CHAPTER 2

British Perspectives on Bivocational Ministry

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The notion of bivocational ministry, in which ministers have another vocation outside of ministry, is not new. Bivocational ministry is considered the original model for ministry in the New Testament. From the time of the apostle Paul, many ministers have taken this approach to participate in the *missio dei* (Samushonga 2020a, 144). In fact, in recent years, bivocational ministry (or multivocational ministry) is increasingly becoming a subject of interest and dialogue in a variety of locations and contexts, including churches, denominations, and theological schools. Recently, the quest to understand and develop bivocational ministry has taken an international approach. The year 2020 saw the establishment of an international consultation among practitioners, researchers, writers, and educators, mainly from the United States and Canada, to collaborate on research pertaining to bivocational ministry. This initiative was spearheaded by Darryl Stephens, the editor of this volume, as

part of the Educating for a Thriving Bivocational Ministry Project at his institution, Lancaster Theological Seminary.[1]

Stephens's international approach to bivocational ministry stimulated me, as a participant in the consultation, to write this chapter with the focus of offering insights on bivocational ministry from a British perspective. I am a British practical theologian with research interest in bivocational ministry practice. Although my interests in the phenomenon are wide-ranging, I have paid particular attention to exploring and researching the notion of bivocational ministry from the context of Britain (Samushonga 2020b). Through my research, I found that although Britain has one of the wealthiest legacies of bivocational ministry (Allen 1923; Francis and Francis 1998; Lees 2018; Samushonga 2019; Vaughan 1987) and a sizable literature on self-supporting ministry (Francis and Francis 1998; Fuller and Vaughan 1986; Lees 2018), academic literature on this phenomenon in the context of Britain is obscure. It is important for practitioners, researchers, writers, and educators to be aware of how these approaches to ministry are described in order to inform a broader understanding of this phenomena. With Britain having a wealth of the phenomenon (as will emerge in this chapter), an exploration of British bivocational ministry constitutes an important contribution to a global picture of bivocational ministry. This chapter hence offers insights on bivocational ministry in the context of Britain to complement other perspectives presented in this volume.

Statistics on the incidence of bivocational ministry are scarce. Many countries, church denominations, and ministries do not widely publish statistics of how many of their clergy also hold another job out of ministry. The Church of England (CoE), also known as the Anglican Church, is one of the oldest and historically largest church establishments in Britain. CoE publishes annual data of self-supporting ministers—a concept associated with the notion of bivocational ministry. In 2019, 37% of ministers in the CoE were self-supporting (Church of England 2021). This mirrors the 35% of US churches served by a bivocational pastor (Chaves et al. 2020, 22). However, the label "self-supporting ministers" largely refers to ministers with another vocation (or vocations) that supports their livelihood without depending on the ministry. In the context of the Church of England, this category also includes retired ministers who have returned to ministry practice supported on their pension rather than another job. Nevertheless, some forms of self-supporting ministry fit the definition of bivocational ministry proffered above.

In this chapter, I discuss the following broad questions on bivocational ministry from a British perspective: (1) How is bivocational ministry described in British literature? (2) What is the history of bivocational ministry in Britain? (3) What are the current and predicted states of play of bivocational ministry in Britain? In responding to these questions, I present the reader with the opportunity to evaluate how the scope of bivocational ministry in Britain measures against that of other parts of the world.

Describing Bivocational Ministry in Britain

Although bivocational ministry is prevalent, the term "connotes different things to different people" (Stephens, chapter 1 in this volume). Bivocationalism is described in a variety of ways in different geographical and ministry contexts. In defining bivocational ministry, I have advocated for a definition that moves away from the traditional description based on how ministers are remunerated (or not). I proffered that "a bivocational minister [is] one who has a ministry vocation and another vocation that is not ministry oriented" (Samushonga 2019, 69). In proffering this definition, I acknowledge the diversity of Christian ministry, which is not restricted to ecclesial ministry. Therefore, bivocational ministry can be carried out in non-congregational settings.

While the labels *bivocational ministry* and *bivocational pastor* are widely used in US practice and literature to describe the ministry of pastors who receive part of their salary from another role outside of church ministry (Bickers 2010), this label is a rarity in British literature. The majority of British literature on bivocational ministry, as defined above, is in the context of the CoE. The phenomenon has been described in different ways in the CoE throughout the generations using labels such as *voluntary clergy*, *auxiliary priests*, *honorary ministers*, *working* or *worker-priests*, *priest-workers*, *tentmaking ministers* (from the Apostle Paul's example), *dual-role pastors* or *priests*, *non-stipendiary ministers*, and *self-supporting ministers*, *priests*, or *pastors* (outside of CoE) (Francis and Francis 1998, xv).

