIVO or COVO does not make one a second-rate minister who won the second prize.<sup>82</sup> Classifying BIVO or COVO pastors as second-rate ministers is like insinuating that flying fish are lesser than normal fish. There are at least forty varieties of flying fish.<sup>83</sup> Since the animals in God’s creation have different modes of living, why do so many of us assume that pastors are part-time if they operate in two different worlds?

Andrew Hamilton: When reading the book, *The Future is Bivocational: Shaping Christian Leaders for a Post-Christian World*, readers will question their beliefs and those of the denominational leaders, and even what works. This question raises the matter of what God thinks about COVO ministry.

The research below will address this nomenclature and doubts from various views, including Scripture and key voices in the church.

#### Part 1 - Introduction

One will find in Scripture that a primary way God reached all the outcasts- those deemed lesser and therefore had worldly insignificance (Mk 16:15)- was through COVO

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<sup>82</sup> Andrew Hamilton, *The Future is Bivocational: Shaping Christian Leaders for a Post-Christian World* (Ark House Press, 2022), 9.

<sup>83</sup> “Flying Fish,” *The National Wildlife Federation*, accessed August 19, 2022, <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Fish/Flying-Fish>

pastors and ministers. Authors have traced COVO ministry to Jesus' early disciples, noting that they had other vocations providing for their needs. Some were businesspeople; others were commercial fishermen before Jesus called them to follow him. Many of these early disciples returned to their livelihoods after his crucifixion; before receiving their call to preach the Gospel to the world (Jn 21:1-25). However, no biblical reference indicates that the disciples had dual vocations (e.g., fishing and ministry) while learning from and ministering to Jesus.<sup>84</sup> Instead, they were ministers of the Gospel while having various vocations they could rely on for income.

Regarding the COVO role, those with more recent traditional views of the ministry (e.g., mono-vocation, traditional/contemporary views of the church) may not understand the confluence of such livelihoods until faced with desperate financial conditions challenging their norms. Therefore, pastors and leaders must be prepared with viable answers and care differently for God's body. That care is "fundamentally based, not on a hierarchy of distinctive roles and a division of labor, but on a group of peers sharing the full variety of their gifts, contributing them based on a common passion and commitment to a shared goal."<sup>85</sup>

## Part 2 – Old Testament (OT) Views

One of the earliest COVO ministers was Abraham the Patriarch. He had a clear call from God to leave his home country and become God's witness wherever he and his family went. Abraham was a voluntary COVO minister who received a call from God to go to a

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<sup>84</sup> Hartness M. Samushonga, "A Theological Reflection of Bivocational Pastoral Ministry: A Personal Reflective Account of a Decade of Bivocational Ministry Practice Experience," *Practical Theology* 12 no. 1 (2019): 66-80.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

foreign land to be a witness for him (Gn 12:1-4, 8). Obediently, Abraham left his home country of Chaldea to live and work in Canaan as a shepherd. The call for Abraham was costly. God challenged him to the point of surrendering his son on the altar (Gn 22:9).

Biblical history clarifies that the Israelite community existed on the divine gift of manna throughout their wilderness experience. However, this was not a lasting solution. The land they were going to receive from God needed work. All the resources were there for people, ministers, and judges alike (e.g., Joshua), but the good fruit of the land needed cultivating (Jo 5:11-12).

Research of prophets and kings in the OT held secular<sup>86</sup> vocations concurrently with their sacred positions. The word “secular” implies a reality that is not religious, sacred, or spiritual.<sup>87</sup> The word “secular” indicates that secular work is not tied to sacred implications and that one’s spiritual reality does not cross over into other realms of life. This understanding implies that the two worlds do not affect each other. This perspective—the belief that COVO and BIVO pastors hold two conflicting roles—is encountered among FF pastors. Additionally, it resembles the bifurcation BIVO strategy.

COVO friends serving in the local church have confessed they feel they do not fit in, which supports some of the earlier comments from the Discovery Session. This concern is because the narrative needs to change from BIVO to COVO. Those serving in these roles need to be honored.<sup>88</sup>

COVO occupations and a belief there is no divide between the secular and the sacred were the norm for the Israelites, a nomadic people settling and moving in towns and villages.

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<sup>86</sup> Secular intimates no need for God. In my opinion and experience it is far from the truth that followers of Christ have no need for God Monday through Saturday.

<sup>87</sup> Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>88</sup> Brad Brisco, “Covocational Church Planting: Rethinking Vocation,” 2017, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/covocational-church-planting-rethinking-vocation/>.

Scripture indicates that the Hebrews followed their herds from one pastureland to another and, at times, settled in for a more extended time during their journey. The Hebrews centered their occupations around the family even while led by the Lord's prophets after suffering centuries of disruption (Is 65:21-22).

Later the reader will find interviews with at least two pastors serving today who share these perspectives. Dr. Aaron Peterson wrote:

Most early biblical characters earned their livelihood from the land and other sources of income. Dorr points out that after forty years of support from the Egyptian court, Moses worked as a shepherd for his father-in-law for the next forty years. Once in Canaan, it was only the tribe of Levi who did not earn their living from the land (Joshua 13:14). Joshua settled on his land and built Timnath (Joshua 19:50), and Gideon farmed wheat (Judges 6:11) on his land. Leaders in the OT earned their living doing other jobs while serving the Lord.<sup>89</sup>

Research shows that OT prophets/ leaders like Amos had dual vocations (Am 7:14). In the seventh chapter, Amos refuted that he was a prophet, including his call of a shepherd.

Whether Amos served as a shepherd and had other means of income is unclear, yet as a shepherd, he did occupy the role of a preacher (Am 7:14). This occupation did not conflict with his role as a prophet. From the patriarchs to the prophets in the OT and writers in the New Testament (NT), readers will find pastors and leaders with dual roles explicitly called to one part of their context for the spread of the Gospel and to equip the Church.

### Part 3 - New Testament Views

Scripture details that many were COVO leaders, from the patriarchs, church fathers, prophets, and kings to the NT apostles. As noted below, the Lord Jesus Christ sent apostles into the world and its systems. At the same time, they maintained their calling with no significant signs that they terminated their trades after Jesus' ascension.

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<sup>89</sup> Peterson, "Working Priest," 32.

These NT pastors depicted them as shepherds. Their functions and responsibilities as overseers and elders joined together in Christ (I Pt 2:25). NT leaders like Jesus, Peter, Paul, and many others who had other jobs did so, knowing the need to stay adaptable in their contexts. Participating in God's Mission is a theological missiology for the Church. Van Gelder and Zscheile noted, "a congregation needs to anticipate that its context will change so that it can intentionally continue to recontextualize its ministries to address new conditions as these emerge."<sup>90</sup>

The Gospel writers were COVO. One example is Matthew. He was one of the twelve Apostles, but before this call, the Gospel narrator served as a tax collector for the Roman government (Mt 4:19). Matthew, Mark, and Luke have parallel bios of moving from one vocation to following Jesus Christ. Jesus called people from their vocations to learn how to be disciple-makers.

In the Gospel of Matthew is written that as Jesus walked along, he saw "Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him" (Mk 2:14). One might imagine that Matthew used his skills as a bookkeeper in the ministry with Jesus and his fellow learners.

Mark's Gospel consistently describes God's call to work in serving the Kingdom of God. Concurrently, we read about the rhythms of work, rest, and the worship God proposes for our lives.<sup>91</sup> By studying the disciples' lives, we also learn about the vulnerabilities of earning a living as a minister through COVO, MF, or FF. We learn from Scripture that the

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<sup>90</sup> Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile, *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America, The Gospel, and Our Culture Series* (GOCS) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), chapter 2, Kindle.

<sup>91</sup> Joel C. Elowsky, "The Ministry in the Early Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 76, no. 3–4 (Summer 2012): 295–311.  
<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0001933510&site=ehost-live>.

apostles, prophets, and teachers served dual roles. For example, Luke served as a physician, and Christian author (Lk 1) and acquired skills, like Paul's tentmaking, likely underwrote his livelihood. Still, his primary vocation was the development of the Gospel message.

The Apostle Paul is the most readily known biblical character who earned a living apart from congregational offerings. He wrote that he operated this way not to burden the Church (1 Cor 9:12). Does this mean he was solely a COVO pastor? We are not sure. Scripture does not tell us that God called Paul to be a leatherworker. Yet we can assume that his life resembled a COVO, non-stipendiary pastor in several instances (1 Cor 4:12). Paul defended his calling as Apostle and chose not to be a financial burden on the local congregations. I wonder if a humble, entrepreneurial position was what Corinth needed to exemplify that no one in God's economy is more important than another.

Other epistles from the Pauline order depict Paul the Apostle as a COVO minister. Paul was a worker of leather, probably a tentmaker (Acts 4:34–37; 18:1–3.) Paul's example led to the term "tentmaking" to describe a COVO, multi-role minister with different financial streams to minister and engage in ministry. As described earlier in this essay, Paul chose not to be a financial burden to the Corinthian churches (1 Thes 2:7–9; 2; Thes 3:6–8). Being a leather worker likely assisted and placed Paul the Apostle closer to those who needed to hear the Gospel.

Paul implored the Thessalonians to model his actions, even in their place of work. It is the venue where most people spend most of their waking hours: "For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God" (Col 4:14).

However, Paul, the Apostle, did not discount those who had mono-vocations. He clarified that he approved the practice so someone would have money to pay a Christian leader's complete financial support (1 Cor 9:7–14). He wrote, "The elders who direct the

affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching” (1 Tm 5:17), and “The worker deserves his wages” (1 Tm 5:18). I am most impressed that Paul’s influence extended to a team of COVO ministers while not discounting other means. Therefore, as we see, donor-supported, self-supported pastors and missionaries were all equally acceptable in Paul’s eyes (1 Cor 9).

Some would say that Paul the Apostle was not specifically a pastor but an apostle. One can argue that he was not a BIVO or COVO pastor. However, his experiences and values were and remain transferable to the pastorate. Scripture does indicate that his sole ministry role was as an Apostle (Rom 1, Eph 1). Yet, it is plausible to consider that a portion of his letter to the Ephesians noting gifts that equipped the believers were all offices he held at once in life, while probably not all at once. He filled many ministerial roles in his life, which did include being a pastor to Timothy and Titus (Eph 4:11). Simultaneously, Paul’s plea, his work ethic, and his example of gaining income by entrepreneurial means is a method of reaching everyone wherever there are people who do not know Christ, including in the marketplace.

Paul’s letters convey to us that his ultimate purpose was to share the life-giving message of the Gospel. His message was the result of the call of God on his life, serving him well in whatever situation he found himself (Rom 1:1). The Holy Spirit inspired him to follow Jesus through “the power of his resurrection” (Phil 3:10). In this, Paul was to share in the sufferings of Jesus to become more and more like him until his death. God authored Paul’s call, and his commitment to that call was proven through his focus, regardless of his financial conditions and income streams. The Church needs to continue honoring and supporting this type of hero of the faith today.

It is essential to understand that COVO church planting is not simply about having two or more jobs but aligning one’s life to their call. It is about blending our calling to

support our families and ourselves with our calling to live a life engaged in God's mission. One's call is a missionary one- people sent into the world to participate in God's redemptive purposes. One vital and urgent means to accomplish that task is to plant new communities as COVO kingdom leaders. Jesus commanded his followers to live in impoverishment (Mt 10:9). There is the support that women (who likely had wealthy husbands) helped support Jesus' ministry (Lk 8:3). Paul the Apostle wrote in 1 Timothy that "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching" (I Tm 5:17).

Scripture gives us signs that Jesus served in a so-called blue-collar industry. Before Jesus began his three years of dedicated ministry, he likely worked as an apprentice for his father, Joseph, a carpenter. It is odd to think that the Son of God and Man was taught to build things with human hands (Mk 6:3) since Jesus was God. Yet, even as Jesus grew up in human terms, he was still one with the Father (Lk 2:39-52).

As revealed above, dual roles are partly how the early Church fulfilled its call. From the OT through NT, the Church can better understand the opportunities and challenges of COVO ministry. I propose that BIVO and COVO-lead congregations meet their contextual and traditional challenges head-on in a renewed fashion, with additional practical educational pathways, just like those whom Jesus Christ personally mentored through non-traditional means.

In summary, we have learned that the OT and NT gave us many examples of people who were followers of God in places of work and ministry. From the beginning, in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 1 and 2, we see the gift of life given to Adam and Eve followed by the divine call to be good cooperative stewards over the creation. With this, these two had the responsibility and incredible opportunity to collaborate with God as workers and shepherds/caretakers over creation.

#### Part 4 – Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Examples of Bivocational Ministers

Bivocational pastors bring a distinctive service to bringing the Good News to the world. As noted above, we interpret this term from Scripture since people had other vocations that were not directly tied to their ministry but maintained their divinely appointed gifts.

This strategy is not the only means of meeting one's financial needs. For some throughout history, following God meant forsaking current employment. Sometimes it meant a cooperative financial arrangement with the local Church, yet, neither established a universal pattern for Christian life nor a strategy for financially surviving as either pastor or laity. Call, context, economic pressures, and personal demands dictate how both types of ministers will satisfy their individual financial needs.

