Introduction

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Bivocational ministry is a topic intimately related to congregational vitality and the future of the church in North America. Also called multivocational, covocational, dual career, partially funded, or tentmaking, bivocational ministry is a way of offering one's whole self in service to church and world. Bivocational ministry is generally defined as a combination of employment (paid or unpaid) within and beyond the local congregation by someone called to pastoral ministry. It is contrasted with univocational (full-time, fully funded) ministry as well as part-time ministry not accompanied by other significant employment or volunteer work. The term *bivocational* is widely connoted with Christian ministry, though the word multivocational more accurately describes the situations of many (Watson et al. 2020). While persons who serve and earn in multiple ways simultaneously are often marginalized in church and academy, there is much to be learned from intentional bivocationali-

ty as a missional, vocational, and faithful way of responding to God's call to all the baptized.

Bivocational ministry is gaining attention among North American seminarians, schools of theology, and the churches they serve. Over one-third of US congregations are served by a bivocational pastor (Chaves et al. 2020, 22), and 30% of seminary graduates in North America plan to be bivocational (Deasy 2018, 66). Some claim that the ecclesial landscape has experienced an increase in bivocationality in recent decades. However, this is a claim voiced more loudly than warranted by available data. An equally strong case can be made that the numbers are holding steady. The reality is complex and difficult to measure, given diverse definitions and practices of bivocationality. Undisputable though is the increased visibility of bivocational ministry among North American churches in the past 20 years. A heightened awareness of this reality is due to a combination of many factors, including the publication of Dennis W. Bickers's *The Tentmaking Pastor: The Joy of Bivocational Ministry* (2000), the rise of the "gig economy," a blurring of traditional notions of sacred and secular, missional innovation at the end of modern Christendom, and greater attention by White-majority institutions to the experiences of BIPOC students and pastors.

Many traditions of Christian faith consider bivocational ministry the norm. "We've always done it that way," declared Melvin Baber, a ministerial colleague in the Missionary Baptist Church (personal communication, August 6, 2021). In his experience, "Pastors held several jobs in order to do ministry. A lot of times, the pastor and pastor's family put more in than they were earning from the church." For pastors in the Black church tradition, holding a secular job is an expected part of the ministry. In fact, ministry in many congregations is not possible without an outside source of income. However, bivocationality is not simply a means for the have-nots to make do.

Additional jobs enable and extend the ministry into the community. For example, Raphael Warnock famously serves both as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, and as a US senator. What a loss to church and society it would be if Warnock's scholarly writing (2014), political action, public service, and preaching were considered incompatible! We are fortunate that he serves in a tradition that recognizes, values, and affirms multivocational ministry. The same is true for other faith leaders. Even after earning a Doctor of Ministry degree, Baber still holds multiple employments, including his pastorate and teaching and administrative roles at Lancast-

er Theological Seminary. “In our tradition, we don’t have ‘part-time’ pastors,” Baber observed. “Ministry is full-time. It’s not about the money or the benefits.” This arrangement is so much the norm that it does not have a special name. Baber explained, “We don’t call it bivocational. It’s just ministry.”

Yet bivocational ministry runs counter to expectations in more privileged communities of faith. Traditions accustomed to overly spiritualizing the pastoral office have difficulty bridging the divide between sacred and secular in the person of their pastor. Embracing the idea of a plumber as preacher, for example, may require a conceptual shift for some congregations. (Ironically, many of these same congregations have no qualms about expecting the pastor to fix a leaky toilet in the parsonage or church building!) Even those congregations that have learned to adapt to bivocational ministry by necessity often measure themselves against the perceived ideal of a fully compensated, full-time, univocational pastor. Imagining and valuing different ways of being church is a particular challenge for majority-White, mainline congregations, though Christian faith communities of all demographics, denominational traditions, and geographic locations would do well to reflect theologically on the meaning and implications of bivocational ministry.