From a broader perspective, bivocational ministers are described as clergy who have two vocations—one that is ministry-oriented and another that is outside the church. This contrasts with the description of a bivocational minister as one who serves in a paid ministry

position and has income from another source. Although using different labels, the Church of England generally follows this salary or wage-based approach to describe members of clergy who serve in a bivocational capacity. In the CoE literature, a *non-stipendiary minister*, a term introduced by Bishop Russell Barry in 1935 (Lees 2018, 22), is defined in contrast to a stipendiary minister—one who is fully supported financially by the church.

According to both CoE official literature and other CoE-focused research, the notion of non-stipendiary ministers has a broad application, which includes retirees (ministers) who return to serve in ministry without receiving a stipend (wage), ministers who serve in the church but receive their income from another ministry outside of church, such as hospital chaplains, and ministers who continue work in secular employment while undertaking ministry in a non-stipendiary capacity. Although the CoE largely uses the label *non-stipendiary ministers*, scholars have sought to differentiate between the various forms of non-stipendiary ministers and favor the term *ministry* (or *ministers*) *in secular employment*. It is reported that this title originated from the ministers themselves "and appeared in the title of the First National Conference of Ministers in Secular Employment held at Nottingham in 1984" (Fuller and Vaughan 1986).

Yet the use of the term *secular* to describe the non-ministry-oriented vocation is a cause of debate in bivocational literature. The Cape Town Commitment described the use of the term *secular* as "the falsehood of a sacred-secular divide" (Lausanne Movement 2011). However, ministry and non-ministry vocations are distinct from one another; for example ministry-focused vocations such as teaching (in non-theological school or subjects), engineering, accounting, nursing, and so on, do not require ministry awareness, ministry calling, or ministerial skills and competency. I therefore find no concern in making the distinction in order to give a clearer definition of the concept of bivocational ministry. The term *bivocational ministers*, as described in this chapter, is one way of responding to this secular versus ministry debate.

Although the term *bivocational ministry* is not widely used in UK literature, which is largely focused on or is mostly written by scholars from CoE, others are more familiar with the term. A recent study consisting of twenty-two ministers and theology scholars of the European Pentecostal Theological Association showed that eleven respondents from Belgium, Burma, Ecuador, Germany, Netherlands, Russia, United States, United Kingdom, Finland, and Sweden were

more familiar with the *bivocational ministry* label than the other labels, and three of these respondents were from the United Kingdom (Samushonga 2020a). This finding indicates that, while the common descriptions of the phenomenon (for example, *self-supporting ministry*, *non-stipendiary ministry*, and *ministers in secular employment*) in the United Kingdom are located within the CoE context, some UK-based Pentecostal theologians, unlike their CoE counterparts, are more familiar with the *bivocational ministry* label. The term *multivocational ministry* is, however, rarely used in the British context.

History of Bivocational Ministry in Britain

While there appear to be more focus, support structures, and resources on bivocational ministry in the United States, the British Church and the CoE in particular have a wealth of bivocational history. In this section, I discuss the history of bivocational ministry in Britain, from the sixteenth century to the present. The documented history of bivocational ministry in Britain is predominantly in the context of the CoE. The CoE historically restricted what is often described as "secular employment" for ministers. In spite of this position, some early British missionaries in the CoE and other denominations became bivocational ministers, thereby laying a foundation for this approach to ministry in Britain. Now, bivocational ministry in its various forms is flourishing in the contemporary CoE, due in part to the influence of the French and Belgian Catholic "worker priest" model. I conclude this section by showing that bivocational ministry is becoming increasingly prominent across Britain today.

Many "colonial" ministers of the CoE in the 1600s supported themselves by means of the parson's glebe—a piece of land set aside for the minister's use to support themselves (Dorr 1988). Historically, there have been three kinds of authority that have controlled or limited secular employment of Anglican clergy: namely statute law, canon law, and the ordinal. Statute law—for example, the 1529 Parliament Act (21 Hen. VIII, cap. 13)—is believed to be a part of King Henry's strategy to use Parliament to restrict the power of the Church. This law consequently restricted clergy from holding several "benefices in plurality." Canons (or church law) have also contained phrases or notions mitigating against the legal development of "non-stipendiary ministry." The ordinal, containing ecclesiastical services for ordina-

tion, stated that all priests ordained into the CoE between 1550 and 1979 were admitted to their office with the charge to give themselves wholly to their ministry office and to forsake and set aside as much as possible all worldly cares and studies (Vaughan 1987). The ordinal has historically constituted the ethos of, and defined the office of, clergy and pastors for many churches, ministries, and denominations.