One of the COVO pastors and movements I explored to understand better this co-existence reality was John Wesley and his Methodist band of itinerant preachers. They began their work with a modified financing strategy, a custom in the Church of England. The movement modified this strategy partly because these preachers did not collect pew rents at the time or have similar means the Church of England had created for Anglican priests.<sup>92</sup> The support elements for a Methodist pastor included a fund for their basic needs (e.g., teaching materials, quarterage [clothes], and their families). However, lessons were learned as the pool of itinerant preachers grew from 50 to 420 between 1750 and 1850. For example, accounting practices needed more clarity, and expanding the financing streams and improving controls became critical as the work expanded. The variations in funding mechanisms were based on the uniqueness of communities and the needs of individual preachers:

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<sup>92</sup> The changing dynamics of the movement had to shift from the societies where a vicar was acquainted by increasing financial streams from non-members of the Connexional affairs. This is based upon the readings from Clive Murray Norris, *The Financing of John Wesley's Methodism c.1740-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), introduction chapter 1.

In short, the primary responsibility for financing itinerant preaching, including the accommodation costs of preachers and their families, fell to the circuit. When itinerating, the costs of preachers' board and lodging, and their day-to-day travel and other expenses, such as fodder for their horses, would be met by the local society. In many cases, the funds immediately available fell short of preachers' needs (or demands). A wide range of other sources of finance might then come into play, including gifts and loans from members and friends, collections in chapel or society, and—increasingly over time—rental income from property, and grants from the centre. Nonetheless, it seems that by around 1780, the costs of itinerant preaching were regularly outstripping the funds which were readily available, and various new approaches were tried—locally and centrally.<sup>93</sup>

Like John Wesley, “Asbury's heart was stirred, and he began to yearn for more.”<sup>94</sup>

Francis Asbury grew from humble beginnings. His vocational experience as an apprentice metalworker gave him a unique capacity to find work when needed and to speak to the ordinary people of his day. However, as God's voice began to be real to him and his call became clear, Asbury worked so that he could serve. “He awoke well before dawn to complete his daily work.”<sup>95</sup> This approach resembles the definition we proposed earlier for the COVO ministry. Regarding vocational experiences, Marc Donaldson's dissertation reminds us that COVO pastors are exhorted to do their jobs well and work as unto the Lord (Col 3:23-24).

#### Part 5 - Twentieth Century Thoughts on BIVO and COVO Ministry

From the late 1920s to the late 1930s, the United States was undergoing the Great Depression.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, research regarding BIVO or COVO ministry is difficult to find regarding the construct or nature of this ministry at the outset of the twentieth century.

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<sup>93</sup> Norris, *Financing*, 42.

<sup>94</sup> Donaldson, “Means,” 24.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> History.com Editors, “The Great Depression,” last modified February 28, 2020 <https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression/great-depression-history>.

The one credible source I found was *The Case for Voluntary Clergy*, written by the Rev. Roland Allen. The text contains a culmination of arguments that he began as early as 1920 in favor of the “non-stipendiary ministry.”<sup>97</sup> Rev. Allen added that paying local missionaries or workers ought to be split between all who preached and evangelized into two groups: employees of a mission and those who worked without pay, with the former enjoying higher prestige. “Yet the paid worker is financially dependent upon the mission.”<sup>98</sup> In this debate, Rev. Allen proposes that the nature of those financially dependent upon a mission or congregation often changes the directness of the Gospel message.

Enclosed in Rev. Allen’s thesis is that systems needed installation and taught that all growth depends upon all followers of Christ serving in local contexts, whether for income or not. Not adapting to this pattern would likely slow down the growth and maturity of local congregations.

It seems that the non-stipendiary ministry would only be a good fit for those with sufficient personal wealth during the beginning of the twentieth century. And according to Rev. Allen, those who did not have adequate means likely needed to consider whether they could become non-stipendiary pastors deeply.<sup>99</sup>

Leaders in the NT who received the call to follow Jesus knew labor. As we have seen from Wesley and Allen, in recent centuries, leaders became BIVO or COVO ministers and entrepreneurs among various communities of devoted followers of Jesus. In each instance, educational pathways changed, revealing different ways local congregations ministered.

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<sup>97</sup> Hubert J. B Allen, “Would Roland Allen Still Have Anything to Say to Us Today?,” *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 29, no. 3 (2012): 179-85.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Reece, “The Need For Bivocational Ministry,” *Mission Frontiers: Slaying the Dragon*, August 2016, <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-need-for-bivocational-ministry>.

<sup>99</sup> Allen, “Roland Allen,” 179-85.

## CHAPTER 4: PROPOSED SOLUTION AND METHODOLOGY

This section will provide a brief synopsis of a theological philosophy of education and a renewed educational pathway for COVO ministers, clergy, and laity. This section will begin with meaningful Scripture passages, quotes, and views from DSs within the CoTN USA/Canada region that will help direct the discussion. Finally, this discussion will provide a way forward to be inclusive of the COVO ministers by providing the basis for four syllabi and a seminar example for this ministry strategy to be used in a district, regional, or conference setting.

There are several ambiguities in how to describe a BIVO minister or a BIVO minister's congregation.<sup>100</sup> The previous Nazarene Research Services asked in the APR, "do you consider yourself a bivocational pastor?" because it is difficult to detail how others think of this term. There is more depth to this question in the recent APR. I addressed that BIVO implies a distinction between a calling and a pastor's source of income. This distinction is a grand opportunity to define the ministry mode as COVO.

For example, I have asked several people who have children if they stop being parents when their child is at school or when they are at work. This question has resulted in answers like, "I'm not parenting when the children are at school, but I'm still a parent." Then I must ask why we have a secular-sacred divide or dishonor COVO ministers and such congregational leaders when they are elsewhere creating other sources of income than in a local congregation. And why do educational institutions not address the growing need for

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<sup>100</sup> Darryl W. Stephens, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," *Religions* 12, no. 8 (July 2021): 56, July 12, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010056>.

educational pathways for COVO ministers and congregations? In part, these will be addressed later by DS's in this dissertation.

Congregations, including the pastor, must be reminded that, like Paul, the Apostle said in Ephesians 4:11-13 we all have a ministry, regardless of our income sources. The Alban Institute of Duke Divinity School posted a journal article that noted, “Unless the concept of bivocational ministry is firmly rooted in the minds and hearts of the congregation, it can fall apart when the pastor leaves.”<sup>101</sup> It appears later in this article that when local congregations foreshadow attributes provided to us by Paul the Apostle, congregations likely to be more rooted in their community will succeed in the high calling of COVO missionaries in their local context. Therefore, it is proposed that educational pathways be more inclusive of local congregations and highlight practical theology. The different local contexts need to be exegeted so practical education—an education a congregation can activate more directly according to their needs—can be part of the system.

At the root of this research, this dissertation asks, “Does there need to be a reformation on how we educate future ministers who align themselves with BIVO or COVO beliefs and practices?” More directly, the depth of that question might demand another academic pursuit as an empirical research endeavor. However, since this is evident from the research done for this dissertation, the revisions need to happen with the creation of new educational pathways for COVO ministries. Different education accrediting bodies have different requirements.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, if any part of this proposal were to be used as a specialized track in an institution, those standards would need to be addressed. Including a

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<sup>101</sup> The Alban Institute at Duke Divinity School, “The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow’s Church?”, *Congregations*, 35 no. 1 (Winter 2009), <https://alban.org/archive/the-bivocational-congregation/>.

<sup>102</sup> The Association of Theological Schools: The Commission on Accrediting, “Standards of Accreditation,” accessed September 6, 2022, <https://www.ats.edu/Standards-Of-Accreditation>.

specialized COVO track must be considered when schools offer chaplaincy, church planting, and evangelism tracks.

My proposal would start with two different fronts. First, I would request that NBC allow this to be tested for need and popularity among COVOs. I have written two syllabi for this institution focused on those in this type of ministry with decent registration and popularity. The primary reason I propose that the NBC Institute of Ministerial Enrichment (IME) program allow this to be tested is its success record with online programming and because I have experience facilitating courses in the IME program.

Secondly, I will invite those DSs who have requested to see the final version of this dissertation to consider holding a 2-3 hour seminar based on a condensed syllabus in the attached appendices. In the appendix, one will find seminar outlines and a proposal to invite COVOs and other interested parties.<sup>103</sup>

I envision a basic format for the seminar, including the following:

1. An outline be made available via email and social media invitations.
2. Google docs will be available at each seminar to reduce costs.
3. Shortly before the seminar, a document be created and made available that includes my bio, a tool for taking notes, and a bibliography regarding the COVO ministry that includes the texts covering the topic. The Google doc will be provided, including a few hard copies at the seminar for those with difficulties accessing the document before the sessions. The attendee could print this document before the seminar or as a Google document; it could be typed in using the attendees' computers.
4. Include an online streaming opportunity if the organizing agency desires.

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<sup>103</sup> See appendices including syllabi followed with an introductory seminar outline.

The seminar in the appendices will incorporate approximately 2-3 one-hour segments. The first segment will include a brief outline, an introduction to the topic, and a presentation on terms used in this dissertation. The second segment will include a brief review of scriptural and key voices on the topic—the text on which the seminar is focused. There will be a method for answering questions at each seminar or following the event.

The seminar's goal is to be contextually valuable. The seminar will have a level of flexibility to adjust to the needs of the attendees. I hope these seminars could count as Continuing Educational Units for those in denominational or laity leadership situations. Another goal is to follow up with the attendees with an email notifying them that one-on-one or small group chat sessions are available. Mentoring mentors who mentor others for the sake of Christ is the goal.

If there happens to be a stipend, other than travel arrangements, I propose that it go directly to a fund supporting the COVO ministry. The following starts the discussion of training methods.

The Jesus method: The preferred way that Jesus taught his students and disciples before his death, burial, resurrection from the dead, and ascension to being seated next to the father was different than exclusively training in the synagogue and serving as a strategy for our lifetime. His training included teaching in the synagogue and the exegetical mentorship method in common spaces. His methods were mutually inclusive, yet he favored mentorship in common spaces.<sup>104</sup>

In the NT, we learn that cooperation was essential for Jesus' students. We see that Jesus asked his followers to consider the opportunity costs as a matter of their obedience (Lk 14:25-34). In scripture, cooperative learning and serving differently in unique contexts was a

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<sup>104</sup> Matthew 4:23-25.

mandate, a value, and is what we see in the life of the Gospel, Jesus Christ (Mt 28; Lk 9; Jn 17).

We find in scripture that before Jesus began his ministry, his employment was as a carpenter, or at least he was an apprentice of his earthly father. He emptied himself of his right as God to be among us and offered a platform to help others know that he understood their trials (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Phil 2:6-8).

In the life of Jesus and his disciples, as revealed in the NT, Jesus sought to teach us how to be followers of God in every area: devotion, family, education, and work. “Jesus gave them this answer: ‘Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does’” (Jn 5:19). The Jesus Christ, the premier apostle wrote that his disciples were to follow his example because what he taught was what he learned by following and becoming one with the Father, whether in his vocation or avocation.

Recorded in Matthew 7:21, we find Jesus saying that only those who do the will of his Father will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Followers do the will of the Father. In Mark 16:15, we read faithful followers will believe in the only begotten Son of God and preach the Gospel to all of God’s people so that they, too, will become life-receiving and giving followers of Christ. This cooperation is a miracle in itself! In John 6:40, we read that whosoever believes in Christ—which indicates actions of followership—will have everlasting life when cooperating with Christ. It is not enough to believe in passive existence. This pattern is a true confluence in the life of COVO leaders and local congregations. We need to reconsider our educational pathways or make room for new pathways that include the fuller sense of being a COVO leader and congregation in today’s culture, as Christ and his disciples did in theirs.

Contemporary training methods: Darryl Stephens provides a contemporary way of explaining the Jesus training method.

Bivocational congregations are challenged to adapt to new leadership styles and expectations of both clergy and laity. Changing demographics and ecclesial situations are forcing institutions of theological education, many of which were designed for full-time students preparing for fully funded pastoral ministry, to reassess curricular programs, schedules, and content in light of multivocational realities.<sup>105</sup>

Benjamin Valentin urges us to consider that common places determine the church's mission. He wrote, "thought and discourse that aspire to publicness must elucidate the significance of the concept of the public."<sup>106</sup> Essentially, the church's mission is to consider the pressures of the common spaces and connect the church to local, public theology views of God.

In John's Gospel, we learn that being a church is more about relationships than about a particular place, though place matters. Still, it does not exclude relationships in a place (Jn 15:5). We must not neglect the theology of place. Green wrote, "the church is then tasked to establish new 'holy places' in new lands."<sup>107</sup> These new holy places are where training principles and practices need to focus.

A unique educational pathway also needs to address the needs and opportunities of the laity to help them become fully vested and mentored to be active in ministry. These pathways must be a significant part of a retooled paradigm. Wayne Cummings noted that,

As congregations rethink their understanding of vocation in light of existential realities, more doors are opened to the laity to enter into previously restricted ministries, in particular fulltime ordained ministry. This is especially the case in urban and rural settings where there is a growing shortage of clergy and where once thriving congregations are grappling with migration, declining membership, and financial sustainability.<sup>108</sup>

Hartness M. Samushonga confirms what Dr. Busic noted, and a survey of some DSs provided: we need to focus on retooling training to empower laity and clergy to act like

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<sup>105</sup> Stephens, *Bivocational and Beyond*, 3.

<sup>106</sup> Benjamin Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference*. (Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002), 88.

<sup>107</sup> Green, *Tribe and Tongue*, 405-406.

<sup>108</sup> Orin Wayne Cummings, "Vocational Integrity." *Dialog* 57, no. 2 (Summer 2018), 107–10, accessed August 23, 2022, doi:10.1111/dial.12390, [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1540-6385](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1540-6385).

missionaries in their local context: “Are seminaries training students for bivocational ministry? In most cases, the answer is ‘not yet.’ Consequently, many students are entering this kind of ministry without a rigorous theological framework or a clear understanding of its challenges and benefits.”<sup>109</sup> My interviewees agreed that institutions must consider contextual employment to support local missionary efforts.