The idea of intentional bivocationality presents many challenges to perceived and inherited ways of pastoring and educating pastors. Bivocational pastors are challenged to integrate diverse expressions of their calling, balance personal and professional obligations, overcome stigma, and achieve financial stability. 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. This book addresses these challenges as an opportunity for theological educators and church leaders alike to reimagine the church and its ministry.

This framing of the subject and this book is admittedly peculiar to (though not limited to) North American Protestantism, and readers are encouraged to augment this text with other resources. For an in-depth treatment of self-supporting ministry in the Church of England (also called non-stipendiary, volunteer, supplementary, or auxiliary ministry), readers are referred to *Tentmaking: Perspectives on Self-Supporting Ministry* (Francis and Francis 1998). This edited vol-

ume stands out as the most comprehensive, scholarly treatment on the topic in English, and its breadth expands ecumenically and geographically beyond the Church of England. Chapter two of the present volume engages these British perspectives, contributing to the conversations in both North America and the United Kingdom. The present volume also complements discussions of diaconia, worker priests in France, lay ecclesial ministry in Roman Catholic parishes in the United States, and Indigenous ministry (especially in relation to missiology). Additionally, books by Bickers (2007), Edington (2018), and MacDonald (2020) provide accessible guides for congregations and their leaders in the United States. The present volume distinguishes itself with a combination of scholarly and practical writings addressing the contemporary church and graduate theological education in North America.

Bivocational and Beyond: Educating for Thriving Multivocational Ministry is an attempt to make sense of this common, though misunderstood and under-researched, form of pastoral ministry. This book is intended to shift the scholarly and ecclesial conversation about bivocational ministry. It is intended to equip pastors, judicatory leaders, and theological educators to thrive in their understanding of multivocational ministry. In this volume, researchers, educators, and practitioners in bivocational ministries provide contemporary analyses and reflections on diverse issues facing bivocational pastors, congregations, and those persons who resource and teach them. This book is intended as a scholarly and professional resource for college, university, and seminary educators as well as graduate students, pastors, judicatory personnel, and lay leaders in congregations.

Contributors include researchers, reflective practitioners, denominational leaders, and academics working in multiple disciplines and from diverse perspectives. Eight chapters present the findings of empirical research based on surveys and interviews with bivocational and multivocational pastors, another is based on ethnographic research, and most are informed by the authors' personal experiences of bivocationality. Among the contributors, twelve traditions are represented, including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), United Church of Christ, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the United Methodist Church, Salvation Army, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), American Baptist Churches USA, Evangelical Covenant Church, the Episcopal Church (US), and several non-denominational churches of pentecostal and evangelical persuasion. Geographically, sixteen contributors are located in the United States, two in Canada, and one

in the United Kingdom. Six chapters were written by women and thirteen by men. Fourteen chapters were written by White persons and five by BIPOC authors. Yet, this book barely touches the wide diversity of bivocational ministry in North America. It is my hope that this volume will serve as a catalyst for further research and wider conversation, inclusive of Latinx voices, Asian communities, Roman Catholic contexts, perspectives from immigrant congregations, and many others.

Bivocational and Beyond is arranged in three parts: landscape, leadership, and learning. The book begins more descriptively in part I, combines descriptive and constructive modes in part II, and leans more prescriptively in part III. Practitioners may be initially drawn to the chapters on leadership and educators to the chapters on learning. Judicatory personnel may be drawn to both. However, all parts of the book are intended to benefit and challenge persons regardless of their role in relation to bivocational and multivocational ministry. Readers are encouraged to begin reading chapters in any order, seeking first the voices and topics most relevant to their context and role and proceeding in a more exploratory fashion thereafter.

Part I, landscape, provides contextual viewpoints for understanding the nature of bivocational ministry. The section includes two overview essays—one from the United States and one from the United Kingdom—a personal retrospective by a bivocational pastor, and two empirical studies—one focused on the experiences of Black bivocational ministers and the other on perspectives and expectations of Black seminary students, particularly around issues of finances.