In spite of some reservations and challenges to clergy having gainful employment outside of ministry to protect them from distractions of financial need (Lees 2018), others have passionately advanced bivocationalism in Great Britain. William Carey (1761–1834), an English Baptist missionary to India and one of the greatest missionaries of modern times, served as a bivocational minister for most of his life. He started his ministry as a bivocational pastor in England and later migrated to India, where he spent an active forty-one years of Christian ministry, which included translating the scriptures—while also working as an entrepreneur in various fields, including agriculture (Carey and Masters 1993). Missionary Herbert Kelly (1860–1950), a Catholic in the CoE and founder of the Society of the Sacred Mission and of the Theological College at Kelham, was a notable early proponent of bivocational ministry. Kelly was involved in setting up churches in Anglican provinces. After encountering practical challenges to establishing traditional diocesan structures, due to the shortage of clergy in overseas missions, he advocated for an alternative model (Jones 1971; Vaughan 1987). In Kelly's view, the working class became "an untapped source of energy and power" for the CoE (Jones 1971, 13). Kelly transcended the church tradition and envisaged a mixed ministry of professional and non-professional clergy.

Another key proponent of bivocational ministry in Great Britain was Roland Allen (1868–1947), an English missionary to China known as "the effective prophet of non-stipendiary ministry" (Vaughan 1987, 69; see also Allen and Paton [1968] 2002; Francis and Francis 1998). Like Kelly, he followed personal experiences and a recognition of the need to provide clergy for the church overseas. Allen went further by publishing his ideas for addressing the lack of clergy for the church abroad and proposed that the principle of "voluntary clergy" could be extended to the local church (1923; 1928; 1930). Allen based his views on Paul's tentmaking practice in the New Testament. He held the view that the model of "stipendiary professional" contrasted Paul's tentmaking model (Allen and Paton [1968] 2002, 22). Allen,

however, aptly acknowledged that voluntary clergy would only be suitable in some situations, as there was need for the church to support ministers "who can give all their time to the care of parishes and to study, and [who] should not be engaged in business" (Vaughan 1987, 79). Allen also challenged the view that ordained ministers with other vocations would necessarily be part-time ministers (Vaughan 1987, 82). After resigning a parochial position in reaction to a debate on baptism policy, Allen "spent the rest of his career as an unauthorised non-stipendiary" minister (Lees 2018, 25). He put his idea in *Voluntary Clergy*, one of the earliest British publications to discuss the notion of bivocational ministry (Allen 1923).

Allen's definition of voluntary clergy is akin to the definitions of bivocational ministry, in their various versions, offered by many scholars and popular literature today. By defining voluntary clergy, Allen contributed to one of the common themes of bivocational ministry discourse—definitions. On voluntary clergy, Allen stated:

> I mean men in Full Orders, exercising their ministry but not dependent upon it for their livelihood. I mean men with the qualifications laid down by the Apostle, but not necessarily those added by us. It is such men that I think we ought to ordain. We ought to ordain these men not because there is a dearth of candidates for ordination of the type to which we are accustomed, but because it is in itself right and wise to do so . . . I have rested my argument for Voluntary Clergy not upon the dearth, but upon Divine Truth. (Allen 1923, 73–4)

Allen's thesis is based on his view that the shortage of stipendiary ministers in his time, whom he referred to as professional clergy, was designed by God in order for the church to learn that professional ministry is not the only type.

For Allen, the category of voluntary clergy applied both to foreign missions and the local church. Allen considered the incorporation of voluntary clergy in the church necessary for ensuring that the sacrament would be regularly available to small groups of Christians in remote locations. Allen argued that the prevailing view of considering stipendiary (salaried) ministry as the only way to do ministry was to restrict the "Divine vocation" (1923, 2). He also challenged the prevailing order of his day that only young, educated men were qualified to enter ministry. He sought to differentiate this practice from the selection of ministers in 1 Tim. 3:2–7 and Titus 1:6–9 that focused on mature, married, and respected men who had proved to be good

leaders and teachers. Allen, like most bivocational ministry scholars and writers, demonstrated the views that voluntary clergy are not half-time ministers and that stipendiary clergy continue to be necessary. Although there are divergent views in bivocational ministry and associated literature on whether the non-ministry vocation of bivocational ministry is to be regarded as necessarily secular, Allen proffered that "there is no such thing as secular business for Christian men" (84). Allen thus contributed to the development of a form of what we understand as bivocational ministry in the British context.