### Interviews

The following are excerpts from conversations with Rev. Hofen and Dr. Barker that specifically address their views of how education for clergy and laity needs to be adapted.

Rev. Brent Hofen notes:

The education needed to be bivocational requires us to trust God in a deeper way and ask Him for wisdom. If we keep doing it the way we have been doing it, we will keep getting what we have been getting. It is time to think outside the box and learn the importance of simplicity. After all, 20% of what we do produces 80% of the results. What is that 20% in ministry? What is that 20% in business?” Most educational degrees we earn do not address the skill sets to scale an entrepreneurial lifestyle. In order to create margin for ministry, we need to know how to scale our business. We need to learn the most important things to do to create wealth. Entrepreneurial thinkers know the importance of creating residual income. The precious hours we invest in creating income need to multiply and produce a monthly cash flow chain reaction.<sup>110</sup>

Dr. Jeffrey Barker notes,

From my vantage point I believe it will be beneficial to step away from a model of professionalized clergy to embrace with more intention and support the priesthood of believers. While our clergy need to serve as the trained theologians in residence within the local congregation, the future of the church rests far more with an engaged and formed laity than a more professionalized clergy. It remains wise for clergy preparation to focus on theology, Bible, Spiritual Formation, and ministry context. I believe reducing our current Course of Study from 25 courses to 15 would focus the work of the clergy within each congregation to that of pastor/theologian. Courses in theology should explore our Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, especially as an expressed ecclesiology. Bible courses need to cultivate a biblical hermeneutic informed by our

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<sup>109</sup> Hartness M. Samushonga, “Wearing More than One Hat: Preparing Students for Bivocational Ministry Is an Important Component of Theological Education,” *In Trust* 31, no. 32 (Winter 2019), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?>

<sup>110</sup> Brent Hofen, interview by author, Portland, Oregon, July 25, 2022.

Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. Courses that provide opportunity for questions to arise from within the ministry context will allow the student to develop a working relationship between theology and practice. Finally, specific attention needs to focus on the character and life of the minister.<sup>111</sup>

In these discussions, the interviewees remind us that Jesus' disciples were students, pupils, and learners under Jesus' teaching. They received contextually adaptative training opportunities throughout Scripture.

For example, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, was forthright and brave as a learner yet not as quick to learn about the context of the Kingdom of God that Jesus brought to his reality. He was defensive and protective when it came to his abilities and caring for Jesus (Matthew 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:2–11; John 1:40–42, 18:10). However, eventually, he learned to adjust to his new reality in adaptive training opportunities. These opportunities were far different than the training for those who learned via their local synagogue. It seems reasonable that he partook like other Jewish young men while building a successful business with Andrew, his brother.

The life of Peter and other examples in Scripture of the apostles needing to adjust to new learning methods should give us pause when institutions or leadership circles when devising curricula.

#### Revisiting The Need and Opportunity and Recognizing the Challenges of COVO Ministry

There are distinctive difficulties for COVO ministers in addition to the everyday challenges that FF senior pastors confront. Five specific challenges for COVO ministers are 1) identity and shame issues, especially in denominational settings; 2) a variety of characterizations of success by legacy and recent congregants; 3) varying expectations and

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<sup>111</sup> Jeffrey Barker, interview by author, phone calls and email exchanges, August 5, 2022.

management due to the short margins; 4) lack of recognition from a denomination historically served by fully funded clergy, and 5) personal isolation.<sup>112</sup>

Given these challenges, this section helps illuminate the retooling or paradigm shift in mentoring that needs to occur, given the notable concerns mentioned so far in institutions or other training events—research, interviews with pastors, and results from a survey of DSs. A conversation with a university president mentioned earlier strongly indicates any new track or program needs to 1) help the pastor and leaders understand the theological and historical value of COVO ministry; 2) provide stewardship principles in several areas; 3) recommend ways to achieve local theological and cultural awareness; and 4) mentoring future mentors.

The following are paramount if COVO ministry is to succeed: A cooperative and willing nature; a desire to follow the ways of Jesus, current traditions, and guidelines; and an openness to adaptive learning. I will provide my readers with four samples of a track in COVO ministry and four samples of continuing education (CE) workshops that will help elucidate the importance of adapting and creating new ministry educational pathways.

Providing leaders an understanding of COVO ministry's theological and historical value: I want to draw my reader back to sections two and three in this dissertation to understand this point better.

However, first, we need to address some foundational concerns. Cooperation and healthy followership aimed toward multiplying disciples must become a regular part of ministry. Attending to these concerns will help FF and COVO pastors cope with the trials of priority management, different insecurities, emotional and spiritual health issues,<sup>113</sup> and rediscovering new rhythms for work, family life, and congregational needs. These trials are

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<sup>112</sup> Karl Vaters, "Redefined Success," *Christianity Today* 37, no. 1 (Winter 2016), accessed November 21, 2021, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/winter/redefinedsuccess.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 11–24.

typical for each lead pastor, yet my interviews revealed that they are more elevated for those serving COVO.

Dr. Larry McKain, Chicago Central DS, wrote a document titled “Respecting Bivocational Ministry: Moving Bivocational Ministry from Second Class to First Class Status.”<sup>114</sup> In this document, he writes about the significance of the COVO ministry strategy for local congregations. He notes that we need to recognize the BIVO among us because of the effectiveness and greater inclusiveness of the laity. These two points bolster the above: 1) to provide an understanding of the theological and historical value of COVO ministry; and 2) to help the local congregation leaders understand their place as COVO ministers, which is no less critical than the FF clergy.

A syllabus that helps local congregational leadership appreciate the COVO ministry both theologically and historically is available in the NBC IME course catalog and <sup>115</sup> Appendix 2.

A survey of the DSs for the CoTN across the North American continent captured the level of district support for the COVO ministry, the contextual challenges, and the need for COVO pastors in their districts.<sup>116</sup> This survey produced a 30.8% response rate. The three most essential tables are below. Compared to a phone or in-person reply, one obvious disadvantage of a written responsive survey is that we do not know precisely why the respondents shared their responses.

#### Survey Results:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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<sup>114</sup> Larry McKain, “Respecting Bivocational Ministry: Moving Bivocational Ministry from Second Class to First Class Status.” DS McKain emailed this working document to me for my research purposes.

<sup>115</sup> Nazarene Bible College: Institute of Ministerial Enrichment, “Keys to Successful Bivocational Pastoring,” accessed September 6, 2022, <https://online.nbcime.com/>

<sup>116</sup> USA/Canada District Superintendents, “Bivocational Ministry Survey” by author, April 12, 2022.

	Agree Strongly		Agree		Agree Somewhat		Disagree Somewhat		Disagree		Disagree Strongly		No Opinion		Responses
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Total
There is a growing need for focused attention in supporting bivocational ministry leaders.	17	70.8	7	29.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24
Our region should provide educational opportunities for bivocational pastors and their leadership teams.	11	45.8	10	41.7	2	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4.2	24
Our educational institutions ought to provide courses and delivery systems explicitly geared to those in bivocational ministry.	8	33.3	13	54.2	2	8.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4.2	24

<sup>117</sup> USA/Canada District Superintendents, “Bivocational Ministry Survey” by author, April 12, 2022.

The above questions in this section of the survey revealed a significant demand that the CoTN consider the needs and opportunities of the COVO ministry in districts across the USA/Canada region.

The first question measured if DSs thought there was a growing need to consider COVO ministry leaders in their districts. One hundred percent of the DSs who responded believed there is a growing need to focus on COVO ministry leadership. Questions two and three helped measure if the DSs felt their districts and educational institutions needed to offer specific training for COVO ministry leaders. Each of these questions revealed that as high as 87.5%, there is a significant need for adaptation to education offerings for COVO ministry leaders.

## 2. Where is your district providing unique support to bivocational ministry leaders?

	Yes, Consistently		Yes, Occasionally		No, But Considering It		No		Responses
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Total
My district provides specific and unique education for bivocational pastors.	3	13.0	13	56.5	6	26.1	1	4.3	23
My district adjusts continuing educational opportunities and meetings to meet the schedule of our bivocational pastors.	10	41.7	14	58.3	0	0	0	%	24

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This section reveals that though the percentages in the previous table showed the need to train COVO ministry leaders in a new way, the districts at least occasionally provide specialized education for COVO ministry needs. This difference may be due to the amount of time or budgeted resources each district and its leadership have available for traditional training. This gap likely reveals the need for a COVO coach to fill this gap. I submit that once an agreed-upon system has a successful track record, it will garner more attention and

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<sup>118</sup> USA/Canada District Superintendents, “Bivocational Ministry Survey” by author, April 12, 2022.

funding approval by districts or other means, such as grants. And cohorts will begin to evolve.

What topics or programs would you prioritize for bivocational ministry leaders? Please score each with a number between 1 and 7 (1=lowest importance; 7 indicates it is imperative)

	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		Responses
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	Total
Stewardship: time, finances, delegation	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	16.7	3	12.5	8	33.3	9	37.5	24
Review of the benefits and opportunities of bivocational ministry	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	25.0	2	8.3	6	25.0	10	41.7	24
Strategic Planning in bivocational ministry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	37.5	8	33.3	7	29.2	24
Board or leadership team alignment and expectations in bivocational ministry	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8.3	6	25.0	8	33.3	8	33.3	24
Bivocational leadership cohorts	0	0	0	0	1	4.2	2	8.3	11	45.8	5	20.8	5	20.8	24

Retreats for the bivocational leadership team	0	0	1	4.2	4	16.7	2	8.3	5	20.8	7	29.2	5	20.8	24
Money for books or conferences	0	0	1	4.3	3	13.0	4	17.4	7	30.4	4	17.4	4	17.4	23

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The three greatest needs by percentage noted by DSs are as follows:

1) Strategic Planning in bivocational ministry	100.0%
2) Board or leadership team alignment and expectations in bivocational ministry	91.60%
3) Bivocational leadership cohorts	87.40%

Consideration of the unique needs of the COVO ministry is a must when developing a strategic plan. Therefore, I propose holding off on this matter until those with specific instances address this best. The highest percentage confirms that a unique educational pathway for the COVO ministry is necessary.

The second highest rating was that the church board and leadership team must align with COVO ministry needs and philosophies. If they attended seminars and had a mentoring experience, this could help close this divide. This simple answer is that every follower of Christ, whether an FF, MF, COVO, BIVO, or laity in the church, is a minister.<sup>120</sup>

This dissertation's syllabi and seminar section addresses the second and third-highest-rated topics. I have seen cohort models imposed without room for dialogue between members

<sup>119</sup> USA/Canada District Superintendents, "Bivocational Ministry Survey" by author, April 12, 2022.

<sup>120</sup> 1 Peter 1:13-20; 2:1-12.

and the program leader. This communication pattern must be reversed to help the cohort become a more meaningful experience. I wonder if cohorts could elevate their value if members of the cohort were to be part of the program's design.

In addition, the results showed that most respondents are interested in seeing the USA/Canada region and its educational institutions provide more interest in supporting COVO ministries. Secondly, the respondents are intensely interested in supporting the COVO ministry in their districts. Thirdly, the overriding principles that need addressing include stewardship, mentorship, strategic planning for COVO ministries, and developing cohorts.

Five DSs provided additional comments they wanted to see addressed.

1. How to balance work and ministry because it seems ministry gets leftovers too often.
2. Mentoring relationships.
3. Opportunities for extended vacation/sabbaticals
4. Pastor/mentor/coach to regularly encourage the bivocational pastor.

I will seek to address these concerns within the syllabi, yet a cohort network could also generate ideas with the oversight of district leaders.

In summary, I am thankful for these leaders taking the time to answer the questions in this survey to help me understand where COVO ministry education is at within USA/Canadian CoTN districts and how it must move forward. Understanding that a written survey is probably less determinant in discovering the whys of issues than personal interviews, I was glad to see that much of what is on my heart and that current research addresses are shared by many. A concern is that the survey revealed a gap between the noted concerns and actions that districts could

attend to for training COVO ministers and congregations specifically. It could be that further research in this area is needed.

Work and ministry: To address the balance of work and ministry, Rev. Hofen provided great insights into this situation. A summation of his feedback is that there is a need to help COVOs consider changing their sources of income. A track or a cohort that included entrepreneurialism could address this. Yet, many people are not owner types. Therefore, the long answer is to focus on a shared leadership strategy among a cooperative community of followers of Christ with entrepreneurial characteristics.

Shared Leadership and Followership: Jesus modeled cooperation and healthy followership for all followers of God as the way forward, recognizing the challenges for the COVO minister. This emphasis is significant for COVO ministers and their congregational leaders to consider. That strategy included cooperation, shared leadership, and servant-followership between Jesus and his disciples. To begin with, Jesus only did what the father wanted him to do (John 5:19). Jesus still wants his disciples to maintain this principle as a cooperative, shared leadership and servant-follower community with the Father's will as the central concern.

Being a cooperative community of leaders who share in services for a congregation and community need to do so as followers of Christ. Cooperation in the community is essential for doing the work of ministry. It is out of realizing God's love for us that we love to follow God. As we do the work of following Christ, we are being obedient and trinitarian-like. As communities of cooperation and shared leadership experiences emerge, we will see transformed congregations and communities. "Christ's Spirit empowers human participation in the life of the triune God,

and all living as Christ's disciples is lived as outgoing, self-giving love to others."<sup>121</sup> This participation depicts an essential characteristic for congregations led by COVO ministry leaders. Coaching for participation, cooperation, and shared followership should focus on training COVO clergy and congregations in contextually appropriate ways.