In chapter 1, "Bivocational Ministry as the Congregation's Curriculum," Darryl W. Stephens views ambiguities and uncertainties about defining bivocational ministry as an opportunity for theological reflection and religious education. Acknowledging a context of anxiety about congregational vitality in North American mainline denominations, Stephens utilizes Boyung Lee's communal approach to religious education to imagine new ways of being church, especially for White-majority congregations, which seem to have difficulty coming to terms with bivocational ministry. This chapter proceeds descriptively, exploring the breadth of definitions of bivocational ministry and related terms, organized around several themes: vocation and ministry, jobs and finances, and commitment. Constructively, this chapter presents intentional bivocational ministry as the congregation's curriculum, a practice of the entire faith community,

and concludes with a call for theological educators to assist in this endeavor.

In chapter 2, "British Perspectives on Bivocational Ministry," Hartness M. Samushonga presents a history of the concept of bivocational ministry in Britain and explores contemporary challenges. Terms peculiar to the Church of England, such as *non-stipendiary ministers*, *ministers in secular employment*, and *self-supporting ministers*, describe the phenomenon in varied forms, though the term *bivocational ministry* is predominant among Pentecostals and other Protestants in the United Kingdom. Tracing the history of bivocational ministry in Britain from the sixteenth century forward, Samushonga highlights the ministry of Baptist, Catholic, and Church of England missionaries, the advocacy of Herbert Kelly and Roland Allen, and the influences of the French and Belgian Catholic worker-priest movement. The chapter then explores contemporary challenges for bivocational ministry in Britain, including a lack of statistical data and a need for focused programs of theological education. Samushonga observes that the momentum for bivocational ministry as a means of stimulating church growth in Britain is intensifying in the Church of England and beyond.

In chapter 3, "Changes in Ministry and Bivocational Ministry Since the 1960s," Ralph B. Wright Jr. presents personal reflections based on 45 years in bivocational ministries in the United States as well as overseas. He observes a crisis of decline among White, mainline churches within a context of increased secularization in North America and suggests that bivocational pastors—offering a broader set of skills and talents than traditional, univocational pastors—are often well positioned to meet the changing needs of congregations in the twenty-first century. Addressing issues of racism, ethnocentrism, classism, and patriarchy, Wright draws on his own experience to show how bivocationality can provide new opportunities for ministry within the larger community. Bivocational ministry can be an opportunity to revitalize the church in mission to the community at large, particularly majority-White congregations that have lost touch with the changing communities around them. He concludes with a plea for increased collegial and judicatory support for bivocational pastors, especially women in ministry.

In chapter 4, "Black and Bivocational," Jessica Young Brown provides deep insight into bivocational ministry based on empirical research with Black pastors and ministers. Noting that Black pastors

have been engaged in this ministerial dynamic for a long time, she asks, Why are we not looking to Black bivocational ministers to inform our understanding about what it means to thrive in this context? Thus, this chapter looks to Black bivocational clergy as exemplars for navigating bivocational ministry. Based on survey and interview data, Brown explores issues of gifts and call, finances, self-care, professional responsibilities and boundaries, as well as challenges, such as patriarchy. She observes, among other things, that women may need additional resources and sources of support compared to men in bivocational ministry. She concludes that the Black church must reckon with the expectations that are placed on ministers in general and bivocational ministers in particular, and suggests a scaling back of the functional expectations placed on ministers to hold sacred space, allowing for their human limitations and sense of wellness.

In chapter 5, "Black Student Perspectives," Jo Ann Deasy examines the perspectives of Black seminarians on debt and finances in order to improve the support offered by graduate theological schools. The author draws on qualitative data she and co-researchers collected during a 2019 study on Black student debt by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Though not originally designed to inquire about multivocational ministry, the data revealed many challenges for multivocational clergy and the seminaries they attend. Few of the students interviewed expected to make a living wage in ministry after graduation. Most recognized that the congregations they came from and the congregations they planned to serve would not be able to support them financially. Many Black students considered educational debt and multivocational ministry as intentional strategies to assist them in answering their call, pursuing theological education not for financial success or security but in order to minister to their communities. This chapter concludes with implications for graduate theological education.

