

# CANADIAN MULTIVOCATIONAL MINISTRY PROJECT

## Research Report

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## Introduction

Tentmaking, bivocational, and multivocational are all terms currently used to describe how people who are involved in congregational leadership and work outside the congregation can combine those worlds. A national study of multivocational ministers was launched to provide insight into issues which arise for this group of leaders. Both challenges and opportunities were considered. This report provides an explanation of the research participants, methodology, key findings, and discussion of ways to move forward.

## Why Does Canada Need Tentmakers?

Part-time employment for those working in Canadian congregations has been on the rise.<sup>1</sup> While the extent of negative trends affecting churches is currently being monitored and assessed, there are some positive possibilities regarding multivocational employment to consider.<sup>2</sup> In a changing and diverse society, direct participation in the secular workforce allows for insight, conversations, and relationships which might otherwise be missed. With a growing general lack of understanding of what the church is or does in Canadian society, being present in a non-priestly role opens doors for people to engage in relationship and conversation directly with congregational leaders. Diverse work opportunities can also positively influence leaders involved in congregational teaching, providing direct access to community opinions and workplace experiences which can feed directly into preaching, theological reflection, and equipping of “the saints” (Ephesians 4:12) for their roles in society.

This report does not make a biblical or theological argument for tentmaking<sup>3</sup> as that has been done elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Rather, by assuming that tentmaking is a valid option, the report presents perspectives from the frontlines of ministry on how the different work settings can function well or what some of the liabilities can be for the leaders.<sup>5</sup> Even though the report focuses on the experience of the leaders, biblical or theological perspectives are not absent;

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Reimer and Rick Hiemstra, “The Rise of Part-Time Employment in Canadian Christian Churches,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 44, no. 3 (September 1, 2015): 356–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429815595811>.

<sup>2</sup> James W. Watson and Narry F. Santos, “Tentmaking: Creative Mission Opportunities within a Secularizing Canadian Society,” in *Mission and Evangelism in a Secularizing World*, Evangelical Missiological Society Monograph Series 2 (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> There was a lively debate during the focus group (which tested questions for the interview) regarding whether or not the Levitical, biblical model of being fully supported by the community of faith was the ideal (and tentmaking was a provisional necessity when this was not possible) or whether tentmaking could be considered one of the normal options for pastoral leadership – this report will not decide that debate.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas W Davis, “The Business Secrets of Paul of Tarsus,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 219–34; Mark D. W. Edington, “The Church” in *Bivocational Church*, (New York: Church Publishing, 2018), chap. 4, <http://www.bivocational.church/2018/01/04/4-the-church-a-bivocational-theology-of-ministry>; Francois Tolmie, “Mission and the Workplace – the Example of Paul,” *Journal for Christian Scholarship* 53, no. 1–2 (2017): 91–105; Watson and Santos, “Tentmaking;” Johannes Mattheus Wessels, “Contextual Views on Paul’s Attitude towards Labour and Remuneration,” *Missionalia* 46, no. 1 (August 2018), <https://doi.org/10.7832/46-1-157>.

<sup>5</sup> There is limited (English) tentmaking social science research literature - generally graduate student or denominational research. Most published work is based on personal experience or anecdotal observation.

interviewees were asked to describe their theology of work and frequently responses referred to biblical or theological concepts.

## Overview of Research: A Mixed Methods Study

This study combined several research methods to provide an in-depth exploration of multivocational ministry (see Appendix 1 for methodology details). Review of reports, books, and journal articles related to the issue of tentmaking in general, and Canadian ministry experience specifically, was an ongoing part of the study (see a selective review in the bibliography).<sup>6</sup> The Wellness Project @ Wycliffe partnered with the project using their online questionnaire assessing wellness in congregational ministry to consider that part of the multivocational experience. Interviews addressed both ministry and “other work” as well as the interaction between the different roles and practitioner’s perspectives on tentmaking. The interview was “semi-structured” in that there was a rationale that guided each of the questions, however the questions were open-ended to allow the interviewees to contribute freely from their experience and perspectives. The aim was exploratory with a focus on diverse combinations of work experience. The exploration of these experiences points towards patterns which should be considered for better understanding of tentmaking ministry in general, as well as possibilities for support and training for leaders engaged in this approach to ministry. A community-based research approach was taken both to include current practitioners and former tentmakers in the design and analysis, but also to shape the progress from knowledge generation (research methods) to knowledge mobilization (reports, articles, chapters, books, online media) to community mobilization (facilitated conversations, training, curriculum development, encouraging support system changes).<sup>7</sup>

## Who are the Multivocational Leaders in this Study?

The congregational leaders who took part in the interviews were men (24) and women (16) who serve in a variety of roles in local churches. While some were lead or sole pastors or church planters, there were co-pastors (generally spouses - there were five couples interviewed), youth pastors, and pastors with an official title and role but who were not receiving payment from the congregation (volunteer ministers). Their congregations ranged in size from house churches or incarnational communities to churches requiring multi-staff teams. The ages of the congregations ranged from “not yet officially a church plant” to early stages of development (within the first three years) to long established congregations. The tentmakers were from across Canada with representation from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, and Newfoundland.

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<sup>6</sup> For additional resources: [canadianmultivocationalministry.ca](http://canadianmultivocationalministry.ca).

<sup>7</sup> Joanna Ochocka and Rich Janzen, “Breathing Life into Theory: Illustrations of Community-Based Research – Hallmarks, Functions and Phases,” *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* 7, no. 1 (June 19, 2014): 18–33, <https://doi.org/10.5130/ijcre.v7i1.3486>.

Approximately one fifth of the participants were born outside of Canada, which approximates the national population average.<sup>8</sup> Interviewees came from congregations founded by immigrants as well as multicultural churches. In one case, a church was led by pastors who were ministering in their third language (one of Canada’s official languages). In another situation, a Canadian born pastor was leading worship in an Asian language. In both of those examples, the pastors submit their sermon scripts to a reviewer, who has the congregation’s preferred language as their mother tongue, before preaching each week.

The primary goal of selection was to obtain participation from people with a wide diversity of other employment. While the project was originally called the Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project, it became apparent that several of our interviewees had more than one job or serious volunteer commitment in addition to a congregational leadership role. We adopted the terminology of multivocational to reflect that reality. Note that the list of other occupations (see below) is composed of roles which may have multiple individuals involved (such as administrator or chaplain) as well as one individual possibly being involved in multiple roles (such as church planter, funeral officiant, and church planting coach).

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Administrator (social services)       | Manager (housing/rental)            |
| Author/writer                         | Manager (landscaping)               |
| Business analyst (government)         | Manager (social awareness program)  |
| Carpenter (furniture)                 | Manager (retail)                    |
| Chaplain (health care)                | Marketer (freelance)                |
| Chaplain (military)                   | Music coordinator (choir/worship)   |
| Chaplain (natural resources/industry) | Musician                            |
| Chaplain (police)                     | Network coordinator (social issues) |
| Coach (church planting)               | Occupational therapist              |
| Company owner (entrepreneur)          | Outreach worker (social services)   |
| Consultant (airlines)                 | Painter (residential/industrial)    |
| Consultant (information technology)   | Personal support worker             |
| Consultant (health care)              | Public relations (fundraising)      |
| Denominational staff                  | School bus driver                   |
| Executive director (social services)  | Shelter worker (social services)    |
| Editor                                | Spiritual director                  |
| Educational assistant                 | Teacher (elementary level)          |
| Farmer                                | Technician (lab equipment)          |
| Foster parent (group home)            | Truck driver                        |
| Funeral officiant                     | Volunteer (community radio)         |
| Housing coordinator (ministry)        | Volunteer (community theatre)       |
| Luthier                               | Wedding officiant                   |

There are several ways to think about the diversity of occupations. One approach is to note that some of these roles can directly benefit from elements of traditional pastoral education

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<sup>8</sup> “Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results from the 2016 Census,” Statistics Canada, released October 25, 2017, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm>

(Bible college or seminary) such as chaplaincy, church music director, denominational roles, funeral or wedding officiants, and spiritual directors. Others may indirectly benefit from this educational background such as writing/editing and educational roles. A few of these jobs are provided by faith-based organizations even though their job descriptions may not be obviously faith connected (retail manager for an organizations' thrift store, administrator for a Christian social service agency) while chaplains and funeral or wedding officiants may work for secular organizations or businesses.

Each form of employment has challenges specific to that field or role. For some, difficulties inherent to the work could distract from ministry, either in terms of time commitments or emotional investment. As an example, multiple interviewees shared how their emotional energy was drained through interpersonal conflicts or their human resources responsibilities when they held a supervisory role for employment outside of the congregation.

There is a relationship between time and money which must be considered. It appears that only a distinct minority of these positions could be considered minimum wage, which may not be the case for all tentmakers but obviously makes part-time work more financially worthwhile. A limited number of interviewees indicated that their expertise allowed for a rich financial return for the time commitments involved and a distinct minority indicated that they were company owners with multiple staff with control of finances (but also the associated responsibilities). While a few of the positions were full time, many were part-time or piecemeal (dependent on specific orders or availability of shifts) or time-limited contracts. Not having full-time employment created challenges for some individuals for obtaining health benefits or mortgages.

## Major Findings

The participants in this study generously shared from their experience. These main findings allow for discussion of "big picture" categories while identifying some of the distinctive issues raised. The online questionnaire provided an opportunity to analyze ministry aspects which allow tentmakers to sustain their congregational ministry or contribute to burn out. The interview responses allowed for exploration of patterns which emerged from the examples and explanations of the tentmakers.