John's Gospel records Jesus saying in chapter 17, "My prayer is not for them alone. I also pray for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe you have sent me" (Jn 17:20-21). In our cooperation, we re-present Jesus. We are to help others follow Christ, separately and in the community, with a sense of multiplying this experience. In the COVO ministry, cooperation and followership are imperatives to achieving God's purposes in their community.

In no other ministry setting is Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 more fitting than in a COVO ministry setting. In the *Theology of Work Commentary*, we learn that we often discover and develop close friendships while cooperating and following each other. At a minimum, working together is more effective and efficient. "Building good relationships at work requires openness and a desire to learn from others."<sup>122</sup> How much more is this true in a COVO ministry setting where the work of presenting the transformational power of God happens?

Jesus often sent his disciples out in pairs to work cooperatively, serve, and see the miracles of God together. Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott tell us that "In all things, union tends to success and safety, but above all the union of Christians. They assist each other by

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<sup>121</sup> John W. Stewart, "The Shape of the Congregation: Congregational and Trinitarian," *The Christian Century* 115, no. 16 (1998): 541, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000991171&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>122</sup> Messenger, William, ed. *Genesis through Revelation*, vol. 2, *Theology of Work Bible Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2014-2016).

encouragement or friendly reproof.”<sup>123</sup> At the same time, a COVO pastor who is laboring in the marketplace needs to coach and rely on their ministry team leaders by delegating and experiencing suffering together to minister effectively together.

Brad Brisco writes favoring COVO ministers and ministries co-opting a healthy followership ministry culture. He writes about reversing a disconnected ministry environment: “To overcome this disconnection, at the Send Network, we have started using the language of ‘co-vocation.’ The prefix ‘co’ is the reduced form of the Latin ‘com,’ which means ‘together’ or ‘in common.’”<sup>124</sup> This commonness is what Jesus knew we would need to have planted in our hearts. This commonness is what he conveyed to his followers before being seated at the father's right hand (Heb 12:2). Cooperation and followership are imperative for success in any ministry because of the heightened stressors, but even more so in a COVO ministry due to its elevated challenges.

When training COVO clergy and congregations, there is a great need to label the laity more than volunteers. They are COVO ministers. Author Tom Tyler argues that this time-honored idea needs head-on discussion. “Individuals within groups are primarily motivated by their self-interest. Instead, he demonstrates that human behaviors are influenced by shared attitudes, values, and identities that reflect social connections rather than material interests.”<sup>125</sup> Sadly, ministry cooperation can be a struggle in my and other colleagues’ experience.

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<sup>123</sup> Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 2017).

<sup>124</sup> Brad Brisco, “Covocational Church Planting: Rethinking Vocation,” 2017, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/covocational-church-planting-rethinking-vocation/>.

<sup>125</sup> Tom R. Tyler, *Why People Cooperate: The Role of Social Motivations*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=335080&site=ehost-live>.

When one of our congregants says yes to a job or volunteer role, they cooperate with others, systems, and leadership. Cooperation is an attitude based on character, often a key element in discipleship. Cooperation and collective intentionality focus on the cognitive capabilities, attitudes, and mental conditions that enable individuals to participate in joint actions (Rom 5:4-6). We need to support COVO ministries by focusing on it and then help COVOs by teaching how to coach and facilitate this need in their local contexts.

Shared leadership through cooperation and healthy followership is essential when COVO ministers (each member) pursue church planting. Church planting creates opportunities for leaders in such teams to use their God-given talents to create a culture of participation rather than spectatorship. More members, out of necessity, become involved in the church's mission. COVO leadership helps to diminish the laity-clergy divide, which is healthier than a sage on the stage and accompanying spectatorship. Reserve pastoral leadership only for the “professionals,” and a collection of gifted leaders will miss opportunities to pursue God’s calling for them.<sup>126</sup>

It is essential to understand that COVO church planting is not simply about having two or more jobs but aligning one’s life with their call. It’s about blending our calling to support our families and ourselves with our calling to live a life engaged in God’s mission. Our calling is missionary—people sent into the world to participate in God’s redemptive purposes. One vital and urgent means to accomplish that task is to plant new communities as COVO kingdom leaders.

At the North American Mission Board (NAMB), two major strategies exist for shifting the dialogue around this latest breed of COVO church planting. Brisco wrote, “First, we need to

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<sup>126</sup> Brad Brisco, *Covocational Church Planting: Aligning Your Marketplace Calling & the Mission* (Nashville: Missional Press, 2021).

champion the benefits of COVO church planting, but we also must champion the COVO planters. To better champion the need for cooperation and healthy followership, we need to leverage stories of COVO ministers and their calling in the marketplace.”<sup>127</sup>

Pearce and Conger also write about healthy followership and shared leadership. They provide several sociological trends in the United States. “Over the past fifty years have allowed shared leadership to emerge more frequently and make it a contextually appropriate practice. The first of these interrelated trends is a rising democratization of society and the church with an increased expectation that people will participate in decision-making processes.”<sup>128</sup>

The Apostle’s words convey that it is incumbent upon each follower of Christ to purposefully grow towards having a healthy and humble cooperative, followership, and shared leadership mindset. A single servant-leader strategy for congregations limits various capacities to see God’s mission happen in local contexts.

An example of a shared leadership mindset is a multi-site ministry called Darby Creek CoTN in the South-Central Ohio district. In this ministry, the pastor chose to call two assistant pastors with ties to each context. The pastors collaborated on sermons, outreaches, and general community service strategies. In this experience, preachers rotated between preaching venues every six weeks so that the hearers would garner a fuller expression of what God was saying to the three campuses. It also equipped their hearers to listen better. Finally, it is worth noting that

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<sup>127</sup> Brad Brisco, “Covocational Church Planting: Rethinking Vocation,” 2017, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.namb.net/send-network/resource/covocational-church-planting-rethinking-vocation/>.

<sup>128</sup> Craig L Pearce, and Jay A. Conger, *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership*, (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2003), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=474616&site=ehost-live>.

they ensured the ministry leadership team had equal representatives from each campus regardless of the number of people who attended a particular congregation.

Shared leadership in business environments through incubators is essential for startups. One of the world's most innovative incubator environments is in California's Silicon Valley.<sup>129</sup> Peter Ester wrote about various schools of startup entrepreneurship and how they help startups become successful companies in this area. An incubator element could be wise for local COVO ministries.

Other Cooperative Considerations: If a network of local congregations adopted an incubator strategy, congregations could share fixed and variable costs.<sup>130</sup> Scripture teaches us about a shared leadership environment: it would help share expenses, learn best practices among the communities more quickly, and create other activities for tremendous ministry success.

Congregational and pastoral leadership is an important factor in a congregation's success or failure. The emerging practice of Shared Leadership offers congregational leaders one tool that might help them successfully engage in the adaptive work necessary in the face of a changing environment. Recent research has connected the practice of Shared Leadership to increased innovation in businesses. This form of leadership should be explored as a model for congregations as they engage in adaptive change.<sup>131</sup>

In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, the author implores humans to cooperate: "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him. Furthermore, if two lie down, they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?" The author indicates that when

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<sup>129</sup> Peter Ester, *Accelerators in Silicon Valley: Building Successful Startups* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1685490&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>130</sup> Ministry Incubators, "Turning Innovative Ministry Ideas Into Reality," accessed September 6, 2022, <https://ministryincubators.com/>.

<sup>131</sup> Zach Ellis, "Shared Leadership in Congregations: How to Construct a Holding Environment to Do Adaptive Work," *Discernment: Theology and the Practice of Ministry* Vol. 3:2, Article 1, (2017), <https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/discernment/vol3/iss2/1>.

individuals work in unison, their capacities surpass a zero-sum game. If we begin following this pattern as congregations with a COVO mindset, they can be better prepared when trouble confronts them.

Luke emphasized the principle of cooperation and its benefits in the book of Acts. He wrote, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:42-44). Then, Luke records Jesus Christ saying, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23). Cooperation to this extent is what members of the Holy Trinity inseparably model for us as followers of Christ in communities of faith.

Paul the Apostle encouraged the Roman Church to “be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation” (Rom 12:16). A keyword for this experience is harmony. Harmony carries the image of a symphony. While each instrument has a different means of expression, the collective or the cooperative provides a fuller expression than one instrument alone. To those who are looking for who and what to follow, Paul wrote, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). He indicates that determining to create an individualistic pathway to becoming a follower is detrimental to one’s closeness to becoming who God created us. We learn followership as we follow God.

Cooperative strategies for the follower of Christ in the community are essential to be able to do what God wants to be done. Jesus modeled cooperation. John recorded Jesus saying, “Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only

what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (Jn 5:19). He spoke this to doubters challenging him by what authority he had to heal and forgive. Jesus Christ served God by revealing to his hearers that they needed to develop an interrelated and cooperative existence.

McNeil writes that local congregations will have more capacity for ministry when serving cooperatively: “It is capable of binding people in love and in unity because there is one body, one Spirit, one calling, one hope, and one God.”<sup>132</sup> This characteristic is more necessary in a COVO-minded congregation with the limitations and constraints upon a full or part-time pastor and other members of the leadership teams. Characteristics and behaviors will surface in local COVO congregations when they determine to fully cooperate, like a busload of followers of Christ on church buses traveling long distances.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was not satisfied with the character of the Church during the rise and occupation by the Nazis. He writes, “The church is only the church when it does for others.”<sup>133</sup> Sharing in faithful, shared leadership for justice of the outcast and marginalized was of utmost importance to Bonhoeffer.

Zacharia Ellis wrote, “Thus, shared leadership is a theologically faithful practice for congregations seeking new ways of structuring their lives together in the twenty-first century.”<sup>134</sup> His essay argued that shared leadership is a discipline that communicates to its local context that

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<sup>132</sup> Genna R. McNeil, “The American Baptist Churches and Cooperative Christianity,” *American Baptist Quarterly* no. 4, (1985): 322–26, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000955400&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>133</sup> Eboo Patel, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer and a Theology of Interfaith Cooperation: Third Speech in the Union Theological Seminary Interfaith Cycle, Originally Delivered March 14, 2013,” *Cross Currents* 63 no. 3 (September 213): 286–95, Accessed: March 30, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?>

<sup>134</sup> Zachariah Ellis, “A Theology of Power in Shared Leadership Teams,” *Journal of Religious Leadership* 19 no. 1 (Spring 2020): 5–30, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAiREM200615000694&site=ehost-live>.

increased participation in the community enables us to live as designed to live by the father. Without shared leadership, congregations participate for the people in their parish, and COVO ministry will not achieve its mission of telling others about the hope in Christ Jesus.

This part of the COVO ministry discussion reveals the need to help local congregational leaders understand their place as COVO ministers. This point will be the second syllabus and fodder for a seminar.

### Stewardship Principles and Practices

C. Peter Wagner wrote, “The indispensable first step in guiding a church through change is earning the right to lead people.”<sup>135</sup> This right is garnered over time by acting and believing that those in one’s care are their primary concern. According to Dr. Jim Russom, earning the right happens relationally. What I took away from our discussion was that spiritual leaders need to attend to love their people, listen to them, and learn what is important to them.<sup>136</sup> Essentially, we must aim to lead by example by becoming servant leaders.

Robert Greenleaf founded the modern Servant Leadership movement and the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership.<sup>137</sup> He was an employee of a high-tech firm, then a researcher of management and education for forty years. His theory of servant-leadership began with serving first. This standpoint developed his thesis: “Caring for persons, the more able and the less able,

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<sup>135</sup> C. Peter Wagner, “Leading Your Church to Growth,” Accessed: April 8, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/1987/fall/8714101.html>.

<sup>136</sup> Jim Russom, phone interview by author, April 4, 2022.

<sup>137</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, “What is Servant Leadership,” Accessed: April 8, 2022, <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>.

serving each other is the rock upon building a good society. The servant-leader is a servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first.”<sup>138</sup>

Becoming better stewards and caretakers of our people (1 Pt 5:2), there are characteristics of sharing and cooperation which have Scriptural backing and are essential for any ministry, especially COVO ministries. If a COVO ministry succeeds, cooperation, sharing, and following by serving through delegation in this setting is of particular importance. Moses was a COVO minister. His story was that he was a prophet sent by God to set fellow Hebrews free from the domination of a wayward government and its leaders. He also served as a shepherd (Ex 2, 3, 18). In Exodus 18, Moses’ father-in-law exhorted Moses to delegate lesser issues in the community and discover the same benefits. In this way, people could settle cases requiring judgments more quickly.

Letting go of duties can save or maximize energy, prepare others for a ministry setting to grow as leaders, and effectively manage more significant ministry responsibilities. Delegating is a stewardship lesson that COVO ministers would do well to implement with the local congregational leaders. I will address this in the proposal section as a matter of COVO as a steward.

In the life of Moses, Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, is our teacher on becoming a better steward. Moses’ father-in-law cries out to us that COVO leaders must learn to whom they can delegate elements of ministry. I would argue that if this is not an active part of their ministry, it needs to be learned, or this limiting factor will result in a failed ministry.

Amy Sherman wrote that “thousands of Christian professionals sit in the pews, wondering, can I participate in Jesus’ mission and do so using the gifts and skills God has given

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<sup>138</sup> Robert K. Greenleaf, “What is Servant Leadership,” Accessed: April 8, 2022, <https://www.greenleaf.org/what-is-servant-leadership/>.

me? The answer is a resounding yes, but such a word is tragically uncommon in many Christian congregations.”<sup>139</sup> I spent several years in business arenas, from start-ups to coaching small and large businesses. I earned an MBA to help develop my skill sets even further. Yet, it has been my experience that just as COVOs are not honored in the world of ministry, there is a similar lack of respect for entrepreneurs and managers in so-called secular work as followers of Christ.