Part II, leadership, explores multiple perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of bivocational leadership for both pastors and the congregations they serve. This section addresses wide-ranging issues pertaining to bivocational ministry, including calling, perceptions, vocation, mission, spiritual growth, and mentorship. Authors provide important conceptual tools for leadership, including the ideas of unique fit, narrative wisdom, distributive ministry, incarnational ministry, personal growth in sanctification, the bivocational congregation, and shadowing as a mentoring method. These chapters provide numerous case studies and examples of bivocation-

al ministers and congregations across North America, including the results of four empirical studies.

In chapter 6, "Calling in Multivocational Ministry," Mark D. Chapman and James W. Watson draw on data from the Canadian Multivocational Ministry Project to examine the ways in which multivocational leaders understand, frame, articulate, and apply their calling. They observe that that calling includes a general biblical mandate towards certain beliefs and actions and is highly individualized and contextual. They conclude that that calling can be understood as a conversation about the unique fit of the different elements of the multivocational life. To support this understanding of calling, theological educators can encourage self-awareness of how this unique fit contributes to clarity of action, minister health, and passion for what God has asked of the individual. Trainers should help multivocational ministers embrace the complexity and discern the spiritual significance of their calling, supporting integration between spiritual calling, non-traditional careers, and daily life.

In chapter 7, "Pitching Our Tent with Bivocational Ministry," Kristen Plinke Bentley compares Paul's model of self-supporting ministry with narratives of bivocational ministry today. Based on surveys and interviews with Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) ministers serving congregations in Kentucky, Bentley observed three primary narratives about bivocational ministry. Some leaders pointed to economic challenges for congregations, seeing the model as "a sign of the times." Others perceived the missional potential of bivocational ministry, describing it as "on the cutting edge." Others, particularly those in African American and Hispanic/Latinx contexts as well as those in rural communities, saw bivocational ministry as "the way we've always done ministry." These narratives reveal the varied experiences for congregations and ministers related to bivocational ministry. They also demonstrate that some congregations have long-term experience with bivocational pastors that could help others build capacity for well-being and thriving in ministry.

In chapter 8, "Exploring Distributive Ministry," Kwasi Kena argues that bivocational congregations are well positioned to offer the gospel to people in an ever-changing environment. Congregations in the midst of change have an opportunity to re-imagine their ministry configurations as bivocational, allowing non-ordained followers of Christ to participate fully in leadership. For these churches, the shift to bivocational ministry includes a shared-ministry framework the author calls "distributive ministry." Distributive ministry employs

a team approach to leadership in which all persons in the congregation function as ministers, sharing pastoral responsibilities. This understanding of distributive ministry is derived from four schools of thought: the priesthood of all believers depicted in Scripture and Martin Luther's writings, missional ecclesiology as articulated by Lesslie Newbigin and others, distributive leadership theory, and the distributed pastorate model described by Geoffrey MacDonald.

In chapter 9, "Incarnating Christ through Bivocational Ministry," Steven C. Van Ostran encourages the church to reframe its understanding of bivocational ministry as a positive way of incarnating Christ. First, he offers the "incarnational church," based on 1 Corinthians 12 and Luke 10, as a model of holistic mission. Then, he presents four benefits of bivocational ministry that might lead churches and pastors to engage in bivocational ministry even when a full-time ministry is possible. The incarnational benefits of bivocational ministry include breaking down the sacred-secular divide, creating community and relationships outside the local congregation, uncovering new opportunities for ministry and mission outside the walls of the church, and reducing the dependencies of the pastor that hinder authentic leadership and prophetic action both in the church and in the community. This chapter draws on Ostran's experience as a pastor and as an executive minister in the American Baptist Churches, as well as experiences of the many bivocational pastors he knows personally.