## Satisfiers and Stressors in Congregational Ministry

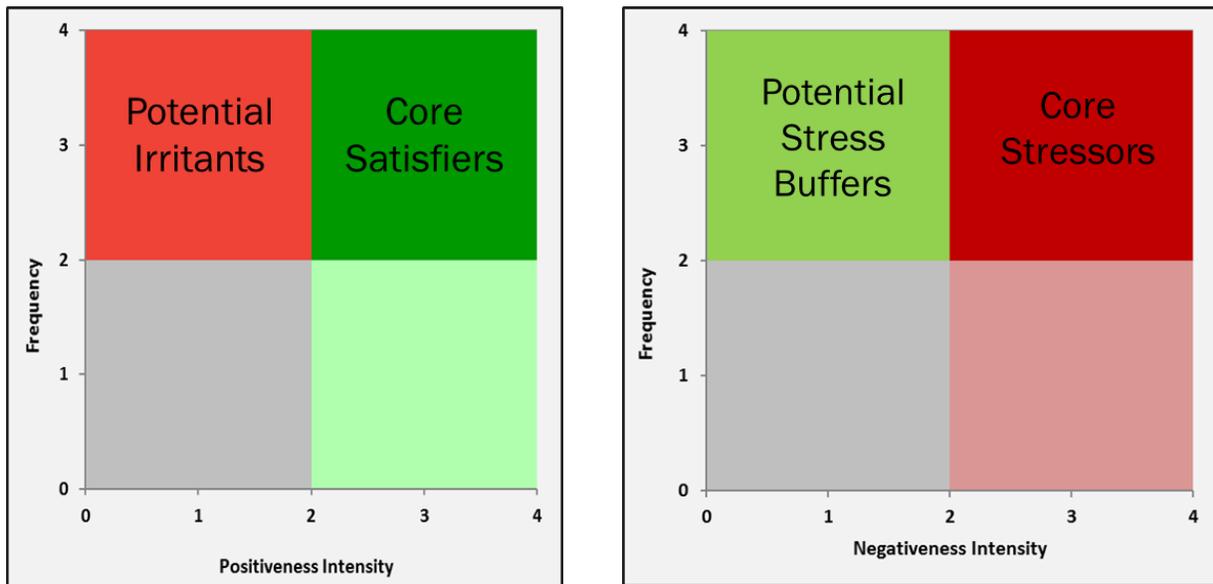
By observing basic trends in the multivocational responses and making some comparisons with a matched set of univocational respondents,<sup>9</sup> issues related specifically to multivocational satisfaction and stress in ministry were highlighted. The Wellness Project @

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<sup>9</sup> There were 32 respondents from the Canadian Bivocational Ministry Projects' interviews and a matched dataset of 32 univocational respondents. See Appendix 1 for details regarding the matching criteria and Appendix 2 for specifics of the analytical tools included in the online questionnaire.

Wycliffe primarily examines how individuals report Core Satisfiers and Core Stressors in congregational ministry.<sup>10</sup> The findings show that the more Core Satisfiers a person indicates then the lower their scoring on burnout indices and the more Core Stressors they indicate, then the higher they score on the burnout indices. While this may seem a basic observation, the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe has also revealed that “when potentially positive aspects of ministry life are frequently required, but not very positive, they tend to work as irritants. In an inverse fashion, potentially negative aspects of ministry life that are frequently required but not very negative tend to work as stress buffers, increasing a person’s sense of accomplishment.”<sup>11</sup> Note in Figure 1 that this is graphed as frequency relative to intensity.

**Figure 1 - Satisfiers and Stressors**



One aspect of ministry life that has elements of both satisfaction and stress is management skills (see Figure 2). While this aspect was a core satisfier for some multivocational leaders, it was an irritant for others. It appeared as an irritant for multivocational ministers twice as often as for the matched univocational leaders. One multivocational participant described the tension in this way:

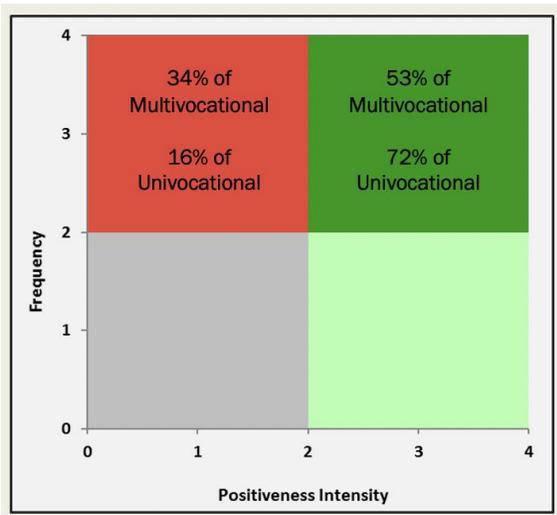
I feel like I ended up having to dedicate more time to administrative things. But the idea of having space and life for holy interruptions...that part of a relational or life-on-life discipleship model: filling our days in such a way that there is space for relational work, has been sometimes a challenge. [I’m] trying to leave room for the Spirit to cue us in to what is most urgent but maybe necessary day to day. I think sometimes we have trouble articulating what it looks like to

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 2 for definitions.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Fisher, “Satisfaction and Stress in Multivocational Ministry: Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project and Wellness Project @ Wycliffe.” Evangelical Missiological Society – Canada. March 6, 2020. Presentation prepared with Wanda Malcolm.

coordinate [ministry] to some folks that don't have a theological framework for that.

**Figure 2 – Management Skills**



This variation in tension factors into the responses from interviewees given the complexity of their ministry and work arrangements. Participants indicated varying experiences in administration. Some indicated that previous business experience prepared them for the challenges they currently faced while others indicated that their leadership teams were structured to manage the administrative challenges of the congregation. As will become evident in reviewing different combinations of work responsibilities, while some of the tentmakers were business owners, employers, or managers which would be assumed to carry a heavy administrative workload, others took work roles which limited their responsibilities. Some specifically mentioned having the ability to negotiate their level of responsibility due to strong work relationships or by occupying a currently “in demand” role which afforded them some negotiating power regarding their position.

#### *What were the Core Satisfiers?*

Over 90% of the multivocational leaders rated the following aspects of ministry life as Core Satisfiers:<sup>12</sup>

- cultivating personal spiritual depth;
- vocation and calling;
- building work relationships and trust; and
- time and diversity of tasks.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 2 for descriptions.

It is noteworthy that over 90% of the matched univocational participants also rated vocation and calling as well as building work relationships and trust as Core Satisfiers. Over 80% of univocational participants rated cultivating personal spiritual depth as well as time and diversity of tasks as Core Satisfiers. One key finding is that all multivocational participants who did not rate vocation and calling as a Core Satisfier showed indices of burnout.<sup>13</sup> This underscores the passion with which the multivocational participants described the importance of calling in the interviews, often with an emphatic personal or theological explanation.

### Punching the Clock: Time Study

During the interviews, participants were asked to describe their typical weeks. This one question revealed a great diversity of patterns, which can be observed in the schedule descriptions provided in Appendix 3. While they do not represent every possible time schedule, some examples have been selected to demonstrate the varying patterns of work life among participants. One pattern is a set schedule with certain predictable times of work or church commitments which allow for flexible organization around those commitments (see Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11). At the other end of the spectrum is a pattern which is largely fluid and can best be described as a rhythm of ministry; an experiment in redefining ecclesial experience with the work, congregational, and other commitments all being flexible and varying to different degrees from week-to-week (see Figure 15). In the middle are a few examples in which the interviewees emphasized seasonal differences, with certain times of the calendar year becoming more active. The farmer/pastor was the most definite example (Figure 13); in the interview this individual emphasized that everyone in the congregation and community knew that during certain agricultural seasons the role of farmer took precedence over the role of pastor. While time and diversity of tasks was listed as a Core Satisfier for over 90% of the multivocational participants, the online questionnaires also indicated that the most frequently identified Core Stressor was time and workload strain.<sup>14</sup> This underscores the importance of understanding the schedules they are required to manage.

An observation to make of all the examples listed in Appendix 3 is that they all seem to have a *team* leadership structure. While not all the tentmakers in the study identified a leadership team as central to how their multivocational arrangement worked, many made specific note of it or mentioned colleagues in their leadership structure. Among the examples in Appendix 3, there are co-pastors or co-leaders who function together, and another who is an associate pastor from a staff team. While it is not explicit in their schedules, the youth worker/relief shelter worker (Figure 9) and farmer/pastor (Figure 13) both made mention in the interview of being part of a team. In addition to the examples provided, one interviewee claimed that their church had been running for about half a century without any paid staff; they had a leadership structure which was dependent on volunteers fulfilling the roles necessary to

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<sup>13</sup> Indices of burnout as measured by the Maslach Burnout Inventory. See Appendix 2 for details.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix 2 for definition.

sustain congregational life. This issue of shared leadership and delegation of congregational tasks to multiple people rather than expecting one person to fulfill all tasks. As a multivocational leader has limits on the amount of time to commit to the congregation, partners in ministry are essential.

There are observable issues from these examples which can benefit from additional comment. The degree of fixedness or flex does have implications for what a tentmaker can do and when they can do it. The issue of flexibility arose in the comments of several interviewees - for either the church or their other workplace. While some of these schedules are representative of very young congregations, others are much older and have provided a degree of flexibility for the leaders to make the pieces fit. In one of the examples (Figure 10), the co-pastors (a married couple) indicated that they offered a multivocational hiring option to the congregation because it was at risk of diminishing ministry and the church recognized that they needed a new financial model for leadership in order to continue. The couple felt that the church was giving them a great deal of grace and flexibility to organize their time.