Each person in a congregation or ministry has a place to fulfill their calling of equipping the Church for more significant work. However, we must ask if this is activated in our congregations. Doug Spada wrote, “From this day forward, I would like you to think of your local church as an aircraft carrier. Unless our churches assume the rightful and biblical positions in the battles we face in the workplace, we cannot fully advance.”<sup>140</sup>

Other stewardship matters needing consideration are how much one should spend on sermon preparation, balancing home life, ministry life, and personal care, and how to steward financial resources better.

One lesson I have continued to act upon in sermon preparation is to start with prayer, asking God what he wants my hearers to hear. After receiving that understanding, I focused on a statement I learned from Dr. Steve Estep. “I want my hearers to hear \_\_\_\_\_ so that my hears will.”<sup>141</sup> In my preaching experience, this has been a proven way to begin a much more focused sermon.

When I pastored a multisite in south central Ohio, I taught my other two COVO pastors to prepare their sermons in three to four hours with this method. That is not to say that it was

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<sup>139</sup> Amy L. Sherman, *Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), Locations 935-937, Kindle.

<sup>140</sup> Sherman, *Kingdom Calling*, Locations 1044-1045, Kindle.

<sup>141</sup> Steve Estep, DMN911 — “Focused Sermons,” Fall 2016.

absent from their minds during the week. We had weekly meetings about what the Spirit showed them and had opportunities to clarify or applaud their direction. Sharing in sermon preparation is a huge advantage but is only applicable when pastors do not act like independent silos. It takes humility and trust. Sharing in a cohort is a valuable practice for COVOs when applicable.

In my entrepreneurial business experiences, sharing updates and best practices was a learned practice we shared with our customers. Whether we hit the mark by overestimating or underestimating was not the primary concern. The most important was the mutual agreement and managing expectations between our businesses and customers. Likewise, Andrew Hamilton recommends that managing expectations between leadership and the pastor need to take place.<sup>142</sup>

What I found that worked for me as a COVO was to prioritize my time in fifteen-hour blocks. When I worked directly with a congregation, I gave that responsibility approximately fifteen hours a week. In sermon preparation, I allotted between three and five hours. Sunday services took about four hours with set up, the actual service, and ministry with individual congregants. Leadership team meetings took about three hours, including prep time. I spent the other four to six hours mentoring others to do ministry work with the congregants. This pattern did not work every week, yet overall, it was a proven strategy. This practice is just one strategy: blocking time.

John Maxwell's book *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day* describes another powerful method to help process priorities. The chapters are segmented by weeks with devotional-like messages for each day, Monday through Friday. Week seventeen is entitled *Peter and the Law of Priorities*. Maxwell writes, "For three years, Peter watched as Jesus' priorities

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<sup>142</sup> Hamilton, *Shaping*, 202.

were tested on a regular basis. And for three years, he saw Jesus consistently invest only in the things that would allow Him to fulfill His mission—despite all the demands on his life.”<sup>143</sup>

I think we need to be completely honest about stewarding our different realms of responsibility with ourselves, our families, and our congregants. Vocational realms are where one’s call is realized (e.g., family life, care for oneself, place of employment, business venture). In these realms, one must achieve the ability to say no to doing what is not essential to one’s call and delegate to others so that they can participate in ministry and help multiply the impact of God’s Kingdom.<sup>144</sup>

When the Church is working, serving, and following in harmony, others will notice, making it highly likely that congregations will cooperate with the culture around them by serving their lives better than they could ever have expected. With cooperative, shared, and servant-like characteristics, ministries will increase a church’s innovation, growth, and implementation of God's various gifts for service in local contexts and the lives of the entire body of Christ. These characteristics will be a significant challenge for those who believe the pastor is the CEO. These characteristics will generate beneficial outcomes and bring a more holistic local congregation.

### Listening: All Theology Is Local And Culturally Contextual

I have served small and large businesses and churches in six states and obtained formal education in four states. These experiences have taught me that culture, thoughts, and meanings

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<sup>143</sup> John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader’s Day: Revitalize Your Spirit and Empower Your Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 279-297.

<sup>144</sup> Dave Ferguson, *Hero Maker (Exponential Series)*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 130, Kindle.

can differ depending on the local context. A syllabus and seminar are provided for this area of concern.<sup>145</sup>

Mark Branson wrote, “The missional church framework requires that we deepen our knowledge of our contexts, including ethnicities and cultures, so we can become more capable of wise and effective leadership in our churches.”<sup>146</sup> Branson has much to say about culture and how its expression. One of the primary ways he encourages us to engage culture is to study the local vernacular: “According to Edward Stewart and Milton Bennett, most native speakers of English in the United States, particularly those who are monolingual, have a mechanistic understanding of language.”<sup>147</sup>

Branson wrote about how one views their context while conducting ethnological research. There is the matter of facts, interviews, and deep listening, yet the view from which one does their research may be more critical. He begins his discussion on viewing one’s context with a 4-I Model, which includes initiating, inquiring, imagining, and innovating what is optimistic about one’s context. He cites five basic requirements in positive, appreciative inquiry: 1) choosing the positive focus of one’s inquiry; 2) looking into life-giving stories; 3) locating themes within these stories to perform further inquiry; 4) creating images of a preferred future, and 5) finding innovative ways to create the preferred future.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> See Appendix 3: Syllabus- Exegeting Your Community.

<sup>146</sup> Mark Branson, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2011), 67, Kindle.

<sup>147</sup> Edward Stewart and Milton Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maine: Intercultural Press, 1991), 46.

<sup>148</sup> Mark Branson, *Churches, Cultures and Leadership*, 67.

Mary Clark Moschella is an expert in helping people find research pathways for their context. She writes, “Doing ethnography is like studying navigational charts.”<sup>149</sup> The local people are the experts in their context.

To better understand their context, Moschella writes that we must be experts at non-interruptive listening. She writes, “Religious leaders are often socialized to be better at speaking than listening.”<sup>150</sup> In Dr. David Wesley’s courses about ethnography, we learned the essential lessons of being willing to tolerate the unexpected.<sup>151</sup>

Moschella’s writings also help one develop images of preferred futures by directing the readers to an ethnography tool called research puzzles.<sup>152</sup> Remarkably, she refers to a model in chapter two: *Religious Practice—Clarifying the Questions*, created by Jennifer Mason. Her models include “Development Puzzles—how did this come to be? Mechanical Puzzles—how does this work (this way)? Comparative Puzzles—how does this compare to that? Causal/Predictive puzzles— how does this impact that?”<sup>153</sup> Becoming a practitioner of these disciplines is a keen way to understand one’s context.

Likewise, in our dialogue with COVO ministries, the value of being a COVO minister seemed to uncover more cultural norms and boundaries than an FF would likely find at the same time. Studying cultural norms is particularly important.

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<sup>149</sup> Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 7.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>151</sup> David Wesley, “Prolegomena, Nazarene Theological Seminary,” DMN911, Fall 2018.

<sup>152</sup> Moschella, *Ethnography*, 57.

<sup>153</sup> Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications, 2002).

Interpreting cultural identity creates the need to consider there can be vast differences in public theology. Mapping these influences on theology, like poverty, wealth, suburban, rural, social status, and security or insecurities, can also help discover a linkage between the assets of the congregation and the primary communities they serve.<sup>154</sup>

In the next section, we will discuss the need to mentor/disciple others in the practices mentioned above based on critical research, including Scripture and other key voices.

### Moving from Mentoring to Hero Makers

This section will examine mentoring and equipping others for multiplication in the Kingdom of God. We need to pay attention to our followers, yet not for the sake of reproducing them into our image. Dave Ferguson wrote, “96% of all U.S. churches are either declining (Level 1), plateauing (Level 2), or growing (Level 3). Only 4% are at Level 4 (reproducing) or 5 (multiplying). And that 4% is lopsided on the Level 4 side, with extremely few truly multiplying.”<sup>155</sup> Jesus said we were to be followers of him (Jn 1:2). In doing so, we would and must multiply (Mt 28:19-20). If we mentor and equip others, the mentor’s vision must go beyond adding one more person like them on earth. The goal is to mentor others to be like Jesus and multiply as he and his disciples.

Robert Kelly examined the followership training process in *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*. He wrote, “We need to pay attention to followers. Followership is worthy of its own discrete research and training. Plus,

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<sup>154</sup> Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference*, 64.

<sup>155</sup> Dave Ferguson, *Hero Maker (Exponential Series)* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 56, Kindle.

conversations about leadership need to include followership because leaders neither exist nor act in a vacuum without followers.”<sup>156</sup>

Most mentoring I have been privileged to participate in has been in one-on-one relationships. Mentoring in a cohort of COVOs could transform and multiply the idea and find tremendous value. “Highly valued learning occurred also with a teacher and a small group of students.”<sup>157</sup> One college president proposed that mentoring should occur between FF pastors from a large church or a group of COVOs. Yet, that is not likely a popular proposition for a large church because experience tells me that pastors within these congregations have a significant role in mentoring their staff with limited time.

Having started dozens of flourishing businesses, I’ve found that the most popular training methods always included manuals, classroom experiences, and hands-on mentoring. Hence, when we couple these teaching aids with mentoring having a multiplication mindset, we will achieve a system of observable success. The COVO cohort strategy cannot occur in a vacuum, so inviting specialists or other COVO practitioners into specific discussions would be wise.

Many seminars I have been to include a handbook, training from a specialist, then dialogue between attendees. One of the deficits of this strategy is that there is typically no mention of taking these lessons back to the local congregational leaders and being held accountable for doing so.

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<sup>156</sup> Ronald E. Riggio, Ira Chaleff, and Jean Lipman-Blumen, *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*. 1st ed. (Warren Bennis Signature Series, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=218521&site=ehost-live>

<sup>157</sup> Richard J. Light, *Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 45–50.

A community of COVOs could act as a mentoring community engaged with a specialist who could speak to the group by providing essential roles “offering the gifts of recognition, support, challenge, and inspiration and incorporating certain features.” This sort of mentoring cohort that is designed for developing mentors to produce future mentors would help overcome the root issues found in the survey provided above and address the growing need that Ed Stetzer writes about in his book *Bivocational Pastors*.<sup>158</sup>

A mentoring community exists in every culture. The cultures within which pastors live work, and minister are vastly different throughout the USA and Canadian communities. At a minimum, culture represents vernacular, arts, objects, trends, religious activities, relationships, imaginations, politics, and “how we find our place in the world of work.”<sup>159</sup> The culture of mentoring, as Jesus portrayed, was to respect and live in context (Mk 12:17) with a mindset of multiplication.

Cohorts should be developed in sub-regions within the greater region yet be open to having expert COVOs in other regions share the best lessons learned. This proposal is because culture cultivates norms in smaller areas, whether life-giving or not.

Goheen and Barth wrote extensively about the church and culture. Goheen wrote:

When you cross over into another cultural setting and take the time to get to know the language, customs, and institutions of that culture, it begins to shake you out of the assumed familiarity you have with your own culture. That which seems to be normal and simply the way things are is now questioned.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Ed Stetzer, “Bivocational Pastors,” Pastoral Care Inc., 2022, <https://www.pastoralcareinc.com/resources/bivocational-pastors/>

<sup>159</sup> Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Emerging Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2011), location 5389, Kindle.

<sup>160</sup> Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation*, 139.

To help find worthy cultural views and how Scripture addresses the issues, “Karl Barth once advised young theologians to take your Bible and newspaper and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible.”<sup>161</sup>

The CoTN’s mission is “To Make Christlike Disciples in the Nations.”<sup>162</sup> This statement reflects what Jesus was quoted as having said in Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus developed disciples who were charged with developing and teaching other disciples. This present/future statement could be restated as mentoring mentors who develop and teach future mentors who make mentors. “Every disciple follows the Master, but never alone; every disciple is a member of the fellowship of disciples, the body, or no disciple at all.”<sup>163</sup> Jesus was a discipler with a multiplication agenda. He was a “hero maker, and his example challenges us to be the same.”<sup>164</sup>

This chapter provided OT and NT models, key voices, and critical points of emphasis to highlight that COVO ministers and congregations are not secondary to FF ministers or their congregations. The call of the FF and COVO minister is basically the same: like Paul, the Apostle of God, the call originates from God to love the people by sharing the good news of the Gospel. “There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Eph 3:28).

This chapter also discussed the benefits and challenges of COVO ministry and how areas of ministry are pretty much like the FF’s experience. In contrast, other areas are more intense and

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<sup>161</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, “Everyday Theology,” accessed September 8, 2022, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2009/fall/interpretingculturaltexts.html>.

<sup>162</sup> Church of the Nazarene, *Manual*, (Kansas City: Foundry, 2021), <https://nazarene.org/mission>.

<sup>163</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission (20th Anniversary Edition)* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011), 76, Kindle.

<sup>164</sup> Dave Ferguson, *Hero Maker (Exponential Series)*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 20, Kindle.

different for the COVO minister and congregation. God uses the COVO minister and congregation to address needs in local contexts to better connect those in the marketplace with the Gospel.

## SECTION 5

### Synthesis and Conclusion: Synthesis of Views, Themes, and Commitments

This dissertation's differing and often complementary views provided a basis for local congregations to understand their redemptive mission as COVO ministers. These views included Scripture, history, interviews, and views from scholars and practitioners with a worldwide biblical orientation. This work sought to bring historical and contemporary views and orientate the need and opportunity to adapt current educational pathways toward the biblical mandate of taking the Good News to all contexts through COVO and BIVO ministries. This work revealed themes and values needing consideration by institutions and church leaders. Innovative adaptations of education must be theologically practical for groups of congregational leaders.<sup>165</sup>

The first theme weaving through this essay is that “all theology is contextual.”<sup>166</sup> And that each local theologian “must be a deep and thoughtful reader of the biblical text, the church’s theological traditions, and the cultural contexts in which the church defines its being and mission.”<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Samushonga, “Reflection,” 66-80.