In chapter 10, "Bivocational Ministry as a Path of Unexpected Spiritual Growth," Ben Connelly shares results and insights from a survey he administered to bivocational ministers regarding their motives and outcomes related to ministry. Motives were grouped in three categories: finances, mission, and convictions. Reported outcomes of bivocational ministry revealed several themes: growth in humility and dependence, a deepened need for a team, and growth in sanctification. Connelly's own experience in bivocational ministry and working with other bivocational ministers in various contexts revealed a pattern of unexpected personal spiritual growth within the bivocational minister. This pattern was supported by the research. Those surveyed entered bivocational ministry for one or multiple reasons, rarely related to their personal spiritual growth. Yet, nearly every minister surveyed shared personal spiritual growth as an outcome, which they did not expect but which came through this unique form of ministry. Regardless of motives, bivocational ministers often find this a path of personal, spiritual growth.

In chapter 11, "The Bivocational Congregation," Anthony Pappas, Ed Pease, and Norm Faramelli address the question: What is the shape of tomorrow's church? The authors answer this question by offering ethnographic case studies of five very different churches to illustrate certain qualities of bivocational congregations: healthy team functioning; a high commitment to being a ministering presence in a particular place; a willingness to die to self, if need be, in the cause of serving others; an acceptance of bivocationality as a full expression of the church, not a second-rate, temporary, expedient form of the church; and a willingness to experiment and trust that a higher power has something wonderful in store for tomorrow. The authors conclude that a congregation does not necessarily have to have a bivocational pastor to exhibit the positive qualities of a bivocational congregation. More important is the dual calling of the congregation to fresh understandings of mission and function. In an epilogue, Pease offers advice on how to prepare a congregation for bivocational ministry.

In chapter 12, "The Bivocational Pastor as Mentor," Herbert Fain shows how Paul's mentorship of Timothy and Titus offers a methodology for shadowing. The shadow methodology, sometimes called pastoral formation, is a specific type of apprenticeship relationship requiring modeling and imitation. Shadowing specifically addresses how to engage in an effective mentor-mentee relationship—a process that is mutually beneficial, providing leadership opportunities for both the mentor and mentee. The shadowing methodology of mentoring is rooted in the Hebrew apprenticeship process, illustrated in the New Testament, and adapted in a contemporary way by many popular leadership authors, such as John C. Maxwell and Harley Atkinson. Bivocational ministers can mentor successfully, despite apparent obstacles such as money and time. When a bivocational minister accepts the call to mentor, this action not only enhances the well-being of the mentor and mentee but also benefits the community.

Part III, learning, addresses the tasks of preparing, equipping, and resourcing persons for successful bivocational ministry. Among these seven chapters are three empirical studies and several discussions of the challenges multivocational ministry poses to traditional graduate theological education. Each of these chapters emphasizes that the task and responsibility of learning are shared by pastors, congregations, judicatories, seminaries, and non-degree programs alike.

In chapter 13, "Empowering the Full Body of Christ," Kathleen Owens aims to equip the full body of Christ for ministry using the variety of gifts, or charisms, found in all members. She employs the image of the Body of Christ, as developed by Paul in the early church and invoked by Luther during the Reformation, to guide the church through times of great technological and societal shifts, such as today. The church still needs people trained for various forms of ministry; changing, argues Owens, is the need for all these skills to be found primarily in one person. She proposes a new model of theological education, empowering the full Body of Christ through discernment of gifts, education and training, and ongoing support and accountability. The transition from full-time to part-time, or bivocational, pastorates offers the church an opportunity to utilize existing educational resources to empower and equip members with specific gifts for ministry. Bivocational pastors need the partnership and support of seminaries and middle-judicatory leaders in this effort.

In chapter 14, "Preparing to Educate for a Thriving Bivocational Ministry," Darryl W. Stephens investigates how institutions of higher learning in theological education can respond to an increasing need for bivocational ministry preparation, training, and support. This chapter presents data from surveys of students, staff, faculty, and trustees at a US, mainline Protestant seminary and learnings from a six-session student focus group. Explored are questions of perception and relevance of bivocational ministry, distinct stressors of bivocational ministry, opinions about current educational programs at the seminary, and opinions about institutional changes designed to better support and prepare seminarians for bivocational ministry. The chapter concludes with a discussion of challenges and opportunities facing institutions of theological education when developing strategic efforts to educate for a thriving bivocational ministry.