Note also the busy schedules among the examples provided. When interviewees were asked to estimate how many hours they committed to all of their roles, the estimates shared varied from 40-50 hours a week on the low end up to 60-70 hours with one outlier of 100 hours.<sup>15</sup> Granted that there was no way to track their hours in this research to confirm their claims absolutely, the time study of their weeks does seem to support these estimates. There is some difficulty in determining from the charts when individuals take time off because not all time slots were clearly reported. Further, some of the schedules include irregular activities. A few of the leaders with spouses and children mentioned feeling tension when they could not meet family expectations because of their full schedules. A number mentioned tiredness. One of the follow-up questions involved asking about rest and recreation and some interviewees clearly indicated their designated time for personal renewal but not everyone. Note that not all multivocational leaders claimed to need a specific day or time set aside for personal spiritual renewal. As one example, the farmer/pastor (Figure 13) indicated that meditative reflection was possible during work as some agricultural tasks were routine and the environment inspired devotional reflection.

### Unique Fit: More than Time and Money

The diversity of schedules hints at the diversity of reasons for the variety of combinations; different forms of employment had different schedule requirements. A key finding of the interviews with tentmakers was that money and time were not necessarily their primary concern when asked about how their arrangement worked for their life, or more significantly what was important when facing challenges or pressures. While some did mention the value of added income, specifically for support of their family or to enable their other interests (such as education), there were other factors which were emphasized - sometimes with

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<sup>15</sup> Entrepreneurial company owner with a part-time denominational staff role and a church hosting a winter sheltering program.

passionate intensity. This collection of responses indicated that there was a rather unique fit between the individual, their family, congregation, and additional employment. Involvement in a family business allowed one pastor to sustain relationship when a close relative was not part of the congregation. One leader was employed in an industry which was part of family tradition. A small town leader provided support to vulnerable community members and acknowledged that family members were thankful for the care provided to their relative. Pastors employed in the local education system indicated that their friendships with their colleagues informed their understanding of people who do not attend church. The objective of “being missional” or operating as a missionary within Canadian society was often understood as being augmented by having a job which promoted relationship with people outside of the church.

Some reflected on the degree to which they had found their “sweet spot” in ministry or to frame it more theologically, that they have discovered something which they were created to do. One leader reflected on how God had been at work in providing the prior life and educational experience necessary for their<sup>16</sup> current configuration of roles, even before they had committed themselves to following Christ. Some of the roles required prior education or experience in the field to acquire an entry level position or a certain degree of expertise which facilitated their requirements for flexibility. One interviewee indicated that their role within the local education system was currently “in demand” so they could confidently make specific requests regarding beneficial timing of shifts or work sites.

With regards to congregational life, there were comments which indicated that there was a common or negotiated understanding which allowed the tentmaking to occur. Some indicated that the congregation had a tradition of volunteerism or part-time employment, so there was a prior tradition guiding the process. A few leaders explained how they would communicate to their key leaders (or the congregation at large) about their jobs, how they used their time, and what were reasonable limits to congregational expectations. The balancing act of multiple careers does require negotiation. Some identified that the most important discussion was with family, others emphasized a mutual understanding with church leaders, and others indicated that it was allowances in the secular workplace.

A few of the leaders were very clear that an underlying rationale for structuring their contributions to ministry in this way was to blaze a new path for churches in Canada. Tentmaking provided a means for reducing ministry costs. One multivocational church planter reasoned that effectively supporting one family should not require such a large percentage of the operating budget for a small church. One other planter chose to vary the options for meeting together and pursue online venues for spiritual formation to create new models of discipleship (see Figure 15) but through tentmaking lowered the threshold of financial overhead of salary for this intentionally, experimental church plant.

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<sup>16</sup> “Their” is used as an alternative to hers or his to protect the anonymity of the interviewee.

Spiritual discernment was identified by some as central to identifying the right fit. One tentmaker who stated that the journey into a congregational leadership role commenced late in life (even though pastoral ministry had been a prayer focus as a young adult) described the specific moment of illumination as a couple:

And we both had this moment where she said, "I'm really sensing God calling us to a smaller place, a place where there isn't a Christian counselor and a place where they have to struggle to get a pastor." And I said, "Yeah that's exactly what I was hearing from God."

In this case the spouse's career was a factor in the shared discernment and the tentmaker's business allowed for a degree of flexibility regarding location.

Mirroring the findings of the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe, calling was a reoccurring theme in the interviews. An interesting point was that the nature of calling implied not only a church, but the local community as well, and that specific church's mission in the world - at least for those who considered their task a missionary venture. One interviewee was very clear that this was the primary motivating factor in continuing to minister in a complex and demanding environment: "It is the call of God." A "tri-vocational" leader in southern Ontario explains why clarity of calling is essential:

Well one of the first things I would want to say is that bivocational ministry is something that will only work if you have a very clear sense of call to the demands that you'll face. Because there is, you know, seasons and moments where bivocational/tri-vocational work, you're exhausted, you're depleted and it's that sense of calling that you rely on, the trust that God by Spirit is going to enable you and empower you, and that this is your reasonable act of service and love for God and for Jesus.

The ideal unique fit is a combination of multiple elements. While there are certain minimum requirements which must be met for the basic logistics to work, consideration of what is important to the tentmakers should not be limited to pay cheques and easily managed schedules. The opportunities presented by the tentmakers' previous education or skill development and how these feed into their current sense of mission or purpose may carry more weight ultimately than the pay scale. Perspectives on the value of additional work and how it supports or conflicts with their sense of calling will weigh heavily on the leaders and should be taken into account when determining new opportunities or the sustainability of their multivocational work.

### Theology at Work: Responses from Tentmakers

While biblical, theological and spiritual keywords or phrases were present throughout the interviewees' responses, they were also asked specific questions about their theology of work. For some, they identified specific ministry issues which had a biblical framework and

shaped their vision for what should be possible. One leader addressed the need for practice to reflect theology:

...we actually had enough space in our life to actually be present to other people; and that never would have happened if we were frantically running around. So that's a significant part of our theology of work ..., there is a wholeness; has to include rest and play and, but also, it has to include simply some space in order for God to invite us into things.

Some addressed the nature of tentmaking specifically. One respondent mentioned that a benefit of having more than one occupation was that it could aid a person in avoiding being *owned* by their job. There was not a complete dependence on one role and so that would help avoid a form of functional idolatry (primary allegiance to something other than God). A similar concern was extended to congregational work, that there could be a greater sense of freedom to make leadership decisions based on what was understood as being necessary rather than a fear of losing one's sole income.

Some connected the value of work with being made in the image of God, as part of the original created order. Within this theological reasoning, a few suggested that there was value in work being challenging; something formative or developmental for what it means to be human. The challenge of work itself was depicted as a good gift from God.

Well I think, I guess my theology of work is: starting in the Garden of Eden and God gave us work to do. ... It wasn't a work free zone. The expectation was that creation was to be tended and cared for, so I talked about vocation and calling and I think God created us to work; for rhythms of work and rest and meaningful work.

Several overarching theological emphases were identified as significant. The kingdom of God or shalom was invoked by a few leaders as part of the vision of the future they were investing in; a spiritual reality not yet fully realized. The phrase "ministry of reconciliation" was used as a link between what is not right in our world and the spiritual task given by Jesus to them as followers. Dependence on God or divine direction and being aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit during challenges were spiritual issues identified as being essential for survival. These were not necessarily unpacked for all their depth of meaning in the interview, but they are biblical themes which could apply to a broad range of ministry.

One individual shared that what they did was for the glory of God while another offered a similar but more pragmatic sentiment, "Your work is an expression of your faith and you should be doing the best." Regarding the realities of work out in the community, one Newfoundland church planter with two jobs in secular workplaces said:

There's lots of days where there's a lot of potential that bad attitude or, to do a job that's not the best in my capacity, or to complain when things aren't

organized, or something goes wrong. And so I think, you know, doing your work as unto the Lord as the scripture would encourage us to do is, it's really, you're faced with that daily. And then also understanding that people watch right, people knowing the pastor, the minister, they're watching how they respond to things, and how I treat people and how I treat customers and how I speak to managers, how I deal with challenges. And so you know, ... it's just daily life...

Some multivocational leaders were able to identify a reciprocal relationship between the different roles and found value in the interaction. A farmer/pastor suggested that:

...what I've learned in my agricultural career informs my church ministry. Like there are things I've learned, agricultural and farming, that are really quite vital for me. And, I am a better pastor because I do this other stuff; and also on the other hand, my church ministry informs my farming. And so they mesh and I think both careers are richer because of that. Many of my sermon topics have come from my agriculture experience, and they're contemplated on the tractor seat...

A major theme which emerged from many of the leaders was the concept of ministry as all of life. One respondent framed it negatively with the implied meaning that when both of your jobs are for "the Church" then you can never escape ministry, there is limited opportunity to step back and gain perspective. However, most of the respondents who picked up this strand of theological reflection were positive about the intent and focus it offers. The idea of not living compartmentalized lives but acknowledging how each situation can provide ministry opportunities. Some individuals indicated that their family were very aware they were "on mission" and participated in different elements of the congregational or secular work. Some leaders objected to a sacred/secular division based on understanding theologically that nothing should be considered outside of divine oversight or our spiritual engagement. An Albertan church planter summed it up by saying, "It's all spiritual." One Saskatchewan pastor claimed to regularly turn the question back to the congregation. The intent is to enlist them in reflecting on their ministry roles in their workplaces: "...how do we integrate our everyday life with what we say in church?"