<sup>166</sup> Green, *Tribe and Tongue*, 426-428.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

This essay addressed the second theme that COVO-led congregations are authentic missional interpreters of our time. Dr. Peterson wrote, “As culture continues to shift, more churches will be pastored by working priests.”<sup>168</sup>

Thirdly, a theme throughout this work was that a reasonable interpretation of biblical and cultural history matters, particularly in understanding the relationship between the church’s mission and opportunities for developing more practical theologians and missionaries in local congregations. Dr. Busic confirmed this theme. One can read these comments in chapter two. Goheen reminds us that it is God’s vision that the church is his redemptive mission. The church is on a mission and needs to be reframed in missionary ecclesiology.<sup>169</sup>

Fourth, practical applications of the church’s mission need to align with God’s redemptive purposes for all creation, tribes, and cultural complexities particular to the growing COVO ministry strategy.

The interpretation of the Good News is rooted in scripture and local contexts where COVO ministers and laity are probably more culturally precise in interpreting this than any other ministry locale. This reality amplifies the needs and opportunities needed in refashioning educational pathways for COVO ministry leaders.

A commitment to a more accurate interpretation of actualizing God’s mission in one’s context demands an appreciation for local theology balanced against Scripture, historical realities, and the interpretive and felt needs of one’s community. Redeemed people modeling love in their contexts is a COVO need. COVO congregations are stewards, practitioners, and coaches of future COVO-based followers of Christ.

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<sup>168</sup> Peterson, “Working Priest,” 22.

<sup>169</sup> Goheen, *The Church and Its Vocation*, 3.

In conclusion, research shows that most work done on BIVO or COVO ministry descriptions are problem-oriented and address the pastor. Research has shown that this is a limited view and not Scripturally appropriate. Dr. Barker's research was one of two dissertations I found that focused on the congregation and supported this view. Dr. Brenneman wrote the other. I found only one document that spoke to the BIVO congregation as a strategy for ministry.<sup>170</sup> Still, my proposal revealed the need and opportunity for adaptive educational pathways for the COVO ministry, including but not limited to the pastor and the leadership team.

There remain unanswered questions in this thorough yet limited research of COVO ministry.

Unanswered questions and topics for further research about COVO ministry:

1. What are the effects on the congregation when there is a COVO ministry leader?

Examining journals, books, dissertations, and websites (even interviews that were not part of this essay), I found only one article dealing specifically with the effects of bivocational ministry on the congregation.<sup>171</sup> From my research, most available documents and dissertations focused primarily on the pastor. This difference may indicate the need for Ph.D.-level work on this topic.

2. Throughout my research, I found that most authors like Bickers referenced the congregation as a subsection within subsections, yet not with much specificity to the congregation being COVO. Considering how much energy a COVO minister uses and the corresponding effects on COVO laity leaves a considerable gap in research.

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<sup>170</sup> Anthony C. Pappas, Ed Pease, and Norm Faramelli, "The Bivocational Congregation: Tomorrow's Church?" *Congregations* 35, no. 1 (2009): 11–15, <http://ezproxy.nts.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001698666&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>171</sup> Pappas, Pease, and Faramelli, "Tomorrow's Church?" 11–15.

3. A study on whether effective evangelism is a reality must be conducted, as many propose when there is a COVO minister. The works I researched had subpoints regarding the benefit of evangelism and COVO ministry and its increased opportunities for evangelism. Yet, I found no empirical data on evangelism and this ministry strategy.
4. There needs to be an additional study in the areas of adaptative learning and keys to success regarding online learning. At this point, I rely on my online experiences with Nazarene Bible College, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and Regent University as a student and a facilitator.
5. Research needs to differentiate the percentage of BIVO and COVO ministries between ethnicities.

Next steps to activating a sustainable, certified training opportunity for COVO ministers and laity:

1. This work needs to be approved by the doctoral interview team.
2. Once fully approved, the work needs to be submitted to the twenty-four DSs who responded to the approved survey and requested to review the final draft of the dissertation. I aim to contact each recipient of this dissertation within two months of receipt to see if they have additional comments or concerns or would like to have any further information.
3. Then, this work needs an entrepreneurial pastoral leader, a denominational champion, or a university leader who would take it upon themselves to help create space and promote a sustainable, life-giving training center and network for COVO pastors, leaders, and their congregations. In part, it will provide resources, certified training,

retreat opportunities for COVO leaders, book reviews, connections, and local congregations and church boards.

- a. An entity or group of individuals to help keep this opportunity moving forward holds the entity's leaders accountable and assists with fundraising mechanisms.
  - b. Funding: District budgets and grants from national organizations must be included in fundraising to help offset costs associated with COVO learning opportunities.
  - c. Reasonable promotion needs to occur to make the needs and opportunities expressed.
4. One of our dreams is to start a 501(c)(3) network for COVO ministers. This network would have a relatively small monthly joining fee. An accountant or bookkeeper would monitor these fees. Except for professional fees and technology, all funds would be deposited into an account to offset future training or retreat events. There would be strict accountability over these funds.
  5. Further work needs to be produced by an organization or researcher to outline a year of training for the COVO. I recommend the following points:
    - a. Part 1: Theological and Historical Foundations of BIVO and COVO ministry
    - b. Part 2: Relational- Heroes making Hero-Makers
    - c. Part 3: Cultural- Community Exegesis
    - d. Part 4: Entrepreneurialism in Ministry
    - e. Part 5: Financial Management as a BIVO and COVO

- f. Part 6: Emotional Care and Shared Leadership
- g. Part 7: Putting It All Together

### Final Remarks

Education topics and pathways need revision. BIVO and COVO ministry leaders, which make up approximately seventy-five percent of CoTN local congregations in the USA/Canada, depend on this revision.

COVO-led congregations are the authentic missional interpreters of our time. They need to be honored, appropriately educated and have a mentoring type of network developed. These ministries need contextually appropriate support as co-leaders for Kingdom success in local contexts and across USA/Canada Region. It presupposes that when our collective capabilities merge as followers of Christ, we will find greater community effectiveness toward what Christ called us to in John 17 and move into contemporary settings with a multiplication mindset more successfully (Mt 28:19-20).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Discovery Session Guide

**Purpose:** The Discovery Session will be conducted through exercises with your discovery stakeholder participants. This session will use the exercises below to help clarify your Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) focus. Students use this guide to conduct Discovery Sessions.

#### Goals

After conducting the Discovery Session, students will be able to:

- Articulate the boundaries of their primary audience.
- Gain a better understanding of the Need, Problem, or Opportunity (NPO) affecting the primary audience.
- Identify potential root causes of the NPO.
- Determine how a solution would impact the audience.

Put this statement on the board or wall before the session. The activities in the Discovery Session will help you fill in the blanks of the discovery statement:

Considering \_\_\_\_\_ (audience),  
 we've discovered \_\_\_\_\_ (NPO),  
 which is caused by \_\_\_\_\_ (root cause).  
 If solved, it would mean \_\_\_\_\_ (outcome).

When the Discovery Session is completed, fill in this discovery statement:

Considering \_\_\_youth group\_\_\_\_\_ (audience),  
 we've discovered \_\_\_the group is shrinking \_\_\_\_\_ (NPO),

which is caused by \_\_\_\_ because it doesn't identify sufficiently \_\_\_\_\_ (root cause). If solved, it would mean \_\_\_\_\_ (outcome).

### Materials needed for the Discovery Session

1. A quiet room for 6-8 people to work together comfortably.
2. Table space for everyone.
3. Yellow Post-it Notes.
4. Blue and pink Post-it Notes.
5. Dot stickers.
6. Large blank wall (to post flip charts).
7. Large flip chart or whiteboard.
8. Pens.
9. Markers.
10. Clock.
11. Healthy snacks (fruit, cheese, nuts, yogurt), coffee/tea, and water.
12. An open mind.

### Facilitation Tips

- The role of the facilitator is to guide the process and learning. As such, you should take a neutral stance throughout the process. This will allow participants to explore the contours of the topic freely.
- For progress, welcome debates. If the conversation turns combative (people stop listening to each other, feel attacked, etc.), remind the participants to return to the session norms. Take a short break if necessary.
- Repeat to participants what they're saying, or paraphrase for more clarity.
- Enlist a timekeeper from the participants to help you stay on track.
- Be assertive but open-minded.
- Remember that this session is to help *you* find clarity around your topic.

### Conducting the Discovery Session

Set the stage.

Before the day: Gather all your materials. Do not leave this until the day of your session!

On the day:

- Before your stakeholders arrive, arrange the room so each participant has a chair, pen, pad of yellow Post-it notes, two dot stickers, easy access to water/coffee/tea, etc.

- Write an outline of the plan on a page of your flip chart and post it where everyone can see it. An example:
  - ❑ 10 am: Welcome and introductions.
  - ❑ 10:10 am: Overview of the day and NPO description.
  - ❑ 10:30 am: Charting the audience.
  - ❑ 10:50 am: Nailing the NPO.
  - ❑ 11:15 am: Break.
  - ❑ 11:30 am: Starting with the end.
  - ❑ Noon: Discussion and next steps.
  - ❑ 12:30 pm: Lunch or dismiss.

### Introductions and Overview

*Approximate time: 15-30 minutes*

When you have gathered your group of 5-7 stakeholders, thank them for coming and allow a few minutes for brief introductions. Outline a set of core norms that the group will follow throughout the session, such as not interrupting, responding respectfully, listening well, stance on the use of phones/computers during the session, etc. You can invite the stakeholders to offer additional norms as well.

Present a broad overview of the NPO you are interested in addressing. Say enough about your NPO area so your stakeholders can see the theme, but not so much that you fully define it and make their input seem superfluous. You want the stakeholders to help you better identify the focus, show you what you may not have considered, and ensure you account for all the relevant voices that the NPO impacts.

EXERCISE ONE: Charting your audience: Who are all the impacted audiences or stakeholders?

### MATERIALS

- Yellow Post-it notes for each person.
- Pens.

- Dot stickers - 2 per person.

*Approximate time: 15-20 minutes*

## PROCESS

1. Following the introduction to your NPO, ask your participants to brainstorm everyone they think is part of the audience surrounding your NPO, each on an individual Post-It note—Example NPO area: Need for children's and youth materials for African Americans. The audience list may include African American children, parents, church leaders, children's and youth pastor(s), denominational leaders, curriculum publishers, authors, etc.
2. Stick all the Post-it notes to a page of the flipchart labeled 'audience' and explain to the group that the audience we want to serve is the one that will provide the most significant impact and the highest level of significance for the amount of effort invested. If some Post-it notes identify the same people, double them up (e.g., multiples of African American children or children's pastors).
3. Ask your stakeholders to reflect on the significance/impact of the cost/effort invested as you read the audience Post-it notes aloud. Do not invite group conversation about the merits of each of them or allow stakeholders to 'lobby' for their favorites.
4. Ask all participants to vote on which audience(s) they find the most compelling, considering the relationship between the impact and the cost and effort, by placing their two dot stickers by that Post-it note. They can put both stickers on one or divide them between two. This process will provide a 'heat map' of what your stakeholders identify as the primary audience(s) to pursue further.
5. Thank the stakeholders for their input and identify which audience has the most traction based on their votes. If two tie or are very similar, you can proceed by:
  - a. Choosing which audience you would like to pursue,
  - b. Proceed with two focus audiences, or
  - c. Giving each stakeholder two more dots allows voting on the top two choices.

EXERCISE TWO: Nailing your NPO: Are you going in the right direction?

## MATERIALS

- Post-it notes – yellow, blue, and pink: Lacking pink post-it notes, feel free to write them on the whiteboard.
- Pens.
- Whiteboard space or blank wall and large flip chart

*Approximate time: 20-25 minutes*

## PROCESS

1. On the individual yellow Post-it notes, ask participants to write an answer to the question, “What is the need/problem/opportunity around this topic?”
  - a. Please encourage them to write everything they can think of about the NPO. For instance, from the African American youth material example above, “African American materials are only available for middle grades,” “African American children are not included in the stories for elementary-aged teaching examples,” “only white children are portrayed in teaching materials – no racial diversity,” etc.
  - b. Have participants place all the Post-it notes on the board or wall and read through them, looking for patterns.
    - i. Work together to cluster them into broad themes on the board or wall.
    - ii. As a group, give each set of clustered items a theme title.
2. On individual blue Post-it notes, ask participants to identify symptoms or ‘pain points associated with each of the clustered themes from step 1.
  - a. To identify the symptoms, ask: “What do we see that indicates a need, problem, or opportunity here?” For instance, from the African American youth material example above, a symptom could be that half of the students in our youth program are racially diverse, but the teachers are all Caucasian.
  - b. Have participants place all the blue Post-it notes on the board next to the “themes.”
3. On the individual, Post-it notes, ask participants to identify the root cause(s) for each clustered theme identified on yellow Post-it notes. Put these on the board next to the related “themes.”
4. The facilitator leads the group to review the themes that have surfaced and the corresponding symptoms and causes.
  - a. Consider the following questions:
    - i. What theme has the most traction and viability?
    - ii. Which theme has substantive symptoms and causes that resonate with the group?
    - iii. Which theme has been either substantially clarified or muddied by the subsequent Post-it notes?
  - b. Use these and other questions to help you select the “theme” the student will continue exploring.