In chapter 15, "The Multivocational Plans of Students in Graduate Theological Education," Jo Ann Deasy challenges seminaries to respond to the reality of multivocational ministry, based on data from student questionnaires. Since 2013, the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS) has tracked the bivocational plans of entering and graduating students among member schools. In 2019, ATS revised the questionnaires to better understand the nature and scope of bivocational ministry, expanding the idea of bivocational ministry beyond paid ministry. The ATS data reveals a complex landscape of multivocational students and graduates navigating work, ministry, vocation, and education in a wide variety of

ways. In response, theological schools have the opportunity to rethink current educational models to focus more on integration and life-long learning, to attend to the broad financial ecology of ministry, and to create a more just system designed to equip and support those preparing to serve in multivocational and volunteer ministry roles.

In chapter 16, "Preparing to Teach a Bivocational Ministry Seminary Course," Phil Baisley shares the research behind his seminary course syllabus in bivocational ministry, informed by his own bivocational experience as well as empirical research. As part of a larger grant-funded project, the author spent much of 2015 driving across the United States, from Pennsylvania to Oregon, interviewing bivocational pastors and members of their congregations. He discovered a wide variety of ways of being bivocational as well as many commonalities among bivocational pastors and congregations. Interviewees also shared their ideas about what seminaries should teach about bivocational ministry. The author provides a succinct list of topics to be covered in a bivocational ministry course, along with suggested resources. He concludes by noting continuing challenges to teaching about bivocational ministry.

In chapter 17, "A Mentored Practice Approach to Bivocational Ministry Education," Ronald W. Baard discusses some of the strengths of a mentored practice approach to the formation and education of bivocational ministers. Mentored practice is a type of field education integrating classroom work with the practice of embodied ministry in a particular context. The author draws on his experience as the Dean of the Maine School of Ministry—a non-degree program of the United Church of Christ. Two extended case studies illustrate the mutual benefit to pastoral interns and congregations. For bivocational ministry students, this approach to formation provides deep personal and professional integration through service in the church as a parish pastor. For teaching congregations, mentored practice provides an opportunity to grow in faith along with the pastoral intern. The mentored practice approach to forming ministers provides an alternative to the still-dominant residential seminary-based model.

In chapter 18, "Seeking Information Mastery in Multivocational Ministry," Susan J. Ebertz adopts a model by Hubert Dreyfus to frame the importance of continual learning to achieve mastery in multivocational ministry. This chapter focuses on learning about information rather than learning specific facts: how to determine what information is needed, where to find it, and how to evaluate it. The author then walks through challenges, such as finding time

for learning, countering algorithmic bias in internet search engines, and discerning trustworthy and knowledgeable sources. The author concludes by inviting the reader to share what is learned with their congregations, ministry colleagues, and community. Such collaboration brings one in contact with diverse voices, promoting innovation and allowing for creativity in thought and practice. Through careful and efficient research and collaboration with others, multivocational ministers can continue their learning in ways that support effective ministry.

The book concludes with chapter 19, "Reimagining Theological Education with a Multivocational Mindset." Darryl W. Stephens argues that a multivocational mindset is a helpful—perhaps necessary—way to reimagine graduate theological education in North America. The need to educate for intentional bivocational ministry arises from the context of the church in North America. Yet, common attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of bivocational ministry also present challenges to educating for bivocational ministry, and professional theological educators do not often address this topic. Intentional bivocational ministry preparation occurs primarily outside of accredited degree programs. Engaging the work of Justo González on the history of theological education and Daniel Aleshire on the future of theological education, the author reimagines theological education in light of bivocational and multivocational ministry, revealing obstacles to and implications for change. Noting both its necessity and insufficiency, the author argues that a multivocational mindset must be combined with antiracist and other justice-oriented commitments in order to reimagine and accomplish life-giving change within graduate theological education.

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