There was a theme of stewardship running through some interview transcripts. The concept of gifts coming from God and being used for God's purposes emerged in reflecting on personal, congregational, and business opportunities. One business owner stated a conviction that the company should offer some form of tithe in addition to providing good service to clients and meaningful employment to employees. The concern for operating out of personal giftedness arose for both tentmakers personally and their hopes for people in their congregations. One eastern Ontario leader recognized the value of self-diagnosis, one of their criteria for personal reflection became: "...what's your sweet spot? Where is it that you know you feel like you come alive? And what you're doing, and it's not as if, it doesn't feel

like a dream, but it actually feels like energizing..." This general concept was applied by a few multivocational leaders to their ministry team in the congregation with the ideal being people playing to their strengths to accomplish what needs to be done. Erika Mills<sup>17</sup> brings these issues together eloquently:

Where I land is my work is an expression of my createdness, my giftedness, how God has wired me to be. And so, my work is going to be most effective, most fulfilling, when I'm able to focus on those areas that I'm gifted at, and so I feel like it's an absolute luxury to be able to look at my week ... based on what is lifegiving, what is fruitful, and what is good stewardship of who God's created me. ... when it's a part time job, people in the church need to understand that we can't do everything, that others in the congregation need to pick up some of the work and take responsibility, and so we're able to prioritize those areas that we're gifted in that we want to spend our energy on.

Regarding the topic of sharing faith, there were several different issues raised as being particularly relevant to tentmaking. A western Ontario pastor explained that "what it's all about is living that love of Jesus in the world and helping people connect to that, and how that unfolds is going to be different for every single relationship we have." A church planter in a Quebec metropolitan centre suggested that it was such a secular setting it was necessary to build relationship through the workplace before discussing faith. In fact, it would be detrimental to some working relationships if their pastoral identity was disclosed too soon. The farmer/pastor explained how selling agricultural products directly allowed for a personal relationship between producer and consumer. Some Muslim customers in the city offered invitations to family weddings because their business relationship became a friendship. One individual who works in faith-based social services explained the opportunity available through tentmaking in this way:

Yeah, the most positive is when those worlds collide and somebody from the breakfast program or somebody who's come in for a voucher or hamper, they end up in my office and we have one of those kingdom of God conversations.

This particular leader identified that even with multiple examples of having deep conversations about Christian spirituality, prayers answered in remarkable ways, and individuals surrendering their lives to Christ, the multivocational leader was still concerned that social service work required substantial time, attention, and personal energy to allow for those opportunities. These examples point both to some of the tensions involved in balancing multiple professional identities and responsibilities, but also the potential in sharing faith in a multi-faith and secularizing society.

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<sup>17</sup> Interviewees were given options of either being anonymous or receiving credit when they were directly quoted.

## How can We Help?

One of the basic questions shaping this research project focused on developing strategies for resourcing tentmakers. As mentioned at the beginning of this report, an assumption of this paper is that there is value in considering multivocational ministry, both from examples which can be found in scripture and current societal conditions in Canada. The intent is not only to know more about tentmakers but point to directions which could be beneficial for their development. While strategies for training and resourcing leaders considering this direction will need to be take into account the theological tradition of the minister and practical needs of the local community, these general guidelines come from the analysis of the multivocational leaders' reflections in addition to some direct recommendations they have offered.

### Integrated, Complementary, Lucrative, or Conflicted

How the different forms of work benefit or create complications for the tentmaker may determine whether the multivocational approach is sustainable. Sustainability may not simply be a matter of financial gain, but also of synergy with ministry and personal objectives. A simple framework is described which is shaped on one end of the spectrum by the ideal that the other work provides discipleship opportunities and at the other end by the simple reality that the tentmaker must view the arrangement as feasible, rather than as a problem. This spectrum will be explained as having four possible states: integrated, complementary, lucrative, or conflicted.<sup>18</sup>

Multivocational work is integrated when there is a synergistic relationship between congregational leadership and other work.<sup>19</sup> The congregational mission is assisted by the tentmaker's additional role(s). This ensures that in addition to any financial return, there are also opportunities created to contribute to the formation of the church. Highly relevant activities are the development of new relationships in the community and opportunities for deeper conversations; allowing discipleship to take place. In the theological reflection on sharing faith, the leader offering faith-based social services which created opportunities for spiritual conversations is one example of integrated work. The church planter/landscaping manager provided stories of people asking about the how these different types of work fit together, which provided an open door for explanation of calling and further spiritual conversation. This implies a degree of intentionality on the part of the tentmaker to recognize the integrated nature of their work and seize opportunities.

The relationship between the tentmaker's differing roles is not always viewed as being integrated. The next category is complementary. A complementary relationship between

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<sup>18</sup> Adapted from: James Watson, "Multivocational Ministry: Interviews." Evangelical Missiological Society – Canada. March 6, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> A similar term is covocational, which has been a concept in church planting for leaders who are primarily committed to their marketplace role and are also starting new churches. See Brad Brisco, *Covocational Church Planting: Aligning Your Marketplace Calling and the Mission of God* (Alpharetta: SEND Network, 2018).

multivocational commitments could be possible if the additional work provides something beyond financial reimbursement to the tentmaker but does not contribute directly to discipleship. Examples of these situations could be the opportunity for devotional reflection while doing work which does not require concentration, having tasks which provide a break from the relationally intensive activity of ministry, or having some other compelling personal reason to have another job. A pastor who worked for a family business did so to maintain and nurture relationship. One leader whose congregation was facilitating the management of a shelter for women at risk found that having a side gig fixing laboratory equipment could be refreshing because it required setting aside other concerns to focus on the task at hand. Being able to fix something, when so much of ministry does not provide immediate or definite outcomes, was refreshing.

After complementary, the next category is lucrative. The other job(s) provides financial benefit but that is it. The cost benefit analysis becomes relatively simple, is the time required worth the money received? In general conversations about bivocational ministry, there often seems to be an assumption that another job is taken solely for the money. The practicality of logistics (financial reimbursement, schedule, intensity of labour, amount of emotional investment required) were identified as factors in the participants' experience of multivocational work. Within this category, passion or meaningfulness or overlap with congregational mission are less of a priority than in the previous two categories. If there is a sense that the additional employment is not contributing to ministry (integrated), providing a personal benefit (complementary), or worth the money (lucrative), then there is the real possibility that the tentmaker's relationship with the complex work arrangements of multivocational life may become conflicted.

The last category is conflicted. For one reason or another, it is becoming clear that the arrangement is not sustainable. The majority of interviewees for this study appear to have been positively biased towards long term, multivocational work. When asked whether they would organize their work life any differently if they could choose how to structure their work, only seven of the participants indicated that they would choose to become univocational. An obvious example was provided by someone who took on a (convenient) driving job to fund further education but when the graduate degree was completed, the priority shifted to obtaining full time ministry employment. For two individuals, they indicated that their heart was in the new ministries and initiatives they were founding, so they anticipated that they would decrease their pastoral responsibilities in the future. For most of the interviewees considering leaving the multivocational arrangement, they wanted to expand their engagement in pastoral ministry. They envisioned offering more to congregational development if they had more time available to invest. For a couple of the church planters in the study, they were anticipating that as the church grew, they would need to decrease their other work to compensate; however, one church planter was quite insistent that the number of jobs would go from three to two. There was a personal (complementary) benefit in keeping one of the other jobs.

This spectrum can serve as an informal discussion tool to assist a tentmaker in clarifying their intentions compared to their current reality. By asking questions which help the multivocational leader clarify to what degree they fit with any of these categories, it can encourage reflection on how the different forms of work is perceived. If other work is perceived to be a positive contributor to ministry, then there are positive implications for sustainability. If other work is considered more important than the congregational ministry or detrimental, something will need to change in the current situation.

### Unique Fit Discernment

Discernment of the unique fit for an individual will be deeply personal. Anyone who is considering the multivocational life should do so from a holistic theological perspective on ministry and with an appreciation of their gifts. If they can give equal value to their work before God, then they have a shot at living richly in multiple occupations. If they think that church life is the sole direction for ministry and they are just doing the other stuff to get by, it may be temporary. They run the risk of not feeling fulfilled and valued.<sup>20</sup>

How can discernment of these issues be explored? This is not only an issue for the person dreaming of tentmaking as a new direction but also anyone who is supporting their ministry formation. Darryl Dozlaw,<sup>21</sup> in reflecting on his own transition to multivocational ministry, offers these suggestions:

And so I would ... ask lots of questions that would, you know, that would hopefully get that person processing out loud what is going on in them. ...they probably just need someone to ask them about it and ... ask them about it in a way that they don't feel pressured to somehow have a bunch of pre-existing clarity on the idea because that can be hard if you don't have any. ... And then I would push back on some of those things by probably following it up with, "This sounds really different than what you're doing now. Why are you imagining something different? What's going on?" I'm just ... making sure that ... they're not just trying ... to work out some of their present situation but that they're actually being prepared for something that doesn't even exist yet.

An approach like this points to the need to be very attentive to the details and motivation of the potential tentmaker. Conversation partners may be very useful if they are able to exercise wisdom and sensitivity to assist the person considering multivocational ministry to unpack their ideas and envision what might be possible.

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<sup>20</sup> Adapted from Wanda Malcolm's notes for "Satisfaction and Stress in Multivocational Ministry: Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project and Wellness Project @ Wycliffe." Evangelical Missiological Society – Canada. March 6, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewees were given options of either being anonymous or receiving credit when they were directly quoted.

## Practical Considerations

Friends, family, pastoral colleagues, and denominational staff may have opportunities to support a potential tentmaker's discernment of calling. As has been highlighted in the questionnaires and interviews, calling appears to play a pivotal role in clarity and persistence. Recognizing the complexities of their unique fit and offering to pray for them can be supportive moves.

While clarity regarding what they are willing to commit themselves to is central, this clarity serves another purpose as well. It allows for imagination of how congregational ministry and other work can be structured to allow for a viable pattern to emerge. It provides a sense of what part they are to play and how others can fit into the picture. Congregational staff or boards will need to work with the tentmaker to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the roles people will play in congregational leadership and that expectations are reasonable. Negotiation of this new reality will be important to ensure that ministry can be meaningful and sustainable.