By the end of this exercise, you now have a better understanding of the problem. The

whiteboard, flip chart, or wall will look something like this:

\*Color coding system above:

- Yellow Post-it notes: NPO themes.
  - Blue Post-it notes: Symptoms.
- Approximate time: 15 minutes*

EXERCISE THREE: Starting with the end: Are you still on track?

#### MATERIALS

- Flip chart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Post-it notes – yellow only.
- Pens

*Approximate time: 25-30 minutes*

#### PROCESS

1. Using the NPO theme cluster with the most traction that emerged from the previous activity (4b), ask the group, “If solved, what would it mean for the audience(s)?” Have the participants call out responses, and the facilitator is to write them on the flip chart or whiteboard as participants identify them.
2. Dive more profound: On an individual, yellow Post-it notes, have everyone answer this question, “What will the audience think, say, feel, or do differently when the NPO is addressed?”
  - a. Ask participants to label the top of their yellow Post-it notes with “think, say, feel, do.”
  - b. Encourage participants to identify as many things as they can.
3. Invite participants to post their responses on the flip chart or whiteboard. The facilitator reads them aloud after everyone has posted all of their responses.
4. Next, the facilitator asks the group, “Why wouldn’t they say (think, feel, do) that now?” Have the participants call out responses, and the facilitator is to write them on the flip chart or whiteboard as participants identify them. **Note:** Their responses will likely reflect the NPO symptoms and causes identified earlier in the session. *This is another way of confirming the reality of the NPO but from the audience’s perspective.* We don’t want to solve an NPO that is not an NPO.

EXERCISE FOUR: Putting it together.

#### MATERIALS

- Flip chart or whiteboard.

- Markers

*Approximate time: 15-30 minutes*

### PROCESS

The facilitator reviews accomplishments with the group during the session and summarizes what was learned as follows:

1. Identify the key takeaways from each exercise and record them on the flip chart or whiteboard.
2. Discuss any friction points, clarification, or questions that arise as a group.
3. Leads the group in completing this statement, using what was identified in the exercises:

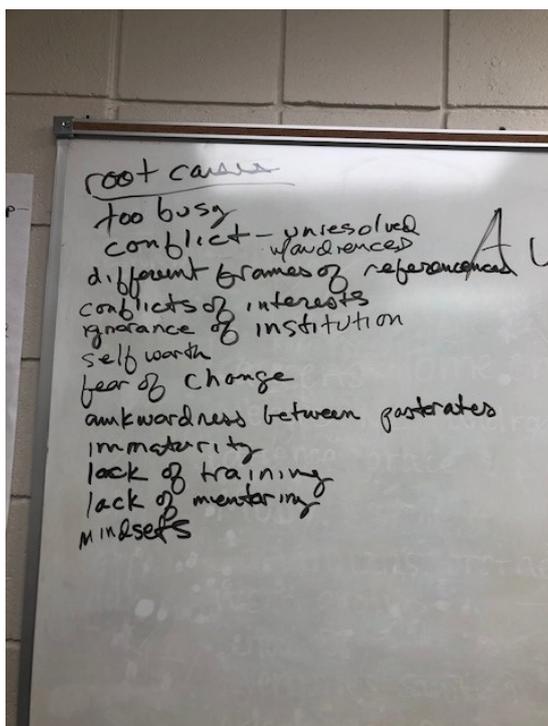
Considering \_\_\_\_\_ (audience),

we've discovered \_\_\_\_\_ (NPO),

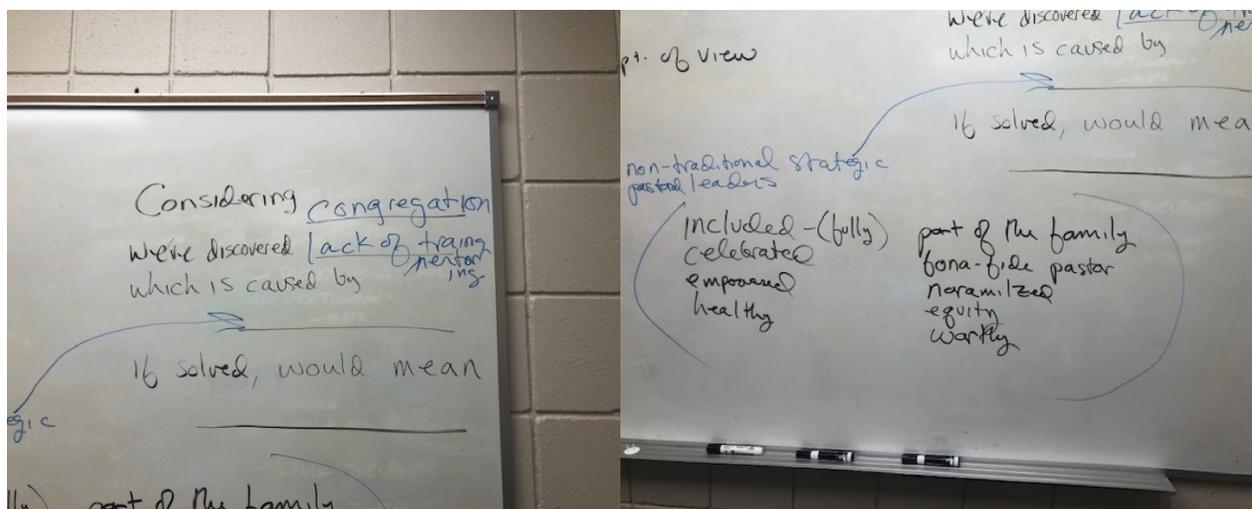
which is caused by \_\_\_\_\_ (root cause).

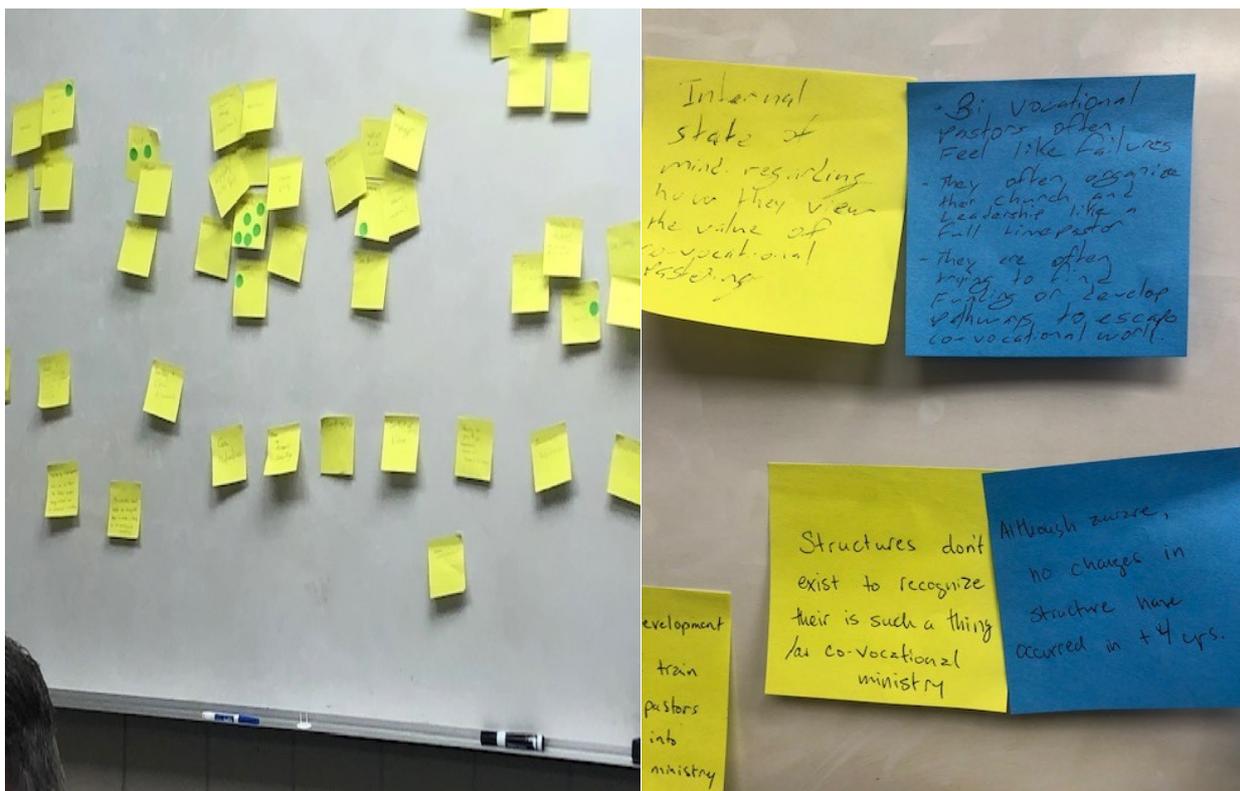
If solved, it would mean \_\_\_\_\_ (outcome).

4. Invite further input by email.
5. Thank your stakeholder participants for their help in your research.



The stakeholders decided that a COVO minister could succeed by training when they are included and empowered to do ministry differently than in a traditional position.





## Appendix 2: Syllabus- Historical and Theological Review of COVO Ministry

The following contains samples of four syllabi.

### Syllabus #1 Historical and Theological Evidence of Effective COVO Ministry

After completing this course, the student will:

- 1) Learn the Scriptural basis for their bivocational pastorate
- 2) Learn key practices from key bi- and covocational pastoral voices
- 3) Discover that being bivocational is not a lesser form of ministry
- 4) Be able to produce a final project that reflects healthy markers for a bivocationally

led congregation.

#### COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

Edington, Mark D. *Bivocational: Returning to the Roots of Ministry*. Church Publishing Inc., 2016. ISBN: 9780819233868

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Dorr, Luther M. *The Bivocational Pastor*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988.

Hamilton, Andrew. *The Future is Bivocational: Shaping Christian Leaders for a Post-Christian World*. Ark House Press, 2022.

Stephens, Darryl W. ed. *Bivocational and Beyond Educating for Thriving Multivocational Ministry*. Chicago: ATLA OPEN PRESS, 2022.

Stephens, Darryl W. "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum." *Religions* 2021. 12, no. 8 (July 2012): 56, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010056>

Stetzer, Ed. "Bivocational Ministry as an Evangelism Opportunity: One-third of American pastors are bivocational." *Coronavirus and the Church* (blog). Wheaton College, Billy Graham Center. 2017. <http://bgcrebuild.projectworldimpact.com/bivocational-ministry-as-an-evangelism-opportunity/>.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes**

Appreciate the benefits, problems, and opportunities for expanding the Kingdom of God by making disciples through bivocationally led congregations.

Seek to apply or will apply what you have discovered so that a local congregation and their leadership team continue to mature, considering Ephesians.

Keys to Effective Bivocational Pastoring has challenged you to re-think how you think, learn, grow, and live as BIVO or COVO minister. In this final paper, you will describe what you have learned and what actions will take based on your studies. Please take the time to think through what Dr. Edington and the essay revealed about this topic. Remember: Your class is about to end, but your journey is just beginning!

- Organize your final paper of 750 - 1000 words in the following manner:
- Title: My Course of Keys to Effective Bivocational Pastoring
- What is bivocational/ pastoral ministry?
- A review of the theology of bivocational ministry and key voices
- Why we need to consider returning to bi- and covocational ministry
- Concluding Remarks.
- You are welcome to use other sources that can bring more significant insights to this means of ministry. Due in Week Four (4) by Day Five (5)

#### 1. Week One - What is bivocational/ pastoral ministry?

Biblical, theological, and historical foundations for Bivocational Pastoring help the student better understand the vital place Bivocational Ministry has in the Church. You are a full-time pastor with more than one source or stream of income!

- Textbook Reading
- Wingate DMIN751 Essay Section 1 pp. 1-10

#### 2. Week Two - What are Scriptural and contemporary examples of bivocational ministry?

Focus: Compare the Expectations of Scripture with the needs of the congregation. With limited time, setting ministry priorities based on biblical mandates is vital. It would help if you built ministry teams: Eph. Ch. 4.

- Textbook Reading
- Wingate DMIN751 Essay Section 2 pp. 10 – 14

3. Week Three - Developing a Theology and Future Story of the Bivocational Call

Developing a Theology and Future Story of the Bivocational Call.

- Textbook Reading
- Wingate DMIN751 Essay Section 3 pp. 15 – 25

4. Week Four - Do we return to the roots of ministry or not?

Understanding the Impact of Bivocational Ministry on the Church and How We Can Make a Positive Contribution to That Understanding?

- Textbook Reading
- Wingate DMIN751 Essay Conclusion pp.25 – 29
- Final Project/Application Paper

### Appendix 3: Syllabus- Exegeting Your Community

Course Schedule: This class organization has four weekly sessions—the information provided below outlines the course during our four weeks together.

The student will choose **one or at most two questions** from each week to answer, which will aid in making this a more interactive course and help you complete your Final Project.

#### COURSE TEXT

Branson, Mark Lau. *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry, Missional Engagement, and Congregational Change*. 2nd ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Moschella, Mary Clark, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008.

Valentin, Benjamin. *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference*. Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002.

Van Gelder, Craig; Dwight Zscheile. *Participating in God's Mission: A Theological Missiology for the Church in America (The Gospel and Our Culture Series (GOCS))*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018. Kindle.

#### 1. Week One: – Foundations to Appreciation and Change

Read Preface- chapter 2.

This week we will examine and describe what God's grace means to those we serve or will have opportunities to serve.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. God's grace has prepared us with many opportunities to discover what is around us and make positive Kingdom changes in our ministry context.
- II. The means presented by the author are to help us better understand our ability to know those we serve as equippers.