It is important to note that the notion of bivocational ministry in Britain was also fuelled by experiences of other countries and denominations. Particularly influential was the French and Belgian Catholic "worker priest" model, in which hundreds of French and Belgian priests entered factories to take up manual labor as an essential aspect of their ministry to the industrial workforce (Arnal 1986). According to Arnal, this model influenced other countries, and "the Anglican Church (CoE) in Britain has pushed forward with its own forms both in urban missions and on the high seas" (172). British worker-priests in the early 1950s and 1960s comprised a movement of a handful of British Anglican priests (following a similar movement of French Catholics), who with their families and some lay ministers, went out to work in factories and mines after World War II. Some of them continued into retirement (Lawson 2000).

Factors Shaping the Growth of Non-stipendiary Ministry

The effect of Kelly and Allen's dream of non-stipendiary clergy took time to be realized within the CoE, as in other denominations. For centuries, the ordained ministry of the CoE was generally considered a sacred office consuming the minister's whole attention on ministerial tasks; benefits included a house and a stipend or allowance to support the physical needs of the minister. By the late nineteenth century, parochial ministry in particular was regarded as a "full-time" occupation. However, insufficient ministry income drove many poor clergy to supplement their incomes with other employment. The CoE officially accepted non-stipendiary ministry into its institutional structures in 1970. Vaughan (1987) identified four key aspects influ-

encing this revolutionization of the office of ordained ministry in the CoE, factors that continue to influence bivocational ministry and are also mirrored in other denominations and ministry persuasions outside of the CoE.

First is the continued pressure for local communities to be self-sufficient in ministry and sacraments. This self-sufficiency is achieved through the training and ordaining of local candidates to serve their own home parish (Francis and Francis 1998). Some of the pressure arises from the fact that membership in the CoE is declining (Lees 2018), particularly in smaller and rural churches (Gill [2003] 2018). As a result, the capacity for the church to support a stipendiary minister has diminished, making it more difficult for churches to attract and support ministers from outside their locality. There is, therefore, focus on having local parishioners taking on ministerial responsibilities in their home or local church. These self-supporting individuals become bivocational ministers. This approach is increasingly being considered in the CoE and is likely to be considered beyond the CoE.

Second, there is pressure for the church to offer ministry in a style and expression congruent with working-class culture. The relevance of the church in contemporary society has been a subject of theological interest in recent years. The church has been accused of being insular and not relevant to contemporary society by some quarters. Theologians and ministry practitioners have thus, over the years, made efforts to address this situation and to demonstrate that the church can be relevant for today's society. Ministers in secular employment, as they are described in the CoE context, are considered to be more in touch with working-class culture, as they are part of it.

Third is the continued pressure for the removal of the divide between clergy and laity. The divide emanates from how lay ministers are described in CoE official literature:

> Readers (also called Licensed Lay Ministers) have a leadership role serving alongside clergy to support people in faith and enable mission. They are lay people who are trained and licensed by their bishop. Reader / LLM ministry looks different in different places depending on the local context. Many Readers / LLMs teach, preach, lead worship and are involved in mission. Some also take funerals after additional training. Many Readers carry out their church ministry at the same time as having another job. (Church of England n.d.)

Although lay ministers or readers preach, lead worship, and are involved in mission, they are largely described as ones serving alongside clergy. This description diminishes the ministry of lay ministers and portays the sense that their ministry is validated by their serving alongside clergy. It should, however, be noted that there is a distinction between lay leaders/ministers and bivocational ministers. Lay leaders serve under a trained or ordained minister. On the contrary, while a bivocational minister will have another vocation outside of ministry, they usually are the lead pastor or minister of a congregation—unlike the lay leaders who ordinarily serve under an ordained senior minister.

Fourth is the continued pressure for the church to offer meaningful witness in the contemporary world of work. It is becoming increasingly recognised that in today's world of secularisation, the church has the duty to take the gospel to the workplace. Bivocational ministers, particularly ministers in secular employment, are positioned to present Christian witness in the workplace (Fuller and Vaughan 1986). This missiological argument does not, however, mean that bivocational ministers should engage people in the workplace on the subject of faith (or the gospel) "willy-nilly." In fact, in parts of the United Kingdom, the law prohibits subjecting another person to "harassment" at work on the grounds of religion or belief or by engaging in unwanted conduct that has the purpose of violating their dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment (Employment Equality [Religion or Belief] Regulations 2003). Nonetheless, even within the confines of the laws, bivocational ministers have opportunities to share their faith with others in the world of work.