While this paper focuses on the opportunities presented by tentmaking, many challenges were also identified. Recognition of the challenges multivocational ministers face, such as difficulties in attending events when there can be multiple schedules to juggle and offering to help out (childcare or guest preaching) may be appreciated. Some interviewees were company owners or full time employees but many were part time, which can create financial issues such as reduced benefits or difficulty in obtaining a mortgage. Some denominational offices provide financial services such as pensions, however access to financial advice or advocating for specialized services may be options to consider. General education about the opportunities presented by tentmaking could also provide support for these leaders. A couple of the interviewees were very clear that not treating them like second class leaders would be appreciated. This study provides examples of the value of multivocational ministry for advocacy within networks and organizations.

## Training Recommendations

The interviewees were asked for recommendations for trainers: Bible college or seminary instructors and parachurch resource people.<sup>22</sup> Basic life skills such as budgeting or family care were identified because of the tensions which can arise from the intensity of balancing multiple life commitments. Leadership skill development and most specifically skills for leading teams was considered valuable for multiple contexts. Business skills were also recommended. Some suggested the provision of basic training for job hunting and the employment application process. Others suggested that more advanced education such as entrepreneurial strategy would be beneficial. Training could provide options to open more

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<sup>22</sup> In the student research literature (graduate level programs in seminaries) on the church there has been a recent wave of theses examining bivocational ministry and support structures for those ministers. The students have reported on a range of Western contexts such as: Canada, Ireland, and the United States of America.

possibilities for tentmaking. An area which crosses over between leadership and management is evaluation. A leader in a complex multivocational situation suggested training towards these outcomes: "How to do the operation that we are doing, how to evaluate it ... And then how to develop the operation in order to get better results than the one that is already in place, or to develop a new one." This general emphasis on leadership development which can apply to multiple areas of work could offer many benefits.

Some of their suggestions were consistent with basic ministry training: biblical interpretation, ethics, social analysis, and developing personal self-awareness. The application of these skills, however, would need to consider both ministry and marketplace contexts. Theological reflection and spiritual discernment should be provided by Bible colleges and seminaries as foundational topics however the following story from a snow removal manager/church planter in the middle of a snowstorm points to their value in the intense moments of multivocational life:

So I left Friday night at suppertime and I went through the night and I go home, I guess around one o'clock on Saturday. We have a gathering Saturday night and then I had to go back in for 4:30-4:45. And I was beating myself up that I didn't get my alone time with God in the sanctuary praying for the service. And I was like, ... my sermon is going to suck, it's not going to be there, God's not going to bless me because I haven't spent that time alone with him. And then it was just as I'm driving from work to the church, God just really just broke me, saying like, you're with me wherever you go, if you stay focused on me, I'm here. And I went, "Wow." Which gave me a great sermon illustration, and I had a good sermon and seeing people respond. So that's why I needed to give myself the grace to do that, but at the same time I make sure that I don't use that as an excuse not to put in the time.

The realities of tentmaking require some special attention. One leader whose multivocational ministry was the result of converging passions suggests:

...so equip people, like even psychologically, for this idea that maybe ministry will be part time or maybe ministry will be unpaid and you'll have a second, another, career. And I guess it's that theology of work that just because you're not working in ministry doesn't mean that it's not sacred.

Seminaries, Bible colleges, and parachurch ministry trainers can take the challenges of multivocational ministry into consideration when designing training.<sup>23</sup> This will mean

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<sup>23</sup> There are Canadian examples of changes to seminary training to account for and promote non-traditional pastoral roles; however, there will always be opportunities for envisioning new approaches and revisions. Research from graduates of Association of Theological Schools (ATS) institutions (Canada and USA) suggests that almost one third of graduates in 2017 anticipated bivocational ministry – see: Jo Ann Deasy, "Shifting Vocational Identity in Theological Education: Insights from the ATS Student Questionnaires," *Theological Education* 52, no. 1 (2018): 63–78.

providing opportunities to train which adjust to a variety of work schedules (see Appendix 3). Further, the consideration of multivocational ministry could shape existing curriculum further towards missionary training to broaden the focus to all of society (beyond just the church) and address some of the marketplace skill development areas which have been described.

## Current Future Issues

What is being learned now by tentmakers has the potential to shape the future of ministry in Canada. The research conducted for the Canadian Multivocational Ministry Project will have further insight to offer as analysis continues. Forums for discussion of these issues can promote both clear thinking and inspire imagination.<sup>24</sup> The goal will be to identify current patterns which can contribute to discernment of future dreams and strategies which are both sustainable and effective.

## Future Research

One of the goals of exploratory research is to open new avenues for research. There is rich data in this study which requires further examination. There are several related academic research projects either in process or being considered at this time.<sup>25</sup> Additional follow up could include further development of resources from this research which could be of benefit to tentmakers or those who support them.<sup>26</sup> New directions for research of wellness in different forms of ministry could include comparison of multivocational ministry with multi-point parishes or other forms of marketplace ministry. As tentmaking is an understudied area of ministry, and Canadian research on the church is not particularly broad, the door is wide open for future opportunities.

## Future Possibilities

One of the future issues to consider is whether a pattern of sustainability is being developed and tested through current tentmaking ventures. One Ontario leader offered an assessment: "It's a missionary outpost and it needs to exist to be able to accomplish more than just sustaining what is already there and hopefully getting enough of the congregation's members to believe to make it, you know, work for another generation." In reflecting on their metropolitan context among those who are relatively affluent one leader argued that:

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<sup>24</sup> Forums and events will be posted to: [canadianmultivocationresearch.ca](http://canadianmultivocationresearch.ca).

<sup>25</sup> Current academic research presentations of the time study, meaning of sabbath, and implications for church planting are being developed. Reports and articles will be posted to: [canadianmultivocationalresearch.ca](http://canadianmultivocationalresearch.ca).

<sup>26</sup> The integrated-complementary-lucrative-conflicted framework will be developed further and examined for suitability to be validated to create a diagnostic tool.

...the people who are the hardest to share the gospel with effectively it's like the young, urban professional. Not only have they never been to church, now for the first time in North American history, their parents have never been to church so they don't even have like the stories in the back of their head of Moses and Noah. You know there are plenty of people in my neighbourhood who genuinely couldn't tell you what Easter is, and I think the church hasn't really started to grapple with that. So everything that we do here, including the way we worked is to facilitate sharing life with people that don't want to come to my church, that don't want to sit in pews surrounded by stained glass, and it doesn't matter how many flyers we give out or how many bus stop ads we do. They're not going to come to us, and so a big part of it is just being part of the neighbourhood and the society around us in a way that contributes to it and is different from what you see in the rest of society that's not sort of the God-following aspects of society. And I know I'm saying a lot more than just what "bivocational" is, but that's sort of like the whole theory of our church in general.

Speaking from the context of rural Saskatchewan one pastor claims, "It feels like being out here is missionary work. Yeah. When you talk to people who don't know God, they know nothing." These concerns of a decrease in general understanding or connection points with the story of Christianity span urban-rural differences within Canada. One co-pastor working on a replant in southern Ontario framed the challenge this way, "It's every church has to be participating in the mission of God, if not, that church will die." A rural, western Ontario pastor raises the question, "So how do we as the church, who you know, want to be disciples of Jesus and be faithful to that call, how do we take the church out into the world? And into those other places where they've become the centre of the community, rather than a church building?" Tentmaking cannot guarantee the development of missionary outposts; however, multivocational ministry creates possibilities for sustainability of congregational ministry and understanding unique opportunities in the intersection of the sacred and the secular.

## Selected Annotated Bibliography

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Review of biblical account of Paul's tentmaking ministry. Includes reflection on Canadian opportunities which can benefit from multivocational ministry.

Principles from community-based research have guided this project. People with tentmaking<sup>27</sup> experience have been involved in the executive supervision, design, research process, and conceptualization of resources. The phases of knowledge generation, knowledge mobilization, and community mobilization have been intentionally incorporated from the beginning with the intention of benefiting tentmakers and those who train or support them.<sup>28</sup> As should be noted in the acknowledgements (see Appendix 1), there are gatekeeper/brokers included in advisory capacity as well as on the teams who can assist in closing the research-practice gap in the sharing of information and beneficial practices.<sup>29</sup>

There are three broad research questions which have guided this research project:

1. What are key features of the diverse expressions of bivocational ministry in Canada?
  - a. What are challenges?
  - b. What are opportunities?
2. What are significant biblical and theological emphases to consider?
3. How can promotion of the opportunities and resourcing of the challenges take place strategically?

This mixed methods research incorporated two streams of research with multiple methods (see Figure 3 below): the Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project<sup>30</sup> incorporated the online questionnaire of the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe. While the Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project provided the broad banner for the bivocational research focus, the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe was an already established research program which had developed a statistically validated questionnaire for assessing satisfiers and stressors in congregational ministry.<sup>31</sup> In addition to the general desire for triangulation by incorporating multiple research approaches to gain information, this collaboration allowed for the expansion of knowledge beyond what would have been possible independently.<sup>32</sup> With the online questionnaire available to address the experience of multivocational ministers regarding their experience of congregational leadership, the semi-structured interview could address directly the

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<sup>27</sup> Tentmaking, bivocational ministry, and multivocational ministry are generally used as synonyms in this study with the distinction that bivocational implies two occupations or jobs, while multivocational implies possibly more than two major commitments.

<sup>28</sup> Ochocka and Janzen, "Breathing Life into Theory."

<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Watling Neal et al., "Brokering the Research–Practice Gap: A Typology," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 56 (August 27, 2015): 422–35, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9745-8>.