## Discussion questions:

- a) Reflect on and write about what you learned regarding how we weary when anticipating change. The reflection can help remind us about those to whom we introduce change.
  - b) Based on the insights from your reading, what would you recommend as a strategy to better care for the groups among you? What scriptures support your view?
  - c) What about AI makes for a better understanding of your ministry context? What biblical character provides a reference for one who appreciated their context, though, by most, it did not have value?
2. Week Two – Focus: Our responsibility and opportunities to appreciate the best memories of the organization held in the people we serve.

## Read chapter 3.

This week we will consider that our life and ministry can only be effective when our actions and responses are based on trust and understanding. As you probably know, a significant difference exists between reaction and response. *Please prayerfully read John 10 and 2 Corinthians 13:11 for additional insights.*

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. God’s desire for us to do what it takes, as servants, to have more clarity and robust ministries that create healthier relationships.
- II. Our responsibility to learn and to help others learn the value of understanding through being exceptional learners to what makes our context unique.

## Discussion questions:

- a) Describe what techniques would assist us in better learning about our context. Do you find something like your vision or word picture in scripture?
- b) In chapter 3, what did the author recommend to help us reimagine our context? What are two or three deliberate steps you would consider facilitating this in your context?
- c) What are two or three deliberate steps you would consider facilitating this in your context for those you serve?

NOTE: you should be writing an outline of your final paper at this point!

3. Week Three – Focus: “ASK” principle: ask, seek, and knock as we initiate an inquiry.

## Read chapters 4 and 5.

This week we will consider that our vocation is a ministry with incredible opportunities for positive change: If we do a more thorough job of understanding. *Please prayerfully read Psalms 23 and Matthew 7:7-12 to help facilitate discussion and your final project.*

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. Taking a deliberate inventory of God's grace evident in the lives and environment around you.
- II. We are taking deliberate steps to discover what opportunities you may not see around you. The "ASK" principle is true for us as we exegete our areas of ministry. This process is a proposal to learn the "appreciative inquiry" process.

Discussion questions:

- a) Describe how, in a hypothetical situation, you would explain the value of a cooperative search for the best in people, organizations, and the world around them.
- b) Describe if "appreciative inquiry" is an art, science, or both, and why you hold that view.
- c) Please revisit the ideas and comparisons between "problem-solving" and "appreciative inquiry" in a narrative sense for us.

NOTE: you should be writing a draft for your final paper now!

4. Week Four – Focus: Appreciative inquiry practices to lead as servants to achieve a new level of organizational life.

Read chapter 6.

This week we will consider that the primary source of our hope is a deep relationship with God and how it is aided by practicing inquiring practices. *Please prayerfully read Psalms 139:23, Colossians 1:26, and John 15:3 for additional insights into how we see God appreciating His handiwork.*

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. A deeper understanding of God's grace-filled opportunities for us to experience.
- II. Tools and processes that we can use to help our congregations or co-workers in service/ ministry workplaces achieve this understanding better and to help them maintain this regardless of the challenges they encounter.

Discussion questions:

- a) Please share three or four possible outcomes your church or ministry partners will see as you apply the principles we have focused on in this class.

b) Why would someone not a believer in Jesus consider believing in Him based on your new appreciative inquiring understanding?

c) Having a working understanding of “prevenient grace,” please describe for us how this reality would favor the “appreciative inquiry” philosophy. *Tip*: this will be an excellent platform for writing your Final Action paper. Start with the end in mind!

## Appendix 4: Stewarding Principles

Course Schedule: This class organization has four weekly sessions—the information provided below outlines the course during our four weeks together.

The student will choose one or at most two questions from each week to answer, which will aid in making this a more interactive course and help you complete your Final Project.

### COURSE TEXT

McKeown, Greg. *Essentialism*. New York: Crown Publishing, 2020. Kindle.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ortberg, John. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2019. Kindle.

#### 1. Week One: – Foundations to Appreciation and Change

Read Preface- Part 1

1 This week, we will examine and describe what the author means by essentialism. These answers can help you with the final project.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

I. God's grace has prepared us for many opportunities, yet not all opportunities that come our way are from God or enable us to fulfill God's priorities for our lives.

II. Discovering essentials will help us lead as essentialists and help others become ones.

Discussion questions (please write on at least one of the following questions):

a) Reflect and write about what you learned regarding essentials in your life and those you serve. This reflection helps remind us of what the body of Christ is to do.

b) Based on what insights from your reading could help you develop a process to discern what is vital? What scriptures support your view?

c) What about saying no to many requests makes you nervous?

2 Week Two – Focus: Our responsibility and opportunities in appreciating the best practices of our local congregations to equip others for ministry.

Read Part 2

This week we will consider that our life and ministry can only be effective when our actions and responses are based on engaging others for what God has in store for others.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

I. Discovering vital disciplines to discern what is essential to fulfilling our vocational calling.

II. Learning what the life of a person with non-essentials resembles.

Discussion questions (please answer at least one of these questions in some depth):

a) Describe the five essential practices in discerning what is essential. What Scriptures support this process?

b) What non-essential has your life choked off from pursuing what is best?

3. Week Three – Focus: Tensions and developing pathways- part 1

Read Part 3.

This week we will consider how our ministry can move from being fairly clear to clear and accomplish more than we imagined.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

I. We will discuss taking an inventory of what is truly important to fulfill our

vocational calling.

- II. This week will examine the difference between essential intents and working through vague attempts to realize our becoming essentialists.

Discussion questions (please answer both questions this week):

- a) What would your leadership team's strategy be moving from a busy congregation to a contextually successful one?
- b) What Scriptural and experiential examples can you use to help convince this shift?

NOTE: you should be writing a draft for your final paper now!

#### 4. Week Four – Focus: Systems that Support Lives of Essentialism

Read Part 4

This week we will consider the pathways and systems that support the essentials to achieve our primary goals.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. A deeper understanding of God's grace-filled pathways to systems of becoming essentialists.
- II. Process a method to help others develop their pathways and systems of becoming essentialists.

Discussion questions (please answer at least two of these questions):

- a) Please share with us three or four possible outcomes that your entire church or ministry partners will see as you apply the principles we have focused on in this class and from the text.
- b) Why would someone who is not a believer in Jesus consider believing in Him based on your sharing these methods to become more life-giving and optimistic as a follower of Christ?

c) What does the author mean by saying, “Life is available only in the present moment. If you abandon the present moment, you cannot live the moments of your daily life deeply.” — Thich Nhat Hanh. And how does this lead to becoming a more essentialistic type of person?

Please submit your Final Assignment

## Appendix 5- Heroes Making Hero Makers

Course Schedule: This class organization has four weekly sessions—the information provided below outlines the course during our four weeks together.

The student will choose one or at most two questions from each week to answer, which will aid in making this a more interactive course and help you complete your Final Project.

### COURSE TEXT

Ferguson, Dave. *Hero Maker (Exponential Series)*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. Kindle.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Walkemeyer, Larry. *Flow: Unleashing a River of Multiplication in Your Church, City and World*. 2014. Free download at [www.exponential.org](http://www.exponential.org).

Galanos, Chris. *From Megachurch to Multiplication: A Church's Journey Toward Movement*. Experiencelifenow.com. 2018. Kindle.

### 1. Week One: – Foundations to Appreciation and Change

Read Preface- Part 1

This week, we will examine and describe what the author means by hero-making. These answers can help you with the final project.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. God's grace has prepared us many opportunities to create hero makers to expand the Kingdom of God that Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20.
- II. The means presented by the author to better understand our ability to know those we serve as an equipper of hero makers.

Discussion questions (please write on at least one of the following questions):

- a) Reflect on and write about what you learned regarding building our kingdom vs. God's Kingdom. This reflection helps remind us of what the body of Christ is to do.
- b) Based on what insights from your reading could help you develop a hero-making strategy. What scriptures support your view?
- c) What about hero-making makes you nervous?

2 Week Two – Focus: Our responsibility and opportunities in appreciating the best practices of our local congregations to equip others for ministry.

Read Part 2

This week we will consider that our life and ministry can only be effective when our actions and responses are based on engaging others for what God has in store for others.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

- I. God's desire for us to do what it takes, as hero-makers, to have more robust ministries that create healthier outcomes and impacts in our local context.
- II. Our responsibility to learn and to help others learn the value of understanding hero-making in our unique context.

Discussion questions (please answer at least one of these questions in some depth):

- a) Describe what it means to you and how hero-making will change you. What does Scripture have to say about your transformation?
- b) What did the author recommend to help us reimagine our local context in disciple-making?
- c) What are two or three deliberate steps you would consider facilitating this in your context?

3. Week Three – Focus: Tensions and developing pathways- part 1

Read Part 3, sections 10 and 11.

This week we will consider that our ministry has incredible opportunities for positive change if we care that only God gets the credit.

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

Taking a deliberate inventory of God's grace in your lives, we will begin to discuss the shift from making our kingdom to making heroes.

II. This week will examine the various tensions in moving from a strictly growing congregation to a growing and sending congregation.

Discussion questions (please answer both questions this week):

a) What would your leadership team's feedback be in moving from a strictly growing individual congregation to a growing and sending congregation?

b) What Scriptural and experiential examples can you use to help convince this shift?

NOTE: you should be writing a draft for your final paper now!

4. Week Four – Focus: Tensions and developing pathways- part 2

Read Part 3, sections 12 and 13

This week we will consider the pathways that our primary goal of making heroes who Jesus said that if we believe in him, would do the works he did, and "they will do even greater things than these" (Jn 14:12).

The following Intended Learning Outcome will be covered:

I. A deeper understanding of God's grace-filled pathways to making hero makers

II. Processes and obstacles that we will find when we help our congregations or co-workers in service/ ministry achieve the understanding of being better and more focused disciples.

Discussion questions (please answer at least two of these questions):

a) Please share with us three or four possible outcomes that your entire church or ministry partners will see as you apply the principles we have focused on in this class and from the text.

b) Why would someone who is not a believer in Jesus consider believing in Him based on your new sharing life-giving and optimistic views for their lives?

c) Having a working understanding of “hero-making,” please describe how this reality would favor the future of your local congregation.

Please submit your Final Assignment

## Appendix 6- Seminar

### Rethinking The Calling of the COVO Leadership Team

Rethinking the calling of the COVO leadership team is a paradigm shift of how one traditionally serves the local congregation.

Dr. Busic: Encourages the church to educate pastors and laity to be like missionaries and help them consider themselves COVO. As such, we must retool, retrain, and recalibrate them with a sense of a covocational calling within their contextual challenges.

#### *Part 1: Rediscover*

- Is BIVO or COVO a model or a strategy?
  - Like saying, do fish swim, fly, or both?
- Statistics from Nazarene Research
- Statistics from District Superintendents
- Is this theologically and historically sound?
  - Many of these early disciples returned to their livelihoods after His crucifixion; before receiving their call to preach the Gospel to the world (Jn 21:1-25).
  - Most early biblical characters earned their livelihood from the land and other sources of income. Dorr points out that after forty years of support from the Egyptian court, Moses worked as a shepherd for his father-in-law for the next forty years. Once in Canaan, it was only the tribe of Levi who did not earn their living from the land (Joshua 13:14). Joshua settled on his

land and built Timnath (Joshua 19:50), and Gideon farmed wheat (Judges 6:11) on his land. Leaders in the OT earned their living doing other jobs while serving the Lord.<sup>172</sup>

- The OT and NT list is long with COVO ministers.
- Wrap up with a question and answer time.

*Part 2: Reimagine (A discussion)*

- Benefits: financial, missional, and (ironically) one's freedom
- Challenges of a BIVO or COVO strategy:
  - Time
    - With God
    - With Family
    - With the essential things in life
    - With oneself
  - BIVO and COVO are not honored.
  - Mixed messages about one's value and importance.
  - Briefly discuss how a COVO or BIVO needs to discuss financial expectations with the congregation's leadership.<sup>173</sup>

*Part 3: Reengage*

- A Shared Leadership Strategy<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Peterson, "Working Priest," 32.

<sup>173</sup> Rodney A. Harrison, Jeffrey A. Klick, Glenn A. Miller, *Pastoral Helmsmanship: A Pastor's Guide to Church Administration*, (Scotts Valley: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

<sup>174</sup> Craig L. Pearce and Jay A. Conger, "All Those Years Ago," in *Shared Leadership: Reframing the How's and Whys of Leadership*, eds. Craig L. Pearce and Jay A. Conger (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 2003), 1;

- Ephesians 4:11-13 is not a leadership passage.
- Shared leadership<sup>175</sup> is a theologically faithful practice for congregations seeking new ways of structuring their lives together in the twenty-first century.<sup>176</sup>
- Addressing obstacles to this strategy
  - Revisit the wisdom in business enterprises.
  - Revisit Scripture
  - Revisit expectations
  - Revisit delegating
  - Revisit rhythms of responsibility
- Financial management (Prv 27:23-27)<sup>177</sup>
- Employment or entrepreneurialism
- Heroes making hero makers.
- Putting this all together as cohorts

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<sup>175</sup> Jinlong Zhu et al., "Shared Leadership: A State-of-the-Art Review and Future Research Agenda," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 39 (2018): 836.

<sup>176</sup> Zachariah Ellis, "A Theology of Power in Shared Leadership Teams," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 19 (1): 5–30, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAIiREM200615000694&site=ehost-live>.

<sup>177</sup> Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds, <sup>24</sup> for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations <sup>25</sup> When the grass is gone and the new growth appears and the vegetation of the mountains is gathered, <sup>26</sup> the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field. <sup>27</sup> There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your girls.