Bivocational Ministry in Britain Today

The need for bivocational ministry that is increasingly being acknowledged in our world today is also recognised in Britain. Within the CoE, "many English dioceses are planning increased dependency on SSMs [self-supporting ministers]" due to projected dwindling church attendance and resources (Lees 2018, 7). In fact, 25–40% of CoE clergy are self-supporting ministers, serving 60% of CoE dioceses (Morgan 2010). Self-supporting ministry (which manifests as bivocational ministry in many cases) is seen as a solution and response

to dwindling attendance and resources in the CoE. Furthermore, other denominations in Britain, such as Pentecostals and "new churches" consider bivocational ministry instrumental and necessary for church planting and growth.

It is interesting to note the differences in approaches taken in Britain for incorporating bivocational ministry. On one hand, churches like the CoE are seemingly adopting bivocational ministry to sustain or preserve their existing churches, whereas other churches are adopting bivocational ministry to plant new churches. For example, the concept of bivocational ministry is increasingly becoming a subject of discussion in the UK Baptist Movement (King 2013). Like the US Southern Baptist Convention, the UK Baptist movement is beginning to consider bivocational ministry more seriously (Haward 2013). Similarly, the Newfrontiers Broadcast Network, Church Planting (UK) published an insightful article highlighting the need for bivocational ministry in church planting (Newfrontiers 2016). Although data pertaining to the incidence and prevalence of bivocational ministry in UK churches is limited, there are strong indications that bivocational ministry is both common and on the increase in Britain and the wider United Kingdom.

Another area of interest is theological training. There is a gap between the prevalence of bivocational ministry and the availability of bivocational ministry-focused theological education in Britain. In 2019, I interviewed four educationalists about their views. Although the research involved only four British theological schools, these schools had been established for over 70 years. The research concluded that: (1) the educationalists were well versed with the concept of bivocational ministry; (2) a significant number of current and former students at the four institutions practiced bivocational ministry; (3) the current educational curricula at the four institutions did not incorporate bivocational ministry training; and (4) there were mixed views on whether there should be specific training for bivocational ministry or if the institutions should consider this pathway (Samushonga 2020b). This research shows that the subject of bivocational ministry training is still developing in Britain and needs further attention (see also Lees 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the notion of bivocational ministry in the context of Britain, highlighting the diversity of the concept. The phenomenon of bivocational ministry was described in a variety of ways peculiar to the CoE, such as *non-stipendiary ministers*, *ministers in secular employment*, and *self-supporting ministers*. The chapter also revealed that, outside of the CoE, the term *bivocational ministry* is used in Britain. The lack of a firmer definition for bivocational ministry presents problems for exploring the phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is clear that the notion of bivocationalism in Britain, in its various forms, points to the ministry of men and women involved in ministry who also have other vocations outside of ministry.

Another challenge for bivocational ministry in Britain presented in this chapter is the lack of statistical data on the numbers or proportion of ministers in Britain serving as bivocational ministers. Much of what is available are estimates. Although the CoE publishes official ministry statistics yearly, reporting the number of ministers who support themselves financially, the number also includes pensioners with no other jobs. As a result, the CoE statistics of non-stipendiary ministers are not true statistics of bivocational ministers in the CoE. It therefore remains that the number and or proportion of bivocational ministers in the CoE and wider Britain remains unknown. This missing data is crucial for giving context and more understanding of bivocational ministry and providing an evidence base for research that focuses on bivocational ministry in Britain.

This chapter crucially highlighted that, while the notion of bivocational ministry is established and predicted to grow in the future, there is little focus on bivocational ministry training in Britain. This gap is not unique to Britain. However, discourse about theological education in the United States has intensified in the last few years, with denominations like the Southern Baptist Convention and theological seminaries like Lancaster exploring training and educational programs aimed at equipping candidates with bivocational ministry knowledge and skills.

This chapter also showed that the momentum for bivocational ministry (or forms of it) in Britain is intensifying in the CoE and beyond as a means of preserving the local church and stimulating church growth. Thus, there is need for further research on bivocational ministry to focus on other churches beyond the CoE.

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Notes

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