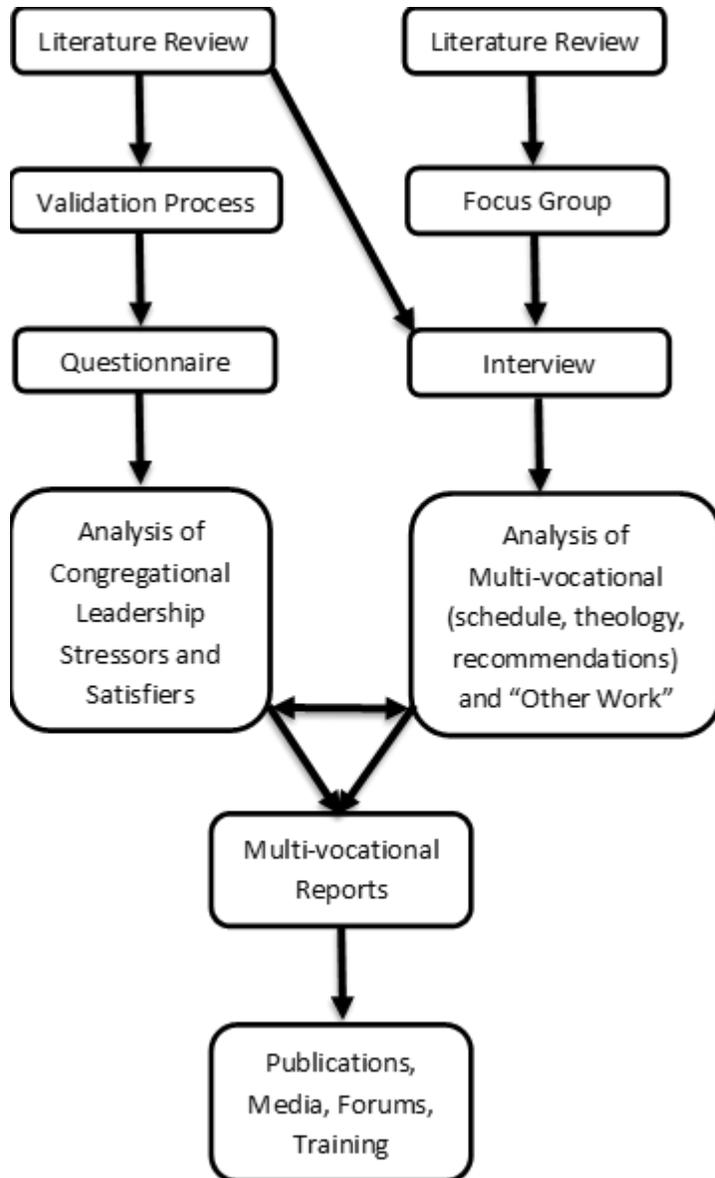
<sup>30</sup> This title has been changed to "Canadian Multivocational Ministry" as it became clear during research that many of the individuals had more than one other significant commitment.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 2 for definitions.

<sup>32</sup> Alan Bryman, "Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research: How Is It Done?," *Qualitative Research*, August 15, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106058877>.

multivocational perspective (schedule, experience, theology, recommendations for training) and unpack the positives and negatives of the other occupations.

**Figure 3** - *Diagram of Mixed Method Research*



#### Online Questionnaire

The Wellness Project @ Wycliffe already had an established research agenda with a fully developed online questionnaire prior to entering into collaboration with the Canadian Bivocational Research Project. This involved literature review of assessment/psychometrics, burnout, and wellness (with a specific focus on clergy) in addition to preliminary qualitative

study to establish categories and questions.<sup>33</sup> The focus on wellness in congregational ministry complemented the research design for the semi-structured interviews by providing a lens to focus on the congregational leadership aspect of the bivocational ministers' lives.

The two tools for information collection through the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe online questionnaire were: Human Services Survey (HSS) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory and Positive Aspects and Negative Aspects Inventories (developed and validated by the Wellness Project @Wycliffe team).<sup>34</sup> While the number of interviewees who participated in The Wellness Project @ Wycliffe (32) provided too small a sample for complex statistical analysis, there are some observable similarities and differences which can be stated for reflection. A data set (collection of online questionnaire responses) was developed for comparing responses of multivocational and univocational Canadian ministers by matching univocational leaders who had completed the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe questionnaire based on criteria which are understood to be important in reflection on ministry (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4 - Data Matching**

|                               | <b>MULTIVOCATIONAL (CBMP)<br/>(n=32)</b> | <b>UNIVOCATIONAL<br/>(n= 32)</b>   |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>GENDER</b>                 | Women = 13<br>Men = 19                   | Women = 13<br>Men = 19             |
| <b>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE</b>    | < 10 years = 7<br>≥ 10 years = 25        | < 10 years = 10<br>≥ 10 Years = 22 |
| <b>ORDAINED/ NON-ORDAINED</b> | Ordained = 16<br>Non-Ordained = 16       | Ordained = 16<br>Non-Ordained = 16 |

While descriptive statistics have been possible, hypothesis testing would require further development to determine whether the differences we found between the multivocational and univocational participants are statistically significant or not.

<sup>33</sup> Wanda M. Malcolm, Karen L. Coetzee, and Elizabeth A. Fisher, "Measuring Ministry-Specific Stress and Satisfaction: The Psychometric Properties of the Positive and Negative Aspects Inventories," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 47, no. 4 (April 14, 2019): 313-327, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647119837018>.

<sup>34</sup> Malcolm, Coetzee, and Fisher, "Measuring Ministry-Specific Stress and Satisfaction." See Appendix 2 for definitions.

## Semi-structured Interview

A literature review of bivocational and tentmaking<sup>35</sup> books and articles has been conducted primarily from the fields of biblical studies, practical theology, and missiology.<sup>36</sup> While much of the literature on bivocational<sup>37</sup> ministry tends to skew to description or recommendations of best practice from personal experience, some offers theoretical or theological perspectives. An informal focus group with individuals with current and previous experience in bivocational ministry was held in Calgary, Alberta. This group (one woman and eight men) represented at least four different church/denominational traditions. Presentations of experience and basic questions were explored in a setting structured for both mutual learning and testing of the concepts intended for question formation for the semi-structured interviews. This provided validation of certain areas for the research design and recommended specific directions for the interviews.<sup>38</sup> As one example, questions regarding theology were included because it became obvious that certain leaders found grounding and direction for bivocational practice from biblical narratives.

The semi-structured interview allowed direction for the questions but allowed bivocational ministers to raise their concerns by providing open-ended questions. These questions were developed from the literature review, learning from the focus group, and discussion with the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe (regarding what issues would be redundant relative to the questions already present in the online questionnaire or helpful to address). This allowed for a descriptive/interpretive approach to focus on developing understanding of the experience.<sup>39</sup> The non-representative but purposive sampling approach incorporated a combination of maximal variation sampling for the variety of occupations in addition to congregational leadership with quota/criterion sampling for specific criteria alongside supplemental snowball sampling techniques (inviting applications online from contacts and asking for referrals). Selection of interviewees favoured diversity of occupations primarily, and secondarily: gender balance, geographic location, country of origin,<sup>40</sup> and additional denominational traditions.<sup>41</sup> This sampling scheme for the mixed-methods research emphasizes analytic conceptualization over generalizability, in other words it explores issues

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<sup>35</sup> Terms such as bivocational, tentmaking, and multivocational are used in the literature. Some terms such as business as mission or covocational have emerged to identify specific circumstances or goals for tentmaking.

<sup>36</sup> Watson and Santos, "Tentmaking."

<sup>37</sup> The research project was introduced as the Canadian Bivocational Ministry Project.

<sup>38</sup> Jennifer Cyr, "The Pitfalls and Promise of Focus Groups as a Data Collection Method," *Sociological Methods & Research* 45, no. 2 (May 2016): 231–59, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124115570065>.

<sup>39</sup> Michele J. McIntosh and Janice M. Morse, "Situating and Constructing Diversity in Semi-Structured Interviews," *Global Qualitative Nursing Research* 2 (January 1, 2015):1-12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2333393615597674>.

<sup>40</sup> Note that this does not directly reflect the multicultural nature of the study as some Canadian-born ministers indicated that they were serving in multicultural congregations and a minority of foreign-born participants were serving in largely culturally homogenous congregations.

<sup>41</sup> Agreements were reached with Free Methodist Church in Canada, Mennonite Church Canada, and The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda to include up to 10 interviewees of each denomination as part of a funding arrangement to provide a specific report and to allow for discussion of any differences or similarities which emerged between different historic, Christian traditions.

which are present among multivocational leaders rather than making representative claims of all Canadians who are tentmakers.<sup>42</sup> The strategic emphasis is on exploration of different combinations of congregational leadership and other work to consider what specific issues or patterns should be considered for training and support. The goal of 40 interviewees was set to maximize opportunity for data saturation given the multiple locations and cross-cultural realities of the Canadian context.<sup>43</sup>

The geographic distribution of the 40 interviewees came from across Canada, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and the Territories. While almost a tenth of the interviewees ministered in overlapping urban-rural regions (8%), about two thirds (67%) served in urban areas and one quarter (25%) served in rural areas. There were 16 female and 24 male interviewees. A minority of the interviewees were married couples who were co-planters or co-pastors with shared ministry commitments. The interviewees indicated pastoral roles of: Associate, Co-Pastor, Church Planter, Lead (or sole pastoral staff person), Youth Pastor, and Volunteer (with a formal role/title but no salary from the church). Three traditions (Free Methodist Church in Canada, Mennonite Church Canada and The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda) contributed about three quarters of the interviewees which allowed a focus on each of those traditions while the rest were composed of: C2C, Canadian Baptists Ontario and Quebec, Christian and Missionary Alliance, non-denominational, and Pentecostal. Interviewees were asked to complete the Wellness Project @ Wycliffe online questionnaire, 32 were able to comply with that request.

One in five of the interviewees were foreign-born, roughly corresponding to the national population average<sup>44</sup> with a few serving largely Canadian-born congregations and conversely at least one Canadian-born minister serving in a largely first- and second-generation immigrant church. Most of the congregations used English as their primary language, a couple used French (both located in Quebec), and one indicated they used an Asian language as their primary language of worship. A variety of ethnocultural backgrounds were explicitly identified in a few of the churches such as: Filipino, Iranian, Japanese, Korean, Middle Eastern, Nigerian, Russian, and South African. A few churches in the study had one of these backgrounds as the majority ethnicity and one church was identified as being highly multicultural, at least within the interviewee's area of pastoral responsibility.

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<sup>42</sup> Anthony Onwuegbuzie and Kathleen Collins, "A Typology of Mixed Methods Sampling Designs in Social Science Research," *The Qualitative Report* 12, no. 2 (June 1, 2007): 281–316.

<sup>43</sup> Ashley K. Hagaman and Amber Wutich, "How Many Interviews Are Enough to Identify Metathemes in Multisited and Cross-Cultural Research? Another Perspective on Guest, Bunce, and Johnson's (2006) Landmark Study," *Field Methods* 29, no. 1 (April 28, 2016): 23-41, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X16640447>.

<sup>44</sup> "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results from the 2016 Census," Statistics Canada, released October 25, 2017, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025b-eng.htm>

Definitions are provided for the Positive Aspects Inventory (PAI) and Negative Aspects Inventory (NAI) as well as explanation of the rationale for Core Stressors and Core Satisfiers and the Maslach Burnout Inventory Human Services Survey.

**Figure 5** - *Positive Aspects Inventory (PAI) Definitions*

| ASPECT | NAME                                 | DEFINITION   |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--|
| P1     | Creative Initiative                  | Opportunities to be creative, try new things, and pursue innovative goals within your ministry context.  |
| P2     | Cultivating Personal Spiritual Depth | Opportunities to cultivate your personal spirituality, wisdom and depth of character.  |
| P3     | Personal Prayer                      | The positive elements of personal prayer practices.  |
| P4     | Leadership                           | Guiding people and exercising leadership within your ministry context.   |
| P5     | Management Skills                    | Carrying out the administrative and organizational tasks of your ministry.   |
| P6     | Pastoral Care Practices              | The positive elements of providing pastoral care to the people you minister to (e.g., visiting and/or praying), as well as teaching responsibilities and/or opportunities within your ministry context.                      |
| P7     | Fostering Faith Development          | Sharing the gospel and seeing people come to faith, as well as facilitating the faith development of the people you minister to. This includes encouraging and assisting these people in developing their gifts and talents. |
| P8     | Vocational Calling                   | Feeling called to the ministry life you are engaged in, the fit between your personal and ministry life, and your sense of God's direction and involvement as you move forward.  |
| P9     | Social Responsibilities              | Social responsibilities you have within your ministry context.   |
| P10    | Ongoing Learning                     | Opportunities for ongoing learning, engaging your intellect, and deepening your knowledge of God.  |
| P11    | Building Work Relationships          | The benefits of your working relationships with colleagues and those who supervise you.  |
| P12    | Time and Diversity of Tasks          | The benefits of being free to choose how you use your time, and the enjoyment that may come with being engaging in many tasks and responsibilities as part of your ministry life   |
| P13    | Fostering Community Worship          | Opportunities and responsibilities related to worshiping with the people you minister to.  |
| P14    | Preaching                            | The positive elements of preparing and delivering formal sermons.  |
| P15    | Liturgical Practices                 | Responsibility for and involvement in the formal liturgical practices within your ministry.  |

**Figure 6** - *Negative Aspects Inventory (NAI) Definitions*

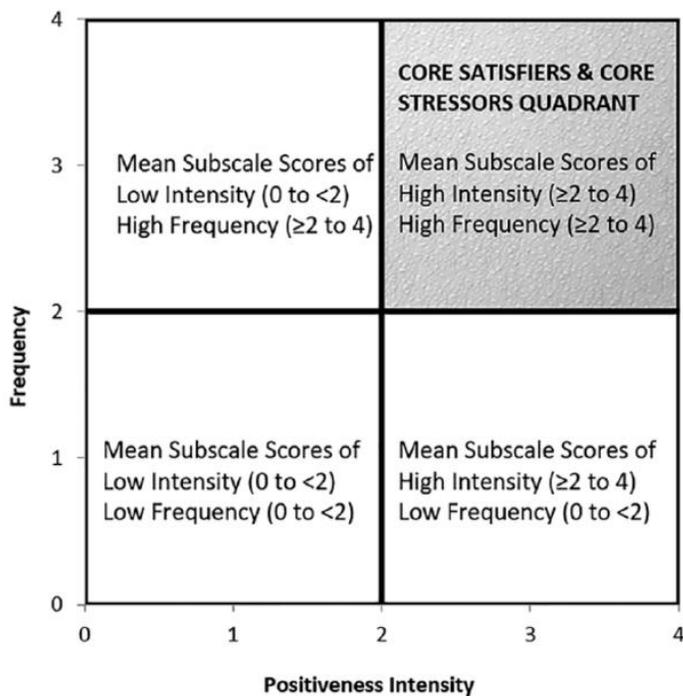
| ASPECT     | NAME                                   | DEFINITION   |
|------------|--|--|
| <b>N1</b>  | Role & Responsibility Pressures        | The expectations placed on you by others, as well as the pressure and responsibility you carry in your ministry role.  |
| <b>N2</b>  | Work Relationship Challenges           | The negative elements of your working relationships with colleagues and those who supervise you.   |
| <b>N3</b>  | Personal Spiritual Struggles           | Challenges to cultivating personal spirituality, wisdom, and depth of character.   |
| <b>N4</b>  | Barriers to Personal Prayer            | The negative elements of personal prayer.  |
| <b>N5</b>  | Leading through Change and Controversy | Navigating change and responding to controversial/divisive issues that arise in your ministry context.   |
| <b>N6</b>  | Pastoral Care Challenges               | The negative elements of providing pastoral or spiritual care, visiting, and/or praying with the people you minister to.   |
| <b>N7</b>  | Boundaries                             | Responding to boundary issues that may occur within your ministry context.   |
| <b>N8</b>  | Perceived Expectations Strain          | The sense that standards are higher for you than for others, or that it is difficult to fully be yourself because of your ministry role.   |
| <b>N9</b>  | Family vs Ministry Conflict            | The extent to which you experience conflict between the responsibilities of your ministry life and family responsibilities.  |
| <b>N10</b> | Time and Workload Strain               | The downsides of having the responsibility for deciding how to use your time, and the strain that may come with engaging in many tasks and responsibilities as part of your ministry life. |
| <b>N11</b> | Financial Challenges                   | Responsibility for leading a community through financially difficult times and/or providing for one's family.  |
| <b>N12</b> | Preaching Challenges                   | The negative elements of preparing and delivering formal sermons.  |

Defining Satisfiers & Stressors: As can be seen in Figure 7 (see below), aspects that received high intensity and high frequency scores were “categorized as “Core Satisfiers” on the PAI, and as “Core Stressors” on the NAI. Quadrant scores were determined for the Core Satisfiers by calculating the percentage of the total number of 12 PAI subscales that were in the high intensity + high frequency quadrant for each participant.”<sup>45</sup> The same quadrant scoring was applied to the NAI.

<sup>45</sup> Malcolm, Coetzee, and Fisher, “Measuring Ministry-Specific Stress and Satisfaction.” See Figures 5 and 6 for definitions of PAI and NAI.

Description of the MBI Human Services Survey: “The Human Services Survey (HSS) is the original version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory ... which was developed to measure levels of burnout among individuals engaged in professions that require ongoing and intense levels of interaction with service recipients (e.g., police or probation officers, nurses, psychotherapists and counselors, social workers, etc.). Items on the HSS are used to determine scores for three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DP), and Personal Accomplishment (PA). Increases in EE and DP, and decreases in PA are indices of burnout. The EE subscale has nine items that assess work-related feelings of being emotionally overwhelmed and exhausted. The DP subscale has five items related to impersonal or unfeeling responses toward those receiving service. The PA subscale has eight items that assess feelings of work-related competence and success. Item scores within each of the three subscales were summed for each of our participants and compared to standardized score levels to determine whether an individual’s scores indicated low, average, or high indices of burnout. Participant scores on the HSS were used to validate the PAI and NAI ministry satisfaction and stress constructs, as well as to establish interpretable score ranges.”<sup>46</sup>

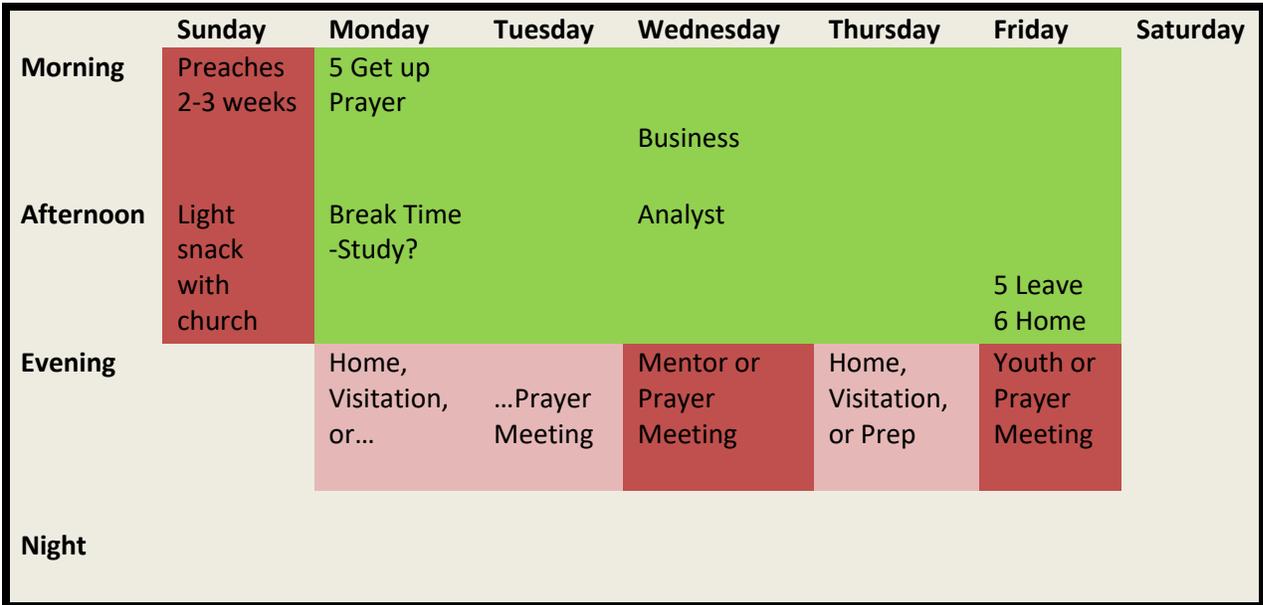
**Figure 7 - PAI and NAI Four Quadrant Scoring Model**



<sup>46</sup> Malcolm, Coetzee, and Fisher, “Measuring Ministry-Specific Stress and Satisfaction.”

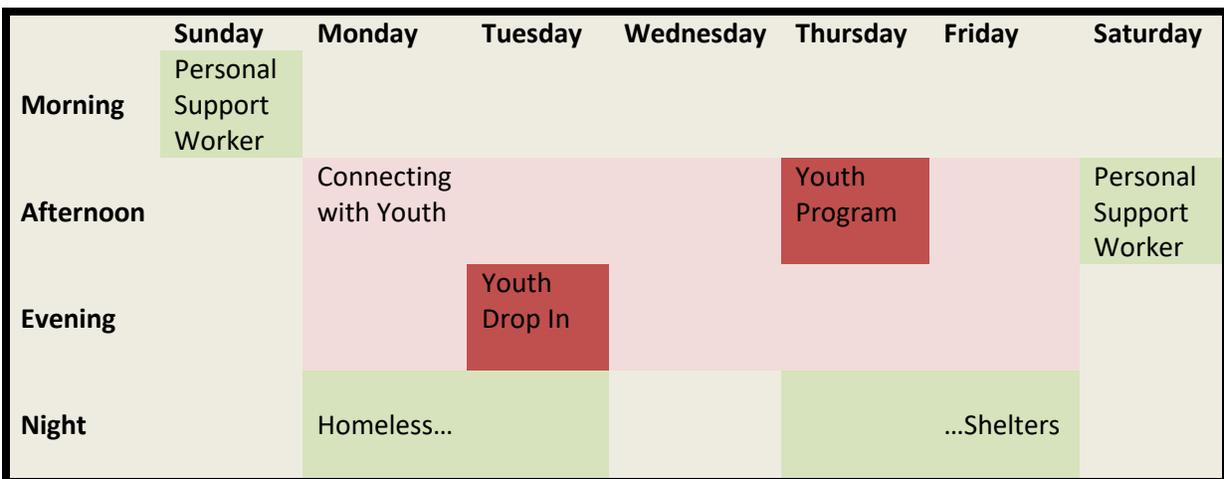
**Figure 8** - *Scheduled Office Hours*

A co-pastor and business analyst for a government department with regular office hours.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 9** - *Scheduled Ministry with Varied Shift Work*

A relief night shift worker for city homeless shelters (two to three shifts a week) and Personal Support Worker (up to two shifts a week) who is focused on leadership in a cross-cultural youth ministry (with church plant potential) when students are out of school.



<sup>47</sup> For pattern recognition the weekly schedules have been organized with: red for congregational work; green for other work; blue for other significant commitments; and orange indicating rest or recreation. Flexible, less frequent than weekly, or irregular commitments are lighter shades.

**Figure 10 - Scheduled Separate Work Hours**

A rural pastor (spouse is worship pastor) who also serves as a chaplain in three contexts: a regional health facility, via telehealth, and as part of a regional outreach team providing in home palliative care visitation.

|           | Sunday  | Monday                            | Tuesday                   | Wednesday             | Thursday                              | Friday                            | Saturday                |
|-----------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Morning   | Worship | Regional Health Centre Chaplaincy | Telehealth Chaplaincy     | Church Office Meeting | Prayer Meeting and Church Office Work | Mobile Palliative Care Chaplaincy | Hanging Out With Kids   |
| Afternoon |         |                                   | Sermon prep, visits, etc. | Planning              |                                       |                                   |                         |
| Evening   |         | "Vegging Out"                     | Ministry Nights at Church |                       |                                       | Youth Group                       | Sermon Prep (or Spouse) |
| Night     |         |                                   |                           |                       |                                       |                                   |                         |

**Figure 11 - Scheduled Integration of Church and Social Service**

Co-pastors who are also social service directors in a building shared between church, faith-based social services, thrift store (open Monday to Friday), and community partners. There are frequent public relations, fundraising, or partnership meetings (including local ministerial). One spouse is in language learning classes three evenings a week while the other spouse completes a graduate theology degree.

|           | Sunday                 | Monday   | Tuesday     | Wednesday          | Thursday     | Friday          | Saturday             |
|-----------|------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Morning   | Bible Study<br>Worship | 4:45am Devotions<br>8am Gym<br>9am Social Services | Bible Study | Day Off            |              |                 | Men or Women's Group |
| Afternoon | Meal                   |  | Chapel      | (Graduate Studies) |              | Social Services | Visitation           |
| Evening   |                        |  |             | Community...       | Intercession | ...Meals        |                      |
| Night     |                        |  |             |                    |              |                 |                      |

**Figure 12** - Seasonal Summers with Reduced Other Work

An elementary school teacher who plays in multiple bands, provides a community radio show on music, and leads a neighbourhood church. Due to the intentionality of community engagement, it is impossible to distinguish between personal activities (blue) and congregational commitments as the pastor is commissioned to engage in the community.

|           | Sunday       | Monday         | Tuesday                   | Wednesday          | Thursday         | Friday          | Saturday                |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Morning   |              | Sabbath        |                           | Music Teaching     | Comm-unity Radio | Guy's Breakfast | Prep Scripture Teaching |
| Afternoon | House Church | Music Teaching | Prep for Comm-unity Radio | Elementary School  |                  |                 | Band Rehearsal?         |
| Evening   |              | Band Rehearsal |                           | Songwriting Circle |                  |                 |                         |
| Night     |              |                |                           |                    |                  |                 |                         |

**Figure 13** - Seasonal with Agricultural Priorities

A rural farmer/pastor who has seasons where it is understood by the congregation that care for the farm has priority (planting, harvesting, and animal birthing). Weekdays in the off season can be opportunities for pastoral connections in the community, intentionally blurring the lines between professional, personal, or pastoral contacts in a small community.

|           | Sunday   | Monday           | Tuesday | Wednesday                   | Thursday     | Friday | Saturday                   |
|-----------|----------|------------------|---------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Morning   | Worship  |                  |         |                             |              |        |                            |
| Afternoon | Visiting | Farm ...         | with    | ... Church Responsibilities | (Visitation) |        | Occasional Prison Ministry |
| Evening   |          | Haying Season... |         | Committee                   | Meetings?    |        | ...in Summer               |
| Night     |          |                  |         |                             |              |        |                            |

**Figure 14 - Flexible with Regular Commitments**

An associate pastor who also manages a social justice awareness program which provides education to high schools as a supplementary resource to the curriculum on an “as scheduled” basis. Church meets in a city run community centre and contributes to specific meal programs.

|           | Sunday                    | Monday                              | Tuesday                     | Wednesday                       | Thursday                               | Friday     | Saturday                                      |
|-----------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|------------|---|
| Morning   | Preach<br>Once a<br>Month | Email                               | Sermon<br>Prep              | Breakfast<br>Club for<br>Centre | Meet<br>History<br>Teachers            | Day<br>Off |   |
| Afternoon |                           | Support<br>Comm-<br>unity<br>Family | Network<br>with<br>Teachers | Staff<br>Meeting                | “Historical<br>Narrative<br>Project”   |            |   |
| Evening   | Wom-<br>en’s<br>Group     | Pastoral<br>Care                    | Learning<br>Events          | Directors or<br>Elders          | Pastoral<br>Care/<br>Coordin-<br>ation |            | Comm-<br>unity<br>Supper or<br>Sermon<br>Prep |
| Night     |                           |                                     |                             |                                 |  |            |   |

**Figure 15 - Flexible Rhythms**

A freelance marketer who co-leads a church plant and is engaged in several social justice initiatives. Communication takes place on an ongoing basis and as needed for planning. Workflow is intentionally fluid and difficult to describe on a weekly basis, it is more of a rhythm than a schedule.

|           | Sunday | Monday                          | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |                              |
|-----------|--------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|------------------------------|
| Morning   |        | Marketing                       |         |           |          |        |          | Co-lead<br>Event:            |
| Afternoon |        | Other<br>Initiatives            |         |           |          |        |          | Dance,<br>Art, or<br>Worship |
| Evening   |        | Prep for: Events or<br>Meetings |         |           |          |        |          | at Least<br>Once a<br>Month  |
| Night     |        |                                 |         |           |          |        |          |                              |